An Events Industry Takes Shape: A Study of the UK and Poland.

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Summary

This thesis investigates the differences – or gaps – between the developed events industry in the UK and the emerging events industry in Poland by conducting an innovative and rare cross-cultural qualitative autoethnographic methodology incorporating 24 in-depth interviews with senior and director-level event organisers at landmark venues in both the UK and Poland. The interviews are supported with the researcher's observations and immersion in the field in both London and Warsaw for 10 years, respectively. The research objective was to identify factors which shape an events industry as it develops so that conclusions could be drawn to help narrow the disparate behaviours and practices of organisers in the one global marketplace for international events.

The findings have impacts upon locations where events management is an emerging industry and international clients and foreign consumers are exposed to gaps in areas of standards, quality, service, and risk at wherever an event takes place around the globe.

The conclusions of this study show it is necessary for an events industry to shape a socio-professional community of practice to facilitate opportunities for organisers to learn their behaviours and practices through formal education, networking, knowledge sharing, and engaging with professional associations for training and accreditation. In emerging locations without a developed socio-professional construct because the events industry is in the process of forming its shape, it is necessary to evolve a culture whereby organisers recognise the need to create their own self-learning environment by observing other organisers and other events – particularly at international level, such as learning from their international clients and foreign consumers. A further unexpected finding is the need for an international professional association for organisers involved with providing international events, to facilitate organisers

in emerging locations with acculturation learning from already developed industries and from the behaviours and practices of foreign organisers.

85,498 words

Impact Statement for COVID-19

I conducted this research project during the COVID-19 pandemic and as such was impacted by the disruption it caused. Governmental-imposed travel restraints caused the inability for me to travel to conduct the activities of face-to-face interviewing of participants and observation of their venues. I made adjustments by reverting to videoconferencing software which facilitated the data collection from participants but could not replace observations. If I had been permitted to visit each participant at their venue in both the UK and Poland it would have enriched the thesis narrative. However, employing the autoethnography method allowed me to pivot the project by drawing on my experience as an insider of the events sector in both countries and provide my interpretations to strengthen the data collection and analysis sections.

My ability to recruit participants was impacted because event organisers were either furloughed or were focused on adjusting their business practices in the onset of the pandemic, rather than participating with a research project.

The closure of the University of Essex campus and library restricted access to workspaces and diminished my access to authoritative material. But I did retain access to online resources and the University of Essex online library resources.

Further discussion of the impacts and adjustments brought about by COVID-19 can be found in Section 3.4 of the Methodology chapter.

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to three influencers in my life, each of whom had departed by the time this project reached completion:

- **Anita Tempelhof Cook** (1929 – 2019), my mother.

- **Brian Cook** (1954 – 2021), my designate father.

- Ambassador **Dr Ryszard Żółtaniecki** (1951 – 2020), professor, sociologist, diplomat, poet, my friend.

Acknowledgements

Contents

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this Study

This thesis sets out to determine the factors which shape the development of an events industry by identifying differences in the behaviours and practices of organisers in an emerging events industry with one that is already well established. For the purpose of this study, I have identified three essential themes of Event Culture, Tourism and Events, and Risk Awareness at Events which are central to managing events at international level and should be non-variable across the global landscape for international events. Event Culture determines the socio-professional cultural construct of the events industry in the target locations of the UK and Poland; Tourism and Events is fundamental in managing international events with concern for foreign clients and travelling consumers – 'event tourists'; and Risk Awareness is vital across the global market for international events where gaps would expose event tourists to risk and harm. There are other important areas of events which I could have considered such as technology or sustainability, but these are fast-changing and ever-moving in the marketplace and might not provide credible and consistent insights for the aim of this thesis which is to determine factors that shape an events industry. Technology, for instance, is variable dependent upon the availability of equipment and specialist expertise, an event's budget, the complexity of an event and resources required to produce the event, and the technical resources in-situ at venues. Sustainability is certainly becoming widespread, but is a variable component dependent upon local law as the driver, social attitudes, trends, and consumer-driven demand.

My method for this research project is innovative as it is a cross-cultural autoethnographic study, whereas event literature is dominated with single case studies. Using this methodology approach, I research event organisers in both the UK and Poland within the socio-professional context of the events industry in which they live and work. Having myself lived and worked in

both the UK and Poland events industries for 10 years respectively in each location, I had already identified issues surrounding the disparity in areas such as quality and consistency between one location and another when delivering events. This might be fine to accept in the distinct domestic marketplace of a particular location, but events are not confined to domestic borders and in most cases are designed to attract event tourism from foreign consumers and clients. Also, event planners are not restricted to organising 'home' events and are thus exposed to the behaviours and practices of foreign locations. So, when it comes to delivering events to the one global marketplace for international events, any gaps between one location and another will expose clients and consumers to disparities in service, quality, safety and risk. My findings will identify the need for an international accreditation association to align the behaviours and practices of organisers who provide events within the global marketplace for international events. The association would facilitate organisers to learn international standards by creating for themselves an environment of self-learning. This is not an unrealistic argument because already the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) are promoting themselves as a global accreditation to 'raise the excellence for the meetings industry' (Conference & Meetings World, 2021).

Researchers agree that the global events market is a transient joined-up socio-cultural community but I have identified a gap in cross-cultural research into the disparities between event locations that are at different stages of development. To illustrate the contribution of my thesis to international events research, Stephenson (BBC 2015) reports that one worker had died during the build of the London 2012 Olympics, but 'hundreds' of construction workers have died for the Sochi 2014 Olympics (Shaw, Anin and Vdovii, 2015), and 6,500 deaths during construction for the Qatar 2022 World Cup (*The Guardian*, no date). In the developed UK events industry it is unacceptable for any death to occur even though one death might be considered to be an isolated unavoidable incident. However, for 6,500 deaths to occur during

the build for the Qatar 2022 World Cup shows a different level of acceptance. The difference is not only cultural but raises sociological implications in the management of events in different locations and the variance of exposure to which stakeholders (clients, consumers, suppliers, sponsors) are exposed. It also unveils the opportunity for an international approach whereby organisers in an emerging industry can learn from tragedies which have already been experienced by a further advanced events industry. This would allow events industries such as that in Poland to shape itself from the legislations and practices which have shaped an advanced industry to making events safer around the globe and align the behaviour of organisers so that they do not have to experience tragedy for themselves, thus narrowing that gap.

I can illustrate this point with an example from my own experience as an organiser of high-end events and as a venue manager in landmark venues including the London Hippodrome and Camden Palace. When I was organising a fashion show for London Fashion Week, the supermodel Naomi Campbell was launched onto the stage on a lift platform rising from the deep basement in the venue. The stage direction given to Campbell was for her to exit the stage at the front of the catwalk whilst the lift was sent back down to the basement for the next model. When Campbell reached the front of the catwalk she turned around and walked upstage to where there was now a deep hole in the stage down into the basement. Fortunately, Campbell saw the danger and ran off stage but if she had stepped into that hole she would have plummeted to the basement. After this incident, the health and safety executive conducted an investigation to identify how the situation had occurred and to prevent it from happening in future. Also, if Campbell or anybody other had been injured or killed, there would be criminal litigation. This example demonstrates the low threshold of risk acceptance in the UK events industry whereas 'hundreds' have died for the Sochi Olympics and 6,500 workers have died for the Qatar World Cup and reveals there is a gap in the levels of risk acceptance within the international events

marketplace due to the stage of development of an events industry in any particular location because of cultural, social and socio-professional differences.

My career experience is as an organiser of events within a developed industry in a democratic society. Even so, when I started out in events, 'events management' was not recognised as a career choice and there were no courses in events management, so I transferred in natural fashion from hospitality management to managing events. I was a white male in London which provided me with easy progression to managing landmark venues and organising prestigious events for corporate, celebrity, music industry, and royal clients. The playing field of events at that time was socially driven – indeed that might not have changed because of the 24 interviews for this study, 13 are male organisers, 11 are female, but all 24 are white. I feel sure that my profile allowed easy and unquestioned access to the social circles where I could network for event jobs and progress my status and my career. This is how I evolved my knowledge and professionalism as an event organiser. This has an influence on my research because I will approach my study from the perspective of an event manager 'par excellence' and my interpretations of the right way of doing things. The study might be different if I were, say, a black female in a post-communist society and had experienced a very different pathway to managing events than that of which I was privileged. To be clear on this point, an organiser with a different background to mine would have evolved different practices and would hold different interpretations of the right way of organising events – which, for me, might be not the right way of organising events – learnt from their career organising events in an unstructured and unsupported socio-professional context, in smaller venues, or independent (not landmark) venues, or less prestigious events with lesser budgets. This is indeed why there is a need for this study to identify the factors which shape a developing events industry as more locations emerge into the global marketplace for international events.

It is recognised by researchers that events have a growing importance in modern society (Moufakkir and Pernecky, 2015) and the management of events is a growing industry across the globe. Bowdin *et al*. (2012) identify events as a phenomenon and that events management has emerged as an industry in its own right, and Getz and Page (2016) state that event management has evolved to be an 'ology', as in 'eventology'. Conference & Incentive Travel (2017, p.19) consider events to be a recent social phenomenon due to advances in the digital world with 7.5 billion people connected online causing 'glocalisation'. Glocalisation is a term defined by Robertson (2014) as the flexibility of the 'local' within the wider context of the firm yet still flexible 'global' which in the context of this study is considered as the world, or even within Europe. Gaps in the marketplace will only become wider with the continuing emergence of locations providing international events with varying degrees of safety awareness, risk management and professionalism of operational practices. Although online connectivity in events has advanced rapidly due to the COVID-19 pandemic triggering hybrid and virtual events, this is likely to be a short-lived adjustment with little or no impact on the need for this study. The Globex (2018) report identifies digital technologies are more likely to enhance live events than replace them and concludes that clients are driving demand for face-to-face social activities for better online relationships and opportunities. So, although social habits have rapidly changed because of the pandemic, live events are not going to go away. In fact, there are arguments that the restrictions caused by the pandemic have fuelled the appetite to re-engage with live events for commerce and leisure reasons once full freedoms are returned. This means that the opposite could happen whereby clients and consumers tire of virtual and hybrid technologies replacing the live event experience and might even associate the dark days of the pandemic with the need for virtual events, and drive hybrid and consumer technology into reverse.

Urry (2002b) defines the level of social interaction as 'liveness' whereby active engagement in an ever-changing social world provides real-world experiences (Tarr, Gonzalez-Polledo and Cornish, 2018). In the context of sociological theory, Back (2007) considers liveness as a research method to document and understand social life is better than 'the lacklustre prose of methodological textbooks [which] often turns the life of the research encounter into a corpse fit only for autopsy'. This had in fact been somewhat of a worry for me at the outset of this study – that my immersion into theoretical methodology when conducting this research project might dull the brightness of the subject of live events. I wanted to somehow keep the research 'live' in keeping with the subject of creative events rather than subdue it beneath theoretical concepts. It was welcome, then, that Urry (2002b), Tarr, Gonzalez-Polledo and Cornish (2018), and Back (2007) recognise the value of liveness in both the physical and theoretical contexts which was helpful in selecting my blended research methods with the intention to retain that sense of 'liveness' within this study. The methods I selected were 24 in-depth interviews with current senior-level organisers at landmark venues (17 UK, and 7 Poland), 3 live observations in the field as a researcher (halted due to COVID-19), plus my former observations of the landmark venues in this study from when I was an events practitioner, and autoethnography to include my insider knowledge embedded in the events industry in both the UK and Poland.

Having established that events are destined to remaining live, Conference & Incentive Travel (2018) report 23% of event planners (clients) are most concerned with the destination's infrastructure and 16% would choose a city knowledge hub where there is access to experts and facilities; 45% of event planners said location was paramount, compared to capacity at 16%, accessibility at 11%, and costs at 5%. These client data further support the need for this study because priority is awarded to where an event is going to take place rather than the costs of placing an event into a location. Evidently, clients are selecting destinations for the location above other factors such as the levels of safety, risk management and professional practices.

Indeed, planners might not be aware of where deficiencies vary, or what they are. From the consumer perspective, event tourists travel to a destination to attend the event, so the choice of destination for its location supersedes consumer safety, exposure to risk, the guest experience, and standards of professionalism and service. Location being the priority factor is helpful for locations where events management is already a recognised profession, such as in the UK, but not where events have yet to evolve to professional status, such as Poland. Yet emerging markets are set to grow faster than mature regions and the global market is forecast to grow 5% between 2018 and 2022 (Globex, 2018). This adds credibility for my selection of London and Warsaw as the comparative research locations for this study.

There are definitions of what constitutes the professional status of an industry, with Wilensky (1964) for example defining that a profession must have the emergence of a fulltime occupation; it must have a training school; it must have a professional association; it must have political 'agitation' towards protecting the association by law; and it must adopt a formal code. The structure of the events industry in the UK has evolved to fulfil these criteria including an abundance of professional associations and the availability of university degree courses in events management. Even so, the UK events industry is still lacking in some key areas such as having no formal professional, legal or collective socio-professional structure and not having a formal code of practice.

The shortfalls of the professionalisation of the UK events industry lie in the diverse activities of 'events' and the range of pathways of entry to the profession which is not regulated by qualifications as would be the medical and teaching professions, say. This means the UK events industry is made up of organisers who may or may not have formal education in the specialisms of managing events, some who are trained but others who are not, and some who have a wealth of events experience whilst others who are new entrants to the industry. An emerging events industry, such as that in Poland, will not be as advanced but will still be made up from a range

of professional, semi-professional and non-professional organisers – although none will be formally educated because there is no access to events management courses in Poland. Nonetheless, it is evident there is an emerging events profession in Poland because of the existence of some professional associations and the beginnings of the availability of courses in events management, but the industry status in Poland society is limited by fewer professional associations and less opportunity for formal events education. This does not mean Poland organisers are less professional than UK organisers. Organisers of events in the UK are just as likely to have arrived to the industry from a range of pathways and without any formal education in events management (Bladen *et al.*, 2018). However, my research will reveal a noticeable disparity in that the UK draws organisers with transferrable specialisms such as customer management, risk management, and quality management gained in related disciplines such as hospitality, hotel, leisure and tourism management, whereas Poland organisers arrive to events from unrelated fields and without transferrable specialisms and experience.

Events as a Profession

The existence of 42 professional associations in the UK events industry (Bowdin *et al.*, 2011) is one indicator of a profession according to the criteria of Wilensky (1964) but it is not an indicator of professionalism. The number of professional associations is not what determines a profession, but it does help to contextualise the expanse of the UK events industry, its evolved socio-professional construct, and that it is indeed at an advanced stage of evolvement. In this thesis, it will become clear that the emerging events industry in Poland could not sustain such a number of professional associations because there is neither the need nor appetite. Indeed, if an unproportionate number of associations were to exist within a developing industry it would only fragment and confuse the direction and shape as that industry evolves. Bowdin *et al.* (2011) have already identified the point that the plethora of professional associations in the UK events industry is fragmenting the industry and it now requires consolidation. It could be argued

therefore that too many professional associations is in fact disrupting the UK industry and has fragmented it rather than serving the purpose of progressing and cohering its status as a profession. As an industry develops it will support the organic emergence of professional associations (the UK has, for example, the Association for Conferences and Events (ACE), the Association of Event Organisers (AEO), the Association of Event Venues (AEV), the Association of Festival Organisers (AFO), the Association of Shows and Agricultural Organisations (ASA0)) (Bowdin, *et al*., 2011). Poland might emerge the growth of similar associations as the industry takes shape with more diverse event genres and activities. This is already happening with the emergence of a few professional associations such as the Poland Convention Bureau, Polish Tourism Organisation, and Poland MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, Exhibitions), but it is not an oversaturated situation as in the UK. This difference is a further indicator of the disparate status of development between the UK and Poland events industries. However, the few professional associations in the current Poland events industry does allow for industry cohesion before too many associations dissect the sector into fragmented splinter-sectors as has happened in the UK.

The difference in the status of an events industry as a profession because of its stage of development has an impact on how that profession is regarded in society. For instance, is it a well-paid career, a worthwhile career choice, and is it a regulated and protected work environment. The disparity in societal awareness and regard of an industry will vary from country to country. Until relatively recently, events management in the UK was not regarded as a career choice but has now become recognised for its career potential and entrepreneurship opportunities because events have grown dramatically with general trends in the experience economy (Getz and Page, 2016) providing consumers with entertainment, education, an aesthetic value, and a platform for escapism (Pine and Gilmore, 2011). Societal awareness of and exposure to events is driving the motivation for people to choose to organise planned

events. This is noted by Kahle and Close (2011) who identify social partnerships, social alliances and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as key drivers in high social awareness of activities. Deciding to enter an industry requires legitimate routes of entry through formal education in the profession – to be a professional within the profession, as it were. Burke (1995) states that formal training is particularly important for professional service firms because their main resource is the talent, knowledge and specialised expertise of staff at all levels. Burke goes on to say that an obvious benefit from professional education is the provision of higher quality services and more innovative products to clients and potential clients, which is where all events industries in all locations should aim to be. Benefits to employees from formal training include job satisfaction and performance, satisfaction from providing high quality and creative services to clients, the potential for career advancement, and increased commitment to the firm because of its investment in staff. This is why there is increasing demand in the UK for degree courses in events management and it is professionalising the UK events industry. However, until recently, the industry had abstained from formal education or qualifications in events management because it was not deemed necessary to be educated in managing events in order to run an event.

Gaps in the Global Marketplace for International Events

The events industry in Poland today is in development, which is a stage of growth that the UK events industry has already been through and has emerged from. The different stages of development of events industries in different locations is why gaps appear within the global marketplace for international events. This is problematic because events management is an increasingly global need reaching many emerging locations, which can be evidenced by mega-events such as the Rio Olympics in 2016 (Davies, 2017), the 2014 World Cup in Rio De Janeiro (FIFA, 2014), and the 2012 UEFA European football championship in Poland and Ukraine (UEFA, 2016). The impact is that event consumers (attendees to events) face exposure to

differences at the events they attend depending on where they attend them. These could be gaps in risk management, safety protocols, service standards, and the actual experience an attendee receives at an event which purpose is to provide consumers with a live experience. Consumers are likely not to be aware that gaps exist, what they are, or which gaps are particular to which country. Similarly, event planners (clients) who place events in foreign locations are exposed to these gaps in the various events industries they encounter depending on the country they place their event because clients are not limited to organising events in a domestic market only. Again, clients might not be aware there are gaps, what the gaps are, or which gaps are particular to which country – although an experienced event planner might learn this and become aware of the likelihood of encountering disparities.

For these reasons, the sociological orientation for this study focuses on the socio-professional structure and social positioning of the events industry in the UK and that of Poland to understand the behaviours, approaches and actual practices of organisers of events in the two locations. This encompasses social theories such as Bourdieu's field of forces (Harker, Mahar and Wilkes, 1990) and habitus concepts (Grenfell, 2012) in which organisers exist and develop their way of working, and Becker's (1984) art world concept whereby the production of art is attributable to a supportive and collaborative network. The sociology of professions (Young and Muller, 2014) is helpful in identifying the positioning of the job of organising events in the socio-context of the recent and rapid development of events management as a standalone profession distinct from the disciplines of hospitality, hotel, leisure and tourism management. Because events management is a recent phenomenon, understanding how the profession matures is integral in identifying the social and cultural factors depending on the location in which the industry takes shape. I have also drawn upon Foucault's structural codes of knowledge (Carrabine, 2007) which discusses how practices, which may seem strange, are governed, and Douglas (Anfara and Mertz, 2011) who identifies a typology of social

environments as a process for the classification of culture which influence the entire cultural environment.

This study researches the mature events industry in the UK and the emerging events industry in the post-communist society of Poland, with the aim to understand how an event industry takes shape and the factors involved with the development of an events industry that are important in meeting the needs of a transient international market: the global market for international events. I intend that this study provides an insight for any country emerging into the global events marketplace, such as Slovakia where Nicki Minaj was forced to cancel one concert of her world tour due to technical issues and power outages (Waheed, 2019). And in Shanghai where Minaj was booked to headline a festival which turned out to be a 'scam' (Gallagher, 2018). Also locations such as Brazil and Turkey which are expected to stabilise depending on their political and macroeconomic stability (Globex, 2018). Egypt is a country which has struggled to establish itself as a global destination for events but is now emerging into the marketspace with the opening of a purpose-built venue and an international events agency opening a new office in Cairo (Mash Media, 2019). Mash Media (2019, p.27) further report there is confidence that Egypt can deliver growth and success for its events and that labour and safety standards have been low but need to improve in order to be compliant with international standards, so my research is appropriate and timely. Southeast Asian markets such as Vietnam, Thailand and the Philippines present untapped opportunities for international events although are limited by venue capacity (Globex, 2018), and there have been recent event openings in China, Hong Kong, the Nordics and Mexico. This study has the potential to reach these destinations, and others which emerge, and help ease their journey into the global marketplace for international events.

My findings will argue that an international umbrella professional association for international events is needed to integrate a more consistent global events industry for the provision of safe

and professionally organised international events, and meet client and consumer expectations. Such an umbrella body at international level would narrow the gaps caused by independent locations with events industries at various stages working autonomously in their socio-professional habitus and developing their own variant levels of safety and other practices in the one global marketplace for international events.

1.2 The UK Events Industry – a developed events industry

I selected the UK as representative of an events industry at a developed stage because it is reported by Rogers (2014) to be one of the world's most developed event industries in terms of destination infrastructures, venues, and service suppliers, with 1.3 million events in 2017 (Eventbrite, 2018) in the 'business' sector alone. The Business Visits and Events Partnership (BVEP) (Business Visits and Events Parternship, 2020) estimate the UK events industry is worth £70bn and accounts for over 50% of the UK visitor economy. The UK events industry employs over 700,000 people in the sector (BVEP, 2020) and is ranked 5th in the top 20 cities ranked by number of meetings organised in 2017 (Conference & Incentive Travel, 2018) after Barcelona, Paris, Vienna, and Berlin. My selection of the UK events industry is further justified by the turnover of £340.1m by the top 10 UK event agencies (Conference & Incentive Travel, 2018) and the rise in applications for event management courses (AEME 2008, cited in Goldblatt, 2014). London was ranked as the top EMEA (Europe, the Middle East and Africa) destination for meetings and event planners in 2018 (*Conference News*, 2019). Still, the UK events potential is continuing to evolve and is not stagnant, which is indicated by a submitted planning application to construct a £200m global event campus in the Glasgow area (Wood, 2018). This study is focused on London as a comparative capital city to Warsaw. I spent 10 years in London producing high-end events for corporate clients, international music stars,

royalty and charity organisations in all event genres and in all types of venues which gives me insider authority for the autoethnography and interpretive elements of this thesis.

1.3 The Poland Events Industry – an emerging events industry

In comparison to the UK as a developed events industry, Poland is representative of a developing events industry with the meetings industry contributing an estimated 1.5% to GDP, employing 220,000 in the meetings sector, and 2,031,589 consumers attending events (Buczak *et al.*, 2020). It is clear that the Poland events industry is in rapid growth stage by the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) reporting an increase in the number of meetings held in Poland (with the criteria of lasting at least three days and with at least 300 consumers of which at least 40% are foreign) as increasing from 150 in 2009, to 230 in 2019 (Buczak *et al.*, 2020). The Poland Convention Bureau report that just 15% of corporate events in Poland are of foreign group origin compared to 85% domestic, and 9% of events are hosted in congress centres and 16% in event venues, compared to 65% hosted in hotels (Buczak *et al.*, 2020). The same report shows trade exhibitions are just 7% from foreign origin compared to 93% domestic, demonstrating how Poland is not yet penetrating foreign markets for international event clients, and international events that attract foreign event consumers, which I discuss in section 2.2. Although Poland has already emerged into the global marketplace for international events, the 'origin' (Buczak *et al.*, 2020) statistics demonstrate Poland has yet to increase the level of events business available to draw from foreign markets. Warsaw makes for a likewise comparative capital city to London. Also, I lived in Poland for 10 years working with a range of venues in Warsaw for corporate and charity clients, and I founded an events school in Warsaw. I have good understanding of the Polish societal, socio-professional and socio-cultural constructs as an immigrant observer of behavioural traits and contrasts as I

assimilated with Polish society. I am conversant in the Polish language which is helpful in conducting this study, and I have access to participants for field research purposes.

1.3.1 Acknowledging Poland's Post-Communist Society

Although this study is focused on the socio-professional cultural construct of an events industry taking shape, I have considered throughout this work that the events industry in Poland exists in the cultural and societal context of a communist legacy, whereas the UK events industry has evolved in a longstanding democratic society. This does impact the shape of the two comparative event industries but not in a way that is detrimental for my research because it in fact strengthens the need for researching the causes of gaps in the global market for international events and provides comparisons for variant behavioural traits and practices of events organisers. It also upholds my justification for research to be conducted in order to reach findings that would help narrow or close the gaps, and the potential for an emerging industry to follow in the wake of an already-developed industry. Poland is one of the fastest-growing economies worldwide and the fastest-growing economy in Europe, and was the only country in the European Union to avoid recession during the financial crisis of 2008 (Bogdan *et al.*, 2015). Since the 1990s there has been enhanced competitiveness of Polish industry and narrowing of the gap between Poland and the European Union which is driving Poland closer to the standards and structures of other EU countries (Domański, 2003). These factors fit well with my cross-cultural comparative study of an emerging industry and a developed events industry, identifying differences in the behaviour and practices of the two sectors, and what gaps exist and how they might be narrowed or closed.

In 1989 Poland was the first country to leave communism peacefully and form the world's first post-communist government (Kemp-Welch, 2008). The fall of socialist ideology brought rapid and profound social change and development which continues to have long-lasting impacts on

social class, social change, modernity, globalisation and identity (Outhwaite and Ray, 2005). Rose (2009) describes the evolution of a post-communist society as 'democratisation backwards' suggesting the search to identify with democratic alliances such as the European Union which Poland joined in 2004 (Lane and Wolanski, 2009). This is further reason planned events provides a suitable and appropriate framework for a sound research topic: because it is a visible and obvious evolution of an industry identifying with the global market. In doing so, Poland has rapidly emerged onto the world stage for international events by hosting significant international events including the UEFA European Football Championship in 2012 and the COP24 United Nations Climate Change Conference in 2018, but also in promoting Poland as a destination for event tourist clients and consumers.

Howard (2006, p.133) writes that in the communist era 'corruption was a way of life and favouritism was rife', so the global market for international events was not accessible for Poland in the East-West divide (Outhwaite and Ray, 2005) and the mistrust which existed between democratic and socialist societies. Zaslavsky and Brym (1978) point out that citizens in communist states were forced to make a hypocritical show of involvement or compliance which could be construed as a distrustful show of trust. I have observed the evidence of this in the societal pretence to be devout Catholic. Additionally, Howard (2003) identifies how civil society in a communist regime developed in a sub-context of widespread corruption. The theme of distrust is also identified by Mishler and Rose (1997) as the legacy in post-communist Europe, although Mishler and Rose dilute their findings to the discovery that it is in fact scepticism. I have also held in mind that the findings of this study are derived from a societal behavioural norm of 'this is how we do things here' (which is further discussed in 4.1). My research will therefore inevitably encounter ethical and moral shortfalls in practices, standards, service delivery, and risk management at events in Poland.

The disparity in the fabric of society between the UK and Poland will have bearing upon the findings of this study but I emphasise that I am not drawing findings on wider cultural issues such as gender or religion. For one thing, Howard (2003) observes that the Polish state had not provided the resources and support for the organisation of a civil society, which is in stark contrast to the UK. But in Poland today there are resemblances to a constitutional system because the cornerstone of reform in Poland was the Local Self-Government Act which drew heavily on the Council of Europe's European Charter for Local Self-Government (Howard, 2006). Communist versus democratic societal differences aside, this study does squarely meet its research objective of identifying how emerging event industries take shape in the context of the global market for international events. It is the socio-professional cultural construct of an emerging events industry in the context of its location which is the focus of this study, not the wider sociological or cultural implications of any particular society. It is also fair for me to state that every location will have its peculiarities and idiosyncrasies fashioned from its society, history, and cultural development regardless of whether that location is post-communist or not, which is why the findings of this project can relate to any emerging industry, anywhere.

1.4 Organisation of the Thesis

This thesis is structured with 7 chapters: Introduction, Literature Review, Methodology, Data Analysis (3 chapters), and Conclusions. The Introduction has outlined the purpose of this study and provided context of both the UK and Poland event industries. A critical review of available literature in the subject area has been obtained from secondary (existing) and tertiary (database) sources and is presented in Chapter 2 as an overview of current concepts and ideas of the three themes of this thesis: Event Culture, Tourism and Events, and Risk Awareness at Events. The methodology for researching this study is explained in Chapter 3 with rationale for my research design, research methods, and my primary research activities of conducting in-depth qualitative

interviews with 24 participant organisers, observations of venues, and autoethnography. The methodology chapter also sets out my criteria for the identification and selection of the participant population. Also within the methodology chapter, I highlight the adjustments I needed to make to my intended primary research methods because of the COVID-19 pandemic which arrived during the undertaking of this project. I discuss the pilot test I conducted for the interviews, and I state the reasons that the findings of this study are valid and reliable. I have set out the ethical approval process and an indication for the direction for future research opportunities that might be undertaken without any of the limitations encountered during my undertaking of this study.

Chapters 4 – 6 contain analysis and interpretation of the qualitative data I obtained from my primary research activities of interviews and observations. Each analysis chapter sets out the respective three themes of Event Culture (Chapter 4.0), Tourism and Events (Chapter 5.0), and Risk Awareness at Events (Chapter 6.0) with data in the form of excerpts from participant interviewees and interpretations drawn from the empirical data, existing literature, and ethnographic observations. The conclusions in Chapter 7.0 of each of the three themes are set out in 7.1, 7.2 and 7.3, with the overall conclusions of this study presented in 7.4.

1.5 Authority of The Researcher

As an industry insider turned academic researcher, I consider myself to be uniquely positioned to produce an authoritative study to contribute to the field of events management research. My career pathway is not similar to most others because I have moved to new jobs every two years or so which has given me very broad experience across all genres of events, whereas it is usual to specialise in one field of events management such as pharma conferences, say, or wedding planning, or sports events, or music industry events. Because I changed jobs frequently, I have experience as an events organiser, venue manager, corporate client, in-house head of events,

and company director. And, of course, I moved my career to Poland. Although it might be considered unwise to change jobs on a frequent basis, there are advantages – one of which is the all-round authority I possess in conducting this study, particularly with the autoethnographic methodology. However, I must acknowledge that another organiser with a less changeable career pattern might determine different outcomes and might deduce different interpretations of the empirical data.

I spent 10 years fully embedded in the field organising events in the UK and then 10 years in Poland. I then moved into academia where I have forged a second career as an educator and researcher. I am Senior Lecturer and program manager of the MSc International Hospitality Management program. I am a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (FHEA) and I hold a Postgraduate Certificate (PG Cert Ed) in Academic Practice. I have authored five textbooks to date, and I am series editor of *The Practical Guide to Events and Hotel Management* series for the academic publisher, Routledge. My books and book series are written in a style to bridge a gap between existing theoretical literature and educating students by providing practical insights from an industry insider which is in fact a knowledge gap identified later in this thesis.

As an event practitioner my portfolio includes the Queen, Prince Charles, Bon Jovi, Jennifer Lopez, the Bee Gees and Shania Twain. I have produced events of every genre including sports, fashion, awards, conferences, exhibitions, parties, launches, concerts and weddings. I was a senior manager for three consecutive years at the BRIT Awards and have organised events in every type of venue from disused warehouses to country estates, and from open parklands such as Hyde Park for the *Route of Kings* concerts to city centre locations such as Leicester Square and The Grosvenor House, Park Lane for a 2,000-guest banquet for *The Publican Awards*.

I became an organiser of events after graduating from the University of West London with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Hospitality Management. My university work-experience

placement was at Thorpe Park Resort theme park, Surrey, UK. After roles in two departments at the theme park, I was asked to take charge of events which is how my career in events management got started.

I relocated to Poland for ten years where I continued producing events, founded Poland's first school of events management, published Poland's first textbook on event management, delivered lectures at Collegium Civitas University in Warsaw, and provided event consultancy services to venues and corporations.

When I returned to the UK, I was lecturer and module leader at the University of West London before joining the Edge Hotel School at the University of Essex where I designed, implemented and now lead the events management programmes. I have undertaken this PhD to further my academic career, establish my specialism in the field of events management in both practice and academia, further my knowledge and understanding of the subject area to enhance my teaching to undergraduate and postgraduate students, and to contribute my research to the field of event literature.

2.0 Literature Review

This chapter provides a critical review of existing literature in the three themes of Event Culture, Tourism and Events, and Risk Awareness at Events. I bring with me my own insights from my event career in the field in both the UK and Poland, which provides me with credible understanding of the events industry in both locations and the behavioural approaches of organisers who provide event services to clients and consumers in the global market for international events. However, because my insights are gained from practical experiences, they are susceptible to opinion and bias. This literature review of existing theory across the three themes of this thesis will ground any of my potential subjectivity with the objective theoretical perspectives of other authors and researchers. The three themes of this thesis are derived from my insider knowledge as being critical factors in shaping an events industry for the global marketplace for international events where gaps will have detrimental impacts on event consumers. There are other factors I could have considered, including sustainability and technology, but they are variable upon operational elements such as the complexity of each event, the event budget, what resources are in-situ at a venue, and trends, so would not provide true and consistent findings.

2.1 Event Culture

The theme of Event Culture is important in establishing how the profession of events management is positioned within the fabric of professional society in both research locations that are the focus of this study. I will identify the stage of development of the events industry in both the UK and Poland, which determines the support culture that exists for organisers to network, train, study and share knowledge through policy transfer – each of which factors have influence on their socio-professional behaviours and practices. This enables me to reveal gaps

within industry practices between the developed UK events industry and that of Poland's developing events industry.

There are definitions for the culture of events provided across current literature, such as Bladen *et al*. (2018) and Bowdin *et al*. (2011) who outline the wide history and complex standing of events in society. My study, however, is not concerned with wider cultural issues, but is limited to the way an events industry shapes its socio-professional cultural construct. As such, I am concerned with the behaviours and practices of organisers within the profession of managing events, and how they might engage and interact with other organisers and professional organisations that are within the socio-professional cultural construct. My frameworks for this study are therefore the sociologist theories which fit within the narrow focus of professional culture, including the sociology of professions, habitus concept, art world concept, and community of practice. I have, however, noted that 100% of my participant population is white, of which there is a relatively even division of 13 male to 11 female interviewees, but I am not making determinations relating to cultural concepts of gender or religion. Also, I have acknowledged there will be cultural differences between the UK and Poland as the target geographies for this study, being long-time democratic versus post-communist nations (see 1.3.1), but again this study is not concerned with general societal cultural complexities. There are also some cultural implications embedded in the post-communist society such as mistrust, and these are acknowledged throughout the thesis.

I do identify and explore some patron-client cultural differences between organisers in the UK and those in Poland, notably how Poland organisers reveal they have identified differences in practices between their domestic and foreign clients. Noting this differential reveals that organisers in Poland can (and some are) learning from continuous contact between groups of individuals of differing cultural origins. Ward *et al*. (2010, p.26) identify this as 'acculturation' affecting the members of two or more cultural groups as each adapts to the presence of the

other. This behaviour focuses on individual-level changes resulting from intercultural contact and is discussed further in section 2.2. The notion of fate (Giddens, 2006) is also considered where there exists an environment of chance and risk, which is the case in Poland, especially. Fate and probability are regulated by risk assessment which I reveal is a cultural difference in the practices of organisers in the UK and Poland, and their levels of acceptance or 'appetite' for risk at events (discussed in 6.1).

In a broader context, events sit within the entertainment industry of leisure, tourism and hospitality but became its own identified discipline with the creation of the first peer-reviewed journal for event studies in 1993 (Getz and Page, 2016). Since then, interest in the management of planned events has grown, largely due to society's exposure and visibility to increasing levels of public events, celebrations and entertainment brought about by increases in leisure time and spending (Bowdin, *et al.*, 2011). There has also been dramatic growth in non-manufacturing forms of production in many Western economies (Power and Scott, 2004) with the most obvious examples being music, electronic games, television, fashion, and media industries. Power and Scott (2004) note the economic development and employment growth due to such industries, particularly in large global cities, and that the shift in global patterns of cultural consumption is attributed to this trend.

Not every location grows at the same time or pace, however, which means there will exist a range of stages of development of an industry such as the events industry. The UK events industry is ahead of Poland, for instance, which is indicated by a range of factors discussed and explored within this research project including the development of industry associations, the advancement of legislations, the difference in contribution to the economy from events, the number of events in each location, the number of employees in the events sector, and the levels of reach and penetration into foreign markets in order to attract international event clients and consumers (event tourists). For differences to exist in the evolution of an industry in different

locations is expected. As a standalone country it can be acceptable within the confines of a domestic marketplace because there is limited range of variance in a domestic setting, but also consumers in that location will become familiar with the level of service they expect to receive, and that will become embedded as the norm. The problem is that events are not domestic only, with more and more events being designed to attract international consumers to attend and so events transgress a country's borders: consumers are choosing to travel to attend international events and planners are choosing to place their events in foreign locations. It is clear, then, that variations in events from country to country will have an impact but in addition there is the growth of international events in emerging locations such as Poland. All in all, it means that any differences in an event culture from one location to another will expose clients and consumers to those gaps in the global context. It is this point which is the thesis of my research to understand what factors shape an event industry at a different stage of development from another and the impacts this has upon the one global marketplace for international events.

Events are a culture within a culture – by which I mean events are cultural live happenings (Getz and Page, 2016) within society but also there is a culture to an events industry in any particular location – both of which are explored in this first theme of the dissertation. According to Storey (2009) culture has to be made, and the making of culture produces new culture industries and new productions for audiences to consume. This is what has been happening for some time in the UK where the events industry has already developed to be identified as its own discipline with all the socio-professional structures to support it such as access to formal education and industry associations. Becker (1984) describes creativity as a collective effort of society towards achieving the product – the 'artwork', and that the production of an artwork is not attributable to just one person, genius or artist. This is a concept which can be applied to managing events because an organiser cannot produce an event by themselves but needs the support of a team, plus specialists such as venues, caterers, entertainers and technical crew.

Becker (1984) points out also that creative 'art worlds' consist of people whose activities are needed for the production of art, and that these same people would cooperate as an established network of links among participants. This development of the theory of producing culture in a collaborative context can extend to the production of news in newsrooms, for example, where the hierarchical system is structured to offer news output which has expanded rapidly since the early 1990s and covers a wider range of media platforms from television and radio to teletext, web and mobile phones (Erdal, 2009). The socio-structure of participant culture creation can again be attributed to the art of producing events which are a creative form of media requiring collaboration from supporting actors such as technicians, specialists, staff, venues, and decorators. Becker (1984) writes that all artistic work requires the collaboration of a group of people because an artist relies on cooperation from others such as paint manufacturers and producers of canvases.

I recognise this type of collaborative culture as rooted in the socio-professional context of the UK events industry but is not yet recognised in Poland as a concept, although I am in no doubt it is taking shape. Certainly, Poland organisers of events rely on collaboration with other professionals, just as anywhere else, but from my observations they try to do as much as they can by themselves (even to the point of overstretching) without accepting their need to rely on others. This is driven by cultural pride but also from their communist past where people turned their hand to everything in the belief that they can do things better themselves and thus do not require assistance from anybody else. Here, I am reminded of a situation where I had a delivery of logs to my house in rural Poland during a snowy winter. I was spreading ash on the incline of my driveway for the lorry to access my house. The lorry driver alighted his cab, took the shovel from my hands and began spreading the ash himself – rejecting my collaboration in the embedded belief that he could spread ash onto snow better than I, even though I knew my driveway better than he. It is this kind of rejection of collaboration which acts as a barrier to

Becker's (1984) description of collective effort of society towards achieving the product. I recognise a financial barrier to it as well – whereby event organisers are reluctant to pay for somebody else to do what they believe they can do themselves.

