

## *Viewpoint*

# **The Media's Use of Interpretive Frames During Football Club Relocations and Mergers**

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### **Introduction**

The media plays a pivotal role in determining the ways in which sport news is interpreted and understood. Television, newspapers, radio and the Internet are important vehicles for the dissemination of sport news that refers to contests and game related activities. The media also reports sport news that is related more to off-field activities, such as sponsorships, draft regulations, competitive balance and ticket prices. During times of crisis, particularly when it is proposed that clubs relocate or merge, the print media are a crucial source of news and information because the event is outside the experience of most media consumers. As such, the media is often charged with transforming a problematic reality (a crisis event) into a comprehensible text (a news story). One of the primary methods that the media employs in developing a comprehensible text is the construction of interpretive frames.

This article examines the print media's use of interpretive frames using three Australian Rules football case studies, in which clubs were experiencing crisis.<sup>1</sup> These case studies all occurred during a turbulent time, when Australian football went through a period of radical restructuring. During the 1980s and 1990s the parochial Victorian Football League (VFL) was transformed into a national competition, the Australian Football League (AFL).

The first case is the South Melbourne Football Club 'relocation saga'. Throughout the last half of 1981 debate raged about the viability of the club and whether the club should relocate to Sydney and reap the financial rewards of increased sponsorship and television exposure. After court cases, player strikes, an extraordinary general meeting and a prolonged period of internal administrative turmoil, it was agreed that the club would play its home games in Sydney in 1982. In 1983 the club moved to Sydney on a permanent basis.

The second case is the Footscray Football Club's 'fightback' campaign. In October 1989, a merger between the Fitzroy and Footscray Football Clubs was proposed. The announcement of the merger, which had been decided without consultation with the membership of either club, prompted large-scale community 'backlash' and resistance in the western suburbs of Melbourne

specifically, and across Melbourne more generally. A massive fundraising and legal campaign resulted in Footscray and Fitzroy continuing as autonomous entities for the 1990 season.

The third and final case is the merger of the Fitzroy and Brisbane Football Clubs in 1996. Brisbane adopted the Fitzroy mascot in place of its 'bear', modified its playing uniform to incorporate the Fitzroy colours, recruited most of Fitzroy's best players and subsequently became the Brisbane Lions. Unlike the Footscray 'fightback' campaign, there was little resistance to the merger, however, it caused great controversy, as it seemed throughout the merger discussions that suburban neighbour North Melbourne was to be the likely merger partner, only to be 'trumped' at the eleventh hour by Brisbane.

### **Theories of Interpretation and Contextualisation**

The interpretation and contextualisation of news events has been examined from a number of perspectives. John Hartley posits that once an event is deemed newsworthy, it is assigned a 'proper' place in the order of things. Drawing on the work of Stuart Hall, Chas Critcher, Tony Jefferson, John Clarke and Brian Roberts, he notes that news workers determined this 'proper' place by utilising 'cultural maps of the social world'.<sup>2</sup> For the world not to be represented as a jumble of random and chaotic events, suggest Hall and his colleagues, they must be identified and assigned a social context.<sup>3</sup> This process of identification and contextualisation, in which an event is related to other events known to the audience and placed within a frame of meanings familiar to them, is the way in which the media makes sense of an event. For Hall and his colleagues, news workers without 'cultural maps' of the social world or the ability to identify and contextualise, would be unable to make sense of unusual, unexpected or unpredicted events. These events, they argue, must be brought from the 'random' to the 'meaningful', which essentially means that unusual or unexpected events must be interpreted through existing cultural knowledge.

Hall, Critcher, Jefferson, Clarke and Roberts suggest that the media often present information about events that are outside the direct experience of the majority of society and often represent the only source of information.<sup>4</sup> Because these events are typically new or unexpected, they argued that the media are engaged in a task of transforming a 'problematic reality' into a comprehensible text. Problematic events, they note, are not consistent with society's expectations and are often perceived as threatening. Furthermore, for the majority of the population the way in which these events are interpreted and contextualised defines what significant events are taking place and offers ways to understand them. Hall, Critcher, Jefferson, Clarke and Roberts suggest that although members of a society are able to manipulate 'maps of meaning' in order to understand events, they have fundamental interests and values in common, and prefer to maintain the same perspective on events.<sup>5</sup>

