

Call for papers  
Joint AsTRES-ORME conference, May 25–27, 2021

Université de Paris Est-Université Gustave Eiffel, cité Descartes, Champs sur Marne

**City, Events, Mega-Events and Tourism**

In an increasingly competitive context when it comes to attract and retain tourists, new inhabitants and/or companies, the development of large numbers of events (Getz and Page, 2016) and a kind of “festivalization” of the city (Boogaarts, 1992) are taking place: different types of festival (music, theater, etc.) have developed in many cities, towns and villages. Urban beaches, sporting events, light festivals and other ephemeral thematic events centered on monuments, temporary exhibitions, cultural, commercial and sporting events, and business events are all evidence of this profusion of events in the “festive city” (Lefebvre and Roul, 2013). Some 1,500 festivals and concerts and 4,000 professional events were organized in France in 2016 (Unimev, 2017), and 1,110 conferences and congresses were identified by the Paris Convention and Visitors’ Bureau (Office de Tourisme et des Congrès de Paris, or OTCP) in 2017. Outside France, the situation is similar: for example, in Salzburg – one of the most visited cities in Austria – more than 4,500 cultural events are organized every year (EC, 2018). In 2016, a total of 2,119 music festivals were recorded in France (including 1,887 current music festivals)<sup>1</sup>. The diversity of forms and themes make them difficult to identify, especially the smallest among them.

These events, by definition temporary, are different from attractions (Hall, 1989). They take place over a fixed period of time and may be occasional or recurring, and form a key part of strategies to combat the effects of seasonality that often affect certain places (via an events calendar that seeks to extend the season, or fill gaps in the tourist off-season). The question of temporality in the city therefore becomes central: how can the ephemeral be taken into account by public action (Pradel, 2016)? Breaking with the longer-term, slower rhythms and timescales of the city – which determine the construction of city and the life of its inhabitants – calls into question event-based dimensions of public action and the structural role of ephemeral processes in the production of the city.

These events may be fairs, exhibitions, festivals, sporting events or corporate events. From a tourism perspective, Getz and Page (2016) distinguish events relating to business, to recreation and entertainment, to sport, and to festivals and culture. Vaclare (2009) distinguishes three types of cultural events: very large events; cultural events on a specific theme or genre (including many well-established events that are organized annually); and events based on the staging of particular places (venues or geographical areas), to which Vaclare extended to cultural events, corporate events, and events planned as part of a seasonal program. Corporate events are at the core of many city strategies because of the significant amounts that participants (individuals and companies) spend while in attendance.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://societe.sacem.fr/actualites/economie-de-la-filiere/la-france-riche-de-1887-festivals-de-musiques-actuelles-en-2015>

<sup>2</sup> See, for example (in French): <https://pro.lyon-france.com/Communique-de-presse/Un-touriste-d-affaires-depense-jusqu-a-224-jour-dans-le-Grand-Lyon>.

Moreover, depending on how strong their links with tourism are, events can also be of different sizes (Getz and Page, 2016): occasional mega-events; periodic symbolic events; and regional and local events.

Mega-events are different from other events because of their international scale (Hall, 1989) not just in terms of spectators but also in terms of their participants, as well as the infrastructure they require (Müller, 2015). Although they are by definition temporary, they require extensive planning (Lefebvre and Roullet, 2013) and can therefore have long-term consequences for the cities that host them (Roche, 1990), especially in terms of tourism and in particular when they are coupled with the construction of transportation infrastructure (Kassens-Noor *et al.*, 2016). They are often linked to more comprehensive city-transformation projects (Gravari-Barbas and Jacquot, 2007, Pradel, 2010).

But in addition to their physical legacies, mega-events can also create various intangible legacies (improved image, fostering of new cultural or sporting practices among populations, etc.). These mega-events are thus an opportunity to grasp what Bourdieu (1984) called symbolic capital, that is to say a set of physical attributes and images that demonstrate taste and distinction (Essex and Chalkley, 1998). Mega-events are also a tool for transforming a city's image (Barthou *et al.*, 2007). Evaluating their impacts, however – and in particular the impacts of sporting mega-events, which are not always those one might expect (Bouvet, 2013) – is difficult and characterized by significant methodological problems (Massiani, 2018). The impact of mega-events on tourism dynamics is the subject of debate (see Delaplace, 2020, on the relationship between the Olympic Games and tourism). Moreover, they also represent very interesting cases for the analysis of working conditions and the changes in employment situations they induce. In particular, one might question the durability of the jobs created during these events and the strategies of reclassification/conversion at play. For example, do subsequent uses of new infrastructures safeguard this durability, once the event is over? How is the work of the different players involved in these events organized?

Urban events are often designed to attract tourists (Piriou *et al.*, 2017), in order to expand – spatially or temporally – arrivals, especially during the low season (EC, 2018), and renew the facilities and attractions on offer in tourist cities (Alexandre-Bourhis *et al.*, 2013). By creating specific resources (Colletis and Pecqueur, 2005), rooted in urban areas, they allow cities to stand out from the crowd. Evaluating these impacts in terms of arrivals and expenditure is of central importance, but presents major methodological challenges. With the exception of paid events where accounting is easier, attendance can be recorded by increasingly diverse technological means (mobile phones, GPS tracking, etc.) (Edwards and Griffin, 2013, UN 2017), which induces significant difficulties.

