Automobile Races and the Marketing of Places: A Geographic and Marketing Exploration of IndyCar Racing in the United States

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Andrew James Baker
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ABSTRACT

IndyCar events attract thousands of spectators and over one million television viewers. Additionally, IndyCar is the most elite form of motorsport that races on oval speedways, natural terrain road courses, and temporary street circuits. This research utilizes case studies of IndyCar events contested on each of these three venue types (Iowa Corn Indy 250 – oval speedway; Indy 200 at Mid-Ohio – road course; Grand Prix of St. Petersburg – street circuit). Previous research in figurational sociology, place marketing, and mega-events provide a framework used to identify key similarities and differences among the perceived and observed benefits and costs of an IndyCar race on their host cities and regions. Identification and analysis of key local event stakeholders and sponsors from a content analysis of event souvenir programs, television broadcasts, and local newspaper coverage revealed key differences among the three case study events. Street circuit races rely on a high-level of public support, have a high impact on businesses and residents surrounding the venue, and can showcase a city's downtown amenities via television exposure of city streets during most of the event. In the case of St. Petersburg, the festival atmosphere and high speed of IndyCar racing in their downtown streets has been part of a process of re-inventing the city as it sheds an image of a quiet city with mostly older residents and has been successful attracting both visitors and residents to downtown. Oval speedway events rely on high participation of private, local event sponsors that are marketing their good or service mostly to local race fans who, for the most part, stay only at the speedway on race day. In particular, the Iowa Corn Indy 250 provides a platform for local, corn-based ethanol promotion of their product in high-performance race cars. Road course races attract a greater number of weekend-long, on-site camping motorsport enthusiasts and participants as these events are more a celebration of the automobile industry, and in particular, the Honda assembly plants that employ thousands of nearby Ohio residents. The results from this research provide key lessons for other current and potential IndyCar venues across three different venue types.

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Questions and Design

Since 1909, professional automobile races at venues throughout the United States and North America have comprised the annual National Championship governed under the rules and supervision of various sanctioning bodies. Historically, the Indianapolis 500 Mile Race has served as the most notable race event in the National Championship, becoming the largest annual single-day sporting event in the world. The automobiles competing for the National Championship are much different than the stock cars of NASCAR that more closely resemble production-based, passenger vehicles. National Championship cars, also known as "Championship Cars", "Champ Cars", and hereafter referred to as "IndyCars", are single-seat, open-wheel (no fenders), performance-based vehicles that closely resemble the technologically-advanced and sophisticated World Championship cars competing in Formula One (F1) racing. IndyCars tend to be bigger, faster, and more durable, whereas Formula One cars are more agile, accelerate faster and never race on oval tracks. Distinct from all other major forms of motorsport, IndyCars race on oval speedways, purpose-built road courses and temporary urban street circuits.

The current sanctioning body, INDYCAR, and its top-level racing series, the IZOD IndyCar Series, were formed in 1995. Initially, IndyCar Series races were located on oval race circuits, as sanctioning body leaders wanted to promote their style of North American open-wheel racing with an emphasis on more American drivers and using only purpose-built, oval race tracks, particularly venues that also hosted NASCAR events. Since 2005, however, IndyCar Series race events have expanded to downtown, temporary

street circuits, natural-terrain road courses as well as newly constructed oval speedways (see Figure 1.1). The IndyCar Series is interested in expansion to new markets, and many municipal government, business, and civic leaders in communities and regions designated as potential race sites are actively seeking, promoting, and utilizing the mega-event appeal of an IndyCar Series race event to showcase themselves to target markets.

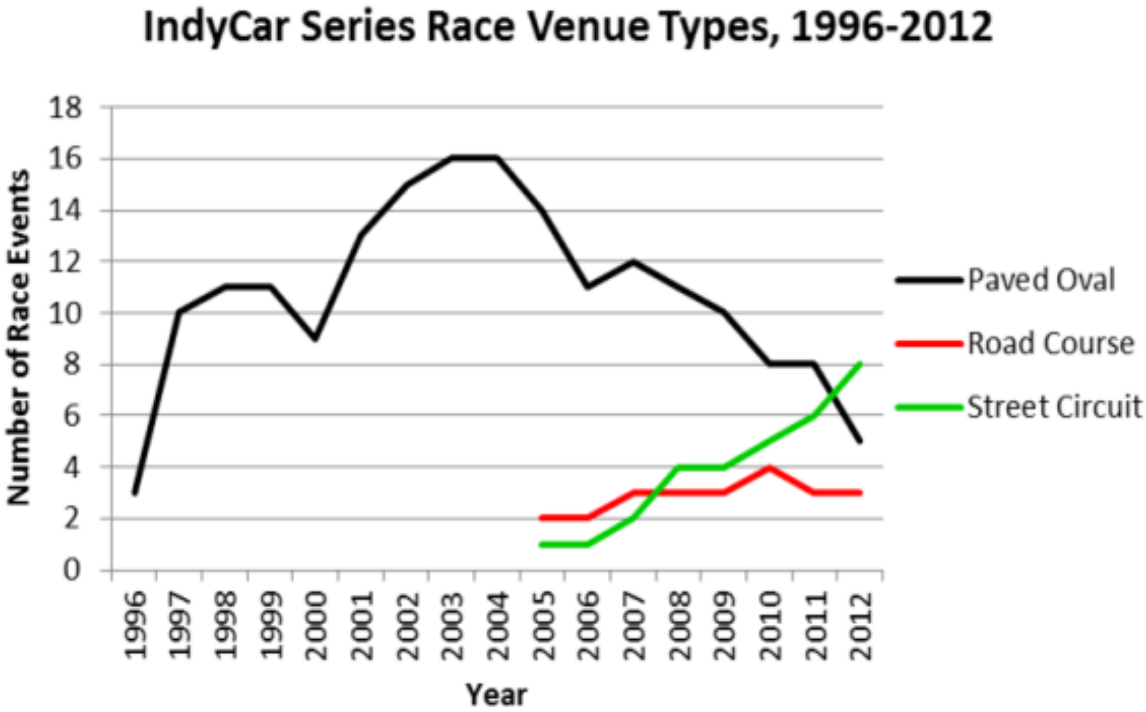

Figure 1.1. IndyCar's recent expansion to new venue types.

Key individuals and entities, hereafter known as place marketers, use the platform of hosting an IndyCar Series race event to stimulate local economic development and showcase their city or region to national and global audiences. This research examines the recent IndyCar Series expansion to new United States venues *and* the role played by local place marketers, including municipal and state governments, event promoters, and

local businesses. I do so by focusing on the different strategies and goals employed by these individuals and entities in order to host a premier sporting event of national and worldwide interest and importance. I argue that these place marketers are, to varying degrees, using the opportunity to host IndyCar race events as a means also to promote a local industry (e.g., tourism, automobile manufacturing, and agriculture), attract outside and internal investment, and showcase themselves to specific target audiences. This research attempts to address the following research questions:

1) **Who are the key individuals or entities seeking and promoting an IndyCar Series event in their city or region?**

2) **What are the perceived benefits or goals of hosting an IndyCar Series race?**

3) **What are the problems of hosting an IndyCar Series race?**

4) **Do the place marketing strategies used in conjunction with seeking, promoting, and hosting the IndyCar Series race event differ from place-to-place? If so, what might be learned from this exploratory research study to forecast the success (or lack thereof) of potential race venues on the circuit?**

This exploratory research project brings together three different streams of research to achieve its objectives. An exploratory study is a "broad-ranging, purposive, systematic, prearranged undertaking designed to maximize the discovery of generalizations leading to description and understanding of an area" (Stebbins 2001, 3). The research design may be represented as a detailed schematic (Figure 1.2). I drew insights from figurational sociology, arguing that the expansion and diffusion of modern motorsport, in this case the IndyCar Series, has been influenced primarily by five, interrelated factors, which are the sanctioning body, automotive industry, corporate

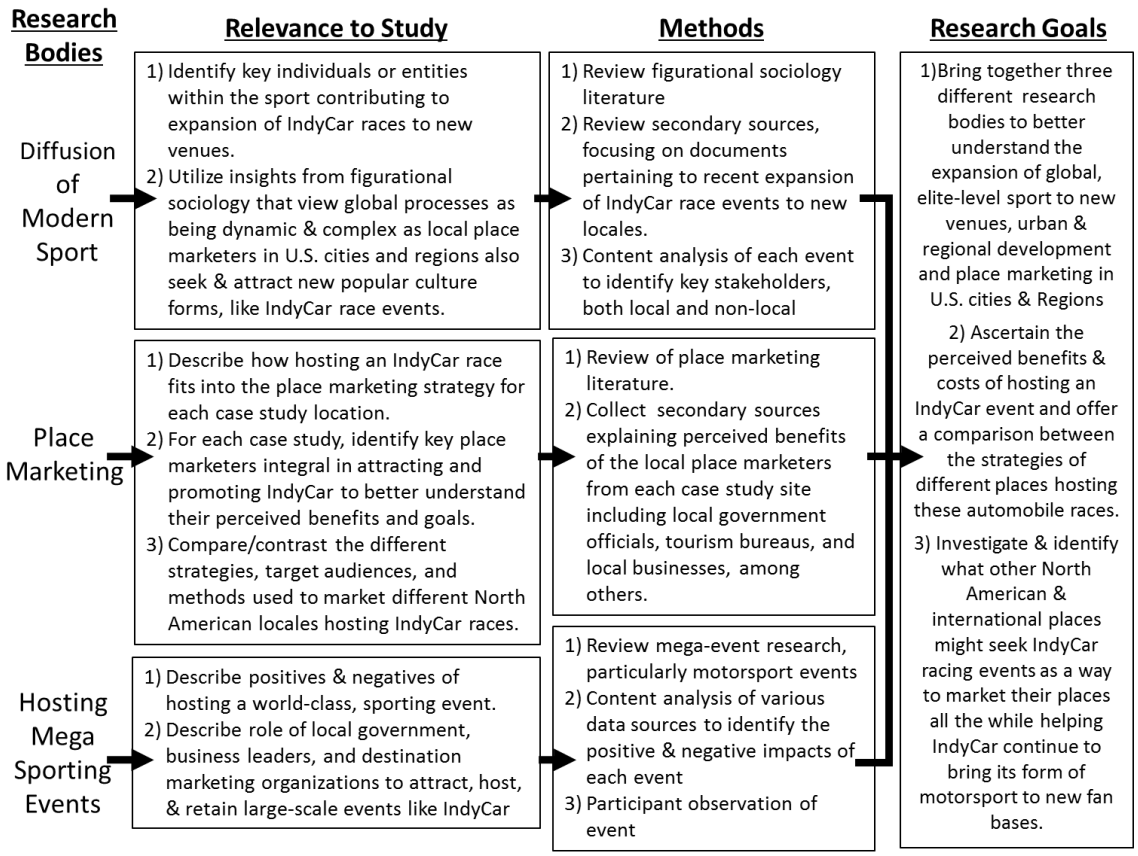

Figure 1.2. Research Design Schematic

sponsorship, media partners, and place marketers. The reasons for choosing these five influences will be elaborated in Chapter 2. Also, I introduce place marketing research as I argue that key individuals, organizations, and businesses within each case study are using the municipality or region's chance to host an IndyCar Series race event as an opportunity to promote their locale to new visitors, investors, and residents.

Then, I review the literature on the use of mega- sporting events to stimulate regional and urban development in the hope of better understanding the perceived and observed consequences of hosting a hallmark event, both positive and negative. Finally, I analyze the different strategies and perceived benefits and costs of hosting the same mega-event (IndyCar) in three different geographical locales and race venue types in the United States (St. Petersburg, Florida – Temporary, Street Circuit; Newton, Iowa – Oval Speedway; Lexington, Ohio – Road Course). The conclusions from this research reveal that each of the case study places is using the same motorsport event quite differently as a promotional vehicle for their respective host city, town, or region. In this first chapter, I discuss the relevance of this research and include a rationale for the case study selections. Then, I place this dissertation within a larger body of geographic research by reviewing previous motorsport research done by geographers or others utilizing geographic perspectives. In Chapter 2, I apply insights from figurational sociology to the evolution of IndyCar as I identify and examine the sport's key stakeholders. In Chapter 3, I review the literature on mega sporting events and their use in an overall place marketing strategy, and then focus on mega-motorsport event research offering insights related to observed positive and negative impacts. In Chapters 4 and 5, I describe the methodology and data used and replicated in each individual case study data analysis. In Chapter 6, I

draw comparisons among the case studies, make some concluding remarks and suggest future research topics.

1.2 Relevance of Study

Pioneering sport geographer, John Rooney (1974), outlined two methodological approaches that are useful to the geographic study of sport. The "regional" approach focuses on only one region while studying the variety of sports within it and the "topical" approach focuses on only one sport and then compares and contrasts it over different locales. This dissertation builds on Rooney's topical approach by analyzing the same event, IndyCar Series races, in three different geographic locations in the United States. Since the IndyCar Series is the most advanced and popular form of motorsport in the world that runs on oval speedways, road courses, *and* street circuits, this research also compares the same motorsport event at these three different race circuit venue types: something that cannot be done for NASCAR, F1, or any other elite, global-level racing series. Later, Rooney (1988) turned his attention to sporting mega-events and their use as tourist attractions. Rooney's research paper has been called a "classic" in event tourism research (Getz 2008), yet is almost never referenced by geographers. This research, focusing on the perceived impacts of mega-events located in different cities and regions, adds to a research area within human geography that has been minimally researched.

Addressing Weed's (2005) concerns that sport and tourism research does not build upon existing 'edifices' of knowledge, Higham and Hinch (2006) argue that sport and tourism research should incorporate the geographic themes of 'space', 'place', and 'environment'. Although not trained geographers, the authors present several areas of

sport tourism research that can benefit from geographic concepts. More prescient to my research, the authors state (pg. 33):

> The concept of place, as addressed by geographers, raises important questions about the field of sport and tourism. These relate to the use of sport to promote tourism destinations in a variety of markets.

Most of the mega-event research utilizes only urban areas in their case studies, a point noted by Higham and Hinch (2009) in their recent survey of sports mega-event research. Also, in a recent review of event literature, Getz *et al.* (2010) argue that "comparative studies are scarce" (pg. 36). The research presented here responds to these calls for studies of sport in different markets by comparing not only different race venue types, but also events in urban (St. Petersburg) and rural areas (Iowa, Mid-Ohio) and in tourist (St. Petersburg) and non-tourist (Iowa, Mid-Ohio) destinations.

1.3 IndyCar Racing Venues: Street Circuits, Road Courses, and Oval Speedways

In order to best describe the differences between the "feel" or atmosphere of an oval, road course, and street circuit event, I created a thread discussion on a popular IndyCar Series discussion board. I posed the question, "Could you please describe the differences between attending 1) an oval race, 2) a road-course race, and 3) a temporary, street circuit by describing the key similarities and differences between the atmosphere, experience, and feel of the events." The twenty-two responses were useful in distinguishing the experience of IndyCar race fans at each circuit type and are summarized in the following paragraphs within this section.

Street circuit races occur on the same downtown streets that are open to the public any other time of year (see Figure 1.3). These races test the driver and car's ability to

perform over a bumpy surface, including welded-shut manhole covers, as the driver navigates the course. Typically, the course contains both right-hand and left-hand turns. Spectators can only see a portion of the course as the cars quickly pass by, which is different than most oval speedways that allow viewing of the entire race track. Street events have a festival atmosphere, including concerts, street vendors, and amusement rides. The spectators are a mix of knowledgeable fans and newcomers to the sport. Often the races include more events than the IndyCar race per se.

IndyCar races on street circuits offer a chance to showcase specific portions of an urban area, bring tourists into the city, and have minimal financial costs other than set-up and tear-down of racing barriers. These circuits do, however, disrupt local traffic as key transportation routes are shut down the weeks before and after the race, forcing many local businesses to close their operations for two weeks. Also, the race weekend contributes to an increased level of noise and air pollution from the race cars.

Unlike street circuits, road courses and oval tracks are typically not located in downtown, urban settings. One exception is the Indianapolis Motor Speedway which is located in Speedway, Indiana, an enclave suburb wholly located within Indianapolis. When constructed in 1909, the Indianapolis Motor Speedway was located at the edge of Indianapolis. The city has since expanded outward, well beyond Speedway. Also unlike street circuits, most road courses and oval tracks are privately funded, typically by an automobile manufacturer for testing or by automobile racing enthusiasts and race competitors for pleasure and competition.



Figure 1.3. Photograph taken from a temporary, street circuit IndyCar race in 2010 in St. Petersburg, Florida (picture taken by author).



Figure 1.4. Photograph taken from a natural-terrain, road course IndyCar race in Lexington, Ohio at the Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course in 2010 (picture taken by author).



Figure 1.5. Photograph taken from an oval speedway IndyCar race in Newton, Iowa at the Iowa Speedway in 2010 (picture taken by author).

Road courses (see Figure 1.4) require large amounts of land and overwhelmingly are located outside of an urban area. Unlike the downtown street events, race events on a purpose-built road course have a more rural setting and often are located in park-like settings as the courses meander through forests and rolling hills. Also, fans at road course events tend to be more knowledgeable about the racing, which can be difficult to follow as cars get strung out along the sinuous route. Similar to street events, there are support series race events all weekend long.

Recently, newly-constructed oval tracks have been built in rural and suburban areas near major interstate highways in hopes of capturing larger markets of attending fans. Oval race events have a much different atmosphere. These venues are similar to NFL stadiums, as fans purchase a ticket for a specific seat and can usually view the entire circuit, especially since most newly-constructed oval venues (e.g., Kansas Speedway, Iowa Speedway) have an elevated backstretch that allows spectators in the main,

frontstretch grandstands to see the entire circuit (see Figure 1.5). Before the IndyCar races on oval tracks, drivers are introduced to the entire crowd, just like professional sports teams. There is limited off-track action compared to street circuits and road courses with an IndyCar race as the main, and often the only, event. Oval tracks are also distinctively American as this form of motorsport is more popular in the United States than any other country or region in the world (Henry *et al*. 2007).

1.4 Rationale for Case Study Site Selection

From 1996 to 2005, IndyCar Series races were held exclusively at oval speedway venues. Time-series maps in the Appendix illustrate the location and venue types that have changed throughout IndyCar's history dating back to the early 1900s. The Indy Racing League (IRL) was designed to be an oval-exclusive racing series that countered the increase in road course and street circuit races on the schedule in the early 1990s. Starting in 2005, however, the IndyCar Series began adding races on temporary, downtown street circuits and natural terrain road courses. Further, of the seventeen race events from that 2005 season, ten are no longer on the schedule. Eight of the ten races dropped from the schedule are oval speedways, with only five of the seventeen races in 2012 contested on ovals. This research examines three events that have been added to the IndyCar race schedule since 2005 and continue to remain on the schedule while other races have been dropped in the interim. This inclusivity provided an opportunity to compare and contrast not only the case study sites but also the type of racing venue.

The first ever street circuit race on the IRL-led IndyCar schedule was the 2005 Honda Grand Prix of St. Petersburg, my first case study site. This event has remained on

the schedule and has been deemed a success by local organizers and IndyCar officials. Further, this event has benefited from usually being the first IndyCar event of the year. St. Petersburg is Florida's fourth largest city (Census 2010 population 244,769) and is located on the Gulf of Mexico coast of Florida with Tampa Bay and the city of Tampa (Census 2010 population 335,709) to the city's east. Most of the area's popular beaches are at least five miles to the west of the St. Petersburg Central Business District (CBD). The circuit is just east of the CBD and runs along the Tampa Bay waterfront, one of the Albert Whitted Airport runways, and then through the downtown St. Petersburg streets (Figure 1.6). St. Petersburg's temporary street circuit encloses a city park, multi-purpose sport stadium, and the Dali Museum and Mahaffey Theater.

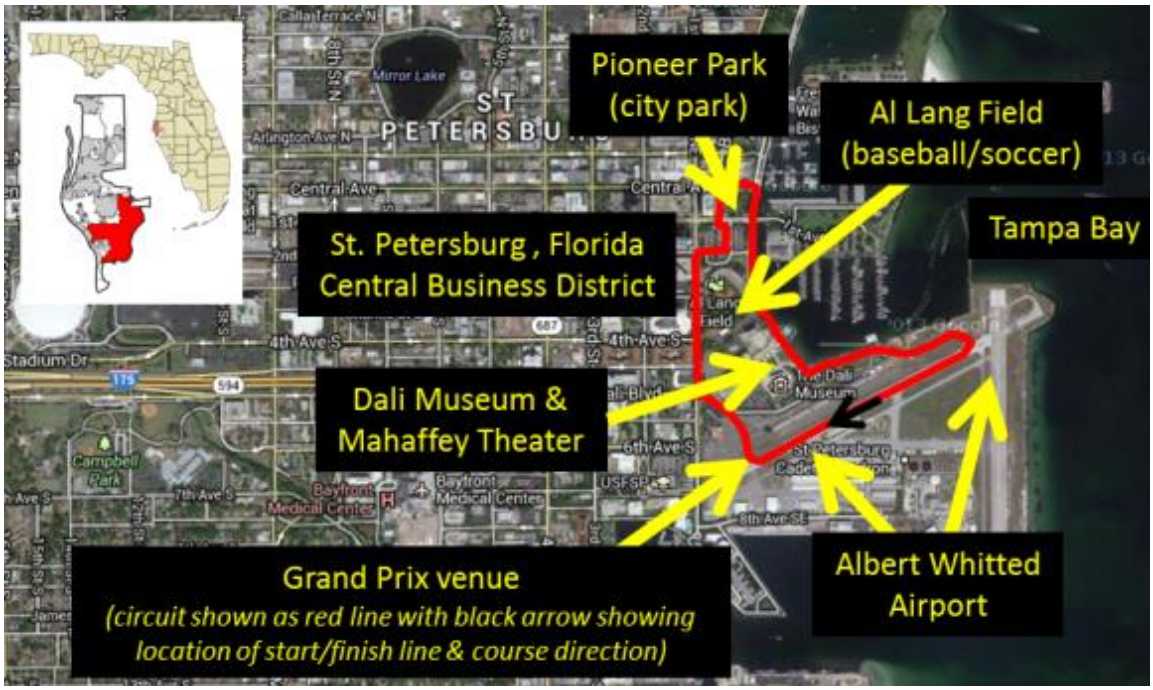

Figure 1.6 Map of St. Petersburg, Florida and Grand Prix Venue

My second case study site, Iowa Speedway, is one of only three oval speedways (Texas and Indianapolis being the others) that have remained on the schedule since its first race in 2007. Therefore, this case study site offered an opportunity to explore the key reasons why this event has been able to remain on the schedule even though IndyCar has recently moved away from the exclusive use of oval speedway venues. Iowa Speedway is located in Newton, a central Iowa city (Census 2010 population 15,254) along Interstate 80 that is 30 miles east of Iowa's largest city and capital, Des Moines (Census 2010 population 203,433) (Figure 1.7). Iowa Speedway is located just south of the interstate with Newton's downtown being three miles northwest of the Speedway's interstate exit and cluster of development known by local officials and developers as the "Prairie Fire District." Most of the western edge of the Speedway's property is shared with the Newton Municipal Airport.

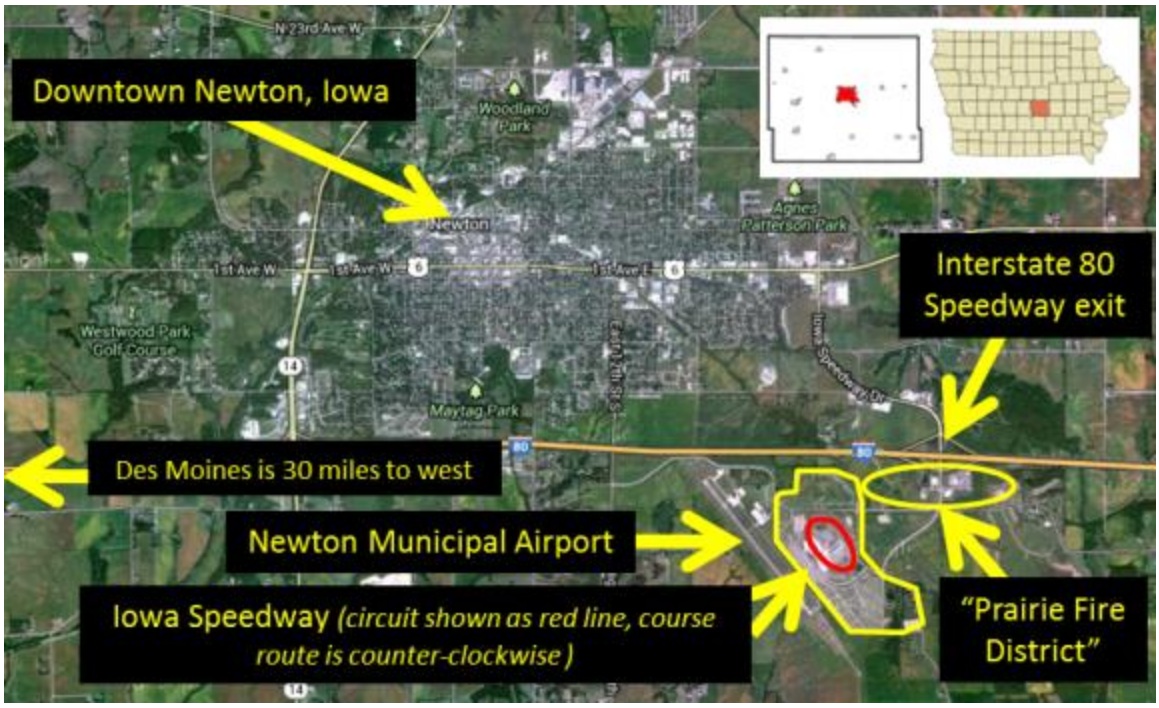

Figure 1.7 Map of Newton, Iowa and Iowa Speedway

The third and final case study event, the Honda Indy 200, is held at Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course (MOSCC), a purpose-built, natural terrain road course 60 miles northeast of Columbus, Ohio and 85 miles southwest of Cleveland, Ohio (Figure 1.8). Similar to Iowa Speedway's IndyCar race, this race was also added in 2007 and has the second-longest tenure of the active road course races on the 2012 IndyCar schedule. The Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course is located in a rural area three miles to the west of the village of Lexington, Ohio (Census 2010 4,882 population). Mansfield, Ohio is the nearest city with over 40,000 residents (Census 2010 47,482 population) and is located five miles northeast of Lexington, and another three miles to MOSCC.

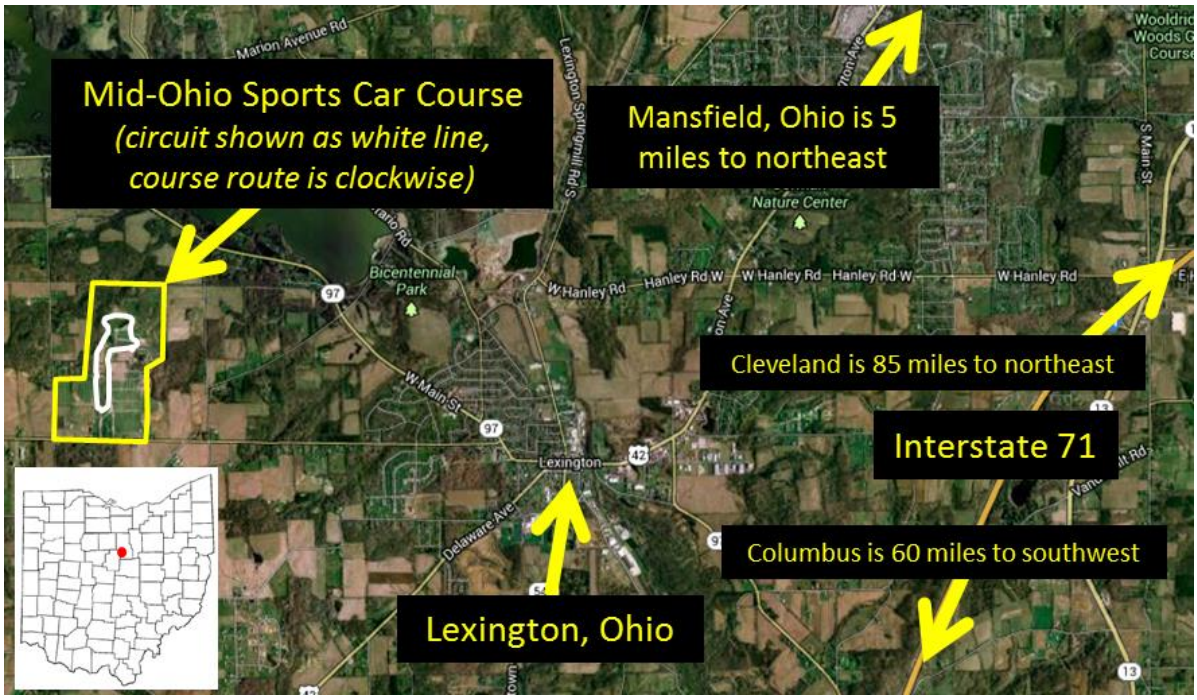

Figure 1.8 Map of Lexington, Ohio and Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course

A simple comparison of each case study events' logo in Figure 1.9 highlights succinctly how each of these IndyCar race events is being marketed differently. The first logo (St. Petersburg) mentions a specific city and its physical environment, the second logo (Iowa) mentions a state name and a key local industry, and the last logo (Mid-Ohio) mentions a region within a state and displays the trademark of a large, multinational corporation. One race is promoting a place (St. Petersburg), another (Iowa) is promoting a local industry (ethanol from corn), and the last (Mid-Ohio) is promoting a global company (Honda) with strong local ties (i.e., an assembly plant in Marysville, Ohio). This research will further highlight the key place-to-place similarities and differences between each specific case study event.



Figure 1.9 Event logos for each of the three case study events used in this research.

1.5 Geography of Motorsport

The first geographer to study extensively North American motorsport was Richard Pillsbury (1974) in his article, *Carolina Thunder*, an analysis of the historical and geographic development of stock car racing in the American South. The only other research by a geographer on IndyCar was a small "sport place vignette" that used the Indianapolis 500 Mile Race has a cultural symbol of "the middle of middle America" (Edgley 1987, 21). More recently, research utilizing both cultural and economic geography perspectives have increased and comprise a majority of the geography of motorsport literature.

Studies of stock car racing, particularly the geographic expansion of NASCAR outside its southern cultural hearth, dominate motorsport research utilizing cultural perspectives. Building on Pillsbury's *Carolina Thunder*, Alderman *et al*., (2003) argue that NASCAR has become "transcultural" in the sense that NASCAR has simultaneously grown and expanded to new markets and tracks beyond the South while race teams and drivers agglomerate in the Charlotte, North Carolina motorsports cluster. As new races were added near large urban areas outside the South, many small, southern Appalachian towns, like North Wilkesboro, North Carolina, suffered economically from the loss of their major-league sporting event. Further, North Wilkesboro residents exhibited a deflated self-image once they were no longer viewed as a "NASCAR town", but instead, "just another place to get gas on the way to the mountains" (Baker 2005, 53). Hurt (2005) cautions that as NASCAR "nationalizes" and expands to new markets and fans, the sport will need to stay connected to its southern fan base as more race events are removed from the region. Other research describes several challenges to NASCAR's

expansion outside the United States and cultural assimilation into Mexico, and more broadly, into Hispanic culture (Mueller 2008).

Several economic geographers have researched motorsport, particularly the role of the motorsport *industry*, not so much the location of motorsport *events*, in stimulating regional and national economies. Of particular interest are three core geographic areas, or clusters, of motorsport teams, suppliers, and companies (southern England; Charlotte, NC; Indianapolis, IN) that have a substantial local economic impact. Motorsports represents a highly-skilled segment of the manufacturing workforce that is constantly innovating in hopes of producing a faster, winning motor vehicle.

British geographers Steven Pinch and Nick Henry have researched extensively the British motorsport industry clustered in southern England (Henry *et al*. 1996; Pinch and Henry 1999a). In explaining the cluster of motorsport-related industries in "Motor Sport Valley," they illuminate the role of tacit knowledge clusters and technological spillovers that are critical to understanding why this region is the "world's leading industrial agglomeration for the design and assembly of single-seater racing cars" (Pinch and Henry 1999b, 665). It is argued, that Motor Sport Valley represents a horizontally integrated cluster of competing race teams (e.g., McClaren, Williams), car manufacturers (e.g., Lola, Cosworth), and engineers that are constantly moving from one company to the next within the regional cluster. Therefore, the transfer of workers within the regional cluster results in this area possessing high tacit knowledge of the newest aerodynamic or engineering motorsport technologies, stimulating even more competition and innovation. Meanwhile, Ferrari and the Italian motorsports industry remains rather isolated, although more recent research suggests that Ferrari has recognized the disadvantage of not being

located within the British cluster by hiring personnel away from Motor Sport Valley (Jenkins and Tallman 2010).

Similarly, the Charlotte, North Carolina motorsports region is presented as another knowledge cluster and regional economic driver with the headquarters of a majority of NASCAR race teams (Connaughton and Madsen 2007). Drawing inspiration from Pinch and Henry's "Motorsport Valley" in southern England, Mitchelson and Alderman (2011) defined the Charlotte motorsport knowledge community and agglomerations as "NASCAR Valley." They argue that while the consumption of NASCAR has become dispersed, the production of NASCAR has become increasingly centralized in the northern suburbs of Charlotte. The Charlotte cluster also contains a mix of sports marketing firms, motorsport media and television companies, and specialized component suppliers. In fact, a recent study on Charlotte and Mecklenburg County suggested the strong presence of NASCAR and motorsport-related shops could be one factor in the shortage of skilled labor in manufacturing in the area (Kalafsky 2008).

Not only does Indianapolis host the largest motorsport event in the world, but Klacik and Cook (2004) identified "400 motorsport-related firms in the Indianapolis region, employing up to 8,880 individuals, and generating more than $425 million in wages" (pg. 1). Many of the teams competing in the IndyCar Series are based within the Indianapolis cluster. Unlike the British and Charlotte clusters, Indianapolis is also the home of several pinnacle motorsport events. Besides the Indianapolis 500, the Indianapolis Motor Speedway hosts the annual Brickyard 400 NASCAR and Indianapolis

Grand Prix MotoGP (motorcycle) races, while Indianapolis Raceway Park hosts the most prestigious drag racing event in the world, the U.S. Nationals.

In *Motorsport Going Global: The Challenges Facing the World's Motorsport Industry*, (Henry *et al*. 2007) the authors provide a country-level survey of the global motorsport industry. The authors utilize a "SWOT" (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis to separate countries into different groupings based on their relative position in the hierarchy of global motorsport. The United States, United Kingdom, Italy, Japan, Germany, and France are the industry's "Frontrunners" and dominate the industry in terms of location of teams, manufacturers, and events. The "Midfield" (e.g., South America, Mexico, Australia, and Spain) and the "Coming Through the Field" (e.g., Malaysia, China, Persian Gulf Region) groupings represent other areas that contain a historically relevant or emerging motorsport industry.

Although not a trained geographer, Mark Lowes, an Associate Professor of Communication at University of Ottawa, has written extensively about the controversial selection of sites for motorsport events in urban areas in Canada and Australia (Lowes 2002; Lowes 2004; Tranter and Lowes 2008). Much of this research is further described in Chapter 3 with Lowes' insights providing insights into the reasons why there are also negative impacts of hosting a motorsport event. In Vancouver, British Columbia, event promoters of an IndyCar race sought to re-locate the Molson Indy Grand Prix of Vancouver to Hastings Park, an urban park just outside downtown Vancouver. Key to Lowes' research is describing the resistance by nearby residents and supporters over the conversion of their public space into a privatized, commercial space as a race track. While Lowes effectively describes the reasons local community members were

successful in their boycott of a local IndyCar race, this research only focused on one case study event. Further, Lowes never analyzed the actual motorsport event, focusing instead on the opposition to the Grand Prix. My research uses the case study approach to compare and contrast multiple motorsport events and includes as well my participant observation at all three case study events.

1.6 My Connection to the Research Topic

My father grew up just a few blocks from the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, where he graduated from Speedway High School, home of the "Sparkplugs." My initials, A.J., can be attributed to my mother and father's appreciation for IndyCar's most famous and decorated driver, A.J. Foyt. So you could say I was connected to this topic literally from my beginning. I have attended the Indianapolis 500 Mile Race consecutively for 26 of my 33 years. Since 2000, I have attended over 175 motorsport events including 28 different racing series in 12 states. While attending Ohio University, I completed a Master's thesis that examined the cultural loss of a major motorsport event in the town of North Wilkesboro, North Carolina. In many ways this present research looks at that thesis' mirror image: the gains a major motorsport event might provide a given locale.

Since completing my graduate course work at UT, I have joined the faculty of the Department of Geography at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) located only five miles away from "the Speedway." IUPUI, the City of Indianapolis, and the Indiana state government strongly support investments in the local motorsport industry, with a particular interest in increasing courses and programs in higher education. The IUPUI School of Engineering is home to the country's first four-year,

Bachelor of Science in Motorsports Engineering Program. Recently, the Indiana University School of Liberal Arts, within which my Department of Geography resides, has started a Motorsports Studies Program with an emphasis on the non-engineering side of motorsport. I recently visited a local IndyCar race shop and a race team member told me only six of the 15 members on staff were engineers; the remaining possessed degrees in Public Relations, Communication, Journalism, and Event Management. Beginning in August 2011, I taught the first ever Motorsports Studies course in the IU School of Liberal Arts and was appointed the Interim Director of the Motorsports Studies Program in Fall 2011. This was extremely challenging considering there is no textbook available that remotely discusses motorsport from an academic perspective. This present research has already served many purposes, as the literature review and the outcomes of my case study research were added to course lectures and assignments. Further, there are several potential student research projects that could extend some of the research findings presented herein. These potential projects are discussed in the concluding remarks in Chapter 6. After having positive course evaluations and peer reviews, co-authoring a peer-reviewed journal article on motorsport, advising a successful capstone project, and placing Motorsports Studies students into internship programs, I was asked by the Dean of the School of Liberal Arts to take over as Director in May 2013.

CHAPTER 2
FIGURATIONAL SOCIOLOGY AND INDYCAR SERIES EVENTS

2.1 Introduction

Prior to the IndyCar sanctioning body announcing the inaugural Grand Prix of St. Petersburg as its first non-oval racing event in 2005, former IndyCar Series Vice President Fred Nation illustrated the multiple stakeholders that are integral in staging an IndyCar Series race event. Nation stated, "…it involves television, a promoter, the city, and the League, and all of those pieces have to fit together" (Fabrizio 2004, 8). This quote illustrates the interconnectedness of several key elements in the production of a motorsport event. More recently, Indianapolis Motor Speedway President Jeff Belskus also identified the key stakeholders in the IndyCar Series stating, "It is critical to be able to work with our key stakeholders, and we have a lot of key stakeholders – the car owners, the drivers, the track owners and promoters, sponsors, and fans" (Glendenning 2012, 1).

