

1 Introduction

Erik Lundberg, Tommy D. Andersson and John Armbrrecht

This book discusses key topics of event management research over ten chapters. The chapters cover core topics that have been emerging within event management research over recent decades and are appearing in the current academic debate. This book does not offer complete coverage of event management, which would require several edited volumes, but it is a selection of current topics that have the potential for further exploration. In more detail, the aim for each contributing chapter is to review and synthesize the previous research and then indicate the future direction of the research in the area under review. Our hope is that this book will inspire fellow researchers and students to engage in exciting research undertakings in event management. The topics are within the following three overarching themes: Events in Society, The Event Consumer, and The Event Organization.

Current state of events

Events are continuously gaining in force both in numbers and in size. In the last decades, there has been an immense growth and commercialization of events of all types. Destinations worldwide, and of all sizes, have developed event strategies and have professionalized their approach to event management. This is the case for many parts of the event industry; thus, the need to review and set a research agenda in the field of event management is highly relevant in understanding how to manage events sustainably.

Considering, for instance, mega-events such as the Olympics or the FIFA World Cup, these events have had a constant growth in size and reach, but they seem to have come to a tipping point in terms of sustainability issues. Issues of corruption, excessive public spending for hosting, poorly utilized event infrastructures, massive costs for safety, lack of inclusion and diversity, and violations of human rights have all been raised in this context (cf. Forster, 2016; Rojek, 2012).

For the producers of events, such as professional event organizers or destinations and cities, the competition has become global and increasingly fierce. Adding to this is the challenge of funding the events, which often rely heavily on public

funding in combination with commercial sponsors. With recent austerity measures and a tendency towards more market-led economic policies, public bodies (and commercial sponsors) demand evidence of how events create value for society (Wood, 2017). Accordingly, producers seek to legitimize their existence by measuring or proving through other means their economic return, job creation, and image-boosting effects. This has, over the past decade, extended into other types of value creation, such as health, integration, community pride, or educational benefits for communities. Events are increasingly treated as instrumental tools for development (Jutbring, 2017; Wood, 2017).

A look at the consumption side reveals considerable shifts. Spectator events are now often consumed via the media and the spectators present at the events are often there mainly to enhance the experience of the media event. The tremendous growth in participation in sport events, such as road cycling, marathons, and other running events, seems to indicate a demand for more active participation. This phenomenon raises a number of intriguing issues from a consumer behaviour perspective related to involvement, identity building, motives, and co-creation of experiences.

Current state of event management research

The event phenomenon has been studied from numerous disciplines, including history, psychology, health, anthropology, sociology, human geography, cultural studies, economics, and business administration. Event management is enriched with knowledge from this plethora of disciplines and often with multi-disciplinary approaches. Even if scholars from business administration and economics have been (and are) overrepresented, creating a tendency towards positivist approaches (Dredge & Whitford, 2010), this edited volume also reaches across disciplines and perspectives. Getz (2005, 2012) and Getz and Page (2016) have published papers and books reviewing the event research field over the last decades. They see *event studies* as the overarching field of study, including the foundation blocks of *event management* and *event tourism*. Event studies is an interdisciplinary field that “studies all planned events, and meanings attached to events and their experience” (Getz & Page, 2016, p. 595). Event tourism, which could also be seen as part of the event management sub-field, focuses on the links between planned events and tourism activities. Not all events are planned to cater to tourism or the needs of tourists, but this is an essential part of event management, in particular, for destinations. Our focus is event management, which could be defined as the effort of “understanding and improving the management of planned events” (Getz & Page, 2016, p. 595). Reviewing some of the challenges in the event sector, in particular for larger events, there is still a need to improve “the management of planned events”, especially when a wider spectrum of sustainability criteria is considered.