Hall also referred to 'codes' in explaining the way in which signs are able to signify additional implied meanings. These 'codes', or 'configurations of meaning', are forms of social knowledge suggested Hall.<sup>6</sup> Likewise, Jonathan Bignell argued that news is not simply facts, but representations communicated in codes of discourse, while Richard Ericson, Patricia Baranek and Janet Chan refer to 'formats' as the devices that journalists use to 'categorize, choose, organize and represent knowledge as news'.<sup>7</sup>

Todd Gitlin referred not to 'maps of meaning', 'formats' or 'codes', but to 'frames'.<sup>8</sup> Specifically, Gitlin suggested that frames are 'principles of selection, emphasis and presentation composed of little tacit theories about what exists, what happens and what matters'. He argued that these frames, like 'maps of meaning', organise the world for journalists and the people who read their reports. Furthermore, these frames are 'persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation and presentation, of selection, emphasis and exclusion, by which symbol-handlers routinely organize discourse, whether verbal or visual'.<sup>9</sup> Gitlin suggested that a recognition of the existence of frames prompts several questions for an analytic approach to journalism. These questions include what is the frame being used, why this frame and not another, and why different frames are used by different media at different moments?

Like Gitlin, Gaye Tuchman suggested that news frames need to be problematised or deconstructed in order to understand the ways in which news is reported.<sup>10</sup> She noted metaphorically that the view through a window is dependant on a large number of variables, including the size of the window, the number of panes or the colour and finish on the glass. Likewise, the scene on the other side of the window changes depending on where and how the viewer stands. Frames, she argued, act in a similar way to filter the news.

In summary, these maps of meaning, codes and frames are an integral part of the news reporting process and enable journalists to better organise and contextualise these processes. At the same time these maps of meaning, codes and frames reveal the inherent subjectivity of news reporting and the underlying values reporters bring to their news analysis. This means that in practice there will be more than one way of framing news events.

### **Case 1: The South Melbourne Relocation Saga**

On 2 July 1981, two of the three major Melbourne daily newspapers broke the story of the South Melbourne Football Club's proposed move to Sydney.<sup>11</sup> Both newspapers reported that on 1 July South Melbourne asked the VFL to play all of its away games in Sydney and play all of its home games at VFL Park in Waverley, Melbourne, thereby leaving the Lakeside Oval in South Melbourne, the club's home ground since 1874.

According to the newspaper reports, South Melbourne's financial plight was dire. *Age* journalists Ron Carter and Trevor Grant wrote that South Melbourne's financial advisors believed that the proposal to play games in

Sydney would turn an operating loss of \$180,000 in 1980, into an operating profit of \$90,000 in 1982. Likewise, *Sun* journalist Peter Simunovich quoted Jack Marks, chairman of South Melbourne Club Ltd., as saying that the club had been operating at a loss of \$150,000 per year for the last five years. Carter and Grant and Simunovich also noted that the VFL had frozen South Melbourne's share of the ground improvement fund, which stood at \$500,000 in 1981.<sup>12</sup> This meant that the club was unable to improve the facilities at the Lakeside Oval, although it was clear from the newspaper reports that the frozen ground improvement funds were only part of a broader financial problem.

At the start of the crisis, its impact phase, the *Age*, *Herald* and *Sun* reported that the options were effectively 'Sydney or bust'. In emphasising that the move was the club's 'survival kit', the print media made sense of an unusual and unexpected incident by transforming it into a 'meaningful' event.

The relocation proposal was also outside the direct experience of the majority of South Melbourne supporters, the general football public and the readership of the three major daily newspapers. As a result, the *Age*, *Herald* and *Sun* were, along with radio and television, charged with the responsibility of transforming a 'problematic reality' into a comprehensible text. The VFL had been an extremely stable competition for the previous seventy years, and the relocation of one its foundation clubs to New South Wales was a problematic reality. While the South Melbourne relocation saga was a seminal moment in the transformation of the VFL into a national League, the print media downplayed the riskiness of the Sydney relocation. It faithfully reported the board of management's argument that if the proposal was not accepted, the club would go into voluntary liquidation or have to amalgamate. The extensive use of the hard news mode<sup>13</sup> and responsible<sup>14</sup> administrative figures as primary news sources ensured that the Sydney option was represented as a panacea to chronic financial problems.

