

Formula One Singtel Singapore Grand Prix and the City

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Abstract

There is a strong relationship between sport event image and destination image as implied in previous studies (Kaplanidou, 2007; Lee et al., 2005; Xing & Chalip, 2006). This paper aims to identify urban elements of a host destination that boost participant experience of a sport event, contributing to sport event tourism. The five key elements of the city are adopted to study how the Formula One Singtel Singapore Grand Prix (F1SSGP) circuit's urban elements have accentuated Singapore's city image. Urban analysis of previous F1SSGP participants' experiences gave rise to five urban elements by which people perceive the event: "access"; "facility"; "telegenic hotspots"; "other events"; and "setting". Positive correlation between city image and urban elements of the street circuit is found. Findings provide basis upon which to further urban studies on how outdoor sport events develop tourism the industry.

Keywords: city, sport, tourism, anatomy, image

Emphasis on sport in close relation to its venue is increasingly drawing the world's attention. Sport gained global recognition in its first world conference on sport tourism held by the International Olympic Council in 2001. Subsequently, the World Tourism Organisation made sport the theme for World Tourism Day 2004 (John Paul II Foundation, 2004). Sport has been the most popular programme on television with Formula One ranked third after the Olympics and World Cup (Henry, 2007). This paper studied urban factors of the Formula One Singtel Singapore Grand Prix (F1SSGP) to discover the potential in capitalizing on visitor's perceptions of the image of the city during the F1SSGP to promote sport tourism. Adopting the analogy of the human anatomy, this paper sought to explore the relationship between urbanism, sport and tourism. "F1SSGP image" refers to the image of the city as observed by the F1SSGP participants. "F1SSGP anatomy" refers to the study of form and structure of the built environment and its features that have direct impact on participants' experience of the F1SSGP.

Literature Review

Sport and tourism

Sport and tourism are prominent worldwide occurrences classified as cultural experiences involving 'sport as a cultural experience of physical activity, and tourism as a cultural experience of place'; it is

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an increasing interaction of activity, people and place (Gibson, 1998; Standeven & DeKnop, 1999: 58; Weed & Bull, 2009: xv). While much of tourism activity is distinguished by sports activity (World Tourism Organization & International Olympic Committee, 2001), a notable amount of sports activity is distinguished by travel (Hinch & Higham, 2003). Hence, the study of the concurrence of sport and tourism, and the way sport tourism is defined, has been a topic of great discussion and research.

One of the benefits of sport to a destination is sport tourism. Involvement in sport can be leveraged to promote tourism to a destination when destination has a meaningful association with the sport (Kim & Chalip, 2010). While sport tourism activities appear to be a practice that is significantly increasing (Hautbois & Durand, 2004), research on sport tourism at an academic level has still been relatively new. It was proposed that tourist researchers should aim to be 'more-than-representational' and recommended that theories be developed to explain the phenomenon of sports tourism (Weed, 2004; Lorimer, 2005; Haldrup & Larsen, 2006).

City as anatomy

Sport tourism and the built environment is a vast topic because of its multi-disciplinary nature. This paper considers the city as a human anatomy, and seeks to develop an understanding of functions of each part of the city.

Quoting Lynch (1960) :

“There seems to be a public image of any given city which is the overlap of many individual images. Or perhaps there is a series of public images, each held by some significant number of citizens. Such group images are necessary if an individual is to operate successfully within his environment and to cooperate with his fellows. Each individual picture is unique, with some content that is rarely or never communicated, yet it approximates the public image, which, in different environments, is more or less compelling, more or less embracing.

This analysis limits itself to the effect of physical, perceptible objects. There are other influences on imageability, such as the social meaning of an area, its function, its history, or even its name. These will be glossed over, since the objective here is to uncover the role of form itself. It is taken for granted that in actual design form should be used to reinforce meaning, and not negate it.”