Socio-professional collaboration is identified by Brown and Stokes (2021) as a 'community of practice' which connects event professionals to a community for shared values and practices, a shared identity, and a desire to work as a wider collective to maintain and advance knowledge and practice. But the Events Industry Board Talent Taskforce survey (EIB TTF) (Business Visits and Events Parternship, 2020) identifies a shortage in event-specific skills within the workforce in areas of sales and business development, project management, creatives, technical, and client handling. Although this presents the problem of gaps in specialisms across the UK events industry it is not necessarily a gap between one events industry and another because the same deficiencies will be present in an emerging event industry, such as in Poland. However, Mannin (1999) recognises the potential for Poland to embrace European cultural, ethical and moral principles to their value system and proposes that the inflow of foreign investment and linkage to the global economy will reduce backwardness. That will take time though, during which the UK events industry is not waiting but is developing still further. Still, it is important to happen because according to Mary Douglas (Anfara and Mertz, 2011) people are controlled by the group they live in.

Douglas's 'Grid Group Diagram' shows just two dimensions: Group, meaning a general boundary around a community; and Grid, being regulation. People will move, or be forced to move, across the grid according to choice or circumstances. Douglas argues that people need to fit with the behaviour of the group to which they belong because of the collective pressure to be loyal to the processes of that group. She explains that the Group dimension indicates how much people are controlled by the group they live in and the need to accept constraints on behaviour by belonging to a group. However, she does accept that the strength of loyalty will

vary, which would certainly be the case between a group operating in the developed UK events industry and a group operating in the less-developed Poland events industry. This accounts for the Grid dimension giving a measure of structure: from zero where a person is free of group pressure and structural constraints, to more comprehensive regulation where groups are likely to be more hierarchical. Put the two dimensions together (group and regulation) and there are four types of social control with scope for mixing, modifying or shifting between the extremes. Douglas's point means that the European collective will help drive the Poland collective closer to alignment. Bogdan *et al* (2015) recognise this same point with Poland's accession to Europe falling in line with international standards and expectations in catching up to the advanced economies and competing successfully in the global market.

To fall in line with the socio-professional structure of the UK events industry, UK organisers will practice their work according to the pressure of belonging to that group. Whereas in Poland the group pressures are lesser, they are fragmented, and organisers will not be so inclined to work in a way that is loyal to that group. Already, it can be seen that the development of an art world or community of practice because of the need for collaboration and specialisms is an essential influence on shaping the behaviours and practices of organisers who are producing events in different locations.

2.1.1 The Significance of Professional Associations

Professional associations are significant because humans have the basic nature to co-operate, and they have to enter into 'relations of production' (Macdonald, 1999). The value of 'professions' is also a stabilising factor in society and provides an important channel of communication (Lynn, 1963). It should be noted (and is discussed in Section 4.1) that concepts change with time, and so the discourse has shifted from the 'sociology of professions' (Macdonald, 1999) to the 'sociology of professional knowledge', and again to the 'sociology of expertise' (Eyal and Pok, no date). Williams (1976) wrote about the significance of changing

terms in culture and society in his book *Keywords*, but even that has needed to be updated in *New Keywords* (Bennett, Grossberg and Morris, 2005) to reflect the ongoing changes in vocabulary. That said, professional associations bind a profession, which Larson (1977) recognises that social mobility and market control are not mere facts of social life, nor reflections of skill, expertise or ethical standards, but the outcome of coherence and consistence of a professional project. The 'project' requires a body of abstract knowledge, practical application and a market or potential market. Abbott (1988) identifies the significance of the polarity of extreme abstraction and extreme concreteness. At either extreme, the profession loses credibility because too great abstraction is mere formalism and too great concreteness is no more than a craft. Thus, a sweet spot in the middle is where the possessor of knowledge and technique can successfully exercise professional judgement. Professional judgement is also recognised by Larson (1977, p.41) where she explains 'unique individual genius that cannot be taught'. I relate to this because I learnt the way of managing events without being taught, which is how most organisers learn. Even so, my 'unique individual genius' was learnt in the context of white privilege access to exemplar events. It is rapidly changing in the UK developed industry because entrants can learn the specialism of events management at university, but in Poland it is still the way to learn without being taught due to the lack of provision of courses and professional associations in the socio-professional construct of the developing industry.

If the possessors of knowledge form themselves into a group, they can begin to standardise and control the knowledge base and dominate the market in knowledge-based services, such as with knowledge in the management of events. Forming a group will standardise and restrict access to their knowledge, control their market and supervise the 'production of producers' (Larson, 1977). Larson's interactionist approach regards social processes as the product of individual and collective actions in actively pursuing 'respectability'.

It is known that members of society working in pressure groups and occupational associations actively strive to change the system to their own advantage. Larson (1977) recognises the link between individual aspirations and collective action, which I have taken a step further by identifying the opportunity for the collective (in the form of a professional association) to drive individuals to recognise the importance of creating an environment for active self-learning in the pursuit of 'respectability' (Larson, 1977). However, Weber (1978) views society as individuals pursuing their interests and by this activity is generating collectively conscious groups bearing ideas. Secondly, social groups engage in furthering their interests in an attempt to exclude others from their group. Thirdly, Weber notes three dimensions of reward which differentiates groups and for which they strive: economic, social and power. This approach is reflective of both Becker's (1984) art world and Brown and Stokes' (2021) community of practice, both of which are discussed within this thesis.

In a capitalist market society, the outcome of the actions of collective groups aims for the closure of social and economic opportunities to outsiders (Weber, 1978). This form of 'social closure' occurs where an occupation attempts to close access to its knowledge, education, training, credentials and its jobs, and only 'eligibles' will be admitted (Macdonald, 1999, p.29). A profession may secure for itself a monopoly but still needs to strive in a competitive marketplace where others can provide similar or substitute services. Thus, it must defend and enlarge its activities. This can be seen clearly in Western culture on individualism – where society is made up of individuals who happen to work in groups and join associations.

Consumers, as lay members of society, monitor, assess and evaluate a profession in a climate of opinion which provides a context for 'professional' standing. So, society is continuously engaged in defining and evaluating professional traits. I have discussed in Section 4.1 how trust in an event organiser, from clients, is won through professionalism, reputation, testimonials and experience, but not because of qualifications. Because events management is a professional

service different from manufactured goods or retailed goods, they are intangible, and both the consumer and client have to take it on trust. Macdonald (1999) recognises this in the society of professions by understanding that the professional's possession of knowledge and expertise can be warranted by diplomas, certificates and degrees, but only up to a point. Thereafter, trust is extremely important and will be won with socially accepted standards, repute and respectability.

Trust can be won, but Halliday (1987) emphasises knowledge as a core generating trait of professionalism because professions become possible only when knowledge emerges as a socio-cultural entity in its own right and independent of established social institutions. This concept can certainly be seen in the retrospective trajectory of development of the UK events industry, as well as the future potential pathway of the Poland events industry. Gellner (1988) sees this as the survival of the group and the drive for economic advance in a modern industrial society. Survival, he argues, is achieved by group cohesion, loyalty to that group, and its norms which is its knowledge. In a society where changes have occurred, those actors who are involved in the pursuit and economic exploitation of knowledge comply with some of the central values of that society. This is why sociologists, such as Durkheim and Carr-Saunders place great emphasis on the social value of professions. There is an anomaly here, however, because modern professions are licensed by the state (such as nursing and medical, teaching, even plumbers) whereas events management is not. With events, the professional associations do play an important role but are voluntary and little-known outside the profession itself.

Turner and Hodge (1970) examine the ways society makes distinctions between occupations, which Weber (1978) sees as certified and credentialled by degrees, diplomas, and certificates obtained from establishments, organisations or associations whose standing is widely known and understood. But I am not confident that any associations in the socio-professional structure of an events industry are 'widely known and understood'. If the claim to professionalism is

credentialled by a high-level qualification, typically a degree or by a high-ranking establishment, or the qualification is granted by a professional body, then the entry standards constitute the basis for judgement of professionalism. Herein lies another problem for the professionalism of managing events because not all organisers are credentialled, and if they are it will be by the range of the 42-plus associations, so the entry standards are varied and inconsistent – so, quite useless.

Professions are knowledge-based occupations, so the nature of their knowledge, the socio-cultural evaluation of their knowledge and the occupation's strategies when handling their knowledge are important. Sociologists have observed that in general the services provided by those with high-level knowledge do not involve manual work if they are successful in their career. This means the success of production is carried in the head of those who have the knowledge. Aside from knowledge, the other characteristic of a profession is a code of ethics: professionals are people who act ethically. Macdonald (1999) argues that professionalism is influenced by the degree of national professional integration: to what level the recruitment boundary and the level of recruitment have resulted in the profession consisting of merely a small group of elite practitioners or whether it includes every conceivable eligible. Then, there is professional mobilisation: the range of issues about which can be spoken about with legitimacy, or are there so many topics that the capacity for influence is dissipated. And there is the capacity for making alliances depending on the profession's contact with other influential groups, the degree of consensus within a profession, and the number of members. Although Macdonald (1999) bases this model on the medical industry, it can translate to the events industry addressing moral and normative issues; professional inclusiveness or exclusiveness resulting in a reasonably homogenous group with a high degree of agreement on issues and priorities, and a group of practitioners well-placed to make alliances with other influential groups.

Macdonald (1999, p.171) goes on to discuss 'location of knowledge' by describing how innovations in technology displaced knowledge residing in people or organisations to areas outside the group. Here, he again uses the medical profession to define his point because pharmacies are an extension of the knowledge located with doctors. In the events profession, I could assimilate this with event organisers extending their knowledge to other people in the art world, such as insurance, health and safety, security, catering and other fields of specialism relative to producing a live event. This creates expansion of knowledge but the professionals (organisers) must retain control of practical training in the use of their knowledge so that expansion is not a threat. Textbooks and degrees are the starting point of knowledge because the rate of expansion of knowledge requires organisers to be updated which means a continuous stream of publications with information on innovations. This can be seen clearly with the contemporary issue of the COVID-19 pandemic driving the use of online and hybrid events – defined by Macdonald (1999, p.173) as 'when technological advance provides new ways of doing a professional task'.

In summary, there is a significant role to play for professional associations to bind a profession and retain control of abstract knowledge, practical application and a market or market potential. There is a link between individual aspirations and collective action to form respectability which consumers can monitor, assess, and evaluate for professional standing. Society draws distinctions by certification and credentials but in events management there is no body or professional association that is recognisable as the industry certificate or credential. Trust, therefore, is won through professionalism, reputation, testimonials and experience, but not because of qualifications. This undervalues the significance of professional associations and provides an incoherent industry performing self-regulation.

The Production of Culture

We can be confident that events management as a discipline can be recognised as a 'production of culture' (Peterson and Anand, 2004) with six facets of 'production' being identified as technology, law and regulation, industry structure, organisation structure, occupational careers, and market. Fine (1992) notes that objects of aesthetic value (of which both art and creative events appear to belong) is a topic of distinctly sociological activity. He points out that an aesthetic component to work in these occupations is in the drive to perform tasks to produce objects. This drive, Fine states, is to demonstrate the competence of the person producing the aesthetic product and includes the production of quality in client demands, organisational efficiency, and the organisation's resource base. I have found evidence of this type of cultural drive in the UK events industry but in Poland it appears the culture is driven firstly by revenue generation which supercedes an organiser's need to demonstrate competent practices. This is risky behaviour because Adorno (n.d., cited in Giulianotti, 2004) warns that it cannot be predicted what will sell because 90% of output never achieves a profit. If this is indeed the case, Poland organisers need to diversify their focus from profit generation only, to other factors such as customer service to achieve repeat business, safety, and professionalism.

But events are not always money-gernerating activities. Events can be for promoting a new product, networking, recognition through awards, to have a good time, to participate with music, or to raise the profile of a charitable cause. My point is that revenue is not always the priority objective for an organiser to achieve, although it is true that every event needs to cover its costs. Turow (2005) writes of the influence of marketers on the culture production in the United States, for instance, where newspaper and magazine publishers realised the achievement of profits from advertisers to enable low subscriptions to readers. This in turn developed the notion that content (the art product) is cheap, or even free, because advertisers support it. I can relate this to my insider observations of events in hotels because it has become the notion that hotels are the place for cheap events. This perception has developed because hotels have every

resource onsite such as staff, washrooms, decoration, bars, and technical apparatus, and so fit best for events with restricted budgets. This is one reason my clients often directed me not to place their events into a hotel.

With the socio-professional structure of events management in the UK, researchers have begun to categorise the industry in an apparent attempt to redefine the field and establish a developed event industry as a bona fide fully-evolved discipline. This can be seen in Getz and Page (2016) defining event management as an 'ology', as in 'eventology', and Bowdin *et al.* (2011) stating events are a phenomenon and that events management has emerged as an industry in its own right. This recognition has driven the UK events industry forward but the events industry in Poland is not yet at a stage of development where it is a recognised profession. Power and Scott (2004) confirm that the composition of industries involved in the creation of culture and providing social and cultural content is likely to vary between different economies and societies. Whatever the industry, the production of culture focuses on the elements that shape the systems in which they are created, distributed, evaluated, taught and preserved (Lena, 2015). Adorno (1991, cited in Curran and Morley, 2006) first used the term 'culture industry' to separate 'mass culture' which according to them is 'something like a culture that arises from the masses themselves'. Clearly the societal shift to wanting to participate with mass events such as festivals, gaming events, sports events and challenge events fits these concepts.

2.1.2 Mass Society and Culture

The study of culture nowadays gives much attention to mass culture and the analysis of popular culture whereas at one time it was a wide assumption of sociology that mass culture was inferior and required little in the way of sophisticated analysis (Tudor, 1999). It used to be considered that popular culture was adverse in the concept of mass society which meant youth culture was largely overlooked with nothing interesting about new and vibrant popular cultural forms. Events is now a recognised discipline, no doubt assisted by the rise of studies and research into

popular culture. In recent times, research in culture has begun to focus on language and the processes of communication in art, film, television, photography or fiction. According to Tudor (1999) this found a new method in the name of a scientific decoding of the workings of culture. Still, there are critics of this development of cultural studies who see it as uncritical celebration of popular culture with qualitative interviewing and participant observations being the preferred methods and 'thick description' the analytic goal.

There is an established link between mass society and media effects (Swingewood, 1997) in that modern society has become a mass society known as 'massification'. In fact, Mills (1959, p.314) states:

> *"The media tell the man in the mass who he is – they give him identity; they tell him what he wants to be – they give him aspirations; they tell him how to get that way – they give him technique; and they tell him how to feel that way even when he is not – they give him escape."*

It can be seen how live events fit with this statement by providing consumers with a sense of cultural identity and social belonging through attending a type of event or an event genre such as a festival and interacting with likeminded people. In line with the statement above, events do "tell him what he wants to be, how to get that way, tell him how to feel, and give him escape". There is little doubt that mass society has embraced the culture of events through societal and cultural events, but also sports events, business events, and entertainment events such as concerts and festivals. Within the 'mass' there are what I would call 'sub-masses' that differentiate one mass from another in the context of society. For example, tribal belonging (Raj, Walters and Rashid, 2015) which I discuss in Sections 2.1 and 2.2, is a clear definitive of sub-masses occurring with events such as Glastonbury Festival and the identity of '*Glasto's*' (Glasto Fest Feed, 2022) (see Section 2.2). Here, Tudor (1999, p.23) makes distinctions

between 'high' and 'low' culture where 'high' culture incorporates the richest and most significant expressions of human aspirations, and 'low' culture is the commercial manifestations of industrial societies pandering to the lowest forms of taste, product and mass production for the undiscriminating mass. Shils (1961) sees mass culture as a positive influence of civility and citizenship by dispersing worthwhile cultural materials far more widely through society, which events continue to do.

Clearly then, events are a form of media, and of communication: in Berners (2017, p.15) I state that 'whatever the event… an event is designed to reach people…'. My categorisation can be recognised by the closeness of events alongside the functions of media, marketing, communications, and Public Relations (PR). My viewpoint is further reinforced by observing the Poland events industry where I have noted in Section 4.2 that in Poland it is marketing and PR agencies who are offering themselves as organisers of events, but it is not 'event organisers' because they are not yet standalone. This is why the business of organising events in Poland is hidden in a blurry confusion of the media, marketing and communications sector.

It has been presumed that social actors are passive victims of the mass media (Mills, 1959) providing identity, aspirations and escape. But it can be seen how media is empowering society to participate with socio-culture through attending live events. Examples here are The Crystal Maze television programme which is now a live participative experience in both London and Manchester (the-crystal-maze.com, 2020) and has led to the phenomenon of escape room attractions; and consumers travelling to participate in events (event tourism) which otherwise might be watched on television, such as Glastonbury Festival and mega-events including the FIFA World Cup and the Olympic Games. Tudor (1999) refers to this picture as an active audience of social actors or socialised individuals who, as a consequence of their social circumstances, seek to gratify certain needs. It is a relation between individual and society, hence audience and communications media, of which events is one form, and is a growing form

around the globe and is visible with emerging territories. If the forms of culture are changing with the rise of mass society, which I believe the growth of the events sector evidences particularly in the emergence of more and more territories, Tudor (1999) observes it will have far-reaching social consequences via the mechanisms of internationalisation and institutionalisation. This is at the root of my thesis and makes my research all the more timely and relevant.

Live events are about the provision of an experience to an audience. Experience is a factor identified quite some time ago by Leavis (1952). Leavis recognises that if there is a shared experience in a community of culture, an argument can be persuasive. Although this viewpoint was in relation to readers and critics, I find it relevant to the organic growth and development of the global market for international events where the events community of culture becomes a coherent organic community with a persuasive argument for, among other things, high-culture experiences, professional levels of service, and safe events. Durkheim (1952), as well, considers society as an organism with causal and reciprocal relations between social elements leading to more effective management of social change. In fact, it is citizenship which offers the possibility of a foundation for solidarity in place of religion as a traditional powerful force of social solidarity in society (Turner and Rojek, 2001). Turner and Rojek explain that sacral bonds have been weakened by industrialisation and secularisation leading to new ways of identity and membership in modern society (Turner, 1999), which is particularly relevant with advances in technology, globalisation, the internet, and the phenomena of social media communications, influencers and 'Instagrammers'. What this means is that society has shifted the social order from cultural interests in the traditions of sacred activities of religion, and is instead finding sacral comforts from tribal belonging by participating in live event experiences: attending Glastonbury in place of the Church. This is a point made by Turner (1988) stating that the emergence of a modern, industrial civilisation involves transition from societies based

on traditional status hierarchies, to those based on market-oriented associations between strangers, and independent associations are crucial links between individuals and the state through participation in associative life to express public virtues. Although Catholicism is still prevalent in Polish society, youth culture and the mass culture is already seeking belonging to other sects or 'tribes' by moving towards participation in live events.

In summary, mass society and popular culture is a contemporary subject area for sociological study and research due to shifts in mass behavioural traits. Nowadays, youth culture is less inclined to follow the traditional pursuits of religious belonging but is seeking tribal recognition in other forms through participating in live events. Belonging to a part of society which attends a genre of event such as gaming events or Comic Con events, or a particular popular culture concert performer or festival, provides mass society with 'sub-mass' subsets for identity and belonging. This shift provides the individual with an identity, tells them who they are, who they want to be and what are their aspirations. It tells them how to get that way, how to feel that way, and an escape, and is, in fact, a redefinition of culture.

For this study, I am also considering event organisers in an emerging event industry, for which Moss-Kanter (1983) states that new ventures – organisations which are entreprenueurial and not yet institutionalised – will be devoted to developing the bureaucratic administrative apparatus to formalise and routinise: creating their art world, in other words. This process is where the events industry in Poland is currently situated whereas the UK has already moved ahead from that. Giddens (2004) studied contemporary social change and suggests informal institutionalism and low levels of bureaucracy in a contemporary culture structure. He advocates that individuals make behaviour choices affecting lifestyle among a diversity of options, to build relationships and develop body and mind. These views begin to identify how socio-professional structures take shape in a change environment, which is relevant to the emergence of a developing events industry. The problem is the variance of change attributed

to the local environment, and the gaps it causes in a global market such as that of international events.

The culture industry in the form of production structure is examined by Gapinski (2001) who applies it to theatre, opera, symphony, ballet and modern dance. He posits that culture is a service industry and the reflection of the importance of the consumer in productive activity, pointing out that a barber, doctor, or teacher cannot produce output without a customer, patient, or student. He extends the argument that an artist cannot produce output without an audience (Fuchs, 1965, cited in Gapinski, 2001). Gapinski notes also that each audience member receives a cultural experience from being an attendee, which fits exactly with what an event is for: to provide the consumer with an experience. Attending to receive an experience is a growing social trend of meeting consumer expectations at creative events, with Raj, Walters and Rashid (2015) stating that events are experiential, interactive, targeted and relational. These characteristics, they state, are highly appropriate and desirable, and are consistent with other forms of communication and engagement within the wider and growing field of experiential marketing, being actual consumer experience with the brand, product, or service. In Berners (2017) I go as far as saying that functionality and practicality do not reach far enough because clients want something more, and their guests expect it. This is the driver of creative experiences in the events industry in both the UK and Poland, but the former location has encountered this demand and has responded to it whereas the latter location is in the process of encountering the demand and has yet to recognise it.

The Market of Consumer Demand

Meeting the demand for live creative experiences is the job of events organisers because cultural products and services are designed to make profit from wide audience appeal, thus cultural producers will shape their output to fit the needs and interests of a target audience

(Smith and Riley, 2009). This is another motivator towards achieving the heterogeneity of events to meet the spectrum of all demand in the global market for international events and become standardised by narrowing the differences or gaps to which an event tourist is exposed. Bourdieu (1984; 2010) writes that of all the objects offered for consumers' choice, there are three zones of taste: legitimate taste (the taste for legitmate works), middle-brow taste (the minor works of major arts), and popular taste (arts devalued by popularisation) which fits well with the culture of events because of the need to attract consumers to engage with the wide range of available live experiences that will suit all tastes and interests. Indeed, the range of events available to consumers is geared to invest emotional energies and economic resources (Rojek, 2013) across the spectrum of cultural tastes from mass hednoistic music festivals to exclusive art exhibitions.

Although I address Tourism and Events in Section 2.2, it is worthwhile noting here the influence of event tourism on the wider culutre of events. Consumers in the pursuit of experiences during their available leisure time become leisure tourists, which Smith and Richards (2013) describe as the co-existence of both culture and tourism. Ferdinand and Kitchin (2017) agree that a significant proportion of tourists would be travelling for the specific purpose of attending events and the express purpose of experiencing culture (Richards, 2007, cited in Ferdinand & Kitchin, 2017) which has given rise to 'cultural tourism'. I would argue that cultural tourism, whether home or abroad, has developed an 'art world' itself according to Becker's (1984) definitions, which is supported by Gillespie and Hennessey (2016) who identify service industries (including hotels, hospitality, tourism and events) getting involved in the product culture through global marketing activities. Gillespie and Hennessey (2016) note that some firms are merely responding to orders from abroad which can be event clients abroad, and domestic clients wishing for or needing a foreign location for their event. This reveals a pluarility of approaches in organisers reaching these markets by their immersion into the

foreign marketplace through targeted marketing or direct visits, or by drawing foreign planners to the home destination to place their events, or attracting consumers to travel to attend events. Ferdinand and Kitchin (2017) underpin this point by stating how events are at the centre of experiential marketing strategies on a global context transforming brands into memorable and inspirational experiences. They also note the growth of international events due to globalisation and the rapid increase in the linkage and need-of-belonging between people, places, communities, countries and markets.

Rojek (2013) identifies how events provide the means for escapism as a way of establishing and reinforcing group identity. At corporate level, every major firm must compete in a global marketplace, according to Gillespie and Hennessey (2016) who understand that some consumer needs and wants are converging across national markets and are not restricted by borders alone. They appreciate also that students of events management will face international competitors at home and will need to understand and apply the principles of global marketing. It is clear, then, that researchers recognise the global events market and its transience as a joined-up socio-cultural community. But, I have not found any recognition in current available literature of the disparities or gaps that exist in different locations at different stages of development of an event industry serving the one marketplace for international events designed for attracting event tourists. My study and findings, then, will bridge that gap in research and might inspire further research activities into this important area of events.

<u>The Cultural Impact of Events</u>

Other than the impacts of events industries in different locations being at different stages of development, there are other impacts of events now being considered, whereas impact was at one time only measured by enonomic indicators (Quinn, 2013). Deery and Jago (2010) identify that the value of social and environmental impacts of events has become a greater priority for

both practitioners and academics. Also, Pugh and Wood (2004) identify that events have become a valuable part of the collective communities' psyche in terms of the celebration of culture and demonstrating civil pride providing social as well as economic impacts. They go on to assert it is possible for marketing strategies to make use of events strategically to bring long-term economic and social benefits to the location and its community. This must extend to global brands and the globalisation of products to consumers but appears not to consider the disparity of the process of marketing through the conduit of events being dependent on the developmental stage of the events industry in any given location. A global brand could therefore have a very successful promotion event in London but be exposed to the risk of a less successful promotion event in Warsaw. The brand managers likely might not recognise greater risk exists in one location over another, or understand what impacted the promotion event in Warsaw to not be as successful, or what they could have done to mitigate the gap. It could even happen that the global brand managers will abandon Warsaw from any future international promotion itinerary because the promotion event at that location failed to reach its objectives. This is what Douglas and Wildavsky (1982, p.16) refer to as hidden risks whereby 'no knowedgeable indivudal would accept them'. What is worse, Douglas and Wildavsky say, is that the risks are more sinister for being kept secret, if that is the intention. From my observations, I have no evidence that risks in the context of events are hidden for intentional sinister reasons but are more likely to be hidden due to cultural and socio-professional deficiencies such as the lack of knowledge, experience, training, education, expertise and knowledge of industry best practice. However, we can be confident that there will be some instances where risks are hidden due to complacency, wilful noncompliance or for avoiding associated costs required to migitigate the risk. Regardless of whether risk is intentionally hidden or not, Douglas and Wildavsky raise the issue of voluntary and involuntary risk

differentiated by an individual's knowledge of the presence of risk and their acceptance to participate with it (discussed further in 6.3).

Another driver of consumer participation with international events is that consumers are better-off financially and distinguish themselves by their use of cultural, experiential and social knowledge: tribal belonging (Raj, Walters and Rashid, 2015). It appears consumers are seeking the same event experiences wherever they are in the world, but cannot be being fulfilled wherever they are because the mobiles, apps and social media is global but the event experience is not, dependent on the consumer's location. According to Raj, Walters and Rashid (2015) cultural shifts in society means product output must adapt as individuals are searching for original consumer experiences. They state there is a relationship between sports, economics and events driven by advances in technology such as mobiles, apps, and social media engagement. This means that the output of events must keep up with fast-moving trends and advances in technology which are more consistent on an international level than events industries are from location to location. It would be unrealistic to expect the global events industry to align with consumers' expectations of other cultural and social products such as technology, but the global events community and producers of international events need to be aware of the impacts of disparity of consistency in a marketplace where consumer products and services are driving consumer expectations for reliability and consistency. In this respect, events are at risk of falling behind other consumer products and could quickly be seen as outdated in comparison to fast-moving technical advances. I would caveat this point with the unique advantage that events have for providing consumers with an experience they would not get without participating with the live event.

2.1.3 Policy Transfer

Policy transfer or 'lesson drawing' is 'a process in which knowledge about policies, administrative arrangements, institutions etc. in one time and/or place is used in the

development of policies, administrative arrangements and institutions in another time and/or place' (Dolowitz and Marsh, 1996, cited by Evans and Davies, 1999, p.361). Policy transfer is a common practice because, as Rose (1991, cited by Dolowitz and Marsh, 1996) identifies, every country has problems, and each think that its problems are only theirs and are abnormal, but cities, regional governments and nations – and indeed industries – can learn from how their counterparts elsewhere. Thus, policy transfer and the drawing of lessons is a key theme of my thesis between an emerging events industry and another which has already developed its practices, behaviours, and regulations. The rapid growth of communications, technology, social media, globalisation, plus the fall of Communist states has only accelerated the process of policy transfer across international borders and provided access for emerging territories to participate in the global market for international events. This is a point raised by Evans and Davies (1999) who note that processes of globalisation appear to have increased policy transfer. It also makes potential for policy transfer to be identified as a key opportunity for the pathway of an emerging events industry that can follow the wake of an already-developed events industry. Evans (2004) claims that the function of the world is becoming increasingly small due to dramatic changes in global political and economic structures and to nation states themselves. These changes, he argues, have impacted the work of public organisations directly and indirectly and created new opportunities for policy transfer. This makes my research relevant and timely as emerging events industries rapidly catch up to compete with those which have already developed. From this perspective, Evans and Davies (1999) seek to answer whether the increase in policy transfer is indeed due to globalisation processes or is it a long-term process of modernisation in the West. They determine that no serious scholar would deny that patterns of increased internationalisation have occurred with significant changes in production and patterns of economic power. These patterns are not confined to the economic arena, however, but also changing trends in culture, technology, and knowledge (Smith, 1990;

Dosi, Pavitt and Soete, 1990; Strange, 1988) all of which are relevant with the production of events.

Policy transfer can take place within nations as well as between nations (Dolowitz and Marsh, 1996). This aspect of domestic policy transfer relies on professional associations to nudge the socio-professional culture towards lesson drawing. This is another discussion area of my thesis in that I have identified the potential for organisers to recognise the need for, and to create, their learning from other events professionals – what I have called in this thesis the 'self-learning environment', and is referred to by Evans and Davies (1999, p.378) as 'the emergence of a transfer network'. The self-learning environment is voluntary, not coercive, because there are no regulations or professional associations to drive organisers in policy transfer, but Dolowitz and Marsh (1996) note that there is value in negative lessons being drawn about how not to do things. I have discussed this value of learning in the context of the role of tragedy in Chapters 2.0, 6.0, and 7.0.

There is also value in the creation, design and development of a socio-professional structure that organisers, as entrepreneurs or experts in the field, can build a nationwide or international network of contacts as a source of ideas and inspiration (Rose, 1993). Currently, this seems to be an organic structural growth in the field of events in both the UK and Poland. In fact, it is left up to the individual organiser to decide to grow their contacts and learning. However, it should rather be a predetermined or strategic requirement that is driven by professional associations, qualifications, or the law, to encourage organisers – particularly in emerging events industries – to conduct policy transfer and draw lessons from other organisers. In the developed events industry in the UK, the abundance of professional associations has the reverse effect and is fragmenting the industry by the provision of sub- and quasi- socio-professional structures: wheels within wheels, as it were. In this case, UK organisers are conducting policy

transfer in smaller circles and there is no joined-up single accreditation body or professional association to standardise practices and cohere the UK events industry.

In other areas of commerce, such as banking, Rose (1993) points out that there are intergovernmental and international organisations which encourage exchanges of ideas. Here, he mentions the European Community, the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development), and the World Bank. In fact, the European Community promotes comparison so that member states become aware of what their competitors are doing. There is no such international organisation in events management performing the function of knowledge exchange and policy transfer, although some imply they do so.

It should be considered what is being transferred, which Dolowitz and Marsh (1996, pp.349-350) identify as policy goals, structure and content; policy instruments or administrative techniques; institutions; ideology; ideas, attitudes and concepts; and negative lessons. Clearly, there are some areas here which do fit with events and would benefit organisers as socio-professional actors performing in an emerging events industry. Dolowitz and Marsh (1996) go on to define from where lessons are drawn. Here, they identify the past to learn what has worked but also what not to repeat – a method of learning (from one's own experiences) that I have discussed throughout my thesis. The obvious problem with this is that in an emerging events industry there is limited past to look at and learn from. Also, organisers in a young industry are not inclined to look at the past, know to learn from it, or be encouraged or trained to do so. This is evident in my primary data capture where organisers in Poland, particularly, are unaware of the value of after-event evaluation as a learning and improvement tool, so they do not do it. A further barrier is that searching the past is subjective evaluation which is open to many interpretations, and current situations may not reflect past situations, anyhow. Additional to these issues, Evans (2004) notes that policy transfer can be a progressive learning activity only if it is compatible with the values of the recipient and can be culturally assimilated

through comprehensive evaluation. He recognises that in most instances, locally sensitive solutions must be found to local problems. The cultural differences between the UK longstanding democratic society and that of the post-communist Poland society are stark and get in the way of policy transfer and learning – I have encountered this blockage in the field, which I have described in Section 4.1.

To summarise, policy transfer and drawing lessons is a valuable and necessary tool for narrowing gaps in the global market for international events. The processes of globalisation and other socio-professional factors such as advances in communications and technology, make policy transfer easier and more widespread. This is helpful for emerging event industries. However, cultural and societal differences hinder the process of policy transfer. Plus, the absence of a socio-professional structure which encourages or requires organisers to conduct policy transfer initiatives, such as creating their self-learning environment, means organisers perform autonomously without consistency or coherence. This is particularly true in underdeveloped emerging events industries, but even in the UK developed industry with its abundance of professional associations, still there is not one overall body to encourage policy transfer. This means policy transfer is limited to smaller networks within the wider industry and is in fact a cause of fragmentation in the UK events industry.

<u>The Leisure Origins of Events</u>

There is history in the analysis of consumer leisure behaviour, however. The Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) led the way in theoretical approaches in the analysis of popular culture, subcultures and mass media (Rowe, 2017) but Taylor (2012) steers the discourse to leisure management involving two interdisciplinary concepts – leisure and management, and that leisure has been analysed by economists, sociologists, geographers, political scientists, philosophers and management scientists. Taylor (2012) identifies that the

management of leisure incorporates planning (products, services, facilities and other infrastructure that give people leisure); managing (the available resources to produce high quality leisure services); monitoring (to improve the form of participation and enjoyment of leisure activities); and contributing (to impacts of sport and leisure on people's health, quality of life and sense of community). Though it appears to be a homogenous approach that cannot address the needs of a heterogenous industry and the spectrum of diversity which is events.

The evolvement of event management from the origins of leisure and sport management is hardly surprising. Horne and Manzenreiter (2006) identify that social aspects of sport can be considered from most classical, modern and postmodern sociological theoretical perspectives. They attribute Pierre Bourdieu alongside Norbert Elias and Eric Dunning as the few leading mainstream sociologists to have taken sport seriously. Although it was Bourdieu (1990, p.156) who declared: 'the sociology of sport: it is disdained by sociologists and despised by sportspeople'. Perhaps this is why Beech, Kaiser and Kaspar (2014) state emphatically that there is no identifiable body of knowledge and skills that defines event management as a separate field of study. This, they argue, is due to the heterogeneity of the subject area, which although has commonality in areas such as strategic planning, budgeting, controlling, event operations and project management, there is still high variance in management, setting, stakeholders and customers. Events is a wide industry which seems to be a fact that was lost when 'managing events' was hidden in the wider genre of entertainment and the sub-genres of leisure and hospitality. Now, events management is visisble as a discipline in its own right and it is clearer to identify its broadness and range. Ever-upward demands from clients and consumers call for ever more creative events, events with more thrill and perceived risk, events that will stand out when marketing a product in an increasingly-crowded marketplace, and for events to happen in more diverse and unusual venues or locations. It is the opposite of a shrinking discipline, wherever the location.

Social and consumer changes aside, event literature is still dominated by the economic impacts and legacies of large-scale, highly visible mega-events (Gruneau and Horne, 2016; Armstrong, Giulianotti and Hobbs, 2017) which are also known as 'hallmark' or 'marquee' events. Bowdin *et al*. (2011) define hallmark events as those that become identified with the town, city or region such as the Carnival in Rio, the Oktoberfest in Munich, and the Chelsea Flower Show in London. They define mega-events as so large that they affect whole economies and reverberate in the global media and include the Olympic Games, the FIFA Would Cup and World Fairs. For the objective of this research project, I am not including mega-events because they import know-how with their event infrastructure, as would a world-tour or visiting circus, so they are not representative of the local event industry. Plus, mega-events come with exaggerated factors such as a heightened threat of terrorism (Armstrong, Giulianotti and Hobbs, 2017) which again does not fit with my research of localised events industries. My rationale for not including mega-events is further reinforced by definitions from Jago and Shaw (1998) that mega-events are one-time major events of an international scale, and by Berridge (2011) who sees the direct consequences of cities holding mega-events as having mainly economic quantitative impacts.

Stepping away from mega-events then, and retreating to the origins of events in sport, Giulianotti (2004) explores the plausibility of ideas and contribution to the social understanding of sport. Giulianotti provides chapters to reflect the major theoretical pathways in the modern social reading of sport including classical theorists such as Marx, Weber, Durkheim and Freud; North American contributions from Merton, Mills and Goffman; contemporary theories of Giddens, Elias and Bourdieu; and postmodern viewpoints of Foucault and Baudrillard. His collection of chapters, Giulianotti hopes, will concur that an intellectual exchange exists between sport studies and social theory. He recognises that the appeal of developing social theory in sports engagement lies in the chance of a surprise result. The same must be true of other types of events, as sports are just one genre of the event discipline – albeit a genre in itself

with wide range and appeal – but still sits within a discpline which includes product promotion, industry awards, trade exhibitions, consumer exhibitions, music festivals, cutlural festivals, entertainment, fashion, through to weddings, and now hybrid and gaming events.

According to Ingham (n.d., cited in Giulianotti, 2004) Marx, Weber, Durkheim, and Freud are thought of whenever theorising sport's relationship to long-term cultural development. Whereas Goffman was always observing and making field notes whether he was in a Las Vegas hotel elevator or watching the public's response to a traffic accident (Birrell and Donnelly n.d., cited in Giulianotti, 2004). Sporting events included, the origins of gatherings for events can be traced to cultural displays of social ritual with symbolisms and artefacts providing meaning (Bladen *et al.*, 2018), such as with weddings where costumes, service and use of food and drink, speeches and behaviours denote the societal meanings of the culture. Bladen *et al*. (2018) point to age-old expressions of human social activities as being the origin of modern-day events which helps to provide context, citing early religious festivals such as the seven feasts of Israel where the nation gathered seven times in religious celebration to demonstrate customs from feasts to sacrifices. The pathway from these origins can be seen in how events are managed today when observing the crowd-safety issues at the Islamic pilgrimages to Mecca, for example, or the birth of the Olympic Games which has evolved from the religious observance to Greek gods and is now a celebration of sporting prowess and the world's biggest single-city cultural event (Armstrong, Giulianotti and Hobbs, 2017). Rojek (2000) supports this by emphasising how events do not simply commemorate a mythical event but reactualise it in which time is circular because of the effect of regenerating time through festivals and celebrations. I appreciate this viewpoint because events have the potential to mark time, such as the origins of Woodstock and Glastonbury festivals for example, which today attempt to replicate or recapture the cultural and social *Zeitgeist* as noted by CCCS (Rowe, 2017). This is where Glastonbury is still succeeding its brand – by defining time with the use of headline acts

of a particular year, from T.Rex, David Bowie, Neil Diamond, Shirley Bassey, and Dolly Parton through to Supergrass, Kylie Minogue, Billie Eilish and Dua Lipa (Glastonbury, 2022).

Getz and Page (2016) agree with CCCS that event studies are largely located in social science as the subject area seeks to develop knowledge and understanding by building theories derived from empirical observations. They state that the resulting theories help explain the complexities of the real world and guide further research activities, as I intend mine will too. In the treatment of events as providing experiences for people, Getz and Page (2016) say that the theory is developed in social psychology and leisure studies to understand what event experiences are and how they may be constructed. Thus, literature leads me to the core of what events are about: providing opportunities for consumers to attend to receive an 'experience' through the use of patterns of understanding reality – so-called 'personal and social constructs' (Kelly, 1991).