Throughout the early stage of the crisis the print media contextualised the South Melbourne relocation proposal by referring to its economic necessity. During the resolution of the crisis, the print media focus shifted to the conflicts that arose between the Keep South At South (KSAS) group (South Melbourne supporters who formed a lobby group as an attempt to ensure South Melbourne continued to play at the Lakeside Oval), South Melbourne, the VFL and the players in a variety of combinations. That is, the newspaper coverage moved towards micro analysis and away from macro analysis. In other words, the reporting focussed on the club's internal politics, rather than the broader economic, structural and cultural significance of the crisis event. The survival of the club was transformed from an issue that was reported via a detached representation of the economic realities of the Sydney proposal, to one where the reporting focussed on the infighting that threatened its existence. The combined involvement of various administrative and players in the dispute ensured that substantial print media coverage continued for over three months.

The South Melbourne relocation saga was also sensationalised, although it was moderated by reference to the financial reality of commercial sport. The coverage in the *Age* and *Sun* suggested that it was an important news story, but the reports focussed primarily on the financial necessity of the Sydney proposal, rather than the potentially greater sensation of the broader problems that faced the League.

The disruption of an extraordinary meeting and a dispute between the players and the KSAS based administration generated significant sensationalism in the print media reporting, particularly in the *Herald* and *Sun*.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, the dispute between the players and the South Melbourne administration led the print media to magnify the subjective emotional experience of the players. Reports such as Mike Sheahan's 'Swans: Why we are out' emphasised the player's confusion, their loyalty and the sense of betrayal they felt.<sup>16</sup> This was further magnified by photographs in the *Age*, *Herald* and *Sun* of Steve Wright crying after peace deals between the players and the Collins' administration had broken down.<sup>17</sup>

At each stage of the South Melbourne relocation saga the narrative was sustained by reference to conflict. Furthermore, the conflict was enhanced by repeated suggestions that the club might not survive. The *Herald* in particular used the theme of war and battle constantly during its coverage of the relocation saga. In essence, the print media reflected the evolution of the crisis. At the beginning of the relocation saga the suggestion of conflict was minimal. During the middle of the saga the dispute between the club and its players became the focus and as a consequence, sensationalised the crisis. The sensation was enhanced by the suggestion that club might not survive if the players quit the club, or the VFL did not grant it a loan from the ground improvement fund, or the VFL was forced to take over the club. In the resolution phase, the print media coverage fluctuated between reporting on the peace deals that had been struck and the peace deals that had been broken at the last minute. Finally, the print media's personification of Bill Collins, the new president appointed to bring peace to the club's warring factions, emphasised that he was the solution to the crisis. Furthermore, his role was enhanced by his connection to the sports industry as one of Australia's best race callers.

In summary, the print media contextualised the South Melbourne relocation saga in terms of economic necessity, sensationalised the conflictual elements of the crisis and personified the KSAS group as representative of the South Melbourne supporters.

## **Case 2: The Footscray 'Fightback' Campaign**

The *Age*, *Herald* and *Sun* initially contextualised the Footscray 'fightback' by referring to death and grief. They magnified the subjective emotional experience of the crisis by adopting a funereal style of reporting. In doing so the newspapers made sense of an unusual event and transformed a 'random'

event into a 'meaningful' event. The merger deal between Footscray and Fitzroy and its subsequent acceptance by the VFL were outside the direct experience of the majority of Footscray supporters, the general football public and the readership of the three major daily newspapers. The *Age*, *Herald* and *Sun* consequently became key sources of information about the merger available to the public.