The sanctioning body, including race teams and drivers, has the duty of putting together an attractive entertainment product that will lure television companies and their audiences, as well as spectators. As television viewership increases, corporate sponsorship also increases as these companies use the high-profile, televised events to showcase and expose their product or service. Increased corporate sponsorship of race teams allow for increased levels of technology and innovation and a more competitive race car. Further, sanctioning bodies and their racing series retain strong connections with the automotive industry and original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) that use motorsport for research and development and technology transfers along with the

marketing of their product. After all, as the old motorsport adage goes, "win on Sunday, sell on Monday."

Further, the linkages and relationships between the automobile industry, the television and media, corporate sponsors, and the sanctioning body "are highly variant upon the nature of the motorsport event" (Henry *et al*. 2007, 6). For the purposes of this research, figurational sociology offers a historical framework for understanding the processes and identifying the key individuals and entities pivotal in the origin and diffusion of IndyCar race events. A central theme of figurational sociology is its focus on historical processes that have led to the present condition. Figurational sociology therefore offers a useful methodological perspective towards understanding the current key stakeholders involved in an IndyCar race event. For each case study analysis, I begin with a detailed historical description that focuses on the initial planning and management that led each case study site to host an IndyCar series race. Then, I identify the local and regional place marketers who are actively seeking the chance to host or promote themselves during each motorsport event. From this, I identify several of the key similarities and differences among the perceived and observed positive and negative impacts of each case study event on their local area. Insights from figurational sociology help provide answers to my first research question: ***Who are the key individuals or entities seeking and promoting an IndyCar Series event in their city or region?***

2.2 Figurational Sociology

Figurational sociology is a perspective based on the idea that global processes are shaped by interconnecting sets of networks of individuals and entities regarded as "figurations" (Coakley 2004). For this reason, figurational sociology is also known as "process sociology." The origins of a figurational theoretical paradigm emanate from the work of Norbert Elias (1939). In describing figurational theory, Elias alludes to a "web of interdependencies formed among human beings and which connects them: that is to say, a structure of mutually oriented and dependent persons" (Elias 1939, 249). Figurational sociologists argue that there should be an investigation of the key historical and dynamic relationships among people and groups in order to properly understand the present. For this reason, I find figurational sociology to be a useful framework for identifying the key individuals and groups who have been, and continue to be, integral in the staging of each case study motorsport event.

Globalization, figurational sociologists argue, is not simply a monocausal, "top-down" phenomenon in which influential and powerful individuals try to spread their influence to new places and markets. Figurational sociologists disagree with Modernization and Dependency theorists who view globalization processes to be controlled solely by either unintended or intended consequences from individuals or groups with power (Maguire 1999). Elias viewed power within figurations as "polymorphous" as "no person or group is ever all-powerful, or completely powerless" (Malcolm 2006, 157). Further, Elias and figurational sociologists argue that "we depend on others; others depend on us" (Elias 1978, 93) and "power balances, like human relationships in general are bi-polar at least, and usually multi-polar" (Elias 1978, 74).

Figurational sociologists go beyond the dualisms of agency vs. structure and individual vs. society. Instead, they view globalization as much more complex and dynamic, as individuals from these new places actually seek out and attract these globalizing processes and forms. Critics of figurational sociology suggest that it represents no "distinctive perspective within sociology" (Murphy *et al*. 2002, 99) and that it's too "descriptive and untestable" (Armstrong 1998, 317). For the purposes of this present research, I am informed by, but not limited to, figurational sociology as an underlying conceptual framework. This research uses the idea of the "figuration" in order to locate the place marketers for each case study event within a broader context of interrelated entities all of whom see value in their participation in IndyCar Series race events. Further, cross-comparisons in Chapters 5 and 6 illuminate key similarities and differences among the figurations for each case study site.

Insights from figurational sociology and the idea of figurations have been used in understanding economic, political, and social processes influencing global sport (Coakley 2004). Others have argued that "sport is an economically significant, highly popular, globally networked cultural form" (Smart 2007, 114). Together, these processes and the individuals bound up within them are critical for understanding the diffusion of sporting forms at the national and global scale. Insights from figurational sociology, therefore offer a useful perspective and understanding of the origins and diffusion of IndyCar over time and the contrasting of this diffusion among different geographic locales and race venue types. Although geographers have long studied the economic, social and political processes bound up in global diffusion or globalization, few have utilized insights from figurational sociology. Additionally, figurational sociology, which grew out of European

academic traditions, has been only sparsely used by academics in North America (Coakley 2004).

2.3 Origin and Diffusion of Modern Sport: Figurational Perspectives

During the late 1800s, particular sports and sporting events became more international with sporting competitions attracting participants, media, and spectators from beyond local areas (Smart 2007). At this time, sporting bodies were organized to govern, standardize, and develop their respective sporting forms while determining the locations of competitions (Maguire 1999). Subsequently, these international sporting forms and their events were covered by media, particularly magazines and newspapers raising the awareness of sport and its participants to increasingly larger audiences. In turn, the media benefited from the rise of global sport with increasing sales of newspapers and magazines.

As more individuals attended, read, or were interested in a particular sport, private companies saw this as a chance to advertise their products and increase brand awareness (Maguire 1999). Advancements in communication and transportation technologies over the course of the 20th century brought global sports to increasingly larger audiences which, in turn, increased media coverage and corporate sponsorship of sport. Audiences would listen to competitions via the radio or would watch recorded sporting events in movie theatres. Initially, sporting goods manufacturers, or in the case of motorsport, automotive-related manufacturers, used sport as a means to increase brand awareness and demand for their products. By the 1960s and 1970s, television became the main distribution channel of a sporting event to its audience. Soon thereafter, the development

of satellite television allowed for the live viewing of sporting events for larger, more global audiences and subsequently, brought in more corporate sponsors showcasing their brands to larger audiences.

2.3.1 Sports Media Complex

Utilizing a cultural studies approach, Jhally (1989) introduced the term "sports/media complex" arguing that modern sport forms an interdependent relationship with the media based on two key points. First, the vast majority of those watching a sporting event are doing so via television, which enables broadcast media to earn large revenues from corporations purchasing advertising time slots. Secondly, sports are financially dependent upon revenue generated largely from media exposure to large audiences. Building upon Jhally and utilizing figurational sociology perspectives, Maguire (1993) introduced the term, "global media-sport complex" arguing that modern, international sport contains three main groups: "sporting organizations, media organizations and personnel, and trans- or multinational corporations" (pg. 149).

Figure 2.1 below is a modified version of Maguire's (2002) diagram describing his media-sport complex. The arrows among the figurations illustrate interdependent relationships in which groups benefit from what they bring to the overall mediated sporting event production. Sport organizations, like IndyCar or the NBA, want high exposure for their sport which, in turn, increases sponsorship and revenue from large corporations and their marketing strategies. Media organizations play a central role in providing the highly sought after exposure of both the sporting organizations and corporate sponsorship. Also, media organizations purchase the broadcasting rights

providing financial resources for the sporting organizations. Further, corporate sponsors also provide financial resources to sport organizations in the hopes of receiving visibility of their products to target consumers. With the financial resources gained from media broadcasting rights and corporate sponsorship, sporting organizations reinvest resources to further enhance the appeal of their sporting form.

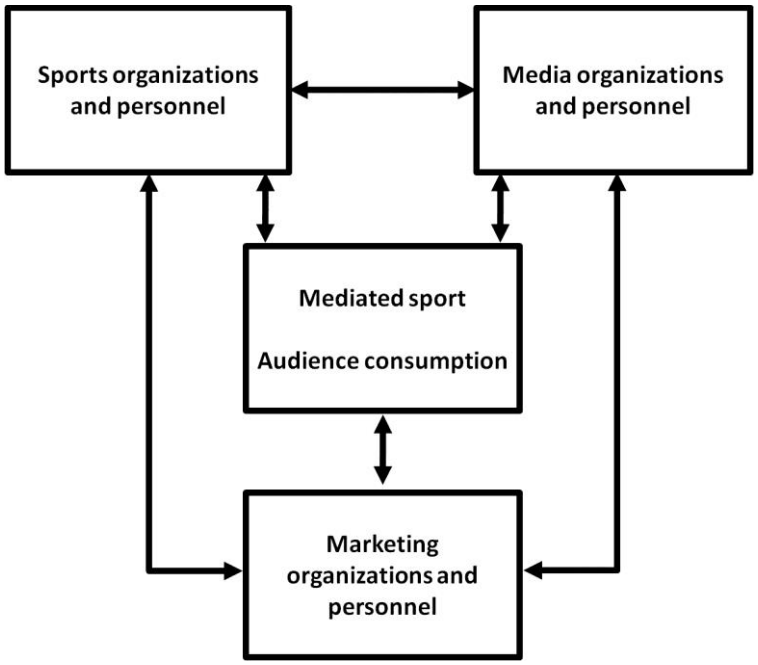

Figure 2.1. The "Media Sports Complex" (adapted from Maguire 2002).

Building on Maguire's "media-sport complex," this research focuses on the role of **local and regional** individuals or organizations (place marketers) that are marketing their locales and organizations by actively supporting IndyCar Series race events. These local place marketers have similar goals to the aforementioned corporate sponsors as they use and invest in these events to showcase their "product" (a city or region) to nationally

and internationally televised audiences. These place marketers are identified in Chapter 4 and followed in Chapter 5 with a summary of the key similarities and differences among the place marketers for each case study event. The sections that follow within this chapter identify and describe the initial organization of motorsport in the early 1900s and the formation of the IndyCar "media-sport complex" in the late 1960s.

2.4 Figurations of IndyCar Series Race Events

The diagram (Figure 2.2) below is a schematic displaying the "figurations" or interrelated networks among the various entities that I have identified as integral in the evolution and recent expansion of IndyCar Series race events in each case study venue. The arrows between circles suggest an interrelated relationship, or figuration, between both entities with perceived beneficial interests in bringing IndyCar Series races to these markets. For instance, an arrow between media and corporate sponsorship exists because of the vast corporate exposure opportunities for companies broadcasting their logo to audiences worldwide and in key markets. The focus of this research is illustrated by the red circle and arrows that focus on the mutually beneficial relationships between local place marketers and 1) the sanctioning body; 2) the automobile industry; 3) corporate sponsorship; and 4) media corporations.

Each of the above four factors still plays an integral role in the expansion of IndyCar to new venues. For the sanctioning body, automobile industry, media, and corporations, locating in new and specific markets are key goals in their overall marketing strategies. In the next chapter, I focus on the central analysis of this research effort -- the role of place marketers. Due to an increasingly competitive global market for

the hosting of mega-sporting events, I argue that individuals and entities within cities and regions are also integral to the growth and expansion of IndyCar.

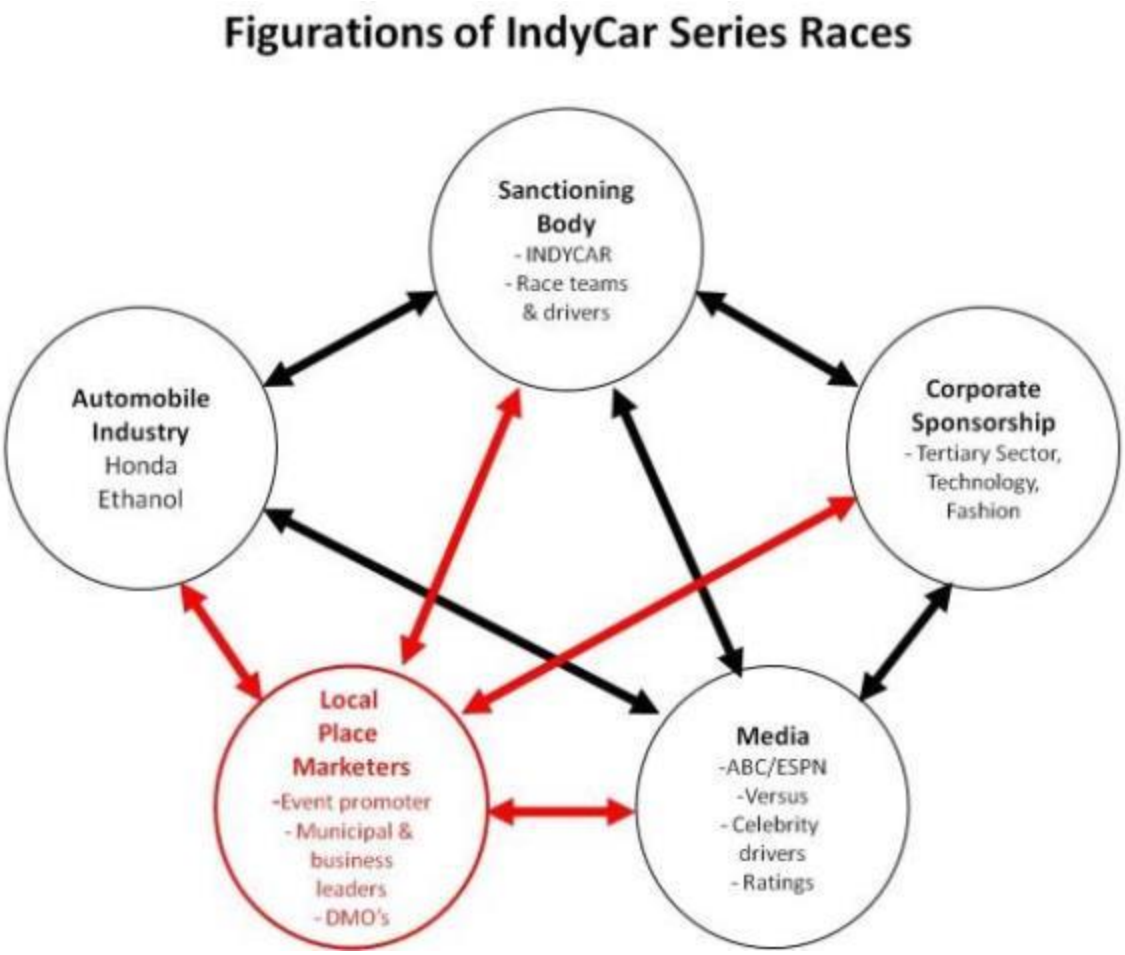

Figure 2.2. The key entities integral in the production of each IndyCar Series case study event.

2.5 Sanctioning Body

Various sanctioning bodies have governed IndyCar racing since the early 1900s (Figure 2.3). A sanctioning body organizes race events at tracks in different places providing standardized rules in order to declare an overall champion at the end of the year. Ultimately, a sanctioning body decides which places will host race events

competing in the overall championship. The sanctioning body must also showcase auto racing competition that is appealing and attractive to spectator and television audiences. Sanctioning bodies require a fee from each venue's track owner or promoter who hosts their race event. Currently, the sanctioning fee to host an IndyCar race event averages $1.5 million depending on the specific agreement made between sanctioning body and event promoter. IndyCar's sanctioning fees are the main profit-generators for the series and are used to pay IndyCar staff and the race purse (Cavin 2008).

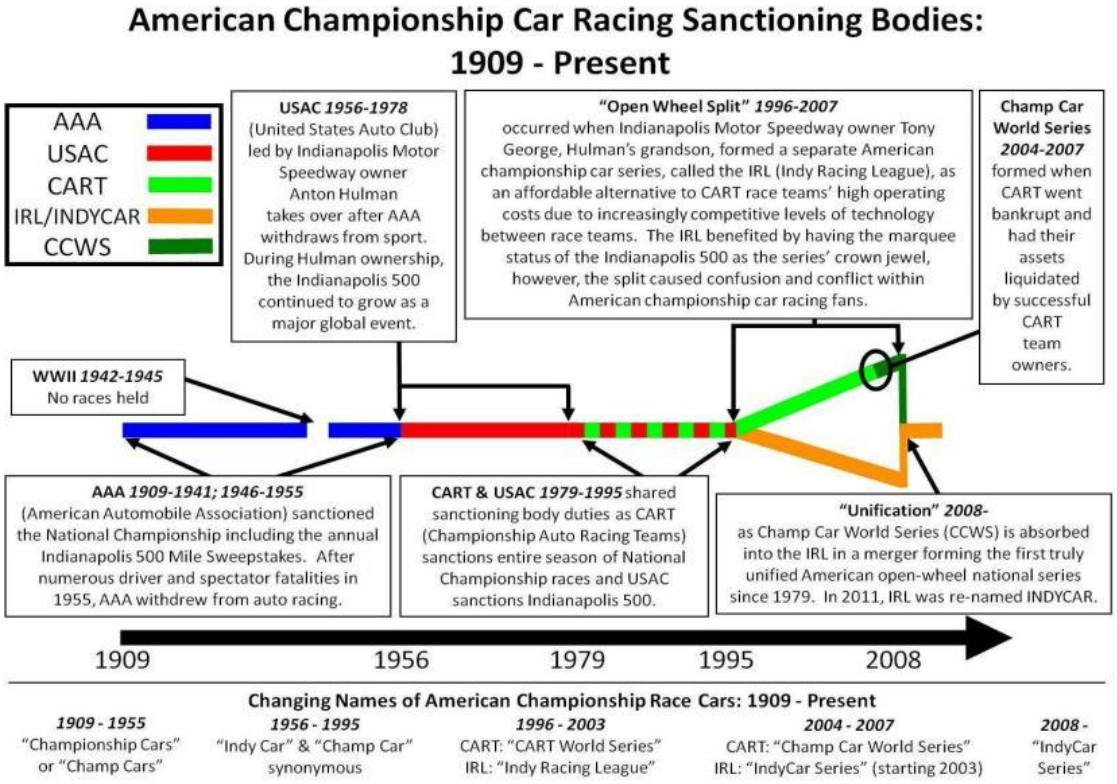

Figure 2.3 The long and complicated history of American open-wheel car racing's different governing bodies.

The Contest Board of the American Automobile Association (AAA) began serving as the sanctioning body for race events in 1902 and awarded its first National Championship in 1909. The AAA began sanctioning races as a way to promote its motor club (Brown 1994). Prior to AAA sanctioning, early motorsport events varied from one race to the next with different "local" rules. Representatives of automobile manufacturers sought AAA as a regulatory body to help standardize and govern the sport across the country (Brown 1994). AAA sanctioned IndyCar race events from 1909 to 1955 with a three-year hiatus during World War II. Under AAA sanctioning in the 1950s, automobile racing became popular as more people could afford automobiles and participate in automobile races. Also, more fans than ever were attending races. The *Wall Street Journal* reported that 35 million fans paid $65 million to attend races in 1951 (Vicker 1952). After a flurry of race event fatalities involving drivers and spectators in 1955, however, AAA announced it would no longer be associated with motorsports (Davidson and Shaffer 2006). Motorsport was a public relations liability for the auto club that promoted passenger car safety. Later that year, Tony Hulman, President of the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, organized the United States Auto Club (USAC) to sanction all race events from 1956 to 1978.

By 1978, race team owners began seeking better race facilities and higher race purses to help the teams cover the increasing costs of building cars that exceeded 200 miles per hour (Davidson and Shaffer 2006). These owners also wanted greater exposure with races in new markets. In 1979, the team owners organized to form their own sanctioning body called Championship Auto Racing Teams (CART). During the 1979 seasons, USAC and CART ran separate schedules with different race events. Most race

teams and drivers ran, however, on the CART schedule, which made sense considering the owners organized the series. From 1981-1995, CART acted as the sanctioning body for the entire National Championship, including every race except for the Indianapolis 500 Mile Race, which remained sanctioned and organized by USAC and is still the largest, most popular race on the National Championship schedule.

With increasing amounts of money flowing into the sport, costs also continued to escalate. Eventually, Tony Hulman's grandson and the Indianapolis Motor Speedway President at the time, Tony George, became concerned about the increasing number of races on street circuits and decreasing number of oval race venues and American-born drivers. He, therefore, started his own sanctioning body called the Indy Racing League (IRL), which included his Indianapolis 500 Mile Race. This began what became known in racing circles as the "Open Wheel Split" in 1996 with two separate sanctioning bodies running separate events at different race venues. The split lasted until 2008.

To insure CART teams would not participate solely in the Indianapolis 500 like they had since 1979, Tony George allowed only seven starting positions in the Indianapolis 500 for teams not competing in the entire IRL season. George also changed the cars by decreasing the costs and size of engines and chassis, subsequently decreasing the speeds in hopes of encouraging more competitive and close action among race teams and cars. George also wanted to emphasize the use of paved-oval tracks in his version of American championship car racing. He felt such tracks would encourage a feeder series or a "farm system" similar to the ideas Tony Hulman put forward during his reign at USAC from 1956-1977 (Davidson and Shaffer 2006).

On February 19, 2008, the Champ Car World Series (CCWS), CART's successor, ceased operations and the Indy Racing League took over as the lone sanctioning body of American championship car racing, ending the Open Wheel Split. George offered free IRL race cars and engines leases to all CCWS race teams that chose to run the entire IRL season. IMS/IRL board members, most of whom were his relatives, felt George was using too much of the family's money to keep the IRL afloat financially and not properly marketing the racing series (Miller 2009). On May 26, 2009, the board members of the Indianapolis Motor Speedway and the Indy Racing League voted to remove Tony George as CEO. George's fellow board members were hoping a change in leadership would prevent continued financial losses for the series and family. Less than six months later, Randy Bernard was selected to replace George as CEO. Bernard has been previously successful at growing the Professional Bull Riders circuit from scratch to earning a multi-million dollar annual profit.

Since becoming CEO of the IRL, Bernard has made several changes that have brought further optimism to IndyCar, including convincing General Motors and Lotus to join Honda as engine suppliers for the IndyCar Series. Competition among automobile manufacturers had been largely absent from the sport since the Open Wheel Split. Also, to rid the series of the negative connotations of the Split, Bernard changed the name of the sanctioning body from IRL to INDYCAR. Explaining the reasons for the name change, Bernard stated (SpeedTV.com 2011, 1):

> The time has come for our sport to move forward under a name that truly signifies a unified organization. The INDYCAR name has worldwide recognition and aligns with our positioning as the fastest, most versatile racing and drivers in the world.

2.5.1 INDYCAR Today: "Speed, Technology, Innovation, Diversity, and Green"

The organizational leaders of the IndyCar Series are in charge of insuring the racing competition is safe, exciting and attractive to increasing numbers of television viewers, which, in turn, fuels even greater media exposure and corporate sponsorship. Prior to the 2010 racing season, the IndyCar Series self-identified their brand attributes (Speed, Technology, Innovation, Diversity, and Green) used to promote their racing series to current and potential corporate sponsors and media partners. "Speed" references the fact that IndyCar Series race cars go faster than any other major racing series other than drag strip racing. For instance, the fastest qualifying speed for the 2010 Indianapolis 500 was 227.970mph while NASCAR's top qualifier during that same year at the Speedway's Brickyard 400 ran a top speed of 182.253mph.

"Innovation" and "Technology" illustrate IndyCar's long history of advancements in safety and performance that often translate into advancements in passenger car technologies. The rear-view mirror, hydraulic brakes, front and all-wheel drive power, and turbocharged engines were all tested and used in IndyCars before those innovations transferred to passenger cars. More recently, IndyCar technologies have focused on improved safety, including on-board crash data recorders and the Steel and Foam Energy Reduction (SAFER) barrier, which is a "soft" wall that flexes and absorbs the impact of a crashing race car. The Indy Racing League, in conjunction with University of Nebraska-Omaha engineers, used the new wall during the 2002 Indianapolis 500. After the SAFER barrier successfully lessened the impact of multiple IndyCar crashes, the soft wall technology was installed in most of the major, purpose-built racing facilities in the United States, including many NASCAR venues.

Contrary to other types of sports, IndyCar races contain a considerable amount of "Diversity" with race competitions involving both male and female athletes hailing from North and South America, Europe, Asia, Africa, and Oceania. IndyCar has long benefited from the marketing appeal and celebrity status of its key personalities: the drivers. During IndyCar's growth period of the 1960s and 1970s, drivers like A.J. Foyt, Mario Andretti, and the Unser family were internationally recognizable names that today remain key IndyCar brand attributes as each still plays a role in the series as an owner, team member, or consultant. Today, Danica Patrick and Helio Castroneves are the two most notable drivers who have broadened their appeal beyond motorsport and introduced IndyCar to new audiences (Plymire 2010). Patrick has utilized her sex appeal in attracting large sponsors to her race team and new audiences to IndyCar racing. During her 2005 rookie year, television ratings went up 53 percent, IndyCar Series merchandise sales increased 75 percent and web traffic on IndyCar.com rose 162 percent from 2004 season totals (Caldwell 2008).

Patrick's IndyCar team owner and former driver, Michael Andretti stated, "Open wheel racing is a little more sexy and a little more fun than fender (stock car) racing, and we feel when we reestablish that position, we'll attract sponsors and partners" (Henderson 2001, D1). Furthermore, Patrick is often used in commercials that are aired during broadcasts of non-IndyCar events. For instance, Patrick has been in commercials airing during the 2009 and 2010 Super Bowl. Castroneves earned more broad appeal after winning ABC's highly rated "Dancing with the Stars" celebrity dance competition. Castroneves was selected as 2007 *Cosmopolitan* magazine's "Sexiest Driver of the Year" and *People* magazine's "Bachelor of the Year." Automobile-related companies and

corporate sponsors, try to align themselves with successful IndyCar teams and popular drivers to help showcase their products and services.

Further, "Diversity" is also a characteristic of the venue types IndyCar races are held. Unlike NASCAR, IndyCar includes races on downtown, urban street circuits and in contrast to Formula One, cars that race exclusively on road courses and street circuits, IndyCar races are also held on oval speedways. The current sanctioning body has only recently (2005) expanded to race events at venues other than the distinctively American oval speedways. IndyCar officials sought road course and urban street circuit venues in hopes of attracting more international fans who are more accustomed to this form of racing (Graves 2009). While discussing the merits of a racing series that runs on both oval speedways and street circuits, INDYCAR President Randy Bernard stated (*Trackside with Kevin and Cavin Radio Show* 2010):

> You know with an oval course, 70 percent of your demographics cross over with NASCAR. At a street course, it's much more urban, much more international and a younger audience. That's what is so great about IndyCar is that we have such a broader demographic than most forms of motorsports.

Bernard later added (Bohnenkamp 2012, 1B):

> You look at the series -- we go from (street circuit) at St. Petersburg, the road course at Barber (Motorsports Park in Alabama), then to the Indianapolis 500 and then here (Iowa Speedway). That shows the versatility of these cars, it shows the versatility of the drivers. That's what we want to emphasize.

Finally, IndyCar markets itself as the first racing series to use exclusively 100 percent renewable ethanol fuels and is, therefore, an innovator in "Green" technologies. I discuss further IndyCar's promotion and use of ethanol fuels in Section 2.6.2. Starting in 2012, INDYCAR regulated the use of new engine and chassis specifications that emphasize fuel efficiency. The engines are smaller in size going from V8 to V6 power

plants using turbochargers to provide the added speed boost that would otherwise be lost because of the smaller, more efficient engine size.

2.6 Automobile Industry and IndyCar

The origins of IndyCar lie in auto manufacturers' use of race events as a research and design tool to test and improve their own technology and competitiveness. Early races also were viewed as an opportunity to stimulate public interest in, and promote the virtues of, the newly invented automobile. The first major *annual* motorsport event in the United States was called the Vanderbilt Cup. Ironically, the railroad heir William Vanderbilt organized the automobile race event that took place on the public roads of Long Island, New York from 1904 to 1910. Vanderbilt, a motorsport and automobile enthusiast, set the fastest recorded speed at the time going 92 miles per hour in 1904 (Patton 2008). The large prize money attracted international drivers, manufacturers, and media to the area, bringing an economic boost to Long Island businesses (Rossano 1991). Vanderbilt was hoping the race competitions would stimulate automobile innovation in the United States, which was lagging behind European-built cars (Casey 1999). As he noted (Kimes 1967, 185):

> I felt the United States was far behind other nations in the automotive industry and I wanted the country to catch up. I wanted to bring foreign drivers and their cars over here in the hope that America would wake up.

In the early 1900s, purpose-built race tracks began to appear throughout the nation, providing a place for head-to-head competition among car builders (Pillsbury 1995). Automobile manufacturers used race competitions and private testing on these closed circuits as a chance to test their products and gain a competitive advantage in the

industry by showcasing their product among other automobile manufacturers. Often, these early races were held in conjunction with county fairs as these races also provided an opportunity for automobile manufacturers to showcase their "horseless carriages" to new audiences (Osmer and Harms 1999).

In 1909, the most famous race track in the world, the Indianapolis Motor Speedway (IMS), was built. The first Indianapolis 500 Mile Race was run in 1911 in front of an audience of 80,000 spectators. Like many race circuits constructed during this time, IMS was built by an automobile industry advocate, Carl Fisher. He wanted to build a large track capable of sustaining high speeds on long straightaway stretches and lured the best drivers and automakers with the richest payout in sports at the time (Davidson and Shaffer 2006). These race competitions were also opportunities to test new innovations. For example, Ray Harroun, the winner of the inaugural Indianapolis 500 Mile Race, was the first driver ever to employ a rear-view mirror which he used to his advantage. It meant that he did not need the extra weight of a mechanic riding with him in order to inform him of traffic on the circuit behind him.

To this day, the automotive industry continues to see value in associating with motorsport. Figure 2.4 illustrates the interrelated relationship between a motorsport sanctioning body and the automotive industry. Automobile –related companies use motorsport as an opportunity to learn about and test new performance and safety technologies that are often transferred to production-based cars. Motorsport also provides a competitive platform for automobile-related industries to showcase and provide evidence of their products high performance and reliability in front of large audiences. To this point, while announcing Chevrolet's return to IndyCar Series racing in

2012, GM Vice Chairman of Global Product Operations, Tom Stephens, stated (*Inside Indiana Business News* Release 2010, 1):

> Re-entering Indy-style racing will help us take our advanced engine technology to the upper bounds of what's possible. And it will also provide a dynamic training ground for engineers, who'll transfer the technologies we develop for racing to the products we sell to our customers.

Petroleum and energy companies also see value in their participation in motorsport as new biofuels are tested in the high-stress situations commonly encountered in automobile race competitions. For the 2009, 2010, and 2011 race seasons, American Honda Motor Company was the lone supplier of IndyCar Series engines that were fueled by corn-based ethanol from the United States and sugarcane-based ethanol from Brazil.

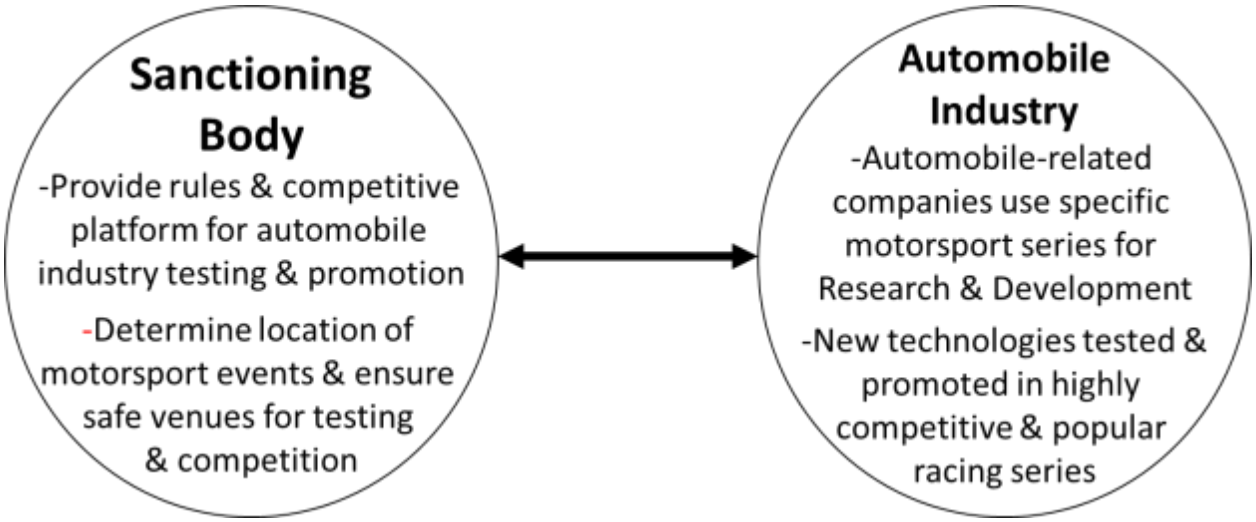

Figure 2.4. Sanctioning Body – Automobile Industry Figuration

2.6.1 Automobile Industry and IndyCar Today: American Honda Motor Company

Justifying his company's entrance to motorsport in 1964, Soichiro Honda stated (American Honda Press Release 2003a, 1):

> If we're going to build cars, it's better to do the hardest work now rather than later. The best place to learn is at the highest level.

Honda, a relative newcomer to North American automobile racing, entered IndyCar racing in 1994 seeking the chance to learn from North American and European engineers and car manufacturers (Henry *et al*. 2007). After supplying the engines for six consecutive CART/CCWS season championships, Honda switched over to the Indy Racing League in 2003. In a press release announcing the switch, Honda cited the chance to compete in the Indianapolis 500 and going head-to-head with other engine manufacturers as the major reasons for entrance into the IRL (American Honda Press Release 2003b). Ironically, by the end of 2005, Honda was the lone supplier of engines to IRL teams as Chevrolet and Toyota left the series. Honda began title sponsorship of select IndyCar races, including the inaugural events in St. Petersburg in 2005 and at Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course in 2007. In 2008, Honda agreed to a five-year extension to its current contract with the IndyCar Series as the lone engine supplier for race teams. During the announcement of the contract extension, Erik Berkman, president of Honda Performance Development stated, "Honda is pleased to be part of the IndyCar Series, as it provides both a technical challenge for our engineers and a showcase for Honda products worldwide" (American Honda Press Release 2008, 1).

2.6.2 Automobile Industry and IndyCar Today: Ethanol

In 2005, the Ethanol Promotion and Information Council (EPIC) began sponsoring an IRL race team partially owned by talk show host David Letterman. EPIC, a non-profit alliance of ethanol industry leaders, was hoping to connect consumer demand for ethanol energy with IndyCar's strong following in the Midwest region where corn is a major agricultural crop. This symbiotic partnership with the IRL paralleled the addition of IndyCar Series races at newly constructed oval speedways in Kansas City, Kansas (2001), Joliet, Illinois (2001), and Newton, Iowa (2007). EPIC's broader marketing strategy was aimed at pushing America away from its fossil fuel dependence and promoting ethanol as a clean-burning, biodegradable, and renewable fuel source made in America. Later that year, EPIC and the Indy Racing League agreed to enhance their partnership with ethanol becoming the official fuel of the IRL (Smith 2007).

EPIC launched its national marketing campaign in conjunction with IndyCar's switch to corn-based ethanol. EPIC purchased advertising time slots during ABC/ESPN broadcasts hoping to showcase the benefits of ethanol to national audiences. EPIC cited IndyCar's high speed and innovation brand attributes as a key reason to purchase time slots. Reece Nanfito, EPIC Director of Marketing, stated that the Council wanted to "emphasize the performance aspects of ethanol. What better way to show it than with a car going 220 mph" (Smith 2007, 7). Nanfito added, "Motor racing is where people look for innovation and what's coming in the future. It's made ethanol relevant and hip" (Broadhead 2007, 1).

For the 2009 and 2010 seasons, IndyCar signed an agreement with the Brazilian federal government's export development agency, Apex-Brasil, to be the series official

ethanol supplier. Apex-Brasil, with financial support from the Brazilian Sugarcane Industry Association (UNICA), sought IndyCar in their goal to enhance the awareness of the many sources of ethanol, including sugarcane. They felt IndyCar was "natural since several Brazilian drivers already compete in the IndyCar Series" (Krefting 2008, 1). The only race events that did not use Brazilian sugarcane-based ethanol were the 2009 and 2010 races at Iowa Speedway, where locally-grown, corn-based ethanol fueled the IndyCar Series engines.

2.7 Media and IndyCar

In 1895, the first organized motorsport event took place as 21 different cars raced from Paris to Bordeaux and back. News quickly spread via newspapers and magazines in the United States about this first French automobile race event. Upon noticing how interested U.S. readers were in the Paris-Bordeaux race, H.H. Kohlstaat, the owner of the *Chicago Times-Herald*, organized the first U.S. automobile race as a way to increase sales and circulation of his newspaper (Scott 2003). His race would be America's first official motorsport event and was run on Thanksgiving Day, 1895 along a 50 mile route from Chicago's Jackson Park to Evanston and back (Brown 1994). The race, however, was not necessarily the marketing success Kohlstaat hoped, with only 60 spectators attending the start of the race in Jackson Park because of cold, snowy weather conditions that are common in late November in Chicago (Scott 2003). Further, the race was not heavily covered in local or national newspapers, with only the *Times-Herald* and the *Chicago Tribune* covering the event. Since the *Chicago Tribune* was an intra-city rival of the *Times-Herald*, they were highly critical of the *Times-Herald* backed event in their

assessment of the event, stating that the only "spectators at the end of the race consisted of two newspaper reporters" (Scott 2003, 46).

Newspapers and print media continued to be the main distributor of motorsport content to large audiences for much of the first half of the 20th Century. *Motor Age*, the first automotive trade journal in the United States, covered many of these events, including the Indianapolis 500 and the Vanderbilt Cup events. It was not until 1939 that newspaper coverage of the Indianapolis 500 was supplemented with live radio coverage by the Indianapolis Motor Speedway Radio Network. Instead of non-stop, start-to-finish coverage like the IMS Radio Network today, hourly update reports would be made during events held in the 1930s and 1940s. The IMS Radio Network has broadcast every Indianapolis 500 Mile Race since 1939 and began broadcasting other, non-Indianapolis Motor Speedway race events on the IndyCar schedule in 1996. In 2012, there were 349 IMS Radio Network affiliate stations across the United States broadcasting each event with a majority of the stations located in the Midwest, Mid-Atlantic, and Southeast regions, providing an indication of IndyCar's core regions of fans (Figure 2.5).

Rank	State	Number of IMS Radio Network Affiliates
1	Indiana	57
2	Ohio	26
3	Illinois	23
4	New York	21
5	North Carolina	19
6	Virginia	16
7	Pennsylvania	15
8	Kentucky	14
	Tennessee	14
10	Wisconsin	11
11	Florida	10
	Georgia	10
	Michigan	10
14	Iowa	9
	West Virginia	9

Figure 2.5. States with Highest Number of IMS Radio Network Affiliates in 2012.

During the 1950s and 1960s, IndyCar entered the "Golden Era" of the sport as several famous drivers, along with the increasing global media coverage and reporting of the Indianapolis 500, elevated IndyCar to the status as the premiere form of motorsport in North America (Wallen 1997). In 1953, the IMS Radio Network broadcasted their first "flag-to-flag" live coverage of an Indianapolis 500 Mile Race on 135 radio stations across the United States and to Europe via the Armed Forces Radio Service (Davidson and Shaffer 2006). Also, the additions of European-style racing brought an influx of international participants to IndyCar, which, in turn, brought international media with them. In 1965, the Indianapolis 500 was televised for the first time as a tape-delayed, two-hour segment on ABC's "Wide World of Sports."