The different parts of a body require a system to be able to function. Because each joint serves a particular function, its form has been specifically designed. For example, a joint is a part of the body which has bones, ligaments, muscles, arteries, nerves, bursae, cartilage, soft tissue, tendon, and in some joints, sesamoid bones such as the knee cap in a knee joint. Just as the human anatomy is studied in order to improve function and performance so it can be altered to enhance functionality and performance, such is the value of studying the form of the city. What are the parts of this body? What are their characteristics? What form does each part adopt? These were some investigations into the form of Singapore city as a Formula One street circuit. The topic in question is anatomic, rather than ergonomic. This study considered the anatomy of the central area of Singapore, which has been transformed through its role as the F1SSGP setting. On the contrary, ergonomics highlights how the body works when designing equipment and devices meant for the human body. While ergonomics prevents repetitive strain injuries and detriment to long-term sustainability of the human body, its prevalence in this study is low as the impact of the Formula One event on the city is short-term.

Image fit

Various components of the perceived image of a destination have been previously studied (Beerli & Martin, 2004; Kaplanidou & Vogt, 2007; Hallmann & Breuer, 2010). These components explain the relationship between image fit, sport event and destination. Akin to that of a sport event and city, the degree one sport is compatible with another within the same space changes according to 'specialisation, equipment, safety, and level of competition' (Bale, 1989). The evaluation of and

connection to a destination has a strong impact on one's attitude towards the place (Lee & Cho, 2009), and plays an influential role on one's revisit intention (Hallowell, 1999; Funk & Chen, 2010).

There are several ways in which the way people begin to perceive image fit was studied (Kim & Yoon, 2003; Lee et al, 2005; Koo et al, 2006). Image transfer can occur between an event and a sponsor (Grohs & Reisinger, 2005; Xing & Chalip, 2006). When both event and destination share distinctly congruent characteristics, their relationship flourishes and the spin-offs to sport tourism will be high (Smith, 2006). The concept of image fit is still largely subjective as it is highly attuned to the tastes and preferences of the consumer. In some cases research had been tainted by the need to push marketing strategies to firms that sponsor the researcher. Although there are various angles to which image fit has been conceived, it is beneficial to note that the concept has its prevalence in sport tourism research, and it could be further capitalized upon to explain its effects on sport events and cities.

Methodology

The relationship between the F1SSGP image were gained by studying the layout of the F1SSGP in the Singapore city area. A qualitative methodology was adopted. Two interviews with representatives of key sport and tourism authorities, as well as a selection of quotations from representatives of the participatory groups involved in the F1SSGP from 2008 to 2010 were conducted prior to the implementation of F1SSGP 2011.

By conducting interviews of people who lived and worked in the city, and pioneering the method of getting these residents to make mental sketches of the city, Lynch (1960) identified patterns brought up by ordinary people and translated them into five elements of the city image: "landmark" (a place which is well-known and prominent), "path" (a channel by which people and goods move about), "edge" (a boundary which separates one place from another), "district" (an area which may be bound by unclear edges but has distinctively different qualities), and "node" (a place where path, edge, landmark and district meet together). Adopted from Kevin Lynch's way of marking out the basic elements of the city image, this research method consists of three parts. First, an analysis of visitor responses to the F1SSGP 2008-2010 was made to extract urban elements of the street circuit from their accounts. The F1SSGP anatomy was mapped following a physical study of the street circuit layout. Secondly, Lynchian elements were mapped against the city circuit. Lastly, an analysis of the two studies by means of developing a conceptual correlation between city image and urban elements of the street circuit was carried out.

Limitations

Data collection during the operation of the F1SSGP was not feasible although it might have offered valuable real-time feedback on the participants' experience of the city. The schedule during which the paper was completed coincided with the off peak and pre-F1SSGP period. However, alternative resources provided readily available quotations and feedback on the F1SSGP from F1 teams, drivers and spectators. This process is a opportunistic way of capturing how people perceived the urban elements of the F1SSGP 2008, 2009 and 2010 in its most simple terms.

Findings

i. F1SSGP anatomy

People perceive the F1SSGP as consisting of five underlying urban elements. These have been categorized as "access" (ease of transport from one point of the circuit park or city to another), "facility" (grandstand, pit buildings), "telegenic hotspot" (city, backdrop, image), "setting" (significance of architectural buildings, climate, night race, road conditions, lighting, waterfront), and

“other events” (sports, entertainment, business, arts, culture, food). Key words or phrases as listed in Table 1 gave clue as to the various categories of urban elements that cause a person to respond or react with those words.