Such opportunities for engaging with these experiences are provided via genres of events categorised by Bladen *et al.* (2018) as sporting events, mega-events, public and third sector events, corporate events, and cultural events and festivals. Kelly's (1991) argument is that personal constructs are created by an individual's experiences to understand reality and chart a course of behaviour. For example, when a person attends an entertainment event, such as a concert or festival, their expectation is to have a fun and rewarding experience with likeminded people in a social setting. Whereas when they attend a funeral they expect a sad experience and will behave accordingly to the social reality of this event. It can be seen how events are important in determining socio-cultural behaviours and serve consumer expectations whatever the occasion dictates in whichever location it is taking place. The question of my thesis is whether it is being done well, and safely, for all event consumers, for all occasions, in all locations in the one global marketplace for international events.

Getz and Page (2016) extend the social need for events by considering consumption of all kinds to be the social norm which leads to massive expenditure on entertainment events and driving the need for theory on needs, motives, preferences, and constraints to attending events. They do not, however, discuss variances, gaps, disparities nor how an events industry takes shape. But, Getz and Page (2016) do note that some people become highly engaged in sports, the arts, and lifestyle or leisure interests and are therefore more committed to events, which they identify as 'serious leisure' – a genre of events that is of particular interest to event designers and marketers, including the increased use of social media. It appears the field of research is still multidisciplinary and draws on established disciplines such as tourism, sport and leisure, which Evans (2015) tidily encapsulates as 'tourism, hospitality and events management – an integrated approach'. I do recognise the merits of adopting a multidisciplinary approach with all the benefits it brings from cross-cultural teaching, studying, experiences, and skillsets. However, events management does require specialisms that are distinct from closely-related disciplines such as tourism and hospitality. To meet the formal education requirements for teaching the specialisms of managing events, universities in the UK have distanced their events courses from those of tourism and notably hospitality. I find this in itself is unhelpful because students of events management do require those multidisciplinary teachings and skills from closely-related disciplines, which are relatable and transferrable skillsets. Here, I am referring to qualities such as customer service, quality standards, communication and team-leadership skills. Current senior-level organisers in the UK draw on their qualifications and experiences gained in related fields such as catering, hospitality and hotel management, whereas organisers in Poland arrive to the events industry from unrelated fields without the transferrable competencies and skillsets. Events, then, should not be considered a standalone discipline never to be associated with tourism, leisure, catering or hospitality, but should be treated as a hybrid in the wider cultural profession so that emerging events industries draw professionals from

related fields. The provision of hospitality is required at every event, after all, and most events attract consumer tourists or client tourists to the destination where the event is taking place. To facilitate this, universities should consider providing core generic courses at entry-level that fit the wider context of 'hospitality' with soft skills such as communication and customer service, and later in the student journey, may divide into options for specialisms in tourism, hospitality, leisure, or events.

To conclude this section of the review of current literature, events are seen to have emerged from ritual occasions to be a standalone discipline. Authors are positioning events as a valuable part of the collective communities' psyche which is being driven by socio-cultural and tehnological advances causing glocalisation, the feel for tribal belonging, and the demand for live experiences. For the purposes of this study, however, I am interested in how an events industry shapes its socio-professional cultural construct. A culture production art world for events has taken shape in the UK and has already shown signs of beginning to emerge in Poland to form a habitus whereby a collaborative community of practice can take place. From this, acculturation through learning from other actors in the professional community can develop. In the next section, I will extend the cultural context of live events to the wider consumer market of tourism because people travel to attend events to participate with a live experience: the experience economy. Then, in section 2.3, I will explore cultural differences in the approach to risk and the notion of fate.

2.2 Tourism and Events

Tourism and Events is a necessary theme for me to research to identify how organisers in London and Warsaw differ in reaching and satisfying the market for event tourists who travel within the global marketplace for international events as part of the experience economy. The scope of my research into international events necessitates the fact that consumers travel across

borders to attend events on a journey to escape from everyday life (Rojek, 2000). Also, event planners can choose, or may need, to place their events in foreign destinations, so there is consumer tourism and client tourism to consider. Further to these, all my participant organisers in both London and Warsaw are involved with event tourism because they host events for foreign consumers and international clients, and they are at landmark venues in their respective capital city which inescapably draws tourists, event tourists, and international events. For me to identify gaps between the UK and Poland, I need to understand the behaviours and practices of organisers in the two destinations in the same market for international event tourists by the ways they reach, penetrate and deliver to foreign markets.

Tourism is no longer a rigidly confined genre because it blurs its borders with leisure, travel and events. Urry and Larsen (2011) attribute this to the processes of globalisation and the internet having transformed social life bringing people together in social interactions and belongings, such as through events that provide a sense of tribal belonging or unification of identity. Armstrong, Giulianotti and Hobbs (2017) allude to this when discussing youth subcultural membership becoming a mono-class society integral to cultural transmission, and Raj, Walters and Rashid (2015) concur that consumers distinguish themselves by their use of cultural, experiential and social knowledge. An easy and contemporary example to draw upon to demonstrate the social thirst for tribal belonging is Glastonbury Festival-goers referring to themselves as '*Glasto's*' (Glasto Fest Feed, 2022) to identify with other *Glasto's* who attend or have ever attended Glastonbury Festival. This has evolved a subculture of music festival-goers who identify with the genre and may attend other music festivals, sometimes internationally such as Coachella in California, but will always return to Glastonbury Festival because they are '*Glasto's*'. For many events the provision and sale of branded tour merchandise generates additional revenues by tapping into the consumer need to demonstrate tribal belonging by evidencing they attended the event and gained access to the official

merchandise which they can thereafter wear or brandish as belonging to that 'tribe'. Cairncross (2001) describes the bringing together of people as the 'death of distance' for many social groups as they become closer in a global society and there is a notable shift from a solid fixed modernity to a more fluid and speeded-up 'liquid modernity' (Bauman, 2000).

Getz and Page (2016) note that leisure, tourism and hospitality are closely related to events because of the importance of planned events as 'products' or 'attractions' and that events are consumed in the leisure time of tourists. Not all people will participate in tourism, however. Cooper (2008) identifies three components which make up the total demand for tourism: actual demand being the number of participants in tourism and the most commonly used statistic when referring to levels of tourism; suppressed demand being those who wish to travel but for some valid reason do not; and no demand being those who do not wish to travel or are unable to travel. Even so, Roncak (2019) recognises a growing rise in city tourism due to the social media boom and the evolution of the concept of the shared economy. Largely, levels of tourism is measured by the demand and travel habits of individuals (Cooper, 2008). Outside individual or personal tourism there is corporate demand which is referred to in the events industry as MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions). MICE is a widely used acronym developed in the business tourism literature of the 1980s (Bladen *et al.*, 2018). Meetings and Conferences refers to bringing together groups of people with common interests; Incentives includes trips and travel, training, team building and away-days; Exhibitions are target market consumer events which can be business (trade), press or public, or a mix of all three markets where manufacturers or retailers display a selection of their products (Bladen *et al.*, 2018). There are limitations with MICE because the largest market, the USA, does not use the acronym. However, there is value to it identifying a distinct sector of the events marketplace because it differentiates corporate event business from leisure events and personal events. This can be important to identify the specific needs of this stakeholder group and is helpful for

separating business rates from other event rates and for distinct pricing structures such as the all-inclusive Daily Delegate Rate (DDR) preferred by MICE agencies.

Whether people travel for leisure or corporate interests, Urry and Larsen (2011) state that what motivates people to travel as a tourist is to receive a pleasurable experience that is different from typical encounters in their everyday life. This is understandable for lesiure tourists and event tourists, but corporate event clients also aspire to provide a pleasurable experience for their attendees, whether the event is for pleasure or business purposes. For example, if delegates are invited to attend a business conference in Monaco, there is a perceived experience to motivate their attendance or purchase desicsion. Ferdinand & Kitchin (2017) agree by describing the international approach to events management as sharing a focus on other international activities such as tourism and international sponsorship, and are concerned with differences between cultures and countries. They argue that an international approach to events management requires an engagement with international activities, cultural differences and global issues. And Desmond (1999) identified that live performance is very common within tourism, although she was referring to live performance in the context of bodily displays in cultural settings such as the Maori war dances, Argentine tangos, the Brazilian samba, and Hula dancing in Hawaii.

The Motivation of Tourists

Ooi (2005, cited in Getz and Page, 2016) moves the discourse to leisure theory by identifying how tourists consume, evaluate and experience tourism products and that travel generates positive experiences resulting in learning, happiness and nice memories. This leads to Urry (2002) discussing why people leave their normal place of work or residence to consume unnecessary goods and services which deliver pleasurable experiences in a situation of liveness. Indeed, my own distilled definition of events is 'any live happening' (Berners, 2013,

p.19; Berners, 2017, p.8; Berners, 2019, p.3) which encapsulates the purpose of a live event for whatever reason it is happening. Urry (2002b) on the other hand differentiates the forms of travel by considering physical travel (people on the move) against virtual travel (in real time online), imaginative travel (through images of places encountered on radio and television) and object travel (the physical movement of objects brought to consumers). Urry questions why physical travel is increasing in society when there are significant advances in imaginative and virtual travel. And with computer communications why it is only possible to sense an event by physical travel to that place. This is a theme taken further by Williams, Ferdinand and Bustard (2019) who look at whether Algorithmic Word of Mouth (aWOM) could emerge to be the dominant source of information for tourist decision-making. Urry, however, concludes that travel results in 'moments of physical proximity to particular peoples, places or events' (Urry, 2002a, p.258) which concurs with the point I have mentioned about tribal belonging and *'Glasto's'*. Events do provoke physical travel for the consumer to attend and experience a live happening, but events also fit with imaginative travel, such as festivals and concerts being broadcast on television and radio. And there is a degree of object travel in events, such as touring exhibitions, artworks, installations, and museum exhibits.

Physical travel to attend an event for the experience it delivers is widely known as 'event tourism' (which I analyse in section 5.1). Event tourism includes travel to sites of industry and work, pilgrimages to religious sites and an enormous array of centres or attractions (Urry, 2002b). Tourists search for something new or different, so anything is potentially a tourist attraction and can become a sacred object of the tourist ritual, a process referred to by MacCannell (1999, cited in Urry, 2002b) as 'sacralisation' and can be the site of a unique mega-event (Roche, 2000). London is well placed for event tourism through its enhancement attractions such as landmarks, history, culture, and the Royal Family. Warsaw, too, attracts tourism for its rich heritage, history, culture and architecture but less-so for events. However,

both capital city destinations have hosted mega-events which capitalise on event tourism, such as the Olympic Games in London and the Euro Football Tournament in Warsaw, both in 2012. Major events such as these (and many other events that are not so 'mega') are placed by event planners into city centre or capital city locations for existing infrastructure and ease of travel logistics such as airports, metro systems, buses and abundance of taxis, and will encourage event tourists to extend their stay whilst at that city destination, therefore increasing tourist spend. This happened with me when I organised a worldwide album launch to happen in Italy and I scouted the Amalfi coast to Naples for the location before being forced to settle on Rome for its infrastructure, transport, and availability of hotel accommodation.

As I showed in Chapter 1, destination is a key factor for an event planner to decide where to place their event, but destination is also a decisive element for motivating event tourists to attend. Urry (2002b) describes the tourist experience as searching for pleasurable experiences that are out of the ordinary from everyday life in some way. He points out these can be ordinary cultural or social elements of other people's lives such as visiting a communist country to experience the routines of life under that regime. Or they can be extraordinary objects such as a painting which may not be indistinguishable from another if it were not for the name of the artist making the painting unique and thus to experience viewing an extraordinary artwork. But Gerritsen and Van Olderen (2014) warn that the experience must live up to the promise otherwise the social value of the experience concept will become devalued. This is a concern for the global marketplace for international events where event tourists are travelling across borders in the expectation of receiving ever-upward experiences but will in reality face variations in quality, service and satisfaction depending on the location of the event and the stage of development of the events industry at that destination. Gerritsen and Van Olderen (2014) argue that the social devaluation of the experience economy is already set in motion, is irreversible, and will become eroded and unusable at some point because global-oriented

consumers are more demanding. Berridge (2012) conducted a study which underlines that argument by providing evidence of a disjunction between an organiser's understanding of the concept of experience and those of the consumers. This could present a problem for events in London if there is a perception that it has been seen and done in London so the consumer might decide to travel to an event happening elsewhere. For Warsaw it presents an opportunity to drive event creativity upwards to provide experiences not yet encountered by consumers. However, if Warsaw is not creative enough to be competitive in the global market for international events, it will satisfy only domestic consumers for a limited time, but not attract event tourists. If this becomes the case, Warsaw will not compete on the international circuit for events and will likely be considered as a lower tier, if at all. It also means Warsaw event organisers must meet that ever-upward demand, but might not be able to do so.

Upward expectations of consumers is a recurring theme with events, and organisers are under pressure to search for new and creative ways to meet ever-growing consumer demands. According to Poulsson and Kale (2004) experiences create value for consumers by being perceived as personally relevant and including elements of novelty, surprise, learning, and engagement. Creating an experience is essentially a marketing tool to capture consumer interest, participation and to generate revenue, which is what the experience economy is all about. It is imperative to deliver the promised experience to the consumer so they have their expectations fulfilled. But, the expectations of tourist consumers will differ between the UK and Poland because expectations are built from previous experiences (Mackellar, 2014) and the availability of choice – both of which are wider in the UK than Poland. Becker (1984) recognises how consumers are trained through their experiences which drives consumer demand and expectations. This presents a further issue for emerging events industries, such as that of Poland, when competing in the global market for international events because event tourists will have ever-higher expectations gained from participating in the experience

economy at advanced destinations, such as in London, causing Poland to slip ever-further behind in its provision of creative events.

In experience analysis, Berridge (2011) discusses experience as a complex series of relational components that are not uniform during the length of time it occurs, nor the same for all those involved. This means there are series of complex multi-variables for organisers to cope with during the lifecycle of an event, however short that event may be. As well as this, participant consumers will have varied expectations throughout their journey of experiencing an event. Because of this, Rossman (2003, cited in Berridge, 2011, p.182) proposes for those who are engaged in producing experiences to understand the phenomena they are dealing with to understand how humans engage in and experience an encounter or engagement. Because experiences have to be designed, developed and delivered by organisers, applying the Symbolic Interactionist (SI) approach, as pioneered by Goffman (Berridge, 2011, p.182) can assist in the understanding of how individuals experience leisure as it is a theory which deals with the construction of social reality through the activities of individuals by recognising that any reality is constructed, as are events, to explore the levels and types of interactions that take place in any given environment. This is about understanding how consumers experience the occasions they participate in because SI is a tool which examines human behaviour in face-to-face interactions, and this forms the mass of leisure, which are also the ingredients that go into making an event.

<u>Service Quality</u>

Where there appears discrepancy between consumer expectation and what is received, is known as service quality (Bebko, 2000) and can be measured on the SERVQUAL scale (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, 1988) to assess gaps in consumer perceptions of service quality in retail and service industries (the SERVQUAL model is shown in Appendix A). Event

organisers in the UK events industry largely understand that gaps between consumer expectations and the actual experience they receive will result in complaints, although Berridge (2012, p.21) recognises the difficulty for organisers delivering consumer satisfaction within a 'multiphasic, multisensory event environment'. This further underpins events are a service rather than a product because events are delivered in a pseudo-socio setting with all its variables, whereas a product is delivered to the consumer with limited or no such variables and is thus easier to achieve consumer satisfaction.

The understanding by UK organisers of gaps between consumer expectations and actual experience potentially derives from the increase in formal education in managing events which will include the subjects of customer service and event design. Events education in the UK teaches future organisers to welcome complaints as learning experiences for correction, prevention and solution, and UK organisers will likely have experience of the causes of complaints, particularly if the organiser has experience in a related field such as hospitality, leisure, or tourism. In Poland, however, formal education in events is not available and organisers tend not to have a background in a related field which is perhaps why I have observed in Poland that complaints are unwelcome and handled reactively, defensively, or dismissively, rather than preventatively. Although the SERVQUAL model is concerned with gaps between consumer expectations and the delivery of services – which may be helpful in the UK domestic context – it will not address gaps between expectations and services received in one location from another. This presents a problem because event tourists are travelling beyond national borders and are exposed to the gaps between what they expect and the experience they actually receive. Event tourists – clients and consumers – will not know gaps exist, what they are, what might be the impacts, and where they differ from location to location wherever they are travelling to attend an event.

Events are recognised by Bowdin *et al*. (2011) as being a service rather than a product because services must be experienced to be consumed. This is key because the delivery and consumption of an event are inseparable so there must be immediate recovery if poor service occurs and consumer expectations are not being met (Bowdin *et al*., 2011). Events certainly fit with the four characteristics of service identified by Gronroos (1988, p.10), that services are mainly intangible; services are a series of activities rather than 'things'; services are to some extent produced and consumed simultaneously; and to some extent the consumer participates in the production process. It is important both to identify events as being a service and that the consumer has an expectation of that service because as soon as a country reaches a certain level of affluence the demand for services shifts to experiences, according to Boswijk, Thijssen and Peelen (2007). This upward demand for experiences drives competition and forces organisers to find new ways of creating greater experiences to attract event tourists. I observed this in the UK marketplace where clients are demanding ever-more creative events in more unusual venues and locations to either satisfy the upward expectations of their guests who have previous experiences to be surpassed, or to outdo the creativity of competitors' events. In fact, an organiser or event agency will win or lose jobs depending on whether their pitch is more creative in a competitive bid against other organisers or agencies.

The Event Destination

It is true that since joining the EU in 2004 Poland has displayed obvious signs of rapid upward affluence. Between 1992 to 2013 GDP per capita in Poland grew twice as fast than the most developed EU countries (Gomułka, 2016) and the European Commission forecast growth of Poland GDP to be 5.1% in 2022 (*Poland | European Commission*, no date) which compares to a forecast growth of UK GDP of 1.6% for the same period. Even so, Poland is only just evidencing the shift from goods and services to an experience economy, so transition is not driven only by fiscal affluence as suggested by Boswijk, Thijssen and Peelen (2007). Post-

communist democratic governments instigated change in 1990 with the aim of creating market economies requiring market reforms, pace of change, sequence of change and international assistance to support change (Lipton *et al.*, 1990). But Lenski, Nolan and Lenski (2014) refer to the process of change as 'socio-cultural evolution' resulting from a society gaining new information and new technology.

Poland's rapid shift might be due to de Kadt and Williams's (1976) explanation how evolving societies take on a new character by the constant requirement to adjust to changes induced by the evolution of a host society – in Poland's case it is European society. Ward *et al.* (2010, p.26) offer the term 'acculturation' for changes occurring from continuous contact between groups of individuals of differing cultural origins. They see it as a dual process affecting the members of two or more cultural groups as each adapts to the presence of the other. Acculturation focuses on individual-level changes resulting from intercultural contact and is distinct from enculturation which relates to the learning of a culture's values, beliefs and norms during development. Different again, is cultural change, which is change in a culture resulting from innovation, invention and discovery (Ward *et al.*, 2010). Each of these terms are relevant to event tourism as the societal changes they define drives the demand for heterogeneous events be it for entertainment purposes, cultural exchange and learning, knowledge transfer and networking, or marketing and corporate needs. I view it as the opportunity for new experiences which attracts tourists to travel to foreign destinations as they become exposed to what is on offer there such as the culture, heritage, architecture, attractions, nature, events and even the weather.

Getz and Page (2016) go as far to suggest tourism in fact relies on events and that locations attract tourists because of events. This is a view shared by Bowdin *et al.* (2011) arguing that events create profile for destinations with one of the most important impacts being the tourism revenue generated by an event. They affirm that an attendee to an event will likely spend on

travel, accommodation, and goods and services in the host location with considerable positive financial impact to the local economy. It is also a consideration as to how the media coverage of an event can enhance the profile of the host location with longer-term impacts on tourism image and visits (Bowdin, *et al*., 2011). For these reasons, many researchers and academics accept that events management is co-operative with the disciplines of tourism and hospitality. But Gelder and Robinson (2009) challenge what is understood in the field of sociology in tourism because of the limited underpinning theory specific to the events industry despite its emergence as an academic field. Even so, tourism marketing has already adapted to the impact of events upon locations and destinations with the top 10 UK event agencies turning over £340.1m (Conference & Incentive Travel, 2018). Getz and Page (2016) discuss the experience economy and how the corporate world has developed experiential marketing to commercialise the experience economy. They explain this as a two-way relationship between consumers and businesses, which is what events are designed to do. I point out in Berners (2017) that events are designed to either reach people or to make money, which is a definition that could of course be applied to the core objective of marketing. This raises the question of whether it is consumers searching for experiences who are driving the experience economy, or the marketing of experiences which is driving consumers to choose to travel to events.

Attracting tourists to a destination is a concept discussed by Zukin (1991) who appears not to welcome the merits. She argues that drawing the sociological, geographical, economic and cultural impacts of the competitive edge of urban landscapes shifting from industrial to cultural capital is creating a crisis of authenticity in destination culture. She considers it as the 'Disneyfication' of locations losing their identify for the sake of being attractive to tourists who, among other things, seek familiarity in brands such as H&M and Starbucks (Zukin, 2010). Smith and Robinson (2009) agree that the increasing dominance of global brands has contributed to the globalisation of tourism, cultures and economies. However, Zukin's field of

study was limited to New York, whereas London and Warsaw each have significant appeal for their historical, geographical, economic and cultural factors, which are stronger than retail alone. For London there is perceived identity and originality to attract tourists, especially because of the Royal Family which is highly regarded abroad. For Warsaw the social historic fabric is strong, largely due to the Second World War and the draw to visit 'dark tourism' sites such as Auschwitz and Treblinka, which is stronger than the homogenisation of retail (Zukin, 2010), regardless of the opening of Starbucks on the *Nowy Swiat* (New World street).

Kavaratzis (2004) moves the narrative from place marketing to place branding in describing the management of a city's image and the process of places becoming associated with desirable qualities perceived by target audiences. This is closer to understanding that the event experience, not the shopping experience, is what draws tourists to host locations. There is also a sub-strand of city marketing (Gerritsen and Van Olderen, 2014) where municipalities are becoming more and more professional in events policy due to the recognition that events are important for urban economy, the quality of life and the attractiveness of a city. City marketing is not to be confused with city branding which focuses on promoting a city in a distinctive way (Gerritsen and Van Olderen, 2014) which again disrupts the theory of Disneyfication of which Zukin (2010) is concerned.

We must also account for the way event tourists choose to travel which has changed globally, too. Yeoman (2012) notes that tourism distribution channels are shifting from High Street travel agents to internet direct bookings, referred to as Online Travel Agents or OTA's. He points out that when a trend becomes important it is irreversible and enters mainstream society, as has OTA's. Because of this, events (and hospitality and tourism) strive to entice consumers to return again and again (Urry and Larsen, 2011) to optimise the objective of the marketing activity. Greene (1983) writes about service deliverers having to be consumer-oriented for loyalty and cites hotel staff using guests' names to welcome them back as a two-way

recognition between staff and guests. Guest history is not a new concept but Greene explains it has little to do with a hotel's physical attributes motivating a guest to return again and again, meaning it is the social interaction. Because of the social attributes to managing events, there are high levels of interaction between event organisers and other people because events are 'live happenings' (Berners, 2013, p.19; Berners, 2017, p.8; Berners, 2019, p.3) designed to engage consumers in an experience for the purpose either of entertainment or business. I have written in Berners (2019) that an event manager is a social role in a social environment and the requirement is to be a social person, but the job is not to be social, it is to be professional and attentive; to guide and lead; to perform the function of a manager; to take control of situations that may occur; to remain aware of risk; and to manage people. Pielichaty *et al.* (2017) research the social construct of events as complex and dynamic projects organised and led by people. They discuss the connectivity of project management and event management and in doing so identify structures and teams, client management and community management as key stakeholder groups.

Bladen *et al.* (2018) bring the job of an event organiser back to the core purpose to provide experiences for attendees who cannot gain this elsewhere. Rojek (2013, p.14) calls this the human necessity for 'transcendence' beyond the limitations of private concerns and habitual regimented existence to somewhere that is above individual worries and the monotony of society. Marketing the experience is seen as 'cultural tourism' (Smith and Richards, 2013), 'event tourism' (Getz and Page, 2016), or the 'experience economy' (Pine and Gilmore, 2011) whereby consumers will travel to an event to experience a live happening outside the norm of their everyday life (Urry and Larsen, 2011). Reaching consumers' expectations is an inherent theme when attracting consumers to participate in an event experience. Wearing, Stevenson and Young (2010) suggest that a global industry has developed to satisfy the needs and expectations of tourists, and that tourism marketers seek to group tourists together according

to their preference for experiences and activities. They state this means that the development of tourist typologies has been useful in both marketing strategies and economic measurements. Cohen (1979, cited in Wearing, Stevenson and Young, 2010) defines tourist categories as recreational, diversionary, experiential, experimental and existential. However, this is not going to help Poland to develop their events industry for tourists and there are arguments against tourist typologies. Tourists move between types, for one thing. Also, the typologies are too generic and 'types' of tourists will leave many kinds of tourists outside the scope (Suvantola, 2002, cited in Wearing, Stevenson and Young, 2010), and typologies neglect the voices of the tourist (Wearing and Wearing, 2001, cited in Wearing, Stevenson and Young, 2010).

Urry and Larsen (2011) identify characteristics of modern tourists in that they seek pleasures that actively break the mild taboos of consumerism, such as drinking to excess, spending money recklessly, dressing in outrageous clothes, and keeping to abnormal time patterns. This corroborates the research that events are being driven by consumers to be more creative – to the extent of becoming risky due to consumer expectations for thrill and excitement. Such observations underline a shift in the expectations and demands of event tourists, and the need for the culture industry to provide greater creative experiences to motivate consumers to travel. Crompton and McKay (1997) propose that event managers should better understand the motivational factors of event consumers so as to design better products and services. This will apply to both the UK and Poland, or wherever the location of an event, and exposes the potential for gaps in how one location understands the motivational factors of event consumers in comparison with another. If an events industry is to attract and engage event tourists, which the research indicates is necessary, the sharing of knowledge beyond domestic borders would be helpful in attracting the event tourist market globally, create an upwardly competitive global

events economy, and will also meet consumer expectations as event tourists travel to events happening at various and emerging locations around the globe.

This section has reviewed current thinking on events being attractions for consumers travelling for live experiences. The literature identifies the impacts of events to attract tourists to a location and enhance the profile and image of a destination, and marketing its international image to attract tourists to attend events, thus capitalise on associated spend on other products and services at that location.

The next section will review the literature on risk at events because when tourists travel to a foreign destination to attend a culutral or social live experience, they are also crossing borders of domestic standards and may encounter variations in areas such as creativity, experience, service, and safety. I will review the culture of risk, attitude and acceptance of risk, and practices of risk management for events.

2.3 Risk Awareness at Events

Risk Awareness at Events is the third theme of research for this study project because if there are gaps in levels of risk awareness by organisers in different locations in the global market for international events it will have impacts on event tourists who travel from location to location, whether client tourists or consumer tourists. Furthermore, there is evidence of the role of tragedy in that an events industry takes shape from the occurrences of tragedy. For example, the UK events industry has evolved through disasters such as the Hillsborough Stadium crush in 1989 where 97 sports attendees died (BBC, 2022), and the Manchester Arena bombing in 2017 where 22 concertgoers were killed (Gardham, 2020) each of which (and others) led to inquiries which thereafter shaped legislation and practices in the UK events industry. Poland has experienced disasters at events as well, including the murder of Gdansk's mayor onstage at a festival (Buras, 2019) and the deaths of five teenage girls in an escape room attraction

which caught fire whilst they were locked inside (BBC News, 2015). I will argue that an events industry which is not as advanced as another, such as Poland being at a lesser stage of development than the UK, can learn from tragedies that have already happened elsewhere, to prevent them from reoccurring in the global market for international events. An international approach of closer alignment and learning would therefore prevent the need to learn from experiencing tragedy and would not put clients and consumers in the line of risk of harm, so there is a role for tragedy.

Events are temporary live happenings which necessitates the need to construct temporary structures, special effects, technical apparatus, stages, and logistics. Ewart and Boone (1987, cited in Ferdinand and Kitchin, 2017) state that the prime objective of risk management is to minimise the potential for physical, social, emotional or financial loss arising from participation in an activity in an unfamiliar environment with unknown outcomes. Events happen in places where consumers, suppliers and staff may not be familiar which introduces further levels of risk such as not knowing emergency evacuation procedures or the exit routes. Because events are for consumers to experience a good time, they will usually involve alcohol and often will attract drug misuse, and there are the people-oriented risks such as crowd behaviour, overcrowding and security issues which exacerbates the presence of all other risks. According to Getz and Page (2016) the purpose of health and safety management is to ensure that all participants and attendees at an event, including staff, crew, suppliers and contractors, guests, and sponsors are protected from any threat to their health and safety. This being so, they identify risk management as people-focused activities and includes crowd management and security tasks. The heightened societal awareness of terrorism has caused security to be a criterion for consumers choosing which participation experiences and travel destinations to partake (Sönmez and Graefe, 1998). This is demonstrated in a study by Kim and Chalip (2004)

that attendance at the 2002 FIFA World Cup held in South Korea and Japan was affected by concerns over safety risks.

In the UK and Poland where the events industry is at a different stage of development, my aim for this research is to identify any differentiation in how organisers plan their events to be safe, how aware they are of the presence of risk, what their approach is to mitigate identified risks, and what variances exist in the level of acceptance of risk by organisers. For me as an event producer and now educator, the priority for an event organiser must be the safety of all people, and that the 'job of the event manager is to minimise risk' (Berners, 2017, p.9). But it took time and experience for me to arrive at that edict because at the outset of my event career I was mostly preoccupied with satisfying the demands firstly of my clients, and secondly the consumers. Then, as my career progressed and the events I organised became more complex and creative, and higher in profile, I learnt that safety is the utmost priority and everything else follows – including client and consumer satisfaction. This is because if risk occurs to cause any detrimental consequence it is not a successful event.

Bowdin *et al*. (2011) agree with my view by warning that the event manager who ignores advice on risk prevention is courting disaster and foreshortening their career in the event industry. This is reflected in the model by the Event Management Body of Knowledge (EMBOK, no date) which identifies risk as one of the five 'domains' of knowledge required for the management of an event (the EMBOK model is shown in appendix B). And any course in event management includes risk management in its content which is why 'risk' is covered in every textbook on event management, including Berners (2017); Berners (2019); Bladen *et al.*, (2018); Bowdin *et al.,* (2011); Getz and Page (2016); Getz (2018); Silvers (2008); Wynn-Moylan (2018). If risk at events is recognised in the literature with such importance, my aim is to identify how organisers in the UK and Poland behave with the presence of that risk.

The Meaning of Risk

The term 'risk' is often used as a synonym of the probability of loss or of a danger (Andersen, Garvey and Oliviero, 2014) and means different things to different people depending on their environment. Any range in interpretation has impacts on the global market for international events because risk can mean one thing in London and something slightly or largely different in Warsaw. Also, risk in events means one thing to the insider perspective but outside the socio-professional environs of events – for clients and sponsors, say – it can mean something else entirely. In the corporate world, for example, risk focuses on organisational culture and behaviour, enterprise risk and financial risk. This is clear from the approach of consulting firms such as Levy, Lamarre and Twining (2010) defining risk culture as comprising the 'norms of behaviour for individuals and groups… to identify and understand, openly discuss and act on… current and future risks'. KPMG (Klynveld Peat Marwick Goerdeler) see risk culture as a system of values and behaviours existing in an organisation which shapes risk decisions (Banks, 2012). And PwC (PricewaterhouseCoopers) consider risk as the ethical environment in place at all levels, touching upon structures of reporting, internal and external risk management communications, and policies that reinforce risk management (Banks, 2012).

Then, Gerber and Von Solms (2005) point out the differences between individual and societal risks. Individual risk is about risk to an individual, worker, member of the public, or anybody living within a defined radius from an establishment. Societal risk is about risk to society caused for example by the chance of a large accident causing a number of deaths. But this seems too definitional to me because events bridge both categories so fit within neither. Beck (1992) uses the sociological term 'risk society' to denote the long-term consequences that both population and technology are causing to lives and the planet, leading humanity to the 'edge of catastrophe, threats to all forms of life, and the growth of risks and impossibility of escaping them'. I wonder whether Beck is confusing risk with crisis, which originates from the Greek

krisis meaning judgement, choice or decision (Paraskevas, 2006). Andersen, Garvey and Oliviero (2014) categorise one 'element' of risk as sociological and psychological because of the element of human expectations, usually with a potential negative effect. Whereas Banks (2012, pp.24-27) identifies ten characteristics of a risk culture which includes risk being qualitative not quantitative, risk is changeable and evolutionary, risk acceptance and implementation will vary, risk must allow for national cultures, and risk relies on good governance.

The problem with these approaches to risk – corporate risk, the elements of risk, and the characteristics of a risk culture – is that they are stubbornly concerned with longevity and the long-term sustainability of an organisation or society. Likewise, the notion of fate in an environment of chance and risk is relevant in consideration of Poland's longstanding devout Catholic society. In my observation of the Polish people, their culture and their behaviours, Catholicism is widely a hypocritical trait as an act to be seen to be religious as a duty or expectation. But the day-to-day practices and behaviours of Poles betray the teachings of the Church. Therefore, I draw the conclusion that leaving risk to fate, or God, is not what is going on.

Risk in Events

 I have identified how events are short-term, often one-time 'live happenings' (Berners, 2013, 2017, 2019) and are thus less inclined to adopt strategic risk management but apply logistical risk identification, assessment and mitigation processes per event. This alone introduces a range of variables for an organiser to deal with such as size of the event, complexity of the event, the level of creative and technical resources, number of attendees plus their profile and demographic, the venue, and type, nature or genre of event. The mistake here is in organisers taking for granted that every event is the same, even if it is the same genre of event such as

conferences, say, or weddings. These can be repetitive events where complacency becomes the norm, rather like the Challenger disaster (Vaughan, 1996) which is discussed later in this section. With events, there are always risk variables such as those already mentioned up to and including the weather on the day. This is why I adhere to routine procedures for all my events but I observe other organisers introducing risk by varying their risk management and control procedures according to the aforementioned variables. Mules (2004) confirms my viewpoint by identifying that unlike other areas of management, events have a unique and all-consuming climax. He understands that risk in events is in sharper focus because the event manager has only one chance to manage the risk. This is true of the UK and Poland but there are factors discussed in forthcoming sections which impact how thoroughly risk management at events gets done, if at all.

Additional to this, some events are inherently risky by nature or design and this is part of their appeal to consumers (Getz and Page, 2016) who are seeking thrill and exhilaration. Rojek (2013) agrees by viewing events as social reactions for power, discipline, resistance, performance, and the species desire for elevation. This type of social behavioural need can be categorised as 'deviant leisure', which Wearing, McDonald and Wearing (2013) define as challenging, exciting and risky while providing associations with power, wealth, celebrity and physical beauty in youth culture and marketing purchased and consumed in the belief that it is resistance. Hayward and Smith (2017) link deviant behaviour to ostentations consumption in the age of consumer capitalism and that its appeal lies in the excitement of hedonism and the suspension of moral regulation and behavioural norms. The effect of this is driving an upward surge in demand by consumers seeking participation in events that offer what I would call 'safe risks' such as thrill, adrenaline and challenge (physical exertion) events and attractions. It presents organisers with additional and increased risk management responsibilities but if there is disparity in risk procedures such as risk planning, risk identification, risk assessment, and

risk mitigation it can be safer for thrill-seeking consumers in one location but riskier in another.

<u>Adventure Tourism</u>

Seeking thrill and adventure is a persistent and continuing consumer trend, with Ewert (1989, p8, cited in Wilks and Page, 2003) having defined adventure tourism as the 'deliberate seeking of risk and the uncertainty of outcome'. Other available research identifies an upward demand in adventure tourism (Wilks and Page, 2003) by thrill-seekers and adrenalin junkies seeking fear arousal from a fear-avoidance stance (Clasen, Andersen and Schjoedt, 2019). As the global demand for adventure tourism and deviant leisure is increasing, event organisers must increasingly meet the demand by producing ever-riskier events. Galloway (2006) discusses the role of adventure as a form of defiant (as opposed to deviant) leisure behaviour of consumers defying the norms of safety and legality which performs both constructive and deconstructive functions for the individual and society. He considers positive forms of deviant leisure, citing the definition of Merriam-Webster (no date) that adventure usually involves danger and unknown risks, the encountering of risks, an exciting or remarkable experience, to expose to danger or loss, and to proceed despite risk.

Organisers therefore need to identify attendee safety as the key objective for all events to keep consumers safe at ever-riskier events. Wherever the location, events are about people and providing experiences for those who attend them (Bladen *et al.*, 2018). So, producing events with risky elements for thrill-seeking consumers who want to get as close to experiencing risk without getting harmed is a dichotomy. Demand is driving organisers to deliver risk-exposure to consumers but in a safe way because consumers want to experience a good thrill, not harm. Yet Adams (2001) identifies that the prediction of risk becomes difficult when people are introduced to systems because people do not respond to prediction, thereby altering the predicted outcome. Additional to this, events are not designed only for individuals, because the

economic driver is more profit from more sales. Organisers are not marketing to attract individual consumers but to engage with tourist groups, families, groups of friends and mass participation. Consumers want this too, so that they can share the thrill experience with people they know or with other participants whom they may not know but will add to a feeling of collective participation euphoria. There is also the boastful element which I identified earlier in this thesis as tribal belonging – consumers who have survived a risk experience want others to know about it, which can be seen even with medals given out to the participants who have run a marathon. Collective participation at events presents a further problem for organisers because there is a socio-culture phenomenon known as the 'risky-shift effect' (*The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Sociology*, 1994) which is the tendency for people to make more daring decisions when in groups, than when they are alone. However, Hillson and Murray-Webster (2007) point out that groups are made up of individuals making their own contributions, choices, decisions, opinions and actions.

When it comes to facilitating the demand for creative risky events, the UK events industry will be further ahead than Poland because the UK has now evolved their procedures in risk management and risk mitigation. This does not mean events in the UK no longer have risks, but organisers have learnt to identify what they are, assess them, and take measures to mitigate them from causing harm. It also does not mean there is no demand for risky events in Poland, it just means Poland organisers have not evolved the risk management and risk mitigation procedures to the same extent as might another location such as in the UK. Ironically, it may provide Poland consumers with what they want – a riskier experience – but they could be nearer to getting harmed than they might choose, and closer to danger than UK consumers. Essentially, risk is always there but consumers will be unaware of any disparity caused simply by the location of an event they happen to attend: that they might be closer to harm at an event in Warsaw than in London. Poland consumers might not concern themselves about this because

they are unaware of it, and anyway their acceptance levels of risk could be higher than UK consumers because that is what they have come to expect in the locality where they experience events. But with event tourism and international events, it exposes foreign consumers visiting events in Poland to greater risk of harm at risky events.

<u>What is at Risk</u>

For organisers of events it is not only the consumer who needs to be considered with risk. Hede (2008) states that stakeholders' interests will be economic, environmental and social so there is the potential risk of failure to meet financial, environmental and social interests. It could be that organisers will focus on those interests and be distracted from prioritising consumer safety, and my data analysis will later show this to be true. For one thing, Bladen *et al.* (2018) warn that stakeholders become agents in the creative process of design and can prove troublesome because of having to consider the opinions of the interested, yet not necessarily expert, parties. I have observed this issue in the field where clients and sponsors in particular make demands which cannot be fulfilled because of the logistical, economic, practical or safety implications. An inexperienced and unknowledgeable organiser might not recognise the limits or know to make adjustments to mitigate risks caused by stakeholders' demands.