The print media transformed a 'problematic reality' into a 'comprehensible text' by emphasising the grief, anger and shock experienced by Footscray supporters, players and past players in the wake of the merger announcement. This was largely achieved through the publication of photographs of Footscray supporters crying, the publication of responses to the merger by supporters, players and past players in which they expressed their grief and hurt and the focus on the theme of death in headlines and subheadings.<sup>18</sup> The front-page of the *Sun* on 4 October was an exemplar in this respect, as well as being illustrative of the sensationalism that was generated as a result of the disruption caused by the merger.<sup>19</sup>

After the impact phase of the crisis, two additional interpretive frameworks were juxtaposed. First, the print media highlighted Footscray's financial malaise and analysed the events that led to the merger announcement. The commentary on the Save The Bulldogs (STB) campaign's attempt to raise enough money to save Footscray was a natural extension of an economic rationale. The print media emphasised this through the continuous monitoring of the progress of the STB campaign, as well as reports of the VFL's demands.<sup>20</sup> Second, the print media emphasised the impoverishment and loss faced by the western suburbs, as well as its fighting qualities, which were emphasised by the personification of Peter Gordon, Leader of the STB campaign, as a battler prepared to fight for what he believed in, against seemingly more powerful enemies.

During the resolution phase, the survival of the Footscray Football Club was reported relative to the massive effort that was required to raise \$1.5 million, as well as the triumph of Footscray supporters and the western suburbs against the odds. Furthermore, the VFL had been vanquished and the hopes of a national competition had suffered a massive setback.<sup>21</sup> In summary, the print media utilised three interpretive frames, comprising death and grief, financial fightback and the impoverishment and loss faced by people and a region.

Footscray's financial situation was used to sustain the Footscray crisis narrative, as well as frame its interpretation. Footscray's financial insolvency was reported as the major catalyst for the Fitzroy Bulldogs merger. Nick Columb, Footscray Football Club president, and Ross Oakley, Chief Executive of the VFL, were quoted in the lead up to the crisis and when the story broke as having said that Footscray's financial situation was dire, that debts of approximately \$1.5 million meant that the club had no option but to merge and that the VFL merger package ensured the new team would be debt free.

Throughout the impact phase of the Footscray crisis, the grief and anger of Footscray supporters, players and past players was juxtaposed by the reality of the club's financial insolvency.

The legal action taken by Irene Chatfield, a Footscray supporter and organiser of the STB group, and the STB committee against the VFL was predicated on the notion that the club had not been given enough time to prove it could remain solvent. The twenty-one day reprieve that was eventually won by the STB group was reported relative to the enormous task of raising \$1.5 million within a short period of time. The financial imperative that drove the STB campaign, as well as much of the reporting about it in the *Age*, *Herald* and *Sun*, was exacerbated by Oakley's letter to Gordon, in which Oakley claimed that the STB group would have to guarantee an income of \$5 million in 1990, as well as erase the club's debt, which was variously reported after the impact phase as between \$1.5 and \$1.8 million.<sup>22</sup>

From 6 October to 24 October the Footscray crisis narrative in each of the newspapers was sustained by reporting on the progress of the STB campaign, in particular the attempt to raise \$1.5 million. Graphics in the *Sun* that recorded the daily progress of fundraising efforts were exemplars in this respect.<sup>23</sup> Finally, the survival of the Footscray Football Club as an autonomous entity in 1990 was reported as the success of the STB campaign's efforts to raise enough money to clear the club's debt, the grass-roots fundraising in the western suburbs and the sponsorships from ICI and the state government that the club had secured for 1990 and beyond.<sup>24</sup>

### **Case 3: The Merger of the Fitzroy and Brisbane Football Clubs**

The Fitzroy merger crisis was understood and contextualised in the print media by reference to two clear interpretive frameworks. Firstly, the *Age* and *Herald Sun* referred constantly to Fitzroy's dire financial situation, particularly during the lead up to the crisis, when the story broke and at its high points.<sup>25</sup> Every development of the crisis was reported relative to Fitzroy's financial mismanagement and insolvency. Reports in the lead up to the crisis referred to Fitzroy's debt and its financial mismanagement. Reports during the impact phase connected Fitzroy's worsening financial malaise with potential solutions, such as a merger with North Melbourne, in which the AFL's offer of \$6 million was implicit. During the high points of the crisis Fitzroy was declared insolvent and merged with the Brisbane Bears. The details of the appointment of a creditor and the deadline to merge were both relative to Fitzroy's financial position and its lack of responsible financial management. Overall, Fitzroy's finances dominated the analysis and reporting, which in turn caused journalists at both the *Age* and *Herald Sun* to advocate particular courses of action, as well as to rebuke Fitzroy officials for their mismanagement of the club.<sup>26</sup>