Table 1. Classification F1SSGP anatomy based on key words used by participants

Key words used	Description	F1SSGP Anatomy
Entry and exit	Enables ease of transport from one point of the circuit park or city to another	Access
Grandstand Pit Building	Buildings that facilitate the operation of F1SSGP	Facility
City Backdrop Image Architectural buildings	Frames picturesque qualities of city image	Telegenic Hotspot
Climate Night race Road conditions Lighting Waterfront	Crafts the atmosphere of F1SSGP	Setting
Sports Entertainment Business Arts Culture Food	Provides alternative forms of activity for participants	Other events

Source: Author’s own

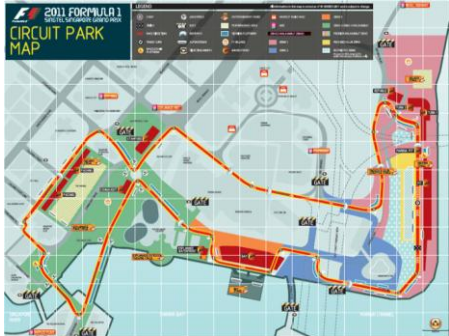


Figure 1 F1SSGP circuit park map 2011 (Source: Singapore Grand Prix 2011)

Table 2. Classification of F1SSGP Anatomy with reference to the 2011 Circuit Park Map

F1SSGP Anatomy	Circuit Park features
Access	Underpass Gate Overpass Nearest taxi stand MRT (City Hall, Esplanade, Promenade, Nicoll Highway)
Facility	Superscreen Ticketing booth Grandstand Viewing platform Wheelchair platform Paddock Club zone
Telegenic Hotspot	Not available
Setting	Not available
Other events	Entertainment stage Performance Area F1 Village

Source: Author's own

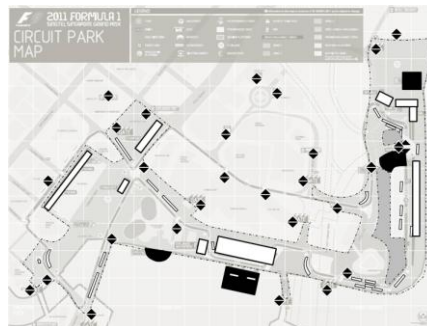


Figure 2 F1SSGP anatomy (Adapted from 2011 Circuit Park map)

The F1SSGP circuit park map 2011 (see Fig. 1) was analysed to extract its urban features and classify them into the five categories of the F1SSGP anatomy. Using the F1SSGP anatomy as shown in Table 1, the physical features of the circuit park were classified in Table 2 and assigned symbols. Of the five elements, the features marked on the legend of the map fell into four categories: access, facility, setting and other events (see Fig. 2).

The only evident feature of setting was the water-front of the Marina Bay. Others were intangible (e.g. climate, night race, road conditions and lighting) and were not indicated on the map. Telegenic hotspots, where the city is seen as a backdrop, also could not be identified, although significant buildings (e.g. Singapore Flyer, City Hall) contributing to the picturesque of the city had their footprint on the map. A secondary investigation was carried out on-site to inquire into how the telegenic hotspots of the F1SSGP image could be mapped in conjunction with Lynchian elements. It was found that there were five telegenic hotspots, from which picturesque qualities of the city could be captured (see Fig. 3).

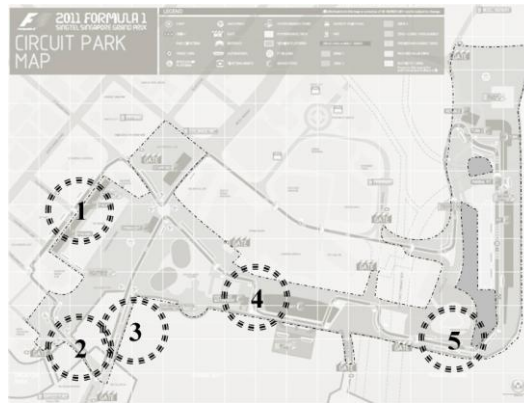


Figure 3 Telegenic hotspots (Adapted from 2011 Circuit Park map)

ii. F1SSGP image

A walkabout and photographic study along the route and race direction of the F1SSGP circuit on a non-event day was conducted to personally experience the city and its imaginary circuit park. The walkabout was conducted before and after the race promoters begun setting up its race infrastructure. The F1SSGP image was mapped out so as to develop a conceptual understanding of the perception of the city as presented by the event.



