

Examining the Social Impact of International Sport Events in Singapore towards the Social Goals of the Sports Masterplan

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Introduction

- Major cities around the world are leveraging on sports events to market themselves, boost tourism, drive growth in their economies and increase community cohesion through sport participation. With similar objectives in mind, Singapore began actively hosting high profile international sport events from the mid-2000s (e.g. Formula 1 Grand Prix, Youth Olympic Games, Women's Tennis Association (WTA) Finals, HSBC Rugby Sevens).
- Singapore launched its sports masterplan 'Vision 2030' in 2012. The 4 strategic themes are 'Future Ready through Sport', 'Sport Without Boundaries', 'Sport as a National Language' and 'Organising for Success'.
- In the masterplan, sport is seen as a universal tool to develop character development, build social cohesion and prepare its citizens for the rapidly changing society and economy; sport events is one strategy utilised to achieve these goals.
- There is a growth of studies on the social impacts of these events as they may have significant lasting effects on the local population (Kellet et al., 2008). Thus, the purpose of the study is to examine the social impact of hosting international sport events in Singapore and their contributions to the social goals of the nation's sport masterplan.

Research Questions:

1. What are the goals of organising these international sport events in Singapore?
2. How are the goals aligned to the social goals of 'Vision 2030'?
3. What are the leveraging strategies utilised to achieve these goals?



Figure 1. Singapore Sports Masterplan 'Vision 2030'



Figure 2. Youth Olympic Games 2010



Figure 3. Singapore F1 Grand Prix

Methodology

- Primary Data:** Semi-structured interviews with key informants from various organisations involved in these international sport events. (e.g. Sport Singapore and event organisers). Sport management academia staff will also be interviewed to seek their perspectives on the social impact of these events in Singapore.
- Secondary Data:** Document analysis of journals, news articles, media sources and official websites.
- Data Analysis:** NVivo software to sort and analyse data; identify key themes and examine relationships.

Significance of Study

- Singapore is making a concerted effort to host international sport events to boost its tourism sector and further drive its economy; these events are also seen as a tool to inspire sport participation, build social cohesion and develop character in its citizens.
- Results from this study can provide an insight into the contributions of hosting these international sport events towards the social goals of the sport masterplan, and the impact it has on making sport a part of the nation's lingua franca, which is a strategic theme of Vision 2030.

Literature Review

Social Impacts of Sport Events

- Social impacts of sport events include social capital, human capital, sport participation, urban regeneration, identity (community and national), sport participation and "feel good" factor.
- International sport events can increase community pride, build social cohesion and enhance national identity (Ohmann et al., 2006; Waitt, 2003). Host community residents can develop invaluable skills, expertise and knowledge through their work in the sport events or volunteering (Xing & Chalip, 2009; Fairley et al., 2016). Hosting of these sporting events may also have a positive effect on sport participation rates in the host destination (Frawley & Cush, 2011; Veal et al., 2012).
- Possible negative impacts include traffic congestion, crime, noise, displacement of residents and disruption to community life.

Theoretical framework

- Chalip (2006) proposed that sport events should be leveraged for significant social impacts; liminality and 'communitas' surrounding sport events can foster social capital and thereby strengthen social fabric. Key strategies need to be developed and implemented to optimise the social impact for the host community.
- Model for social event leverage was further developed by O'Brien and Chalip (2007). 'Communitas' and event media are seen as key opportunities to leverage on the liminality that is generated through the sport event. Targeted social issues can be aligned with the values of the sport subcultures and specific strategies can be developed to entice locals' engagement with these issues and bring about positive outcomes for the resident community.

Expected Results

- There may be evidence that the international sport events in Singapore are able to develop skills and expertise (human capital) among the people in the organisation of these events and bring about community excitement and pride (social capital) among Singaporeans; the effects of these sport events on the sport participation rate may not be as conclusive.
- Leveraging strategies utilised by the organising authorities to bring about positive social impacts may be present but inconsistent across different sport events.

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