During the 1970s, network broadcasters began television coverage of events (most of which were tape-delayed) bringing IndyCar new audiences beyond those attending race events. The increased distribution of televised IndyCar race content paralleled the increase in corporate sponsorship of race events, teams and drivers. During the 1980s and early 1990s, American championship car racing was the most popular form of motorsport in the United States and included large corporate sponsorships and increasing media attention and exposure as race car speeds began to exceed 225 miles per hour. Increasingly, IndyCar was attracting more international drivers that further increased the global stature of IndyCar racing. Nigel Mansell, the 1992 F1 World Champion, for example, retired from F1 racing so that he could drive in CART's IndyCar race season the following year in 1993.

One of the negative outcomes of the Open Wheel Split in 1995 was the declining television ratings for IndyCar Series broadcasts. Television ratings are an audience measurement reported by the Nielsen Media Research group where one ratings point equals one percent of the television households in the United States. The ratings are based on samples of the entire population and are useful for comparing the popularity of different programs. Figure 2.6 illustrates the decline in viewership, particularly in comparison to NASCAR's pinnacle race, the Daytona 500. 1996 was the first year ever that the Daytona 500 earned higher ratings than the Indianapolis 500, a trend that continues today.

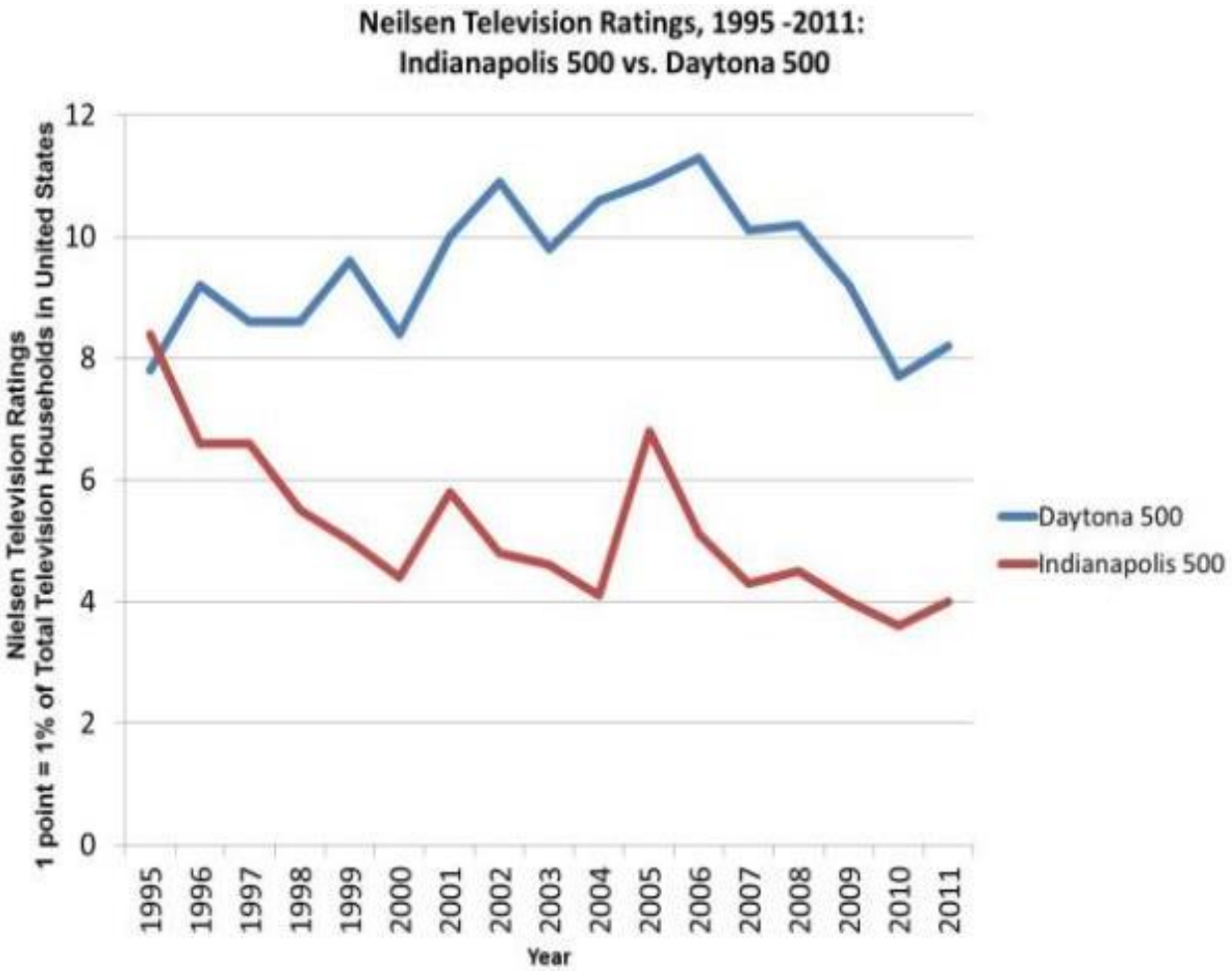

Figure 2.6. While Indianapolis 500 Nielsen television ratings declined, Daytona 500 ratings increased.

Television ratings for non-Indianapolis 500 races have also been steadily declining, with season averages falling below one rating point which, in 2010, represented roughly 1.6 million of the 115.9 million television households. In Figure 2.6, there were three years in which television ratings increased for the Indianapolis 500. In 2001, several major racing teams from CART/CCWS switched over to the IRL. One driver crossing over to the IRL was the popular and charismatic Helio Castroneves who, upon winning the 2001 Indianapolis 500, climbed the safety fence to greet the cheering

fans. The image of the race car driver emerging from his victorious car and climbing the fence became the highlight of the 2001 race. The big spike in ratings in 2005 is overwhelmingly due to the popularity and success of female rookie driver, Danica Patrick. Not only did she have a high qualified position on the starting grid, but she led several laps near the end of the race and ended up finishing in third place. The final increase noted below was a minor jump in ratings in 2008, most likely due to unification of open-wheel racing in the United States. Figure 2.7 summarizes the interrelated relationship among IndyCar, automobile industry, and media and television (Figure 2.7). Data analysis of the television ratings for each of the case study events can be found in Chapter 4.

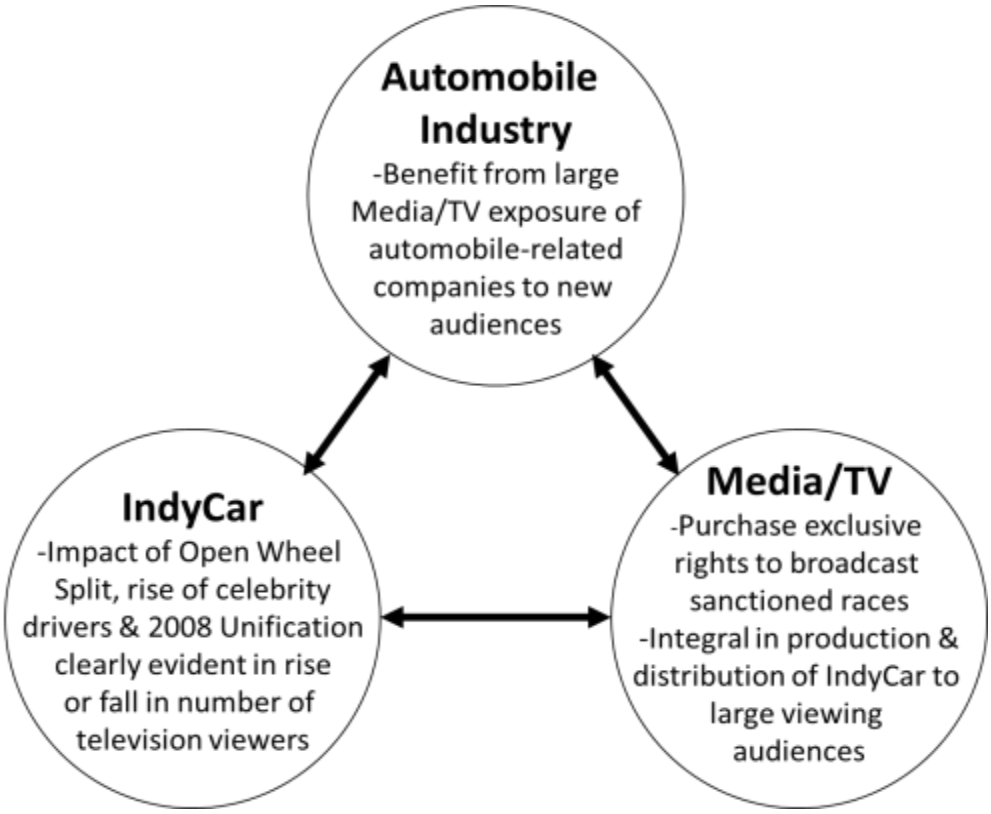

Figure 2.7. Sanctioning Body – Automobile Industry – Media/Television Figuration

2.7.1 Media and IndyCar Today: ABC/ESPN

Since 2005, ABC has supplemented its coverage of the Indianapolis 500 with four-to-six other IndyCar Series races during each racing season. The other IndyCar Series races during the season have, however, been televised on lesser-viewed cable channels, such as ESPN2 and Fox Sports. In 2008, ABC Sports extended their broadcast rights of the Indianapolis 500 and four other IndyCar Series events for another four years ending in 2012. ABC pays between $4 million and $6 million annually to broadcast their four-to-six IndyCar races (Schoettle 2011). ABC viewed unification and the popular appeal of Danica Patrick and Helio Castroneves as key reasons to extend the partnership with the IndyCar Series (Ourand 2009). From an IndyCar Series perspective, the agreement with ABC places its racing series on a media platform that reaches 99 percent of the United States market. Further, because both ABC and ESPN are owned by The Walt Disney Company, these select IndyCar Series races are also shown to international audiences via ESPN International and heavily promoted across the various ESPN outlets.

2.7.2 Media and IndyCar Today: Versus/NBC Sports Network

Seeking more ancillary programming of IndyCar Series events and drivers, the IRL partnered with Versus, a sports-focused Comcast cable television channel that was seeking higher profile sporting competitions to show on its network. In 2008, Versus added the National Hockey League, the Tour de France, and tennis's Davis Cup competition as the channel transitioned from its previous name, Outdoor Life Network, that focused its programming mainly on hunting and fishing shows. From the perspective of IRL leadership, ABC/ESPN was not providing enough pre- and post- race coverage of

their events, sometimes ending an IndyCar broadcast before the completion of the race because of contractual agreements to air other sporting events during specific time slots (Ourand 2009).

Near the end of 2008, Versus purchased the $67 million broadcasting rights to at least thirteen IndyCar Series race events for ten years beginning in 2009 (Ourand 2009). In return, the IRL received more coverage of race events and drivers with seven hours each week devoted solely to coverage of the IndyCar Series. The IRL agreed to the contract even though Versus was available in 20 million fewer homes than ESPN, resulting in a 60 percent drop in viewership of IndyCar races in 2009 compared to the previous year (Ourand and Smith 2009). With the television ratings declining because of the switch to Versus, several corporate sponsors of IndyCar Series race teams began to consider ending their sponsorships (Schoettle 2010a). At the end of 2011, Comcast merged with NBC Universal and subsequently changed Versus' name to NBC Sports Network. This merger had minimal impact on IndyCar television viewership with 2012 ratings declining 27 percent after Versus' name change.

2.8 Corporate Sponsorship and IndyCar

North American open-wheel racing, including IndyCar leaders, teams, and drivers are supported financially from the large sums of sponsorship money. By using race cars as billboards, corporate sponsors can reach spectators and TV audiences. Henry *et al.* (2007) noted that, "Motorsport should be seen as a mechanism that allows products and services to develop their brand awareness and associations by utilizing the particular connotations associated with, and provided by, motorsport" (149). A recent survey of

corporate sponsors of motorsport found media exposure to be the primary motivation for their sponsorship (Grant-Braham 2008). Numerous other studies correlate corporate sponsorship of race cars and brand loyalty (Collin *et al*. 2002; Dewhirst and Hunter 2002). Research from NASCAR shows a great deal of brand loyalty to the products being advertised on the cars of a fan's favorite drivers (Levin *et al*. 2004). More money generated by teams allows them to buy better equipment and hire better drivers.

Furthermore, because IndyCar racing is attached to a glamorous, luxurious lifestyle and high use of technology, companies can associate their brands of products with these traits and reach target markets (Fenton 2005). Figure 2.8 summarizes the interrelated relationship among IndyCar, media and television, and corporate sponsorship (Figure 2.8). Corporate sponsorship within motorsport has either supported the race cars, including teams and drivers, or the race event. Sponsorship of the race car typically involves a decal or painted livery and the naming of the car or race team for the entire season (e.g., Bowes Seal Fast Special, Target Chip Ganassi Racing). Sponsorship of the event varies from title sponsor of the race (e.g., Honda Grand Prix of St. Petersburg) to advertising on billboards around the track, on the event website, or inside the event souvenir program. Typically, event sponsorship is organized and secured by the event promoter and is critical in offsetting costs associated with the sanctioning fee, which is approximately $1.5 million for most IndyCar events (Cavin 2010). Figure 2.9 lists several perceived benefits of event sponsors as documented by Grant-Braham (2008) (Figure 2.9).

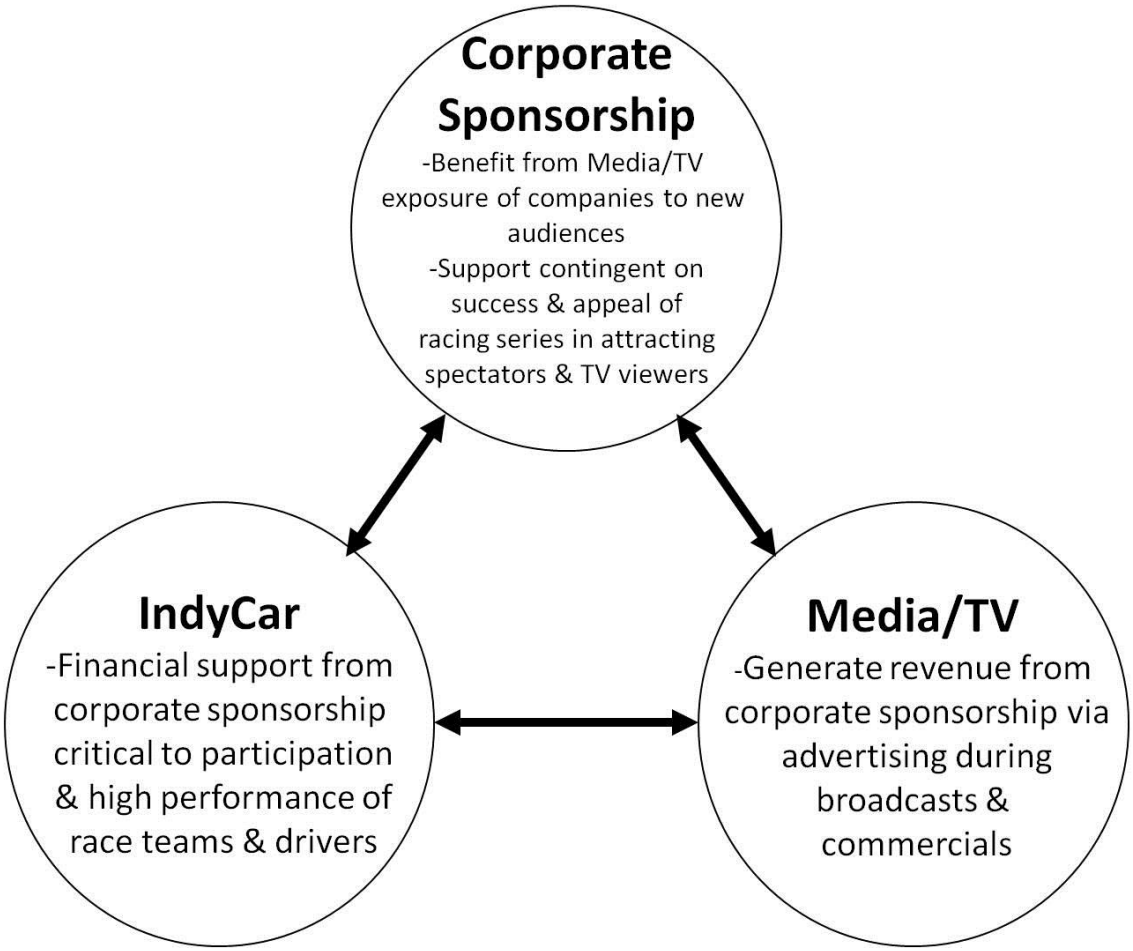

Figure 2.8. Sanctioning Body – Corporate Sponsorship – Media/Television Figuration

1) Increased awareness of company or product name.
2) Identification with a particular lifestyle.
3) Differentiation of product from competitors.
4) Enhanced commitment to community or ethnic group.
5) Entertainment of key clients; business-to-business marketing.
6) Increased merchandising opportunities.
7) Shaping or reinforcement of public's perception of a product's attributes.
8) Positive impact on the bottom line.

Figure 2.9. Perceived Benefits of Sponsoring Race Events (adapted from Grant-Braham 2008, 79)

From the origins of motorsport in the 1890s up until the 1970s, IndyCar received most of its sponsorship from automobile-related companies, particularly automobile, oil, and tire manufacturers. Initially, automobile manufacturers used motorsport for research and design as well as the promotion and marketing of their product to consumers. Also during this early period, newspapers were major sponsors of motorsport events as they used the early appeal of motorsport to promote their newspaper. By the 1920s, more non-automobile manufacturing companies began sponsoring cars, including Majestic Radios, Pay Day candy bars, and State Auto insurance company. However, high-performance car manufacturers (e.g., Duesenburg, Maserati) and automobile-related products (e.g., Cummins Diesel engines, Firestone tires, And Champion Spark Plugs) were the most active corporate sponsors. During the 1940s, major oil companies (e.g., Mobil Oil, Gulf Oil) began sponsoring race teams and drivers.

After the 1970 National Championship season, USAC officials decided to revamp the sport by decreasing the number of races from 20 to 12 and increasing each race purse with the hope of increasing the stature and profile of each event. USAC also announced picking up title sponsorship from Philip Morris and Marlboro as the season-long "National Championship" was now called the "USAC Marlboro Championship Series." Tobacco companies began sponsorship of both NASCAR (Winston Cup) and IndyCar after the 1970 Public Health Cigarette Smoking Act banned cigarette advertising on television. This caused a redirection of tobacco advertising from television commercials to motorsport via event and race car team sponsorship. In October 1971, the Marlboro 300 in Trenton, New Jersey became the first USAC-sanctioned race to receive title sponsorship of an event.

Previous research has shown how tobacco advertising has circumvented restrictions, especially those imposed by regulation, by using motorsport to reach new consumers (Blum 1991; Chapman 2002; Hafez and Ling 2005). In a 1989 open-wheel race called the Marlboro Grand Prix, the Marlboro logo was shown over 6,000 times during the 90 minute telecast (Blum 1991). Since it was illegal for tobacco companies to advertise their products in print and television media, companies avoided tighter advertising restrictions by using race car liveries to place their logos to be seen by visiting spectators and television viewing audiences. For the next 30 years, tobacco, automotive and alcoholic beverage companies were the most prevalent sponsors of IndyCar racing and were critical in financing the technological innovations of race teams and cars while also promoting the sport of IndyCar to new fans via cross-promotion. Legislation was passed in 2007 that no longer allowed tobacco companies to advertise their brand name on race car liveries, thus ending tobacco's 37 year history with the sport.

Another key negative outcome of the Open Wheel Split was the loss of sponsorship as teams in both the IRL and CART/CCWS saw a decline in sponsorship. Initially, large company sponsorships from Miller Brewing, Budweiser, Honda, and Toyota moved with the race teams to CART leaving the IRL with smaller, less well-known corporate sponsorships. As fewer fans attended and watched IRL and CART races, corporations switched their marketing platforms to other forms of motorsport, particularly NASCAR, which became the most popular North American form. By the end of the 1990s, the IndyCar Series received much of its sponsorship from small internet companies seeking brand awareness during the internet boom that preceded the bursting

of the dot-com bubble in 2000-2001. In 2000, Northern Lights, an internet search engine agreed to be the title sponsor of the IndyCar Series. After two years, however, Northern Lights decided to leave the sport.

As more CART/CCWS moved to the IRL from 2001 to 2006, they often cited pressures from their sponsors for urging the switch. Many of the sponsors wanted to continue sponsoring race teams. They preferred, however, the opportunity to use the marquee status of the Indianapolis 500 as their marketing platform. This switch brought several Fortune 500 companies to the Indy Racing League, including Marlboro, Target, Red Bull, Firestone, and General Motors. These bigger-name companies provided higher paying sponsorships for Indy Racing League teams. As corporations began using the IRL as their marketing platform, IRL officials mandated that sponsors also promote the racing series (Schoettle 2007).

2.8.1 Corporate Sponsorship and IndyCar Today

Building on the success, star power, and marketability of celebrity drivers and many young drivers with famous IndyCar last names such as Andretti, Foyt, and Rahal, corporate sponsorship of the IndyCar Series has begun to increase. In late 2009, the clothing company, IZOD purchased the rights for near $10 million per year to become the title sponsor of the "IZOD IndyCar Series" from 2010 to 2015 (Klayman 2009). In describing the partnership, Mike Kelly, executive vice president for Phillips-Van Heusen, the parent organization of IZOD, stated, "We saw an opportunity to invest our money and effort to re-introduce this amazing sport to appeal to a younger audience by showcasing the speed, technology and sexiness that the series offers, and in doing so, connect that

same sexiness to our IZOD brand" (*The Toronto Sun* 2010, 24). At the conclusion of IZOD's first season as title sponsor, the apparel company announced a 350 percent return on investment, a 10 percent increase in brand awareness, with a 16 percent increase among 25-35 year old males (Schoettle 2010b).

The desire of IZOD not only to grow their brand, but simultaneously grow open-wheel motorsport in the United States, illustrates the mutual partnership between the two organizations. IZOD has since placed advertisement of both their brand and IndyCar racing in popular magazines, like *Vanity Fair* and *GQ*, and in television commercials shown on ABC, ESPN and Versus. IZOD also purchased commercial spots during the 2010 NFL Playoffs that were viewed by nearly 100 million viewers during the highly-rated football games thus providing greater exposure of IZOD clothes and IndyCar racing. It was estimated that IZOD spent $6-7 billion on promoting their brand and IndyCar largely via purchasing advertising across many media platforms (Schoettle 2010).

2.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter began with a review of previous figurational sociology research that has investigated the mutually beneficial, interconnected relationships among sporting organizations (e.g., INDYCAR), media and television companies, and corporate sponsors. I identified and described IndyCar's interconnected web of historical and current media, automobile industry, and corporate sponsorship partners that have all had a vested interest and key role in the staging of IndyCar race events. The question remains, however, is this interconnected web the same for each case study event? For

instance, does the automotive industry have a similar level of involvement with each event? Are the reasons IndyCar wants to sanction races at a particular venue the same for each case study event? The answers to these questions are the focus of Chapter 4, as I conduct a content analysis of each case study event and identify the key similarities and differences among the "figurations" for these three events. Further, the case study and cross-comparison approach that this research utilizes provides insights into the composition of the interconnected relationships described above for each motorsport event type (street circuit, oval speedway, road course). In Chapter 4, I explain the research methodology used to identify the figurations of key individuals and entities critical in the expansion of IndyCar race events to these particular case study events. In the chapter that follows, I introduce the role of local place marketers into this interconnected web. I define and explain the term "place marketing" and begin to identify the different local public and private place marketing actors and types of place marketing strategies utilized. I also highlight previous literature on the use of motorsport events in the marketing of place.

CHAPTER 3
PLACE MARKETING, MEGA-EVENTS, AND MOTORSPORT

3.1 Introduction

The use of motorsport events by local place marketers first began when organized races were held in the early 20th Century. With the automobile still in its infancy and rarely seen, spectators were attracted to the speed and danger that accompanied race car drivers trying to break a new world speed record. With the breaking of new speed records came increased publicity. This notoriety was not only good for the race-winning automobile manufacturers and newspaper sales, but also for the places that hosted such events. Some early races in lightly populated southern California were sponsored by cities in hopes of attracting in-migrants by "advertising their greatest asset—open land" via newspapers and magazine depictions and photographs of the event (Osmer and Harms 1999, 3).

In 1914, a Chicago-based building company asked the Des Moines, Iowa Chamber of Commerce for help in constructing a $100,000 wooden or board oval in Des Moines. The building company sweetened the deal by promising faster speeds than those recorded at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway in order to attract as many spectators to Des Moines as possible (Seward 1962). Mindful of the opportunity to attract new visitors, the Des Moines Chamber of Commerce obliged and in 1915 Prince Speedway hosted a 300 mile race in front of 10,000 spectators (Seward 1962).

Further, automobile racing in the American South has origins well before NASCAR's inception in 1947. In the early 1900s, several races were held in southern urban areas (e.g., Savannah, New Orleans, and Atlanta) as these "races served

simultaneously as sport, social events, and civic advertisements" (Hall 2002, 659). Just as this study reveals, different places embraced and used these motorsport events differently, depending on their particular place marketing strategy. Sometimes automobile races were added during other events to generate greater "buzz", like during Mardi Gras in New Orleans, and in Galveston during their cotton carnival. In the case of Daytona-Ormond Beach, automobile racing was seen as a way to attract northern tourists to Florida's beaches (Hall 2002).

The previous chapter introduced the key stakeholders involved in the production and distribution of a motorsport event but did not include the stakeholders that are also the focal point of this present research: local place marketers. In this chapter, I define and describe 'place marketing' and follow with a literature review of mega-event research and, in particular, motorsport events. This literature review places this research project within a larger body of place marketing and mega-event research and is useful in understanding the positive and negative outcomes of these events. From this review, I provide a context for answering the following research questions: **Who are the key individuals or entities seeking and promoting an IndyCar Series event in their city or region? What are the perceived benefits or goals of hosting an IndyCar Series race? What are the problems of hosting an IndyCar Series race?**

3.2 Place Marketing

Marketing can be defined as the advertising, distribution, and selling of a good or product to satisfy consumers' wants. Those marketing a product or service try to obtain a competitive advantage over other producers. Using marketing research, the producers

target individuals with traits deemed desirable in hopes of attracting and retaining them as consumers. Places, whether they are cities, regions, or states, can also be conceptualized as a product or a commodity to be consumed (Ward 1998). Because of intense competition, a city or region's image competes with other cities' and regions' images and must be successfully marketed to specific targets utilizing a specific marketing and branding strategy, much like a product's image. In a more globalized economy, increasing numbers of emerging markets and places are trying to obtain a competitive advantage over other places (Matson 1994); so much so, in fact, that this competition has been labeled a "place war" (Haider 1992).

It has been argued that in the "post-industrial" city, the municipal government has transitioned from being managerial to more entrepreneurial (Harvey 1989). Cities and regions compete for tourism revenues and capital investment from corporations, governments and retail activities. Places must adapt quickly to seize new opportunities and remain viable. Places must, therefore, apply a variety of strategies to present themselves positively by being appealing and distinct to tourists and investors.

3.2.1 Who are Place Marketers?

In *Marketing Places: Europe* (Kotler *et al*. 1999), the authors provide a list of the different types of individuals/entities typically involved in the marketing of places at the local and regional level. Figure 3.1 identifies these local and regional place marketers (Figure 3.1). Further, these place marketers are differentiated between public and private sector types. For the purposes of this research, Figure 3.1 is useful in identifying the key place marketers involved in attracting, hosting, and promoting each case study event as

"the marketers of a place can sometimes be difficult to identify" (Kotler *et al*. 1999, 66). This also allows for better conceptualizations of the similarities and differences between the types of place marketers when comparing the case study events presented.



Figure 3.1 Major Local Actors in Place Marketing (adapted from Kotler *et al.* 1999, 67)

3.2.2 Place Marketing Strategies

An initial step in the strategic market planning process is to conduct an internal SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis or "place audit" (Kotler *et al*. 2002). This audit involves an examination of the local population and culture, quality of life, physical assets, and economy, to help understand the place identity. In Chapter 6, I conduct a SWOT analysis for each case study event. Marketers of a place also need to identify the "factor conditions" that might create a competitive

advantage in an industry. Previous research has illustrated how national competitive advantages for firms are created in an industry by a few interrelated determinants (Porter 1990). Porter argues that the determinant most important to national or regional competitive advantage is "factor conditions". These conditions are not inherited from plentiful access to nearby raw materials or unskilled labor. Instead, they are created by a skilled workforce, increasing amounts of capital, and improved infrastructure. Although Porter's research focuses at the firm level, governments can play a large role in acting as a catalyst or hindrance to creating a nationally competitive advantage.

Upon identification of existing strengths and new opportunities, place marketers need to identify to whom they are marketing their place by identifying specific target markets. The four main target markets or buyers (Figure 3.2) include visitors, residents and employees, business and industry, and export markets (Kotler *et al*. 2002). Visitors could be business-related, viewing a possible production or conference meeting site or non-business related tourists looking for a place to spend some time vacationing. Residents and employees range from unskilled workers to the type of high-skilled employees that a city or region is hoping to attract from abroad or retain from within. Business and industry are the most highly sought target markets as place marketers try to lure businesses to move operations and invest within their region. Finally, place marketers can target new export markets to help introduce local products to new, more globally dispersed consumers.

Four broad strategies used by place marketers to attract these specific target markets include using images, people marketing, attractions and infrastructure strategies (Kotler *et al.* 2002) (see Figure 3.2). Image marketing involves producing a place image

that is attractive, believable, and unique. Further, whether they are famous people or enthusiastic local leaders, a place can use its citizens to market itself. An attraction such as hosting a major sporting event, is another tool used to lure specific potential investors. Although having a positive image and offering plenty of attractions are quite beneficial, modern infrastructure is needed to support sustained future growth. By focusing on the use of IndyCar race events as a place marketing strategy, this study adds to previous research on hosting large attractions, particularly global sporting events. Given the relatively large television audience watching across North America and throughout the world, IndyCar offers an attractive opportunity to stimulate or transform an area's cultural, political, and economic interests.



Figure 3.2. Levels of Place Marketing (Kotler *et al*. 2002, 46)

3.3 Mega-Events

Mega-events are defined as, "large-scale cultural (including commercial and sporting) events which have a dramatic character, mass popular appeal and international significance" (Roche 2000, 1). Further, these mega-events "rely for their success on uniqueness, status, or timely significance to create interest and attract attention" (Ritchie 1984, 2). Key characteristics of mega-events are that they significantly impact the host city, region, or nation and that they attract significant media coverage.

In an extensive review of previous mega-event research, Getz (2008) identifies three types of events that are most researched: business, festival, and sporting events. Business events relate to the hosting of conventions, conference meetings, and trade shows, whereas festivals range from carnivals, fairs, and musical concerts to other more cultural-specific events (e.g., Oktoberfest, Irish Festival, and Gay Pride Parade). According to Getz, research on sporting events has focused on the attraction of either participants of a sport to an area or the attraction of both spectators and participants to a large, spectator-oriented event. Large motorsport events attract spectators, but due to the large number of drivers, teams, and racing series types, large numbers of participants can also attend a race event weekend. This study builds upon previous research that focuses on the use of sporting events that attract both spectators *and* participants.

Horne and Manzenreiter (2003) identify three key reasons that explain the increasing attraction of sporting mega-events. First, advancements in mass communication and satellite technology provide access to much larger viewing audiences. Second, because these events are exposed to a large viewing audience in attendance and watching on TV, the "sport-media-business" alliance of corporate sponsors, merchandisers, and broadcasters, has increased its associations with sport events (Horne and Manzenreiter 2006, 5). Third, hosting mega-events provides an opportunity for cities and regions to promote themselves to new audiences.

Since the 1990s, research focusing on mega-sporting events has increased. In fact, one of the earliest studies of a mega-sporting event used the Adelaide Grand Prix Formula One motorsport event as a case study (Burns *et al*. 1986). Mega-sporting events have increasingly been used as a factor in urban and regional policy, as noted by

Whitson and Macintosh (1996). The rationale for the large investments in these events relate to job creation, attraction of visitors from outside the community, and a short-term economic boost to local business (e.g., full hotels and restaurants during event). Previous research clearly identifies, however, several negative impacts of hosting mega- and motorsport events. These events require considerable costs, cause an increase in traffic congestion, and disrupt the lives of local residents, especially those not interested in the event.

Preuss (2009) provides a review of the positive and negative impacts of hosting a mega-sporting event that have been identified in previous studies (see Table 3.1). Further, Preuss identifies the differing types of impacts or effects, including economic, tourism, environmental, and political. This rather exhaustive list of varying types of positive and negative impacts of mega-events proved to be a useful template when I made comparisons among the varied case study sites that are identified in the data analysis and drawing conclusions from this present research. I reference this table often in the following chapters.

Table 3.1. Potential Impacts of Hosting a Mega-Sporting Event (Preuss 2009, 135).

Types of Impacts	Positive	Negative
Economic	• Increased economic activity • Job creation • Increase in standard of living • New trade relations	• Price increase during event • Real estate speculation • Failure to attract tourists • High security costs • Over indebtedness of community • Increased local taxes • Shortage in labor and investments
Tourism/ Commercial	• Increased awareness of the region as a travel/tourism destination • Creation of new accommodation and tourist attractions • Increased knowledge concerning potential for investment & commercial activity in region • Increase in accessibility	• Acquisition of poor reputation as a result of inadequate facilities, crime, improper practices or inflated prices • Negative reactions from existing enterprises due to the possibility of new competition for local manpower and government assistance
Physical/ Environmental	• Construction of new (environmentally sustainable) facilities • Improvement of local infrastructure • Preservation of heritage • Environmental promotion	• Ecological damage • Non-sustainable facilities • Overcrowding • Changes in natural processes • Destruction of heritage • Architectural pollution
Social/ Cultural	• Increase in permanent level of local interest and participation in types of activity associated with event • Strengthening of regional values and traditions • Impacts on sport participation	• Commercialization of activities which may be of a personal or private nature • Potential increase in crime • Changes in community structure • Social dislocation
Psychological	• Increased local pride and community spirit • Increased awareness by non-locals • Festival atmosphere during event	• Tendency towards defensive attitudes concerning host region • Culture shock • Misunderstandings leading to varying degrees of host/visitor hostility
Political/ Administrative	• Enhanced international recognition of region and values • Development of skills among planners • International understanding • Better co-operation among different parties	• Economic exploitation of local population to satisfy ambitions of political elite • Distortion of true nature of event to reflect elite values • Inability to achieve aims • Increase in administrative costs • Use of event to legitimate unpopular decisions • Legitimating of ideology and socio-cultural reality • Corruption

In the following sections, I review previous studies that identify the positive and negative impacts of hosting a major sporting event and, in particular, motorsport events. The sections are organized thematically based on the types of positive and negative impacts listed in Table 3.1. Within each section, I review research that includes several different forms of motorsport and racing series held in various regions of the world considering there has been minimal research on IndyCar or motorsport events in the United States. During the 1990s, various Australian motorsport events, including several CART-sanctioned IndyCar races, and Formula One World Championship events in Asia dominate this research area (Gamage and Higgs 1997; Fredline and Faulkner 1999; Fredline and Faulkner 2000). This literature review provides an informed contextual background I used to design the research methods and data analyses in the chapters that follow, including the types of key questions that should be posed when researching place marketers.

3.4 Economic, Tourism and Commercial Impacts of Motorsport Events

Economic impacts are "the net economic change in the incomes of host residents that results from spending attributed to tourists" (Crompton 2006, 68). Cities and regions hosting large sporting events are typically justified on the basis of a positive and direct economic boost from visiting spectators and participants (Chalip 2004) and the creation of typically short-term jobs related to the event (Roche 1994). Much of the motorsport event literature is comprised of economic impact analyses that utilize input-output tables to calculate direct economic benefits and to calibrate the multipliers used to calculate indirect economic benefits.

3.4.1 Increased Economic Activity and Job Creation

A 1999 economic impact study of the Indianapolis 500 revealed that the race was responsible for generating $336.6 million annually, which was almost 50 percent of the Indianapolis Motor Speedway's $727 million annual impact on the central Indiana economy (Rosentraub 2001). A 2000 analysis of NASCAR's Daytona 500 found an average of a $41.77 million increase in taxable sales within Volusia County, in which Daytona resides, that was directly attributable to the race (Baade and Matheson 2000). Bernthal and Regan (2004) argue that two NASCAR races each year at Darlington Speedway in South Carolina have a total economic impact of over $46 million, creating directly or indirectly 908 jobs within the "Pee Dee" region surrounding the paved-oval speedway.

Building off the Darlington study, analysis of a newly-constructed race track in Sparta, Kentucky predicted the attraction of a NASCAR race would create 362 event-related jobs with a total economic impact of $38.8 million for Gallatin County, the county in which Kentucky Speedway is located (Upright *et al*. 2011). Furthermore, $32.4 million of that total is from the hotel, campground, retail and food service industries. Kentucky Speedway has many similarities with Iowa Speedway: both are newly-constructed venues supported with public funding, located along a major interstate, and found in rural locales with the nearest major city located 30-45 miles away. Insights from this research on Kentucky Speedway were therefore useful in my Iowa Speedway research.

Using a survey of attending race fans along with several estimates of multipliers, the *Motorsport Industry Association* (2003) estimated the 2002 F1 British Grand Prix

provided 1,148 jobs with £5.6 million (US $6.8 million) directly benefiting the area near the race venue. In another study, researchers compared the economic impact of the 1996 Melbourne Grand Prix a scenario in which the F1 event was staged in a more rural venue (Gamage and Higgs 1997). Because they calculated a higher multiplier for Melbourne than the rural venue, Gamage and Higgs found that, "holding the Melbourne Grand Prix in the Melbourne Metropolitan Region created an additional AUS $12 million (US $6.23 million using 1997 conversion rates) indirect expenditure, an additional AUS $3 million (US $1.56 million using 1997 conversion rates) in household income, and an additional 2,500 jobs than would have been expected had the event been staged in the (other rural) region" (Gamage and Higgs 1997, 13). Ernst & Young (2011) later used the Computable General Equilibrium (CGE) model to compare the economic activity generated by the Grand Prix against hypothetical scenarios for the state of Victoria without the event (i.e. if the event were staged in another Australian state or overseas). From this, they concluded that the 2011 Grand Prix increased Victorian Gross State Product (GSP) by between AUS $32.04 million (US $32.05 million) and AUS $39.34 million (US $39.44 million) and created an additional 351 to 411 jobs in Victoria (Ernst & Young 2011).

3.4.2 Attraction of Visitors

Sporting events can also attract tourists and visitors from areas beyond the local region, particularly since the global expansion of communication and satellite television has increased the audience of televised sporting events. Previous research has also shown the role of national and international media elevating the profile and awareness of an area to new investors and tourists. These large events can also leave a favorable enough

impression with spectators and participants who may return later for a non-event visit or even decide to relocate to the area permanently.