Figure 4 F1SSGP image (Adapted from 2011 Circuit Park map)

The circuit consists of a series of paths and edges. The track design strategically encircles the city's architectural landmarks, which are well distributed throughout the circuit. Moreover, it sits across three districts, marked by a drastic change in spatial qualities from one to another, and upon which three out of four of the nodes lie. Of the five Lynchian elements, "edge", "path" and "node" feature strongly in the photographs.

iii. Anatomy-image analysis

Analysis of the image and anatomy of the F1SSGP was carried out to perceive how the F1SSGP anatomy had been structured to serve the function of enhancing visitors' experience of the city through this sport event. The maps were cross-analysed to establish theoretical correlation between the city image and urban anatomy of the street circuit.

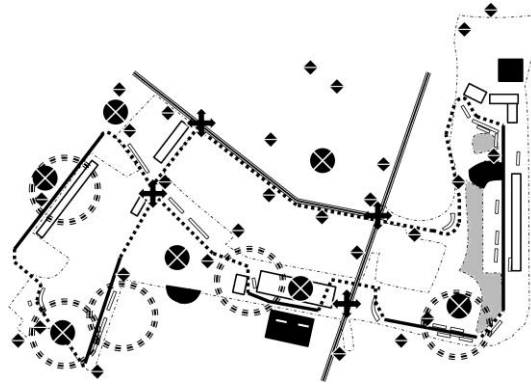


Figure 4 F1SSGP anatomy-image

Elements of access featured throughout the circuit park at varying intervals within and outside of the circuit park boundary (see Fig. 4). Facilities line up parallel to the circuit at different massing densities within all five telegenic hotspot radars. While facilities have been placed most densely at the Bay area and the Pit area, each has its own visual emphasis. Those at the Bay area emphasise on showcasing Singapore city, reinforced by the fact that it sits within a telegenic hotspot. On the other hand, that of the Pit area focuses on showcasing the Formula One Grand Prix event. Of five of the telegenic hotspots, three encircle a landmark. Notwithstanding, the other two frame views of the Marina Bay necklace (URA), giving a sense of enclosure and of being a jewel in within a vibrant city. Four of five telegenic hotspots face the Singapore River, suggesting that the element of water adds great value to the image of the city.

Discussion

The anatomic-ergonomic city

For sport event tourism to thrive, architecture, urbanism and landscape must embrace a driver in the field of sport, while its structure evolves to support its new function. Just as the human body has to adapt to the requirement of a new sport, so that over time, the body changes in form, speed and agility, a sport event like the F1SSGP could leave behind similar traces on the urban fabric.

Space and place are concepts that are shared by the geography of sport and of tourism (Pearce, 1987; Bale, 1989; Lew, 2001; Hinch & Higham, 2006). Unlike leisure and recreation, sport tends to be associated with a certain spatial framework in which the game is played, such as turns of a Formula One race track or the length of a marathon course. Spatial analysis of sport tourism involved the study of locations in which sports occur and the movement of tourists to these locations. The allure of sport tourism locations capitalized on the special qualities of different sport areas. In the case of the F1SSGP, semi-permanent fixtures have been implanted into the fabric of the city (see FIG. 44) whereas temporary fixtures, which do impact the original use of the street but are required for the street to be transformed into a street circuit, are set up closer to the event date.