Secondly, throughout the crisis Fitzroy's financial position was inextricably linked to its impending death or demise. Fitzroy's financial

position, reported journalists at the *Age* and *Herald Sun*, became increasingly untenable throughout the crisis. Under the weight of financial pressure, and driven by the AFL's offer of six million dollars, several reporters at both newspapers claimed that Fitzroy looked likely to merge. The funereal character of the reporting was best illustrated after the announcement of Fitzroy's insolvency, the merger with Brisbane and the final two games that the club played as part of the VFL/AFL.<sup>27</sup> In each instance reporters referred to Fitzroy's imminent death, likely death, timely death or unnecessary death. The content differed, yet the interpretive framework remained constant throughout.

Journalists at the *Age* and *Herald Sun* used two major frames to sustain the Fitzroy crisis narrative. First, Fitzroy's financial mismanagement was central to the crisis narrative from the warning phase of the crisis through to its resolution. Specifically, the crisis narrative was in part dependent on journalists at the *Age* and *Herald Sun* progressively revealing information about Fitzroy's financial position to their respective readerships. The state of Fitzroy's debt was particularly important in this respect. In the lead up to the crisis it was reported the Fitzroy's financial position might lead to crisis talks with the AFL. In the impact phase, the level of Fitzroy's debt, revealed during the lead up, was reported as a catalyst for merger talks with North Melbourne. Reports about Fitzroy's inability to pay its players further sustained the crisis narrative by reference to the club's economic instability. The level of debt was also central in reports of the announcement of administrator Michael Brennan's appointment<sup>28</sup> and the merger with the Brisbane Bears.

Second, Fitzroy's attempts to court a merger partner were used to sustain the Fitzroy crisis narrative. Speculation about a merger with North Melbourne consumed reporting during the middle of the crisis. The details of North Melbourne's proposal and Brisbane's subsequent successful bid dominated reporting during the high points of the crisis and their immediate aftermath.

Finally, the resolution phase was not reported relative to either of the narrative frameworks detailed above. Rather, the impacts of Fitzroy's last two games of VFL/AFL competition were reported as an extension of the standard weekly coverage. The reporting was informed and contextualised by the interpretive frames of death and loss, but this was used to achieve a resolution to the crisis, rather than sustain its narrative.

## **Discussion**

In each of the case studies examined in this article the crises were generally outside the experience of most of the print media's readers. In this respect, the print media was not only a crucial source of news, but was also charged with transforming a 'problematic reality' into a comprehensible text. In all three cases the print media contextualised and interpreted the event by referring to an economic imperative. This was the primary interpretive frame. In South Melbourne's case the print media reported that the relocation proposal would

ensure economic survival. Similarly, in the case of the Footscray 'fightback', the merger was represented as the only viable financial alternative, while the campaign to rescue the club was underpinned by financial 'fightback'. Finally, the Fitzroy merger was dominated by financial mismanagement and insolvency. The three case studies demonstrate that in crisis events where clubs are seeking relocation or merger because of financial difficulties, the interpretative frame used by journalists will centre on economic issues.

In the South Melbourne and Fitzroy cases the print media used the financial imperative frame to suggest that a radical alternative, relocation or merger was required to solve the problem. In the Footscray 'fightback' the print media suggested that saving the club was a viable alternative.

In each of the three cases the position that the print media adopted was linked to the strength of the fan group, as represented in articles and photographs published in each of the major daily newspapers. In the case of South Melbourne the fan group was given little space. The financial interpretive frame was linked to the conflict between the players and the administration and the administration and the VFL. Both interpretive frames were used in tandem by the print media up until the resolution of the crisis.

During the Fitzroy merger the fan group created by the press supported the secondary interpretive frame of death and grief and the funereal character of the reporting. At no stage was the fan group represented as a viable solution to the club's financial problems. As a result the primary economic frame remained dominant throughout the crisis.