The Singapore Tourism Board calculated US $115 million in revenue from the 40,000 tourists visiting for the 2008 Singapore Grand Prix Formula One event, setting a new record for revenue per hotel room for one weekend (Singapore Tourism Board Press Release 2009). These overseas visitors attending the race were also observed to stay longer than non-race weekend tourists. The previously mentioned study of NASCAR's Darlington Raceway found a significant economic impact for the rural area surrounding Darlington, South Carolina because 93 percent of attending race fans came from outside the region (Bernthal and Regan 2004). Formula One's Malaysian Grand Prix was primarily pushed by Prime Minister Mahatir Mohamed, who stated, "Motor sports will help to put us on the world map and attract commerce and tourists to Malaysia" (Spurgeon 2007, 5). The visitors can be businesspersons and organizational representations looking for sites to host meetings as well as tourists seeking a place for vacation (Kotler 2002). Commenting on the importance of non-local visitors, Joie Chitwood, former Senior Vice President of Business Affairs for the Indianapolis Motor Speedway (IMS) stated (Powell 2004, 1):

> It was conservatively estimated that (IMS)… provides $727 million (annually) to the economy of Indianapolis. What racetracks really do is draw people from at least 300 miles away. What motorsports does is it brings people to town, and it's that dollar that comes from outside the community that provides the greatest impact.

3.4.3 Promotion of Local Companies and Industries

Mega-sporting events have also been shown to be a tool used to promote local products and to attract investment and economic development (Dwyer *et al*. 2006; Getz 2007). The media coverage from these events can showcase local businesses and tourism during the televised broadcasts, a term referred to as the "showcase effect" (Hiller 1989, 119). An analysis of the television broadcast of Formula One's 2009 Australian Grand Prix estimated that the mega-event provided the advertising equivalent value to the State of Victoria of AUS $35.6 million (Comperio Research 2009). Malaysian Grand Prix place marketers have used the hosting of their F1 race event to trigger spinoffs in the local automotive industry by encouraging research (Francis 1996), even though the sanctioning fee to host the race was estimated to be $37.75 million in 2007 (Sylt and Reid 2007).

Chinese companies, including Lenovo, Sinopec, and SINA have used the large spectator and media event of Formula One's Grand Prix of China to introduce Chinese products and services to the global market (AFX International Focus 2004; Interfax China 2003). Further, the automobile race in Shanghai has been strategically located inside the Jiading Automobile City, a US $6 billion project that was created as China's center for automobile manufacturing, exhibition, logistics, sales and services (Tianle 2002). Considering India has had a lagging automotive and, in particular motorsport industry, hosting a Formula One event at the Buddh International Circuit near Delhi was seen as an opportunity to improve domestic automobile production by utilizing research and technology to help integrate the Indian automotive and motorsport industry with the global market (Spurgeon 2007).

3.4.4 Key Concerns of Economic, Tourism, and Commercial Impact Analyses

There is considerable research on mega-sporting events that suggests, however, that the positive economic impacts identified by many previous research efforts are either overly exaggerated (Dwyer *et al*., 2005; Horne and Manzenreiter 2006) or have demonstrated no statistically significant relationship between hosting a mega-sporting event and improved economic development (Siegried and Zimbalist 2006). Porter (1999) found, for example, that Super Bowl-related retail sales and hotel vacancy rates in Miami did not change significantly from a non-Super Bowl year. Further, Baade and Matheson (2000) found that the total economic impact of the Super Bowl was less than one-tenth of the amount proclaimed by the National Football League.

Key theoretical issues that exaggerate economic impact analyses that have been identified by previous research (Matheson 2006) include the "substitution effect," "crowding out," and "leakages." The substitution effect suggests that a local resident is spending his or her money at the particular local sporting event venue that they would have otherwise spent somewhere else locally, thus not really boosting their impact on the local economy. Further, outside visitors or tourists also could be choosing to spend their money at the venue instead of another tourist spot in an area.

Another potential negative impact of a sporting event is the displacement of locals, or "crowding out", caused by the burdens of increased congestion or noise from the event. Further, higher prices associated with the event might be another reason local residents are deterred by the event and will leave the area for the weekend. Also, visitors from outside the local area who frequently visit the locale might choose not to visit during the event in order to avoid the crowds and congestion (Matheson 2006).

Finally, "leakages" refer to the revenue generated by an event that is not returned or does not stay in the host area. Many non-residents will visit during a race weekend spending considerable money on merchandise from trailers and tickets to races which largely benefit other non-residents (Baade and Matheson 2000). For example, if a fan purchases merchandise from A.J. Foyt Racing during the Grand Prix of St. Petersburg, that revenue does not stay in St. Petersburg. Instead, it would benefit Houston, Texas, the location of Foyt Racing headquarters.

3.5 Political and Administrative Impacts of Motorsport Events

3.5.1 Enhancing the Image of a Place

In terms of intangible benefits, local and regional governments seek new internal investment by creating a spectacle and enhancing the image of the place. Hosting a mega sporting event can also help a place advertise a new image and "personality" by incorporating the event into a place marketing strategy (Hiller 1989; Roche 1994; Whitson and Macintosh 1996; Chalip 2004; Chalip and Costa 2005). For example, a recent study analyzed the role of the 24 hours of LeMans race event, the most famous sports car and endurance racing event in the world, in the local governments' overall "territorial marketing strategy" (Desbordes and Hautbois 2010, 230). Since LeMans is located in a rural area of France, local event organizers wanted to enhance their image as being more than an agricultural area. Further, since the LeMans circuit is the most famous in France and hosts a few world-renown racing events, the local place marketers were seeking brand awareness beyond France to international viewers and spectators.

One of the major goals of hosting the Singapore Grand Prix Formula One race was the promotion of Singapore as a modern, cosmopolitan city with a great urban lifestyle and a vibrant cityscape, including five-star hotels and upscale restaurants (Yeo 2007). The Indian Grand Prix Formula One event held at the Buddh International Circuit near Delhi was seen as a way to entice the country's large, youthful population not to leave to find work outside of India (O'Connor 2007). Motorsport is, therefore, seen as a way to retain the highly educated youth that seek wealth, cars, and technology, three traits that are almost synonymous with racing. The location of the South Korean Grand Prix Formula One event in a rural, poor area of the country is seen as a way to help improve the local conditions of this area by increasing tourism (Gelken 2006). Also, hosting the Grand Prix was seen as an opportunity to change the image of Korean automobiles from cheap and unreliable to luxurious, high-tech and dependable (Gelken 2006).

A survey of spectators from the 2008 Shanghai F1 Grand Prix found that "76.1 percent of respondents reported positive overall image change about the host city of Shanghai and 11 percent reported negative change, with the remaining 12.9 percent reporting no change" (Liu and Gratton 2010, 636). Of those reporting a positive overall impact, 61.4 percent stated they have a higher probability of revisiting for a future Grand Prix event (Liu and Gratton 2010). Another study surveyed individuals staying in a large hotel very close to a temporary street circuit during the internationally-renowned Macau Grand Prix touring car and motorcycle races (McCartney 2005). Although only 43 percent of those staying at the hotel were attending the race, a majority of these individuals said the attractiveness of the city, friendliness of the residents, and unique

architecture were all much greater than they perceived prior to their visit, illustrating the ability of a mega-sport event to change the perception of visitors.

3.5.2 Political and Administrative Costs

Administrative costs often associated with motorsport events include the securing of the right from a sanctioning body to host the event, known as the sanctioning fee. Other costs include "build-out", which typically includes infrastructural improvements in order for the event to take place. For example, street circuit venues must smooth sections of the race course and add curbing prior to a race to ensure safety. For temporary street circuits, this would involve not only the annual construction and tear-down of barriers, fencing, and grandstands near the event site, but also their maintenance and up-keep during the rest of the year. For purpose-built motorsport venues, most of the costs are associated with the initial construction of the venue.

3.6 Social, Cultural and Psychological Impacts of Motorsport Events

Socio-cultural impacts tend to focus more on the perceptions of individual residents and community citizens hosting a sporting event. The impacts of motorsport events on local residents have been identified in previous research by Fredline and Falkner (2000). They used an IndyCar urban street race in Gold Coast, Australia and Formula One's Australian Grand Prix in Melbourne as case studies to identify types of residents based on their perception of, and reaction to, hosting the event. They identified five main clusters of residents that they later narrowed down to three types in a follow-up study (Fredline and Falkner 2002). They found that individuals who are "positive" or in

favor of the event tend to have a high identification with the event theme, attend the race and are younger, while those who have a "negative" view of the event are older, have a low identification with the event, and most likely did not attend the race. Those that were "ambivalent," were, for the most part, those who had the least amount of contact (i.e. lived the farthest average distance away from event), whereas both "positive" and "negative" residents tend to reside nearest the event. Further, residents who gained employment due to the event also had a positive view of the event (Fredline 2004).

3.6.1 Increased Local Pride and Community Spirit

Previous research has found that a successful production and hosting of a mega sporting event can increase civic pride, community involvement, and the morale of the local community (Dwyer *et al*. 2000; Arcodia and Whitford 2006). Cegeilski and Mules' (2002) study of a street circuit race in Canberra, Australia found that over 75 percent of local Canberra residents approved and supported the Australian V8 Supercars touring car race continuing the following year, with over half indicating the event increased their community pride as the event "makes the area more attractive and promotes (it)" (pg. 68). A survey of Singapore residents found that 75 percent of them agreed that successfully hosting a Formula One event has increased their civic pride in Singapore (Henderson *et al*. 2010). In a study of the World Rally Championship rally car race in Australia, 93.5 percent of the residents of the town of Kyogle felt that the image of their city was positively altered (Mackeller 2009). Many residents mentioned that increased awareness from a global audience had put Kyogle "on the map" and the "world stage" of motorsport (Mackeller 2009, 16).

Hassan (2005) argued that the staging of a rally car event that crossed the often contentious Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland border was useful in enhancing "social cohesion" (page 3) and "developing closer links between the people of both jurisdictions" (page 16). This study focused on the spectators attending the 2005 Rally Ireland point-to-point, internationally-sanctioned race that took place along closed dirt and gravel roads across both states in Ireland. Empirical research showed that the majority of the spectators were willing to attend the event on both sides of the border with only about three percent of attendees feeling "uncomfortable/uneasy about having to watch the rally outside their own immediate jurisdiction" (page 16).

3.6.2 Negative Social Impacts of Motorsport Events

Focusing on the negative social impacts, one study compared the perceptions of residents near the Australian Grand Prix F1 race with those living near a large, Melbourne Labor Day festival and those living in a smaller town in a rural area hosting a largely local community-supported arts festival (Fredline *et al.* 2005). Although the Grand Prix brought many positive impacts to the local community, the event had a "substantially negative impact on the community because of the noise it creates" (Fredline *et al*. 2006, vii). Another Australian study found noise and traffic to be the negative impacts felt most by local residents hosting a V8 SuperCar race in Australia's Parliamentary Precinct in Canberra (Cegielski and Mules 2002). A more recent survey of an Australian community hosting the World Rally Championships found that 29 percent of the residents feel their community "has suffered from conflict or division due to the event" with those strongly opposed being heavily inconvenienced by the event

(Mackeller 2009, pg. 48). Another negative impact associated with a motorsport event was identified after the 1985 Australian Grand Prix Formula One event (Fischer *et al.* 1986). The "hoon effect" is the idea that car accidents after the race event increase as passenger car drivers dangerously emulate their race car driving heroes. A hoon is a slang word in Australia and New Zealand for an irresponsible, speeding driver of a passenger car.

Because of an increase in traffic congestion or a perception of increased crime, local residents may decide to leave and travel outside the region to avoid the perceived congestion, traffic, and social disruption associated with the event. There is a concern that if the event does not go according to plan, or is not successful, that it actually casts the city or region hosting the event in a negative light. For example, a severe weather event may delay or cancel the event. Previous research on the 2006 United States Grand Prix F1 race at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway (IMS) identified the magnitude of a controversial, negatively publicized F1 race at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway and the multiple stakeholders involved in public relations mitigation after the event (Pfahl and Bates 2008). Due to unsafe Michelin tires, only six cars raced in front of 150,000 disgruntled spectators that came expecting to see a 22-car field. Event attendance dropped considerably the following year with less than 100,000 race fans eventually leading to the event cancellation and removal of the IMS from the F1 World Championship the following year. The elite, global stature of this F1 event had been a boost for central Indiana over the course of its ten-year existence, making the negative publicity generated by the 2006 event that much more difficult.

3.7 Physical and Environmental Impacts of Motorsport Events

Motorsports' harshest critics are usually those that view the activity as unsustainable, carbon-intensive, and a wasteful use of fossil fuels. They argue that motorsports are too dependent on the use and conspicuous depletion of natural resources while emitting harmful air and noise pollutants (Tranter and Lowes 2009a). Further, it is argued that motorsport should be banned (Tranter and Lowes 2009b, 75):

> Because of the precarious state of the world's environment, staging motorsport events in significant public places is incompatible with a responsible approach to protecting the livability of the planet.

Apart from research by Paul Tranter and Mark Knowles, however, there is not a large body of research that focuses on the environmental impact of motorsport events.

In response to cries to ban motorsport, some have suggested that motorsport represents a small fraction of fossil fuel depletion when compared to other international business activities (Cairns 2009). Others suggest that motorsport is, in fact, a leader in more environmentally-friendly technologies, whether it is cleaner-burning racing fuels, more efficient use of energy within a moving vehicle, or lighter composite materials that reduce a car's weight (Dingle 2009). Another study identified several modifications utilizing green technologies that could be introduced in order to reduce environmental and economic costs associated with Formula One's Bahrain Grand Prix (Alnaser 2006).

3.8 Chapter Summary

Chapter 2 highlighted the primary stakeholders involved in the evolution of IndyCar racing. In this chapter, I introduced the role of local place marketers into this interconnected web. I began by defining "place marketing" and identified the varying

local public and private place marketing actors and types of place marketing strategies described in previous research. From a place marketing perspective, this chapter focused on both the positive and negative impacts for localities that host mega-events, in particular, motorsport events. In the following chapter, I outline the research methods that I use to investigate the differing place marketing strategies evident for each case study event. By using a mixed-methods approach, I elucidate the perceived and observed benefits as well as costs associated from hosting an IndyCar race event.

CHAPTER 4
METHODOLOGY AND DATA ANALYSIS: PART 1

4.1 Introduction

In order to answer all four of the research questions posed in Chapter 1, I incorporate multiple methodologies. A mixed-method strategy is used to collect and analyze quantitative and qualitative data in the same study (Creswell 2003). The use of mixed methods was chosen because results from one method can inform insights useful for another (Coyle and Williams 2000). Further, Markusen (1994) suggests using multiple sources of data, including both primary and secondary sources, for all cases since each has its own unique characteristics. This research uses the replication of multiple case studies, which has been shown to be useful in assessing cross-case comparisons and ascertaining similarities and differences among case study events (Yin 1994).

In order to identify those who are seeking and promoting an IndyCar event in each city or region, I first identify most of the key stakeholders, either local or non-local, for each case study event to ascertain the level of involvement among the local individuals and entities. This chapter utilizes the insights gleaned from the literature review of figurational sociology as detailed in Chapter 2, in order to identify these stakeholders. I describe the "sport-media complex" for each case study event by identifying the key players, including IndyCar, automotive and non-automotive event sponsors, and the media. I begin with an introduction to each of the case study events and explain how each came to fruition by focusing on key individuals and events prior to the first IndyCar race event at each venue. I conduct a textual analysis of articles from

local and regional newspapers and IndyCar press releases in the years preceding the first IndyCar event at each case study locale. I include a section for each case that explains IndyCar's perception of the value or benefit of adding each case study to the series schedule. Then, I introduce the title event sponsor for each event. All of the case study events have had the same title event sponsor since the first hosting of an IndyCar race. I also analyze the varying magnitude of each of the case study events based on the number of television viewers over each event's existence. *Street & Smith's SportsBusiness Daily* publishes data on sporting events provided by Nielsen Media Research. These data revealed stark contrasts between the large number of viewers watching events broadcast by ABC compared to few viewers watching Versus/NBC Sports.

The methodology and data sources used to identify these key local stakeholders are explained in sections 4.5 and 4.6. Results and general cross-comparisons of the collected data are included in section 4.7. Key similarities and differences observed across all three cases are summarized in section 4.8. I draw connections between the data observations and figurational sociology at the end of the chapter in section 4.9. The data clearly showcase that the case study events have quite differing levels of local involvement among both automotive and non-automotive companies and individuals from the public and private sectors. In the following chapter, I focus on the perceived positive impacts and benefits among the local stakeholders identified in this chapter.

4.2 Case Study Event Venue #1: Streets of St. Petersburg

4.2.1 Origins of Event

The inaugural St. Petersburg Grand Prix was a sports car endurance race that took place along the city's downtown streets in November 1985. Although 100,000 spectators attended the first race, race organizers lost nearly $500,000 due to large expenses associated with constructing a temporary street circuit (Dolan 1986). The race was organized by Motor Sports Enterprises, a collective of private investors, including local car dealership owners, retired company executives, and key St. Petersburg Area Chamber of Commerce leaders (Albright 1987).

In a 1986 Eastern Airline's in-flight magazine, St. Petersburg, Florida displayed an advertisement proclaiming "St. Petersburg: Florida's Monaco" (Albright 1986, 15A). The advertisement promoted the St. Petersburg Grand Prix along the city's downtown streets, drawing comparisons to Monaco's famous grand prix race, luxurious resorts, and location as a year-round vacation destination. The St. Petersburg Grand Prix race circuit also included a stretch along the city's waterfront, just like Monaco. Unlike Monaco, however, St. Petersburg had a lifeless downtown with minimal social and economic vitality. Hosting a racing event was part of a broader strategy by local corporate and government leaders to revitalize downtown St. Petersburg by attracting large cultural events and festivals, including the Grand Prix, a Major League Baseball franchise, and many arts festivals (Hoffmann 1990). The goal was to change St. Petersburg's image from that of a place for retirees and tourists to a vibrant, youthful city that is attractive for young families.

Although Motor Sports Enterprises lost money on the race, the event generated $16 million into the Tampa Bay region's economy, particularly in the hospitality and retail industry sectors (Nickens 1987). In subsequent years, race organizers continued to lose money on the race, citing a lack of local corporate sponsorship to help bear the costs of staging the race event. These costs include the erection of concrete barriers and fencing for safety (Allen 1989). Further, local fans stopped attending the races, as attendance fell below 20,000 (Lowitt 1989). In 1991, the St. Petersburg Grand Prix was cancelled after public funds from both the state and city were withheld due to budget cutbacks (Caldwell 1991). Racing returned to the downtown streets of St. Petersburg in 1996 and 1997 after the International Marketing Group took over race operations (Howard 1995). The race circuit included a section that passed by the construction of Tropicana Field, the future home of the Tampa Bay Rays. Once again, race attendance was lower than expected, causing race organizers to lose money on the race (Moncada 2001).

After numerous failed attempts at staging a successful automobile race in downtown St. Petersburg, the Grand Prix Association of Long Beach, Inc. (GPALB), the owners of Grand Prix of Long Beach (California) IndyCar race, struck a deal with the City Council of St. Petersburg to begin organizing a race in 2003 (Moncada 2001). This time, the "Grand Prix of St. Petersburg" (GPSP) would be a CART sanctioned race, the highest level of racing competition ever in the Tampa Bay area with faster cars and more famous drivers than the sports car races held previously. Interestingly, officials in nearby Tampa were also hoping to attract CART to a venue on the other side of Tampa Bay.

CART officials chose St. Petersburg, however, because the City of St. Petersburg already had access to barriers, curbing, and other street circuit infrastructure (Moncada 2001).

In reference to St. Petersburg, Chris Pook, GPALB president stated, "Yes, it's a motorcar race, but more importantly, it's a destination-marketing vehicle that shows what St. Petersburg has to offer and where it is, what its lifestyle represents, how it looks and feels" (Moncada 2001, 8). Pook later added, "St. Petersburg has the potential to be a truly romantic street circuit… the waterfront area and the harbor, and we can build that into a mini-Monte Carlo" (Korth 2001, 2C). About 50,000 race fans attended the 2003 CART event. Race organizers, however, lost $1.3 million (Silva 2008). After the 2003 event, GPALB decided no longer to promote the event, transferring the rights and assets of the Grand Prix to CART, which would soon file for bankruptcy and be bought by the owners of Champ Car World Series (Johnson 2003). CCWS was unable to organize a 2004 race in St. Petersburg (James 2004a). With no 2004 grand prix scheduled, city officials turned to the other North American-based open-wheel series, the Indy Racing League (James 2004b).

4.2.2 Sanctioning Body and the Grand Prix of St. Petersburg

The Grand Prix of St. Petersburg was the first event the Indy Racing League held that included right-hand turns during a race, departing from the eight straight years of strictly left-turn, counter-clockwise oval speedway races. One of the fundamental reasons for the Open Wheel Split in 1995 was IMS President Tony George's desire to move IndyCar racing back to an oval-based racing series. However, during the

announcement of the first ever IRL street circuit race in St. Petersburg, George changed his tune, stating (American Honda Press Release 2004, 1):

> The addition of St. Petersburg allows the IRL to achieve two of its primary goals as it relates to scheduling - one being the enhancement of our schedule with the addition of road and street-style events. Secondly, this allows the IRL to fill in a part of our season with a warm weather market in advance of the Indianapolis 500-Mile race.

The IRL viewed an IRL-sanctioned, street circuit event in St. Petersburg as attractive to the racing series expansion to new markets. IRL vice president of corporate communications Fred Nation stated (James and Johnson 2004b, 1C):

> We need more warm-weather facilities. It is a separate market from our other Florida venue in Homestead-Miami, and it should be an attractive venue for our sponsors and partners.

As George mentioned above, the St. Petersburg race has always been held during late March and early April, a time that is critical for the IndyCar Series towards the build-up of the Series' marquee event, the Indianapolis 500 Mile Race in May. The St. Petersburg race has always been one of the first three events on the IndyCar Series calendar. In 2009, 2011, and 2012, the St. Petersburg was the first race on the IndyCar season schedule.

In terms of geography, the St. Petersburg race has remained as the only IndyCar race in the southeast United States that has been held continually since 2005. Races at oval speedways in Charlotte, NC, Atlanta, GA, Richmond, VA, and Homestead-Miami, FL have all been dropped from the schedule, mostly due to declining spectator attendance and lack of event title sponsorship. Therefore, the St. Petersburg race "fits" geographically on the schedule because it's the only race in the lowland South and offers a warm-weather race in early spring in Florida. Also, Florida represents a large base of

motorsport fans and events, especially during the early parts of the motorsport racing calendar. In February, NASCAR's biggest race is held in Daytona, and then mid-March is the Twelve Hours of Sebring, the most prestigious international sports car race held in North America on a former World War II air base in south-central Florida,

4.2.3 Title Event Sponsorship of the Grand Prix of St. Petersburg

Ever since the first race in 2005, Honda has been the title sponsor of the Grand Prix of St. Petersburg. Key to this title sponsorship was Honda Racing's technical partnership and team sponsorship with Andretti-Green Racing, which also started a motorsport event promotion business called Andretti Green Promotions (AGP) in 2004. Selected by the City of St. Petersburg and IndyCar to be the event promoters, AGP also brought with them the title event sponsorship from Honda. Similar to IndyCar officials, the scenic beauty of St. Petersburg was a key reason for Honda's sponsorship of the race, as P.E. McHale, manager of motor sports public relations for American Honda Motor Company stated (Ave 2005d, 1C):

> It's [St. Petersburg] got everything we want. The water is beautiful. From people who know racing I've heard this course is one of two or three of the best. It's the Long Beach of the East Coast.

Kurt Antonius, an executive with American Honda Motor Corp., added (Scheiber and Korth 2005, 7C):

> There is something very, very special about this city. There's (sic) the waterfront yachts, the airport, the skyline, as well as the support of Mayor Rick Baker and a City Council that's unparalleled in other cities. This city is nothing short of a spectacular locale to have a street race in. Monaco, USA.

Sponsorship of the GPSP by Honda was also seen as a way to add to their portfolio of sport event sponsorships. Each year, Honda sponsors a Professional Golf Association

tournament in Palm Beach and a major sailing race off the coast of Miami. Speaking at the press conference announcing the inaugural GPSP, Tom Elliott, Executive Vice President of Auto Operations for American Honda stated (American Honda Press Release 2004, 1):

> Honda has a long history of supporting open-wheel racing in America, and a tradition of sponsoring major sporting events in Florida. The opportunity to combine these two traditions in the St. Petersburg market should provide a thrilling show for Florida's many motorsports fans. We also appreciate the strong support from the City of St. Petersburg and look forward to sponsoring this race for several years to come.

4.2.4 Television Viewers

For the first four years of the Grand Prix of St. Petersburg, races were broadcasted by ESPN with all four races averaging just under a 0.4 Nielsen Television rating, which means about 440,000 households in the United States were tuned-in to each broadcast (Figure 4.1). In 2009, St. Petersburg was the first ever IndyCar race to be broadcasted by Versus. Since Versus was not available in as many cable subscriber packages as ESPN or ABC, the Grand Prix of St. Petersburg ratings dropped to their lowest point since the event's existence, with a 0.3 Nielsen rating (344,700 households).

More recently in 2010 and 2011, ABC has led-off the IndyCar season with the broadcasting of the Grand Prix of St. Petersburg. This resulted in a substantial increase in the number of viewers watching the event. ABC has chosen to cover the St. Petersburg event in late March to begin promotion of their coverage of the Indianapolis 500 in late May. In 2010, the race earned a 0.6 Nielsen rating (695,400 households); higher than any year prior even though the race did not take place during the three-hour broadcast due to torrential rains. In other words, the 2010 broadcast on ABC was the

highest viewed Grand Prix of St. Petersburg even though no race was staged during the coverage that contained mostly driver interviews instead of on-track action. Instead, the race was broadcast on the following Monday morning on ESPN2 No television ratings were released pertaining to this postponed broadcast.

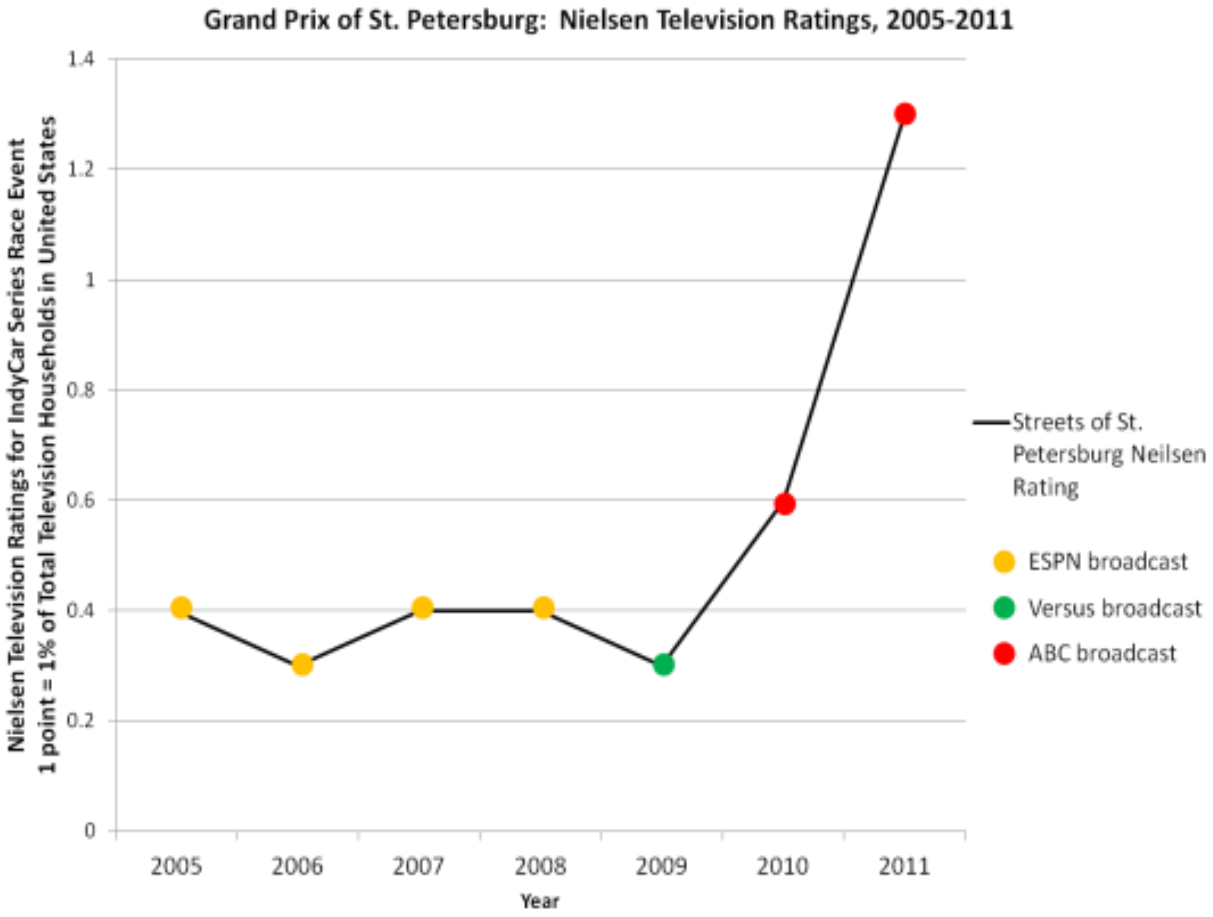

Figure 4.1: Television Ratings of each Grand Prix of St. Petersburg (Nielsen Media Research 2011)

In 2011, the Grand Prix of St. Petersburg had a further increase in television viewers as the race once again was broadcasted by ABC and kicked-off the IndyCar season. The race earned a 1.3 Nielsen rating (1,491,100 households), which was up 100 percent in ratings and 126 percent in viewership from the previous year's rained out coverage. Excluding the Indy 500, the 2011 Grand Prix of St. Petersburg ranks as the most-viewed IndyCar telecast since Mid-Ohio's Indy 200 in July 2007. Among the case study events, the St. Petersburg event was the only one to increase television ratings from 2007 to 2011.

4.3 Case Study Event Venue #2: Iowa Speedway

4.3.1 Origins of Event

The Iowa Speedway is a 7/8th mile, paved, oval race track located in Newton (population 15,000), a small, central Iowa town located in Jasper County 35 miles east of Des Moines. The speedway began construction on June 21, 2005, held its inaugural automobile race in September 2006, and hosted its first IndyCar race in June 2007. Discussion of building a speedway began in early 2000 as a proposal for Vision Iowa, a program started by Iowa legislature to stimulate tourism and community attractions (Okamoto 2000). Jasper County officials, along with private donors, created and developed a grant proposal requesting for funds to help construct a county-owned speedway (Dukes-Lee 2001). In 2002, the Vision Iowa board rejected the speedway project, however, because it requested too much money from Vision Iowa ($20 million) and board members also doubted whether the investors had access to their stated funds (Hussman and Jennings 2002).

Over the next few years, a group of investors formed the U.S. Motorsports Entertainment Corporation and invested in the $70 million proposed racing facility. The group of investors included a local race car driver and co- owners and a president of a local construction company specializing in concrete and paving, among others (Higgins 2005). Track construction was spurred by a $12.5 million tax break, passed through state legislature and signed by Governor Tom Vilsack (Higgins 2005). Under the tax break, U.S. Motorsports Entertainment would collect $12.5 million in sales taxes from race fan ticket and concession purchases (Roos 2005). In response to the tax break, one of the speedway's investors and local Newton resident and lawyer Dennis Chalupa stated (Higgins 2005, 1A):

> It is certainly offering some good news, which there hasn't been a lot of lately. We are hoping it will be a real economic stimulus to the community.

Reflecting trends similar to the United States and the Iowa economy, Newton has been affected by the recent decline of manufacturing jobs. Newton's largest employer had always been the Maytag Corporation, a large appliance manufacturer founded in 1893 in Newton. Throughout the 20th century, Maytag provided many in Newton and central Iowa with manufacturing and administrative jobs. From 2002 to 2006, however, Maytag began downsizing and eliminating many of its high production cost workers as new appliance manufacturers in Asia entered the market with lower costs of production (Ryberg 2007). Finally, in 2006, Maytag was purchased and absorbed by the Whirlpool Corporation, another large appliance manufacturer. Whirlpool executives decided to close Maytag's manufacturing facilities and corporate headquarters in Newton, causing a loss of nearly 2,000 manufacturing jobs and 1,800 administrative jobs. Jasper County

already had one of the state's highest unemployment rates in 2005 at 5.7 percent (Eller 2005).

Many state and local community leaders voiced support for the proposed speedway prior to its construction. Iowa Senator Bill Dotzler, representing nearby Waterloo stated, "We have a tremendous opportunity with this facility to help put Iowa out there, to say that it's more than corn and soybeans and pigs, that there is excitement in Iowa" (Roos 2005, 1B). Jean Morgan, Newton City Council member stated, "It will be what every town wants – it puts us on the map" (Doak 2005, O3). Newton's Mayor Charles Allen viewed the speedway as part of a "recreational triangle" that connected a sprint-car race track and Hall of Fame & Museum in Knoxville, Iowa with the Prairie Meadows in Altoona, Iowa to the west and Pella, Iowa, known for its Dutch heritage and architecture to the north (Doak 2005, O3). Newton's city planner, Brian Friedman, said the speedway would help Newton become "Maytag and more" (Doak 2005, O3) as the town diversifies its labor market by adding non-manufacturing jobs. The City of Newton planned for numerous hotels, restaurants, and gas stations at the Iowa Speedway main exit along Interstate 80. This economic development district was called the "Prairie Fire Economic Development District." as Newton officials hoped the area would develop and spread "like wildfire" (Karr 2007d, 1).

Iowa Speedway, which also hosts concerts, antique shows, and banquets, was designed by former NASCAR driver Rusty Wallace. The race track is a paved, short oval (less than one mile in length) and the preferred race track type of Iowans as the state contains 56 such short, oval tracks (Murphy 2007b), including Knoxville Speedway, a famous sprint car race track that is home to the National Sprint Car Racing Hall of Fame

and Museum. Although an open-wheeled vehicle, a sprint car is smaller and lighter than an IndyCar. The high horsepower and fast speeds of a sprint car make them quite dangerous on the dirt, short oval race tracks. Up until the early 1970s, many of the USAC sanctioned National Championship races occurred on the types of dirt, short oval tracks found throughout Iowa.

The first automobile race at Iowa Speedway was a small, stock car racing series event on September 15, 2006, 15 months after construction began. During construction, speedway officials began seeking different racing series to bring their events to Newton. Rusty Wallace, who owns a ten percent share of Iowa Speedway himself, stated (Gray 2005, 1C):

> In order to get some major sanctioning bodies involved, they've got to see the facility – they want to see it done. So many people want to build a race track, and if you could go up to NASCAR and say, 'Hey I'd like to have a Cup (NASCAR's top series) date,' and they said, 'OK, you've got a date, go build the track,' they'd all do it. They want to see the commitment not only of the racetrack but of the infrastructure system, the roads, the excitement level of the people, the elected officials – can we work with these people or are they knuckleheads and hard to work with? They won't touch it if that's the case.

In August of 2006, the Indy Racing League announced the addition of Iowa Speedway to its series calendar (Karr 2006).

4.3.2 Sanctioning Body and the Iowa Indy 250

Expansion of the IRL to Iowa was part of a strategy "to get back to our grassroots racing," said IRL president Brian Barnhart (Dahn 2006, 1C). Iowa has one of the highest number of race tracks that are currently operational per capita in the country, with an overwhelming majority being short, dirt oval tracks that were historically county fairground horse race tracks. Subsequently, Iowa is an area that already possesses a large,

passionate fan base for open-wheel, short-track racing and is geographically located in IndyCar's Midwest core fan region. Brian Barnhart added (Dahn 2006c, 1C):

> It's a natural for us to bring the Indy cars here to Iowa, and we're very excited about that. Nearly half of our fan base is based out of the Midwest, we have great television numbers in the Midwest.

While visiting Iowa Speedway to conduct a compatibility test to see if IndyCars could drive on the short oval, IRL Vice President for League Development John Lewis emphasized the mega-event appeal of the Iowa event, stating (*Associated Press* 2006a, 3C):

> I think Midwest race fans will flock to an open-wheel event, especially the caliber of the Indy Racing League. I think that in the state of Iowa there are so many race tracks and so many race fans that are just starving for top-notch racing entertainment.

Terry Angstadt, IndyCar Vice President of Marketing, later added, "The race fans in Iowa have really embraced the sport and it works well in adding to the diversity of our schedule." (Iowa Corn Indy 250 Press Release 2009, 1).

The IndyCar Series also viewed an event at Iowa Speedway as fitting in nicely with their promotion of renewable, environmentally-friendly biofuels since Iowa is the country's top producer of corn-based ethanol. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the IRL became the first racing series to use 100 percent, corn-based ethanol as the standard fuel powering race cars in 2007. IndyCar Series driver Buddy Rice stated (*Newton Daily News* Staff Report 2007b, 2C):

> With Iowa, obviously with us running 100 percent ethanol, it's just a perfect fit to come here to Iowa, where a lot of the corn is coming from. There is a big push for the ethanol program, so it makes it an obvious fit.

4.3.3 Title Event Sponsorship of the Iowa Indy 250

Because of Iowa's high production of corn and competitive advantage in the corn-based ethanol industry, the Iowa Corn Growers Association (ICGA) has been the title sponsor for every Iowa Corn Indy 250 (*Telegraph Herald* 2006). After the success of the first IndyCar race event, the Iowa Corn Growers Association extended their title sponsorship contract with Iowa Speedway for the 2008 and 2009 IRL events (Murphy 2007e). ICGA CEO Craig Floss stated, "The race offers an opportunity for education and a chance for us to congratulate the corn growers who continue to grow corn for ethanol and promote its use" (Murphy 2007e, 3C). Bob Bowman, president of the Iowa Corn Growers Association added (Bloomquist 2007a, B3):

> We're really excited for this. We've been doing ethanol promotion for 30 years, back before anyone knew what it was. This is the culmination of a lot of hard work.

The Iowa Corn Promotion Board also included a "Q and A with Indy" that mentioned several statistics regarding ethanol's use in IndyCars (Iowa Corn Indy 250 Press Release 2010). After calculating that the IndyCar Series used 70,000 gallons of ethanol in 2009, they equate that it would take 142 acres in Iowa to produce this much fuel. Further, the Promotion Board also emphasized that the IndyCars observed no reduction in horsepower and, in fact, used less fuel due to the greater efficiency of ethanol over methanol, which was previously used by IndyCar.

