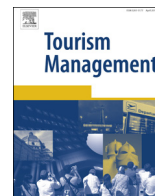




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# Tourism Management

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## Progress in Tourism Management

## Progress and prospects for event tourism research

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### HIGHLIGHTS

- Event tourism as a growth area has expanded exponentially since 2008.
- The review documents the main changes in the event tourism literature.
- Event tourism as a response to planned events is evaluated from a social science perspective.
- Event tourism is categorised and the literature critically evaluated.

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### ABSTRACT

This paper examines event tourism as a field of study and area of professional practice updating the previous review article published in 2008. In this substantially extended review, a deeper analysis of the field's evolution and development is presented, charting the growth of the literature, focussing both chronologically and thematically. A framework for understanding and creating knowledge about events and tourism is presented, forming the basis which signposts established research themes and concepts and outlines future directions for research. In addition, the review article focuses on constraining and propelling forces, ontological advances, contributions from key journals, and emerging themes and issues. It also presents a roadmap for research activity in event tourism.

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## 1. Introduction

The field of event studies, reviewed by Getz (2012a, 2012b) depicts the expanding field of event management and the wider social science contribution to this interdisciplinary area of study, heralded as a major success story in terms of its educational provision within higher education, its expansion of research activity and its contribution to tourism development within the commercial arena. Within the context of tourism and the tourism system (Leiper, 1990), events comprise a key element in both the origin area (i.e. events are an important motivator of tourism) as well as within the destination area (i.e. events feature prominently in the development and marketing plans of most destinations). Events are both animators of destination attractiveness but more fundamentally as key marketing propositions in the promotion of places given the increasingly global competitiveness to attract visitor

spending. To use Leiper's analogy of the tourism system, events have become a core element of the destination system where accommodation, attractions, transport and ancillary services have been utilised or specifically developed (e.g. the provision of infrastructure for mega events) to enhance the destination offer thereby expanding the tourism potential and capacity of destinations beyond a narrow focus on leisure-based tourism (e.g. holidays). Recent research (e.g. Connell, Page, & Meyer, 2015) also demonstrates the critical relationship that exists between events as a bridge between the market for visitor attractions created by tourists and the use of events to fill the gap left in the off-peak season by a seasonal drop in tourism demand, as residents and domestic visitors provide a substitutable form of demand stimulated by events. In this respect, events have a wider remit than destination-related tourism although the focus of this article is primarily on the destination-related issues of event tourism and the studies associated with this area.

Interestingly, place marketing, often referred to as boosterism (where events are used to 'boost' visitor numbers and appeal) has emerged as a key feature associated with events to develop a unique selling proposition that differentiates the destination from

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the competition. With its nineteenth century origins (Pike and Page 2014) event-led place marketing and development initially promoted in the USA (Ford & Peeper, 2007) has continuously utilised conventions and events to achieve key tourism and other visitation objectives linked to place development, although the analysis of its wider contribution to tourism development as both a field of study and area of critical research is a more recent outcome of the evolution of event studies (Getz, 2008). In the previous review of event tourism, Getz (2008) outlined many of the principal themes around the growth of event research and subsequent studies (e.g., Getz, 2012a, 2012b) expand upon the nature of the contributing disciplines that are coalescing to create an event knowledge base. Yet synthesising this knowledge is no easy task and this review examines the evolution, progress and future prospects for event research within a tourism context, focused on the notion of the planned event within tourism.

Planned events in tourism are created for a purpose, and what was once the realm of individual and community initiatives has largely become the realm of professionals and entrepreneurs. Fig. 1 provides a typology of the four main categories of planned events within an event-tourism context, including the main venues associated with each. Business events (or the MICE sector) require convention and exhibition centres, including numerous, smaller private parties and functions held in restaurants, hotels, or resorts. Sports also require special-purpose facilities including athletic parks, arenas and stadia. Festivals and other cultural celebrations are less dependent on facilities and can use parks, streets, theatres, concert halls and all other public or private venues. Entertainment events, such as concerts, are generally provided by the private sector and utilize many types of venue.