Only in the case of the Footscray 'fightback' did the print media create a fan group or interpretive community that was contextualised as a viable solution to the club's financial problems. The interpretive frame of financial issues remained dominant, but the efforts of the supporter group were reported relative to the club's potential for survival. In this respect, the use of the economic frame was markedly different from either the South Melbourne or Fitzroy reporting. As in the Fitzroy case, the secondary interpretive frame of imminent death and grief was also present in the reporting of the Footscray merger proposal. In the case of the Footscray 'fightback', however, once the fan group was established as a viable alternative, the financial imperative frame subsumed the frame of death and grief.

Finally, it is clear from an analysis of the three case studies that disruption and turmoil generates sensation in the print media reporting of crisis events and that during these events the subjective emotional experience is magnified as part of the event coverage. In the case of the Footscray 'fightback' and Fitzroy merger these additional interpretive frames were particularly evident. In the case of the South Melbourne relocation saga the naturalisation of the relocation proposal negated the ability of the print to sensationalise the event, or focus on its emotional subjectivity. As the relocation saga developed, however, the print media sensationalised the conflict between the players and

the South Melbourne administration, as well as focussed on the subjective emotional experience of both the players and coaches involved in the crisis. Importantly, the three cases also demonstrate that interpretive frames were used to sustain the crisis event narratives.

Conflict was the primary narrative form used by the print media throughout the South Melbourne relocation saga, underpinned by the club's financial turmoil. This was a result of the way in which the crisis developed. Specifically, the formation of the KSAS group, a legal challenge, an extraordinary meeting, a player strike and a coaching dispute were all forums for conflict, and the print media used the crisis context to sustain the narrative.

During the Footscray 'fightback' the print media used the club's financial situation as the primary narrative form. Reports of the attempts by supporter groups to raise enough money to save the Footscray Football Club sustained the crisis narrative from the lead up to the crisis, through to its resolution. Clearly, the club's financial plight was a central cause, as well as the major symptom of the crisis. As such, the reporting narrative followed the natural progression of the crisis.

Similarly, in the case of the Fitzroy merger the financial plight of the Fitzroy Football Club was the primary narrative form, and was used to sustain the crisis story from the lead up to the crisis, through to its resolution. As in the Footscray case, Fitzroy's financial situation was the primary cause of its insolvency and the need to court a merger partner. The *Age* and *Herald Sun* reported the details of Fitzroy's insolvency, as well as its attempts to merge, as a natural consequence of the position in which the club had been placed by poor financial management, rather than an artificially constructed framework.

In each of the cases examined a club's capacity to reproduce itself was threatened, and the media contextualised and interpreted the events by referring to clearly defined imperatives. In each case the dominant frame was economic. This was not surprising in the light of the financial crisis faced by the club administrators, and that the future of each club was under severe threat.

In each case, however, the economic frame was modified to take into account the specific contexts surrounding the crisis events. Whereas the Swans relocation narrative linked their financial problems to a lack of fan support and internal conflict, the Fitzroy-Brisbane merger story linked their financial problems to administrative incompetence. In the case of the Footscray 'fightback', the economic frame was also dominant, but instead of generating themes of conflict and incompetence, emphasised the strongly emotional themes of impoverishment, loss and grief.

In each of the three cases there were a number of broader conditions that may explain the different interpretive frames utilised by the print media to contextualise and make sense of the crises. First, the South Melbourne crisis occurred in a setting where the VFL were seriously addressing the issue of league expansion. This consequently created the strategic space for a solution

that did not necessitate a complete loss of identity for the club. Second, the Footscray 'fightback' involved a much stronger community focus, which could be galvanised in the face of the distinct possibility of extinction if a rescue proposal or package could not be assembled. Third and finally, the Fitzroy-Brisbane merger was preceded by years of cyclical crisis management, which was compounded by a very small supporter base. The print media quickly pounced on the soft 'under-belly' of chronic underachievement and fragmented fan support to mount a prolonged critique of club officials. In this context the merger became a palatable and rational solution to an ongoing problem.

The three case studies clearly show that not only are interpretive frames used to make sense of crisis events in which football clubs relocate or merge, but that the frames used by journalists and newspapers are modified in response to the special circumstances of each crisis event. At the same time each event's reporting was structured around the frames of economic necessity or rationalism, sensation, conflict and grief and death. These frames were either emphasised or downplayed depending on the strength of the fan group's resistance and the way in which the narrative was being sustained.