4.3.4 Television Viewers

The Iowa Corn Indy 250 achieved its highest television ratings (Figure 4.2) and viewership in its first two years in 2007 and 2008 with a 1.1 Nielsen rating for both years

(1,225,400 households in 2007 and 1,240,000 households in 2008). Both of these races aired at Noon (Eastern Daylight Time) on ABC and were among the top three most viewed IndyCar races during both seasons. In 2007, one of the broadcasters was Iowa Speedway investor and co-owner Rusty Wallace. Although still covered by ABC, the 2009 event saw an approximately 30 percent decline in the number of viewers, with a 0.8 Nielsen rating (870,000 households). In 2010, the race switched from ABC to Versus, resulting in a 74 percent decline in viewership from 2009 and the lowest ever Nielsen rating (0.2 or 229,800 households) for any Iowa Corn 250 event. This was also the least watched IndyCar race of the 2010 season. In 2011, the Iowa Corn Indy 250 was also broadcasted by Versus, but moved to Saturday night instead of Sunday afternoon. This resulted in a 25 percent increase in viewers with a 0.35 Nielsen rating (401,450 households).

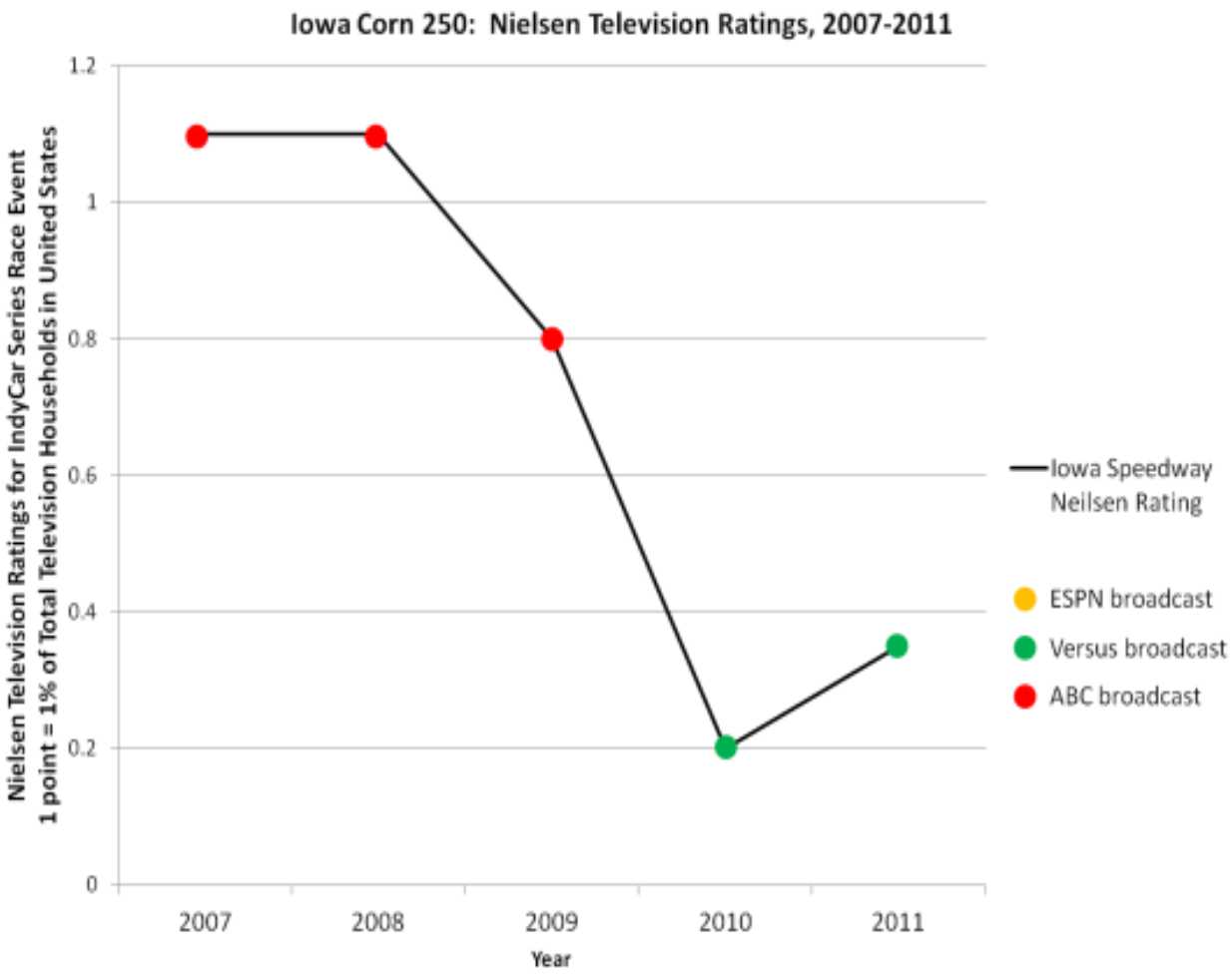

Figure 4.2: Television Ratings of each Iowa Corn 250 (Nielsen Media Research 2011)

4.4 Case Study Event Venue #3: Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course

4.4.1 Origins of Event

The Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course is a purpose-built, permanent road course located just outside Lexington, Ohio (population 4,000), a small town in a rural area 50 miles north of Columbus and 90 miles south of metropolitan Cleveland, Ohio. The term "Mid-Ohio" refers to a region of north-central Ohio that spreads from Lake Erie and Sandusky, Ohio, southward to metropolitan Columbus. The road course was built in

Lexington in 1962 by Les Greibling, who assembled private investors and designed the track layout (McCurdy 2003a). Greibling, who became a local celebrity after winning the locally popular Mansfield Soap Box Derby as a child, owned a foreign sports car dealership in Mansfield (McCurdy 2008). Desiring a place for Greibling and his friends to race their sports cars legally, he acquired an abandoned farm and began constructing a $250,000 race track (McCurdy 2008). Initially, only sports car and grass roots, open-wheel racing series sanctioned events at Mid-Ohio in the 1960s and 1970s (McCurdy 2008). Over time, Greibling promoted his race track by offering extremely high race purses, which attracted the best drivers, cars, and international audiences (McCurdy 2003a).

In 1981, local road racer and founder/owner of Red Roof Inn hotels, Jim Trueman, purchased the Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course from Greibling (McCurdy 2003a). Trueman modernized the facility, adding garage areas, spectator mounds and grandstands, and changed the track layout slightly (McCurdy 2008). In 1980, CART raced for the first time at Mid-Ohio. Trueman saw parallels between the fans and viewers of automobile races and hotel guests at his Red Roof Inns, as he stated, "The demographics of racing are similar to our motels… and usually attract people who are between 20 and 40 and very mobile" (McCurdy 2003a, 2). Beginning in 1983 and throughout the 1990s, Mid-Ohio secured a permanent race weekend on CART's annual schedule.

Although fan attendance levels at Mid-Ohio racing events remained constant, corporate sponsorships declined. The CART race was the track's second biggest event annually, attracting slightly fewer attendees than a motorcycle racing event weekend

(May 2006a). In 2001, Miller Brewing Company ended their corporate sponsorship and promotion of Mid-Ohio race events due to declining television audiences for CART series races as the open-wheel series began losing popularity among fans, race teams, and drivers (McCurdy 2003a). CART-sanctioned races continued at Mid-Ohio in 2002 and 2003 when CART co-promoted the race with Truesports helping to cover the sanctioning fee previously paid for by Miller Brewing through its event title sponsorship. CART and Truesports decided to end their partnership as CART sought to take their form of racing "to major urban markets of NAFTA" instead of the more rural setting in Lexington, Ohio (McCurdy 2003b, 1B). At that time, no other road course race on the CART circuit had a longer tenure with the open-wheel series than Mid-Ohio. After three years of no open-wheel racing at Mid-Ohio, the Indy Racing League in 2007 added Mid-Ohio to its schedule, increasing the number of IndyCar races on non-ovals to five of the 17 total races (McCurdy 2006a).

4.4.2 Sanctioning Body and the Indy 200 at Mid-Ohio

Michelle Trueman-Gajoch, Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course former owner and president and the IRL agreed to a three-year contract that also paired the IRL event with an American LeMans Series race, bringing together North America's highest form of open-wheel and sports car racing series (May 2006b). The addition of a Mid-Ohio race event was part of the IRL's expansion to tracks that previously staged popular, well-attended Champ Car and CART race. As IRL president Brian Barnhart stated (McCurdy 2006b, A1):

> We look forward to bringing our series to a state rich in motorsports tradition. Mid-Ohio has a deep championship heritage.

Further, IndyCar viewed a race at Mid-Ohio as another way to add to the diversity of venue type with the addition of natural-terrain road courses, as Barnhart later added, "the event at Mid-Ohio fits into our diverse lineup of venues perfectly" (McCurdy 2007e, A1). Similar to Iowa Speedway, Mid-Ohio is located in an area with a long history of supporting open-wheel racing. One exception, however, is that Mid-Ohio had hosted a CART-sanctioned race since 1982 whereas IndyCar's first race in Iowa since the early 1920s was in 2007 at Iowa Speedway.

4.4.3 Title Event Sponsorship of the Indy 200 at Mid-Ohio

Honda agreed to become the title sponsor of the inaugural Honda Indy 200 at Mid-Ohio Presented by Westfield Insurance. The Japanese automaker has long sponsored the Mid-Ohio School for driver education and training at the race facility, including providing complimentary vehicles (McCurdy 2006b). Also, Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course is 60 miles from Marysville, Ohio, Honda's first production facility in the United States, opened in 1982. In 1992, Honda began supplying engines for CART-sanctioned teams, including former Indianapolis 500 Mile winner and nearby Columbus, Ohio resident Bobby Rahal. He suggested that Honda develop a relationship with Mid-Ohio considering the tracks' location near the Marysville plant. As Rahal stated (Honda Indy at Mid-Ohio Souvenir Program 2011, 40):

> When we were first talking to Honda, we were in Columbus, Ohio with the team, and with Mid-Ohio there, I recommended to them at the time that they try to create a good relationship with the track. With the proximity of the plant in Marysville, Ohio, it made a tremendous amount of sense for Honda to be involved with Mid-Ohio. It's been a great relationship there.

Bobby's son, Graham, a second generation IndyCar driver from nearby Dublin, Ohio, added (Honda Indy at Mid-Ohio Souvenir Program 2011, 40):

> It's home for Honda and it's great the support they have given that event over the years. It's great the turnout we get of employees from Honda.

Further, Honda was the lone IndyCar series engine supplier. To help generate buzz for the first IRL race at Mid-Ohio, several drivers went to Honda assembly plants in nearby East Liberty, Marysville, and Anna (McCurdy 2007e). John Mendel, Senior Vice President of Auto Operations for American Honda commented (American Honda Press Release 2006, 1):

> There are many reasons why this monumental racing weekend is such a great fit for Honda and Acura. There is our long-time presence in Ohio as a manufacturer, Honda's tradition in open wheel racing, currently as single engine supplier to the IndyCar Series. Add to that our decade-plus partnerships with both the Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course and the Mid-Ohio School, which has brought us tremendous exposure as Official Vehicle and Official Pace Car. Finally, we're bringing Honda's and Acura's highest-profile domestic racing programs virtually into the backyards of more than 15,000 company associates who are based at our plants in Marysville, East Liberty and Anna. We're thrilled to play a significant role in this historic racing weekend, and we are extremely grateful to our partners at IndyCar, the American LeMans Series and Mid-Ohio for helping to make it happen.

Honda support of the Mid-Ohio event is absolutely critical to the staging of the event, as former Mid-Ohio Owner Trueman-Gajoch stated (McCurdy 2007e, A3):

> Honda is certainly doing a tremendous amount of things in the background to help get the event promoted. They have a captive audience here in Ohio as one of the largest employers in the state. We will capitalize on that as much as we can.

Westfield Insurance also agreed to be a "presenting" sponsor for 2007-2010 Mid-Ohio events. A presenting sponsorship is less expensive to purchase than a title sponsorship. The sponsorship also includes the company as the official insurance company of the Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course. Westfield Insurance is a national insurance

company headquartered in Westfield Center, Ohio, 50 miles northeast of Lexington. Trueman-Gajoch stated (Truesports, Inc. Press Release 2007, 1):

> It is a significant moment when a local company embraces what we have to offer. A present sponsorship of a national-based event will provide Westfield Insurance with considerable exposure in their very own backyard. This is a proud moment for our community.

4.4.4 Television Viewers

ABC's coverage of the 2007 IndyCar race at Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course (Figure 4.3) had an exceptionally high 1.7 Nielsen rating (1,893,800 households), which was the second most viewed race of the year behind only the Indianapolis 500 (4.3 Nielsen rating). The ratings success was partly attributed to an exciting British Open golf playoff that preceded the IndyCar coverage (McCurdy 2007g). That same weekend at Mid-Ohio, the ALMS support series race on Saturday was aired on CBS, however, the race was tape-delayed and aired to a nationally-televised audience (0.17 Nielsen rating) on CBS on Sunday at the same time as ABC's live coverage of the IndyCar series race, giving both weekend races at Mid-Ohio a large, nationally-televised audience.

In 2008, the Mid-Ohio IndyCar race was still covered by ABC and was once again the second most watched race (1.3 Nielsen rating or 1,488,500 households) of the season behind only the Indianapolis 500's 4.5 Nielsen rating (5,152,500 households). However, every IndyCar race since the 2008 event at Mid-Ohio has been covered by Versus, and subsequently resulted in the lowest viewed IndyCar races at Mid-Ohio. Both the 2009 and 2011 events earned a 0.2 Nielsen rating (229,000 households in 2009 and 229,400 households in 2011) and were also the least viewed races of the entire season for both years among races tallied by Nielsen.

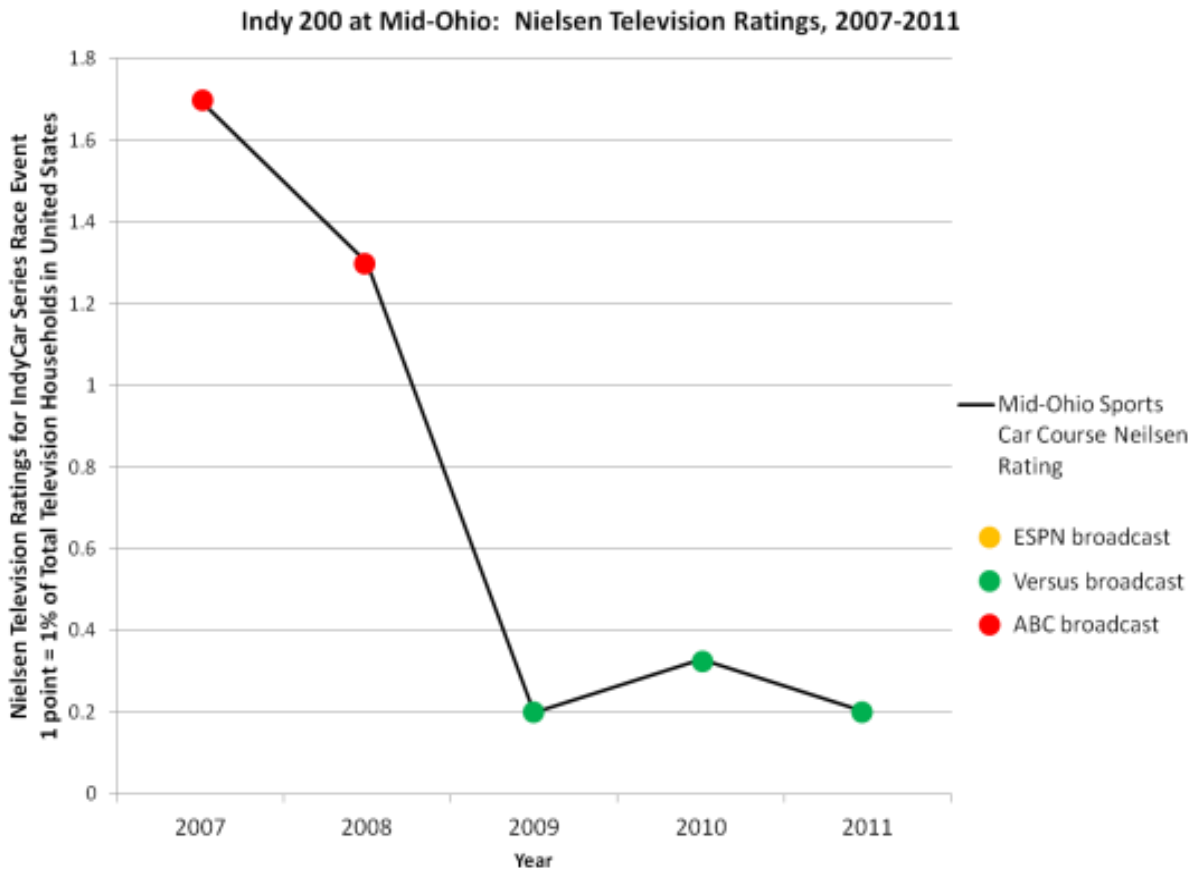

Figure 4.3: Television Ratings of each Indy 200 at Mid-Ohio (Nielsen Media Research 2011)

4.5 Identifying the Key Stakeholders: Methodology

Much of the data analysis involves the use of a content analysis, which is a "system of identifying terms, phrases, or actions that appear in a document or video and then counting how many times they appear and in what context" (Hay 2005, 224). A content analysis identified the key individuals and entities that have been most involved with each case study event. Each source is categorized based on the case study location to which it pertains. For instance, all data sources pertaining to the Grand Prix of St. Petersburg were analyzed separately from the other case study data sources. This type of

analysis allowed for a quantitative measurement of the varying figurations pertinent to the staging of each case study event. The content analysis was replicated for each case study event, allowing me also to draw useful cross-comparisons.

Within motorsport, there is already considerable use of content analysis that focuses on the exposure an event provides sponsors of race cars, drivers, and racing series. Sponsorship value during motorsport broadcasts are recorded for every NASCAR and IndyCar Series race, among other sports, by Joyce Julius & Associates, Inc. in their "Sponsor Report". Joyce Julius calculates "exposure value" for sponsors by adding "exposure time" and "mentions" and then multiplying the results by an estimated cost per second that companies would have had to pay for equivalent television time in commercials. This service attempts to identify a monetary value for the television exposure that a sponsor received during an event. "Exposure time" is simply the number of seconds the company's logo appeared during each television broadcast, while "mentions" is the number of times the sponsor's name was spoken during the broadcast, whether by an announcer, driver, or official. From the Joyce Julius website (Joyce Julius 2011, 1):

> The Joyce Julius standard calls for a brand's logo to be considered clear and in-focus only when the image is not blurred or obstructed in a way as to prevent the typical viewer from acknowledging the branding. In addition to the visual exposure, Joyce Julius also monitors and tabulates each verbal mention received by the brand throughout the telecast.

The authors of a recent *Journal of Sports Economics* article used the Joyce Julius methodology described above to argue that time-on-camera, and thus sponsorship value, is closely tied to the on-track performance of the sponsored race car (Groothuis *et al.* 2011). For instance, NASCAR's Kyle Busch led the most laps and was consistently near

the front during the 2011 season, and thus spent the most amount of time on camera providing $68 million worth of television exposure for his sponsors. This was the highest among all NASCAR racers even though he did not win the season-long championship (Joyce Julius Press Release 2011).

For this research, I use the same methodology as Joyce Julius. Instead of recording exposure time and mentions of sponsor logos on race cars, however, I use data for each case study event that pertains to their figurations of key stakeholders identified in Chapter 2. This content analysis involves direct observations from the event souvenir program, televised race broadcast, and local newspaper coverage in order to identify the dominant and key stakeholders involved in each case study event. In general, the content analysis of the souvenir program and televised broadcast were useful towards identifying event sponsors, whereas local place marketers were more likely to be identified in local and regional newspaper coverage. Each time a key stakeholder is identified in the data sources, they are coded based on their type (Figure 4.4). For instance, if the mayor of a city is mentioned in a data source, he or she is coded as "local place marketer – public sector". The content analysis of the data also identified the composition of local and non-local involvement among the key stakeholders and was useful in the data analysis of local place marketers discussed in the following chapter.

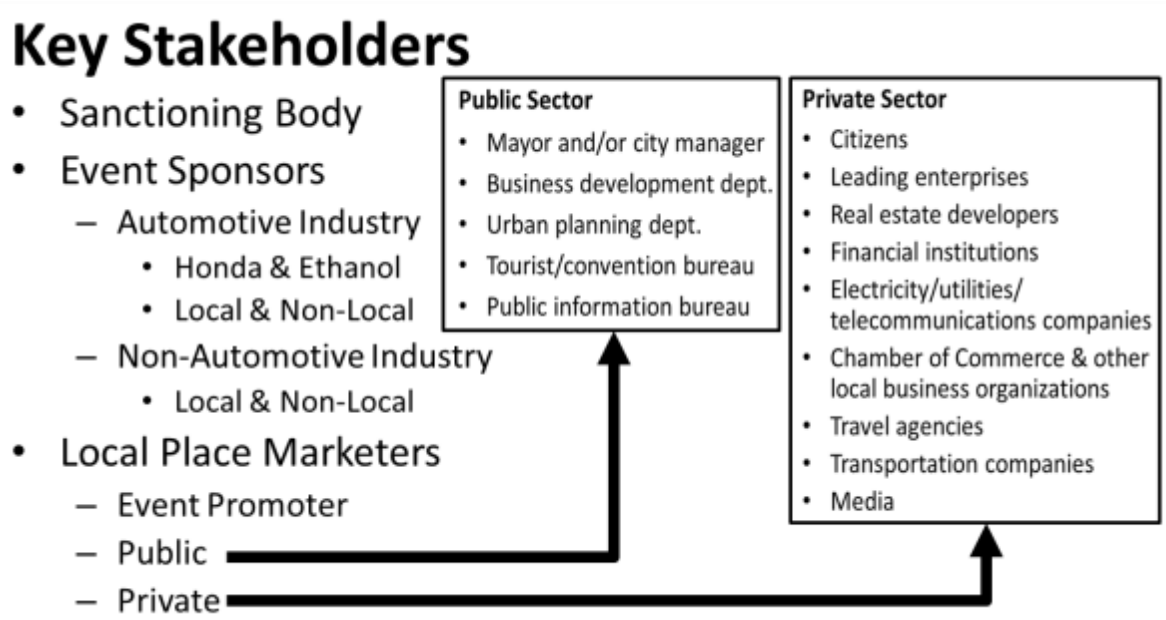

Figure 4.4: Codes used in content analysis

4.6 Data Sources

4.6.1 2010 and 2011 Souvenir Programs

In 2010 and 2011, research funds from the IUPUI Geography Department and the Indiana University School of Liberal Arts allowed me to attend each case study event. I collected the 2010 and 2011 souvenir programs for the Iowa Corn Indy 250, Honda Grand Prix of St. Petersburg, and Honda Indy 200 at Mid-Ohio. In this research, I use the event programs as a textual document in order to identify quantitatively the key stakeholders who are sponsoring or integral in the staging of each case study event. Essentially, the souvenir program provides a useful "artifact" from the race event that is designed specifically to reach those attending the race event. In each of the programs, event sponsors and key stakeholders have purchased advertising space within the program. The souvenir programs also provided another source of local place marketer

identification and their perceived benefits of investing in the event by purchasing advertising space inside the race program.

For all three events, the size of the space within the program varies considerably. For example, sometimes an advertisement was found only in a small, one-quarter section of a page, while others were a half page and some took up an entire page. Different size advertisements cost different amounts, with the largest advertisements costing more. Subsequently, I assigned a value for each advertisement. If it was found only in one-quarter of the page, I assigned it a score of .25, whereas a full-page ad would receive a score of 1.0 and a two-page advertisement would receive a score of 2.0 (Figure 4.5). Then, for each case study, I identified if an event sponsor was "local" or "not local" based on the simple identification of the sponsor's headquarters. If they were located in the same state, they were considered "local", whereas those that were "not local" are headquartered outside the state. I then coded the program's event sponsors based on their type of organization or business. For example, I identified whether or not the company was an automotive industry company (e.g., Honda, Firestone) or a non-automotive, corporate sponsor promoting a local consumer service (e.g., Pizza Ranch, Rum Bum Surf Shop).



Figure 4.5: Example of methods used for analysis of souvenir programs.

4.6.2 Televised Broadcast Analysis by Joyce Julius, Inc.

After inquiring about the methodologies used to obtain their data, Laura Webb, President & Director of Client Services at Joyce Julius, shared their recorded data for each of the case study events from 2011. Joyce Julius conducted a television analysis of event and track-related sponsorship by counting the number of times a sponsor or place name was shown on camera and/or mentioned verbally during the broadcast by a reporter or race team member. Although Joyce Julius tabulates and uses these data as an attempt to calculate sponsorship value, they are also useful for identifying the key stakeholders involved in the event. A sample of the "Event and Track Related Sponsor Exposure Breakdown" dataset provided by Joyce Julius is shown in Figure 4.6.

Sponsor/Entity	Source	Exposure Time	Mentions	Exposure Value
Goodyear	Access Bridge - Turn 1	0:01:57	0	$37,815
Goodyear	Tire Barriers - Turn 2	0:00:46	0	13,800
Goodyear	Tower	0:00:12	0	7,220
	Sub Total:	**0:02:55**	**0**	**$58,835**
Honda	Starter's Stand Identity	0:05:31	0	$105,030
Honda	Access Bridge - Turn 7	0:03:42	0	66,600
Honda	A-Frame Signs - Turn 2	0:03:34	0	64,200
Honda	A-Frame Signs - Turn 1	0:03:28	0	63,605
Honda	Tire Barriers - Turn 12	0:03:16	0	58,800
Honda	Tire Barriers - Turn 1	0:02:46	0	49,800
Honda	Banners - Turn 10	0:02:14	0	40,200
Honda	Highlight Identity	0:01:09	0	31,885
Honda	Aerial Camera Graphics	0:01:18	0	23,400
Honda	Billboards - Turn 2	0:00:58	0	17,400
Honda	Billboards - Turn 3	0:00:46	0	13,800
Honda	Event Mentions	N/A	4	12,035
Honda	A-Frame Signs - Turn 7	0:00:18	0	5,400
Honda	Brought to You by Graphics	0:00:16	0	4,800
Honda	Observation Towers - Turn 1	0:00:10	0	3,000
Honda	Observation Towers	0:00:02	0	1,205
Honda	Grandstand Banners	0:00:02	0	600
	Sub Total:	**0:29:30**	**4**	**$561,760**

Figure 4.6: Sample from the dataset provided by Joyce Julius

4.6.3 Local and Regional Newspapers

For each case study event, I compiled a list of all individuals and entities that were quoted in local and regional newspaper articles. I used the assumption that the most frequently quoted and mentioned individuals have a significant impact or influence on the staging and hosting of each event. In order to identify those that are seeking and promoting an event, I only focus on those making statements that are in favor or support of each event. In the following chapter, I include commentary from local individuals and citizens that view an IndyCar race in their locale as a negative or burden. This was useful in ascertaining some problems with hosting the IndyCar event.

I divided each of the "mentions" into different pre-determined groupings based on the figurations described in Chapter 2 including: sanctioning body, automobile and non-automotive event sponsors, and local place marketers. For example, if the Newton, Iowa mayor is quoted in an article, that would be counted in the "local place marketer: public sector" category. Each time a key local stakeholder is quoted, I count it as one mention for that particular article. I do not count the remaining number of times a stakeholder's name is mentioned in the same article. This allowed for further cross-comparisons among the types of key stakeholders that are most involved in each case study event. For example, I compared the number of times Honda and ethanol are mentioned in newspaper articles in order to compare the levels of their automotive industry support across the three case study events.

As mentioned by McInerney *et al*. (2004), the texts acquired via newspapers for content analysis should be carefully screened and selected. Also, because case study event stories can contain a variety of different terms to discuss the event, search strategies should include a comprehensive list of all possible keywords and terms specifically used in connection with the IndyCar Series race event. For example, Mid-Ohio and Iowa Speedway both host other sanctioned motorsport events during their season. If the story mentions IndyCar but does not specifically pertain to the case study event, then it is not included. Another example was the term "grand prix" being used to mention a local golf tournament in Tampa Bay. Because this "grand prix" reference to St. Petersburg was not related to the racing event, it was not included in the data analysis. I also did not include articles that described the racing action, interviews of race winners, and box scores.

Finally, like in many studies that rely on electronic gathering, the stories retrieved that appeared in duplicate in the database were only used once.

For the Grand Prix of St. Petersburg, news articles were acquired from the Newsbank newspaper index, which contains a variety of articles from small towns to major cities and regions. This index was chosen because it provided access to the *St. Petersburg Times,* the major local newspaper and Grand Prix of St. Petersburg event sponsor. I also accessed articles from the nearby *Tampa Tribune* that also discussed the St. Petersburg event. The first article collected was from August 3, 2004 and the last article was from May 22, 2011. I collected 64 total newspaper articles covering the Grand Prix of St. Petersburg, with 55 from the *St. Petersburg Times* and nine from the *Tampa Tribune.*

Newspaper articles collected for the Iowa Corn Indy 250 were obtained from the Factiva newspaper search index because the local newspaper, the *Newton Daily News,* was not available via the Newsbank index. One option provided by Factiva is the ability to search for certain key terms among newspaper sources inside pre-defined geographic regions. I include other central Iowa newspapers in the collection of local newspaper articles about the IndyCar Series event at Iowa Speedway. The first article collected was from July 27, 2006 and the last article was from August 1, 2011. I collected 83 total local newspaper articles covering the Iowa Corn Indy 250, with 43 coming from the *Newton Daily News,* 21 from the *Gazette* in nearby Cedar Rapids, and the remaining 19 from six other Iowa newspapers.

The closest local newspaper coverage to the Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course is Mansfield, Ohio's *News-Journal,* which is not included on any available newspaper

search index. Therefore, I purchased a 1-year subscription to the *News-Journal* that allowed me to search the newspaper's archives, but with a limit of ten searches per month. Numerous searches over the course of several months yielded only 27 articles from the *News-Journal*. Therefore, I also included seven newspaper articles from *The Columbus Dispatch* from nearby Columbus, Ohio. The first Indy 200 at Mid-Ohio article collected was from October 11, 2006 and the last article was from August 5, 2011.

4.7 Results

4.7.1 2010 and 2011 Souvenir Programs

Of the three case studies, Iowa had the highest involvement of sponsors from within the same state (Tables 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4). Over 90 percent of the event sponsors identified in the souvenir program were from Iowa, whereas St. Petersburg (47 percent) and Mid-Ohio (40 percent) had less than half of their event sponsors from the same state. The Mid-Ohio case study event had the largest percentage (49 percent) of event sponsors that are automotive industry companies. St. Petersburg (26.8 percent) and Iowa (26.2 percent) had a much smaller percentage of automotive-related event sponsors; however, Iowa had the highest percentage (82.5 percent) that comprised auto-related industry sponsors from the same state. Although Mid-Ohio had the highest percentage of automotive sponsors, over 63 percent were companies from outside Ohio. There were no local automotive-related event sponsors identified for St. Petersburg in the souvenir programs.

As described in Chapter 2, Honda and the ethanol industry are two key automotive-related stakeholders in IndyCar today. These two stakeholders displayed

considerable differences in their involvement among the case study events. Honda, title sponsor for both the St. Petersburg and Mid-Ohio events, comprised nearly 52.9 percent and 11.5 percent respectively of the total automobile-related event sponsorship identified in the souvenir programs. Honda did not sponsor the Iowa race; instead, ethanol is the major automobile-related sponsor for this event comprising 37 percent of auto-related event sponsorship. The ethanol industry does not sponsor and is not a key stakeholder in either the St. Petersburg or Mid-Ohio events. Since the Mid-Ohio event has the highest percentage of automobile industry event sponsorship, it makes sense that it also had the lowest percentage of event sponsors from outside the automotive industry. Both Iowa and St. Petersburg had approximately two-thirds of their event sponsors from other than the automotive industry. In the case of Iowa, 100 percent of the non-automotive related event sponsors were from Iowa, whereas about 67 percent of Mid-Ohio and 63 percent of St. Petersburg non-automotive industry event sponsors were from the same state.

Table 4.1: Summary of Data from Content Analyses of Souvenir Programs

	St. Petersburg	Iowa	Mid-Ohio
Local (% of Total)	47.2%	90.3%	40.7%
Sanctioning Bodies (% of Total)	14.2%	3.9%	16.9%
Auto-Related Industry Sponsor (% of Total)	26.8%	26.2%	49.2%
Local Auto-Related Industry Sponsor (% of Auto)	0	85.2%	36.8%
Honda (% of Auto)	52.9%	0	11.5%
Ethanol (% of Auto)	0	37.0%	0
Non- Auto Industry Sponsors (% of Total)	62.2%	69.9%	33.9%
Non-Auto Industry Local Sponsors (% of Non- Auto Industry)	63.3%	100.0%	66.7%

Table 4.2: Data from Content Analysis of Grand Prix of St. Petersburg Souvenir Programs

Souvenir Program Advertisement	2010 Score	2011 Score	2010 and 2011 Total Score	Local	Figuration
Honda	4	5	9	No	Auto
IndyCar	3	2	5	No	Sanction
City of St. Petersburg	2	3	5	Yes	Non-Auto
Green-Savoree	3	2	5	Yes	Promoter
Firestone	2	2	4	No	Auto
World Challenge	2	2	4	No	Sanction
Budweiser	1	1	2	No	Non-Auto
Bayfront Medical	1	1	2	Yes	Non-Auto
Safety-Kleen	1	1	2	No	Auto
St. Petersburg Times	1	1	2	Yes	Media
Tourism Toronto	1	1	2	No	Promoter
Brighthouse Networks	1	1	2	Yes	Non-Auto
USFSP	1	1	2	Yes	Non-Auto
Renaissance Vinoy	0.5	1	1.5	Yes	Non-Auto
All Children's Hospital	0.5	1	1.5	Yes	Non-Auto
AAA Flag & Banner	0.5	0.5	1	Yes	Non-Auto
Incentive Services	0.5	0.5	1	Yes	Non-Auto
St. Petersburg Chamber of Commerce	1		1	Yes	Non-Auto
Toyo Tires	1		1	No	Auto
Visit St. Pete/Clearwater		1	1	Yes	Non-Auto
Dex Imaging		1	1	Yes	Non-Auto
AirTran		1	1	No	Non-Auto
Mid-Ohio		1	1	No	Promoter
Albert Whitted Airport		1	1	Yes	Non-Auto
Pirelli		1	1	No	Auto
Nos Energy		1	1	No	Non-Auto
7-Eleven	0.5		0.5	No	Non-Auto
St. Petersburg Pier	0.5		0.5	Yes	Non-Auto
Rum Bum Surf Shop	0.5		0.5	Yes	Non-Auto
GTE Federal Credit Union	0.5		0.5	Yes	Non-Auto
Ramsberger for Circuit Judge	0.5		0.5	Yes	Non-Auto
Parkshore Grill		0.5	0.5	Yes	Non-Auto
400 Beach Seafood & Tap House		0.5	0.5	Yes	Non-Auto

Table 4.3: Data from Content Analysis of Iowa Indy 250 Souvenir Programs

Souvenir Program Advertisement	2010 Score	2011 Score	2010 and 2011 Total Score	Local	Figuration
Iowa Corn	2	3	5	Yes	Auto
IndyCar	1	1	2	No	Sanction
Iowa Chevy Dealers	1	1	2	Yes	Auto
Firestone	1	1	2	No	Auto
Mercy Hospitals	1	1	2	Yes	Non-Auto
Iowa Telecom	1	1	2	Yes	Non-Auto
VanWall Group - Equipment & Powersports	1	1	2	Yes	Non-Auto
Casey's General Store	1	1	2	Yes	Non-Auto
Adventureland	1	1	2	Yes	Non-Auto
Prarie Meadows	1	1	2	Yes	Non-Auto
Pizza Ranch	1	1	2	Yes	Non-Auto
Iowa Department of Health	1	1	2	Yes	Non-Auto
Northland Oil		2	2	Yes	Auto
Iowa Pork	0.5	1	1.5	Yes	Non-Auto
Town of Marshalltown	1	0.5	1.5	Yes	Non-Auto
Dekalb Seeds	1		1	Yes	Non-Auto
Pioneer	1		1	Yes	Non-Auto
Iowa State Fair	0.5	0.5	1	Yes	Non-Auto
Great Clips	1		1	Yes	Non-Auto
Blue Cross Blue Shield Iowa	1		1	Yes	Non-Auto
Visit Grinnell	1		1	Yes	Non-Auto
Iowa Cancer Consortium	0.5	0.5	1	Yes	Non-Auto
Valley Environmental Service	1		1	Yes	Non-Auto
Newton, Iowa	1		1	Yes	Non-Auto
GASS	0.5	0.5	1	Yes	Auto
Remco	1		1	Yes	Non-Auto
Long John Silver's Iowa	1		1	Yes	Non-Auto
Line X Protective Coatings		1	1	Yes	Auto
Iowa National Guard		1	1	Yes	Non-Auto
Miller Lite		1	1	No	Non-Auto
Joseph's Jewelers		1	1	Yes	Non-Auto
Des Moines Area Community College		1	1	Yes	Non-Auto
Okoboji Grill	0.5		0.5	Yes	Non-Auto
Neumann Construction	0.5		0.5	Yes	Non-Auto
KIK 101.1 Radio	0.25	0.25	0.5	Yes	Non-Auto
Hy-Vee		0.5	0.5	Yes	Non-Auto
Kum & Go		0.5	0.5	Yes	Auto

Table 4.4: Data from Content Analysis of Indy 200 at Mid-Ohio Souvenir Programs

Souvenir Program Advertisement	2010 Score	2011 Score	2010 and 2011 Total Score	Local	Figuration
IndyCar	3	3	6	No	Sanction
Honda	2	2	4	No	Auto
ALMS	2	2	4	No	Sanction
Dunlop Tires	2	1	3	No	Auto
Westfield Insurance	2		2	Yes	Auto
Budweiser	1	1	2	No	Non-Auto
Walmart	1	1	2	No	Non-Auto
Pepsi	1	1	2	No	Non-Auto
Associated Graphics Inc.	1	1	2	Yes	Non-Auto
Goodfella's Pizza	1	1	2	Yes	Non-Auto
Goodyear	1	1	2	Yes	Auto
Wiseco	1	1	2	Yes	Auto
Applebee's	1	1	2	Yes	Non-Auto
Mid-Ohio School	1	1	2	Yes	Auto
Firestone	1	1	2	No	Auto
Rocky Fork Landscaping	1	1	2	Yes	Non-Auto
World Challenge	1	1	2	No	Sanction
Newell Equipment	1	1	2	Yes	Auto
Kumho Tires	1	1	2	No	Auto
Falken Tire	1	1	2	No	Auto
Safety-Kleen	1	1	2	No	Auto
Mazda	1	1	2	No	Auto
Patron	1	1	2	No	Non-Auto
Alum Creek RV & Marine	1	1	2	Yes	Auto
Parr Public Safety Equipment	1	1	2	Yes	Auto
UPS	1	1	2	No	Non-Auto
Deer Ridge Golf Course	0.5	0.5	1	Yes	Non-Auto
Rapid 2 Way Rental	0.5	0.5	1	Yes	Non-Auto
East of Chicago Pizza	0.5	0.5	1	Yes	Non-Auto
Toyo Tires	1		1	No	Auto
KeyBank	1		1	Yes	Non-Auto
Old Bag of Nails Pub	0.5	0.5	1	Yes	Non-Auto
BMW		1	1	No	Auto
Pirelli		1	1	No	Auto
Buzz Thru Espresso Bar	0.25	0.25	0.5	Yes	Non-Auto
Travelodge (Mansfield)	0.25	0.25	0.5	Yes	Non-Auto
Lesch Battery	0.5		0.5	Yes	Auto
RockAuto.com		0.33	0.33	Yes	Auto

4.7.2 Televised Broadcast Analysis by Joyce Julius, Inc.

Many of the data patterns observed in the souvenir program analysis were also identified in the Joyce Julius analysis of event and track sponsors from the 2011 televised broadcasts of each case study. Of the sponsors identified by Joyce Julius in their analysis of the Grand Prix of St. Petersburg, all of them were also identified in the content analysis of the souvenir program (Table 4.5). This was different than the other two case studies as Joyce Julius identified an additional seven event sponsors for both Iowa (Table 4.6) and Mid-Ohio (Table 4.7). Both Iowa Speedway and Mid-Ohio host multiple weekends of races, thus increasing their potential pool of sponsors that have purchased advertising space on a trackside billboard. For example, a billboard with the logo for KTM, a motorcycle manufacturer that was not identified in the souvenir program, was observed in the Joyce Julius analysis of Mid-Ohio which hosts multiple weekends of motorcycle racing during the year.

