

## **“Place” and U.S. College Football Bowl Games**

Sport Tourism Lecture

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### **What is “Place”?**

- Meaning attached to space (Hinch and Higham, 2003)
- Some experience available at the destinations which cannot be found at home (Cohen, 1996)

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### **Bowl Games attempt to Create a “Place”**

- History of the Bowl Games
  - 1902 – Rose Bowl
  - 1933 – Orange Bowl
  - 1935 – Sugar Bowl,
  - 1937 – Cotton Bowl
- 28 current Bowls today
- All created with the same thing in mind – tourism development
- Pasadena vs. Glendale. Which one is a ‘place’

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### **Marketing Place through Bowl Games**

- Creating a “Destination Image” or “Brand Imaging” a destination knowing that you are in competition with other areas trying to do the same thing
- “City of Champions” is \_\_\_\_\_
- “Home of the Granddaddy of Them All” is \_\_\_\_\_
- “Home of Touchdown Jesus” is \_\_\_\_\_
- “Title Town” is \_\_\_\_\_

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### **“Leveraging” the Big Money**

- Non-local fans said to spend only 41% on game ticket as opposed to 77% by local fans on the entire sporting experience (Shaffer and Davidson, 1985)
- The further sport tourists travel, the more likely it is that they will spend some time at the destination engaging in other types of touristic activities (Nogawa, et al 1996)
- “Brand Name Teams” (Atkin, 2003), or “Hallmark Teams” (Hinch and Higham, 2003) like Michigan, Wisconsin, Florida State, Oklahoma, and Nebraska. Notre Dame is the gold standard

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### **Case Study I: Economic Impact of Independence Bowl**

- *In in Shreveport, LA (aka The Poulan/ Weedeater Bowl)*
- *Said to be worth \$15 million to the city (Robbins 2002)*
- *Dying in mid-80’s*
- *Saved itself in 1989 by searching for “hungry school” and University of Oregon brought 9000 fans with them to Shreveport.*
- *Thus discovered the importance of the type of team and its fans rather than the competitiveness of the team and it’s record.*

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### **Case Study II: The Periodic Marketing of the State of Hawaii**

- Doesn't Hawaii already have a good identification with Place?
- Hawaii Tourism Authority spends \$7.5 million on sport marketing during the winter months (Song, 2003) which includes four golf tournaments, two college football games (Hawaii and Hula), and the Pro Bowl
- Worth up to 40 hours of sports programming on 13 different days broadcast nationally from Hawaii during December/January
- Pro Bowl said to be worth \$20 million to the local economy and generate \$2 million in tax revenues (Song, 2003)

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### **Culture, Place and Identity**

- Why do people go to these meaningless games?
- In a sport tourists search for "authenticity", sports are supposed to be "goal oriented in a sense that sporting situations usually involve an objective for achievement" (Hinch and Higham, 2003)
- Where is the achievement in a 6-6 team advancing to the GMAC Bowl in Mobile, Alabama? Almost half of the Division I teams in the NCAA go to Bowl Games. What's the big deal? Where is the authenticity?

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### **Culture, Place and Identity**

- "Liminoid State of Communitas" (Turner, 1974) and the "culture" of college football in the United States
- 115 Division I Football Teams, many with student sections of over 25,000 for home games.
- Isn't being a student a liminoid state?
- Large Student Sections at home games = future alumni searching for a return to a liminoid state of communitas.
- Happy Alumni pays the bills and fills the stands at home games

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### Why the BCS is here to stay

- **Big Money:** \$185 million paid out to schools through Bowl Game participation last year with another \$2 billion expected to be paid out over next decade.
- **Culture:** 1.4 million in attendance at Bowl Games in 2002/03. College students themselves may start attending while still in school. Their demographic of 17-22 will experience a high level of stimulation and will seek sports oriented vacations to satisfy their need for action. (Douvis, Yusof, & Douvis, 1998). Following graduation a search for a liminoid state of communitas through nostalgia based sport tourism by revisiting periods where sport was attached to place (Hinch and Higham, 2003) creates the Bowl going public.

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### Why the BCS is here to stay

- **Bowls Marketing as a Place:** Replacing Christ's Alter with a new Alter of Sports (Hinch and Higham, 2003). Is the Fiesta Bowl the new Mecca (i.e. pilgrims traveling to worship)?
- **Schools Marketing as a Place:** Annual survey of top party schools in U.S. (i.e. Florida State) largely based on culture surrounding the football team.
- **Cities desire for identification as a Place:** Boise, Idaho in December? The Humanitarian Bowl makes it happen!
- **The defying of Logic:** Simply put - none of the above will happen with a playoff system therefore the opposition of coaches and University Presidents.

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