Further research that examines the construction of crisis event interpretive frames in different football codes will be important in establishing whether the interpretive frames used in these three case studies are common to all football crisis events, or whether they are code and context specific. Furthermore, an examination of different media organisations and outlets, such as television, pay television, radio and Internet, might uncover significant differences in the use of interpretive frames, which in turn might lead to valuable research into media institutions and audiences.

## NOTES

1. The research referred to in this article is limited to the major daily newspapers in Melbourne – the *Age*, *Herald* and *Sun* in the first two cases and the *Age* and *Herald Sun* in the third.
2. John Hartley, *Understanding News* (London: Routledge, 1982), p. 81.
3. Stuart Hall, Chas Critcher, Tony Jefferson, John Clarke and Brian Roberts, *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State, and Law and Order* (London: Macmillan, 1978), p. 54.
4. Hall et al., *Policing the Crisis*, pp. 56-7.
5. Hall et al., *Policing the Crisis*, p. 55. See also James Carey, 'Why and How?: The Dark Continent of American Journalism', in Robert Manoff and Michael Schudson, eds, *Reading the News* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986), pp. 146-96. Carey notes that although the who, what, when are where of a story are relatively transparent, the reader must in most cases supply the why and how.

6. Stuart Hall, 'The Determination of News Photographs', in Stanley Cohen and Jock Young, eds, *The Manufacture of News: Social Problems, Deviance and the Mass Media* (London: Constable, 1973), pp. 226-42. See also Hartley, *Understanding News*, p. 5.
7. Jonathan Bignell, *Media Semiotics: An Introduction* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), p. 81; Richard Ericson, Patricia Baranek and Janet Chan, *Representing Order: Crime, Law, and Justice in the News Media* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), p. 149.
8. Todd Gitlin, *The Whole World is Watching: Mass Media in the Making and Unmaking of the New Left* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980).
9. Gitlin, *The Whole World is Watching*, p. 7. See also Peter Dahlgren, 'Introduction', in Peter Dahlgren and Colin Sparks, eds, *Journalism and Popular Culture* (London: Sage, 1992), p. 13. Dahlgren notes that 'texts foster specific ways of seeing the world, hinder other ways, and even structure ways of relating to the text itself'.
10. Gaye Tuchman, *Making News: A Study in the Construction of Reality* (New York: The Free Press, 1978), p. 1.
11. Peter Simunovich, 'Sydney or bust!', *Sun*, 2 July 1981; Ron Carter and Trevor Grant, 'South's survival kit', *Age*, 2 July, 1981.
12. See Bob Stewart, *The Australian Football Business* (Sydney: Kangaroo Press, 1983), pp. 62-5. For every ticket sold to a VFL game, 40 cents was deducted and placed into the ground improvement fund, to be shared equally between the clubs. As part of the League's plan to rationalise the number of grounds, the VFL 'froze' South Melbourne's share of the ground improvement fund.
13. David Rowe, 'Modes of Sports Writing', in Peter Dahlgren and Colin Sparks, eds, *Journalism and Popular Culture* (London: Sage, 1992).
14. See Peter Bruck, 'Crisis as Spectacle: Tabloid News and the Politics of Outrage', in Marc Raboy and Bernard Dagenais, eds, *Media, Crisis and Democracy: Mass Communication and the Disruption of Social Order* (London: Sage, 1992), in which he suggests that there are several privileged positions for speakers and sources within the crisis course, including that of 'responsibles and managers' (p. 146).
15. At an extraordinary meeting on 22 September 1981, the Board of Directors was voted out and a KSAS based Board took control of the club.
16. Mike Sheahan, 'Swans: Why we are out', *Herald*, 4 December 1981, p. 30.
17. Peter Wilmoth, 'VFL ready to move in', *Age*, 22 December 1981, p. 20; Peter Stone, 'The footballer who cried', *Herald*, 26 December 1981, p. 14; Peter Simunovich, 'South: A new crisis', *Sun*, 22 December 1981, p. 60.
18. See for example Ross Brundrett, 'The spirit goes west', *Sun*, 4 October 1989, pp. 36-7; Michael Steven, 'No choice', *Sun*, 4 October 1989, p. 72; Jo Chandler, 'The west