In all three cases, the title event sponsor received the highest number of event mentions or exposure time observed by Joyce Julius. For St. Petersburg and Mid-Ohio, Honda received the most numerous mentions by television broadcasters, particularly when mentioning Honda as they stated the event name (e.g., "Welcome back to the Honda Grand Prix of St. Petersburg"). Honda also had a large of presence in terms of its logos and banners across both of the race circuits. Joyce Julius found that Honda received 26 mentions and 1 hour and 9 minutes of exposure time during the 2011 televised broadcast of the Mid-Ohio event. The Joyce Julius analysis of the Iowa event also identified the title event sponsor (Iowa Corn Growers Association) as having the

highest exposure time on camera and the most frequently mentioned during the broadcast.

Table 4.5: Data from Joyce Julius' Content Analysis of 2011 Grand Prix of St. Petersburg

Event & Track Related Sponsor	Event Mentions	Exposure Time	Local	Figuration
Honda/Acura	17	25:51	no	Auto
St. Petersburg, Florida	20	17:30	yes	Place/Venue
Firestone	0	11:21	no	Auto
Airtran	0	06:57	no	Non-Auto
Visit St. Petersburg Clearwater	0	05:14	yes	Non-Auto
Bright House	0	04:14	yes	Non-Auto
St. Petersburg Times	0	03:07	yes	Non-Auto
DEX Imaging	0	02:58	yes	Non-Auto
Albert Whitted Airport	2	00:57	yes	Place/Venue
Budweiser	0	00:32	no	Non-Auto
Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course	0	00:11	no	Event Promoter
Tampa Bay Times	0	00:11	yes	Non-Auto
Honda Indy 200 at Mid-Ohio	0	00:08	no	Event Promoter
Honda Indy Toronto	0	00:05	no	Event Promoter
Renaissance Vinoy Hotel & Resort	0	00:02	yes	Non-Auto
Streets of St. Petersburg	9	n/a	yes	Place/Venue

Table 4.6: Data from Joyce Julius' Content Analysis of 2011 Iowa Indy 250

Event & Track Related Sponsor	Event Mentions	Exposure Time	Local	Figuration
Iowa Speedway	15	06:27	yes	Event Promoter/Venue
Iowa Corn	25	05:51	yes	Auto
Pork: the other white meat	0	04:24	yes	Non-Auto
Lucas Oil	0	03:05	no	Auto
Pioneer	0	02:39	yes	Non-Auto
Mercy Hospital	0	02:20	yes	Non-Auto
Pella Windows & Doors	0	02:15	yes	Non-Auto
Sunoco	0	00:56	no	Auto
Pizza Ranch	0	00:54	yes	Non-Auto
Newton, Iowa	4	00:29	yes	Place
Arnold Motor Supply	0	00:25	yes	Auto
Northland Oil	0	00:25	yes	Auto
Miller Lite	0	00:24	no	Non-Auto
Coca-Cola	0	00:23	no	Non-Auto
Napa Auto Parts	0	00:22	no	Auto
Enlist Weed Control Systems	0	00:18	no	Non-Auto
Local Iowa Chevy Dealers	0	00:16	yes	Auto
ManWall Powersports	0	00:13	yes	Auto
Great Southern Bank	0	00:13	yes	Non-Auto

Table 4.7: Data from Joyce Julius' Content Analysis of 2011 Indy 200 at Mid-Ohio

Event & Track Related Sponsor	Event Mentions	Exposure Time	Local	Figuration
Honda	26	1:09:15	no	Auto
Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course	86	13:08	yes	Event Promoter/Venue
JEGS	0	08:24	yes	Auto
Budweiser	0	05:46	no	Non-Auto
EMCO Gears	0	05:02	no	Auto
KTM	0	03:47	no	Auto
Key Bank	0	03:12	yes	Non-Auto
Goodyear	0	02:55	yes	Auto
Pepsi	0	02:30	no	Non-Auto
Jack Daniel's	0	02:28	no	Non-Auto
Eagle (Goodyear)	0	02:05	yes	Auto
Bosch	0	02:00	no	Auto
rockyfork.com	0	01:38	yes	Non-Auto
Kumho Tires	0	01:16	no	Auto
Lexington, Ohio	2	00:56	yes	Place
Wiseco Performance Products	0	00:54	yes	Auto
Walmart	0	00:36	no	Non-Auto
Allum Creek R.V. Marine	0	00:34	yes	Auto
Sunoco	0	00:15	no	Auto
Safety-Kleen	0	00:04	no	Auto

The Mid-Ohio event had more automotive-related sponsors (66 percent) identified than Iowa (47 percent) and St. Petersburg (20 percent). Other than Honda and Firestone, no other automotive-related sponsors were identified in the St. Petersburg analysis. Also similar to the souvenir content analysis, there were differing levels of local sponsor support among the case studies. Iowa once again had the highest involvement of local event and track sponsors with 68 percent compared to 56 percent for St. Petersburg and 45 percent for Mid-Ohio, which once again had the lowest involvement of sponsors from the same state.

Another interesting pattern revealed by the Joyce Julius data is the number of event mentions and exposure time for each of the cities or towns that host the race. Lexington, Ohio only was mentioned two times with an exposure time of 56 seconds, while Newton, Iowa had only four mentions with an exposure time of 23 seconds. Conversely, St. Petersburg was mentioned 20 times with an exposure time of 17 minutes, 30 seconds. Additionally, the phrase "Streets of St. Petersburg" was mentioned nine times during the televised broadcast. This showcases the considerably higher level of exposure the IndyCar race brings to the City of St. Petersburg compared to the other case study places that host a race weekend.

4.7.3 Local and Regional Newspapers

Similar to the content analysis of the souvenir programs and television broadcasts, several key differences among the case study events were also identified in the content analysis of local and regional newspaper coverage for each event (Figure 4.7). Honda was mentioned 79 and 61 times respectively in St. Petersburg and Mid-Ohio articles, but

only four times in the articles collected for Iowa. Conversely, ethanol was mentioned 156 times in Iowa Indy 250 articles, but only 10 times in Indy 200 at Mid-Ohio articles. Ethanol was never once mentioned in any of the 64 Grand Prix of St. Petersburg newspaper articles collected

The event promoter is the facilitator between the sanctioning body and the venue hosting each race. A promoter provides publicity, tickets and merchandising, among other duties, and basically coordinates the race. In the case of St. Petersburg, the event promoter is a private organization that works with the City. In the case of Iowa Speedway, the venue is the event promoter, as is the case with the IndyCar race at Mid-Ohio. Individuals associated with the event promoter and organizers were most likely to be quoted in local newspaper coverage of the Mid-Ohio event, representing 90 percent of all individuals quoted. This was higher than Iowa with 68 percent and considerably higher than St. Petersburg, which only received 39 percent of all mentions from those individuals organizing, staging, and promoting the event.

Articles pertaining to the Grand Prix of St. Petersburg were considerably more likely to mention local government and public officials than the Iowa or Mid-Ohio case events. From 2005 to 2011, 59 percent of the local individuals who were quoted in support of the Grand Prix of St. Petersburg held a public office or worked for the city. Place marketers representing the public sector accounted for only nine percent and seven percent for Iowa and Mid-Ohio respectively. Local place marketers from the private sector were more likely to be quoted in articles pertaining to the Iowa case study than the other two events. The content analysis of Iowa newspaper articles found individuals

from private businesses and organizations were mentioned 23 percent of the time, compared to only three percent for Mid-Ohio and two percent for St. Petersburg.

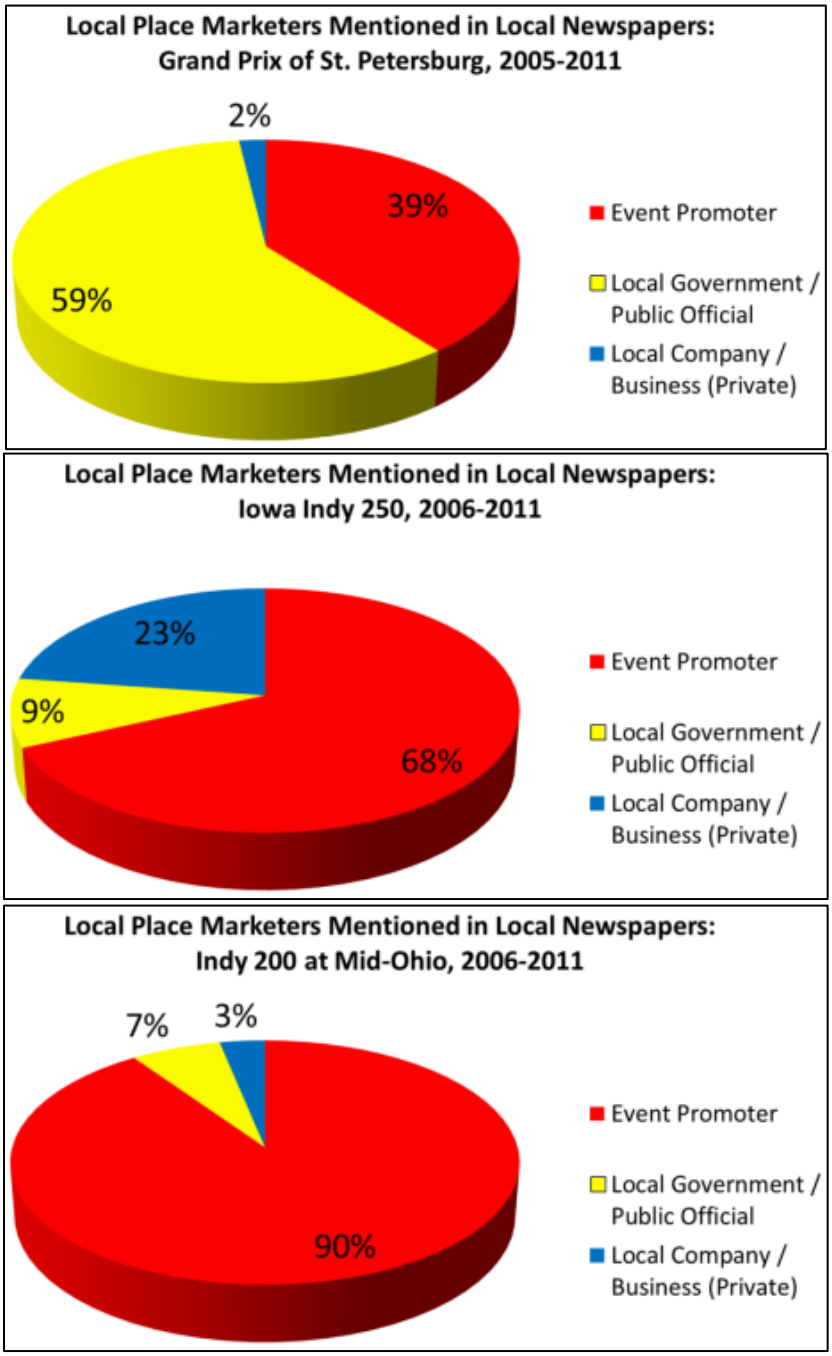

Figure 4.7: Case Study Results from Content Analyses of Local and Regional Newspapers

4.8 Summary of Data Results

4.8.1 City of St. Petersburg, Green-Savoree Promotions, and Tourism

The dominant local stakeholder in the Grand Prix of St. Petersburg is the City of St. Petersburg, which was the most visible event sponsor other than Honda identified in the content analyses. The level of public and local government support was by far the highest among the St. Petersburg case study compared to the others. The most mentioned individual from the content analysis of local newspapers were the City's mayors as they were mentioned in 30 of the 64 articles collected. This includes Rick Baker, the City's mayor from 2001 to 2010, and his successor and current mayor, Bill Foster. Other often quoted public officials included the City's manager, Kevin Dunn, who is directly in charge of working with the event promoter, and several city council members and city employees. Several prominent event sponsors are private business located in or near downtown St. Petersburg. These include two hospitals, Bayfront and All Children's, and the city's largest newspaper, the *Tampa Bay Times*.

Green-Savoree, the event promoters, also had a large amount of exposure and is a key local stakeholder. Green-Savoree Promotions originated as Andretti Green Promotions when the first IndyCar sanctioned Grand Prix of St. Petersburg was organized. Andretti Green was also an IndyCar racing team that had a very close technical partnership with Honda. With this close relationship, Andretti Green secured title event sponsorship from Honda and then reached an agreement with the City of St. Petersburg to be the event promoter. Since 2005, Kevin Savoree and Tim Ramsberger, a lifelong resident of Tampa Bay, have been the most visible and mentioned representatives of Green-Savoree Promotions. Although Green-Savoree is based in

Indianapolis, Indiana, Tim Ramsberger, president of the Grand Prix, works from an office in St. Petersburg and is integral in the local promotion of the race to both fans and potential sponsors.

Another key stakeholder is the local tourism industry, with event sponsorship from the local destination marketing organization (DMO), The St. Petersburg and Clearwater Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB), and the Renaissance Vinoy, a hotel and resort located in downtown St. Petersburg and only one mile north of the race circuit. The St. Petersburg and Clearwater CVB had a full-page advertisement in both souvenir programs and their on-track advertising received over five minutes of exposure time during the televised broadcast.

4.8.2 Iowa Speedway, City of Newton, Iowa Businesses

The construction of the Iowa Speedway was spurred by both public and private funding sources with the overarching goal of stimulating the local Iowa economy, particularly after the recent downsizing and elimination of jobs at Maytag in Newton. City officials hoped the attraction of a major sporting venue would trigger development and job growth in businesses surrounding the speedway's interstate exit. To generate attention about the new venue, track investors sought Rusty Wallace to design and invest in the oval and larger, national-level sanctioning bodies like IndyCar to bring their form of racing to Iowa Speedway.

Only four of the 34 non-automotive event sponsors identified in the souvenir program and Joyce Julius analyses were not Iowa-based companies (Miller Lite, Coca-Cola, DeKalb Seeds, Great Clips), illustrating the high involvement of local Iowa

companies supporting the Iowa Speedway IndyCar race. Among the many local businesses and organizations supporting the Iowa event, the biggest supporters are local farmers and the promotion of ethanol in Iowa via the Iowa Corn Growers Association. Further, Iowa Farm Bureau, the Iowa pork industry, and other local agriculturally-related businesses also support the Iowa Speedway event. Among the case studies, the heavy presence of private sector Iowa organizations and companies was the distinctive characteristic of the Iowa event. Also of note, there were three different central destination marketing organizations (Newton, Grinnell, and Marshalltown) that were promoting their locales with advertisements in the souvenir programs. These, along with the local City of Newton, were the only local, public sector event stakeholders identified in the Iowa Indy 250 data.

4.8.3 Honda and Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course

The two dominant local entities in support of the IndyCar race at Mid-Ohio is the venue, Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course, which is also the event promoter, and Honda. Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course hosts a safe driving school along with many different forms and levels of races, ranging from small, private car club racing to their biggest event, the IndyCar and American Le Mans race weekend. In order to pay the IndyCar sanctioning fee, Mid-Ohio relies on title event sponsorship from its longtime partner, Honda, which also provides automobiles for the driving school.

Although American Honda headquarters are located in southern California, Honda has a large presence in the nearby area. Honda views the IndyCar race at Mid-Ohio as an amenity for their employees, supplying them with tickets and special access to

the event. Honda also saw the opportunity to sponsor both the IndyCar and American Le Mans races, both of which include Honda and Acura engines respectively in their racing series. In general, the distinguishing characteristics of the Mid-Ohio case study are the strong participation of automotive-related companies but minimal involvement from local place marketers or businesses, especially compared to the other two cases.

4.9 Discussion: Connections with Figurational Sociology

In this chapter, I identified the key local stakeholders involved in each case study event. The case studies showcase varying figurations or networks of key individuals and entities, in both the overall make-up of the figuration and reasons for supporting an event in their locale (Table 4.9). The cross-comparisons revealed varying levels of local automotive industry involvement and public versus private support. As I describe in Chapter 2, figurational sociology views the expansion of mega-sporting events to be "polymorphous" (Malcolm 2006, 157) and not necessarily a "one-size-fits-all" case as the mutually beneficial relationships among the key stakeholders vary from one event to the next.

Table 4.9: Summary of Chapter 4 Case Study Key Stakeholders

	St. Petersburg	Iowa	Mid-Ohio
Sanctioning Body View	Warm weather, fits calendar	In fanbase core area, motorsport heritage	In fanbase core area, motorsport heritage
Automotive Industry	Low inolvement	Moderate involvment, highly local	High involvement
Honda	High involvement	None	High involvement
Ethanol Industry	None	High involvement	Minimal involvement
Non-Auto Industry	High public & private	High local, private involvement	Minimal
Television Ratings	Started low, now increasing	Started high, now decreasing	Started high, now decreasing

More specifically, the sanctioning body sees different benefits or advantages to the expansion and continued location of a race at each venue. For St. Petersburg, the attraction of the first ever street circuit on the IRL schedule was natural given the series' goal to diversify the venue types on their schedule. Additionally, St. Petersburg offered a warm weather location to start the season when most other venue locations are still experiencing colder temperatures. The sanctioning body finds Iowa to be ideal because it is a short oval that maintains near capacity attendance with large support from a local, short track, oval racing heritage and culture. IndyCar and their innovative use of American ethanol in their race cars provided a useful platform to for the Iowa Corn Growers Association promotion of Iowa-based ethanol. Like St. Petersburg, Mid-Ohio fits in nicely with the IRL's goal to diversify the series with the addition of more purpose-built road course races. At the same time, Honda, Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course's longtime partner and major local employer, became sole engine supplier of the IndyCar Series.

The data also revealed much different levels of involvement from the automotive industry. Of all the case studies, the Mid-Ohio event has by far the largest percentage of stakeholder involvement from the automotive industry, comprising nearly 50 percent of the event sponsors identified in the souvenir programs and 13 of the 20 event sponsors identified in the Joyce Julius analysis. Not only is the automotive industry minimally involved in the Grand Prix of St. Petersburg, there is no involvement by any local automotive industry stakeholders. No Florida-based automotive industry sponsors were identified in either the souvenir program analysis or the Joyce Julius data set.

Further, compiling television viewership data for each case study event, I provide another context with which to understand the magnitude of each event. The data revealed that each of the case studies have had at least one event that reaches over 1.2 million households and attracts over 30,000 spectators, giving justification to these events as mega-events. As I detail in the following chapter, many local place marketers are actively seeking an IndyCar event because of the access to large numbers of television viewers. However, the data above clearly showcase varying television viewership numbers based on the television partner that is broadcasting the event. Each case study race had at least one event with less than 400,000 households watching the event.

The composition of local event sponsors and place marketers also varied considerably among the case studies. In the case of St. Petersburg, Honda's close relationship with Andretti-Green Racing and Promotions was crucial to Honda's title event sponsorship of the Grand Prix. At the same time, the mayor of St. Petersburg was looking for a major sanctioning body to bring their racing series to the downtown streets after several previous attempts. Essentially, the City of St. Petersburg had invested in the

infrastructure to host a grand prix, but needed to find a willing and viable sanctioning body and event promoter. At the same time, IndyCar was looking to expand to new venue types, moving away from their traditional oval speedway form of racing.

As more and more ovals were removed from the IndyCar schedule, the short oval Iowa Speedway was added, due at least in part to a passionate, open-wheel racing fan base in Iowa and title event sponsorship from the ICGA. Although the Iowa Speedway was constructed with the help of public support and funding, the Iowa IndyCar race has had considerable support from private, local Iowa businesses beyond the title event sponsorship promotion of Iowa-based ethanol. To the contrary, the Mid-Ohio IndyCar weekend has virtually no local involvement from public or private key stakeholders other than Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course owners and operators and local Honda employees.

CHAPTER 5
METHODOLOGY AND DATA: PART 2

5.1 Introduction

Now that the key local stakeholders have been identified using various quantitative measurements and data sources, I turn my focus to the local impacts, both positive and negative, of an IndyCar Series race event for each of the case study sites. I begin by using insights from the place marketing literature review in Chapter 3 as key local individuals and entities are using the mega-event stature of an IndyCar Series event to showcase themselves to larger audiences while providing a positive impact to their local area via the highly-spectated event. I do so by analyzing specific comments and statements made by each of the local place marketers identified in Sections 4.8.1, 4.8.2, and 4.8.3 utilizing many of the same data sources from Chapter 4, including souvenir programs, local newspaper articles, and other publically available documents. I also incorporate additional data sources including, but not limited, to transcripts from city council and county commission meetings, travel and community surveys produced by local destination marketing organizations, radio interviews, and company press releases. These data sources were also useful in identifying several key negative impacts that have been observed with the staging of each case study event.

I organize the perceived and observed positive and negative impacts for each event using Table 3.1, which summarizes the positive and negative impacts observed in previous mega-event research. These differing types of impacts are used as sub-headings within my analysis of each case study event in the sections that follow. Participant observation was also used while visiting each case study event to foster further an

understanding of the entities supporting each event and of the local environment, including the characteristics of both race fans and residents as I personally experience the IndyCar race event. While attending each case study event in 2010 and 2011, I identified additional local stakeholders who support each event via an analysis of track signage and billboards as well as those purchasing vendor spaces within the race track venue in organized display areas. For instance, if I would not have attended the Mid-Ohio event, I would have never known that the Mansfield and Richland County Convention and Visitors Bureau actually has a visible presence at the track with a display area in an area of the venue with high spectator traffic. This destination marketing organization was never identified in the Chapter 4 data analysis. For each case study event, I stayed at the venue during the entire event, including overnight. I camped on-site at both the Iowa Speedway and Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course events, although their amenities vary considerably. For the Grand Prix of St. Petersburg events, I stayed at the Downtown St. Petersburg Hilton, which is located between Turn 4 and Turn 5 on the circuit and is the host hotel for IndyCar race teams and series officials.

The analysis of the Joyce Julius data from Chapter 4 is coupled with my own content analysis of each case study event's televised broadcast. I also analyze each broadcast by focusing on two specific areas. First, each televised broadcast uses an introduction that places the race in a particular setting. This place-specific, often pre-written description is very useful towards understanding what is being showcased by the television broadcasters of each event. Also, during lulls in the televised broadcast, representatives of the title event sponsor are often interviewed to explain their key reasons for supporting the IndyCar race event in their locale. Similar to the previous

chapter, I conclude this chapter with a summary of my findings, including cross-comparisons, and a discussion relating my research findings to previous place marketing literature.

5.2 Local Impacts of the Grand Prix of St. Petersburg

Rick Baker, the mayor of St. Petersburg from 2001 to 2010, grew up in Indianapolis, Indiana as a child and frequently attended events at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. From Baker's perspective, attracting the IndyCar Series to the streets of St. Petersburg, even after failed attempts by other racing series, was "kinda like going from the minor leagues to having a major league baseball team" (St. Petersburg City Council Meeting 2009). Each year, the City of St. Petersburg pays the event promoters $150,000 and provides various services, including police, fire, and sanitation. The event promoter, not the City of St. Petersburg, pays the costs to construct the race course and erect grandstands along with IndyCar's sanctioning fee.

Since ending his term as mayor, Baker wrote an autobiography called *The Seamless City* that describes his time while he was mayor of St. Petersburg. He includes an entire section detailing the specific reasons he sought IndyCar to bring their form of racing to St. Petersburg. Baker stated (2011, 60):

> It was my love for Indy car racing, and my understanding of what it can do for a city, that convinced me to call Tony George in April 2003.

When Baker called Tony George, he did not want to sell the city to lure George to bring his series to St. Petersburg. Instead, Baker wanted to show George that he understood IndyCar racing and was a passionate fan himself. Baker stated (2011, 61):

> I wanted him (George) to know that if he brought a race to St. Petersburg, I would make sure that it succeeded here. It was more than an economic development project to me. It was a passion.

Baker identified three key objectives he hoped to achieve by hosting the Grand Prix (2011, 62):

> 1) Favorably impact the city economically, hopefully by filling hotel beds that in turn provide visitors who spend money on taxis, restaurants, shopping, and visiting other places in the city.
>
> 2) Provide image enhancement, often with television coverage that positively shows off the city.
>
> 3) Introduce an activity that our community can enjoy, improving the quality of life and making us all feel even better about our town.

Each of Baker's objectives is analyzed in the following sections.

5.2.1 Attraction of Visitors, Increased Economic Activity and Job Creation

Leading up to the inaugural Grand Prix of St. Petersburg, City Council Chairman Bill Foster stated (James and Johnson 2004a, 1A):

> It's the granddaddy of auto racing. To have an IRL event in St. Pete, that's like a Super Bowl or a Final Four. The economic impact would be huge.

In a press release describing the direct economic benefits of the 2009 Grand Prix of St. Petersburg, the city's economic development division announced 140,000 attending fans, with the average spectator spending $120 in downtown St. Petersburg restaurants and stores over the course of the race weekend (City of St. Petersburg Press Release 2009). The City announced that all 1,048 hotel rooms in downtown St. Petersburg were booked from the Wednesday before the race through the following Monday (City of St. Petersburg Press Release 2009). The St. Petersburg/Clearwater Area Convention and Visitors Bureau estimated that the 2005 GPSP spectators gave the St. Petersburg area a

$5.13 million boost (Weimer 2006a). As a result of the recent economic recession and a subsequent decline in tourism and local hotel bed taxes, Pinellas County officials had to cutback sponsorships they provide various Tampa Bay sporting events. The Grand Prix ($250,000) and Major League Baseball's Tampa Bay Rays ($250,000) were the only two major sporting events or organizations to receive any funding, which was justified because the Grand Prix puts "heads in beds" (Huettel 2009, 1B). Race fans visiting from outside St. Petersburg were "a blend of northerners and an international crowd" (Donila and Farlow 2008, 1B).

The creation and support of local jobs preceding, during, and after the event was another direct economic impact proclaimed by city officials, as Mayor Baker noted (Sharockman 2009, 1B):

> It has a great stimulating effect. To have something like this coming in at this time, creating jobs, helping business, is a really positive thing.

Race organizers use local contractors for race setup, and use the Mahaffey Theater's management company, which is located inside the temporary street circuit venue, to help organize food vendors. The company that erects the track's grandstands, Nussli, is located across Tampa Bay in Tampa. Commenting on the creation of jobs, Kevin Savoree, one of the event promoters, stated, "At a time when folks need jobs and so on, it's a great feeling to know that we've contributed to the local economy," Ray Smith, owner of Smith Fence Co. in nearby Clearwater, Florida employed 47 people to set up concrete barriers, wire fencing and bridges over the circuit. Smith stated (Sharockman 2009, 1B):

> This is a big deal for us. We're doing four months of work in six weeks. We're supporting 47 people, their wives and their kids.

Many businesses that surround or are near the Grand Prix circuit noted considerable increases in customers and downtown traffic. Tim Toon, manager of Midtown Sundries, a downtown St. Petersburg sports bar stated (Brassfield 2009, 1B):

> This is the biggest weekend of the year for us. A lot of restaurants are closing. In this economic climate, for us to be having positive sales is a very good thing.

This was noted when I stayed for the entire race weekend and the week following at the Hilton, located downtown along the race circuit. The Hilton was where IndyCar management and personnel, along with race teams stay from Wednesday to Sunday evening. The hotel was completely full during the event but did have plenty of availability the week after. Downtown restaurants, grocery stores, and parking garages were also observed to have many more customers during the race weekend.

5.2.2 Enhancing the Image of a Place

The second key benefit identified by Mayor Baker and City officials was the large television viewing audience who were introduced to St. Petersburg. Baker stated, "How do you buy that kind of publicity around the world? It's like a live two-hour commercial for St. Petersburg" (Ave 2005b, 1B). As mentioned earlier, prior to the 1990s, St. Petersburg was regarded primarily as an area for retirees and often viewed in the shadow of Tampa, the larger of the two cities in the Tampa Bay region. Bob Stewart, a former member of the St. Petersburg City Council, along with other city officials, believed a motorsport event would be critical towards changing the image of St. Petersburg. Stewart stated (Moncada 2005b, 1):

> It (the race) was just another significant aspect of trying to prove to ourselves and to a larger constituency that St. Petersburg could be a happening place.

With the St. Petersburg race stretching along the downtown's waterfront, city officials, along with event promoters, compared St. Petersburg to Monte Carlo, the site of Formula One's most prestigious event in downtown Monaco. In fact, Monte Carlo and Monaco combined were mentioned several different times by local place marketers when drawing comparisons with St. Petersburg. In a May 7, 2009 meeting with St. Petersburg City Council, Kevin Dunn described the race as "two days of international and national television coverage to over 200 countries and to 200 million households in a setting compared to Monaco with crowds estimated over the three-day weekend in excess of 150,000" (St. Petersburg City Council Meeting 2009). Dunn later added that "the city did a great job of positioning itself. ... they compare this venue to Monte Carlo with the live network (coverage) panning our downtown waterfront" (Heisler 2009, 1). City Councilman Karl Nurse added, "I supported it because the Grand Prix obviously attracts a lot of people to town, but more importantly it is shown on TV across the world, and I have to tell you that spring in St. Petersburg and a race with our waterfront in the background is worth a lot of money" (Heisler 2009, 1)

During the 2011 televised broadcast of the GPSP, there were several overhead camera shots that did show much of the downtown areas surrounding the venue. The recently opened Dali Museum received considerable attention and was mentioned five times during the broadcast. That broadcast contained an 87-second long clip that interviewed an IndyCar driver while touring the inside of the Museum. The downtown waterfront, including yacht and marina, also received considerable exposure during the broadcast. A screenshot from the 2011 televised broadcast provides perspective regarding the views of downtown St. Petersburg (Figure 5.1). Marty Reid, ABC

television announcer, also added positive commentary about St. Petersburg during the 2011 broadcast, with comments including:

> Ahhh. The crystal waters of the bay of St. Petersburg. You come across Albert Whitted Airport, in fact one of the runways will serve as our front straightaway here in the Streets of St. Petersburg we get ready to start the 2011 IZOD IndyCar Series. This is a rite of spring. It is an absolutely picture-perfect day here in St. Petersburg.
>
> If you're looking for a place to vacation, you ought to come down in March when we are here for the IZOD IndyCar Series. St. Petersburg's just a beautiful spot as we have had great weather all weekend long. Our crew was even out building a little sandcastle.



Figure 5.1 Screen capture from ABC broadcast of 2011 GPSP.

The City of St. Petersburg purchased advertising for an entire page in both the 2010 and 2011 event souvenir programs. In the 2010 program, an image of the city's skyline at night was adorned with the phrase, "St. Petersburg: Beauty and the Beast"

referencing the downtown's "beauty" and the "beast" of loud, fast-paced IndyCar racing. The 2011 program advertisement included the city's waterfront and skyline, but the focus of the photo was the Dali museum with the phrase, "St. Petersburg: The Art of Racing". Both of these showcase the City's over-arching goal of promoting their downtown as vibrant and scenic, but also the location of several art museums and the growing art scene. Also included in both the 2010 and 2011 programs was a "Dear Race Fans" message from Mayor Foster. In both messages, Foster hoped race fans would visit other downtown businesses and amenities during their visits. In 2010, Foster encouraged spectators to "explore downtown St. Petersburg and all the amenities we have to offer – great restaurants and shopping downtown, renowned attractions like The Pier and Sunken Gardens, six outstanding museums, wonderful cultural opportunities in our galleries and our stages, professional baseball with the Rays and endless recreational opportunities under the Florida sun" (Honda Grand Prix Souvenir Program 2010, 6). Mayor Baker's successor, Bill Foster, has also been very supportive of the GPSP, stating (Honda Grand Prix of St. Petersburg Press Release 2012, 1):

> St. Petersburg hosts many events, but none heightens our city's visibility as much as the Honda Grand Prix of St. Petersburg. Each year, we welcome more than 150,000 race fans from nearly every state in the country, Canada, South America, Japan and Europe. The race also brings beautiful images of our city to 180 million homes in 171 countries around the globe. That's exposure we can't buy.

5.2.3 Quality of Life of Local Residents

The third key benefit identified by Mayor Baker and City officials is the role the Grand Prix in stimulating community pride and improving the quality of life by offering residents entertainment and amenities during the race weekend. During an announcement

after the inaugural Grand Prix to renew the City's contract with event promoters and IndyCar, Mayor Baker stated (Lewandowski 2008, 1):

> (The Honda Grand Prix of St. Petersburg) is becoming, more and more, a tradition that is part of the fabric of our city. As children growing up become race fans, as people throughout the city get to know the sport, they see it as an improvement to the quality of life for our city.

Baker later added (Brassfield 2009, 1B):

> When you're in economic times like this, it's good for people to get together and enjoy something together. It adds to the life of the city.

5.2.4 Promotion of Local Companies and Industries: Tourism

As event promoters, Andretti-Green Promotions were in charge of designing a track layout that was safe, yet offering exciting racing action. However, Andretti and Green were both adamant that they also wanted to design a layout that showcased St. Petersburg. Green stated (Fabrizio 2005, 3):

> We want the city to look its absolute best on race weekend. That's good for the city and good for all of us. The bigger we can make the event look, the better off we all are.

As the data revealed in the previous chapter, St. Petersburg had less of a local motorsport heritage than to the other two case study areas. For this reason, Grand Prix promoters have added several non-racing activities to keep fans interested and attracted to the event. Event promoters refer to the Grand Prix as "a three-day festival, with racing as the centerpiece of the entertainment" (Hau 2006, 1D). During the race weekend, there is a "fan zone" with racing simulators, go-karts, and activities for kids. Event promoters have also added a Ferris wheel and music concerts throughout the entire weekend, which I did not observe while attending Mid-Ohio and Iowa Speedway events.

Of course event promoters have the main goal of earning a profit for their private company, but Grand Prix General Manager Tim Ramsberger hoped the event would also be integral in the promotion of the St. Petersburg area as a tourist destination to visitors beyond Tampa Bay and Florida. This was stated in a press release from Andretti Green Promotions in support of the 2008 announcement of unification between the IRL and CCWS, Ramsberger wrote that he felt the Grand Prix in St. Petersburg had "made this a destination event for race fans from across the region and the nation" (Andretti Green Promotions Press Release 2008, 1). In the 2010 GPSP souvenir program, the event promoters wrote a "Dear Race Fans" message highlighting the many events taking place at the venue during the race weekend. They also included a sentence describing their goal to "help boost the profile of St. Petersburg as one of the world's foremost destinations" (Honda Grand Prix Souvenir Program 2010, 8). In the 2011 souvenir program, Green-Savoree Promotions adjusted slightly their 2010 line mentioned above, stating their goal was to "help boost the profile of St. Petersburg as The World's Fastest Spring Break Party" (Honda Grand Prix Souvenir Program 2011, 8).

Event promoters started using the "World's Fastest Spring Break Party" in 2009, emphasizing both St. Petersburg's location on the IndyCar calendar but also the attraction of race fans from beyond the local area. In late 2012, I acquired the 2013 Visit St. Petersburg/Clearwater Annual Plan produced by the Pinellas County Convention & Visitors Bureau, a destination marketing organization that also goes by the name "Visit St. Petersburg Clearwater" (VSPC). Data compiled by VSPC in 2012 found there were 13.7 million visitors to Pinellas County, "making it the most popular vacation destination on Florida's west coast" (VSPC Annual Plan 2012, 13). Of those 13.7 million visitors,

5.2 million stayed overnight with the Midwest and Northeast regions representing the largest source regions of visitors, accounting for 29.7 percent and 23.2 percent respectively. These two regions, particularly the Midwest, are also large source areas for IndyCar race fans and vacationers that travel to warmer climates during spring break in late March and early April. In a short promotional video produced by VSPC and published on their website, Tim Ramsberger promotes St. Petersburg's physical environment, including sunny weather and a variety of beach and ocean activities throughout the entire year. Ramsberger stated in the promotional video (Elephant Cinema 2010):

> On a bright, sunny spring day in St. Petersburg when there's still a foot of snow up north, you've got the sail boats and the sea gulls, you can't ask for a better postcard. What that does is just show what a beautiful community this is. The backdrop on Tampa Bay, you've got the Gulf Beaches, we're blessed to be able to sail, and surf, and fly and do all of the things on a year-round basis here that in other areas of the country you can't do.

In 2011, VSPC spent $250,000 to sponsor the Grand Prix of St. Petersburg indicating their high level of involvement with the event and they were highly visible in both the souvenir program and Joyce Julius analyses as demonstrated in Chapter 4. In the 2011 GPSP souvenir program, VSPC purchased a full page advertisement using their new motto, "Every day is sun day," with several images of people visiting many areas of Pinellas County (Figure 5.2). Also included near the bottom of the advertisement is an IndyCar driver from the Grand Prix. In a recap of the January 12, 2011 Tourism Development Council Meeting, David Downing, VSPC Assistant Director stated their objective with the new motto was to "create a fresh, youthful feel" to their marketing of St. Petersburg and Clearwater (Tourism Development Council Meeting Recap 2011, 1). One of the first times the new motto was used was in conjunction with the 2011 GPSP

later that March. The "every day is sun day" motto emphasizes the area's climate, which the City of St. Petersburg boasts on its website that they are the "Sunshine City," averaging 361 days of sunshine per year and holding the Guinness World Record for the most consecutive days of sunshine (768 days) (St. Petersburg At A Glance 2013). Also, the "sun day" references the day of the week the IndyCar race in St. Petersburg is held.