The question of what is at risk is recognised by Getz and Page (2016) who ask is it the loss of money, reputation, survival of the event, or personal safety and health? Because of the range of risk that is present at events, Getz and Page assert that risk, health, and safety management has to infiltrate all other systems of event management. Bowdin *et al.* (2011) note as well that risk is not confined to the event itself, but within other areas of events management that may harm the success of the event, notably fraud, misrepresentation by marketing or over promotion, or any likelihood and consequence of an event not fulfilling its objectives. Bowdin *et al*. (2011) go on to state that every part of event management has potential risks which they

identify as occurring during build-up, load-in, the show, load-out, and breakdown, and involve administration, marketing and public relations, health and safety, crowd management, security and transport. These authors confirm the compound presence of risk throughout the entire production cycle of events which can be easily overlooked without formal education in the specialisms of managing events. Formal education in events management is available in the UK but not in Poland, and junior entrants to the industry in the UK are now opting for specialist education which I have identified in this study is being imported into the industry and adjusting the practices of current senior-level organisers. Even so, events management is still a recent discipline and my research shows that current senior-level organisers in the UK were not formally educated in events specialisms because event courses were not available to them.

The lack of formally educated organisers in both the UK and Poland is problematic because the extensive preparations required before an event and the hectic and often chaotic pressures on the day of an event will preoccupy the organiser, which Jackson, Morgan and Laws (2018, p.3) concur is a 'complex, messy, creative and process-driven way of conceptualising, planning, producing, curating and evaluating a creative output'. To assist the event organiser with managing risk, there is a wide range of resources, professional associations, and publications, including the British Standards Institution (*BSI*, 2020), the UK governmental Health and Safety Executive (HSE, no date), and the go-to industry resource The Purple Guide (*The Purple Guide*, no date). Poland has governmental resources also, but the few professional associations such as the Poland Convention Bureau, Polish Tourism Organisation, and Poland MICE are not resources for risk management. However, in 2020 the Poland Convention Bureau launched an initiative for the 'safe MICE venue' project (*Poland Convention Bureau*, 2020) which does signify Poland's awareness of risks at venues and events, and an attempt to pivot the industry towards less risk at events. But it is a flawed idea and will have limited impact

because it is a voluntary and self-certification scheme. As such, it will be a quasi-accreditation for venues which are likely to use it as a marketing tool in the main.

To assist organisers in the field with managing risk, Wynn-Moylan (2018) introduces the Event Safety Management System (ESMS) as a process for continual improvement and the capacity to learn from event to event in improving the standard of safety performance. ESMS is a coordinated and documented set of planning activities which includes assessing the risks and evaluating the hazards. Haniff and Salama (2016) address the likelihood of risk when they write about 'conditions' of certainty, risk and uncertainty. They cite the example of Egypt having never experienced an earthquake prior to 1992, so the building codes never considered earthquake as a risk. It was, they say, regarded by risk analysis procedures as an uncertainty. After Egypt was hit by a strong earthquake in 1992 risk analysts regard earthquake as a risk event and the buildings code has changed to account for the now possible event of the risk of earthquake. This type of adaptation to the presence of risk is evolvement and is the way people learn. Unfortunately it occurs after a risk has already impacted an outcome and is relatable to organisers learning from experience of their mistakes at events because, as previously mentioned, an event is being consumed at its point of consumption so it is already too late to recover mistakes.

There is an example I can draw upon from Poland which demonstrates the capacity to learn from risks that have already impacted. Five 15-year-old girls were locked into an 'escape room' attraction in Koszalin where visitors to the attraction need to solve puzzles to gain their exit. BBC News (2019) reports that when fire broke out, the five girls were left inside to die. It was afterwards that the Polish interior minister instructed the State fire brigade to carry out fire checks on an estimated 1,000 escape room attractions already operating across Poland offering consumers the thrill of risk but (hopefully) survival.

It is clear that the presence of risk at live events is manageable if built into the planning procedures to identify risks and hazards, take avoidance measures, and implement contingency plans. But an organiser needs to know this, and know how to do it. According to Haniff and Salama (2016) the objective of the risk management process is to seek answers to the following questions and develop an appropriate strategy for dealing with any risks identified: what are the risks and where do they come from; what is likely to happen should the risk occur; what is the probability of the risk occurring; what are the consequences of the risk occurring; and what are the signs that the risk is going to occur. They propose six sequential stages of output from a risk management plan, being: Risk Identification; Risk Classification; Risk Assessment; Risk Attitude (risk seeker / risk neutral / risk averse); Risk Response and Contingency; and Risk Control and Feedback (monitoring).

Not all organisers in the UK operate industry best practice or will be knowledgeable of procedures such as ESMS, Safety Advisory Groups (SAGs) or Event Management Plans (EMPs) but the UK events industry is further ahead in its development, so organisers are faced with regulation and legislation – and the real threat of litigation – of which most organisers are aware. The effect of this is that the approach and response to the presence of risk has encoraged preventative behaviours in the UK. Conversely, in Poland I have observed the aforementioned Egypt behaviour of waiting for a risk to impact and then reacting to it, such as those five girls who perished in an escape room attraction before the State thought to inspect the 1,000 or so other escape rooms already in operation. There is an additional problem with reacting to risks which have already occurred because events are gone as soon as they have finished. Because of this temporary mindset, I have observed Poland organisers ignoring the presence of risks in the hope they will not occur and nobody will notice the shortcuts so long as everything goes well. Even if things do not go well and something does go wrong, it will be gone and behind. It could be, however, a positive trait held by Poland organisers not to acknowledge risk until

after it has materialised because the highly-evolved state of UK regulations and legislations is a barrier for foreign clients thinking to book their events into the UK. It would be easier, quicker, far less logistical and therefore cheaper to stage an event in a location where compliance is less rigorous, such as in Poland.

That said, everybody should want events to be safe. It would be advantageous and worthwhile therefore, for Poland organisers to learn from tragedies that have happened elsewhere, to prevent them reoccuring at events in Poland. The examples exist and are well documented in the pursuit to learn lessons, and legislation and practices have taken shape because of the tragedies that have happened, so the opportunity is there for Poland organisers to prevent the need to learn from their own experiences of tragedy.

Attitude to Risk

The society in which an events industry exists clearly has an effect on risk acceptance and attitude to risk. Ekberg (2007) explores the theoretical works of Ulrich Beck and Anthony Giddens who claim we are living in a risk society of low probability and high consequence technological risks, it is not globally equal but is variable to location. This confirms the gap, then. 'Risk society' is understood as the perception of risk, the communication of risk, and the social experience of living in a risk environment where it is not just health and the environment at risk but the fundamental socio-political values of liberty, equality, justice, rights, and democracy (Ekberg, 2007). It appears that events have not been required to be in line with societal behaviour legislation and although it is catching up with events, there will always be gaps because events industries do not develop at the same time and pace in all locations within the global marketplace for international events.

For me, the concern is in knowing and understanding the starting point of risk. In the developed UK events industry the evolved mechanics of legal compliance and permissions exist to prevent

an event from happening if it is too risky. Pielichaty *et al.* (2017) link risk planning with the concept of project management and feasibility, which leads to evaluating the worthiness of putting on an event. If the risks are not worth taking because of threat to safety, loss of money, or because the event objectives will not be met, an event would likely not proceed. However, my data analysis will show that organisers do not routinely set objectives for their events (mitgating risk is an objective) or conduct after-event procedures to measure whether the objectives were in fact met, and what can be learnt to improve practices and prevent mistakes happening in future. Indeed, Douglas and Wildavsky (1982) correlate the linear concept of identifying risk by paying attention to remote probabilities, with learning from error over time. They argue that safety is not a static product but derives from learning from errors. For me, this encapsulates the essence of risk management for events by holding risk as the highest priority at the outset of the pre-event planning phase, and keeping it held high right through to the after-event phase where the organiser must learn ahead of their next event being planned.

The escape room example mentioned above exposes there is variable acceptance of risk between organisers in the Poland and UK events industries. I have observed a range of risks taken at events in Poland which would not be acceptable risks at UK events. It does appear, then, that geography plays its part in attitude to risk. Hofstede Insights (no date) underpin this by showing comparative data for 'uncertainty avoidance' where Poland scores 93 and the UK scores 35. Poland, they note, scores 68 for 'power distance' indicating it is a hierarchical society where people accept an order in which everybody has a place (likely influenced by its communist legacy). The UK scores 35 for power distance, suggesting UK society believes inequalities should be minimalised and fair play drives the belief that everybody should be treated the same way (likely influenced by its democratic legacy). Poland scores 60 for an 'individualist' society, suggesting a preference for a loose social framework where people look after themselves and their family. This highlights a contradiction as an individualist society

requires hierarchy and results in tension in the culture, so relationships are delicate but intense. The UK scores 89 for individualism which is very high and indicates the British are highly private people. It is not surprising for research to reveal that a post-communist society will be trailing a longstanding democratic society, and further emphasises the need for catching-up to happen extremely quickly to narrow disparities and close the gaps.

The need for rapid advancement is recognised by Paraskevas (2006) who identifies early warning signals as imperative for dealing with crises, because if not dealt with at the earliest stage, management can rarely recover and the crisis will cause damage – the extent of which will depend on the preparedness of management and their effectiveness in crisis response. Thereafter, there is the 'clean-up' stage when management attempts to recover, identify their vulnerabilities, and learn from their failures and successes of their response. Finally, the crisis resolution stage is returning to normality and resuming full functionality (Paraskevas, 2006). This is pertinent for organisers of events because the service they provide is being consumed at the same time it is being produced which means there is no ability to recover something that has gone wrong – an event cannot rehappen. When coping with uncertainties (risk) Goble, Bier and Renn (2018) recognise flexibility and adaptability are key requirements. They identify vigilance as a requirement for adaptation to risk, and further identify two types of vigilance. Type 1 vigilance directly supports adaptive management to understand what is being looked for such as warning signals, gaps in knowledge, reviewing systems. Type 2 vigilance is needed to address surprises and failures that are not part of normal orderly planning. The latter vigilance is in situations when it is not known what to look for – observation of confusing signals, anomalies, unacknowledged responsibilities. Goble, Bier and Renn (2018) argue that Type 1 vigilance demands focus whereas Type 2 requires defocusing and a questioning approach, and they view these two types of vigilance as conflicting and requiring ongoing process and effort which is why it is a 'severe challenge' for various actions at various levels

of societal organisation structures. It is clear why organisers would avoid acknowledging risk at events if they can get away with doing so.

However, Adams (2001) believes everyone is an expert in risk through their practice and experience in managing risks in life – it is about coping with uncertainty, he asserts. He likens risk management to developing the skill of staying out of trouble which, he argues, is never completely mastered. In sociological texts there is much written about risk in the context of society and organisations, and in textbooks on events management there are chapters on risk planning and management (Getz and Page, 2016; Wynn-Moylan, 2018; Berners, 2017). But there is a gap in event literature on the evolution of risk. Existing event literature tends to view risk as a future issue to plan for and therefore focuses on the management of potential problems, but there is little written about the role of tragedy in reflection to past risks, learning from risk, and the evolution and development of risk management. Perhaps this is because 'events management' was almost non-existent until the 1990s but has evolved to being a low-key yet sophisticated approach that involves strategy, marketing, stakeholder involvement, and innovation (Mules, 2004). Still, reflecting to large-scale disasters at events would make it possible to identify milestones which caused legislations and regulations to evolve, which would certainly be worthwhile for students of events management, and helpful for an emerging industry following an already developed one, such as Poland reflecting to the UK

But learning from past mistakes is not the same as planning risks out of events so that they are less likely to occur. It is the planning and removal of risk which is the role and duty of an event manager (Berners, 2017) before the event happens and it is too late. This places a lesser developed industry at an advantage because they can streamline their event legislations and practices ahead of having to experience their own tragedies from which to learn. This allows that industry to shape itself from tragedies that have already occurred in an industry which is further advanced. Such a standpoint would be proactive reduction of the presence of risk rather

than having to experience tragedy and then reacting to clear up the disaster. Identifying risks and then understanding how to remove them is nevertheless a discipline learnt from a historical perspective, it just depends upon whether the learning is from historical own experiences or from the historical experiences of tragedies at other events. For the latter to occur, requires cross-cultural engagement and an international approach. The issue is that there is no second chance to recover poor service or rectify customer expectations that were not met. Learning from mistakes is a recognised and accepted social model of learning whereby the pursuit of quality rests in the idea of learning so that the outputs closely match the requirements of consumers (Beckford, 2017). Beckford also points out that if mistakes get repeated, then no learning is happening and there is no improvement in quality. It is thus better to prevent risk than attempt to learn from what has gone wrong.

Reviewing the literature in the area of risk and events has identified that events are susceptible to compound specific risks which other industries may not encounter. Specifically, I am referring to the temporary nature of events which itself introduces a range of risks such as organisers, staff, suppliers and consumers being in an unfamiliar venue with the presence of alcohol, perhaps drugs, a crowd, and hedonism. In such environments there is potential for security issues, overdosing, and overcrowding. Additionally, consumers at events forego the responsibility for their own personal safety because 'the private person does not pay attention to remote probabilities' (Douglas and Wildavsky, 1982, p.187). Instead, consumers transfer their personal safety to the organiser who may or may not be experienced, formally educated in the specialisms of events – notably risk management – or bothered about cutting corners to achieve greater profit.

To conclude this section, existing research does recognise the value of planning for risks and how to do so through planning and project management procedures, but I have identified a gap in literature reflecting to past risks and learning from previous issues and outcomes which

would tell the story of how risks at events have shaped an industry and evolved its legislation, regulations, practices and procedural advances. An emerging events industry should look at the role of tragedy that has shaped a developed events industry and adopt those advanced practices and legislations without having to experience first-hand tragedy themselves. As a resource, this would enable students of events management to study previous examples and milestones to further their knowledge and approach to the presence of risk at events, and import that into both developed and emerging events industries.

Aside from that gap existing in current literature, there are gaps in the industry itself in both the UK and Poland. Formal education in the specialisms of managing events is required to understand the value and methods of planning and managing risk. The UK has rapidly developed the provision of events management courses whereas Poland has barely begun to offer event-specific courses. Even so, the UK is still insufficient in formal education within its events industry because current senior-level organisers did not have the opportunity to study events management. The UK does, however, draw organisers from related fields such as hospitality, hotel, tourism and leisure management with the transferrable knowledge and skillsets these disciplines provide. There is another gap in industry which is the variance in the acceptance of risk. This exists as an extension to the previous gap of formal education because taught knowledge and understanding will improve attitude to risk, levels of acceptance of risk, and the implementation of routine risk management and risk mitigation procedures for all events, not just some of them. However, my data analysis will reveal education is not a guarantee of risk awareness because even those organisers with formal education in related fields do not necessarily address risk control. Most do not routinely apply risk management controls in all their events such as setting event objectives or conducting after-event procedures to measure whether the objectives were met – of which the mitigation of risk is one objective.

What is being told here, is that the presence of risk cannot be ignored. Avoiding risk can lead to crises at which point recovery is unlikely because with events the consumption of the product is happening simultaneously with its production and if something goes wrong, regardless of the severity of the consequences, it is already too late. Organisers must identify risks, assess the probability and impact of those risks, and make mitigations to eliminate or lessen the probability of risk causing impact. In fact, Douglas and Wildavsky (1982) echo the quote by Plato at the top of Chapter 6 by accepting that we do not know the risks we face now or in the future but must act as if we do. This can to an extent be mitigated by an emerging events industry learning from the role of tragedy that has shaped a developed industry, which would allow for knowing the risks and acting upon them. Failure to identify potential risks at events and their probability to cause harm to the objectives of an event such as financial goals, attendance levels, or the safety of stakeholders means the risks are present but hidden dangers. As Douglas and Wildavsky (1982, p.28) put it, 'avoidance of tomorrow's risk is the greater danger'.

The other conclusion I have derived from reviewing the literature in risk awareness at events is the need for organisers to conduct after-event analysis to identify their successes and errors against the objectives of the event so that learning from errors can be handed forward to future events and future organisers of events. If the internationalisation of events management were to happen, such learning would be handed forward to an emerging events industry from one that has already shaped its culture, legislations and practices by tragedies which have already happened.

3.0 Methodology

This chapter aims to justify the research methods I have selected to ensure the research outcomes are reliable and credible. From the outset, I sought approval from my supervising professor, and the chair of my board, and the University to ensure this study would be a worthy contribution to the field and a positive impact on the international events community, and not be a pointless investigation. The methodology positions my perspective as a researcher within a field of study with which I am familiar as an insider as a white male practitioner and educator, and now as a researcher of insights into the socio-professional behaviours of other practitioners within two separate geographical locations. I note, however, that my career history is unique as I have vaulted across most event genres and sectors, and I relocated to Poland. I am acknowledging here, that this study will be organically influenced by my unique perspective and insights, which might differ from an insider with a different career background, or from somebody of a different culture, ethnicity, gender, or even their access to prestigious events and/or landmark venues to which I was privileged.

3.1 Research Design

Having made a critical review of existing literature grounded me in the concepts and thinking of authors as a foundation for the interpretations and findings of my primary research data. My longstanding career in producing and organising events and managing venues in both the UK and Poland provides me with authoritative knowledge in the subject, plus my understanding of the social organisation of the events industry in both territories. Because of my credentials, training and experience (Ruane, 2016, p.6) this makes me an 'insider' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Having been immersed as a practitioner in the events industry in both the UK and Poland for ten years respectively, I am in a position to draw comparisons within the framework of ethnography. My closeness to the subject made it appropriate to adopt

autoethnography (see 3.2.3) as an inductive research method because it focuses on describing and interpreting the social world through first-hand field study (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016) and allows me to draw on my experiences and my personal insights when analysing and interpreting the secondary and primary data. However, my perspective as a white male event manager 'par excellence' may not be true to the grass roots level of interpreting how events are managed in, say, small independent venues, or events with restricted (low) budgets. This would, in fact, provide a further research opportunity to investigate whether the factors which shape an events industry are the same at other levels of events and for organisers of different cultural and social pathways. There is also opportunity to conduct research with other social groups because my study which incorporates 24 interviews shows 13 are male organisers, 11 are female, but all 24 are white.

From the outset of this project, I was aware that I hold perceptions of how events are organised because of my insider knowledge and experience, and I did not want to be misled by any embedded presuppositions I might hold – especially in recognising my unorthodox career path not being the norm. It was therefore important for me to retain an objective view throughout this project based upon factual knowledge, not my imaginings, by identifying sets of structured practices rather than the social investigation of intentions or subjective meanings (Scott, 1997) and scrutinising against the secondary data literature review. I also wanted to retain 'liveness' (Urry, 2002b) because the subject is concerned with events as live experiences. Tarr, Gonzalez-Polledo and Cornish (2018, p.37) define two broad approaches within arts-based research as 'participatory' (engaging with participants with the possibility of new modes of enquiry) and 'performative' (methods themselves create or perform their social realities) that share a commitment to producing social realities from the research process in the view that research makes things rather than simply documents them.

Utilising empiricism demanded that I capture tangible evidence to substantiate my interpretations and assumptions to acquire knowledge from the collection of observational data so it is fact-based rather than my personal opinion or speculative imaginings (King and Horrocks, 2012). Empiricism also facilitates my reliance on the stories my participants were telling me during the semi-structured interviews to explain who they are and what they are doing, to give me a picture that although may be partial, is adequate for my research purpose (Becker, 2007). This approach has been helpful because the respondents represent a population with varying qualifications (or no qualifications), in a variety of venues, across a range of event genres, and a wide range of experience. This means that my interpretations are not derived from my privileged perspective but are grounded in the responses of my twenty-four respondents – although all 24 respondents are white.

Spillman (2002) states that the analysis of culture is interpretive in search of meaning and can provide better grounding for theories of social structure. This emphasises the need for a researcher among people to understand differences between social actors (participants) rather than objects. The people I was interviewing and observing are actors in their respective events industry and it was important for me to interpret the way they act in the UK and in Poland so that I could draw similarities and/or differences. Becker (2007) warns it is not easy to separate interpretations from fact, and that a fact in its social context implies and invites interpretations. I was aware of this but felt it was important to adopt interpretivism into the study so that I could interpret the stories being told to me during the interviews and support my autoethnographic insights. Veal (2011) points out that interpretivism involves participants providing their explanations of their situations or behaviours for the researcher to see the world from their point of view, which of course was my intention to undertake because I wanted to subdue my presuppositions. Also, I have not practised events in London for 18 years, nor in Warsaw for 8 years and it is a fast-changing industry in both locations so my notions could be outdated and

historic, and not a valid interpretation of the current situation. Nevertheless, I am still engaged and active in the field through my teaching and research activities which demands knowledge of current practices, trends and advances. This said, being an insider to the subject and knowing industry practices, jargon and behaviours was helpful for me to interpret the actors' storytelling during the in-depth interviews, and I was led by the responses of my respondents which in fact determined repetitive patterns of behaviours and practices across the population.

It was my intention to underpin my interpretations from the interviews with observations of venues from a research perspective, although due to COVID-19, I needed to revert to my former observations from the time when I was a practitioner in the field. Because of these (my insider knowledge of the industry and my former observations of venues), I was able to interpret, for example, that interviewee PL1 was 'acting' to provide me with model answers during her interview and was not providing me with a true picture of her operations (explained in 3.2.2). I did not find this falseness counterproductive to my research so long as I could interpret this was what was occurring which allowed me to make compensations with my interpretations. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016) describe the inductive approach as the development of a theory after observing empirical data and observations from the real world, which was my aim for this study, and I felt was important because my observations, interpretations and empirical approaches might have led me from theoretical inclusion (Veal, 2011).

3.2 Research Methods

3.2.1 Interviews

To conduct this cross-cultural study, I had planned for 30 in-depth interviews to take place face-to-face at each participant's place of work in landmark venues in London (15 interviews) and Warsaw (15 interviews) which would also facilitate the observation part of my research

approach (outlined in 3.2.2). I managed to conduct three face-to-face interviews in London before the governmental restrictions brought in with the COVID-19 pandemic forced me to conduct interviews via video calls and substitute the observations with autoethnography. Reverting to video-call interviews gained convenience for myself and my participants without the need for me to travel to their place of work, and them having to host me and conduct a show-round of their venue. Video-call interviewing also gained access to participants during the restrictions of the pandemic, and in fact provided me with a wider reach into the potential population. Although facial expression was not lost by using video-call technology, I found that I did lose the presence of flexible social interaction normally achievable in face-to-face conversations and I did lose the potential to read and react to body language.

Because of the restrictions, I achieved a total of 24 interviews (17 UK, and 7 Poland) which, although fell short of the target, did elicit valuable and credible data and did fulfil the requirements and objectives of my study. The sample is supported by autoethnography, firstly, but also the data elicited from the reduced sample of 24 interviews did show signs of repetition and saturation, leading me to identify patterns for data interpretation. There is an unexpected limitation that of the 24 interviews with 13 male organisers and 11 female, all 24 are white.

In the circumstances I faced by the pandemic, it was even more relevant to retain quality research over quantity research which is underpinned by Muncey (2010) confirming that in the social sciences a large sample without rigorous control of variables produces inferior quality evidence. I achieved twenty-four in-depth interviews with very prominent senior-level organisers among the best landmark venues in the UK and Poland, and I have further supported and underpinned the data captured from the interviews with observations and autoethnography which is a justified research approach when the sample involves small numbers of people (Muncey, 2010). Mason (2014) acknowledges that whilst qualitative interviewing involves

what may seem to be a relatively small sample, it is made up for in the very rich data gathered, and I felt this through my excitement for the rich usable data I captured at each interview.

On reflection, my target of 30 interviews may have proved problematic even without the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic. There is less abundance of landmark venues in Warsaw, so to achieve the 15 interviews may have been a stretch. And in London, some of the landmark venues would not have responded to my requests for interview because they are too busy, or disinterested, or naïve of the value of participating with research. Without the pandemic, I may have had more success at engagement if I were 'on the ground' and in-situ asking for an interview, but that is not a certainty. Also, the video-call technology allowed me to widen the geographical sphere of sample capture outside London and Warsaw. I therefore consider that the pandemic sharpened the research sample to a relevant proportion of the population, which proved to provide me with credible data which reached saturation at 24 interviews anyhow. In section 3.4, I further explain the adjustments and impacts due to COVID-19.

I constructed the interviews using the qualitative method of semi-structured questions to follow a set theme with each participant for consistency of analysis and comparison, but with the flexibility to vary the order of questions and ask further questions (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016). Veal (2011) supports the idea that semi-structured interviews reflect the positivist paradigm in qualitative research by involving full interaction with participants in free-flowing conversation, which is what I wished to achieve to ensure a pleasant and sociable experience for each of my participants. This was key because each participant had offered their time for no reward or payment and I wanted to leave them with a feeling that was pleasant, worthwhile and social. I was concerned that if I were to use structured interviews it would restrict participants from exploring the themes I was presenting to them, and unstructured interviews would not work because I had a predetermined list of questions to work through for

comparison and consistency (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016; Mason, 2014) across the two locations.

Interviews are recognised by Qu and Dumay (2011) as a way for researchers to learn about the world of others, which was the aim of my primary research activity, as previously outlined. In framing the interview questions (see appendix C for the interview questionnaire) I considered the type of question to access the knowledge I required whilst avoiding my presuppositions (King and Horrocks, 2012). There were 11 questions which were kept the same set for UK and Poland participants for comparative reasons. The first question was designed to ease the interviewee into talking about their career path and how they arrived at their current position. This provided me with the understanding of their background and experience and allowed me to identify any differences in the career pathways and entry to the industry between UK and Poland participants. This led to the second question asking if they had professional qualifications in areas of events management which I prompted with examples of training in risk, health and safety, first aid, customer service, or sales. This second question provided me with their level of formal and professional education as a comparison between senior-level organisers in the UK and Poland. The third question probed how the interviewee approaches working with international clients so that I could ascertain any differences between handling domestic and international clients. The fourth question investigated the participant's awareness and engagement with professional associations for me to identify any difference in the levels of engagement with the socio-professional construct between UK and Poland organisers. I prompted with some associations such as the Event and Visual Communication Association (EVCOM) and the National Outdoor Events Association (NOEA) to gauge each participant's knowledge and awareness of professional associations. The fifth question pivoted the questionnaire towards operational practices, so from question five onwards, I was seeking to uncover the participant's approach to pre-event, during event and after-event procedures.

Question five, then, asked if the interviewee conducts onsite staff briefings and, if yes, to whom, and for what purpose. The sixth question followed with conducting pre-event operations meetings and, if yes, who attends, and for what purpose. And the seventh question followed with conducting after-event debriefings and, if yes, to whom, and for what purpose. Question eight intended to determine strategic planning by asking if the interviewee sets event objectives for each event and, if yes, how do they arrive at the objectives, and how they measure that the objectives were met. Question nine was designed to identify if the participant was aware of the value of conducting after-event evaluation for feedback and learning and, if yes, what methods do they use, and what is the purpose. Question 10 led the questionnaire to two final questions which required personal reflection from the participant by asking, firstly, how they know they have done a good job after an event. Finally, Question 11 followed with asking the participant to identify their top three roles as an event organiser by stating what they consider is their main role, secondary role, and tertiary role. This last question helped me understand the priorities of organisers in the UK and Poland, and what the interviewee recognises as their responsibilities as an organiser of events.

The restrictions on social interaction and travel meant that I was forcibly distanced from approaching organisers at venues in the UK and it was not possible to travel to achieve direct engagement and networking with organisers in Poland. Even though I could not fully immerse myself in the field, it was not a significant impact for this study because I had already done so previously in both the UK and Poland. Although I knew some of the participants from my own networks, it was not a usual social meeting or a business meeting. For them, and me, it was a slightly odd situation for us to meet for a research purpose – not least because the interviews were conducted via video call which is not how my usual interaction with my industry contacts would have been: usually, if I could not meet with them face-to-face, there would be no need to meet them at all. Still, video-call technology made the scheduling of interviews more

convenient for myself and for each participant. For me, there was no requirement to spend time and resources on travelling to each interviewee's place of work, and for the participant they could schedule the meeting for their convenience at their home or office without having to take time out of their day to host me.

By reverting to the use of video-call technology, allowed for wider access and reach to participants. For those whom I did not previously know, there was a need to open the meeting with some social interaction to establish an ease to the relationship as would be normal for a first-time encounter. This was where my knowledge of the industry was helpful in quickly establishing a rapport between myself as researcher-interviewer and the person I was meeting as participant-interviewee. I believe that none of my participants were familiar with providing their insights for a research study, especially at the level of a PhD, so I was aware they might hold some trepidation of what was expected from them, what would happen, how the information they gave me would be used, and would I in fact be able to use what they told me. This became proven when most of my participants at the end of their interview showed anxiety that the information they had given me was indeed useful. I found that at the close of each interview, I felt the need to reassure the participant that their information was very worthwhile and valuable for my research purpose. This was not a problem for me to do because without exception each interview did provide me with extremely rich, valid and usable data.

I needed to account for a further consideration when conducting interviews with Poland organisers because English is not their native language. I knew some of the Poland organisers from my network but others were introduced to me from one of my event contacts in Warsaw, which could be considered a snowball effect, so I therefore could not be confident each would be comfortable to be interviewed in the English language. In my first contact with each Poland participant, I wrote to them in the Polish language which had been translated by a Polish undergraduate student of mine at the Edge Hotel School. In the letter, I explained the nature of

my research, their required level of input, and the time it would take. I also offered the option for the interview to be conducted in the Polish or English language, which was mostly a gesture because I knew that most Polish businesspeople speak English and would want to do so. However, I felt it was important to make this polite concession and not be seen to prejudge a participant's preference of language. In the end, just one interview (PL1) was conducted in the Polish language. For this one interview, I used a simultaneous Polish interpreter which was in fact easy and convenient to do because of the video-call technology, and the translator simply joined the video call. Each other Poland participant was comfortable to engage in the English language for three reasons. Firstly, a Pole who has taken time, effort and expense to learn English will seize the opportunity to put that investment to good use. Secondly, they will be keen to exercise their English and keep it polished. Thirdly, they will want to proudly show they do in fact speak English. For all the Poland interviews conducted in the English language, I found a very good level of English and I am confident there were no barriers or misinterpretations due to language differences. My knowledge of the Polish language enabled me to interpret intonations and phraseology when a Poland participant was using the English language. I employed tactics to ensure a quick rapport and set the social level to help the participant feel at ease: I spoke some words and phrases in the Polish language; introduced my history of living in Poland for 10 years; and emphasised my first-hand knowledge of each participant's venue.

My intention to engage with participant targets was impacted by a level of mistrust from Poland organisers. This was not helped by my not being able to travel to the field and engage at a personal level with potential participants to gain their trust. A distant approach from a UK researcher would be received with caution and trepidation because there is mistrust in Poland business circles surrounding corporate secrets and finances, even though I was ready to provide assurances that personal, sensitive or financial information was not required for this project.

Because of the pandemic making it impossible for me to travel to Poland, I was not in a position to counter a potential participant's mistrust and in fact I would not even know about it – just that there would be no response to my request. This happened in numerous failed attempts to engage participants in Poland, whom I then needed to redirect my approach through my Warsaw contact to achieve their participation. Only with the WOSP (*Wielka Orkiestra Swiatecznej Pomocy* / Great Orchestra of Christmas Charity) (WOSP, 2020) which is similar to the BBC Children in Need, ultimately failed to engage their participation.

For all interviews in the UK and in Poland, I provided a brief introduction of my background as an event organiser myself, as small talk to assure each participant that I was 'one of them' which I felt would help towards mutual respect, trust, and the ease of conversation. I understood that I, as a qualitative researcher, needed to elicit free speech and honesty from my participants by them having trust in me, especially when interviewing the cautious Poland population. Interviews were timed to take between 45 minutes to an hour (see 3.5, Pilot Test), plus an observation of up to half an hour although the observation was abandoned after the first three interviews (see 3.2.2). I recorded each interview by Dictaphone for the first three face-to-face interviews and then via video-call recording for the remaining interviews. After each interview had closed, I uploaded the recording to my device provided by the University of Essex with password protection to allow future access for myself only. During each interview, I made ethnographic notes by hand to highlight specific comments or insights, and to remind me of my own experiences and situations which I could later apply to what I was being told. After each interview, I read through my notes to re-sort and re-order them so that I would understand at a later date what they were informing me.

3.2.2 Observations

It was my intention to observe each interviewee in the environment of their venue so that I could determine some aspects in the field, underpin my findings and restrict me from relying on my presuppositions. From an interpretivism research perspective observing people as social actors, it seemed an opportunity not to miss whilst I would be travelling to venues to interview participants and would have supported the ontological assumptions. According to Dey (1993) observation is a hallmark social research method for capturing unstructured qualitative data which, for me, was not for observing the job of organisers and what they were doing, but to substantiate the story they were telling me (Dey, 1993). Plummer (2019) acknowledges stories are weaved and interconnected with truth and fiction as determined by the storyteller, and I encountered an example of this with one interviewee (PL1) providing me with model answers and a near-perfect picture of procedures at her landmark stadium venue. But when I observed her venue during a significant concert (Roger Waters *Brick in the Wall* stadium tour), there were stacks of unused chairs blocking an emergency escape route which is a fundamental breach of fire prevention regulation and contradicted her viewpoint of her own venue.

For each observation, the participant was aware I was conducting research but I did so as a spectator and did not participate in any activities, which in the typology of observers made me an 'observer as participant' (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016, pp.293-294; Ruane, 2016, pp.212-215). I chose to take this elementary level of 'immersing oneself in the field' (Ruane, 2016, p.212) to openly focus on my research during the observation. Besides, I am an industry insider with significant previous embedded immersion in the field over a period of 10 years in the UK and 10 years in Poland. Thus, I felt justified not to perform any of the activities I was observing because I have performed those activities myself over significant time, and it would not further my research objective. I was aware that by not performing any of the activities I

was observing, would not engage me with any social experience but that did not matter because the purpose of observing was to provide me with interpretations of the venues, not how people perform their role – the in-depth interviews facilitated the latter. Further to this, I was employing observation to underpin the interviews, so in fact the interview was the priority activity, and observation was secondary.

The benefit of conducting an observation of a participant's landmark venue after the in-depth interview had concluded was to underpin the storytelling during the interview. For example, if the participant told me of their rigorous compliance to legislation, I would be observing the venue for indicators of compliance, or indeed signs of noncompliance, such as I have mentioned did in fact happen with PL1. An associated benefit to conducting observations was to walk through the venue with the participant to effectively extend the interview from a formal to a social setting. When an organiser reverts to their familiar and usual socio-professional role as an actor showing their venue, they relax, which would provide me with the opportunity to access further data from a less-guarded participant. Finally, the observation activity was my gesture of respect to the participant by showing my interest in their venue, and not simply arriving to conduct the research interview and leaving directly after. My insider knowledge informed me this would be well-received because organisers at venues are proud of where they work and welcome every opportunity to show their venue.

3.2.3 Autoethnography

When governments worldwide introduced restrictions on travel and social interactions due to the COVID-19 pandemic (see 3.4 for adjustments and impacts) it became clear that I could not continue face-to-face interviewing and onsite observations of venues. I discussed with my research supervisor and decided to pivot my primary research methodology to autoethnography to facilitate me to study the experiences in my own life as a means of illuminating more general

social processes (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Chang (2008, p.13) describes the concept of culture as a 'web of self and others' and that the autoethnography research method utilises the researchers' autobiographical data to analyse and interpret their cultural assumptions. By adopting autoethnography, then, I could utilise my significant wealth of knowledge inside the field and recount observations from the time when I was an events practitioner in both the UK and Poland. In the UK, my career gravitated towards the music industry by the network I created, largely through organising and providing artist hospitality at the BRIT Awards for three years. This led me to event projects for Shania Twain, Bon Jovi and Jennifer Lopez. When I relocated to Poland, I launched my own school of event management and grew a consultancy network which included the design of a new event space in the Old Town of Warsaw, and a launch event for the *Miss Polonia* beauty pageant.

In both London and Warsaw, I enjoyed privilege. Firstly, in London as a white male with a hospitality management degree it was easy for me to penetrate socio-professional networks of event clients who shared similar ethnicity and gender – particularly in the corporate and music industry genres. Sharing commonalities made it easy for me to socialise and be accepted into these circles, although not all my clients were white males. Even so, the social landscape is dominated by white organisers, which my participant population shows by interviews with 13 male organisers, 11 female, but all 24 are white. Then, in Warsaw, I arrived to the event industry socio-construct as a 'celebrity' with a client portfolio of international music stars and royalty, but especially the Queen who is revered abroad. This provided me with immediate access to the upper levels of events because I was considered a curio which attracted jobs because clients wanted to meet me – but more relevant is that they wanted to tell other people that they were working with the Queen's event organiser. However, getting in was the limit, and I found that my acceptance within the Poland events industry did not go as far as allowing me to enact cultural change to their behaviours and practices.

Nonetheless, I was still privileged to observe the events industries in the cross-cultural context of the developed UK industry and the evolving Poland industry. I could identify contrasts, differences and 'gaps', which would become the driver of this thesis and the adoption of the autoethnography methodology to facilitate me to still engage in the first-hand study of society and culture in action (Murchison, 2010) but with the application of a biographical research method (Chang, 2008). It should be noted that autoethnography is a method personal to the researcher: autoethnography or 'personal ethnography' is a 'first-person method' of research (Desjardins *et al.*, 2021, p.37:4) where the researcher's first-hand experience is the starting point of knowledge production and can involve observing one's own experience with a particular group or subculture. This means that my thesis will be constructed from my perspective and experiences which would be different from somebody with a different ethnicity, gender, and career profile. This bears influence on the outcomes of this research project, but it remains valid and representative because of the participant population and their perspectives, and because my interpretations are grounded with secondary literature as well as the empirical data.

In retrospect, it would have been restrictive for me not to input my authoritative experience for this research project through autoethnography, so it was somewhat advantageous to have been steered by the pandemic to reassess my research methods. Desjardins *et al.* (2021) are pro-autoethnography and point out that simply going into the field to write about it and the people being observed can be a distanced perspective, whereas employing autoethnography allows the researcher to input their own voice in their writing and provide an authorial voice in describing patterns. It would always have been difficult for me to have a distanced perspective of this research topic, so I would have been fighting for ways to provide my authorial voice, anyhow. Autoethnography was the solution as the conduit research method for my authoritative interpretations drawn from my cross-cultural experience in both study locations applied to

patterns that were identifiable in the data analysis. Muncey (2010) hesitates to call autoethnography a research method because she argues there are many ways to include personal experiences into research, and prefers to describe it as a subsidiary or a participant observation strategy with the researcher observing their own story and its social location. Hayano (1979) also takes issue with autoethnography as a research method by identifying it is not a specific research technique, method or theory and there are problems of the researcher's involvement and intimacy with the subject. But he does acknowledge that fieldwork itself raises issues of objectivity, and I was aware from the outset of the need for me to retain an objective context.

Because the pandemic distanced me from the participants in my fieldwork, I could not gain research access (Thiel, 2012) to perform ethnography in the field during the timeframe of this project. Instead, I applied what I would call 'retro-ethnography' by recounting my previous experiences, observations, training, and knowledge as a former practitioner in both London and Warsaw. But I was aware there are criticisms of simply recounting personal experience or opinions. Rigor is achieved through methods of data collection to allow triangulation between participant observation, reflective writing, and interviewing or the gathering of documents. I was able to draw upon the range of activities I perform at the Edge Hotel School, University of Essex as senior lecturer, program manager of the MSc program, leader of the events programs, and employability development director. To enrich the empirical data, I networked through my research activities including this PhD which itself has widened my industry, academic and campus-colleagues network, but also other research activities such as authoring textbooks and engaging with academic conferences. My industry-facing activities include guest lecture sessions from industry professionals such as Goodwood Revival and Glastonbury Festival, student field trips to the o2 Arena, ExCeL convention centre, and Royal Ascot, and student-led live event projects at the BRIT Awards.