- faces a time of grief', *Age*, 5 October 1989, p. 1; Anonymous, 'Death of a club', *Sun*, 5 October 1989, pp. 21-2.
19. 'Death of the Bulldogs', *Sun*, 4 October, 1989; David Fisher, 'Hurt fans fight, but it's done', *Sun*, 4 October, 1989, p. 1.
  20. See for example Fiona Athersmith and Patrick Smithers, 'Dogs supporters given 21 days to raise \$1.5m', *Age*, 7 October 1989, p. 1; 'VFL gives Bulldogs \$5 million ultimatum', *Age*, 8 October 1989, p. 1; Jon Anderson, 'Dogs need \$5m: Oakley', *Herald*, 8 October 1989, p. 56; Greg Baum, '\$450,000 kitty says there's life in the old Dogs yet', *Age*, 9 October 1989, p. 1; Michael Stevens, Shane Burke and Justin Brazier, 'Dogfight', *Sun*, 9 October 1989, pp. 1-2; Michael Lovett, 'VFL stand firm on Bulldogs' \$5m', *Herald*, 9 October 1989, p. 26; Daryl Timms, 'Dogs' fans push funds past \$1/2m', *Sun*, 12 October 1989, p. 90; Ray Carlisle and Tony De Bolfo, 'Dog appeal rains cash', *Sun*, 16 October 1989, p. 88.
  21. See Michael Cox and James Weston, 'Dogs reprieve', *Sun*, 22 October 1989, p. 1; Len Johnson, 'A setback for moves to go national', *Age*, 24 October 1989, p. 40; Tony De Bolfo and Daryl Timms, 'Bulldogs "Saved"', *Sun*, 24 October 1989, p. 3.
  22. See Daryl Timms, 'Scare tactics – Dogs', *Sun*, 10 October, 1989, p. 67.
  23. See for example Daryl Timms, 'Dogs' fans push funds past 1/2m', *Sun*, 12 October 1989, p. 90.
  24. De Bolfo and Timms, 'Bulldogs "Saved"', p. 3.
  25. See for example, Stephen Linnell and Martin Blake, 'Lions admit merge option', *Age*, 30 April 1996, p. B12; Philip Cullen, 'Fitzroy defiant – we won't merge, or die', *Herald Sun*, 30 April 1996, p. 69; Ron Reed, 'Key player in Lion's eloquent defence', *Herald Sun*, 30 April 1996, p. 69; Patrick Smith, 'Chairman smooths ruffled fur', *Age*, 30 April 1996, p. B12; Jake Niall, 'How Fitzroy lost the Lions' share', *Age*, 5 May 1996, pp. 12-13; Greg Denham, '"Insolvent" Lions to fold?', *Age*, 29 June 1996, p. 1; Michael Stevens and Scott Gullan, 'Lions on the brink', *Herald Sun*, 29 June 1996, pp. 96, 89.
  26. See for example Tony De Bolfo, 'Who's kidding whom?', *Herald Sun*, 17 May 1996, p. 43; Trevor Grant, 'Clubs own worst enemy', *Herald Sun*, 17 May 1996, p. 106; Patrick Smith, 'Clubs have no right to mislead, misinform', *Age*, 30 May 1996, p. B16.
  27. See for example Rohan Connolly, 'Wounded Lions roar in vain', *Age*, 30 June 1996, p. 1; Heather Kennedy, 'Glory days slip away', *Herald Sun*, 30 June 1996, p. 5; Howard Leigh, 'Roys gather to mourn', *Herald Sun*, 30 June 1996, p. 52; Scott Palmer, 'Countdown kicks off on a football execution', *Herald Sun*, 30 June 1996, pp. 52-3; Patrick Smith, 'Ten thousand witness the death of a club', *Age*, 1 July 1996, p. 5 (sport); 'Farewell Lions', *Herald Sun*, 26 August 1996, p. 1; 'Last rites in a faraway place', *Herald Sun*, 2 September 1996, pp. 42-43.
  28. Greg Denham, '"Insolvent" Lions to fold?', *Age*, 29 June 1996, p. 1.