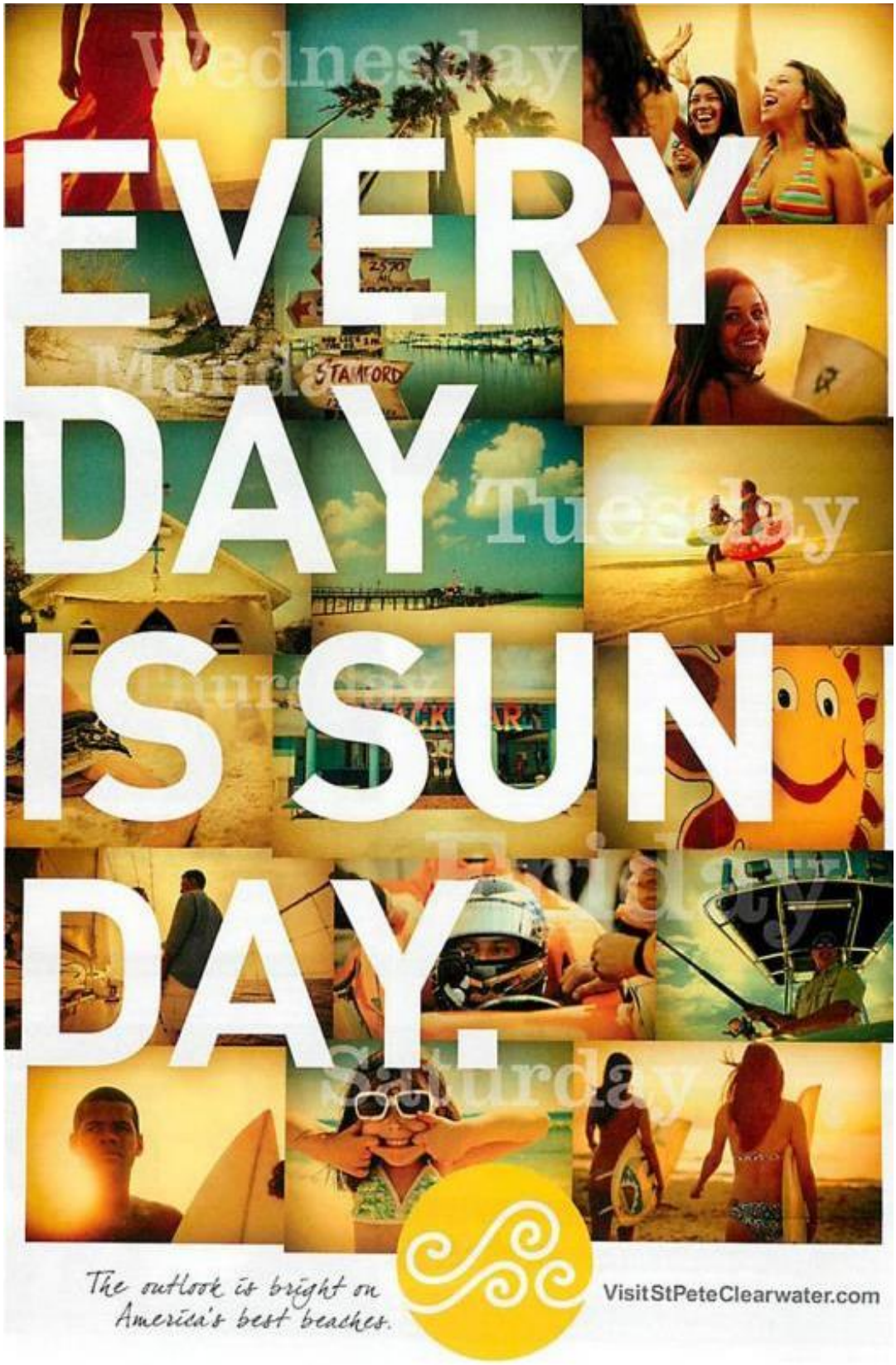

Figure 5.2 Visit St. Petersburg Clearwater advertisement covering page 17 from the 2011 GPSP souvenir program.

5.2.5 Negative Impacts of Grand Prix of St. Petersburg

Compared to the two other case study events, there were many more positive, but also negative, impacts associated with St. Petersburg's IndyCar race. One of the most mentioned negative impacts was from downtown residents complaining about the noise and barricades that fills the city streets during race weekend. "I think it's horrible," said Rex Brasell, president of the Bayfront Towers Association, which is along the race circuit route (Silva 2008a). Marilyn Heitman, another Bayfront Tower resident stated (Silva 2008a):

> I hate it. It's just loud and dirty and it takes them two weeks to get the fencing down. We are just barricaded into Bayfront Towers. It's like a little prison.

Another downtown resident, Emil Pavone commented (Hayes 2009a, 2B):

> Listen to it. It's so disruptive to our lives. The event's wiry fences make the city look like a labor camp.

While I attended the 2011 GPSP, I took before and after photos from the same vantage points to visualize the impact of the barriers and fencing around the circuit (Figure 5.3 and 5.4). On the Thursday before the IndyCar race on Sunday, I went around to different areas of the circuit and then compared those photos to ones I captured on the Wednesday following the race. By Wednesday, all of the pedestrian bridges and most of the fencing were removed. Also, since street lights along the race course pose a safety hazard to IndyCar drivers in open-cockpit cars that can get airborne, they are removed before the race and the replaced immediately following the event. I also noted that the entrance to the Dali Museum, Albert Whitted Airport, and the Mahaffey Theater were all opened and had signs directing patrons to each entrance. That said, there were still plenty of remnants from the previous weekend's race as most of the concrete barriers were still in

place. These barriers were the first items erected in the five-to-six weeks prior to the GPSP in February and the last to be removed two weeks after the race in April, totaling about 40 to 50 days of the year the streets have barriers for the three-day event.



Figure 5.3 Images from three days before (left) and three days after (right) the 2010 GPSP.



Figure 5.4 Images from three days before (left) and three days after (right) the 2010 GPSP.

Although several businesses are positively impacted by the large amount of people visiting downtown, other businesses were negatively impacted. This was especially noted in 2011 when the Dali Museum patrons could no longer access the museum because of the erection of track barriers causing an estimated decline of 2,600 visitors to the museum during the three-day event (Stanley 2011). During the race weekend, Dali patrons first had to purchase a $40 general admission Grand Prix ticket to access the Dali Museum for an additional $21. Dali executive director Hank Hine stated, "Following the disastrous interruption of the waterfront, the access roads, the airport, Mahaffey (Theater), and Al Lang Stadium lasting for two months, I have asked the City of St. Petersburg to meet with Dali representatives to discuss how to reduce, in the future, the impediments to our operation at the Dali and other amenities, caused by the Grand Prix" (Thalji 2011, 1B).

Courigan's Irish Pub owner Sam Martin said he loses thousands of dollars each year because of the race barriers and signs hiding his bar's entrance and sign, stating, "You can't see me and you will never get here if you don't know how to get here" (Silva 2008a). Lornie Muller, owner of a jewelry store along the race route stated, "It's killing us. It deflates the city's budget without helping businesses like us" (Van Sickler 2010, 1B). Downtown residents who have no interest in the Grand Prix have to deal with closed parking lots, changed entryways into their apartments, not to mention the loud noise associated with the event. Some leave to go on vacation, evidence of "crowding out" as locals leave the city to avoid the negative impacts (Krueger 2006; Hayes 2009). One restaurant owner noted that although they gain new customers from the GPSP, their

regular customers avoided the restaurant causing them to net no real positive impact in terms of sales, as they stated (Pittman 2006, 3B):

> We did get people from the Grand Prix but our regular customers were not here. They stayed away because of the races, so the weekend did not turn out as well as we had hoped.

Another restaurant owner observed leakages as the vendors inside the GPSP circuit provide food options for Grand Prix patrons benefiting those vendors instead of downtown restaurants near the circuit, stating (Weimar 2006d, 1A):

> The people go to the event and they come out and go to their cars and leave. Because everything they need is provided to them at the race. And all of our regulars are staying away.

Also, the weekly "Saturday Morning Market" farmer's market, which averages 200 vendors and 8,000 to 10,000 customers each week, closes for one week each year during the race weekend because its location in a downtown parking lot is used as turns 4, 5, and 6 of the race circuit.

The City of St. Petersburg does not pay the race promoters cash directly, but instead provides $150,000 worth of services to them each year. These services include police and fire protection, as well as road maintenance and garbage service. In return, the city receives 200 tickets, advertising opportunities and the right to build a hospitality area. The City spends an additional $50,000 managing traffic during race weekend. The City is also in charge of storing the barriers, including approximately 1,500 tires, which caused complaints one summer when the tires would retain water, increasing the number of mosquitos and the chances of mosquito-borne diseases (DeCamp 2010).

Tom Begley, a St. Petersburg resident and general manager of the Grand Prix of St. Petersburg in 2003 before the IRL sanctioned the race, questioned the reasons why the

City and local taxpayers should pay the current event promoter $150,000 each year when they never provided the same to Begley and previous event promoters. In 2004, when a race was not held, the City of St. Petersburg took control of the $3.6 million in capital improvements, including all race circuit safety systems, fencing, barriers, and pedestrian bridges over the track (Begley 2009). In order to lure a new event promoter, the City of St. Petersburg then offered the $3.6 million in capital improvements to Andretti-Green organizers for only $1.

Another negative was that the race was bringing visitors to Pinellas County during a time of year when they already have high numbers of visitors, particularly visitors from the Midwest. In a *St. Petersburg Times* op-ed prior to the 2011 GPSP, Assistant Metro Editor Sandra J. Gadsden suggested changing the date of the Grand Prix, although IndyCar officials are the ultimate deciders of the event date, not Grand Prix or City officials. Gadsden included commentary from Mark Johnson, Director of the Saturday Morning Market that is canceled each year during the Grand Prix weekend. Johnson stated (Gadsden 2011, 3A):

> Why not in September when we are in need of visitors? This time of year, when we have perfect weather, a huge number of visitors that come for the waterfront and the weather — before the race was here — why have it now?

Lodging data published in the 2013 VSPC Annual Plan support this argument as the 2010 "winter" season, which VSPC defines as January, February, March and April, had 75.5 percent occupancy, whereas "spring/summer" and "fall" had 71.6 percent and 57.3 percent, respectively (VSPC Annual Plan 2012, 14). Further, the average daily rate for lodging in 2011 was $114.51 for the winter months and $102.95 and $97.05 for spring/summer and fall, respectively.

5.3 Local Impacts of the Iowa Indy 250

Prior to their first IndyCar race, Iowa Speedway Director of Media Relations Matt Beecher proclaimed that, “It will be the premier sporting event in Iowa in 2007" (Dahn 2007a, 3C). Iowa Speedway Vice President and General Manager Craig Armstrong promoted the inaugural race as “the largest-impact professional sporting event in Iowa history” (Dahn 2007c, 5C). Iowa Speedway investors saw an opportunity to build an elite-level, short-oval speedway in an area of the country with a strong passion for auto racing, as Iowa Speedway General Manager Todd Melfi stated (*Associated Press* 2006a, 3C):

> I think that in the state of Iowa there are so many race tracks and so many race fans that are just starving for top-notch racing entertainment.

Iowa Speedway President Jerry Jauron added, "We're in the heart of open-wheel country” (Dahn 2008b, 1C).

The attraction of the IndyCar Series was seen as an opportunity to showcase the Speedway’s goal of attracting other top-level series, including NASCAR, via the nationwide and international television coverage of the IndyCar event on ABC. Commenting on the role of the television coverage, Armstrong stated, “When we see our track and our state televised by a major network, I have to contain my giddiness when I think about it” (Dahn 2007c, 5C). Although they received ticket requests from outside Iowa, Speedway officials promoted the Iowa Speedway IndyCar race in seven nearby cities, including Omaha, Nebraska, and Sioux City, the Quad Cities and Cedar Rapids in Iowa. Commenting on the reasons for the promotional trip, Armstrong stated (Dahn 2007b, 4C):

> The crazy thing is, we've also heard from a lot of Iowans that they don't know much about us. That's part of the reason we're touring the state - we're taking Iowa Speedway to Iowa, in effect.

In early 2007, Iowa Speedway officials sought title event sponsorship from Bob Bowman, President of the Iowa Corn Growers Association (Bloomquist 2007a, B3). During the press conference announcing ICGA title sponsorship of the IndyCar Series race, Armstrong stated (Bloomquist 2007a, B3):

> It's a marriage made in heaven. It's the first year of ethanol in Indy, Iowa is the No. 1 producer of ethanol and it's made with Iowa corn.

In a June 19, 2010 interview with Chuck Zimmerman from "domesticfuel.com", Armstrong identified several benefits of the Iowa Corn Indy 250 from the perspective of various stakeholders (DomesticFuel.com 2010). First, Armstrong described the mega-event stature of the IndyCar Series and how this is a "world-class event" that also appeals to IndyCar Series management because they have a well-attended venue in IndyCar's core fan region. Armstrong felt the "upper Midwest is really an underserved market in terms of motorsport" arguing that this area contains a considerably high number of race fans but lacks any major motorsport venues that host top-tier, national-level racing series. Second, with IndyCar using corn-based ethanol, the Iowa race provides a platform for the Iowa Corn Grower's promotion of the benefits of ethanol. This title event sponsorship helps to defray the sanctioning fee paid by Iowa Speedway to IndyCar Series.

5.3.1 Promotion of Local Companies and Industries: Agriculture

The Iowa Corn Growers Association (ICGA) described its reasons for sponsoring the Iowa Corn Indy 250 based on the "4 E's." (Iowa Corn Growers Association Press

Release 2009, 1). These four "E's" include the promotion of ethanol's (Iowa Corn Growers Association Press Release 2008, 1):

1) "environmental" benefits

2) domestic-based production that provides national "energy" independence

3) importance to Iowa "economy"

4) use in high-performance "engines"

Iowa's position as the leader in corn-based ethanol production was promoted by ICGA CEO Craig Floss in a "Dear Race Fans" letter in the 2010 souvenir program, stating:

> From the green flag to the checkered flag today, we can all be proud to showcase Iowa – as the leader in corn production and the leader in corn-based ethanol production.

During the 2010 race broadcast, Tim Burrack, president of the ICGA, emphasized the environmental benefits of corn-based ethanol in an interview with pit reporter Lindy Thackston, stating:

> We're standing here in front of the ethanol car, with ethanol cars going round, what a great time. It's all about ethanol, it's about corn, it's about racing, it's about renewable energy, a sustainable energy, environmentally-friendly energy, and that's ethanol and that's why we are here today.

The platform of an IndyCar race utilizing corn-based ethanol was also an opportunity to showcase the viability of ethanol to consumers that are unaware of its performance level and efficiency. When the Iowa Corn Growers Association agreed to become title event sponsor in 2006, Kyle Phillips, ICGA President, emphasized the connection between the engine performance of IndyCar and Iowa-based ethanol, stating, "If you can drive 220 miles an hour on 100 percent ethanol during an Indy race, driving down the highway with an ethanol blend should be a piece of cake" (*Associated Press* 2006b, 5C). Two

advertisements produced by the ICGA that were included in the souvenir programs connected the engine performance of IndyCars with the everyday, passenger car. In the first advertisement (Figure 5.5), the slogan "Ethanol: Good for Iowa, Good for Indy" is used to emphasize the benefits of ethanol to Iowa, including the creation of jobs, increased efficiency, and a reduction in environmental impact. The second ICGA advertisement (Figure 5.6) is meant to inform non-ethanol using, passenger car drivers that may not be aware of its performance level. The advertisement emphasizes that the only difference between the average consumer car and the high-performance IndyCar race cars "is the speed limit".



Figure 5.5 Iowa Corn Growers Association's advertisement covering pages 28-29 from the 2010 Iowa Indy 250 souvenir program.



Figure 5.6 Iowa Corn Growers Association's advertisement covering page 5 from the 2010 Iowa Indy 250 souvenir program.

The ICGA uses the IndyCar race event to promote ethanol to both Iowans attending the event and the nationally-televised audience. Tim Burrack, 2009 Chairman of the Iowa Corn Promotion Board, noted the focus on promoting ethanol to Iowans in a press conference to announce a contract extension with Iowa Speedway and IndyCar (*Newton Daily News* Staff Report 2009e, 1A):

> Iowa Corn is at the track again this year because the cars are not only running on corn ethanol, but thousands of Iowans hear and see our messages about the power, performance, reliability and energy independence from homegrown corn ethanol.

The television opportunity of an IndyCar event to promote ethanol beyond Iowa to the entire nation was key to ICGA event sponsorship. Tim Recker, 2008 president of the Iowa Corn Growers Association, stated (Wilde 2007, 4):

> It's (ethanol) well-known in Iowa, not in the nation. That's why we're doing it with nationwide coverage. It's time to unveil it to the rest of the country.

Both of Iowa's U.S. Senators, Tom Harkin and Chuck Grassley, attended the inaugural event and promoted the national and global-level impact of ethanol usage. Grassley stated, "We need to remind ourselves that ethanol is good for farmers, good for the environment, good for good-paying jobs in rural America … and it's good for our national defense" (Bloomquist 2007b, D6). Harkin added (Bloomquist 2007b, D6):

> If we did not export ethanol, we could replace in this state 100 percent of our gasoline usage. When we draw our fuel from the corn fields of the Midwest that means we don't have to draw it from the oil fields of the Middle East, which is unstable.

Although there was a national and global-level promotion of ethanol, there was also an emphasis on using the IndyCar race to promote ethanol to Iowans. Local Newton gas stations offered discounted ethanol for consumers during the weekend to help

promote the race to locals (Newton Daily News Staff Report 2007c, 3A). Craig Lang, president of the Iowa Farm Bureau, stated (Lucas 2007, 7B):

> We can't get to the goal of replacing foreign petroleum without Iowans purchasing E85 and ethanol-blended gasoline. We want people to know that 28 gallons of E85 replaces one barrel, that's 42 gallons, of imported oil, and the majority of the money in making the ethanol stays in the state.

The televised broadcast also highlighted the corn industry in Iowa, as NBC Sports introduced both the 2010 and 2011 events mentioning corn with images of the Speedway amid corn fields (Figure 5.7) and a farm (Figure 5.8). Bob Jenkins introduced the 2010 race, stating:

> It's the Corn Belt heartland, where short-track, oval racing defines comfort level. It's extreme speed in the Midwest. Among the cornfields of central Iowa, you'll find Iowa Speedway, located 35 miles east of Des Moines.



Figure 5.7 Screen capture from the introduction to the 2010 NBC Sports televised broadcast of the Iowa Indy 250.



Figure 5.8 Screen capture from the introduction to the 2010 NBC Sports televised broadcast of the Iowa Indy 250.

Also shown in the introduction were Iowa Speedway fans from the previous year waving green flags (Figure 5.9). To promote the green, environmentally friendly aspects of corn-based ethanol, each fan attending the Iowa Indy 250 receives a green flag from the ICGA. Fans are instructed to wave the green flags along with the official IndyCar race starter located at the start-finish line. During the broadcast, the camera would pan through the crowd during each re-start as the entire crowd waved their green flags. Numerous times the broadcasters mentioned ethanol in association with the crowd's green flag waving.



Figure 5.9 Screen capture from the introduction to the 2010 NBC Sports televised broadcast of the Iowa Indy 250.

5.3.2 Enhancing the Image of a Place

After the closure of Maytag, the City of Newton received considerable national attention about the city's demise, including a *Wall Street Journal* article titled, "Town Fears Being Hung Out to Dry by Maytag Sale" (McCarthy 2005). In response, Mayor Chaz Allen wrote *WSJ* a letter to the editor titled, "Newton moving into new era" that describes Allen's positive view of Newton, particularly the perceived benefits of the Iowa Speedway (Allen 2005). Allen stated:

> Newton is on the cusp of a paradigm change like no other the State of Iowa has seen. In coming months, construction will begin on the motorsports complex that will create a bustling retail and tourism destination adjoining our recently renovated and expanded airport next to Interstate 80. This is not only a destination for Iowa but for the entire Midwest.

In “Dear Race Fans” letters from both the 2010 and 2011 souvenir programs, Newton Mayor Charles “Chaz” Allen encouraged out-of-town IndyCar fans to visit Newton’s downtown shops, restaurants, and tourist attractions. Allen also emphasized that Newton was a city “at the forefront of our nation’s transition to renewable energy” (Iowa Corn Indy 250 Souvenir Program 2010, 4) and “transforming” to become a “hub of quality green jobs that will fuel America’s future in renewable energies” (Iowa Corn Indy 250 Souvenir Program 2011, 4). This “Dear Race Fans” letter showcases the City of Newton’s promotion of their environmental innovations and their local, renewable solutions to providing sources of energy along with the goal of bringing business downtown in order to increase economic activity.

5.3.3 Attraction of Visitors, Increased Economic Activity and Job Creation

Race weekends have led to increase traffic at local hotels, restaurants, and gas stations near the speedway in the “Prairie Fire Economic Development District”. In 2007, Love’s Country Store opened a facility that, in addition to selling gasoline, includes a McDonalds and Chester’s Chicken (Karr 2007d). With the help of a rebate on property taxes, a BP gas station, including a Wendy’s fast food restaurant, was built in 2007 (Karr 2007d). The locally-owned Prairie Gas company opened a station complete with a store that promotes local cheese, wine, and bread and also encourages visiting race fans to visit other Newton area establishments (Jennings 2007). Two hotels, AmericInn and Newton-based Prairie Inn and Suites also located near the Speedway in the Prairie Fire Economic Development District (Karr 2007d).

Prior to the first IndyCar race weekend, Newton businesses expected increases in customers, with stores adding extra staff or adjusting the hours they were opened. The Greater Newton Chamber of Commerce organized and sponsored a shuttle that brought Iowa Speedway patrons to shop at downtown Newton stores (Karr 2007c). In conjunction with the 2008 IndyCar event, the Newton Convention and Visitors Bureau co-hosted the "Weekend Pit Stop", an event including music, entertainment, and food vendors that catered to race fans not from Newton. Bacon stated (Lowe 2008, A1)

> The Speedway is interested in us having entertainment for them as well and things to do for campers, visitors and teams. We'd like (race fans) to experience Newton and the whole community, rather than just one area.

A recent study published by Iowa State University and commissioned by the City of Newton and Iowa Speedway found that the Newton race track directly and indirectly brought $34 million to the local area economy in 2009 (Swenson 2010). Other key statistics from the study found that 50.4 percent of visitors came from central Iowa and 33.6 percent from the rest of the state with out-of-state visitors accounting for 16 percent of spectators. Also, the Speedway employs 22 full-time, year-round workers and up to 367 part-time workers during the larger events, like the IndyCar Series race. Another key finding from the study was that of the $6.5 million estimated direct economic impact from visitors, $3 million (46 percent) were generated from racing crews and officials. In the 2010 Iowa Welcome Center Survey Report, Iowa Tourism officials estimated that each spectator that visits the Iowa Speedway on average contributes an economic impact of $173 to the local and state economy (Kelley 2011). In 2010, the Iowa Tourism Office selected the Iowa Speedway as the "Tourism Attraction of the Year". During the announcement of the Speedway's award, Iowa Tourism Manager Shawna Lode stated

that “Iowa Speedway is a wonderful attraction benefitting the community of Newton, its immediate region, and the State of Iowa, while reminding all of us that Iowa is, and will continue to be, a travel and tourism destination” (*Newton Daily News* Staff Report 2010b, 1A).

5.3.4 Negative Impacts of Iowa Indy 250

Since construction of the Iowa Speedway, Newton residents have experienced increased local taxes and utilities costs. To help fund the Iowa Speedway construction, the City of Newton constructed just under $10 million in road and sewer infrastructure along with a $3.3 million grant to the developers towards construction of the track. In exchange, US Motorsport Enterprises constructed the Speedway and was assessed at a minimum of $40 million by 2026. As a result of the construction of the Iowa Speedway, extra costs have been added to local taxpayers to fund various improvements in and around the race track. In order to help fund an $800,000 project to bring water service to the Speedway, the average Newton household saw their water bill increase 19 percent (Hussmann 2006). In February 2009, Newton City Council members voted to increase sewer rates to help upgrade the facilities near the Speedway (Karr 2009). Council members also voted to provide traffic control for all Speedway events by paying a private company, Per Mar Security, $5,000 for the entire season, adding another cost to local taxpayers.

Although the Iowa Speedway has helped to replace jobs lost due to the Maytag closing and some development has occurred around the Iowa Speedway in the Prairie Fire District, the economic impact that was expected has not yet come to fruition. When

I attend the 2010 and 2011 IndyCar races at Iowa Speedway, I observed no new development since the Speedway's inaugural season. In fact, the Prairie Gas station and Prairie Inn and Suites are no longer operating and are vacant. Further, although the IndyCar race at Iowa Speedway regularly attracts 40,000 spectators, very few of those spectators make it to areas other than those immediately around the Speedway exit. During the televised broadcast, the only parts of Newton other than the Speedway that were shown were cornfields and farms. The lack of event attendees visiting Newton's downtown and businesses was identified in responses to a survey of Newton residents conducted by Linda Bacon, Newton CVB President. Although several surveyed respondents were in favor of the Iowa Speedway race events, some survey respondents viewed the event as only benefiting a few businesses, particularly hotels and gas stations built near the Speedway, providing minimal economic impact to Newton's downtown businesses. Others noted that the uptick in Speedway visitors to the area only occurs on the four or five race days each year. These critical statements about the Iowa Speedway by Newton residents in response to the question, "Please provide other comments or suggestions you have about the City of Newton" included (Newton CVB Resident Survey 2011):

> The fact that so many thought the Speedway was going to bring us a greater amount of tourist traffic has proven to only be true about 4 times a year. People who come to the races do not come and and (sic) go downtown they pretty much stay out at the racetrack. (Response 42)
>
> The speedway was built on the outskirts of Newton and did not assist Newton in the way it was supposed to. It should have been built so that visitors went through the town and frequented the businesses in Newton instead of building new businesses just for the purpose of the speedway. (Response 52)
>
> The Iowa Speedway only holds a few weekends of racing each year; therefore, too much emphasis is being placed on the track "hoping" to make it the cash cow

> for Newton and the East entrance to the community. Clearly no big developments have wanted to come to the money pit area for a reason. (Response 53)
>
> Again this is my opinion but we need to look at where we are really going as a community and stop the hype with the Iowa Speedway, it does not contribute that much to the city and yes I know the tourism thing is good for overall Iowa but guess what those people do not make it past Rusty Wallace Drive (ask some of the local businesses) and it is what 4-5 races a year. (Response 124)
>
> When Speedway came in they put in restaurant, gas station, hotel/motel so why would they come to town and buy anything out there. And we loaned them our money. Wheres (sic) the payoff for Newton businesses? Speedway paid off to the investors not the tax payers of Newton. (Response 523)
>
> The Speedway has been a disappointment in that beer and motels are about all that bring money into the community! As far as I'm concerned, the taxpayers got took! (Response 701)

In several local newspaper articles, traffic and congestion around the Speedway was another negative impact observed of the Iowa Speedway events. Andrew Potter, writer for the *Newton Daily News* reported, "Traffic problems held cars up for hours in some locations" (Potter 2007a, 1B). Heavy rain the Friday night before the inaugural 2007 race turned the newly-laid grass in the parking areas unusable. This led to a miles-long traffic jam before the race as traffic was re-routed to usable parking lots. Traffic was backed up in both directions on Interstate 80 and many fans got to their seats when the race had already started. Scott Dockstader from the Iowa Department of Transportation stated, "Once you got within four miles of the track, and on some these other roads, you were just in gridlock" (Petroski and Gray 2007, A1).

By 2010, however, I observed no congestion or traffic going into the venue as there was multiple exit ramp and surface street lanes blocked off and redirected allowing many cars to enter at once. Also, fans arrived at various times throughout the day with much more "tailgating" in the parking lots compared to the race events at other two case

studies. Most of the traffic congestion occurred at the conclusion of the race as a large number of spectators left the venue at the same time. Commenting on the traffic congestion and concerns with parking, Jerry Jauron, Iowa Speedway President, stated (Dahn 2008e, 1C):

> The biggest problem we face is the difficulty of getting fans here. Last year we had about five inches of rain and our parking lots were only about nine months old. It was very difficult. We only had about 30 percent of our parking available. We had six areas reduced to two and that caused some bottlenecks on the interstate. We're going to park between 12 and 15 thousand cars.

Although the 12,000 to 15,000 cars that Iowa Speedway officials expect to park is impressive, it also indicates the one-day trip characteristic of the spectators attending the race in Newton. Ever since the first Iowa Indy 250, spectator attendance has been estimated to be between 35,000 and 40,000. Assuming each car contained only two passengers, 75 percent of those attending arrived via car.

Many of those attending the event are within the same-day driving distance of the Speedway. With no rooms available in any of the three closest Newton hotels, I chose to stay at the Iowa Speedway's Campground located 100 yards north of the race track. There were only 28 vehicles observed in the campground, with most of those being recreational vehicles. Among all of the on-site campgrounds I've stayed at during my ten years of motorsport travels, the Iowa Speedway Campground had the least amount of amenities, indicating once again, that they do not receive a large weekend crowd. Instead, most fans arrive and leave the race on the same day. Further, on the Sunday morning before the IndyCar race later that day, I drove around various areas of the city of Newton. Once I crossed under Interstate 80 and approached downtown Newton, I noted minimal traffic as the downtown appeared very quiet. The photos below (Figure 5.10 and

Figure 5.11) were taken three hours before the green flag was waved. They showcase the minimal effect the race has on downtown Newton.



Figure 5.10 Downtown Newton morning of IndyCar Race (picture taken by author).



Figure 5.11 Downtown Newton morning of IndyCar Race (picture taken by author).

5.4 Local Impacts of Indy 200 at Mid-Ohio

With the addition of the IndyCar race in 2007 and co-headlining the weekend with the nation's largest sport car racing series, the Indy 200 at Mid-Ohio became the venue's marquee event. During the race weekend in early August each year, there is a packed schedule of various levels of motorsport that begins Friday, Saturday, and Sunday mornings, ending each day at or near dusk. Mid-Ohio promoters viewed the IndyCar race as an opportunity to promote their venue to those that are more casual race fans who have never attended a race at the venue. MOSCC President Trueman-Gajoch stated, "I think it's a great opportunity for the community and the state, even for the non-racing enthusiasts, it's a valuable asset" (McCurdy 2006b, D1). MOSCC used the celebrity drivers of the two top-level North American open-wheel and sports car racing series to promote the race to fans using the advertising slogan, "See the stars of the Indy 500 and the 24 Hours of Le Mans in the same weekend" (McCurdy 2006b, D1) and billed the event as "the biggest motor sports spectacle ever in Ohio" (McCurdy 2007b, A2). The first IRL sanctioned event at Mid-Ohio was deemed a success and attracted the largest number of spectators of all MOSCC events in 2007. In particular, there was a large turnout for both the Saturday American LeMans Series (ALMS) sports car race and IndyCar's race on Sunday as Jesse Ghiorzi, Mid-Ohio's Media and Communications Coordinator noted (McCurdy 2010b, 1B):

> For other events, there is one major league one and there are the supporting ones. With this one there are two. It's a doubleheader. Saturday is just as big a race as Sunday.

On the IndyCar race day, MOSCC officials observed a large number of first-time visitors who were Honda associates (McCurdy 2008, A1). Mid-Ohio's close relationship

with Honda has been key to attracting new fans to both IndyCar and Mid-Ohio, as recently appointed MOSCC president Craig Rust noted, "They (Honda) are a power in the state of Ohio, that much I'm learning more and more each day, but their ability to touch fans and bring new fans in is important" (McCurdy 2011b, 1B).

5.4.1 Attraction of Visitors, Increased Economic Activity and Job Creation

In this rural area of Ohio about halfway between Columbus and Cleveland, Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course is a major tourist destination throughout the year and "the largest economic impact generating facility to Richland County because of its size and scope and the duration of its season" (McCurdy 2012, A1). Prior to the first IRL sanctioned race at Mid-Ohio, economic impact analyses were published in local newspaper articles. The Mansfield/Richland County Convention and Visitors Bureau estimated a 2004 sports car weekend event brought in $7 million to the local economy (McCurdy 2004) and a total of $80 million from 1993-2005 (McCurdy 2006a). Other research found that Mid-Ohio added $86 million to the central Ohio economy and attracted 500,000 spectators in 2005, with 68 percent from Ohio and a majority within 50-to-100 miles of the venue (McCurdy 2006c). Research by Mid-Ohio officials since IndyCar's arrival in 2007, observed a larger number of fans from outside Ohio, particularly from, Indiana, Michigan, and Pennsylvania, compared to their other events (McCurdy 2012).

Commenting on the type of race fan that Mid-Ohio attracts, former track owner Michelle Trueman-Gajoch stated, "We're a facility that traditionally has a strong following for the real racing enthusiast versus the passive corporate customers who turn out traditionally at the street races" (McCurdy 2007b, A2). This was particularly noted

after I attended the 2010 and 2011 Mid-Ohio events. Of the three case studies, Mid-Ohio had the largest number of on-site campers, ranging from the large coach buses of IndyCar drivers and race teams, to fans in large recreational vehicles but also in tents, like me. Most of those camping arrive on Thursday or Friday, although there are some sports car fans that leave Sunday during the IndyCar race after watching Saturday's ALMS race. On both Saturday and Sunday, there are a large number of spectators that drive to Mid-Ohio and park in the daily parking lots. Unlike the other two case studies, the Mid-Ohio weekend has "car corrals" as groups of similar brands of cars park together in a special lot. For example, Chevrolet Corvettes will park in an infield area that is roped off and only for those purchasing "car corral" parking spots. After the ALMS race concludes on Saturday, the different corrals then take laps of the Mid-Ohio circuit at a controlled speed.

Lexington Mayor Gene Parkison, commenting on the town's increase in visitors during Mid-Ohio events, stated (Caudill 2011, 2A):

> Mid-Ohio has always been a source of good traffic through the village and for the businesses that have been able to draw them in. For the restaurants in the area, I'm sure it is a boom. You hear the story that the four to five weekends a year make the year for some.

Lexington administrator Randy Pore added, "These events certainly help all the businesses around town, plus this year seemed to bring back the race feel we used to have in the village" (Kinton 2008, A1):

Area hotels, bed and breakfasts, restaurants, and grocery stores benefit the most from the Mid-Ohio events. Belinda Bowman, owner of The Paddock Inn Bed and Breakfast located about 2.5 miles from MOSCC stated, "We get a lot of (Mid-Ohio) drivers who stay here with us and we already have everything booked out through next

year during some of the races" (Bullock 2011, A3) Downtown Lexington's Buck's Bar and Grill general manager April Hall stated (Kinton 2008, A1):

> This is a gold mine in our own back yard. Every local business benefits from these races. For our industry, it's what we need every summer.

Commenting specifically on the IndyCar event, Creig Gattshall, manager of Buck's Bar and Grill. observed the IndyCar race weekend to have the largest impact on the restaurant, stating (Caudill 2011, A2):

> It's a big bump (for business). The turnout is double or better.

Geyer's Fresh Foods general manager Rick Stineman also saw a boost during the IndyCar race weekend, stating (Kinton 2008, A1):

> The last two weekends were record weekends for us. For the past four to five years, traffic was being routed up (Ohio) 314, but this year they re-routed it through 97. That made a big difference. It's great for us. The economy has been so slow lately that these three weekends really make a big difference.

5.4.2 Promotion of Local Companies and Industries: Motorsport

Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course hosts many different racing series throughout the year; however, MOSCC also has a driving school called "The Mid-Ohio School." The driving school offers several different driving-related courses, ranging from teaching teenagers how to drive safely to teaching future professional race car drivers the intricacies of the sport. Over its 20 year existence, the Mid-Ohio School has graduated 46,000 students and generates income for the venue 250 days of the year (McCurdy 2012). Essentially, given enough training and funding, a person could attend a three-day course including eight hours of on-track driving and earn the "Competition License" required to participate in lower-level, grassroots-sanctioned races. Mid-Ohio also generates income via track rental. Private car clubs will purchase private access to the

Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course to hold competitive races, recreational drives around the circuit, and photo shoots.

Ten miles north of Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course is Mansfield, Ohio, where there is a ½ mile, paved short-track called the Mansfield Motorsports Park (MMP) that attracts many NASCAR feeder series race events, among others. Both Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course and Mansfield Motorsports Park are built and maintained exclusively with private funds. Referencing the role of motorsports in the Mid-Ohio region, MMP owner Michael Dzurilla stated (McCurdy 2004, I1):

> We're in the entertainment industry. Let's show them Mansfield is not a cow town. It is a population center. Rome wasn't built in a day.

Starting in 2008, the Mansfield/Richland County Convention & Visitors Bureau started to market their area to new visitors utilizing a motorsport theme creating their website "experiencemotorsports.com" where they describe the area as "America's Best Motorsport Experience" (Figure 5.12). During the announcement of the new website, Mansfield/Richland County CVB president Lee Tasseff stated, "We have new status. We are one of the top racing destinations in the country" (McCurdy 2007a, 13). Apart from race tracks that have both oval speedways and road courses on the same site (e.g., Indianapolis Motor Speedway, Daytona International Speedway), it is rare for two large motorsport venues of different types to be located relatively close to each other, showcasing the elite, national-level racing series, but also the diversity of motorsport entertainment offered in the area. The term "experience" also reflects the fact that many motorsport-related visitors to the area are attending The Mid-Ohio School where they can "experience" racing for themselves along the same course the professionals use.



Figure 5.12 Screen capture from experiencemotorsports.com website created by the Mansfield and Richland County CVB.

As the camera flew over the race course via helicopter, Bob Jenkins, NBC Sports commentator for IndyCar introduced the race course at the beginning of the 2011 telecast. Jenkins mentioned Mid-Ohio's motorsport heritage and the large number of campers attending the entire weekend of races, stating:

> Making its 50th year of racing, Mid-Ohio is a fan favorite on the IZOD IndyCar Series. The campsites are busy all weekend long, and the rolling hills provide ideal natural seating. Fans come to this location between Columbus and Cleveland to check out the cars off the track as well as on.

During the 2010 introduction to the Mid-Ohio broadcast on NBC Sports, host Lindy Thackston highlighted the rural location of the event, starting the telecast by stating, "Cleveland rocks, but Mid-Ohio rolls through a picturesque 2.258 mile, 13 turn road course that offers great vantage points for fans." During this introduction, there are shots of the rural landscape with an old barn (Figure 5.13) and a hilly, country road (Figure 5.14).



Figure 5.13 Screen capture from the introduction to the 2010 NBC Sports televised broadcast of the Indy 200 at Mid-Ohio.



Figure 5.14 Screen capture from the introduction to the 2010 NBC Sports televised broadcast of the Indy 200 at Mid-Ohio.

5.4.3 Negative Impacts of Indy 200 at Mid-Ohio

Of the three case study events, the Indy 200 at Mid-Ohio has the lowest negative impact on its local area with minimal amount of public funding compared to the other two case studies largely because the Mid-Ohio is privately-owned and located in a rural area. As IndyCar driver Marco Andretti stated, "It's a famous place, but there's not much going on around it" (McCurdy 2011c, 1B). I observed only minor traffic and congestion on the road exiting the facility at the end of the ALMS and IndyCar race. Lexington, Ohio is about five miles east of the MOSCC and does experience back-ups as traffic works through the slower, downtown streets of Lexington on the way to Interstate 71 on the opposite side of the race track from the town.