According to Getz (2012), generic management and business theories are still prevalent today after three decades of increasing research in the field, albeit with

influences from social psychology and nearby applied fields, such as leisure and tourism studies. Prominent theories revolve around event experiences and meanings, consumer behaviour, institutional theory, stakeholder management, and impact assessments (cf. Getz, 2012). However, scholars in recent years, acknowledging the sustainability challenges of event management, have seen emerging fields of study that venture into examining, for example, the socio-cultural, political, and power dimensions of sustainability, the sustainable management of events, and the processes of planning for sustainable events (Dredge & Whitford, 2010; Mair & Whitford, 2013). Perhaps as a sign of the maturity of the field, the book *Critical Event Studies* was published by Lamond and Spracklen in 2016; this book established a more critical agenda, inspired by the development in leisure studies and drawing on theories from that field and others, such as sociology, politics, and cultural studies. The critical agenda set by Lamont and Spracklen includes discussions on, for example, contested spaces, power, protests, commodification, and mediatization.

With this concept in mind, it is indeed an interesting challenge for the researchers and editors of this book to look forward to and canvas topics that span the different discourses of event management and to suggest research agendas.

The chapters of the book

The book contains ten chapters loosely divided into the following three sections: Events in Society (Part I), The Event Consumer (Part II), and The Event Organization (Part III). Part I, Events in Society, alludes to the integration of events in geographical and political contexts. There has been critique that the tourism and event research has a narrow focus on specific cases, excluding the context it is in or being too industry-specific (cf. Saarinen, 2006). In this section, the aim is to review and discuss important concepts, developments, and external forces that affect, and are an integral part of, event management. Similar to discourses on business in society and sustainable development, event managers need to respond to and relate to societal and political trends and agendas. Judith Mair (Chapter 2) questions the silo effect of conceptualizing sustainability into economic, social, and environmental sustainability, proposing a novel way to think about sustainable event management. Morten Thanning Vendelø (Chapter 3) describes the evolution of event safety, from historical concerns of crowd safety to modern-day terrorism threats, and proposes an event safety research agenda. David McGillivray, Daniel Turner, and John Lauermaann (Chapter 4) critically review the phenomenon of bidding for events, which is often a non-transparent process but is still crucial where larger sport and cultural events are concerned. Finally, Donald Getz (Chapter 5), a pioneer in event management research, raises five challenges in connection to event evaluations.

In Part II, The Event Consumer, the focus is on the spectator, participant, and, ultimately, the consumer of the event product. This has long been a focal topic in

event management research and includes but is not limited to perspectives from consumer behaviour research, psychology, and sociology. The consumer is even more the focus in an event setting, in comparison to other services and products. The end result of an event is dependent on consumer actions, which co-create the event experience. Eliza Kitchen and Sebastian Filep (Chapter 6), with perspectives from psychology, lift the importance of understanding how events affect the well-being of event consumers, including the concepts of self-identity, sense of belonging, positive emotions, and flourishing. Greg Richards (Chapter 7), the coordinator of the ATLAS Event Experience Project, reviews the field of event experience research and identifies major trends that will influence future research directions. Lena Mossberg (Chapter 8) focuses on the concept of immersion within the event context. With further research on immersion, she illustrates how it is possible to grasp the creation of extraordinary event experiences. Tommy D. Andersson, John Armbrrecht, and Erik Lundberg (Chapter 9) focus on participant events and discuss the relevance of concepts such as serious leisure, involvement, and event portfolios to understand the active consumers at participant events and to suggest future directions of research.

In Part III, The Event Organization, attention is moved towards the inner realm of the event and management issues related to the organization of events. The inherent characteristics of planned events create particular challenges for managing events in this regard, in particular, on the short period in which the organization is running in operational mode (that is, temporary or pulsating organization). Karen A. Smith, Leonie Lockstone-Binney, and Kirsten Holmes (Chapter 10), experts in volunteering, review the growing field of event volunteering and build on preceding work to identify gaps in the existing literature. Finally, Raphaela Stadler (Chapter 11) discusses how different knowledge management approaches are applied in an event context. She argues that the event context needs to be recognized as a unique context for the practice of knowledge management and how this context should be examined.

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