3.3 Participant Selection

My target participant population were senior-level event managers and director-level organisers at London and Warsaw capital city landmark venues. Because of my longstanding career as an organiser, my current involvement with industry professionals as part of my teaching responsibilities, plus my professional networks, I could readily identify 'representations of society' (Becker, 2007, p.5) in the events sector in both the UK and Poland so I did not find this to be a challenge. I have knowledge of the abundant landmark venues in London although some such as the Royal Albert Hall and the Natural History Museum failed to respond to my requests for their participation with this research project. I also have knowledge of the landmark venues in Warsaw, which are fewer in number and was an initial concern of mine, but in the end they were generous and willing to participate so this did not present a problem. There are classical definitions of what constitutes a landmark, including this from Merriam-Webster (2021):

> *'A conspicuous object on land that marks a locality, or a structure such as a building of unusual historical and usually aesthetic interest, especially one that is officially designated and set aside for preservation'.*

Closer to what I would recognise as a landmark venue for the purpose of hosting an event is: '*a building or place that is easily recognised, especially one that you can use to judge where you are'* (Cambridge English Dictionary, 2021). These definitions helped to underpin my justification that the venues I had identified could in fact be categorised as landmark. This was important to get right because I wanted to use like-for-like venues in both capital cities and by doing so, would define the type of participant, their types of consumers, and their clients because typically a landmark venue is in a prominent location, it is large, it is expensive to hire, and it will be known to consumers and clients. Even though each landmark venue owns unique

peculiarities (Tonnelat, 2009) which is what makes it a landmark venue because it is not replicated anywhere else, I was conscious that selecting the right type of venue would need to fit with the three themes of this thesis (Event Culture, Tourism and Events, and Risk Awareness at Events). This was never going to be an issue with venues in capital city locations that attract event tourists, but even when the pandemic forced me to incorporate participant organisers at venues outside London and Warsaw, they do still fit with the research themes and objectives of this project.

Within current and available event literature, I could find no definitions, classifications or categorisations of landmark venues. I therefore drew upon my insider knowledge to define the characteristics of a landmark venue and from there I arrived at a set of criteria for my target sample of venues. Firstly, to determine what constitutes a 'venue', I reflected on the social practices of attending an event because the interpretation of what is a venue resides in social practice and not just 'in the heads of individuals' (Dey, 1993, p.11). For those attending a venue, requires further social practices such as getting to the venue, buying a ticket and audience behaviour (Sayer, 1992, cited in Dey, 1993). The culmination of the social practices and social construction in putting on an event for people to attend happens at the place where there is a live happening: the venue (Berners, 2013; 2017; 2019). Thus, my set of characteristics for the sample of venues that would meet my research requirements were:

> A building of significance that is known for hosting events (is an event venue); is built for the purpose of hosting events; is widely recognised in its location and is therefore easy to locate; and has a reputation for hosting large events (a capacity upwards of 200 attendees).

In both London and Warsaw, I found venues which fit my set criteria. But the range of potential venues for me to approach in Warsaw was less than in London. Even so, it was London which

presented the problem because some venues did not respond to my requests for their participation. Whilst I found this disheartening, the wide range of landmark venues in London did allow me to engage alternatives.

It was always my intention for this research project to engage senior-level organisers at prominent and high-profile capital city event venues. I felt this level was important for the validity and credibility of the research outcomes of this study, and its contribution to the field of research in events management, international events, events industries, and emerging events industries. I am thankful that even with the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic which made participant engagement slower and more difficult, my persistence and knowledge of the industry, and the help of snowballing through my network of industry contacts, fulfilled that original intention to engage senior-level organisers at some of the best landmark venues. In London this includes Olympia exhibition centre which hosts over 200 events each year with a maximum capacity of 7,000 consumers (*Olympia London*, 2018); ExCeL convention centre with over 400 events each year and over 4 million consumers annually (*Visiting ExCeL*, 2021); and the o2 Arena hosting over 260 events each year with a capacity of 20,000 (*The O2*, 2021). In Warsaw it includes the National Stadium of Poland (*Stadion Narodowy*) with a capacity of over 58,000 (*PGE Narodowy - Warsaw National Stadium - The Stadium Guide*, no date); the Palace of Culture and Science (*Palac Kultury i Nauki* / PKiN) which is a 44-storey building in central Warsaw with ballroom, congress and banqueting facilities and a capacity of 4,500 (*Pałac Kultury i Nauki*, 2021); and The Royal Castle (*Zamek Krolewski*) in Warsaw Old Town which is a former royal residence of significant historical importance dating to 1598 and hosting a range of events from banquets, dinners, fashion events and hosting dignitaries (*zamek-krolewski.pl*, no date). I have provided images in Appendix E to indicate the scale, character and architecture of the venues named here.

To summarise my participant selection, the sampling fraction (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016) is a sub-group or proportion of the total population of high-level event organisers at landmark venues. Although it turned out that all 24 participants are white (13 male / 11 female) which raises a socio-demographic question, the participant selection grounds my thesis in the cross-cultural frame required for the study objective to identify gaps between the UK and Poland events industries. Identifying participants was driven by firstly the criteria of the venue meeting my set criteria, outlined above. Once the venue was identified as representative of my sampling target, it was the venue which led secondly to the participant-organiser at that venue. This worked well because I would not know each participant due to my absence from the field, and the change of staff and change of position taking place continually and organically within the industry. Also, this two-step approach reinforces that the participant would be legitimate for this study and I would be in no doubt that they were indeed employed at a high level of organising events and in a landmark venue.

For anonymity purposes I have coded each of the participating interviewees (see key in appendix D) so that I could label their excerpts in the data analysis chapters. None of the participants requested that their venue should be anonymous but some did not want their name to be revealed (see 3.7, ethics). The anonymity code depicts within brackets the country of the participant, followed by the number of the participant, and a generic description of their type of venue. So, the label for Participant One in the UK who is an organiser at the o2 Arena is: '(UK1 – landmark arena venue)'. Where a participant is not venue-based, the generic description is of their role, so the label for Participant Four in Poland who is an organiser of charity events is: '(PL4 – organiser of charity events)'.

3.4 Adjustments and Impacts due to COVID-19

My sample target was 30 in-depth interviews with high-level organisers at landmark venues in London (15 interviews) and Warsaw (15 interviews). I conducted three face-to-face interviews alongside venue observations before the government imposed restrictions on social gatherings and travel (gov.uk, 2020) due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This made it impossible for me to continue to travel to venues in person to conduct interviews and observations. Even so, during the early stage of shutdown, I maintained the high expectation of achieving that target of participant engagement because organisers were now not busy organising events and would have the time to engage with me – possibly even as a welcome distraction. But the opposite materialised because those who were furloughed to stop work but stay employed (ACAS, 2021) were not permitted to do job-related activities and, anyway, were out of the office and away from their desk on temporary leave of absence from work (CIPD, 2021). I also had not anticipated the factor of mass social uncertainty during the pandemic as a result of inadequate understanding, a sense of incompleteness, ambiguous or unreliable information, and conflicting alternatives (Koffman *et al.*, 2020). In such climate, engaging with a researcher was a low priority for an event organiser, so my targets were not responding to my requests. Although I did not reduce my target of 30 interviews, the lack of engagement amounted to achieving 24 interviews: 17 from the UK and 7 from Poland.

The missed target of 30 interviews is rightly an impact of the pandemic. However, it is not a detrimental impact on the outcome of this thesis. The actual 24 interviews achieved did sharpen the sample and did provide credible data with identifiable characteristics of saturation. Furthermore, this impact of the pandemic pivoted my research from interviews supported with observations, to interviews supported with autoethnography, and led me to a wider sample

geographically outside London and Warsaw whilst retaining the criteria of high-level participant-organisers at landmark venues.

I adjusted the criteria of selecting capital city landmark venues in London and Warsaw and widened the catchment area to landmark venues in other city centre locations. This resulted in engaging four venues outside London, and two outside Warsaw. The impact of this adjustment has not affected the validity of the primary data captured because each participant venue fulfils the criteria of a landmark venue in their respective city-centre location. The data capture is still an accurate measure of what was intended to be measured, and the findings are still about what they set out to be about (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016). However, I was now targeting participants at venues not previously identified as within the target geographical range which in fact enabled me to engage a wider network of my industry contacts. This helped because researchers gain access to experienced and knowledgeable interviewees through shared social networks (Rubin and Rubin, 2012). It also introduced the presence of a snowball effect where one participant leads to another (Seidman, 2013) because my contacts were introducing me to their contacts. Snowballing resulted in two participants who are not venue-based organisers but are professional organisers of events in venues that are not 'theirs'. This balanced with one in the UK and one in Poland. The impact of this adjustment has not affected the validity of my qualitative research objective because it still produces legitimate results and remains 'appropriate, meaningful and useful' (Lakshmi and Mohideen, 2012, p.2755).

Another impact of the imposed restrictions was the closure of the University of Essex library which prevented me from browsing for authoritative material during writing some sections of this thesis. I found it limiting not to have physical access to the wealth of resources in the University library, but I still had access to online resources, e-books, e-journals, and the online library catalogue and search platforms (University of Essex, 2021).

Without doubt, the arrival of the pandemic delivered negative disruption to this study, such as the inability for me to visit organisers at venues in the UK let alone travel to Poland. However, the restrictions on travel, having to work from home and not commute, and the closure of the entire retail, hospitality and entertainment sectors afforded more time for me to conduct research, read and write. This project has devoured many thousands of hours that would not have been available to me if I was spending time with shopping, holidaying, socialising, and commuting twice daily. So, the imposed restrictions created freedom for me to study, and I must acknowledge the time afforded to me because of the onset of a pandemic.

3.5 Pilot Test

Although Mason (2014) suggests conducting pre-testing before the pilot, he recommends pre-testing on friends or fellow researchers who could provide useful feedback. I did not feel it was relevant to conduct pre-testing before commencing the pilot because the data collected from friends or other researchers could not be included in my main study. But I did think it was necessary to conduct a pilot to minimise the likelihood of respondents having difficulty with answering the questions and to check the validity and reliability of the data collected (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016). This was particularly appropriate with this project because I would be engaging participants outside academia who would likely not be familiar with research activities and providing their insights for a research project. I therefore conducted three pilot interviews to UK organisers which generated valid data that is included in the study even though I changed the sequence of questions after the pilot, but the questions themselves remained the same.

Conducting the pilot interviews helped me to determine the length required to conduct an interview. The pilot interviews were 25-30 minutes, so I extended the timeframe to 45-60 minutes by asking for examples drawn from participants' experience. The additional time also

provided the necessary requirement to ease the participant into the unfamiliar setting both because it was a research interview and because it was being conducted on a video call. Easing the interview from the beginning was helpful for me as a researcher to gain a better insight to the interviewee, but also for the participant to feel comfortable in their role as actor-participant. For the Poland interviews, the longer time of the interview from the pilot interviews afforded me to ascertain their level of the English language whilst informing the participant of my history of living for 10 years in Poland and my first-hand knowledge of their venue. Again, these social interactions eased the interview.

When I was asking the questions in the pilots, I felt that if the participant had no formal qualifications in events management they might feel inconsequent or invalid for the research. I therefore adjusted the introduction to emphasise there are no right or wrong answers and no judgements being made, and that their responses are to compare across the frame of research and not about what is better or not so good. When closing the pilot interviews, I noticed each participant appeared concerned whether their responses were useable and helpful for my research, which helped me to realise they are not familiar with the activity of research. For the rest of the interviews, I took steps to reassure participants during the interview to ensure they felt confident that I was receiving valid information I could use. I also closed each meeting with further reassurances so they would feel that the interview was valid and worthwhile – which in fact each were.

3.6 Validity and Reliability

Although this study is qualitative, not quantitative, I kept in mind that the data and findings need to be valid and reliable – especially because I was using autoethnography as a research method which meant I was freely able to contribute my own insider knowledge and experience – gained in a privileged position and different to other organisers – to interpret the data. From

an epistemological viewpoint, my interpretation of the stories being told to me (Becker, 2007) during each interview could lead to subjectiveness. However, Dey (1993) attributes the difference between interpretation and misinterpretation is in the reluctance to admit the possibility of misinterpreting data. I was aware from the outset of the risk of misinterpretation not least because of the Poland language interviews. But my authoritative knowledge of events industry practices and behaviours in both the UK and Poland, and my 10-year immersion in the events industry in London and Warsaw, plus my knowledge of the Polish language if it were needed, addressed the risk of misinterpretation of the data. Lakshmi and Mohideen (2012) point out that validity in research requires multiple sources of evidence which act as a representative sample, and that reliability is the degree of consistency in the measurement procedures leading to results. To meet these criteria, I undertook an acceptable level of interviews during the difficult climate of the global pandemic and triangulated the data collected with retrospective observation technique and autoethnography to identify patterns from the data and interpret valid and reliable findings and research outcomes.

3.7 Ethics

Ethical approval for me to conduct primary research was granted by the Department of Sociology at the University of Essex on 5th September 2019 (appendix F). During the course of this study, I adhered to data protection legislation in respect of GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) requiring personal data to be processed and obtained lawfully with consent and opt-out (*Data Protection Act 2018*, 2021). I presented an Informed Consent form (appendix G) to each of my participants at the outset of their face-to-face interview, and for the videoconference interviews it was read out, shared on screen, and their consent was recorded. Each participant was invited to request anonymity at the commencement of the interview, although most did not request anonymity but some did not want their name revealed. None of

the participants requested that their venue should be anonymous. Regardless of these responses to anonymity, I decided to anonymise this study after considering that none of my participants would have known the outcomes of the study at the point when they contributed to the research, and that they had no prior knowledge of the questions I would be asking. I have provided an anonymity key in Appendix D to correspond with the labels of the excerpts in the data analysis chapters, but the names of participants are withheld.

I presented a participant information sheet to inform participants at the beginning of their interview, details about the research project, participant rights, where and how the data would be stored, and how the data would be used. However, the presentation of academic bureaucratic documentation was complicating the process and taking time from the purpose of the interview which was to capture valid data. Also, I noticed from the pilots that formalising the process was not welcome by the participants who appeared to either be bored by the academic language, disinterested in the detail, or in some cases it appeared to frighten them into believing there was a lot that could go wrong, and I felt they might withdraw. As I had no need to collect sensitive or personal data, I relied on my personal ethics, academic status, and industry insider knowledge to convey the assurance of ethical practice and so I provided verbal assurances with the Consent Form and withdrew the participant information sheet.

3.8 Future Research

At a stage during this project, I began to feel that this study is one-sided because it researches the shape of an events industry from the perspective of organisers only. But the shape of an events industry must also impact clients and consumers. Of course, I faced limitations as does every researcher. My main limitation was time-related with a fulltime job as a lecturer, plus the submission deadline requirements for a PhD. I also conducted this research as a PhD candidate rather than a funded researcher, so there were financial limitations preventing me

from undertaking a wider or longer study project. The pandemic also placed its own limitations on my research activities, and it was problematic at that time to conduct field research at any level, let alone decide to broaden it. Because of these limitations it was not possible to widen the field to include client and/or consumer participants, if I had chosen to do so. A future study might therefore undertake primary research of the perspectives of event consumers, and another for the perspectives of clients, who also travel within the global market for international events and are equally event tourists. The insights into the experiences of consumers who travel abroad to attend events in a developed industry and an emerging industry would provide further context to this thesis. Likewise, the insights of clients who book their events into various locations and destinations where the events industry they encounter is at different stages of development would be an interesting study to triangulate.

Another shortfall which came to light during this project and provides an opportunity for future research is that my target population of organisers was drawn only from landmark venues. This means their perspective could be skewed by the security of high volume, high spend business in their socio-professional environment making them feel less competitive. Conducting this study with a population drawn from organisers at smaller independent venues might reveal a stronger attitude of fiercer competition to win business and less willingness to engage with the wider socio-professional network and participate in the community of practice. In the same vein, all 24 of my participant population are white (13 male / 11 female) so it could be worthwhile to conduct future research with organisers across a diversity of characteristics. Another perspective on the organiser's side of managing events would be the views and values of a co-researcher(s) who could contribute and interpret from experience other than mine only. I am a white male organiser of prestigious events, so to conduct research alongside organisers with other characteristics would broaden the thesis and could prove insightful.

There are further limitations concerned with the methods undertaken for this project. In-depth qualitative interviews can elicit subjective interpretations and my own view of the story being told to me because of my insider knowledge of the industry in both locations. Also, my prior experiences, assumptions and beliefs are part of the qualitative research process and as such there is reflexivity. I have acknowledged both these limitations in section 3.1.

I would like to see future research undertaken with similar methodologies to mine, which is novel, original and extremely rare. Here, I am referring to cross-cultural qualitative autoethnography and in-depth interviews. At the moment, event literature is dominated by single case studies but there is great potential for other researchers to input their own experience and research skills to merit individual interpretations which would be different from mine which is from the perspective of a white male with privileged access in the field organising prestigious events at landmark venues.

A dimension which I have considered in this study but have not fully explored is the social impacts and contrasts between the Poland communist legacy and the UK democratic societal structure. The focus of this study was not the country and its social fabric, but the events industry in two different locations and the socio-professional factors which shape it. I have therefore made no findings on wider cultural issues such as gender, religion, clientelism, or command cultures. So, a future research project might replicate this study to understand how an events industry takes shape in different locations with closer-aligned societal histories – two democratic societies, for instance. There is also the opportunity for a future study to research a larger geographical range to include other societal structures such as a country with existing communism, a regime, or a kingdom to add to the findings of this study that is concerned only with the UK and Poland. To do so, would extrapolate further data on how an events industry takes shape in different cultures, to understand if there are factors particular to certain societal

structures, or that perhaps the influences are generic wherever the events industry is shaping and whatever the social fabric of a location.

The next three chapters will analyse the primary data captured from the in-depth interviews with reflections to the literature review and my interpretations through the autoethnography method.

4.0 Data Analysis – Event Culture

I begin the data analysis chapters with looking at the socio-professional cultural construct of the events industry in the UK and in Poland, which is important in positioning where events sit in both a social and cultural context of professional society in two different locations. The UK is further ahead with events than Poland, and I aim to understand what factors influenced the UK events industry as it took shape and whether this is potentially helpful to the development of the Poland events industry. To be explicit, then, I am not analysing wider cultural complexities outside the socio-professional construct of the events profession, such as religion, gender, clientelism, command cultures, or long-time democratic versus post-communist nations. Analysing the emerging industry in Poland will reveal differences, or gaps, in the behaviours and practices of organisers in the developed events industry from the one which is taking shape.

4.1 Cultural Context

Professional Associations

The socio-professional construct of the UK events industry has become overcrowded with 42 industry associations (Bowdin, *et al.,* 2011, p.31) which has the effect of causing confusion, such as which is the best association; why is one association different to another; and which association is a credible accreditation for its members. The existence of so many associations will only fragment the unity of collaboration which is counterproductive to the purpose of industry associations and is a point realised by Bowdin *et al.* (2011) who note the need for consolidation to happen for the industry to move forward. It seems, then, that as the events industry in the UK developed, it has impeded itself. As a former event practitioner myself, I found it difficult to know which or how many professional associations to join, or why I should.

It was easier not to join any and get on with the job of organising events to the best of my ability using the practical knowledge and experience I was gaining along the way. The empirical data gathered for this study clearly shows that UK organisers are benefitting from participating with professional associations, however. They gain training, knowledge of industry best practices, networking opportunities, and knowledge sharing. They also gain accreditation and compliance from some of the industry bodies such as the NEBOSH (National Examination Board in Occupational Safety and Health) and PRINCE2 (PRojects IN Controlled Environments). The problem is that there are so many professional organisations in the UK for an organiser to participate, they will not know them all and cannot participate with each. It thus becomes a lottery of knowing which to join, if any, and is off-putting.

Poland can learn from this as their events industry takes shape. In its developmental stage, organisers are blissfully not being bombarded with professional associations vying for membership sign-up with promises of benefits and teaching the right way of doing things. With the few associations already emerging, such as the Poland Convention Bureau, and Poland MICE, it is easier for organisers to navigate their way to belonging to industry bodies and can hold the industry together. If the few associations are wise, they will absorb more organisers as the industry expands and professionalises. This is certainly good for the associations and will continue holding the industry together within the few industry networks for knowledge sharing and networking. Poland should learn that if the number of associations grow with the growth of the industry, it will splinter the cohesion of the events industry as has happened in the UK. But it will prove difficult for Poland to curtail the growth of associations. Firstly, it would require legislation to restrict associations from springing up. This is unlikely to happen because it cannot be considered a legal problem requiring the protection of law. Also, restrictions by the state on what would be considered as the growth of an industry will be unpopular and would recall the former state of communism. Secondly, growth is organic and

changeable, so who is to determine how many associations there should be to support the industry, and how many is enough, and how many is too many? Poland, therefore, is unlikely to avoid the disadvantages of oversaturation of professional associations until it becomes unsustainable and hinders the cohesion of their events industry. By which time it is impossible to reverse the situation.

In the meantime, before Poland reaches that level of abundance of professional associations, there are too few and their events industry is taking shape without a socio-professional construct of support, learning and knowledge transfer, and is driving the autonomous culture in the Poland profession of organising events. What is required, then, is a balance between just enough associations to cohere and professionalise the profession but not too many that would confuse and fragment the industry to the point of anti-coherence which is the antithesis of the objective of professional associations. The problem is that the development of an industry is not static and is ever-changing so will always be difficult to measure the 'right' level of professional associations in an industry. An events industry will take shape organically and should be allowed to do so but it is helpful to be aware of the implications of oversaturation.

Regardless of the above arguments in how many professional associations should there be, they will serve some purpose to organisers of events. Even though the UK events industry has reached the point of being awash with associations, my UK participants evidence the benefits from engaging with some of the range of industry bodies available to them:

> *"The typical ones for us would be the Association of Event Venues [AEV] and the Association of Event Organisers [AEO]… Sharing best practice and helping to elevate the standards of our industry. We'd be in competition with other venues but actually the other side of it as a group of venues across the country it's our job is to collectively improve our standards and offer our customers the best that they can possibly get."*
>
> (UK4 – landmark convention centre)

UK4 demonstrates here, his recognition of the value of collaboration and his goal in furthering industry best practice above the perceived threat or fear of competition. It might be that socialising with likeminded professionals has the effect to dissipate the fear of competition by realising there is enough business to go around and learning that other organisers in fact pursue other genres from other sources. It would seem that the impetus for education and professionalism is being driven by an individual organiser's recognition for self-improvement of their performance, rather than by consumers or the insurance industry responding to past tragedies. However, the need for compliance with legislation must be a motivating factor for the individual organiser or the company they work for, so it is fair to state that the law is in fact the key driver for professionalism. This is unsurprising because, so far, the events industry has abstained from requiring or even acknowledging the merits of professional education or qualifications. From my experience as a practitioner of events across all genres for a diverse range of clients, plus my roles as venue manager and company director, the emphasis was on an organiser's track history of events and their client portfolio and testimonials. Nobody in the industry was much interested in an organiser's education or qualifications which is why some firms and individuals are trusted implicitly in this industry because of their reputation. The quality and profile of events which an organiser has produced, or the reputation of their venue, carries prestige above any qualifications and I can evidence this in the trajectory of my own career as an organiser. All my jobs arrived to me through reputation, networking, my career profile, the prestige of my client portfolio, and my track history of producing events. Experience builds the knowledge of an organiser and so they become trusted on the basis of what they have done before. The discipline of managing events is still new, even for the developed UK industry let alone the emerging Poland events industry, yet there are signs of

change because entrants to the UK industry are seeking education and qualifications which is driving employers to recruit candidates with such competencies.

UK4 told me that he is keen to share best practice and participate with elevating the standards of his industry. This is important because knowledge, and how knowledge is identified, collated and shared is at the centre of events management (Brown and Stokes, 2021). UK4 seems not to want to work autonomously within the limited parameters of his venue, but take a holistic approach of his industry. Events in the UK is a fiercely competitive industry to win jobs because there are many players in the market, and venues are in direct competition with each other – particularly in London where there are more landmark venues to choose from. It is perhaps surprising that UK4 does not appear to be concerned about competition and shows his willingness to adopt a shared identity and desire to work as a wider collective in order to maintain and enhance industry knowledge and best practice. This is likely due to UK4 being at a secure landmark venue which enjoys high volume and high spend business levels. An organiser at a smaller or independent venue might not be so open to sharing in the competitive marketplace and this could be an area for future research because my respondent population sample are drawn only from landmark venues. Nevertheless, UK4 has provided evidence of the UK community of practice (Brown and Stokes, 2021) in action which connects event professionals to a community with modes of working, shared values and practices. This helps amalgamate the industry and will go some way to forming standardised practices albeit at a local (domestic) level. Becker (1984) categorises such communities of collaboration as an 'art world' consisting of people whose activities are needed for the production of art, and that these same people would cooperate as an established network of links among those engaging within the field for benefits such as networking and knowledge sharing: 'If everyone whose work contributes to the finished artwork does not do his part, the work will come out differently' (Becker, 1982, p. xxiv). All organisers rely on an art world because the nature of organising

events requires the procurement of resources from a diverse range of specialisms such as technical apparatus, catering and security. Even an experienced organiser who is proficient in their role cannot be a specialist in technical, catering and security but it is their role to bring these elements together and oversee them for the purpose of a successful event. I should point out that even if an organiser does have various specialisms, they would not be able to perform them all at once at an event, anyhow, so there must always be reliance on support from an art world.

Poland has not yet evolved a socio-professional network of industry-related professional associations important for supporting event organisers and providing a culture of collaboration instead of competition. This difference is not surprising between a developed industry and one that is in the forming stages. However, already it reveals a gap in the wider global market for international events because the absence of the opportunity for Poland organisers to network within a supportive and collaborative environment leaves them at a disadvantage and behind the developed event industry in the UK. This impacts meeting the standards and expectations of international clients and consumers of events in areas such as quality, service and risk, which UK5 demonstrates:

> *"On all these forums they arrange staff training days… the advice is free and you can share the issues. When you look at a problem you've got, you're probably not the first person to have that problem and other people will have experience of it. I think it's learning from the best practice of others, having benchmarking groups where you can share information, and learning from others' successes and failures."*
>
> (UK5 – organiser of local authority events)

UK5 speaks from the perspective of already participating with professional associations and reflecting on the benefits he is receiving which Poland organisers are not receiving because of the absence of professional associations. He confirms the value of *"learning from others'*

successes and failures" which I will later argue is the core factor in shaping a developing events industry but will mention here that UK5 recognises the importance of the knowledge he gains from other people in the socio-professional construct. It raises the question of how organisers in Poland are developing their way of organising events if they are doing so naively and autonomously. My previously mentioned point about competition is likely a factor in Poland, too. Because there are fewer landmark venues in the Warsaw marketplace the competition is fiercer and organisers will be less willing to engage with a wider socio-professional network, even if it were available to them. Perceived competition may be a barrier which could be dissipated through closer aligned working relationships across the socio-professional construct, which professional associations would facilitate.

Poland organisers are not exempt from rapid cultural changes, and they do need to be part of a socio-professional network to identify and understand trends and changes in the events marketplace. In both the UK and Poland, the uptake of social media, updated regulations and legislations, advances in technology, and new trends such as sustainability and dietary awareness are driving consumer demands:

> *"People are much more aware of sustainability and also wellbeing. Wellbeing and sustainability are the two key things that people keep asking for at the moment. In terms of how events have changed, that comes into it because people are looking at sustainability so that they don't have to fly thousands of miles to get groups of people over from one end of the thing to the other… That's what the industry basically says as well in terms of a lot of the people I've spoken to over the last six months or so… Current trends are sustainability. We have a lot of CSR policies as well in place so that we can show people we do community engagement and charity work, as well. In addition to that, wellbeing is a huge talking point at the moment. We have an entire floor of the hotel, level 4, dedicated to wellbeing. Previous to that it was all about rooftop gardens and private dining rooms. They still come up but the two key trends are sustainability and wellbeing."*
>
> (UK13 – sales account director)

The trends which UK13 describes are recognised from networking in the industry – she says in this excerpt, *"That's what the industry basically says as well in terms of a lot of the people I've spoken to over the last six months or so"*. Lenski, Nolan and Lenski (2014) refer to change as 'socio-cultural evolution' resulting from a society gaining new information and new technology. It requires organisers having to very quickly and constantly adapt their offer to meet changing client and consumer demands. UK13 mentions rooftop gardens and private dining as previous trends which has now pivoted to sustainability and wellbeing. It can be seen in this excerpt how important it is for her to win business by promoting trends as added value amenities. Poland organisers are in an emerging environment and must anticipate trends or identify them. Reacting to trends already taking place is perhaps too late because it takes time to pivot services and the trend could already have changed. This means competition must not be considered as a barrier to socio-professional networks and engagement but should be seen as a supportive and collaborative art world or community of practice for the collective events industry, and the individuals within it, to win business.

As the Head of Events at the London Hippodrome in Leicester Square, I was working in a very fierce competitive socio-professional environment. Even so, I had an open and sharing mindset. For me, I was there to present my venue in its best light to potential clients, and to facilitate the client's questions, concerns and requirements. But the client would make their decision if they wanted to place their event into my venue, so I felt it was not for me to coerce the client to book with me. In fact, occasionally I would reject a client's business if I felt my venue was not a good fit for their event. My closest competitor across Leicester Square, however, would promise potential clients whatever they wanted just to win their business, and he would often disparage my venue to put a client off booking with me. Except, it did not work. Clients saw through his unethical practice and realised he was not trustworthy, and they would book with me instead. From this, I learnt how clients know what they want and will make their decisions

regardless of the intensity of competition. Competition provides choice in the marketplace, so it is the organiser who in fact decides to make competition a barrier – which seems to be the behavioural standpoint of the organisers I interviewed in Warsaw.

My example shows there are benefits from engaging with industry associations and the socio-professional network because it influences the way organisers do their job if they are exposed to professional elements such as knowledge sharing and knowledge transfer. Hanquinet and Savage (2016) see this as infusing social actions with culture through representations, narratives and structures informing, regulating and shaping social actions. Poland organisers are bereft of this influence but it can be seen in action in the UK community of practice with organisers benefitting from networking, communication and liaison, training and accreditation, codes of ethical practice, and lobbying on behalf of their members (Bowdin *et al*., 2011):

> *"Being part of international associations we have exposure to meetings, conferences, seminars… we do a lot of work with the AEV [Association of Event Venues], I chair the event management committee of that association and we talk a lot about working with international clients and how we as UK venues set best practice, especially safety, how we set standards of best practice."*
>
> (UK6 – landmark convention centre)

Here, UK6 raises another dimension for his participation with industry associations because some UK participants viewed it as important to be associated with professional associations for reasons other than networking and knowledge sharing, but for accreditation purposes. UK4, UK5, UK6, UK8 and UK10 each mentioned their accreditation to the National Examination Board in Occupational Safety and Health (*NEBOSH*, no date), and UK4, UK6 and UK8 mentioned their accreditation to the Association of Event Organisers (*AEO*, 2017). This seems also to be true with Poland organisers who seek accreditation from belonging to the few industry-related associations that do exist such as the Poland Convention Bureau (*Poland*

Convention Bureau, 2020) and Polish MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions) (*MICE Meetings Incentives Conferences Events Incoming Tour Operator*, 2018) which were mentioned by both PL1 and PL2 landmark venues. This is helpful with the professionalisation of the industry because participating organisers will learn the regulations and legislations to which they must comply. Such regulations and legislations are brought about from previous disasters at events, so the industry is in fact shaping itself around the learning from previous mistakes. It is the law, then, which drives organisers to professionalise their behaviours and practices, and seems not to be driven by any pressure from consumers or the insurance industry responding to past tragedies.

The problem with accreditation, as I see it, is that it does not mean much to anybody outside the industry's socio-professional network, such as consumers and personal clients who likely do not know what the accreditation body is or does. Corporate clients and MICE clients might be aware of some of the accreditation bodies, so if that is the organiser's client base, it would be helpful to display these accreditations. There are benefits for organisers being accredited to some of the industry affiliations and doing so might mean personal and professional development and a requirement to uphold a level of standards, which is a good thing. But in the Poland events industry the accreditations tend to be set up primarily for marketing purposes, rather than professional bodies for the purpose of knowledge gain and transfer. So, they will not make much headway into bringing Poland organisers closer to the standardisation of event management practices or narrow the gaps between events in Poland and other locations within the international events community, which is a lost opportunity. If we were to step outside the events industry and look to the hospitality sector – which still is a closely related sector to events – we could identify the Michelin Star or the AA quality rating systems as examples of successful accreditations that have reached recognition by consumers. The global events industry could achieve this as well if it managed to establish an international accreditation not

only for industry professionals but for consumers (clients and attendees) to recognise excellence in areas such as qualifications, training, experience, safety, quality, service, and standards.

Events as a Profession

The presence of industry associations professionalises an industry, although Klegon (1978) questions the definitional criteria by which professions can be distinguished from non-professions. Macionis and Plummer (1998, p.435) categorise 'profession' as 'work based on theoretical knowledge, occupational autonomy, authority over clients and a claim to serving the community', but Klegon (1978) persists that for this approach to be viable a consistent set of traits of professions need applying with limited ambiguity. Perhaps this is why Pierre Bourdieu uses the concept of a 'field of forces' (Harker, Mahar and Wilkes, 1990, p.8) which he developed after personal experiences 'in the field' in order to examine the social space in which interactions transactions and events occur (Grenfell, 2012). Bourdieu's concept is closer, I feel, to what I am studying in this project. The discourse, however, has moved from the 'sociology of professions' to the 'sociology of professional knowledge' because of the need to distinguish professions from other occupations and the need to deploy expert knowledge in minor occupations and semi-professions (Young and Muller, 2014). Yet, Eyal and Pok (no date) argue the case for the 'sociology of expertise' because professions is about fields and jurisdictions whereas expertise considers spaces between fields. Whatever it gets called, each recognise how expert knowledge distinguishes professions from other occupations and that all professions involve some practical expertise, which leads me to consider knowledge as a qualifier of expert occupations. Applying this to the culture of the events industry in the UK allowed me to identify that the UK does have a professional industry, and so does Poland – it is just that each are at different stages of development. This is reflected clearly in the interviews

with my respondents who take the view that their knowledge is a qualifier of professional expertise:

> *"...Developed through knowledge and experience."*
>
> (UK7 – landmark conference centre)

> *"[No qualifications] but practical experience."*
>
> (PL2 – landmark venue)

> *"[My] formal education was within the process of preparing for Euro2012 because within the company policy we had some project management – it wasn't event management but project management. Apart from this it was through experience mainly. More experience and less formal education."*
>
> (PL6 – landmark convention centre)

These excerpts, and others in my data capture, demonstrate how organisers in both locations value their knowledge above their need to study for an events qualification. This mindset sets the direction of how the culture of an event industry takes shape without the presence of a community of practice to evolve the learning of how to do the job, which then becomes embedded as the way of doing things. It is characteristic of Bourdieu's 'habitus' concept (Grenfell, 2012) whereby social practices are characterised by the occurrence of regularities without the presence of rules to dictate practices. This was observed by Marciszewska (n.d., cited in Smith and Robinson, 2009) that a knowledge-based economy is emerging in Poland to replace the previously dominant national culture, which she attributes to the impact of intense competition brought about by globalisation in the sectors of culture and tourism. Douglas and Wildavsky (1982) alluded to this as well by informing us that we owe our current perspective to modernisation. My concern is that if knowledge has developed through Poland's way of doing things, it does not make it the right way of doing things, although Foucault recognises

that strange practices are actually governed by structural codes of knowledge (Carrabine, 2007). Perhaps, I should take the view that it is just different knowledge and might even be skewed by socio-cultural factors such as emerging from a communist regime. This could be the reason that the knowledge I gained in the UK in how to manage events seemed to be strange practice for Poland organisers, so they rejected it (which is discussed below).

As an industry professionalises it requires a culture of regulation and education both in the '*re*-production' of knowledge and experience from one generation to the next, and '*pro*-duction' through the generation of new knowledge (Bourdieu, 1973, cited in Harker, Mahar and Wilkes, 1990). Until now, however, the events industry in the UK has eschewed formal education or qualifications in events management. This is largely due to the relative newness of the discipline because until recently there was no provision of university courses in events management. The recognition of professionalism for an organiser, then, has been driven by testimonials, reputation, networking, client portfolios, and job history – not by their education or qualifications. In fact, it is why some firms and individuals are trusted implicitly and their word and abilities are considered more significant than any qualifications. Trust is all-powerful in winning event jobs because a client is making the decision to place the success of their event into the hands of an organiser. A client will not place their trust in qualifications but in the demonstrable experience and knowledge of the organiser. Likewise, an organiser cannot convey trust to a potential client by qualifications alone but will need to demonstrate their portfolio of clients and successes. This is where accreditation from professional associations plays its part because clients might be impressed (at least, in part) with an organiser's membership of 'authoritative' bodies.

Qualifications

However, there is a shift in recognising accreditation from qualifications since universities in the UK have been providing degrees in events management. Recruiters are now requiring a relevant qualification when advertising their job vacancies. This in turn requires applicants to meet that requirement. Thus, entrants to the industry are seeking knowledge of organising events whilst gaining a recognised qualification to make them more employable.

Whilst junior entrants to the events industry in the UK can reproduce knowledge from current senior organisers, it will not be knowledge gained from the source of formal education because it was not available to senior organisers when they set out to organise events. It could be, then, that junior entrants learn poor practices or the omissions of certain procedures from their managers. The same is true in Poland because senior-level organisers still do not have access to formal education, so junior entrants will reproduce knowledge from the way senior-level organisers do things. However, I have found evidence that the new generation of organisers in the UK who are graduating with qualifications in the art of managing events will produce new knowledge to implement with their future roles and transfer it to their senior organisers, thus importing formal knowledge to the industry, which UK14 shows is already happening:

> *"One of them has a degree in event management – one of my event planners in my ops [operations] team has a degree in event management from Bournemouth… I have worked with people who have got an event management degree though in various different roles."*
>
> (UK14 – portfolio of royal museum venues)

UK14 is accepting she will gain knowledge from her team-member who brings formal education in event specialism to the team. She also acknowledges here that she has worked alongside people outside her team who have event management degrees and although I am not aware how she found this out from them, if she has learnt they do have a degree she is likely to learn other knowledge from them, such as ideas and best practices, strategies, trends, and

risk control. I find this is a key factor for positively manipulating the shape of an events industry by educating junior entrants in the specialisms of managing events, who then enter the industry and transfer that education to other practitioner organisers and senior organisers who are organising events with knowledge only. This demonstrates how the industry is shifting from the previous stance of abstaining from formal education and professional qualifications. An even clearer example of junior entrants importing their formal education into the UK events industry to influence senior-level organisers is presented by UK15:

> *"We're quite an old department – except for one person we're all over 50 and that means our education is a mix of formal and operational experience – but formal in hotels rather than events. The reason for that is that when I went into education, as far as I remember there were only two universities that did formal degrees in events – and the whole events education format has just absolutely mushroomed and now there are a huge number of people who go and do events in universities all over the place. One of the challenges that we find is the dynamic between us as older people and the type of organiser-client we are encountering and providing service for. They are half our age and come from a very different background of A-levels straight into a university events degree. It's a very interesting dynamic between a 22 or 23-year-old who has the title 'event manager' and myself who is 58 who has the title 'event manager' and we are two entirely different people. You have to be quite careful with your language when dealing with a client who is half my age in that you can't be demeaning in any way shape or form because they very much take exception. Strangely, you are managing the relationship before you are managing the function."*

> (UK15 – landmark event hotel)

Here, UK15 is confirming that he is being taught by new entrants who are *"organiser-clients"* bringing their events business to his hotel. It is a plurality of learning with that of UK14 because she was learning from her educated team-members, whereas here UK15 is learning from his educated clients. Because the clients he receives are now educated in events management, UK15 has had to re-evaluate his relationship with this type of educated organiser-client and is having to adjust to doing his job in a new way, being led by junior entrants to the industry. This

is evidence of a culture shift in the UK events industry brought about by formally educated entrants interacting with current senior organisers and altering how they had previously learnt to do their job. It is also relevant to mention here that graduates are looking to enter the industry in a prestigious role or with an event agency or venue that has a demonstrably good reputation. UK15 is not resisting nor rejecting interaction with educated and qualified organisers or clients, so the industry does appear to be accepting the shift from experience to academic qualifications.