Although not directly related to the IndyCar event, Mid-Ohio officials went public with their displeasure at local hotels hiking prices during a grassroots, sports car event weekend at Mid-Ohio. In local newspapers, this was given the nickname, "Hotelgate," as the sports car sanctioning body decided not to return to Mid-Ohio for their race because race teams and fans had to pay over $200 per night with five-day minimum stays. On non-peak weekends, these hotels normally charge under $100.

5.5 Discussion: Connections with Place Marketing and Mega-Events

Similar to the results from Chapter 4, key similarities and differences were observed among the case study events in regards to their local impacts (Table 5.1). The Grand Prix of St. Petersburg uses their IndyCar Series event to market their city to race fans from a broader geographic target market than the other two case studies. The timing of the GPSP each year also fits well with this target as many northerners, particularly

those from IndyCar's Midwestern cultural hearth visit warmer locations for spring break vacation. The Mid-Ohio race pulls in more hardcore race fans from Ohio and bordering states, but compared to St. Petersburg, most fans are coming from the same region of the country. Race fans attending the Iowa Indy 250 are much more likely to be coming from Iowa and are more serious race fans than most of those attending the Grand Prix of St. Petersburg. Although the St. Petersburg race has a much higher level of marketing of its locale, the Iowa event provides more of a platform to promote the local agricultural industry while the Mid-Ohio event promotes a key, local company, Honda, and more generally, their local motorsport industry.

Table 5.1 Summary of Place Marketing Characteristics and Impacts among Case Study Events.

	St. Petersburg	Iowa	Mid-Ohio
Goal	Attract Visitors	Market and Promote Corn-Based Ethanol	Promote Honda to Local Employees
Metaphoric Type of Event	festival	college football game	pro golf tournament
Place Marketing	high marketing of place	high marketing of place	low marketing of place
Benefits & Costs	moderate benefits & costs	minimal benefits & moderate costs	minimal benefits & costs

Each of the case study events also differs in the type of event it hosts. The GPSP has much more of a festival atmosphere, with spectators visiting multiple days and having more non-racing amenities to choose from at the race track. There are many fewer non-racing amenities at Iowa and Mid-Ohio compared to St. Petersburg. The IndyCar race at Iowa Speedway has more of the feel of a college football game, with fans

arriving throughout the morning and afternoon, then parking and tailgating, and leaving that night once the event has concluded. Mid-Ohio is comparable to a golf tournament, with attendance levels remaining the same throughout the race weekend as spectators are more likely to attend more than one day.

Key differences between the case studies were also observed in their positive and negative impacts on their respective local areas. More positive and negative impacts were observed for St. Petersburg compared to the other two case study events. For both Iowa and Mid-Ohio, race fans spend most of their time at the venue and do not patronize local businesses as much as they do at the GPSP since the Iowa and Mid-Ohio events occur on private property that is somewhat geographically isolated from the closest population centers. Although the televised broadcast was successful in showcasing and promoting downtown St. Petersburg businesses, the local impacts of noise and congestion caused displacement and resentment among some residents and businesses. Increased costs for local taxpayers, the inability to achieve the aims of developing the Prairie Fire District, and the difficulty of attracting race fans to downtown Newton were the largest negatives observed for the Iowa Indy 250. Although the Mid-Ohio event had minimal positive impacts beyond the economic impact of increased patrons to local hotels and restaurants, there were hardly any negative impacts observed.

In the next chapter, I conclude this research by first revisiting the research questions posed in Chapter 1. I then summarize and compare each case study event by conducting a "SWOT" (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis based on the data results. I also discuss implications for future IndyCar race venues and differentiate among oval speedway, road course, and street circuit venue types. I end the

dissertation by addressing limitations of this study and suggest potential future research that builds on my research findings.

CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Introduction

IndyCar race events provide a unique opportunity to understand the impact of "mega events" on the places and regions that host them. First, IndyCar race "mega-events" can attract thousands of spectators over the course of a weekend, with an additional million television viewers during the two to three hour broadcast. Given the relatively large television audience watching across North America and the world, IndyCar offers an attractive opportunity to showcase a local company or industry and to stimulate or transform an area's cultural, political, and economic interests. Second, IndyCar race events are unique because they are the world's most elite form of motorsport that competes on three distinct venue types: oval speedways, temporary street circuits, and purpose-built road courses.

This dissertation used a mixed-method approach employing multiple case studies and data sources to better understand the impact IndyCar Series races have on the places at which they have been successfully held. A content analysis of event sponsorship derived from souvenir programs and television broadcasts, along with publically available documents and local coverage in newspaper articles, revealed key similarities and differences among the case study events. This dissertation also brought together previous research on the expansion and diffusion of sport (e.g., figurational sociology), the use of attractions and events in the marketing of places, and the local impacts of mega-events. Few geographers and North American researchers have utilized insights from figurational sociology (Coakley 2004). By focusing on the use of IndyCar race

events in an area's overall place marketing strategy, this study adds to previous research on hosting large attractions, particularly global or elite-level sporting events.

My extensive review of previous research on motorsport events showed a paucity of studies of IndyCar or open-wheel races, and more generally, motorsport events in the United States (Gamage and Higgs 1997; Fredline and Faulkner 1999; Fredline and Faulkner 2000). Previous research about places where major sporting events are held has typically focused on one specific event (e.g., the 2008 Olympics) and one type of impact (e.g., economic). The case study and cross-comparative approach that this research utilizes adds to the research by comparing the same sport across three different locales and venue types during the same sporting season. Each of the cases revealed the key role for local and regional individuals, businesses, and organizations that are marketing their locales and organizations by actively supporting IndyCar Series race events. In the following sections, I will summarize the answers to the research questions posed in Chapter 1 and analyze the key findings within the context of the prevailing literature.

6.2 Revisiting Research Question #1:

> ***Who are the key individuals or entities seeking and promoting an IndyCar Series event in their city or region?***

The first objective was to identify the key stakeholders that are integral in the staging of IndyCar events. I used insights from figurational sociology to provide a useful framework for understanding the key stakeholders critical in the staging of each event. These include the mutually beneficial relationships among the automobile industry, the television and media, corporate sponsors, and the sanctioning body. As noted in previous

research, the key stakeholders and their reasons for support of each event "are highly variant upon the nature of the motorsport event" (Henry et al. 2007, 6). This research found that the expansion and continuance of IndyCar race events on the season schedule relies on varying levels of local support and participation.

This analysis of television coverage based on Nielsen television ratings indicate high variability contingent on the particular broadcast partner, with ABC/ESPN receiving considerably higher ratings than Versus/NBC Sports. IndyCar obviously plays an integral role in each event. This research found, however, that Iowa Speedway and Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course relied less on IndyCar for the venue's success considering both purpose-built facilities have multiple racing series events. The St. Petersburg event relies heavily on IndyCar since it is the only prominent racing series during the one race weekend each year on the streets of St. Petersburg. The data also revealed much different levels of involvement from the automotive industry, which plays a much larger role in the staging of oval speedway and road course events. Of all the case studies, the Mid-Ohio event has by far the largest percentage of stakeholder involvement from the automotive industry, with Iowa Speedway having the highest percentage of local automotive industry involvement.

The content analysis of each case study event sponsor's in the souvenir program and television broadcast exposure value analysis by Joyce Julius identified key differences among the local stakeholders. Although the Iowa Speedway was constructed with the help of public support and funding, the Iowa IndyCar race has had considerable support from private, local Iowa businesses beyond the title event sponsorship promotion of Iowa-based ethanol. To the contrary, the Mid-Ohio IndyCar weekend has virtually no

local involvement from public or private key stakeholders other than Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course owners and operators and local Honda employees. The Grand Prix of St. Petersburg involved a higher level of public support with the strategy of promoting the city to new visitors via television exposure.

6.3 Revisiting Research Questions #2 and #3:

> ***What are the perceived benefits or goals of hosting an IndyCar Series race? What are the problems of hosting an IndyCar Series race?***

Considering IndyCar events attract thousands of fans to the venue, the local impacts, whether they are positive or negative, also are contingent on the event's venue type. Although the St. Petersburg race has a much higher level of marketing of its locale, the Iowa event provides more of a platform to promote the local agricultural industry while the Mid-Ohio event promotes a key, local company, Honda, and more generally, their local motorsport industry. I summarize my research findings of the perceived and observed positive and negative impacts of hosting an IndyCar Series race utilizing a "SWOT" (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis in the following sections (Figure 6.1).

6.3.1 Strengths Found in Each Case Study

The date of the Grand Prix of St. Petersburg (GPSP) on the IndyCar calendar provides the race the opportunity to receive the extra attention and exposure of being the first event of the season each year. Also, the timing of the event coincides nicely with the time of year that many visitors from IndyCar's cultural hearth regions of the Midwest and

Northeast head south to Florida for vacation. This event brings in outside visitors to the St. Petersburg area who are likely to stay for more than one day. My research revealed that the GPSP has been especially successful at filling hotel rooms in downtown St. Petersburg as well as the hotels along the nearby beaches that are always near full occupancy during this peak time period. Another key strength of the GPSP is the television exposure and high level of place promotion and marketing the city receives during the broadcasts. The city is viewed very favorably by the commentators as the circuit goes through an urban park, down a waterfront marina with docked yachts, and by high-rise, luxury apartments.

Many oval speedway venues have recently been removed from the IndyCar schedule. Key to Iowa Speedway's success is the continued title event sponsorship by the Iowa Corn Growers Association along with the full or near-capacity grandstands for each running of the Iowa Corn Indy 250. Other than the Indianapolis 500 Mile Race, oval speedways on the IndyCar Series schedule have recently had half-full grandstands with the exposed aluminum seating being quite noticeable during the televised broadcasts. Like many of the Iowa Speedway events, there is also considerable support from corporate sponsorship from Iowa-based companies and organizations that want to connect their product or message to the large number of Iowan spectators that attend the event. The connection between IndyCar's usage of ethanol and the local agricultural industry is another key strength of the Iowa event. In particular, the high-performance and speed that are the key attributes of the IndyCar brand provide a useful platform to market the corn-based ethanol industry to new customers not familiar with its performance level in passenger car engines.

Key to the success of the Indy 200 at Mid-Ohio is the involvement of the Honda Motor Company and their usage of the event as a way to showcase their product in front of a large number of their local Honda employees. The event is also successful because of the high involvement of automotive-related sponsors that use the event as an opportunity to market their products to knowledgeable fans that are well-versed about the automotive or motorsport industries. These events also have action throughout the day with many competing racing series sharing the IndyCar weekend, increasing the number of visitors who are also participants. Further, many of the visitors from outside the local area are likely to stay for multiple days, instead of just the day of the IndyCar race. Multiple-day stays were not as prevent in the Iowa case study event, perhaps because of the more localized draw of the Iowa Corn Indy 250.

6.3.2 Weaknesses Found in Each Case Study

The Grand Prix of St. Petersburg has a large, negative impact on these local residents who have no interest in the racing event. This animosity is largely caused by the traffic and congestion, barriers and fencing, and loud noise. Although the race track does generally benefit downtown hotels, restaurants, and bars, there were several businesses that experienced declines because of the event. Apart from Honda as title event sponsor, there are also minimal connections between the GPSP and the automotive industry. Another key concern for the GPSP compared to Iowa and Mid-Ohio is its highly-dependent relationship with the IndyCar Series. Both Iowa Speedway and the Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course host multiple racing series and are not solely reliant on the IndyCar Series race weekend. Considering NASCAR never races on street circuits and North

America's largest sports car racing series already has a full plate of potential venues, the IndyCar Series is the only national-level racing series that would race on the streets of St. Petersburg.

The Iowa Indy 250 and the Indy 200 at Mid-Ohio have a much lower positive impact on their local areas than the GPSP as most fans stay in proximate areas around the venue during the event and seldom explore nearby cities and towns. Although there is IndyCar practice and qualifying on the first day of the event, most spectators arrive and leave the Iowa event on the same day, with heavy traffic being experienced at the conclusion of the race. For Mid-Ohio, fans are more likely to stay the entire weekend of the Indy 200. They are, however, more likely to stay at their campsite on the event grounds than frequent hotels and restaurants in nearby towns. Also, during the television broadcasts, the Iowa Speedway and Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course events showcase and market many fewer of their local places and areas compared to the Grand Prix of St. Petersburg. Another weakness of the Iowa Indy 250 is that it is no longer Iowa Speedway's premiere event as the NASCAR Nationwide race, which is one level below NASCAR's top-racing division, draws a larger crowd and has had higher television ratings. In August 2013, the NASCAR Nationwide will race at Mid-Ohio, which could also surpass IndyCar as the event's premiere race weekend.

6.3.3 Opportunities Found in Each Case Study

All of the venues could do more to enhance their events and increase the positive impacts of their events on their host regions. With a large following of IndyCar race fans located in the Midwest and, especially in Indiana, there could be more promotion of the

GPSP in those markets during the preceding winter months when many potential attendees in these areas plan their spring break trips. The Grand Prix of St. Petersburg has successfully emphasized its environmental characteristics, including the sunny, warm climate and Florida beaches. There are, however, many arts and cultural attractions located in downtown that could also be promoted even more during the event. After all, arts and culture are the "economic powerhouse in the city" according to the City of St. Petersburg's website (City of St. Petersburg Arts and Culture 2013, 1).

Although not directly tied to the IndyCar event, a potential opportunity for the Iowa Speedway and Newton is the attraction of a NASCAR Sprint Cup event. The Iowa Corn Indy 250 was initially the premiere event. After the success of the IndyCar Series race, however, Iowa Speedway officials were able to entice NASCAR to add a Nationwide Series date. If Iowa Speedway officials could attract a NASCAR Sprint Cup date, they would attract the most popular racing series in the United States, provide much more television exposure for event sponsors and local place marketers, and perhaps trigger more development in the Prairie Fire District. Evidence of this salutary "bump" comes from Kansas Speedway, where the attraction of two NASCAR Sprint Cup race weekends has triggered considerable development around the venue.

Mid-Ohio had never hosted a national-level stock car series event until 2013, when the NASCAR Nationwide Series will visit Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course for the first time ever. Key to this surprising addition is Nationwide Insurance, a Columbus, Ohio-based company that is also title sponsor of the stock car racing series. This event has the potential to be bigger than the IndyCar Series weekend as NASCAR is quite popular in the Midwest and Great Lakes Region. Further, the Mid-Ohio event is one of only two

road courses that the NASCAR Nationwide Series will race at during the year, increasing the stature of the event. This event also has the potential to increase significantly the exposure of the Mid-Ohio School, promote the local motorsports industry, and showcase the surrounding towns and cities to new visitors. Green-Savoree Promotions, the new owners of the MOSCC, hope to add more of the non-racing related amenities that they use at the GPSP with the goal of attracting new fans that might not be the traditional Mid-Ohio race fans who are, for the most part, motorsport enthusiasts.

6.3.4 Threats Found in Each Case Study

For each of the case study events, the loss of the title event sponsor is always a threat to the event's continuance on the IndyCar schedule. Honda has had three different periods of participation as a manufacturer in their approximately 40 years of IndyCar racing, illustrating the fact it is not out of the realm of possibility that both Mid-Ohio and St. Petersburg could lose their key partner in the future. In the case of the Iowa Indy 250, if IndyCar decided no longer to use ethanol fuel, instead preferring another alternative fuel or energy source, the ethanol title event sponsorship would not make sense anymore and might potentially end. More recently, there has been a change in the public perception of the environmental impact of corn-based ethanol with concerns over increasing food costs, distortion of land prices and growing schedules, and the high amount of energy inputs necessary to produce ethanol. This could cause IndyCar to change its choice of fuel and also to end the ICGA's event sponsorship.

A potential threat to the St. Petersburg event has been the increasing usage of street circuits on the IndyCar schedule. As more of these events are added, other events

are replaced, which could be viewed as a threat to the GPSP. Since St. Petersburg was added to the schedule, similar events in Baltimore, Maryland, Toronto, Ontario, and Sao Paolo, Brazil have also been added. In 2011, IndyCar officials expressed interest in a street circuit race in Qingdao, China. More recently, IndyCar and Fort Lauderdale, Florida officials have discussed a proposed street circuit race (Richards 2012, 1C). In Formula One, when new markets want to host an event, F1 officials have increased the sanctioning fee for reasons driven by economic supply and demand. This has led to an increase of F1 events in Asia and a subsequent decline in Europe as the new, emerging markets are willing to pay a higher cost to host an F1 race. This could also happen to St. Petersburg and IndyCar as international street circuits are increasingly considered as additions to the IndyCar schedule.

6.4 Revisiting Research Question #4:

> ***Do the place marketing strategies used in conjunction with seeking, promoting, and hosting the IndyCar Series race event differ from place-to-place? If so, what might be learned from this exploratory research study to forecast the success (or lack thereof) of potential race venues on the circuit?***

As "post-industrial" cities and municipal governments transition from being managerial to more entrepreneurial, increasing numbers of emerging markets and places are trying to obtain a competitive advantage over other places by adding mega-event attractions with the hopes of benefitting their locales (Harvey 1989; Matson 1994). These local place marketers in St. Petersburg, Iowa, and Mid-Ohio have goals similar to the automotive industry and corporate sponsors as they use and invest in these events to showcase their "product" (a city or region) to nationally and internationally televised

audiences. This research found, however, that these local place marketers are actively seeking IndyCar Series races and are using the events to market and promote themselves quite differently. The Grand Prix of St. Petersburg highly markets the city of St. Petersburg as a tourist destination to non-local visitors while also serving as a cultural amenity for its local residents. The Iowa Corn Indy 250 utilizes a high level of place marketing as well. Instead of marketing the local area to new visitors, however, there is more promotion of the key local agriculture and corn-based ethanol industries along with several other Iowa businesses and organizations. Mid-Ohio has a much lower level of place marketing during the IndyCar race weekend, with the event serving more as a camping event for road racing enthusiasts and an employee benefit or amenity for local Honda assembly plant workers.

6.4.1 Implications for Potential IndyCar Venues

This research provides a context for other North American and international places that might seek IndyCar racing events as a way to market their locales, all the while helping IndyCar continue to bring its form of motorsport to new fan bases. Each of the case studies has demonstrated strong connections to some sort of key local organization or entity, often times serving as the title event sponsor. This is also characteristic of new IndyCar street circuit events in Detroit and Houston that have been added to the 2013 IndyCar schedule. The title event sponsor for the Detroit race is Chevrolet, a local company that is also now an IndyCar engine manufacturer. Also, Quicken Loans, another Detroit-based company, has been added as the presenting sponsor. The Houston event that takes place in the parking lot of Reliant Stadium, home

of the NFL's Houston Texans, has Shell Oil Company as title event sponsor. Shell Oil Company, the US-based subsidiary of Royal Dutch Shell, has their headquarters in Houston. This research provided an understanding of the different implications for potential additions to the IndyCar schedule for each of the three venue types. In the following sections, I provide likelihood estimates for potential IndyCar street circuit, road course, and oval speedway venues that I have developed during the course of this research project.

6.4.2 Implications for Street Circuits

As the St. Petersburg case demonstrates, street circuit events provide an opportunity for a city's downtown to be showcased to large numbers of spectators and television viewers. GPSP fans were less likely to be motorsport enthusiasts. Instead the promoters pushed the theme of a "party" and the festival-like atmosphere that was created by adding several non-motorsport related attractions at the venue to keep spectators interested. Further, since the city is a large sponsor and supporter of the event, there is less reliance on automotive-related sponsorship compared to oval speedway events, and especially, road racing events.

The local impact on the streets and venues used during the event does, however, pose key problems. For example, shutting down roads and erecting barriers creates eyesores and prevents access to businesses and residences. St. Petersburg has tried to lessen the negative impact of these necessary preparations and precautions. It does so by locating the circuit on streets that surround other tourist, sport, and/or recreational attractions. The circuit encircles museums, a baseball stadium, and a park instead of

mostly residential areas or the downtown urban core with its many offices and workplaces. The same is true for the other street circuits. The Long Beach Grand Prix, for example, encircles a parking lot and aquarium. The Baltimore Grand Prix goes around the Baltimore Ravens and Orioles stadiums, and the Grand Prix of Toronto in Exhibition Place surrounds an area with considerable open space, a park, and public memorials.

6.4.3 Implications for Oval Speedways

The Iowa Speedway case study highlighted the limited impact the event has had on the local area in terms of promoting new development or attracting visitors to local sites other than the venue on the day of the event. This localized impact is coupled with attendance levels that have declined at all IndyCar oval speedway races other than Indianapolis and Iowa. Most other oval speedways have been removed from the IndyCar season circuit because of the event promoter's inability to pay the IndyCar sanctioning fee and earn a profit given declining revenues from sponsors and declining ticket sales. Defying this trend, the large number of spectators and television viewers for the Iowa Indy 250 provides a useful platform for the title event sponsor's promotion of the local ethanol industry to new, larger audiences. In order for an IndyCar oval speedway event to be successful, the acquisition of title event sponsorship and the attraction of a larger number of local fans embracing the heritage of oval speedway racing are crucial. It is not attractive for IndyCar or its current or potential sponsors and media partners to show events with half-capacity attendance.

Another key concern for potential oval speedway venues is a recent disagreement between IndyCar officials and the International Speedway Corporation (ISC), which is owned by the same family that owns NASCAR along with six oval speedways that IndyCar races no longer use. IndyCar did not feel that ISC was doing a good enough job promoting IndyCar races at their venues, which are mostly located in NASCAR's core southeastern United States region. For this reason, IndyCar dropped all of its ISC events at the end of the 2010 season. This leaves only a select few oval speedways in North America that can currently host an IndyCar event, which requires each track to have the Steel and Foam Energy Reduction (SAFER) barrier installed.

With an increasingly talented field of drivers from Europe, Asia, and South America, IndyCar could expand internationally to oval speedway facilities and bring their unique and diverse form of oval speedway racing to areas that traditionally have hosted more road racing and street circuit racing venues. Since the late 1990s, Formula One has expanded to new Asian race venues, away from its European base providing an opportunity for IndyCar to replace some of these events and expand into Europe. Places like England and Germany both have high numbers of motorsport spectators, participants, and automobile manufacturers. They also possess oval speedways, including Rockingham Speedway in England and EuroSpeedway in Germany, which are a rarity in Europe.

6.4.4 Implications for Road Courses

Most road course venues are privately-funded and rural, therefore no public subsidies are provided as they must be relatively self-sufficient in raising funds to pay

IndyCar's sanctioning fee. For this reason, IndyCar road course races need to have a strong connection with automotive and motorsport industries, particularly those that are locally-based in order to promote themselves to their own employees while also promoting themselves to the large number of television viewers. Of the three purpose-built road course venues on the 2013 IndyCar schedule, all of them have title sponsorship from a local automotive or motorsport-related industry. Similar to the Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course, Barber Motorsports Park in Birmingham, Alabama has title sponsorship from Honda, which built an assembly plant in nearby Lincoln, Alabama in 2001. Sonoma Raceway in Sonoma, California, has sponsorship from Go-Pro cameras, which is located in nearby San Mateo, California. Go-Pro is a manufacturer of high-definition video cameras designed to be worn or attached to adventurers or thrill seekers to record their experience. Go-Pro cameras are used heavily throughout grassroots and national-level motorsport. Their cameras are attached to cars and driver helmets in order to capture the video of the race from the driver's perspective.

Another implication for potential IndyCar road course venues in the United States is the 2014 unification of North America's two largest sports car racing series, Grand-Am and the American LeMans Series, both of which race almost exclusively at road course racing venues across North America. For the last 12 years, these two racing series have included about 10 to 15 races each per year. Although they both will occasionally race at the same venue on separate race weekends there were, on average, 15 to 20 road course venues that would be used by one or the other racing series during the year. With unification, there will be several road course racing venues that will no longer host a

national-level, road race. Hence, this merger could increase the number of available and potential road course events for IndyCar.

6.5 Contribution to the Geography of Sport

Over the last thirty years, geographic research of sport has been relatively stagnant, evident in *Sport Place*, a geographical journal of sport that has not been in press since Fall/Winter 2000. Recent organized sessions on sport geography at the annual meeting of the Association of American Geographers (AAG) are often lumped together with sessions covering topics in recreational, leisure, and tourism geography. Previous geography of sport research has typically tried to find where blue-chip athletes tend to cluster, recruiting trends in various sports, and cultural boundaries of regionally specific or altered forms of sport, like lawnmower racing (Combs 2007). Other studies have used the geographers' cartographic and spatial data tools to show which athletic conferences draw from the most geographically dispersed source areas and which are more closely clustered. Recent studies of motorsport, include Alderman *et al.*'s (2003) "Carolina Thunder revisited" and Hurt's (2005) "Dialed In". These studies offer more compelling geographic research because they do more than simply describe patterns found on a map. Instead, they examine the impact, whether cultural or economic, that sport has on people, places, and regions.

Whether it was the 2008 Olympics in Beijing, the World Cup in South Africa in 2010, or the addition of IndyCar race events in St. Petersburg, Florida, sporting and mega-events offer a chance for increasingly global audiences to learn about places as they show off their "soft" power. For instance, this research identified how places are

using an event to showcase their automobile racing heritage, downtown culture and arts museums, or modernization or improvement of the local economy. Often, sporting events will be the first time many will learn about new places as the global audience tunes in to watch the televised broadcast. I found that the local place marketer's use of the media-sport complex can help a city, region, or culture to showcase itself to prospective investors or tourists via large television audiences. This is where I feel this research can help to infuse life in this seemingly quiet sport geography research backwater.

6.6 Limitations of Findings

An analysis of the event souvenir programs and television broadcasts for all of the years of each event's existence rather than just 2010 and 2011 would have been useful. This chronological expansion would have provided a better understanding of the changing patterns among the key stakeholders. Regarding the television broadcasts, the Joyce Julius content analysis does not include commercials which might include more information regarding the identification of key event stakeholders who have purchased advertising specifically for an event.

Interviews and surveys of local place marketers would have increased the number of perceived and observed impacts of the event to the local area. Although my original intention was to interview each local place marketer for all three events, it became difficult as some declined interview while others never responded. Their responses to my direct questions could provide a clearer understanding of these local impacts. Further, by contacting each of the local place marketers, I would increase the chances of them referring me to another key informant (i.e. a snowball sampling procedure).

This research would have benefited from a survey of race fans attending each event. The survey would be designed to identify the distance traveled and length of stay for each race fan. Choropleth maps for each case study event that depict the locations race fan hometowns at the county-level would reveal a better understanding of the market regions and places of origin that each event attracts. I would also hope to ascertain other information from race fans, including where, if at all, they visit in the local area during their time at the event. A survey of community residents in each case study site would have provided this research with a longer list of observed positive and negative impacts.

This research would have also benefited from an analysis of commentary on TrackForum.com, an IndyCar fan discussion forum that is not directly affiliated with the IndyCar Series. Fans on TrackForum comment on all IndyCar news (e.g., potential new venues) and include a "Rate the Race" feature for each event. TrackForum members can rate the event on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being a great race and 1 being a boring or uneventful race. I compiled these data for each event during the 2009 and 2010 IndyCar events (Figure 6.1). Although it is hard to decipher clear patterns based on only two years of data, oval speedways (e.g., Iowa Speedway, Chicagoland Speedway, Kentucky Speedway) appear to have higher ratings than street circuits or road courses. By gathering these same data over the course of five to ten years, specific reasons that certain events are consistent fan favorites might be revealed. Analysis of comments on TrackForum about each race could also supplement the Likert scale data mentioned above to understand better the reasons IndyCar fans may like or dislike a particular event. Further, I am curious if highly rated events influence fans to attend that particular race or support an event sponsor.

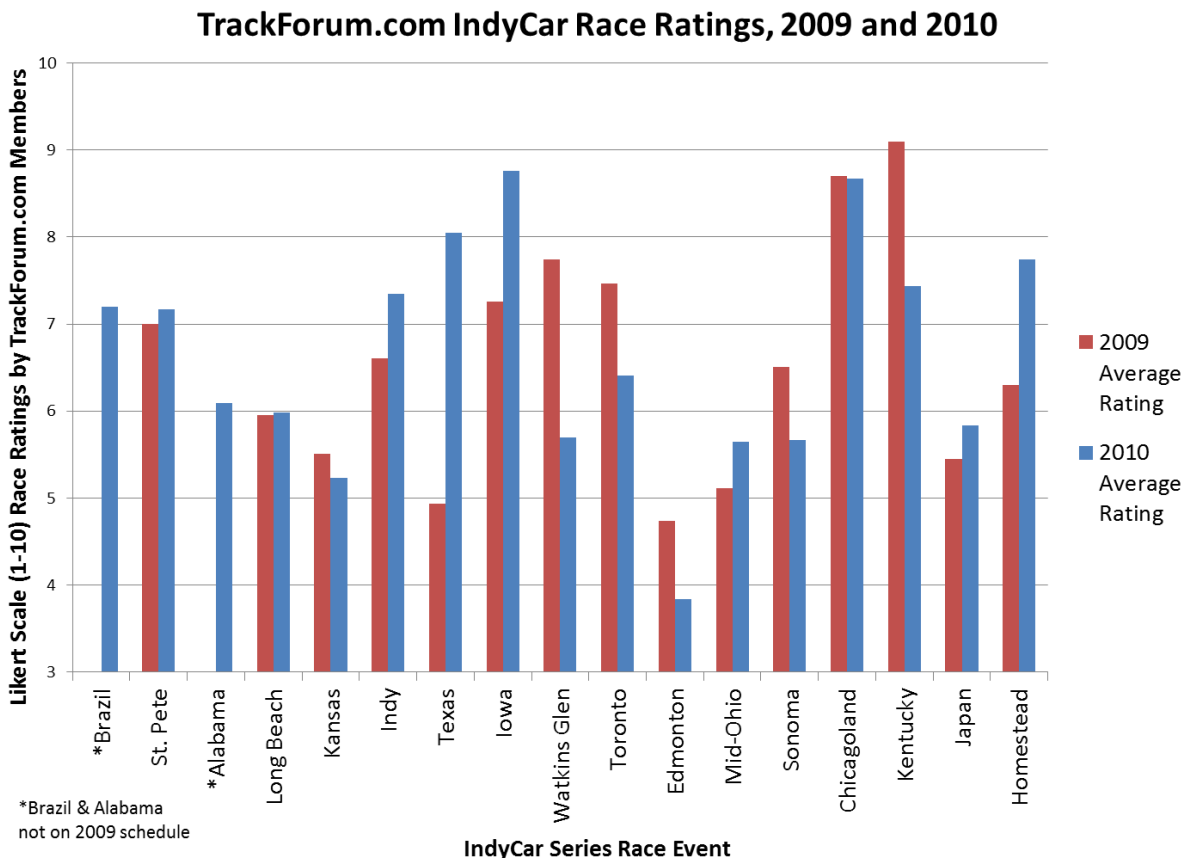

Figure 6.1 TrackForum.com IndyCar Race Ratings, 2009 and 2010

6.7 Suggestions for Future Research

6.7.1 Analysis of Events Recently Dropped from IndyCar Schedule

While this research analyzed the successful IndyCar Series race events that have remained on the schedule since their inception, an analysis of the venues that have recently stopped hosting IndyCar events would be useful in understanding more of the reasons why certain venues lack sustainability and continuity on the schedule, while others remain. Also, an in-depth approach that analyzes every single IndyCar Series event on the calendar instead of one from each of IndyCar's three venue types might also provide clues regarding the types of venues that are likely to be added or dropped from future schedules.

6.7.2 Analysis of Other Forms of Grassroots, Regional, and Global Motorsport Events

I can also replicate my content analysis of event souvenir programs, event sponsorship, and television broadcasts, but instead focus on motorsport events at different scales. For example, IndyCar represents a national-level racing series with most events spread out across North America. Formula One and the World Endurance Championship sports car series, on the other hand, are larger and more global in their scope than IndyCar. At the same time, grassroots events, whether they are a weekly, local dirt track or karting events, would likely have different benefits and costs to the local areas associated with a given venue. It would be desirable to attempt to determine the key similarities and differences in the local impact among the grassroots, national, and global-level racing series. Further analysis of one particular venue that hosts multiple forms of racing would be useful towards gaining an understanding of the benefits and costs of different racing series by controlling for the venue itself.

6.7.3 Case Study Analysis and Comparisons of Other Mega-Events

A content analysis of event souvenir programs, event sponsorship, and television broadcasts, including cross-comparisons between case studies, could also be replicated to examine other types of sporting events. For example, what are the key similarities and differences among Super Bowl host cities from one year to the next? When my life-long hometown of Indianapolis hosted the Super Bowl, the global television exposure was an obvious benefit. A positive impact that was discussed much less, however, was the Super Bowl's role in attracting metropolitan Indianapolis and suburban residents to the newly constructed, downtown amenities. The Super Bowl provided Indianapolis with an

opportunity to showcase itself to its own metropolitan residents. But this begs the question: do all Super Bowl host cities attempt to create this local awareness of the city's amenities?

A more focused analysis of the destination marketing organizations (DMOs) that are associated with different motorsport events would be useful in understanding more about how cities and regions are marketing themselves to new visitors and investors. As Harvey (1989) noted, places have become more entrepreneurial instead of managerial. This potentially increases the role of DMOs as they set forth to attract new visitors and investors by crafting specific strategies to promote and market their locale. Interviews with, and surveys of, representatives from DMOs could shed more light on the specific goals and strategies they use in conjunction with the hosting of a major event in their locale.

6.7.4 Analysis of the Use and Role of Social Media in Place Marketing

Another potential research study could examine the usage and role of social networking (e.g., Twitter, Facebook) as a platform to market and promote an area via the staging of an IndyCar Series event. In other words, what role does social networking play in the promotion of the race weekend by local place marketers? How do place marketers measure or evaluate the effectiveness of their social media strategies? Interviews of public relations representatives for different motorsport venues would highlight both successful and unsuccessful social networking strategies used in conjunction with a motorsport event.

6.8 Final Statement

"It's not about the races, it's about the places…"

When colleagues in other academic disciplines, friends, or family members inquire about the topic of my dissertation research, I always begin my response with the quote above to help explain and legitimize my research on motorsport, a topic that is not in the "fast-lane" of academic research. While many remember the famous race car drivers, daring last lap passes for a victory, or the tragic, often violent crashes, the places at which these events are staged also have pertinent, interesting, and unique characteristics themselves. As geographers, we are well aware of the varying cultural, economic, and physical characteristics of places and tell stories beyond economic, social, or environmental impacts alone. My dissertation has told the stories of three events staged on three different venue types in three different geographical regions of the United States by focusing on place-to-place differences and how these different places use and are impacted by motorsport in their own unique ways.

In the case of St. Petersburg, the festival atmosphere and high speed of IndyCar racing in their downtown streets has been part of a process of re-inventing the city as it sheds an image of a quiet city with mostly older residents and has been successful attracting both visitors and residents to downtown. The Iowa Corn Indy 250 at Iowa Speedway provides a platform for local, corn-based ethanol promotion of their product in high-performance race cars. IndyCar races at Iowa Speedway rely on high participation of private, local event sponsors that are marketing their good or service mostly to local race fans who, for the most part, stay only at the speedway on race day. IndyCar races on the road course of Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course attract a greater number of weekend-

long, on-site camping motorsport enthusiasts and participants as these events are more a celebration of the automobile industry, and in particular, the Honda assembly plants that employ thousands of nearby Ohio residents.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A:
Location and Venue Types of IndyCar Racing: Before World War I





APPENDIX B
Location and Venue Types of IndyCar Racing: Between World War I and II





APPENDIX C
Location and Venue Types of IndyCar Racing: After World War II





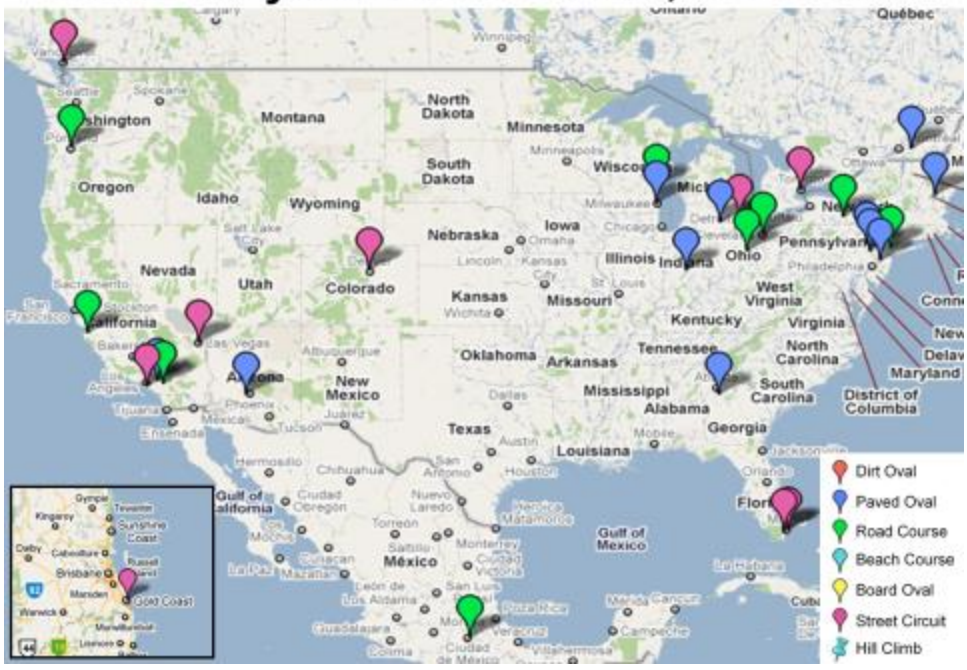
APPENDIX D
Location and Venue Types of IndyCar Racing: 1960s and 1970s





APPENDIX E
Location and Venue Types of IndyCar Racing: CART Era

CART IndyCar World Series, 1979-1995



CART/CCWS, 1996-2007



APPENDIX F
Location and Venue Types of IndyCar Racing: IRL Era and Today

Indy Racing League, 1996-2008



IndyCar, 2009-2012



VITA

Andrew Baker was born in Indianapolis, IN, to his parents James and Robin Baker. He is an only child that attended West Grove Elementary and continued to Center Grove High School in Greenwood, Indiana. After graduation, he headed west to Eastern Illinois University where he earned a Bachelors of Science degree in Geography and a Bachelors of Science degree in Business Finance. He accepted a graduate teaching assistantship in the Geography Department at Ohio University in Athens, OH and completed a Masters of Arts degree, including a Master's thesis. In 2005, he continued his studies at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville, TN, where he was a graduate teaching associate teaching an introductory human geography course for the Geography Department. To this day, he still has the highest rated course based on student evaluations in department history when he taught the G101 course during Fall 2007. While taking courses at the University of Tennessee, he maintained a perfect 4.0 throughout his PhD studies. He is currently a Geography lecturer at Indiana University's School of Liberal Arts on the campus of IUPUI in Indianapolis, IN.