This events policy is consistent with new tourism practices that are increasingly oriented towards the search for experiences (Pine and Gilmore, 1999), be they emotional, visual, auditory or gastronomic. This forms part of the postmodern tourist experience that characterizes the present time (Kadri and Pilette, 2017). It also allows people to become tourists at home (EC, 2018) by creating a new atmosphere (Kim *et al.*, 2016, Popp, 2012), and more specifically a festive atmosphere in the city, and in this way can attract new populations interested in this dynamism. By contributing to the cultural character and vibrant nature of the city, events are one of the factors that attract creative classes (Florida 2014), in turn resulting in innovation and urban development (Delaplace *et al.*, 2020). With attractiveness emerging as a new strategic orientation for local authorities (Houllier-Guibert, 2019), city/regional managers legitimize public policies through event planning.

These events are also a tool for communicating an image in terms of a city's dynamism, which can attract not just tourists but also longer-term populations. As pointed out by Getz and Page (2016, p. 593), “[e]vents are both animators of destination attractiveness but more fundamentally (...) key marketing propositions in the promotion of places given the increasingly global competitiveness to attract visitor spending.” But “the impact of major events on the image of metropolises is often mentioned (...), but we have no data to measure it” (Sallet-Lavorel and Lecroart, 2002).

But these events also benefit local populations. For example, the World Puppet Theater Festival in Charleville-Mézières, in northeastern France, is both an international event, which attracts puppeteers from around the world, and an event for the children and adult residents alike of the city and the region, which requires more than 500 volunteers. Different types of events attract tourists but also residents who are sometimes volunteers. In addition, spending promotes economic dynamics that can benefit inhabitants. Like mega-events (see above), recurring events are linked to planning issues that can contribute to the structuring of a territory by producing permanent facilities.

This abundance of events raises the question of the objects and locations that are mobilized: cultural events are sometimes analyzed as an instrumentalization of art and culture in order to promote a particular place for the benefit of new residents or potential investors (Hoffman *et al.*, 2003). It can also generate discontent, opposition and confrontation: inhabitants, participants, and organizers sometimes come into conflict during events, especially when they generate noise or congestion issues. But conflicts can also occur before the event when preparatory works modify or disfigure the urban space. The social acceptability of these events (Marquis, 2013) is not always in evidence. Events policies lead to a particular vision of the vibrant city, sometimes referred to as a “creative city” (Vivant, 2009), which is not always compatible with the inhabited city, and introduces renewed forms of conflict, particularly around housing. Co-constructed policies with all stakeholders, and in particular local populations, must therefore be implemented in such cases, in order to maximize the positive impacts on cities and minimize any risks and conflicts (Girginov, 2016).

Lastly, since these events concentrate many tourists and resident populations in one place, they become targets for terrorist attacks and thus pose significant security problems (Richard *et al.*, 2020).

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The themes of this international conference are diverse and can be analyzed from different disciplinary standpoints (urban and regional planning, law, economics, geography, management, political science, sports science, etc.).

Contributions may deal with different kinds of events (mega-events such as Olympic and Paralympic Games, World Expos, European Capital of Culture, etc.) or different types of events on smaller scales on diverse themes. Papers may relate, without limitation, to:

- the events policies of cities in all their dimensions (cultural, sports, corporate events, etc.);
- assessments of the impacts of different kinds of events on tourism and more broadly on economic activities and employment;
- the risks and security issues associated with the population concentrations that the events imply;
- conflicts related to events and tourism in public spaces;
- the difficulties associated with hosting tourists during major events and mega-events, especially in terms of housing;
- issues related to transport, mobility and logistics during events and in particular mega-events (reorganization of human and freight flows, management of pedestrian pathways, establishment of reserved lanes, etc.) including the issue of accessibility for people with disabilities;
- the interactions between image and territorial marketing around mega-events.

Other themes linking events and tourism may also be suggested.

This third conference of the Observatory of Research on Mega-Events (ORME) (<http://www.u-orme.fr>) at the University of Paris-Est - Gustave Eiffel University is organized under the auspices of the AsTRES Association, a network of universities and higher-education and research institutions specializing in research and training on the theme of tourism (<http://www.association-astres.fr>) and in partnership with the City, Tourism, Transport, and Territory group within the Urban Futures laboratory of excellence (LabEx).

The working languages of the conference are English and French.

Deadline for submission of abstracts: October 31, 2020

Reviewers' responses will be sent by: November 30, 2020

Abstracts should be submitted on our website: <https://megaevent2020.sciencesconf.org/>

### **Abstract submission rules**

1. The abstract may be written in English or French.
2. The document must contain the title (in bold type and centred), the name of the author and co-authors (if applicable) and their institutional affiliations.



3. The abstract should be written in Microsoft Word or a similar program, and be approximately 1,500 words long; the margins should be normal (2.5 cm at the top, bottom, and sides). The font used should be Times New Roman, size 12 pt, and the text should be justified with single line spacing.

4. The text must contain an introduction presenting the subject of the paper, the theoretical framework in which it is situated, the methodology used, a discussion of the results, bibliographical references, and five keywords.

Standard registration fee: 150€

Concessionary fee for researchers from AsTRES member universities: 120 €

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