While the F1SSGP capitalizes on the form of the city, its setting defines the circuit park as a sportscape. The term 'sportscape' is used in the geography of sport to describe the highly enclosed (e.g. golf courses), remodelled (e.g. ski slopes), and electronic (e.g. corporate suites, closed circuit television) sports scene (Bale, 1994). Thus, sportscape refers to a developmental inclination to change landscapes into closed and consistent sporting environments (Hinch & Higham, 2006). This phenomenon has showed itself in the month of the F1SSGP, where the streets around the planned circuit park have begun to change in preparation for the event. Development of tourism at a destination typically requires resources to be constructed, including sporting amenities and tourism infrastructure (Maier & Weber, 1993). Most sports may need purpose built facilities such as sports arenas, stadiums, swimming pools, water bays and gymnasiums (Bale, 1989), while others house

themselves temporarily at makeshift buildings or developments created without the primary intention of hosting sporting activities. Streets, parks and urban tourist icons may make striking features or provide a backdrop to sporting scenes, such as Australia's Sydney Opera House and Singapore's Marina Bay. This explained the temporary road fixtures and additions along the F1SSGP, which facilitate the city setting in its secondary function as a Formula One race track. It is yet unclear if these changes will remain on the urban fabric after the final F1SSGP. What is clear, though, is that the city used for an alternative function has reflected this new function through change in its form.

Marketing F1SSGP

Event marketing played a major role in promoting the F1SSGP image. Singapore city itself was the advertisement for Formula One. Among the five urban factors of the F1SSGP anatomy, setting was least represented on the circuit park map. This factor, though largely intangible, greatly affected one's experience of the event. Most of the comments revolved around the fact that the F1SSGP was the first night race in the world, and included others such as "climate", "challenging and interesting track", "street circuit", "geographical proximity", "food" and "dedicated fans". Successful marketing strategies in conjunction with corporate sponsorships and a well-planned circuit park contributed to the 100,000 spectators in 2009 and a S\$168m increment in tourist receipts over the period of the race.

The density of F1SSGP facilities throughout the circuit park was a means to market certain parts of the circuit. Facilities are placed most densely at the Bay area and the Pit area, and each has its own identity. While both areas sit within a telegenic hotspot, the Bay area emphasises on showcasing Singapore city but the Pit area showcases the Formula One Grand Prix event. The Padang area is a less facility-dense area than the Bay area but holds many significant milestones of the nation, such as the 1943 victory parade and the launching of Loyalty Week in 1959 at the Padang (Arasu & Daljit, 1984) (see Fig. 5).



Figure 5 Left: 1943 victory parade. Right: 25,000 people turn up for 1959 Loyalty Week (Source: Information Division, Ministry of Culture, Singapore, 1984)

Implications and future research

Implications for sport event organisers

The image of Singapore city influenced the design of the F1SSGP circuit park. Also, the sport event also proved beneficial to the tourism industry in an indirect way, providing a platform for the city to be framed and presented to the world in uncontested broadcast attention and hence encouraging more foreigners to visit the destination. It is in the best interests of the sport event organisers to actively consider the host destination's urban factors as key to making the sport event a tourism attraction, so that they are in a position to assess, strategize and capture these benefits. It has been argued that when tourism destinations are augmented to meet the assumed needs of tourists, they are less likely to establish a connection with the place (Relph, 1976). However, a sport event like the F1SSGP targets not only sport event tourists but active sportsmen and their teams. Urban planners involved with the F1SSGP have a complex task of addressing the needs of both groups of users. If urban designers are able to grasp how people interpret these elements and design to make cities more imageable, Lynch argues, they can build more psychologically edifying urban environments. They will be able to tweak and condition them to make the urban environment a better place for visiting locals and foreigners in

the event of an outdoor sporting tournament held within the city setting. This can in turn contribute positively to the sport tourism industry, and to tourism as a whole.

Further research on event-city fit

Just as the F1SSGP has undertaken a rigorous exercise in planning and execution through expertise training from the international federation of motorsport, future events need to do the same. Most importantly, as this paper highlights, urban factors ought to be part of the planning consideration in order to maximize opportunity for the sport event to allow visitors can relate to and appreciate the city.

Conclusion

This paper could serve as a platform upon which researchers in this field can: identify the fundamental urban anatomy of other spaces with respect to its users' feedback; derive strategies by which urban factors may be tweaked to achieve greater visitor experience; discover more details of the urban anatomy to evaluate future proposals and pre-empt obstacles; and develop a deeper study into the anatomy of the city to understand its micro processes.

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