Poland can to a certain extent reproduce knowledge from current senior organisers but again it will not be knowledge gained from formal education. More problematic for the Poland events industry is the lack of production of new knowledge because there are no graduates with events specialisms to import to senior-level organisers – a fact which PL4 realises:

> *"Actually, when I came to you – when we met in Warsaw – this was a good opportunity for me to actually see it from the other side – not from the amateurs' side but from the professional side, which was very good for me. So, now I'm in the business, so to speak, as far as our events are concerned."*
>
> (PL4 – organiser of charity events)

PL4 is confirming that she gained professional knowledge from me, which otherwise she would not have been able to import to her role as an organiser of events. Even though she was already organising events, in her interview she labels herself as being on the *"amateurs' side"* and views me as being on the *"professional side",* and that it was good for her to see it from my professional side. If she had not met me – or any other event *"professional"*, as many other organisers in Poland have not – she would not have seen it from the professional side which reveals the gap to fill in educating organisers in Poland.

Another gap in knowledge is that Poland organisers tend not to enter the industry with experience in a related field, whereas organisers in the UK at least import knowledge from their experience in related fields, such as hospitality:

"I went to Ealing [Ealing College of Higher Education, now the University of West London] for my HND, HCIM [Higher National Diploma in Hotel, Catering & Institutional Management]. I did my placement at the Grand [Hotel], Eastbourne. I was a chef at Country Inns for 18 months, was at the QEII [conference centre, London] for two and a half years, a restaurant manager with Hilton for two years, and have now been with P&G [Payne & Gunther catering] for 22 years."

(UK1 – landmark arena venue)

UK1 demonstrates a typical entry route for senior-level organisers in the UK because events management was not a defined discipline at the time when she entered the industry but was closely associated with hotels, hospitality, tourism and leisure management. Since then, there has been a more refined and focused growth in events education to meet the rising demand for events professionals (Getz and Page, 2016). Events management is now accepted in the UK as a quasi-profession because of the increasing number of graduates from educational programmes as well as holders of designations from professional associations (Getz and Page, 2016). When in the turn of time graduates elevate to senior roles, carrying with them their formal education and knowledge in organising events, the UK events industry will self-professionalise as an occupation based on advanced complex knowledge (Macdonald, 1999). It is clear, then, that the tension between academic qualifications and experience has faded.

Macdonald (1999) further makes the point that professions are possible only when knowledge emerges as a socio-cultural entity in its own right, which is evident with the UK events industry in recent years. This is indeed why some firms and individuals have become trusted and their word and abilities are considered more significant than qualifications because they can demonstrate knowledge, experience, and successes. Still, having an education in a related field, but not in events, does not put UK1 at a disadvantage in her ability to manage events. The skillset of a hospitality professional closely matches that of an events professional such as flexibility, adaptability, communication, social and human skills, and decision making

(Bowdin, *et al.*, 2011). Bowdin *et al* further identify project management skills as key to the role, including developing and working in a team and providing leadership, integrating the project plan, presentation and negotiation, and defining client requirements.

Specialist Education in Events

> *"I didn't study event management. I was working part-time at the college and just got more and more involved in that, really. I was asked to step in on a full-time basis very much as a coordination position and then just worked from there. I had the opportunity to work as the event manager at Alexandra Palace for just under 4 years. I then joined Earl's Court as an event manager. At Earl's Court I slowly progressed through the ranks of management – soft-services management, that kind of thing. Then I was asked to be head of events at Earl's Court during the Olympics until we closed the venue. When Earl's Court closed, there was already a head of events at [name of venue] so a new role was created as deputy director for operations looking after all core services interacting with events, looking after everything from catering, security, traffic and logistics, car-parking, media."*
>
> (UK10 – landmark exhibition centre)

The career path of UK10 demonstrates how venue management is closely related to project management which is defined by the Project Management Institute as 'the application of knowledge, skills, tools and techniques to project activities to meet project requirements' (PMI, 2013, cited in Haniff and Salama, 2016, p.12). UK10 could thus be considered a project manager rather than an event organiser but the transferable skills are identifiable across those two roles anyhow. More pertinent is his knowledge in the sector of managing events and venues. He does mention he was *"the event manager at Alexandra Palace for just under 4 years"* so he does have an events background. But Alexandra Palace is a significant venue for someone who *"didn't study event management"* so it is unclear what skills he had at that point other than the experience he carried from *"working part-time at the college… very much as a coordination position and then just worked from there"*.

I have found acceptance both in existing event literature and in the events industry that a formal education in a related field such as hospitality or tourism is relatable to managing events. Bourdieu (Grenfell, 2012, p.103) refers to this as 'institutionalised education' in an attempt to develop a habitus where people know the 'rules of the game'. This is dissolving tensions between experience and academic qualifications as the industry pivots towards professionalisation. However, for me this raises a concern with what rules of the game of managing events might be unknown if an organiser is not educated in how to play it – if they have studied hotel management, say, but not events management. That is why I have identified the other themes for this thesis as Tourism and Events, and Risk Awareness at Events because these are two critical factors required for organising events, above technology or sustainability, say, in the global marketplace for international events. An education in hotel management does not fulfil the specific needs of organising events, operating an events department, or managing a venue, which is confirmed in the interview I conducted at this event hotel:

> *"No. I don't [have any formal specialist training or education in managing events]. No, I don't think [my team] do. I'm sure it's not the answer you're wanting to hear. Certainly, the two most senior people in that department have years of experience [pause] in events."*

> (UK11 – country house hotel)

UK11 was concerned I would not like his answer which indicates he accepts there is a shortfall in his hotel because nobody within his events department has specialist training or education in managing events. As an industry insider, however, I still reflect the status quo of trusting an individual's abilities more significantly than their qualifications. Yet, my view is changing partly through observing how the UK11 events department falls short in their management of events, but largely because I am now an educator and see value in the insider knowledge I can

impart to students as they study for an academic events qualification. I am therefore a measure of, and actively involved with, the changing attitude of the industry in recognising the need for events qualifications.

This attitude change is reflected also by UK11 feeling conscious of the under-qualified personnel in the events department at his hotel. UK11 demonstrated in the interview that he recognises the need for academic qualifications alongside experience, thus evidencing the shift in the industry from abstaining from professional qualifications in organising events. This is in fact a glaring admission from him because he told me events are a third of his hotel business (the other two thirds are accommodation and food and beverage). He then appeared to counterweigh this apparent professional deficiency by reassuring me – more possibly to reassure himself – that the two most senior people in his events department have *"years of experience in events"*. This is empirical evidence of trusting individuals, their word and abilities more significantly than any qualifications. However, experience still is not a substitute for them having formal education in the specialisms of managing events because the years of experience they have may not be the best way of doing things. I am familiar with the team in the events department at this participant hotel and have worked alongside them as an observer and a researcher, so I can identify where the shortfalls occur in their way of doing things which is shaped from their years of experience and their lack of formal education in the specialisms of managing events. Plus, they still will lack theoretical understanding of factors such as consumer psychology and marketing behaviours, as well as recognition of the need for setting event objectives, after-event evaluation, and risk management.

As an industry 'insider' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007), I recognised there is a gap in specialist education at hotels which host events. Because of this, I designed and implemented an events management module for hotel management students which delivers a 'short-burst' package of specific knowledge and understanding of events, which after all is as a significant

revenue stream for a hotel. Also, my books and book series are designed to bridge a gap between theoretical textbooks and practical insights from an industry insider, and blend hotel management with events management. It is my intention for hotel management students to gain an understanding of events so they can lead an events department in a hotel. Otherwise, they will do as UK11 described, which is to rely on the decisions and behaviours of their events team who may not be formally educated but have shaped their way of doing things from their experience, which might not be the best way or the safest way. This approach is factual in the industry and is being reinforced by treating experience as more significant than any qualifications.

UK12 is the organiser at another hotel property, which hosts around 300 events each year and considers its hotel and events operations to be *"two separate businesses, each with its own entrance",* yet UK12 also demonstrates his lack of specialist education:

> *"Not really. At college and various other times I've done a lot of casual work on events – bar work, plated service, silver service back in the day – all those sorts of things… Just a lot of operational experience. So, no, I don't have any qualifications, but I do have a lot of common sense and practical experience, which is the best thing anyway. You need that, you know. Learning on the job and also seeing a lot of events happen when I was at college – the flow of things and just through experience of doing bigger and bigger events in venues, you learn what works, what doesn't work. A couple of [my team] do [have qualifications] – a couple of them have degrees in event management."*

(UK12 – landmark event hotel)

This excerpt highlights a significant deficiency for UK12 who told me that catering revenue from events was higher at his hotel than total rooms revenue. Clearly, events are a significant contribution to the profitability and sustainability of his hotel business – yet he has no specialist training or education in managing events. It seems odd that people without an education in

organising events can lead an events department which has a significant impact and contribution to their business, but this is typical of an events industry at any stage of development. UK12 is in his position because of his experience, not for qualifications, which is another factual of the industry reinforcing the trust in an organiser's abilities more significantly than any qualifications. Also, an organiser such as UK12 in a senior role at a landmark event hotel, commands implicit trust in their word and abilities more significantly than their qualifications mostly due to their seniority.

I have considered whether leaders such as UK12 might feel inadequate in the changing socio-professional culture of events which is now recruiting graduates in events management, as UK12 has confirmed is happening in his department. I did not ask that question, though. However, I ascertained from my participants that they welcome imported specialisms with graduates. Still, it remains an opportunity for future study to ascertain if there is conflict and friction because graduate entrants are educated with specialisms which senior-level organisers do not possess, and whether the specialisms of graduate entrants are being held back by the rigid developed practices of their seniors who consider abilities as more significant than any qualifications.

None of my Poland respondents are educated in the specialisms of events management which is unsurprising because there is no access to formal institutionalised education in events management in Poland. Thus, no habitus has yet evolved where people know the 'rules of the game' (Grenfell, 2012, p.103). In fact, Poland is at the stage where the UK used to be in the stance of eschewing any formal education or qualification in events management, driven by a belief that if specialist education is not provided or available, it cannot be needed. It does make sense, then, for the events industry in Poland to place trust in the word and abilities of firms and individuals more significantly than any qualifications which are not yet available, anyhow.

The ones who are trusted, are those with a portfolio of clients, testimonials, demonstrable experience, and a track record of previous successful events.

In addition, my Poland participants are not educated in related fields with transferrable knowledge and skillsets such as hospitality, hotel, leisure or tourism management. Instead, then, organisers in Poland must create their own 'rules of the game' and play it their way. Of course, this means an obvious disparity between the game they are playing in Poland, and the game the rest of the international events industry in their habitus may be playing. In other words, there is a different set of rules. The gap here is due to the progressing stage of the events industry in Poland which is why experience from any field is valued above specific experience, or experience in a related field. This can be seen in this excerpt from PL6:

"Well, I started working for the sports and international sports cooperation department within the local community town hall which used to have the only big stadium in Poland for a long, long time before Euro2012 arrived in Poland and gave the boost to the construction of many other modern arenas. I dealt with lots of cultural events, international events with our partner cities – obviously it was a smaller local scale but still it was the whole logistics and the whole schedule and preparation process of the events. Later on, I went on to a higher-level regional administration level where I was the head of the Euro2012 preparation team for a year. After that year, I went on to Warsaw to the Polish Ministry of Sport responsible for preparing infrastructure for Euro2012. We had the project management infrastructure for highways and mainly for the construction of the new stadiums [sic] for Euro2012. We had realised the project of Euro2012 in Poland was not only about having fun and enjoying 3 weeks of tournament, but it was about giving a boost to the economy, new roads, new stadiums [sic], hotels, huge impact on Polish development and growth which was the main aim, apart from having fun watching football. After that for two years I worked at the National Stadium in Warsaw responsible for event management and deputy head of the sales department. After that I moved to Katowice because a brand new international congress centre was commissioned and they were looking for the operator so I started working for the company that won procurement responsible for that company operating events."

(PL6 – landmark convention centre)

Similar to the pathway of current UK senior-level organisers, PL6 demonstrates how he entered events without specialist education in managing events but had *"started working for the sports and international sports cooperation department within the local community town hall"*. This brought him close to events, but he did not tell me what work he was doing for the sport cooperation department in the local community town hall. This raises another reason why the industry eschews any formal education or academic qualifications in events management: because senior organisers themselves have succeeded to their position without the need to be educated or qualified in the discipline. They are wont, therefore, to reject the need for others to be formally educated or qualified. PL6 found himself as *"the head of the Euro2012 preparation team for a year"* which is a significant leadership role in the field of events management and then he talked about the "*project management infrastructure for highways and mainly for the construction of the new stadiums [sic] for Euro2012"*. When I analyse the career history of PL6 as he tells it, it is less of an event organiser career and more of an infrastructure project management career for events. There is nothing wrong with that, because events do require infrastructure project specialisms in their habitus or art world, but the point is that PL6 does not have the education in events management to make those infrastructure decisions that will impact an event – he is relying on his experience only, which does not appear to be as an event organiser.

The difference in Poland is that organisers enter the events industry with experience only, and without education in a related field such as hospitality. In the above excerpt, PL6 acknowledges the economic and infrastructure benefits to Poland from hosting the UEFA (Union of European Football Associations) Euro2012 football championship due to which he gained learning in project management. This highlights my earlier point that the production and reproduction of knowledge can get going where cultures provide the policy transfer opportunity to learn from each other. Still, PL6 did not indicate to me any knowledge or competences he gained from

organising events. This could be because the UEFA championship is a mega-event, defined by Bowdin *et al.* (2011, p.21) as an event that is 'so large to affect whole economies and reverberate in the global media', and by Quick (2020, p.36) as 'an event that exceeds 1 million visits, with a capital cost of at least \$500m and the reputation of a 'must see' show'. Schwarz *et al.* (2017) point out how mega-events operate through a constitution, protocols, regulations and codes of conduct which is perhaps why PL6 indicates that he developed skills in project management rather than event management. I would expect an organiser involved with a mega-event to have received learning in managing events, rather than in project management, because it would be more event specific. As PL6 made a natural and organic move into organising events because of his involvement with the UEFA mega-event, it demonstrates that need. Instead, he is leading the events at a landmark convention centre without the specialisms in managing events. This presents obvious shortfalls, but for me it signifies a lost opportunity, and the indication that the value of events education as a discipline is not yet recognised in Poland.

All is not lost, though. The events industry in Poland is shaping, and during my interview with PL4 she evidenced the beginnings of courses in events management now being offered at both the University of Warsaw and the University of Commerce:

> *"[Talking about universities] A new thing which has just been created and we have no idea whether it is any good."*
>
> (PL4 – organiser of charity events)

Poland getting going with a culture of knowledge reproduction and production (Bourdieu, 1973, cited in Harker, Mahar and Wilkes, 1990) is a sign of the opportunity to begin to reduce the knowledge gap in Poland with other players in the global market for international events whose socio-professional habitus has already taken shape and is producing graduates to import

specialisms into their events industry. Although this is an encouraging sign, PL4 is a current organiser in the capital city who says she has "*no idea whether [the events course] is any good.*" Clearly, she has heard of the new events course or has learnt about it somehow because in Poland it is a new and unique offering to now have a course in events management. Even so, PL4 has not taken any effort or interest to find out about it, or if it *"is any good"*. This indicates to me that firstly she is not fully immersed in the socio-professional construct of her profession as an organiser of events to find out more about the new course. Secondly, she must feel she has no need to take the new course that might now teach her how to do her job. This informs me that PL4 is eschewing any formal education or qualification in events management. It also demonstrates her nonchalant attitude for the significance of qualifications. As an organiser in the Poland events industry then, PL4 is not fully engaged with her habitus, and PL6 further indicates that Poland is shaping a fragmented autonomous approach when delivering events:

> *"This industry over the past years has not been integrated because the number of the big arenas and congress centres like mine has increased over the last 5 years. Before that there was a shortage of them. Within those past 5 years the industry has not been able to integrate yet to lobby on government level for new laws to support the situation. But I think it was last year the organisers of concerts, gigs, entertainment shows and big festivals such as the Warsaw Orange Festival have come together and they set up an organisation in order to exchange knowledge and in order to operate or to work out some common policies towards venues, clients and government.*
>
> <div align="right">(PL6 – landmark convention centre)</div>

Collaboration

PL6 is confirming what PL4 has said: that the industry *"has not been integrated"* and "*the industry has not been able to integrate yet"*. But, PL6 does show that the industry is beginning to move towards collaboration and there is a socio-cultural shift towards a community of

practice happening, with all the benefits this brings through socio-professional networking, such as government lobbying. PL6 went on to explain it was the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic which caused a crisis in the events industry and triggered the need for organisers to collaborate because of the sudden and urgent reliance on cooperation from others (Becker, 2008):

> *"What we have seen because of the COVID-19 situation… pushed us to exchange knowledge on our situation and how we can influence decisions the government is going to take to support our industry. It was probably the first time that I had the chance to come together to talk with the main arenas and congress centres because we wanted to support and give some input to people representing different entertainment and sport associations to talk on our behalf to our government to work out best solutions in these difficult times. It was the first time we were exchanging knowledge and we working on documents to propose to our government and was also the time we realised how important this type of cooperation was… I think this is something that will lead in the future to set up a body that would assemble representatives of venues which would be helpful."*
>
> (PL6 – landmark convention centre)

It seems that the pandemic has forcibly advanced the events industry in Poland into developing a culture of knowledge sharing, although there are indications this was happening anyway. PL6 talked about the dramatic changes caused by the arrival of the pandemic as the catalyst for collaboration, and that he has found it both necessary and helpful to network with other venues which would have been treated as hostile competitors prior: *"It was probably the first time that I had the chance to come together to talk with the main arenas and congress centres…"*. This reaffirms my earlier finding that competition is healthy and should not be held as a barrier to collaboration within the community of practice. Smaho (2012) states that knowledge sharing is a consequence of and influenced by dramatic changes in economic and social conditions as well as changing consumer demands and requirements, which can certainly be applied to

Poland since the collapse of communism in 1989 and then its integration to the European Union in 2004, but also reflects the sudden and more recent arrival of COVID-19.

The pandemic may have been the driver to speed collaboration in the Poland events industry but organisers will need to maintain that urgent momentum to move rapidly in catching-up with the advanced state of the UK events industry. Frankel (1979, p.9) calls this 'orientation towards participation in the international system', which is the core objective of this thesis in researching the potential for an emerging events industry to orientate towards participating in the global marketplace for international events. I feel, however, that it does not always work like that in real terms – that it is an 'orientation towards participation in the international system' – because emerging locations tend to happen suddenly and quickly which is one of the factors that causes the gaps within the one marketplace. I am thinking here of Qatar hosting the 2022 World Cup or when Poland and Ukraine hosted the EURO2012 football championship – these locations found themselves thrust into the market for international events rather than oriented towards participation in the international system. There is not always, then, the luxury of orientation before events in an emerging location are already taking place – it is this which defines it as being an emerging location in most cases. I do accept there are opportunities to develop a culture of orientation once a country is beginning to emerge so that any gaps could be identified and get narrowed, but this will require cultural momentum. Also, there are locations which decide to emerge into international events, such as Egypt, Vietnam and Mexico (see 1.1) and do orientate themselves to be attractive for hosting future events.

Social fields are not level, as pointed out by Bourdieu (Grenfell, 2012), and capital advantage allows for more accumulation and further advancement. For this, Poland organisers will need to recognise their need for collaboration with foreign sources in order to take advantage of differences in expertise and to access markets around the world (Argote *et al.*, 2000). Bourdieu (Grenfell, 2012) explains this can happen in terms of competition for capital advantage in social

spaces or 'fields' such as economic capital, cultural capital, knowledge capital and social capital. With both willingness and the recognition of the need, Poland can adopt legislations from the UK because the events industry in Poland is at the point of opportunity to advance to professionalisation. Domański (2003) highlights that Poland is pushing closer to the standards and structures of other EU countries because progress in organisation and management is driven by greater competitiveness, so the motivation is already here.

There are, however, embedded societal and cultural characteristics in Poland which are barriers to the rapid development of the Poland events industry through collaboration. Rojek (2013, p.10) makes mention of 'social ordering' where there is a process of conditioning social behaviour through formal (education; law) and informal (understandings; can-do attitude) processes. I have observed this many times whilst in Poland as an events consultant contracted to provide my expert advice only to be told 'you might do it that way in London but it won't work here', or 'that's not the way we do it here'. This factual appears at odds with my finding that there is trust in the word and abilities of an organiser because my word and abilities are beyond doubt. However, this is a socio-cultural difference rather than my finding that it is about the significance of qualifications: the two are very different. Beckford (2017) states that expressions such as 'We've always done it like that' is an indication of systems and procedures becoming fixed or frozen and the pressure for change meeting high resistance. Although this type of resistance is not limited to Poland, it is a socio-cultural attitude influenced by Poland's communist past and is reflected in research undertaken by Dobosz-Bourne (2004) into the different processes of *Opel Polska* and *Vauxhall Luton*. It showed her that the same set of practices can become the norm and a source of power in one location (as my expertise was for me in the UK) or be rejected as a negative practice in another location (as it was for me in Poland). Even so, Lipton *et al.* (1990) found there is intense desire in Poland to re-join the economies of Western Europe for the obvious achievements as well as a race to distance the

failures of communism, making it the first country to enact fundamental market reform under a non-communist government.

As an events consultant and resident in Poland, I was unsure why I was being hired to provide my expertise only for it to be rejected. Organisers seemed to take the view that they should bring me in to their operation because I was English, which carried prestige for their organisation. Also, because I had worked with the Queen of England which was a further layer of prestige for them to acquire. Perhaps organisers in Poland thought they might learn from me, or maybe they wanted to enhance their own profile by involving me in their business. Whatever their motivation, organisers would welcome me in, and pay me, but very quickly they would obstruct my progress by insisting my practices would not work in their environment or undermining my input by reverting the things I was attempting to advance. Because this happened frequently, almost consistently, I observe it to be a cultural distrust of foreign intervention, or it could be cultural pride to reject collaboration with an outsider's way of doing things. To underpin my viewpoint with a real-life example, I obligingly corrected a young Polish man's English when he was considerately conversing with me in my language and he wanted to exercise his English. I thought it would help him if I corrected his mistakes. But instead of welcoming my corrections and accepting learning from a native speaker, which was a singular opportunity for him, the young man became seriously offended that I was pointing out to him what he was doing wrong. For him, I should be grateful for his attempt to speak my language, not rebuke him for doing it wrongly. Mishler and Rose (1997) identify distrust as the legacy in post-communist Europe as a cause of resistance to outside interference, which seems to be the case with the rejection of my professional expertise, even after having paid to receive it from me. Giddens (2012) concurs mistrust as being an actively negative attitude towards the claims to expertise.

Although I experienced resistance and mistrust in the field in Poland, I did not encounter the same when conducting my research. I attribute this to my participants not fully understanding their role because they were unfamiliar with participating in research activity whereas in the field they 'believe' that everything they are doing is the right way because it is their way of doing it. Still, none of my Poland interviewees exhibited signs of self-consciousness or inadequacy. Every participant appeared willing to answer every question I asked, even in areas that might reveal their shortfalls such as their career path into events, their professional qualifications, whether they engage with professional associations, and if they conduct after-event procedures. Some of the responses that I have transcribed demonstrate their candour, for example:

> *"Tricky question… Never done by me."*
>
> (PL7 – organiser of events)

> *"None."*
>
> (PL6 – landmark convention centre)

> *"It is the client's job to set objectives."*
>
> (PL5 – landmark historic venue)

I felt pleased by the frankness of my participants in Poland more than those in the UK because it demonstrates I achieved their trust. I expected honesty from my UK population but anticipated some hesitation from the Poland population. This anticipation was one of my presuppositions I mentioned in section 3.1 but it turned out to be unfounded and in fact helped underscore the validity of data captured from all my participants. That presupposition, however, was not simply a vague notion of mine which became dispelled, but was handed to me when I was embedded in the field because although communism collapsed in Poland in

1989 its societal and cultural legacy is lasting. Parents, in bringing up their children, draw on the experiences from their own upbringing (Macionis and Plummer, 1998) so the behavioural traits get filtered through ongoing generations: the grandparents teach the parents of the children who are living today. I experienced this in everyday societal behavioural traits in Poland, including having to first argue before being accepted as friendly, and being accused 'by the other side of that which they are guilty' (Goebbels, 1934). Anyway, the frankness of my Poland participants was helpful, which is underpinned in this response by PL5 to my question, 'how do you know you have done a good job':

> *"…You are the event organiser so you know when an event has worked. You know immediately after this. We have feedback from clients. Usually they are pleased, I must say, with our work. But the Polish companies say, "Thank you, goodbye".*"
>
> (PL5 – landmark historic venue)

PL5 is showing here that he considers himself to be the best judge of him doing a good job. He assumes this without conducting structured after-event evaluation procedures which would inform him from stakeholder feedback and performance measures. From this, it seems organisers place trust in themselves because of their own experience and abilities, rather than feeling trust in the learning they would have achieved if they had academic qualifications. It is evident PL5 does not understand, for instance, the value of conducting after-event evaluation otherwise he would be doing so. The after-event evaluation procedures dovetail with obtaining structured feedback, conducting debrief meetings, and setting event objectives and measuring they were met. So, by not implementing after-event evaluation, indicates PL5 is not conducting any of the other after-event procedures. None of the Poland respondents are conducting after-event evaluation but this is not a socio-professional or cultural difference from the UK because most of the UK participants do not do so either. Some of them do, however, so there is more

after-event evaluation happening in the UK than in Poland. But this is not because of socio-professional or cultural differences, or because of learning from formal education. My data findings will reveal that those UK organisers who are performing after-event evaluation do so for reporting purposes and because UK organisers have experience of conducting after-event procedures and so it becomes embedded in their practice, but it is not being done because of the understanding of the value of doing so.

Post-Event Evaluation

In the previous excerpt, PL5 says *"We have feedback from clients… But the Polish companies say, "Thank you, goodbye"."* which reveals how Western clients expect to give their feedback but his Polish clients just walk away at the end of an event. This is likely because Western clients are routinely being asked for feedback and get used to giving it, so they do so when in Poland as well. Not obtaining feedback from his Polish clients should concern PL5 because he has no measure of his performance from the domestic marketplace to determine whether he is doing a good job. His statement reveals complacency with obtaining feedback because he happens to receive it from Western clients only because they offer it, but not because he is routinely conducting procedures to obtain it. This is where the value of after-event procedures is not being recognised because understanding the value of doing so means it cannot be overlooked and must be carried out as a routine procedure at every event, every time. It is what I have referred to in Berners (2017, pp.149-150; 2019, p.188) as performing the job of an event organiser in its entirety whereby pre-event planning is 95% of the job, the onsite logistics is 3%, and the after-event procedures are 2% – but if the after-event procedures are not performed, the job is only 98% done.

UK entrants to the industry are being educated in the value of after-event evaluation and feedback so there is change happening in the socio-professional practice of managing events.

PL4 demonstrates this is not yet happening in Poland because she is another who measures her performance from a reactive and subjective viewpoint by interpreting positive but informal feedback as affirmation that she is doing a good job:

> *"If our clients are pleased with what we do, if they are really pleased with that, that means we think we have done a very good job."*
>
> (PL4 – organiser of charity events)

For PL4 to *"think"* she has done a good job is not the same as knowing it to be true and factual. If she were conducting post-event evaluation and feedback, she would not use the word *"think"* but would have full and total confidence in the fact – in the context of her speaking during a recorded in-depth research interview, she would have wanted me to know that. I could be accused of being pedantic with the language here, especially because this is a Poland participant, but I would defend this from the standpoint of a researcher because this participant is excellent in the English language having been born and raised in the UK before her parents returned to Poland. I therefore do not consider this to be a language differential that skews the data. There is further ambiguity revealed in this short excerpt from PL4 with her use of the word *"if"* in *"if our clients are pleased with what we do"* which indicates that her clients are not always pleased with what she does, or that she does not know in every circumstance whether they are pleased or not. Underpinning my analysis is the knowledge that PL4 does not conduct structured evaluation procedures.

PL6 then provided me with further evidence that there is trust in the 'feeling' of doing a good job and is important to Poland organisers, which again is based on informal feedback with no structured after-event evaluation processes in place:

"[Sigh] How I measure it? I think basing feedback is from the client and internally – both ways. I've done a good job because I haven't had complaints. Everything was ready on time. Um, the client wants to come back next time. The area that I was responsible for worked effectively and this is how I feel."

(PL6 – landmark convention centre)

The sigh at the outset of this response to my question could be taken as a delay tactic whereas if structured post-event evaluation were being conducted by PL6 he would perhaps be direct with his response without any hesitation. My view might further be underscored by him repeating part of my question, *"How I measure it?"*. Here, PL6 states that he feels he has done a good job if he has not received any complaints, which is counterintuitive to having done a good job because there would not be any complaints, anyhow. Receiving complaints as a measure of performance is not the same as conducting procedures of feedback and evaluation to know that the organiser has done a good job. For one thing, not everybody will complain: there are many reasons why people do not complain. Also, people might not complain to PL6 but might raise their concerns to somebody else within his organisation or outside, and he would not get to hear about it. Furthermore, the purpose of planned structured feedback is to penetrate all stakeholder groups – so PL6 might not receive a complaint from his client, say, and thus feels he has done a good job, but he has neglected to obtain feedback from consumers, sponsors, suppliers and his staff. But the overriding value of post-event evaluation and feedback is to learn whether the job was done well and the event met its objectives, and to learn what could be improved – it is not about waiting to learn from complaints.

These excerpts confirm that organisers in Poland are not planning to meet objectives such as client satisfaction, meeting consumer expectations, or achieving repeat business. If a client or consumers were not happy with an event, or did not wish to return, there is a real risk that the organiser will not know about it. For one thing, not all clients and consumers will complain to the event organiser, but for another it will already be too late to fix (Berners and Martin, 2022).

The problem is that audit practices such as evaluation can be seen as mundane, but they create the larger picture which takes on contours and identifies patterns (Strathern, 2000). Beckford (2017) highlights that learning results from a systematic cycle of planning, experimentation, reflection and consolidation which supports the more structured approaches that the UK participants describe:

> *"I'll answer it in two ways. From a commercial point of view has it delivered to its commercial objectives. Yes or no. The second way, we send out a survey after each show to get feedback from our organisers. If they're not happy they'll tell you. The other thing is I spend time with my clients and we'll have non-commercial meetings – we'll leave the contracts and money and have a qualitative meeting and say right let's forget the money side of it, where are you with your event? What do you want to do? How was the last event? If it didn't go well what can we do to help you to get it better – is it something we can do; is it a connection we can help you with; is it a bit of knowledge; is it someone in the industry who might be able to help?"*
>
> (UK4 – landmark convention centre)

Here, UK4 conducts non-commercial meetings with his clients pre-event which demonstrates learning in and between projects to develop competence in ordinary activities (Clegg, Skyttermoen and Vaagaasar, 2021). UK4 is clear about the importance of meeting commercial objectives but separates the non-commercial objectives to allow for his understanding of how an event can be successful in other key areas. This approach is in line with the opinion by Getz (2018) that event managers need to implement continuous evaluation to become learning organisations, achieve their goals, and meet the standards expected of a profession that provides services to society. At least most of the UK participants undertake after-event evaluation in some form, compared to none of the Poland organisers which confirms there is a wider lack of understanding in Poland in the value of evaluation. It also reveals there is a failure in recognising evaluation as industry best practice which exposes this gap is due to the stage of evolution of the events industry in the UK versus Poland. Collaboration with an events industry

socio-professional structure (Becker, 1984) would redress this, as is already apparent in the UK. I have found no indication this gap is caused by cultural or social differences, it is only about organisers learning the value of conducting after-event evaluation in the first place, in which the UK respondents are more aware is a measurement of performance:

> *"Obviously there are the financial ones [KPIs]. And then what we do pore over are the Net Promoter Scores – we just refer to them as NPS. It is very much a tool used by a number of media-type people. If you can imagine that you're asked the question after an event, 'how would you rate the event and would you come back' if you score (out of 10) between 9 or 10 that's a plus. If you score less than 5 it's a minus. Between 5 and 8 is considered to be neutral. We have a vast database and we send this question out to hundreds, if not thousands, of people saying 'would you recommend to come back next year'. Then we collate what all the scores are. You get a NPS whereby you've got all the 9s and 10s and you deduct all the 5s or less, and you'll come up with a plus or minus. And that's the key thing we use as a KPI going forward."*
>
> (UK3 – landmark sports venue)

This excerpt from UK3 describing his use of Net Promoter Scores as a tool to evaluate and measure consumer feedback responses concurs with Goldblatt (2011) who says evaluation is connected to setting Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for an event. Badawy *et al.* (2016) explain KPIs are mostly quantitative information important for planning and controlling, creating transparency and supporting management decision makers. Measuring performance through KPIs and evaluation leans towards an audit culture which has shifted from finance and accounting to all kinds of reckonings, evaluations, measurements and accountabilities (Strathern, 2000) and has social consequences in locking-up time, personnel and resources. This is a barrier for organisers to want to conduct post-event procedures because of the anti-climax effect once an event has gone, plus the drive to move on to the next event for commercial reasons. Gerritsen and Van Olderen (2014) pick up on the socio-cultural effects of evaluation by identifying the positive effects of an increase in participation in the type of activity connected to an event, and the strengthening of regional tradition. They identify

commercialisation of traditions and the adaptation of traditions to commercial requirements as negative socio-cultural effects. Strathern (2000) points out that an audit culture itself creates problems with checking and evaluating, such as the requirement of trust in the measures used and the sources of information. In this respect, UK3 told me that his NPS measures can be negatively impacted even by the weather because if it is raining on the day of an event, the consumer experience will be compromised and the NPS would be lower. For this reason, UK3 needs to take account of the weather during each event otherwise the NPS results would be untrustworthy:

> *"What we've learned for example is that Net Promoter Scores are governed by the weather. In an event that's predominantly an outside event, however good your food and beverage service might me, however good the actual event is, if it's the British summertime and it is pouring down, then your NPS drops. So, when we review our annual NPS we actually have above it 'good weather, bad weather'. But we are always looking for high plus scores… You will get companies – some budget airlines for example – they have got an NPS score that is about minus 70 or whatever, so we're always looking for a high plus score."*
>
> (UK3 – landmark sports venue)

It is a valid point for me to pick up on because the audit culture in the advanced UK events industry is especially pronounced whereas in the Poland socio-professional culture of events it is largely non-interventionist. This in itself means that an event happening in the UK faces stringent audit culture processes which adds time, logistics and money to comply with, yet events in Poland might not require resources to be applied to be compliant. UK3 is concerned about the reputation and social status of his mass-participant venue which is why he spends resources on an external media and branding agency to implement and analyse the NPS. Allen *et al.* (2010) consider evaluation as a critical step in the planning process of an event where objectives set at the outset become the benchmarks to determine its final outcomes and success

in delivering a service to clients and consumers. Not all UK respondents recognise this because some evaluate their events without setting or using objectives to measure success:

> *"Not measurable objectives, no. Every event has a detailed schedule – if this is met, we know we've done a good job."*
>
> (UK1 – landmark arena venue)

Event Objectives

UK1 seemed confused with what an objective is because an objective must be measurable by definition. I was unsure, then, what objectives UK1 would set if they were not measurable ones. The *"detailed schedule"* UK1 refers to is otherwise known as an Event Management Plan (EMP), function sheet, or running order but this is not produced for measuring objectives. An EMP is a logistics document used for communicating the schedule of an event to interested parties and, yes, for that reason it does help in ensuring the objectives of an event do get met, but that is not its purpose. Besides, meeting the content of a schedule might mean the event ran well and smoothly, but does not necessarily mean a good job was done because that will only be determined from the after-event evaluation and feedback audit procedures.

UK2 stumbled over the question of setting objectives:

> *"No; no formal objectives. It sounds weird but I suppose we just know what a good event looks and feels like, and what needs to be done, and what we need to achieve but nothing formal, so nothing written down in an event plan… No. It's a good question."*
>
> (UK2 – organiser at an institution)

This response, like UK1, introduced confusion and ambiguity, yet my question 'Do you set event objectives for every event?' was clear and simply worded. There was no opportunity for

a respondent to misconstrue the question, particularly as the participant population are event organisers. Furthermore, this question was not presented in a questionnaire but during an interview where the participant had the opportunity to ask me what I meant. But none of them did. Also, the pilot interviews did not reveal any issues regarding this question. I am confident, therefore, that the question was not the issue: it was the non-understanding by UK1 and UK2 of what an objective is. I probed UK2 by asking a follow-up question: 'If you are not setting formal objectives, how do you know the event was a success?' to which she responded:

> *"Hmm. [Long hesitation]. That's interesting isn't it? And it's different for different events. [Long pause]. That's, that's really interesting."*

The statement, *"It's different for different events"* is an acknowledgement that objectives need to be set for each event as a routine procedure but UK2 does not do this. It was clear to me that my questions were pushing UK2 to think about objectives and evaluation processes for her events whereas the job itself had not required her to do so. UK2 then went on to list a range of potential audits for the different events she organises, including *"good levels of attendance; no technical problems; people stayed for the drinks reception afterwards; do people look happy after the event; everybody is mentioned in the speech; the right people are in the front row…"* UK2 could easily have answered 'No, I don't set objectives,' but her floundering, hesitation and reaching for a list of possible factors she could use as measures, indicated that she does recognise her shortfall in not setting objectives.

Data obtained from Poland is not dissimilar to the UK where organisers know it can be important to set objectives, but do not do it:

> *[Hesitates] "Well, yes but not always on paper. In Poland the majority happens during conversation. [We] set objectives verbally. Objectives are less visible than they should be, not necessarily put in writing. That's how it works, if you know what I mean. I don't believe anybody in Poland does such a thing. Honestly, in Poland we don't do it, we don't measure it because there is never time after an event."*
>
> (PL7 – organiser of events)

This statement leads me again to the conclusion that not conducting strategic management practices is not an omission caused by cultural or educational differences between the two countries. It is purely the nonunderstanding of what an objective is and what it is for. PL7 said his event objectives are *"not always on paper… the majority happens during conversation. [We] set objectives verbally. Objectives are less visible than they should be, not necessarily put in writing"* which is not conducive to an objective acting as a KPI – a measure of performance. How is PL7 going to know how well his event performed if he has not set objectives to measure against? He then professed that he does not *"believe anybody in Poland does such a thing"* but I am uncertain how he would know this. He asserts "*Honestly, in Poland we don't do it"* which suggests that just because he does not set objectives, he perceives nobody else does. Finally, PL7 admits *"we don't measure it because there is never time after an event"* which is the truth reveal. Organisers in both countries are displaying the same fragmented approach as each other. It is a case, then, of the organiser possessing the understanding of the value of these types of procedures to ensure the success of their events.