It was only a few decades ago that 'event tourism' as a phenomenon became established as a recognisable term within the tourism industry and research community, so that subsequent growth of this sector can only be described as spectacular. One indication of the progress can be gauged from searches of the scientific literature since 2007 when the initial Getz (2008) review was undertaken. SCOPUS results based on a search for the period 2008–October 2014 report over 1000 articles using the search terms 'event' + 'tourism', with an increasingly interdisciplinary focus within the literature. If one then assumes that even 10

references in each article are from events-related literature (and the bibliographies of these articles typically cite a much more comprehensive events related literature than that), then we see the field is drawing upon a burgeoning literature base of over 10,000 items as a conservative estimate, probably nearing 15,000 items. This makes producing a second synthesis of the research literature increasingly challenging and requiring certain parameters to be established to draw out the essence of growth in the field since 2007, the end date when the previous review was undertaken (Getz, 2008). For this reason, the review is necessarily selective in what it draws upon citing major studies in the leading interdisciplinary and specialist journals in cognate fields (e.g. tourism, leisure, hospitality) as well as the increasing move towards new areas (e.g. risk, travel medicine, history, planning and cultural studies) where the focus is related to event tourism. Clearly this requires a certain academic judgement on what to include and not include (i.e. excluding conference papers). Therefore, the purpose of the review is to demonstrate this expanding nucleus of knowledge that continues to assist in our understanding of event tourism, building upon elements of the previous article that remain valid in 2015. We deliberately exclude the debates on event studies (see Getz, 2012a, 2012b) and event management (Bowdin, Allen, Harris, McDonnell, & O'Toole, 2012) as sub-fields, deliberately structuring the review around germane concepts and approaches to event tourism that help in our synthesis of this large knowledge base that is expanding across the social sciences. Critics may point to missing themes, articles or studies and we accept that achieving a comprehensive coverage from the volume of material is impossible even in an article of this extended length.

### 1.1. Structure of the paper

To aid the reader, the paper is structured in three discrete sections: the conceptualisation of event tourism and then progress in the research literature and then a model of the event tourism system: We commence the first section by discussing the epistemology and ontology of event tourism to outline some of the key propositions around events tourism so as to highlight its significance to tourism, in much the same way that previous reviews (e.g. Ashworth & Page, 2011 on urban tourism) have done. Following on

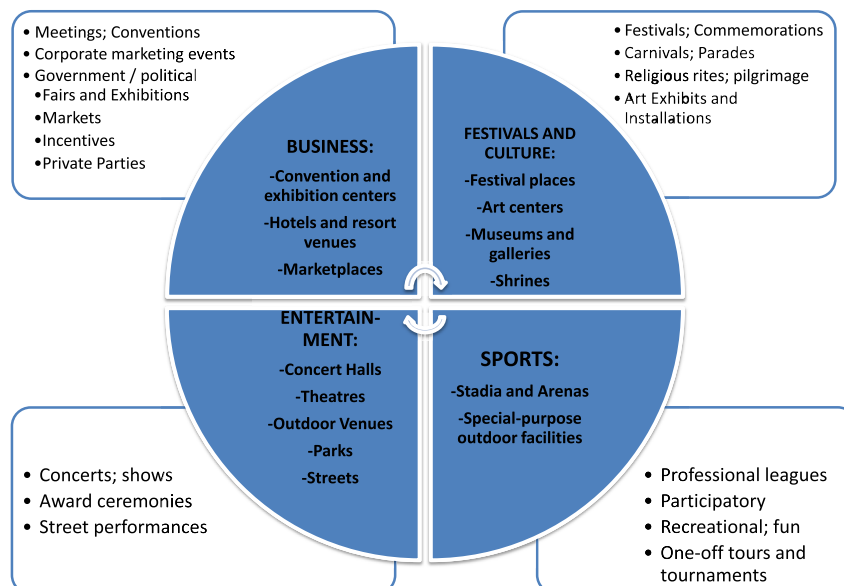


Fig. 1. Typology of planned events and venues: An event-tourism perspective.

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