

6

Built Environment

Learning objectives

- Learn the range of impacts that events and tourism can have on the built environment.
- Learn why and how events and tourism contribute to urban development, renewal and re-positioning.
- Understand the issues associated with events as animators of public spaces.
- Be able to take into account life-cycle issues when conducting IA
- Be able to recommend strategies and actions for image, reputation, brand and place marketing to attain desired outcomes from events and tourism.
- Know how media management can influence the impacts of events and tourism.

6.1 Introduction

Built environment refers to the places in which we live and work, the services that meet our needs, and everything humans do by way of physical planning, design, development and controls to ensure our basic needs are met and quality of life maximised. This broad definition encompasses residential neighbourhoods, transport systems, farmland and industrial zones. It is also worth distinguishing between ‘spaces’ where things can be built and activities occur, and ‘places’ which have meaning – such as play and work spaces, living and meeting places, all within social and cultural value systems.

Impacts of tourism and events on the built environment are of increasing importance, particularly because so many cities have pursued tourism and culture-based development or re-positioning strategies. There are many examples of using events, venues, iconic architecture, tourism and culture synergistically, with profound effects on the urban landscape, its image and liveability. In small towns the impacts of development can be more noticeable and have more profound impacts on residents.

In the literature on events and the built environment the focus has often been on the effects of mega events that require enormous investment in infrastructure and venues. However, construction and operation of sport arenas and stadia, major arts and culture facilities, as well as convention and exhibition centres all have profound implications for cities.

In this chapter the starting point is a discussion of the roles of events and venues in urban development and renewal, a theme that incorporates the concepts of liveability (or quality of life), community development, healthy and creative cities. A second theme is the use of public spaces by events, looking at both the positives and negatives. The influence of the environment upon events and tourism has to be mentioned, although it is not part of the objects of impact assessment considered in this book. Within 'environmental psychology' there is the principle of 'setting affordances', meaning what the environment allows (or lends itself to) by way of events and tourism. For example, many urban spaces with heritage status and unique design are popular venues for festivals and other events, but with possible negative impacts owing to crowd activities and, over time, the accompanying change in the character of the place. Parks and streets lend themselves to parades and open-air events, but at a potential cost.

Attention is then directed at place making and place marketing and the inter-dependent elements of image, reputation, positioning and brand. In recent years the communicative properties of events have come to the fore, and in many cases even replacing the emphasis on events as attractions. We live in a networked world, with mass and social media presenting global opportunities to both market events (especially to special interest segments) and to exploit events and related images for broader political, economic and social purposes.

Completing this chapter is a case study from Rudi Hartmann about events and the evolution of the resort town of Vail, Colorado. A number of themes are reinforced, and new theoretical perspectives introduced.

6.2 Events, tourism and urban development or renewal

Several themes are discerned in the literature, starting with the roles of events and tourism in urban development and renewal. This is a multi-dimensional process of change, involving the creation of event places, image management, repositioning, animation of new development and existing spaces or facilities, and employing event venues as catalysts for economic transformation.

This is not a completely new theme. Mules (1993) examined how a special event was designed to draw people to a redevelopment area in Adelaide, South Australia, as an integral part of urban renewal, and to change the image so that the area would become associated with leisure and tourism with a maritime flavour. More recently, Xie and Gu (2015) also examined events at the waterfront,

in Auckland New Zealand, observing that the America's Cup and the Rugby World Cup aided in its redevelopment.

Research Note

Xie, P. & Gu, K. (2015). The changing urban morphology: Waterfront redevelopment and event tourism in New Zealand. *Tourism Management Perspectives* 15, 105–114.

Abstract: This study addresses the changing morphology of the commercial waterfront in Auckland, New Zealand. It seeks to examine the wider impacts and implications of hosting special events such as that provide an impetus for the redevelopment of an underutilized waterfront area. By using an evolutionary analysis of the spatial structure of the waterfront landscape, it demonstrates that government development agencies and event tourism have been the key agents of change in influencing its redevelopment at different phases. The findings illustrate the role of government in the context of economic restructuring and the embrace of tourism as a significant element in the waterfront planning. This study proposes to establish a systematic understanding of morphological change in order to create a sound base for waterfront landscape management and tourism planning.

Van Aalst and van Melik (2012) wrote a case study of a festival that was moved from one city to another, focusing on the question of place identity and dependency. Although the festival is a showcase for Rotterdam, findings suggested that the event and not the city was the destination; its audience cared most about the festival programme and site. The implication is that a lot of thought has to go into embedding an event in a particular place in the hope that it will somehow transform its environment.

6.2.1 Mega event impacts on the built environment

There is a long tradition of examining mega event impacts on host cities. Mendell et al. (1983) observed that the Knoxville World's Fair was conceived as an urban-renewal project and created a legacy of improved infrastructure, a new convention centre and private investments that improved the city's tax base. Dungan (1984) reported on a variety of mega event legacies including airports, subways, freeways, fairground renovations, parks, and the landmark structures that have become iconic in a number of cities (e.g., the Eiffel Tower and Seattle's space needle). Mihalik (1994) said the Atlanta Summer Olympics of 1996 generated two billion dollars worth of construction projects and were a catalyst in obtaining federal money for low-income housing.

Essex and Chalkey (1998) reviewed how the Olympic Games emerged as a catalyst of urban change and a key instrument of urban policy for host cities.