PL7 reflects the previous point made by Strathern (2000) that audit practices can be seen as mundane. Like other organisers, PL7 blames lack of time after an event to conduct the post-event procedures. From my knowledge in the field and my observations, lack of time is often the reason proffered by organisers to explain why evaluation is the neglected part of the event cycle (Quick, 2020), so my research data underpins what is factual in the industry. But there is always time for strategic management practices – it is part of the job. Besides, lack of time is

not a legitimate reason because these activities might take place after an event but are planned before an event – in the planning stages. It does not require time afterwards to plan them, nor does it take time to action them – the consumer does that: it is the customer who sits down to complete an evaluation questionnaire, which is why I have pointed out in Berners and Martin (2022, p.53) that 'time does not prevent feedback and evaluation – poor planning does that'.

At least PL7 was candid in his readiness to blame time but the wider data I have captured from the interviews reflects a laissez-faire culture exists within the events industry in both the UK and Poland. This reveals itself in the area of strategic events management but is visible as well in both the Event Tourism and Risk Awareness sections of this thesis. Again, this is more prominent in Poland than the UK which is demonstrated here:

> *"Of course [I set objectives] when I am the organiser because sometimes the [venue name] is not only the venue it's the organiser or co-organiser of the events. But when the [venue name] is a venue, it depends on the client, that's their job to set the objectives."*
>
> (PL5 – landmark historic venue)

This statement shows how PL5 sets objectives when he is the organiser of an event in his venue, and by using the term *"of course"* at the outset of his response, indicates he attaches value to setting objectives and understands it is an essential part of event management procedures. Yet he is displaying the laissez-faire characteristics by foregoing the need to set objectives in the situations where clients organise the event in his venue. He is differentiating between events he organises at his venue and those which he hands the venue over to a client, what is known in the events industry as 'dry hire'. Even if PL5 could absolve himself of the need to set objectives when an event at his venue is being organised by a client as a dry hire, there still will always be event-related objectives relevant to his venue in every situation. These could be financial goals, consumer satisfaction levels, client satisfaction levels, achieving a repeat event,

levels of service standards, and risk mitigation. PL5 reinforces the dataset that organisers in both the UK and Poland do go some way to setting objectives and conducting evaluation but do not fully understand the value of doing so, or appreciate the relationship between objectives, KPIs and evaluation as metrics of performance (Jeston, 2018).

4.2 Socio-Professional Culture

In Berners (2017, p.3) I have categorised the complex socio-professional culture of the event industry in developed markets such as the UK as 'an industry in itself'. This is because the structure of the event industry in the UK is multi-layered with event management agencies, production companies, freelancers, and the many services which support a developed event industry, from marquee suppliers to power supply companies, temporary trackways, perimeter fencing, and crowd barriers – what is defined in section 2.1 as fitting both with an 'art world' (Becker, 1984) and a 'community of practice' (Brown and Stokes, 2021). In essence, the size and structure of the socio-professional network which has developed to support the UK industry is what determines the shape of the industry.

The event industry in a developing market is a different shape: it has less need to develop support from a socio-professional network, so has less layers which makes it a simpler and 'noticeably flat' (Berners, 2017, p.5) shape. This is certainly what I observed in Poland as an embedded insider because it was difficult to source creative resources, there was limited choice of support services such as technical companies, and there was no existence of professional associations to network with suppliers. In Poland there were not even 'event organisers', but events were being organised by companies involved with marketing, public relations, and media. It was the same to varying degrees when I have produced event projects elsewhere such as in Italy and Portugal. In Rome, for example, I could not source an event theming company

for a Bon Jovi album launch I was organising so I toured the 400,000 square metres of the *Cinecitta* film studios (cinecittastudios.it, 2021) in search of props before deciding to import my entire theming from London.

Deficiency of Organisers

Although it is rapidly evolving in Poland and there are now event agencies which is shaping structured levels to the Poland events industry, in an emerging events industry there is a void of specialist event professionals. This causes gaps in the specialism of organising events that get filled by non-specialist personnel working in related media-centric professions offering themselves as bona-fide event organisers. Data collected from the professional backgrounds of my interviewees confirms my categorisation:

> *"I worked for 15 years in the mobile telecommunications sector. I did some marketing there and that's why I'm here at [venue name] to somehow support marketing and to organise events. But most of my career was in a different place and different sector. I do not have any theoretical background but rather I could say practical. Please bear in mind this is not a commercial company. The municipality makes all the decisions here because we have to ask if we can host the events in this [venue name] so most of the decisions are on the side of the municipality."*
>
> (PL2 – landmark venue)

PL2 demonstrates a deficiency in specialist knowledge of managing events but he was awarded the position due to his marketing background which was seen to be closely related and therefore sufficient to lead events at a capital city landmark venue. Such venues attract big events, international clients, significant budgets, and sometimes complex logistics. Importantly, this type of venue has a public profile and needs its reputation protecting. Being in Poland it is probable PL2's employer would not have found a candidate with specialist event or venue management experience, anyhow. His comment that *"most of the decisions are on the side of the municipality"* must limit his ability and authority as a venue manager. If he had specialist

experience in events and venue management to give him confidence and authority, he might feel empowered to take decisions in his capacity as the venue manager. From this perspective – the perspective of organisers – there is similar cultural structure in both the UK and Poland as the following two excerpts from a UK and then a Poland participant describe:

> *"It was a little bit accidental. I was actually studying a double degree in marketing and politics. I was working in a hotel whilst at university and I got offered the position of being the events manager at the hotel and I really liked it. That's basically how I got into that. And then I volunteered in India for a little while with underprivileged children. I was told I had no London experience… they wanted London experience in particular. So I started off at the very bottom at [hotel name] working on reactive sales and planning of events as well. Then I went into proactive sales, my remit currently is basically ensuring I have event management agencies and corporates coming into our hotel. My remit is the globe, US market, Asian market, Europe market, as well as the UK market knowing about [venue name]."*
>
> (UK13 – sales account director)

> *"Many, many years ago when the idea of the [event] came to my mind, I had no way out. I had to start organising events. So, it came naturally. I didn't study anything which involves organising events, so it came just naturally from the bottom of my heart and my head."*
>
> (PL3 – organiser of charity events)

Both UK13 and PL3 demonstrate their similar accidental pathway into events management because the events socio-professional status in both countries – and at different stages of development – makes no demand for relevant academic qualifications, training, experience or specialisms. This provides a snapshot of an events industry wherever it is, filled with professionals who have learnt to do the job but may not be doing it right. In these cases, however, the organisers are shifting from 'dedicated and resourceful amateurs' to 'trained and skilled professionals' (Bowdin *et al.,* 2011, p.xxviii) because of the experience they are gaining

and their social practices becoming characterised by the presence of rules to dictate good practice (Bourdieu, n.d., cited in Grenfell, 2012) which is explained by PL4 here:

> *"We gained experience whilst organising things because we always had to deal with these problems and we always had to see to it that everything was tip-top. There would be no problems during the event. One of the events that we organise is really huge therefore we had to see to everything. And have professionals deal with the problems, we didn't do it on our own. We had fire-fighters, security, medical people, special guards from the [venue name]."*
>
> (PL4 – organiser of charity events)

Like all my respondents, PL4 has evolved her own mini-culture for organising events which might not be the right way, or the safe way, or the optimum way. She says that she relies on what she labels *"professionals"* collaborating to ensure she produces a successful event, so there is evidence of her use of a wider art world supporting her mini-culture. Becker (2008) recognises that all human activity involves the joint activity of a number of people and he suggests patterns of collective activity is a sociological approach. PL4 does therefore have a sociological approach, albeit unintentional. From the professionals she mentions, she is compelled to rely on specialists for her events to comply with safety, security and legal requirements.

PL4 is not an unusual situation in events socio-professional culture because there appears to be societal acceptance that events are run by people who refer to themselves as organisers but without attaching any professional merits such as specialist education or experience to qualify them as such. In Poland this could be because organisations are reacting to newly-emerging free trade bringing competition from the rest of the world (Lipton *et al.*, 1990). Domański (2003) recognises Poland firms must adapt to unprecedented competition in a sudden environment of catching-up to new demand outpacing the labour resource of organisers experienced or educated in managing events. But I have found voids in event specialism in

both Poland and the UK which get filled by organisers with limited or no specialist experience. At a hospice, which I observed in the east of England, they had developed an internal structure of organisers who had at some point engaged in fundraising activities as altruistic payback (Berners, 2017) for their reliance on the services of the hospice at a time of need. In this situation the hospice had evolved a culture lacking the specialist event management skills required of the event lifecycle (Holmes and Ali-Knight, 2017) which includes planning events, setting event objectives, marketing events, optimisation and growth of events, safety protocols at events, and after-event evaluation. Pielichaty *et al.* (2017) focus on levels of skill and competency required for organising events, which were compromised at the hospice because their events were being run by all sorts of people with no specialisms in events management. This became counterproductive to the requirement for vital fundraising opportunities through events because their events were mismanaged and quickly in decline.

The culture seems to have developed where organisers are not being recruited into the industry because they hold industry-related academic qualifications. Nor are they being offered event jobs because of their track-history in organising events:

> *"Huh, I worked for 15 years in mobile telecommunications sector. I did some marketing there and that's why I'm here at [venue] to somehow support marketing and to organise events. But most of my career was in a different place and a different sector."*
> (PL2 – landmark venue)

It is fortunate, then, that such organisers are supported by the wider socio-professional habitus of the industry in which they operate which is having the effect of dampening their deficiencies of knowledge and expertise. In other words, they can rely on the expertise of other skilled operatives such as specialist caterers, venue managers, risk and safety experts, trained security, technical specialists, and agency staff such as waiters. It is a structure which works in covering

the gaps within the industry which should be led by event organisers, but in many cases is led by other people with specialist industry skills. But this will not be happening to the same extent in a location such as Poland where the industry has not yet evolved that wider socio-professional structure. In Poland, the industry is developing a culture that is highly autonomous of managerial control and largely immune to formal management regimes (Thiel, 2012, p.4) within the one global marketplace for international events because there is no community of practice to cohere or align organisers and narrow the gaps.

There is a further widening gap between the UK and Poland culture of events management due to the correlation between educational investment and income (Domanski, 1999). Domanski asserts that education and job complexity are the indications of social role and status when converting investment in oneself into reward. This is a point which is explored by Kuhlmann (2013) in locations of fundamentally changed concepts of welfare state and the governance of professions. The social and professional approaches to a career in events has changed since then, with events in the UK now seen as an industry in its own right (Getz and Page, 2016) which is why this gap is widening. In Poland there still are very limited opportunities to invest in one's own education as an event organiser (or opportunities to employ educated event organisers for that matter), so qualifications are being sourced from other disciplines. This is indeed the case with PL5 who describes himself as a *"historian and an educator"* and is now the director of education and events at a landmark historic capital city-centre venue:

> *"I am a historian and I was an educator in [venue name] which has its educational department. It started with art history students, etc. and we are doing lessons for students attending these lessons. Because of the head of this branch of the education department – she is also the head of the events department – she knows me and when there was a need because the former events director was retiring, she asked me to replace him and jump in."*

(PL5 – landmark historic venue)

I feel certain that within the internal culture of PL5's venue it was a natural and organic progression *"when there was a need because the former events director was retiring, she asked me to replace him"* – that is how PL5 put it across to me, anyhow. Even though his was an appointment of convenience and organic progression, the process neglected the potential to recruit somebody with event specialisms. PL5 freely admits he was teaching *"art history students, etc."* which does not make him an organiser of events. But the woman who PL5 said was *"the head of this branch of the education department"* would not recognise this or know the need for the job to require events specialisms – she just happened to be *"also the head of the events department"* and there was an opening which PL5 was there to fill. As I have mentioned, it is unlikely in Poland that an events specialist would be found for this position, anyhow, so why bother looking. This is evidence of the industry eschewing any formal education or academic qualification in events management. But until Poland develops their events industry to be a socio-professional culture that provides investment in oneself through education, it will not begin to narrow the gap between itself, the UK, and other developed locations that are already in the marketplace for international events.

It is not only the perspective of organisers which is affected by the socio-professional culture being created. The way an events industry takes shape will have impacts in other areas for organisers managing events such as how successfully organisers penetrate foreign markets to attract event tourists, and how well they meet the service and quality expectations of international clients and consumers. It is documented by de Kadt and Williams (1976) that old perspectives linger in underdeveloped countries which has implications in modern society where knowledge-based occupations are integral to modern social formation (Macdonald, 1999) and is a consideration for the development of the events industry in Poland, particularly because of its hangover legacy from communism.

This chapter has identified the cultural standing of events management in the UK and Poland and has unexpectedly revealed it is the socio-professional network which impacts how an events industry takes shape. Whilst an industry is in development, it eschews any formal education or academic qualification largely due to the belief that if they are not available, they cannot be needed. This places emphasis on the value of experience over education wherein lies a tension. It means some firms and individuals become trusted implicitly because of their client portfolio, testimonials, experience of events, and track record of delivering successful events so their word and abilities are considered more significant than any qualifications. This is evidenced in the Poland events industry and was evident in the UK until universities began to provide courses in events management. Thereafter, entrants sought academic qualifications for their employability, and recruiters responded by requiring qualified candidates to apply for advertised job vacancies. In the UK there is also a wide supportive structure linked by professional associations to facilitate networking for the benefits of knowledge sharing, knowledge transfer and education in the specialisms of events management. These factors help align people who are organising events and is narrowing the gaps in their behaviours and practices. The empirical data strongly supports this is happening in the UK, but there are 42 professional associations in the UK events industry which is causing confusion and is serving to fragment the cohesion of the industry as organisers are networking in smaller circles. It is as if the industry is being pulled together whilst splitting apart. Nevertheless, those organisers who participate with any of the professional associations are professionalising the industry by learning regulations and legislations and recognising their need to be compliant. So, I have determined that although the law is driving the professionalisation of the industry because organisers need to be compliant, it requires the individual organiser or the company they work for to recognise the need for learning and being a better (and safer) organiser of events. It is therefore not due to any pressure from consumers or the insurance industry that is driving the

professionalisation of the industry because of previous tragedies at events, but the need to comply with law in case something does go wrong.

In Poland where the structural shape of the events industry is flatter with many fewer professional associations it is easier for organisers to gravitate towards those associations for networking and knowledge sharing of best practices. This should provide cohesion to the events industry in Poland. But too few associations mean organisers are developing a culture of autonomy which is seeing a fragmented approach to managing events, as well. As the Poland events industry expands, it is likely that the range of professional associations will grow also. But Poland could learn from the oversaturation in the UK which is splintering the industry. It is unlikely Poland will learn from this, however, because it is difficult to curtail growth without legislation, and it is not a legal issue. The problem then, is in the balance where there are enough professional associations for the benefits of cohesion through professional networking, knowledge sharing, learning best practices, and achieving training and accreditation, versus too many associations that diversify and fragment the industry.

At first glance, fragmentation and autonomy might seem not to be issues of concern within the context of a domestic marketplace. Organisers in the UK are becoming ever more aligned in their practices which is a good thing. If Poland has gaps due to its autonomous culture because that is how it works in that market, clients and consumers of events will quickly learn to accept that culture. However, in the context of the global marketplace for international events where event tourism is a factor with clients and consumers travelling across borders, it is problematic because the gaps between the two countries are more disparate, which is a factor likely to be unknown by clients and consumers.

5.0 Data Analysis – Tourism and Events

This second data analysis chapter is concerned with how organisers in the UK and Poland approach the tourist sector of international events. Event tourists incorporate international clients and foreign consumers, so this research investigation would not be complete without the theme of tourism because it is a core element of events in the international marketplace. As an events industry takes shape, any gaps in approaches and procedures for tourism events will have impacts upon the global marketplace for international events. It is a factor that all my participants each find themselves in direct engagement with tourists by organising events which attract international consumers (Ferdinand and Kitchin, 2017) whether it is clients or attendees. This is because the target participant population for my study are organisers at landmark capital city venues which naturally host international clients and international events. I am informed by Getz and Page (2016) that tourism is closely related with events because of the importance of planned events as 'products' or 'attractions' and that events are consumed in the leisure time of tourists. Ferdinand and Kitchin (2017) agree by describing the international approach to events management as sharing a focus on other international activities such as tourism and are concerned with differences between cultures and countries. They argue that an international approach to events management requires an engagement with international activities, cultural differences and global issues, so tourism in events is not only about clients and consumers, but it can also be about organisers travelling in their job role, as UK9 shows here:

> *"I moved to New Zealand to work on the America's Cup, then I came back to work on the Olympics in Athens. Then I worked for Ellen MacArthur around China. Then I moved out of sport because I got stuck in a rut. Then, I went back for the 2012 Olympics."*
>
> (UK 9 – organiser at an institution)

This example demonstrates the existence of a dual approach to event tourism where UK9 was performing the role of a tourist searching for new experiences, for something different (O'Donnell, 1997) whilst undertaking her job organising events at those host locations and experiencing the needs and expectations of leisure tourists, and what attracts tourists to unique events (Gelder and Robinson, 2009). The internationalisation of events allowed this to happen for UK9 and is indeed now one of the motivators for people choosing to enter the events industry, as has long-been with the hotel, tourism and aviation industries offering travel opportunities, international experience and worldwide networking. Event organisers, like most people, would claim they know what it is like to be a tourist because of their experiences of travel in their leisure time. But UK9 is highlighting the potential to place oneself in the position of gaining experience as a 'working tourist' and gain experience of organising events for tourists, whilst being a tourist. Many young people achieve similar by taking a working 'gap year' and can bring their international experiences into their early career. This type of tourism is helpful for closing gaps between developed events industries and those which are emerging because travelling organisers will export and import knowledge, experience, and practices.

I did the same when I relocated from London to Warsaw and carried with me knowledge and experience, and behaviours and practices of organising high-end events in the developed UK events industry, which I could share with the emerging events industry in Poland. I then learnt how they do events in Poland and brought this back with me when I returned to the UK. However, as I have mentioned in the previous chapter, my expertise was routinely rejected in Poland. This fact draws a distinction between leisure tourists who are visiting for pleasure only and are welcomed purely for their spend, not for the provision of their experience or expertise, and professional tourists who bring with them their own ideals drawn from experience and expertise which is not welcome in a socio-professional environment that is already practising

its own way of doing things, rightly or wrongly. As Dobosz-Bourne (2004) explains, this could be because the same set of practices can become the norm and a source of power in one location or be rejected as a negative practice in another location. Nonetheless, my experience of the rejection of expertise from abroad due to socio-cultural differences showed me it is a factor that will impede the advancement of a developing events industry and will slow the potential for narrowing gaps in the global marketplace for international events.

5.1 Event Tourism

For economic benefits and job creation, governments have turned to tourism as a growth industry, with events seen as image-makers and creating positive profile of a destination and it is recognised that event-goers will spend on travel, accommodation, and other goods and services in the host city (Bowdin *et al*., 2011). The value of Britain's event sector is estimated at £70bn (375.5bn PLN) employing 700,000 (Business Visits and Events Parternship, 2020), whereas events in Poland contribute £6.5bn (35bn PLN) employing 220,000 (*Poland Events Impact 2019 report*, 2021). These statistics indicate that the number of events in Poland and what they contribute to the Polish economy is not yet at a level to be taken with seriousness on a societal level as it is in the UK. I can example how the growth of events business impacts seriousness towards events by the socio-cultural change I accomplished as the head of events for Thorpe Park Resort which is a thrill-experience theme park attraction in Surrey, UK (*Corporate Events Packages & Facilities | Thorpe Park Resort*, 2021). Events were considered by the organisation to be insignificant and a disruption to the daily running of the core business as a leisure theme park. But when I grew the level of events business, and revenues increased substantially, it created a snowball effect. The more events revenue I generated for the company, the more I was budgeted to spend on improving event facilities for consumers, meeting client expectations, identifying further opportunities to offer my clients, and marketing

to new clients. I was given more areas of the theme park as venues for hosting events, and events then became the only revenue-generating department during the dormant winter months by continuing to host Christmas parties, conferences, craft fairs and car clinics when the theme park was closed to the public. The effect of this shift was not only financial but pivoted Thorpe Park from a landmark leisure attraction only, to a landmark event destination as well.

Destinations have realised that same impact from events and are developing and implementing strategies to increase visitation (Bowdin *et al.*, 2011). Locations are spearheading event tourism as a social phenomenon by developing events and the infrastructure for events to take place and attract consumers who would be motivated to travel to an event. Hays, Page and Buhalis (2013) identify social media as a tool to reach a global audience with limited resources in a rapidly changing culture because it reaches people at a scale and speed larger and more quickly than previous communication mediums. To contextualise the growth in usage of social media, Qualman (2009, cited in Hays, Page and Buhalis, 2013, p.230) reports that if Facebook were a country it would be the fourth most populous in the world. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), tourism is the largest industry in the world and is growing at an extremely rapid rate (O'Donnell, 1997). The WTTC reports that the COVID-19 pandemic caused a 49.1% downturn in global GDP from tourism and losses of almost £3.23TN in global tourism. This aside, in 2019 tourism in the UK contributed 10.1% GDP at 237.6BN GBP (1.2TN PLN), and in Poland 4.7% GDP at 106.5BN PLN (20.2BN GBP) (*Travel & Tourism Economic Impact | World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC)*, 2021).

So, the value of tourism and its growth is not disputed, and event tourism could be considered a hybrid genre of events designed to attract consumers to travel to an event in 'the development and marketing of events for tourism and economic development purposes' (Getz, 2008, p.406, cited in Ferdinand and Kitchin, 2017, p.318). In recent years there has been growth in places to where consumers travel to experience certain features, characteristics or a perceived

attraction of some sort (Buhalis, 2000) and in Poland cultural consumption is shifting from high culture (museums, art galleries, religious sites, historical landmarks) to popular culture (festivals, sport events, performing arts attractions) (Marciszewska, n.d., cited in Smith and Robinson, 2009). It is therefore important for organisers in city centre and capital city locations to reach and penetrate the foreign event tourism market. UK7 mentions her approach to attracting event tourists to her landmark conference centre in central London by developing integrated services to meet the needs of tourists and remain competitive (McCabe, Sharples and Foster, 2012):

> *"American clients demand a quick response – 4 hours is a typical turnaround for a proposal. I use Microsoft Teams and a show-round app to [convey] visuals. I visit countries to see their culture and build relationships with long-term planners."*
>
> (UK7 – landmark conference centre)

UK7 is employing technology to facilitate the process and enact speed to foreign clients who *"demand a quick response"*. This was before COVID-19 necessitated the adoption of video-call technology becoming normal practice. Driven by her astuteness of proactive commercial acumen put UK7 in advance of the global reaction to video-calling resulting from the crisis of a pandemic. To contextualise this point, an analysis of the uptake of *Microsoft Teams* video-calling software at the Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust showed that on 18th March 2020 there were 7 daily active users and zero virtual meetings compared with 24th June 2020 showing 1525 daily active users and 1411 virtual meetings (Mehta *et al.*, 2020). UK7 mentions she uses *"a show-round app to [convey] visuals"*, so it is fair to accept she was also driven by broader social, cultural and economic changes in the event tourism sector.

The Trend of Tourism

Industrialisation and increasing commodification in the tourism sector brought about the desire for escape and distraction, which is explained by Wearing, Stevenson and Young (2010). They correlate industrialisation with the administration of time because more precise clocks drove the measurement of time through timesheets, overtime, timekeeping, and time-off. This led to leisure being taken in commodified time or 'sacred' time (Wearing, Stevenson and Young, 2010, p.37) because leisure time is a space for gaining social capital which is sacramental to human existence (Kielbasiewicz-Drozdowska, 2005).

Poland is not immune to changes in the leisure-tourism sector and the opportunities this offers. According to Kielbasiewicz-Drozdowska (2005) social changes in Poland have been strongly connected with political and economic transformations and with changing social awareness. She recognises that profound changes in the workplace have led to re-evaluation of the way in which leisure time and work time are understood. This cements the global impact which international travel has on all locations. But event organisers in Poland are not yet capitalising on capturing the event tourism market and can learn from the proactive, immersive and technological approaches being adopted by UK7 and other UK organisers.

It may seem surprising for UK7 to state that *"4 hours is a typical turnaround for a proposal"* and it may even appear unrealistic. But Gillespie and Hennessey (2016) concur that competitiveness moves across national borders at an alarmingly fast rate. This is reinforced by Buhalis (2000) recognising destination marketing is increasingly competitive worldwide and requires taking advantage of new technologies to enable destinations to increase their visibility. Further reinforcement is provided by Salameh (2019) who writes that the FIFA World Cup and the Summer Olympics has been the single most important way to reposition the international profile for Brazil, and (Giulianotti *et al.*, 2015, p.99) refer to the London 2012 Olympics as the opportunity for 'festival capitalism'. The fast approach by UK7 also reflects the recognition by Hospers (2004) that European regions are increasingly competing to attract consumers through

soft factors such as a location's image, referred to as 'place marketing'. Warnaby and Medway (2013, p.345) describe this as 'the marketing of towns and cities… to gain advantage for their particular place in an increasingly competitive spatial environment'. They further categorise place marketing as creating offers commodified and marketed to target consumers through the attraction of tourism and a sense of place-attachment.

<u>Penetrating Foreign Markets</u>

UK7 is bidding for events from large US clients in to a landmark venue in London's intensely competitive marketplace with its range of large conferencing venues making it a bidding market at the stage where the competitive contract to run an event is won or lost (Berridge, 2007, cited in Berridge, 2010), which Quinn (2013, p.8) describes as a 'very risky activity'. Conference News (2019) confirms London continues to be a hot spot for North American meeting and events planners with bookings in 2018 up 20% on the previous year. UK7 has perhaps self-imposed her turnaround target of four hours because large international clients will place their enquiry to a number of London-centric venues and the winner could be the venue which responds quickest. She not only waits for inbound enquiries, however, but makes business trips to her client locations in the US:

> *"I attend the PCMA* which is an event for event professionals. There are 4,000 delegates for educational, networking, sales and sharing best practices."*
>
> (UK7 – landmark conference centre)

*The PCMA (Professional Convention Management Association) describes itself as a professional resource for leaders in the meetings, conventions, events and trade show industries with over 6,000 members to facilitate connections (*Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA)*, 2020).

UK7 is utilising her membership of the PCMA to attend stateside conventions for networking in the home market of her target clientele who will be booking events into London. This is a proactive approach where the organiser is travelling abroad to secure foreign business for her venue in the UK and counteracting the very risky (Quinn, 2013) bidding process. Here, UK7 demonstrates a plurality of approaches to destination marketing: the location contriving an image to attract visitors from foreign markets, and a marketeer reaching into foreign markets to draw visitors to her destination.

Proactive engagement activities with foreign markets such as place marketing (Warnaby and Medway, 2013) and place branding (Kavaratzis, 2004) contradicts my findings from Poland respondents. Whereas UK7 invests time and financial resources to travel abroad to client destinations to secure international business for her venue, there is a gap here because Poland organisers demonstrate a reactive or non-interventionist approach, which PL2 demonstrates:

> *"They [the Polish Convention Bureau] are sending us some requests for venue leasing, and somehow they are promoting us as a place amongst foreign customers. I would say they do marketing, mainly marketing. We have got some associations – MICE associations mainly hotels and that kind of venues we're working with them – somehow they promote us amongst their international customers, somehow."*
>
> (PL2 – landmark venue)

In my interview with PL2 he wavered and used phrases such as *"somehow"* and *"how to say this diplomatically"*, which indicated to me that he does not fully understand how the Polish Convention Bureau operates and how he should be engaging with them to promote his prominent landmark venue to foreign clients. He instead waits for foreign business to arrive, should it happen, without being actively engaged in pursuing or securing foreign business for his venue. His approach contrasts with those organisers in London where the competition is fierce and they are driven to actively penetrate foreign markets. I would consider it unusual for

a landmark venue in London to exhibit a similar laidback approach, which is not to accuse PL2 of being complacent, but to highlight this gap in the socio-professional behaviours between Poland and UK organisers.

PL2 went on to say he would be willing to undertake place marketing and place branding, and even says he is frustrated at not being able to conduct destination marketing to international clients:

> *"Huh… I would say that I would wish myself to be able to put more attention to promote the building and to promote the support internationally. I would say that it is underestimated – our uniqueness of the building. But I am also aware that there are so many challenges organising an event here. So, I would say that firstly we should fix those technical and regular issues and make things more commercially competitive to be able to promote the building internationally and to have more international customers. I would say that we should put more attention to that. Yeah. And I would say this should be our priority as event managers. Not only do our daily job to focus on technical issues and signing contracts, but to do more PR and marketing internationally."*
>
> (PL2 – landmark venue)

I take this as an encouraging statement because it shows that a Poland organiser does possess the will to drive their events business into the global market for international events. PL2 might lack the knowhow, which is symptomatic of the limited community of practice in the shaping events industry in Poland, but knowhow can be gained from international networking and knowledge transfer and addressing the gaps which exist between the developed industry and the emerging. However, PL2 is the organiser at a state-owned property and feels unsupported in his ability to reach international markets. It is a situation which resonates with the finding by Wong, Mistilis and Dwyer (2011, cited in McCabe, Sharples and Foster, 2012) that barriers to collaboration include a lack of coordination amongst government departments. This is evident with PL2 who is responsible for the day-to-day running of his state-owned venue which

he labels *"technical issues and signing contracts"* but recognises there is no strategic forethought to win business from foreign markets. The Chartered Institute of Marketing define this as 'the management process responsible for identifying, anticipating and satisfying customer requirements profitably' (*Chartered Institute of Marketing / CIM*, 2021). His is a situation acknowledged also by Welch, Benito and Petersen (2018) who identify that international managers rarely face foreign market entry decisions because of the daily concerns of their job such as growing the business, reorganisation and developing existing operations. This of course is the limitation described by PL2 saying *"I would wish myself to be able to put more attention to promote the building and to promote the support internationally"* and is a restriction for him to reach out to foreign markets because he is kept busy with the operational demands of running a landmark venue. It is not a situation relevant only to Poland because UK10 exhibits the same focus on daily operations:

> *"My main role is to facilitate our organisers' needs to get as close to what people want. We'll always try and help… to achieve all of this. That's our main function, really. We take good money off clients, so we have to give them good customer service. I get very annoyed when we don't deliver good customer service. I think keeping continuity and a sustainable business arm running – we try and run an efficient and lean team and try to be a bit more streamlined, I suppose, but very much keeping an eye on efficiency levels making sure we are doing all we can. We've spent a lot of time and money on training staff for the purposes of serving the business as opposed to personal development. It's always been very much based on what our output is."*
>
> (UK10 – landmark exhibition centre)

UK10 is saying that his focus is firmly on business objectives and the sustainability of the business rather than on consumer objectives and meeting expectations of consumers. He said *"We've spent a lot of time and money on training staff for the purposes of serving the business as opposed to personal development"* which shows their focus is not on developing people but enabling them to do better purely for the needs of the business. This is a business-centric

approach at the expense of people development or even recognition of consumer needs and expectations. UK10 confirms this interpretation by going on to say, *"It's always been very much based on what our output is"*. In his interview, he did refer to clients as customers, but he was not considering consumers of events – event attendees – in his role as an organiser. Conversely, UK17 told me that he does focus on consumers, but this is still for the purpose to serve the business operation objectives:

> *"People would like more value for money. I feel that the spend per head has increased but they're expecting a lot more with that. I feel that they are using the [venue name] for special occasions. Predominantly, a lot of guests here it's potentially their first time here at [venue name] and it's normally a special occasion – it might be their favourite act that they've waited their whole life to see. We've noticed that it's not just becoming one event per year, a lot of people do return to see different events. I think it varies between people who come to [venue name] to see a lot of acts and some that still come when [artist name] decides to do a show here and they've waited their whole life to see her and now they're coming to see her for the first time. But I think everyone has that idea that they spend more now."*

> (UK17 – landmark arena venue)

These excerpts reveal that it is not the type of objectives an organiser focuses on which is going to impact their reach to event tourists (whether they are foreign clients or foreign consumers) but whether they are focused on operational level or strategic objectives. UK10 and UK17 focus on different operational factors, and PL2 is stuck on them, and each are not going to attract event tourism this way. There is a difference between the UK and Poland in that UK10 and UK17 have the freedom to refocus their objectives but PL2 does not – yet it is PL2 who wants to refocus his objectives from the daily operational issues to strategic marketing to reach foreign markets. I held a presupposition that the UK would be better equipped to reach foreign markets because it is a multi-layered collaborative structure of organisers, marketing managers and public relations people. Whereas in Poland, organisers are likely to do everything

themselves (which they cannot do) because it is a flatter, less structured industry. However, this problem exists with both, and unique landmark venues in a European capital city, which PL2, UK10 and UK17 each are, should be positioned for bidding in the global marketplace for international events that attract international clients and foreign consumers to that destination. Although Buhalis (2000) sees destinations as amalgams of tourism products offering an integrated experience to consumers, UK13 reveals landmark venues are not attempting to win individual tourists, but those clients who bring the tourists:

> *"At least 85% of the time business comes from event management agencies or venue finding businesses. Most of the big companies are mandated to use event management agencies or venue finding businesses. With that in mind, you need to ensure that you don't just have the relationship with the end client, you must have the relationship with those third parties as well."*

> (UK13 – sales account director)

Agencies and venue finders are less abundant than individual tourists, so there is a narrowing to the shape of the structure which means the competition to win that business gets fiercer. Wong, Mistilis and Dwyer (2011) note that another barrier to collaboration is the conflict between cooperation and competition. I do not interpret it in the same way because I have identified that the lack of competitiveness in the Warsaw marketplace is proving counterproductive and is working against venues making efforts to win foreign business and promoting themselves into the global market for international events – because they do not have to. It seems organisers are collaborating by their participation in the competitive habitus which is driving them to be competitive and win business. My hypothesis that venues in locations with intense competition is driving organisers to reach foreign markets is supported by PL2 not being directed to market his venue internationally or attract event tourists even though he recognises the market opportunity exists and would benefit his venue. I am further

supported by Gillespie and Hennessey (2016) identifying that developed economies like the UK account for a disproportionately large share of world GNP (Gross National Product) and as a result need to attract many companies into their market environment. UK15 reflects such reliance on the economy here:

> *"The credit crunch hit in the backend of 2008, and this is where the type of venue is very important. [Venue name] had an incredible level of reoffer business. What that means is that a function will happen on the same day every single year, notwithstanding – insurance awards, banking awards, actuary awards will happen on the same day every single year. What people did with the credit crunch is they said, 'we're not going ahead with our function, but we will retain the date and we will pay you not to sell that date and we will recoup it the next year'. So, we went into negotiation with several clients and were charging somewhere around 60% cancellation fees and that represented the profit we would have made on their function."*

> (UK15 – landmark event hotel)

Response to Trends

This shows how events can adapt to reap a competitive advantage. Not many industries have the ability to be flexible so rapidly. Hotel bedrooms, for example, cannot respond easily and quickly to trends or financial climates, and it can take many months for a retail product to reach the market in response to a trend. This is important to understand because events generate income for venues and hotels particularly in times of uncertainty when competition for business intensifies. UK14 demonstrates this even with the critical impacts of the pandemic:

> *"The budgets had decreased pre-Covid which has actually changed quite dramatically post-Covid. Whereas now I think there are far less events, but the budgets are far higher, I think prior to Covid it was just more and more and more events and the budgets were smaller and smaller and smaller. In the UK you get a tax break on your Christmas party per person and we were seeing a massive shift in companies splitting that budget down the middle and using half of it for a summer party and half of it for a Christmas party which was only really, I would say, since about 2015 when we started*

to get better summers but prior to then when we didn't have any nice weather there wasn't any point. I would say the early 2000s budgets were far higher for events because nobody was really checking. And then 2010 onwards there was a bit more of a check on those budgets but there was [sic] more events and then, yeah, we've kind of come out of Covid in a slightly different direction again. And whenever something new comes out – a new style of event – like when molecular food came out and like you know fancy fine dining that was a different burst and like I say about summer parties that was a different sort of style of thing now obviously we're seeing hybrid and virtual events sort of taking off in a way that I would never have imagined."

(UK14 – portfolio of royal museum venues)

UK14 is reaffirming that events are adaptable to sudden changes by saying *"it has gone up and down in different ways with different themes"*. It is this rapid adaptability which organisers need to exploit with their event offering and it seems organisers in the UK are already aware of this and do adjust. This is essential for the sustainability of an events business in a culture of an unstable financial climate, rapid social and technological changes, and the uncertainty of the pandemic. Poland organisers are slower to identify trends and less likely to adjust their event offering. This indicates a gap between UK and Poland organisers in recognising that events have the specific characteristics to be able to rapidly adapt to change and win business from competitors in the marketplace. This puts the Poland events industry at a disadvantage in the wider global marketplace to capitalise on growth, which UK16 mentioned to me:

"[Events] are hugely important. Especially for here at [venue name] our fine dining restaurant is quite expensive to run, so without bringing in the money that events brings in, it would run but it wouldn't have as strong a staff and team because, you know, whatever we bring in through the events comes through [venue name] as well so it's really important for bringing that huge amounts of money for the business."

(UK16 – multi-purpose venues)

UK16 shows her understanding that events are the leader in her business, and the revenue contribution from the events side of her business allows other areas of the business to keep going – areas which may be more costly to operate or may generate less profit in proportion to costs, she says. It is important, then, for venues to win events business from competitors to support other areas such as maintenance and upkeep, marketing, penetration into foreign markets, and investment in technology. This is especially important for a diverse business but reinforces the significance of events for any business:

> *"[Events] sits very high up. If events are busy it will have a dramatic impact on the accommodation level of occupancy. If events are dead, the occupancy of the hotel will stem anywhere between 30% and 50%. In September, October, November and the first half of December we [events] were chipping that up to around 80% to 100% so we have a dramatic impact on the level of business the hotel takes."*

> (UK15 – landmark event hotel)

UK15 relies on events business to raise and sustain other areas of operation – in this case, it is the accommodation occupancy levels. I might have believed that a landmark hotel in central London would be full of guests and its primary source of income would be from bedrooms, but UK15 informed me that the accommodation side of his business is sustained by events – the occupancy levels he mentions above, are wholly influenced by events business in his hotel. It can be seen in the data how UK organisers understand the importance of events in a competitive marketplace. Ohmae (1985, cited in Gillespie and Hennessey, 2016) highlights the importance of developing a competitive position in major developed markets – in particular to compete in the US, Europe and Japan where 'real global competitors are advised to have strong positions in all three areas' (Gillespie and Hennessey, 2016, p.249). But Poland organisers are not attuned to competing in the global marketplace or spotting global market trends, whereas UK

organisers are attracting event tourism in more than one way, and organisers do not necessarily need to visit foreign markets to attract clients and attendees but can participate with events taking place abroad, which UK5 demonstrates:

> "*We did* Global Rhythms *working with the Trinidad and Tobago Commission – they very much wanted to profile their location and their country for tourism. It was working with the tourist board bringing a little bit of Trinidad and Tobago to England and we managed to bring across a number of high-profile artists but the challenges around that was the expectation once they're here. Dealing with an international artist who may have a rider* who is an A-list celebrity in their own right in their own country, bring them over here in terms of having a rider which is suitable to all was quite a challenge as to what their expectations were and how their fees are and when and how those fees should be paid. A lot of international artists work on the proviso that they get paid when they're here rather than having a pre-payment. That was an attendance of close-on 8,000 to an event like that. We also had the Commissioner from Trinidad and Tobago coming to the event, and high-profile UK celebrities.*"
>
> (UK5 – organiser of local authority events)

*A 'rider' lists the contractual requirements of an artist or performer and can be technical requirements for their performance, or hospitality requirements for their comfort.

What UK5 describes is different to the usual promotion activities of a destination putting on events to attract foreign consumers to attend at the host destination which serves to promote and enhance that location and enjoy additional benefits such as tourist spend. Here UK5 demonstrates how a destination can export their location through an event taking place at a foreign location. In this case, instead of Trinidad and Tobago attempting to host events that would attract tourists to travel to attend on Trinidad and Tobago, they brought *"a little bit of Trinidad and Tobago to England"* to showcase their location. Urry (2002a) identifies this as object travel (see 2.2) which is the object of attention that draws the tourist – in this case it is

whatever Trinidad and Tobago was promoting such as culture, lifestyle, or simply sand, sun and sea (Urry, 2002b, p.51).

It raises the question to PL2 – who told me he is frustrated by not being able to reach foreign markets to attract international event tourists – whether he understands that he could promote his location and his venue by exporting it to an event taking place in a foreign location. This could be a tourism exhibition or an international venue convention such as *International Confex* at the ExCeL, London (*International Confex - Where the events industry meets*, 2021). This type of engaging with industry networks is an opportunity to win business and facilitate knowledge exchange, awareness and the feeling of industry inclusion. However, Welch, Benito and Petersen (2018) caution that reaching foreign markets is not the end of it and there is life after entry. Their view is that initial entry to a foreign market is a basis for building business and will need to evolve with changes of operation. The developed stage of the UK events industry means there are more opportunities in reaching foreign markets because international associations with affiliated groups in countries such as the UK (Bowdin *et al.*, 2011) provide a route of entry and exposure, as UK6 explains:

> *"I went to the AIPC [International Association of Convention Centres] out to Brussels for a week and we discussed things such as international delegates coming to our venue and international clients coming to our venue. Being part of international associations, we have exposure to meetings, conferences and seminars. We talk a lot about working with international clients and how we as UK venues set best practice and how they work across Europe or the Middle East or North America."*
>
> (UK6 – landmark convention centre)

International clients, agents and venue finders who organise event tourism events are the core target market for UK6 because of the significant size and central capital-city location of his venue. Here, he demonstrates his activities in foreign markets and international collaborations with the objective to drive foreign business to his venue and, in this case, develop his

understanding of the expectations of *"international clients coming to our venue"*. There is a clear distinction being identified here between the shape of the socio-professional UK habitus and that of Poland. UK6 is showing an approach which allows a relationship to form in the field with members of that habitus (Bourdieu, n.d., cited in Grenfell, 2012).

Placing oneself into an unfamiliar field (or habitus) takes time and adjustment to fulfil what Bourdieu identifies as the need to match the habitus with a social context so as to feel comfortable and not avoid or resist participation in that social context. It is about acceptance because an outsider will not sit comfortably in the habitus until they accept, and be accepted, as existing in that social environment. I was resident in Poland for 10 years where I was fully embedded in the field, but I never truly felt accepted in that habitus during that entire period of extended time. I think this was mainly due to language differences, but also because of social behaviour traits, professional behaviours, and socio-cultural differences. As a professional, my authoritative knowledge was never really accepted. Bourdieu describes fitting-in with the habitus as 'practical mastery' or 'feel for the game' (Grenfell, 2012, p.57) (but I might otherwise describe it as 'engaging with industry networks') to understand what is reasonable and unreasonable, likely and unlikely, and natural ways of taking actions as a mediated form of arbitrary social structure, which is what PL2 was lacking.

Internationalisation

As I previously mentioned, event tourism is not limited to clients and consumers of events, but extends to organisers of events who can be attracted to foreign destinations to place their event:

> *"Some institutions in Poland are absolutely on the international level and they are highly professional people. But on the whole if you visit a smaller event somewhere they do adhere to all the regulations set up by the EU. I think joining the EU was a very, very good thing because you have certain regulations which absolutely have to be seen to. But sometimes I do come across things which for us would be unthinkable;*

poorly managed; poorly organised. But some are absolutely on the international level, I would say."

(PL4 – organiser of charity events)

In this excerpt PL4 is discussing standards in Poland in the context of organising her events in Vienna and provides her opinions of standards in the two locations. By doing so, she demonstrates acquisition of knowledge from her wider experience of international standards and practices. But I focus on the point she makes about EU regulations: *"I think joining the EU was a very, very good thing because you have certain regulations which absolutely have to be seen to"*. An emerging event industry will evolve and take shape in its own manner according to its cultural and societal environment, but when Poland joined the European bloc in 2004 it adopted EU-wide legislations and regulations which continued the drive for Poland to align closer with the standards and structures of other European countries (Domański, 2003). Poland's accession to Europe directed the Poland events industry to fall in line with international standards and expectations in catching up to the advanced economies, and competing successfully in the global market (Bogdan *et al.*, 2015).

From my insider experience of events in Poland, I concur with PL4 that domestic and local events can be substandard because of the lack of local expertise in the professional management of events. To illustrate this point, I attended a 'celebration of women' event in an exclusive venue in central Warsaw, with notable women speakers which attracted a good level of press attendance. It did not take long for me to identify the event had not been rehearsed. VIP guests were invited on to the stage to receive awards but did not know how to access the stage or which way to exit; the press pack crowded the stage which blocked the audience sightlines; there were attempts to corral the press but it became a repetitive and farcical game of cat-and-mouse; one well-known actress was invited onto the stage to speak but was taken by surprise and announced she thought she had been invited as a guest, not a speaker. The scenario I

witnessed provides a snapshot of how the events industry in Poland has taken shape: that a high-profile event in a good city-centre venue could go ahead unrehearsed to expose a series of errors.

But PL4 is identifying how European regulations are improving standards of events in Poland. Indeed, Gillespie and Hennessey (2016) observe there are moves to internationalise laws with the Hague Conference on International Private Law considering a global treaty for enforcing legal judgments. This would be a significant move in the direction of standardisation and would help places becoming associated with desirable qualities perceived by target audiences (Kavaratzis, 2004). It is an argument for homogenisation which Zukin (1991) found distasteful but I recognise would narrow the gaps that exist from location to location. A move such as this would recognise the theory advanced by Mary Douglas (Anfara and Mertz, 2011) in identifying four prototypes of social environments which influence the entire cultural environment. These are: individualist (individuals not constrained by rules or traditions), bureaucratic (hierarchical with low levels of autonomy), corporate (individual behaviour is exercised in the name of the group), and collectivist (the perpetuation of group goals and survival is highly valued). It would no longer be the haphazard shaping of an event industry according to its own socio-professional environment, but a standardised homogenous international event industry led by those countries which are already shaped and developed into a socio-professional structure with all that entails.

Bogdan *et al.* (2015) appraise that the initiative which the Polish people have shown indicates they aspire to become competitive on a global scale. PL4 is evidence of this appraisal because she is in the process of comparing domestic standards in Poland with the standards she encounters in Vienna. She is gaining learning of international standards which, for her, makes her a better organiser. If this were upscaled and became embedded in the socio-professional behaviour of organisers in the events industry in Poland – if other organisers in Poland achieved

learning through international experience – Poland would narrow the gaps in the global market for international events. UK3 reinforces this potential by his comparisons of different locations drawn from his experiences in the Middle East and Malaysia:

> *"Certainly, when I was overseas you wouldn't really bring up deposits and payments and schedules and that sort of stuff if you were dealing with Middle Eastern clients – it was considered to be uncouth. In Malaysia I remember taking an enquiry for a French event management company and they expected us to be quite European in our attitude and I had to tell them upfront that things didn't happen perhaps the way it would happen if you were in Western Europe, out in Malaysia. If you've got a Western European or American agent wanting to bring a piece of business, they want reassurance that things are going to happen to time and to budget and all those normal things you'd expect. But you also have to share the realities of the part of the world you are in."*

> (UK3 – landmark sports venue)

It can be seen from both PL4 and UK3 that international experience is indeed a valuable contribution to the profession in both the UK and Poland event industries. UK3 understands it is cultural differences which shape the way things are done and it is not only about knowing how to organise events. In fact, he is suggesting that knowledge in organising events is secondary to getting the cultural customs correct by saying *"you also have to share the realities of the part of the world you are in"*. He learnt this from his interaction in foreign fields which otherwise he might not have understood. Gaining such understanding fits with the four characteristics of profession identified by Ritzer and Walczak (1986) as theoretical knowledge, self-regulated training and practice, authority over clients, and orientation to community rather than self-identify. Theoretical knowledge can be obtained through regular interaction with peers, and authority over clients provides organisers with knowledge their clients lack which allows them to provide direction and advice when responding to clients' wishes. I support this in Berners (2019, p.67) by stating 'above anything else a client is looking for guidance and support – otherwise they would be doing the job themselves'. Clients rely on guidance from

specialists, and the specialists rely on guidance from other specialists – otherwise the system fails (Berners, 2019). The basis of being an event organiser is to advise others – a concept I refer to as the 'real' event manager (Berners, 2017, pp.19-21). My 'real event manager' concept is compatible with Foucault's power-knowledge theory (Gutting, 2005, p.96) investigating the traits of seriousness and credibility: 'who was authorised to speak seriously, and what questions and procedures were relevant to assess the credibility of those statements that were taken seriously'.

So, organisers in the UK events industry benefit from their penetration into foreign markets which is supported at local and national governmental level because of the significant contribution events provide to the economy. Events in Poland are not yet recognised with that same level of seriousness and Poland organisers are not supported in their reach and penetration of the foreign event tourism market. By not doing so, organisers in Poland are not gaining the knowledge transfer brought about with international engagement and relations, they are not spotting and meeting global trends and demands in events, and they are not being driven to operate at the level of standards recognised in the global market for international events.

5.2 The Experience Economy

Because this study is about identifying the shape of two events industries within the global market for international events, it is important for me to address the experience economy because events are live experiences designed to attract consumers and clients from the global market of event tourism. The experience economy is about making money out of experiences (Boswijk, Thijssen and Peelen, 2007), and Pine and Gilmore (2011) provide the example of a coffee bean to explain how the cost of a service can be inflated by the experience it delivers to the consumer. The cost of producing coffee from a coffee bean is far less than the purchase price of a coffee in a coffee shop. A consumer can choose to further inflate the purchase price

for their coffee if they decide to purchase it in, say, Harrods or The Ritz. They will select to pay a higher inflated price just for the experience of consuming a coffee in that environment, which is how the experience economy works. Gerritsen and Van Olderen (2014) consider events to be typical of the experience economy because they meet the demand for unique, personalised and memorable experiences and provide social cohesion in communities. Thus, creative events are typical of the experience economy which is an inherent theme running through my target population:

> *"For me it's always about people leaving in a happy fashion, you know, they've achieved what they needed to do. You see people leaving – you only need to hang around in an exit area looking kind-of official and people are very quick to tell you how they feel and think. I've worked with other stakeholders and done lots of concerts and music events with 20,000 people piling out all at once from [name of venue] and you get the Tube station manager saying, 'thanks very much it went really well' and police officers saying, 'thanks very much it all went well'. And job-well-done really – that's what we're there for; we're there to make our partners' lives easier so they're doing their jobs safely and efficiently and very much with a customer focus, visitor focus in mind."*
>
> (UK10 – landmark exhibition centre)

What UK10 describes is the experience economy: creating an experience for the consumer who has decided to participate by paying to attend. For UK10, his job is to provide the experience his consumers have paid for and expect to receive – this is how he measures the *"job-well-done"*. It was clear from the way he spoke during our interview that he is passionate about doing the job of delivering an experience to the consumer. By doing so, the consumer will receive a transcendent experience that would otherwise not be achievable (Rojek, 2013). It is therefore important for organisers to understand the motivations of consumers which, for events, is socialisation, a fun atmosphere which offers ample opportunity to socialise, and to have new experiences (Gelder and Robinson, 2009). The consumer will purchase a ticket for the experience and is thus participating in the experience economy. If the potential consumer

decides not to participate, they risk missing the opportunity of receiving the experience because the event will be gone, which makes events a perishable service (Bowdin *et al.*, 2011). UK organisers appear to recognise they exist within the culture of an experience economy as can be seen in my interview with UK14:

> *"There is far greater emphasis on an experience, which works very, very well where I currently work but less well for people who don't have an experience to offer. So, I think clients want to have something that they can take a picture of and something that they can remember. So, for example the museums, I can offer things like a telescope viewing or a planetarium show, or a gallery tour, or all of these other sort of added value things which a hotel can't because it's a hotel. So, you know, anything that you can do to make it seem a little bit 'sparklier' a lot of clients are asking for sort of what else can we do to enhance people, potentially because there's more events for people to go to, they want people to come to theirs."*

(UK14 – portfolio of royal museum venues)

This excerpt highlights the elevation of the experience economy in the UK to an ever-upward requirement for experiences. Experiential events have shaped the events industry in the UK because at one time creating an experience used to be an additive to an event but from what UK14 shows us, experiences now *are* the event. UK14 recognises her venues meet the demand for event experiences, and she was clearly proud that her venues meet this need. She understands the competitive advantage of doing so, and she mentions hotels in almost a derisory fashion: *"a hotel can't because it's a hotel"*. I concur with her viewpoint having observed the industry as an insider embedded in the field. Creative events struggle in hotel ballrooms that are typically 'designed to be generic' and 'do not allow for the creativity of events' (Berners, 2019, pp.11-12). Many of my clients instructed me not to use a hotel ballroom for their event because the experience is suppressed in a nondescript and generic hotel space. There are exceptions where a hotel event space is architecturally impressive such as the

Grosvenor House on Park Lane, or when the event requires overnight accommodation for guests, in which case it must be a hotel.

Hotels Versus Venues

Hotels have lost a significant share of events business to other venues that have become competitors in the events marketplace and are more exciting, unusual, and different. This has shifted the shape of the UK events industry from events happening in hotels to events being staged in all manner of venues. This is one of the factors that has exposed events to many more people and has motivated them to become organisers, whereas at one time in the UK, events were 'hidden' in hotels and were visible mainly to hotel workers. This in itself has shaped the UK events industry because, as already mentioned, senior-level organisers crossed into events from hotel roles such as sales or conference and banqueting. Now, organisers do not need to work in hotels to work in events, which has helped events to be a standalone discipline. It has also driven the rise in formal education in events management because it is no longer seen as an offshoot of the hotel discipline.

I should mention here that there are two further factors why hotels have lost events business. The first is a follow-on from generic spaces designed to fit all types of events from conferences to weddings, and that is the problem with low ceiling height. Most hotel spaces have low ceilings because of cost restrictions during the build. It seems hotel architects fail in the understanding that creative events require high ceilings for the creative elements (Berners, 2019) and it is difficult for an organiser to insert creative elements without generous ceiling height. Secondly, there is a perception in the UK events industry that hotels are for low-budget events. This has come about because hotels provide most resources in situ, including catering, staff, and notably technical apparatus, so if the event budget is restricted, a hotel is the best

place for the event. This has negative connotations for clients, and these factors have also shaped how the events industry in the UK now operates.

UK14 reinforces this shift is still happening and still important because her venues are unusual, interesting and creative, which allows for events which are held there to be individual and memorable: *"There is far greater emphasis on an experience, which works very, very well where I currently work"*. This is an important competitive advantage for her to win business in the experience economy because her events offering is unique and can be tailored to clients looking for evermore creative experiences and *"anything that you can do to make it seem a little bit 'sparklier'"*. The upward demand for creativity and uniqueness is driving UK venues to adapt their events offering to capture clients in the experience economy marketplace. In fact, UK11 told me of the need for his hotel to shift from corporate events and move further into the creative events arena to fit the experience economy:

> *"It involves change and the growth of our business. We, as an industry have to adapt. We, as a business – one of the plans for our 10-year anniversary is to look at expanding the function space and changing that. We have to develop it as an event venue as opposed to a meeting venue – it's very corporate at the moment. It's very functional – it's very adaptable, actually – but we have to lean more towards events than meetings when we develop that area. We need to expand the space because we need bigger numbers… and in terms of the interior design of it needs to be more in keeping with events, including weddings, than a board meeting or a conference."*

<div align="right">(UK11 – country house hotel)</div>

UK11 underpins the problem with generic hotel spaces by saying *"It's very functional – it's very adaptable, actually"*. He vocalised this in a positive way but actually his wider statement reveals he knows it is no longer enough for an event space to be functional and adaptable when the demand is for unique creative experiences. UK11 told me that he intends to invest in

developing his existing corporate events offering to that of creative events which is a significant shift of his business mix and reaffirms the shift of the UK events industry. UK11 is at a historic building of architectural interest but, not untypically, the events facilities are not in keeping with the uniqueness of the property. The ballroom is an addition and was purposefully designed to be functional to suit a range of events such as meetings, conferences and dinners. I am uncertain whether UK11 knows exactly how he needs to adjust his events offering to deliver a creative consumer experience at the point of consumption (Berners and Martin, 2022) but for the purposes of my research it confirms to me that venues are realigning in response to the experience economy. Kim, Uysal and Chen (2014) support the view that events are important in attracting tourists looking for unique consumer experiences, so I can assert that the shape of the UK events industry has shifted towards the experience economy. But Poland organisers also appear to be recognising the experience economy, which PL2 evidences here:

> *"Most of our customers, they come back. Most of them. But, I'm aware that not because of the quality of our job but because of the building – it's unique. That's the reason. It's a really good spot for B2C [Business-to-Consumer] events, for fairs and exhibitions to the B2C market. The best one, I would say here in Warsaw. That's why customers come back to us – not because of the quality of our service, yeah our uniqueness makes the job."*

> (PL2 – landmark venue)

This statement provides me with clear indication that PL2 is aware of the need to provide an event experience. He demonstrates here that event consumers in Poland are looking for uniqueness, just as in the UK. However, unlike my participants in the UK, it does not inform me that PL2 is strategically aligning his business to the experience economy – only that his venue is unique and that is what attracts consumers who seek an event experience. My point here is that UK organisers are pivoting the shape of the UK events industry to align with the demands of the experience economy, whereas in Poland, organisers are not shaping their

industry to meet the experience economy, even though they know it exists and there is demand. Poland, therefore, again demonstrates a non-interventionalist standpoint. Moreover, PL2 is candid about consumers not choosing his venue because of the quality of service they will receive, but because it is a venue which offers them a unique event experience: *"not because of the quality of our service, yeah our uniqueness makes the job"*. So, he is banking on his unique venue winning business rather than him having to provide a quality service to win business. This exposes a gap between the UK and Poland meeting the experience economy because both locations recognise the value of providing an experience for event consumers, but UK organisers are competing for that market sector whereas Poland organisers appear content to let that market sector arrive to them without much attempt at making efforts to win that sector through market reach and penetration, or meet the service needs and expectations of that market once it has landed.

<u>Service Quality Expectation</u>

When PL2 said *"I'm aware that not because of the quality of our job but because of the building – it's unique"* he is accepting his shortfall in providing good service. Service quality is defined by Donthu and Yoo (1998) as the difference between perceived service performance and expected service level, so PL2 is admitting complacency with this aspect of his offering and is reliant on his unique venue attracting business to him. It might be that his clients are mainly domestic and the level of service he is providing is acceptable or expected within the domestic marketplace, but where his venue is attracting foreign clients and consumers who have experience of locations with higher socio-professional standards, the service gap will be exposed.

In Berners (2019) I have written that even if a venue has a poor reputation or poor housekeeping I would not routinely reject it as a potential venue to host my event. Not every venue is

professional and clean but can still be appropriate for the event. It is my responsibility as the 'real' organiser (Berners, 2017, pp.19-21) to identify any shortfalls in standards as it informs me of the professionalism (or lack) I can expect to receive. Once shortfalls are identified they can be overcome – I can bring in my own teams, for example, such as caterers, security and cleaners to overcome a venue's shortfalls. From the comments made by PL2 his returning clients will likewise have identified the shortfalls in the quality of service at his venue by their previous events, and will understand these can be compensated for in order to achieve the event experience at that unique landmark venue. This is clear indication of an experience economy in Poland because PL2's clients are placing quality of experience above quality of service. The problem here is that it exposes a gap in delivering a quality event service in line with the event experience. Also, if a client is new to the venue, or is foreign, they would not have previous knowledge of any shortfalls at this landmark venue, or what they are.

In my observations and interviews, I have not encountered the same approach at a landmark UK venue because in a location with a highly competitive market, good reputation is the priority for attracting clients – and more pertinently to achieving return clients – in the experience economy. However, in the UK as well, most event organisers are not trained in meeting consumer needs and expectations, which UK8 demonstrates:

> *"Never had any training on that to be honest with you. It's not something that I've needed, I don't think. I think the industry, yes you need to have that. There's lots of personal attributes you need to have to work in a high-pressured environment dealing with lots of people pre-show, onsite, whatever. We as a company don't have training at the moment. It would be worthwhile for some people but I haven't done any of those qualifications."*
>
> (UK8 – organiser for a pan-European publishing company)

This is indication that the events industry in the UK is not yet closely attuned with meeting consumer expectations of service, which is a fact confirmed by Berridge (2012) who found organisers do not consistently achieve the main desired outcomes for all guests. It is troubling that UK8 feels that training in customer service expectations is *"not something that I've needed, I don't think"* because it reveals her naivety in understanding the value of people in both the social and professional contexts of being an organiser of events. It is a 'people' profession after all, which is why entrants to the industry who study events management degrees are learning customer service management and the psychology of consumer behaviours. It is parallel to the situation in Poland even though the UK industry is more developed. It is probable this shortfall is tolerated in both locations because in the microenvironment of an event's immediate surrounds (Reic, 2017) an event consumer will judge the experience (and service) they receive at each event to be autonomous upon reflective factors such as quality of food, how easy it was to find the venue, and even the weather on the day of the event. But it ignores the fact that event tourists exist in the macroenvironment and will benchmark the event experience (and service) they receive against other events in the wider experience economy as they travel in the global market for international events where PESTEL (Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental, Legal) factors are less manageable (Reic, 2017). This creates a distinction between the domestic experience economy and the wider experience economy.

This chapter has identified that events management does exist within the tourism sector because live events attract consumers (clients and attendees) to travel to experience a live happening, which is what makes the marketplace for international events a global phenomenon. Due to the shift towards delivering experiences in the experience economy, it is important to understand the factors which shape an events industry because of gaps in the quality and service an event tourist receives as they travel to events in a range of locations that will be at different stages in

the socio-professional construct of their events industry. The experience economy exists in both the UK and Poland but there is a gap here because organisers in the UK are more aware of the need to align their events offering to the expectations of consumers who seek evermore creative experiences. However, quality improvement in event tourism is necessary in both the UK and Poland because organisers are not educated in providing exceptional customer service, even though the UK events industry is further developed than in Poland. Although organisers in both the UK and Poland need to understand how consumers interpret experience so that experiences can be designed, developed and delivered (Berridge, 2011) this is not a gap identifiable between a developed industry and one that is developing because it exists in both locations. Rather, it is a gap in providing an experience to event tourists within the experience economy but will create gaps between locations that are better at understanding how to deliver experiences, than others.

Event tourists have experience of the increasingly competitive global tourism market and the expectations of tourists in the experience economy are constantly rising (Augustyn and Ho, 1998). Augustyn and Ho further identify a strong relationship with consumer services and tourism and find the SERVQUAL service quality model (shown in Appendix A) to be important for defining the true meaning of consumer satisfaction. They use gap analysis to demonstrate how tourism organisations can improve their service quality. These 'gaps' are: 1. Between consumers' expectations and management's perceptions of consumers' expectations; 2. Between management's perceptions of consumers' expectations and service quality specifications; 3. Between service quality specifications and service delivery; 4. Between service delivery and external communications to consumers; 5. Between consumers' expectations and perceived service (Augustyn and Ho, 1998, pp.74-75). They assert that service quality is a necessary and winning strategy in the tourism industry, of which events is a sector.

There is work to be done in both the developed UK events industry and the developing Poland events industry to educate organisers in service quality and meeting expectations of service. It is further advanced in the UK because the competitive marketplace demands organisers provide good service to win and retain business and protect their good reputation. But in both locations the customer service elements of events management are not being addressed. As an events industry takes shape, and when it pivots shape, organisers need to align themselves with the tourist side of events so that they reach and penetrate overseas markets to attract foreign clients and international attendees. This can be done in alignment with a destination's place marketing initiatives. But winning foreign clients and international attendees is the beginning. Once they have been won, organisers need to meet customer service expectations which, in an international marketplace, are benchmarked elsewhere.

6.0 Data Analysis – Risk Awareness at Events

'*The problem with the future is that more things might happen than will happen,*' (Plato 427-347 BC).

Through my interpretations of the primary research in-depth interviews, this final data analysis chapter explores whether my participant population are risk-aware at all stages of managing events, particularly in the planning stages where the identification and assessment of potential risks can mitigate them from occurring during an event. For me to consider the factors which shape an events industry, I must include risk awareness because safety should be the priority of every organiser everywhere, and event consumers are exposed to risk at events wherever the event happens to be. I particularly want to understand the impacts for events if risk awareness varies in different locations because of the stage of development influencing the way an events industry takes shape. Bladen *et al.* (2018) assert that safety and risk management is an essential principle for events industry professionals and is key in planning. They state that safety should be factored in from the start and be considered during every part of the planning process. Beech, Kaiser and Kaspar (2014) insist risk assessment must be carried out for all events during the entire lifecycle of an event so that it is an integral and strategic part of organisational processes and decision making. I am not alone, then, in viewing risk as the priority factor for an organiser of events, and with the exception of one UK participant, all my interviewees did refer to risk and safety, as UK6 demonstrates here:

> "*To be fair, everything should fall behind safety. Really. If you go right [inaudible] to the crisis management planning, everything is about the safety, wellbeing and welfare of visitors coming to site. It is the number one of everything. You have to put that one down.*"
>
> (UK6 – landmark convention centre)

This approach by UK6, and other participants, is indicative of professional event management. UK6 states *"everything should fall behind safety… It is the number one of everything"*, which supports my statement in Berners (2017, p.23) that 'the job of an event organiser is to eliminate or certainly minimise risk'. Not all risk can be entirely eliminated but there is a process of risk identification and assessment to mitigate potential risks which is important as Douglas and Wildavsky (1982) acknowledge in a more recent version of the quote from Plato, that we cannot know the risks we face now or in the future, but we must act as if we do. This helps us understand the proactive or before-event approach to risk whereby risks can be managed out of the event rather than left in to cause damage or harm. As mentioned previously, events are temporary live happenings, so if a risk is not managed out of the event before the event happens, it is already too late and the damage or harm will have impacts and consequences which will be difficult to recover.

The Management of Risk

The process of risk management is set out by Schwarz *et al.* (2017, pp.181-184) as risk identification, risk analysis, risk treatment, risk avoidance, risk acceptance, reduction of the likelihood of occurrence, reduction of the consequences of the occurrence, transferring the risk, retaining the risk and risk monitoring. This highlights the depth of risk management and it not being a cursory activity or tick-box exercise to satisfy compliance to legislation but is a thread to weave through the fabric of the lifecycle of managing events. Compliance is somewhat of a get-out for some organisers who might go so far as to be compliant but go no further, as I will show later in this chapter. But there is social responsibility to provide a safe event, and UK5 does go further because he organises events in the community sector and here he underlines the importance of risk management in his role:

"Ensuring we're compliant with health and safety in terms of any kind of emergency procedures that I'd feel comfortable running an event, and also the public perception."
(UK5 – organiser of local authority events)

UK5 is concerned with the social perception of his events which is the driver for him to comply with risk management procedures to ensure the public are kept safe. But he goes further by saying *"I'd feel comfortable running an event"*. This informs me that because he 'feels' something, he is passionate about being comfortable running an event that is safe, compliant and has considered *"any kind of emergency"*. For UK5 to run an event with the potential to cause injury to members of the public would have a wider detrimental social impact than causing harm to an attendee at a private or exclusive event. This perspective reflects the individual versus societal risk categorisation by Gerber and Von Solms (2005) (see 2.3). However, Carson and Bain (2008) state that some service professionals who are employed to take decisions on risk are reluctant to contemplate risk if death is a potential consequence. I can understand that some organisers might prefer not to identify risks which they would then have to deal with because of the potential consequences or even the monetary cost of mitigating them. It might be tempting to look away, then, pretend they are not there, and hope nothing goes wrong. I have not encountered this type of risk-avoidance in the socio-professional attitude of UK organisers, but I have observed it in Poland. However, I determine it is more to do with the lack of knowledge and formal education in the need for risk management processes than organisers in Poland wilfully ignoring the presence of risks.

Whatever the reasons for an organiser to ignore risk, the UK events industry is further ahead than Poland with organisers understanding the need to mitigate risks and the value of doing so. Bladen *et al.* (2018) note that the UK perception of health, safety and risk in the past tended to be red-tape bureaucracy that ticked regulatory boxes while creating extra work for the event organiser. This may be so, but it did have the effect to shape the UK events industry towards

an audit culture psychological stance in line with other sectors. It also created the socio-professional environment of safer events. We tend to view red-tape bureaucracy as a negative factor, but it has in fact driven organisers in the UK to compliance behaviours because of the fear of legal repercussions and litigation if something were to go wrong (negligence). Organisers in the UK, then, are wont to be compliant to avoid litigation which means they must be educated in the regulations and legislations, or risk breaching them. An individual organiser or the company they work for might recognise this and seek training, accreditation or knowledge gained from a professional association. It is therefore the individual organiser or the company they work for which is driving the industry to professionalisation and risk aversity, rather than consumers or the insurance industry responding to previous tragedies at events.

This can be seen in contrast to Poland where the fear of repercussions and litigation is not as pronounced because it is less likely for an event to receive a visit by an authoritative body such as the health and safety executive. It means Poland organisers operate in a culture where they feel they can get away with non-compliance – not because they wilfully aim to breach safety legislation, but because they do not feel the need to bother to think about it in great depth. The shape of the industry in Poland, thus, is different to the UK because there is less drive by the law to professionalise if individual organisers or the company they work for are not rushing to be compliant for fear of litigation.

Learning about Risk

Poland could learn from how the UK events industry has shaped itself towards an audit culture to prevent disasters from happening by observing what has happened elsewhere and then adopting those corrective measures. This would speed the professionalisation of the industry driven by the need to be compliant. Bladen *et al.* (2018) write that the importance of health,

safety and risk has been accentuated by event disasters that could have been prevented if correct health, safety and risk procedures were in place. This is evident with the bombing at the Manchester Arena Ariana Grande concert on 22nd May 2017 where 22 concert-goers were killed (Gardham, 2020). The first volume of the government inquiry report into the bombing, published in June 2021, set out to identify missed opportunities and failings of the accountable parties being the venue operators, the contracted security company, and the police (Saunders, 2021). The Inquiry chairman stresses the Report is not to apportion blame but to learn what went wrong and reduce the risk of such an event happening again and, if it does, mitigate the harm it causes. Bladen *et al.* (2018) say that such occurrences result in governments and industry associations regulating against future problems by increasing legislation, thus shaping the industry. Increased regulation becomes a resource for event organisers to comply with in making their events safe. I see this is where an emerging events industry can shape itself to be a closer fit with the behaviours of organisers in an advanced events industry to close the gaps in risk acceptance and risk avoidance.

My point is underpinned by UK6 who mentioned he is a member of the ICA (International Compliance Association) which declares itself to 'provide resources that demonstrate commitment to the highest standards of practice and conduct, enhance professional reputation and employability, and enhance the performance of the organisation' (*ICA*, no date):

> *"We offer emergency procedure briefings, also under the CDM* regulations that came in 2015 we now need to do site inductions which is driven by the organiser and the responsibility of the organiser that we will make our staff go through it."*
> (UK6 – landmark convention centre)

*The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 (*CDM*, 2015)

Here, UK6 understands his professional responsibility in society as an organiser, to lead his staff to deliver a safe event. Whereas in Poland the emphasis for an organiser is on the delivery of the event rather than risk management for the delivery of a safe event. UK6 shows that his membership of the ICA has informed him to conduct staff *"emergency procedure briefings"* in compliance with CDM regulations. This type of compliance evidences the evolution of events regulation in the UK industry as organisers learn of new legislation, otherwise they risk being noncompliant. It can be seen here that organisers are driven to professionalise by the law, not from any pressures by consumers or the insurance industry. Professional bodies such as the CDM provide organisers in the UK with a socio-professional support network indicative of a functioning 'art world' (Becker, 1984) and has driven the events industry forward with people supporting other people to achieve the art product – in this context, the event. It is the art world which influences the way organisers learn to do their job and reflects the Douglas Grid Group Diagram (Anfara and Mertz, 2011) (see 2.1) arguing that people need to fit with the behaviour of the group to which they belong.

To an extent, participation with professional associations is a choice for organisers in the UK – there are many to choose from, which as mentioned previously, is counterproductive because it is confusing and an organiser might find it simpler to engage with none. Whereas in Poland there are too few associations to choose. It is a gap between a developed industry and one that is emerging, but I consider it not to be a significant gap because not all UK organisers participate with industry associations, and those who do can choose which ones and how many. Because there is no legal requirement to belong to one or any of the professional associations, the gap exists in the UK industry anyhow. In Poland it is the same gap, albeit more widespread. The difference between Poland and the UK, therefore, is not due to the stage of development of the events industry in each country. This is what makes it an insignificant gap between the

UK and Poland and will only get filled if both countries require organisers to join a professional association for accreditation.

This said, there is a need for organisers in the UK to comply with constantly evolving legislation. This is more pronounced at the level of my target population who are high-level organisers at landmark venues, so it might be less driven for organisers at smaller, independent venues. Nevertheless, my data reveals an appetite in the UK for knowledge sharing and best practice:

> *"The typical ones for us would be people like the Association of Event Organisers and the Association of Event Venues … Sharing best practice and I guess really helping to elevate the standard of our industry, if you like. Because if we can do it better… There are two elements, for us we'd be in competition with other venues but actually the other side of it as a group of venues across the country it's our job to collectively improve our standards and offer our customers the best… It's about trying to elevate our own industry… We need to be presenting the united face of the industry."*
>
> (UK4 – landmark convention centre)

UK4 reflects the social awareness of organisers in their collective responsibility to advance the UK events industry. Knowledge is the objective here, which Brown and Stokes (2021) argue is at the centre of events management, and UK4 places this above the fear of competition. This provides a snapshot of the shape of the UK events industry and shows a stark differential between the UK and Poland because organisers in the UK appear keen to exploit their network for knowledge-sharing activities and associations whereas Poland organisers are autonomous and will view other organisers as competitors in the marketplace. It is a professions difference because organisers in the UK have been driven to develop a socio-cultural behaviour to be professional and professionalise their habitus. UK6 reinforces this summation:

> *"I have a *NEBOSH qualification and **PRINCE2 project management*

qualification."

<div align="right">(UK6 – landmark convention centre)</div>

*NEBOSH (National Examination Board in Occupational Safety and Health) is a recognised professional examination in health and safety (*NEBOSH*, no date).

PRINCE2 (PR**ojects **IN C**ontrolled **E**nvironments) (Pielichaty *et al.*, 2017) courses begin from £540 (*PRINCE2*, 2020).

My interview with UK6 was one of the face-to-face interviews before the pandemic forced me to revert to video-call interviews. In this case, then, I can assert that UK6 was proud to tell me of his NEBOSH and PRINCE2 accreditations. For him, possessing risk management qualifications provides skills and competences accredited by the industry of his profession which reflects the discussion in Section 4.1 of the shift in discourse from the 'sociology of professions' to the 'sociology of professional knowledge', and then to the 'sociology of expertise' (Macdonald, 1999; Eyal and Pok, no date; Young and Muller, 2014). Knowledge-gain is important to UK6 not only for him to do his job (because he could do his job without qualifications, as others are) but because he feels professional among his professional counterparts in a professional setting. He can, for example, assert authority over others in his industry including his clients because he possesses knowledge, and confidence, in an area of event specialism which they might lack. This allows him to elevate his status and is an example of what I have explained in Berners (2017, pp.19-21) as 'the real event manager' (see also 5.1). It confirms, then, how individual organisers or the company they work for are driven to professionalisation by recognising the need to be compliant, not by any pressures of consumers or the insurance industry responding to previous disasters at events.

By UK6 possessing industry qualifications and knowledge gain will make headway in the production of safer events where risk management is being practiced. This is a good thing, of

course, but it does drive the UK events industry towards accusations of credentialism. Brown (2001) explains this can lead to declines in employers' use of other recruitment criteria by insisting on candidates who have a certain set of professional qualifications or an events management degree, say, thus homogenising the social landscape. At least in Poland there are no barriers to enter the events industry because qualifications are not required. For all the deficiencies that the lack of professional qualifications may entail, it is certainly not a credentialism social landscape which limits diversity in the sector, unlike what is taking shape in the UK events industry.

Due to the different stage of development between the events industry in the UK and Poland, courses in events management are not yet available in Poland, so are not recognised. Therefore, qualifications in events specialisms appear to be more valued in the UK but have no value in the Poland events sector:

> *"Huh [laughs], it's quite a long story, I used to work in different kind of companies because I worked for 15 years in the mobile telecommunications sector. I did some marketing there. That's why I'm here at [venue name] to somehow support marketing and to organise events. But most of my career was in a different place and different sector. I was fed up of [inaudible] world – rat race and that kind of stuff… I do not have any theoretical background but rather I would say some practical one."*
>
> (PL2 – landmark venue)

By laughing at the outset of his statement, PL2 may have found it incredulous that he was being interviewed as an event specialist even though his professional background is in other sectors. But he fit my target population because of his position at a landmark venue in Warsaw. I was not targeting experienced and qualified event professionals. This study project would not work if I had, and is rather the point of my research. PL2 might have felt nervous to reveal to me that his background is elsewhere, and he is in fact an events imposter in his role as the director of events at a landmark capital-city-centre venue. But he is not an imposter, and he might even

have been surprised if I had informed him that his situation is not dissimilar to London organisers. He confessed *"I do not have any theoretical background but rather I would say some practical one"* which is consistent with other participants in my population drawn from both Poland and the UK: they do not have a theoretical background in the management of events. This is the reason they place value in their experience over qualifications, and is why the events industry in both the UK and Poland mirror the same shape of holding experience above qualifications.

There is a gap, however, in that the UK draws organisers with experience in related fields such as hospitality or tourism, whereas in Poland this does not seem to matter to correlate. This is at odds with the theoretical works of Ulrich Beck and Anthony Giddens that we are living in a developed risk society (Ekberg, 2007). Their theory is that there has been a reconfiguration in the traditional way risk is identified, evaluated, communicated, and governed. It is not only the sum of probability of an adverse happening and the severity of the consequences, but it now includes the perception of risk, the communication of risk and the social experience of living in a risk environment. This, they argue, is the way to effectively manage risks emerging in the age of modernity of the risk society. Beck (n.d., cited in Boyne, 2003) considers there is a break within modernity in shifting from classical industrial society to a new self-endangering civilisation. Perhaps, then, organisers are relying on their experience to redress their lack of professional qualifications to meet the modern risk environment:

> *"We had to learn a lot by ourselves. Everything. We gained experience whilst organising things because we always had to deal with these problems, and we always had to see to it that everything was tip top. That there would be no problems, you know, during the event. We had firefighters, we had security, we had medical, we had special guards from the [name of venue] as well."*
>
> (PL3 – organiser of charity events)

Here, PL3 organises events for up to 5,000 people and seems to be showing the value she attaches in the experience she has gained from having *"always had to deal with these problems"* herself. She has no access to formal education, so she is having to learn from her experiences. She mentions her reliance on trained *"professionals"* such as *"firefighters, security, medical"* and *"special guards"* which is no different to the level of specialist support required by qualified organisers, and PL3 will learn from working alongside specialists, also. I can surmise, then, that the absence of formal education does indeed mean organisers value their experience in the absence of qualifications.

6.1 Acceptance of Risk

My primary data has revealed that acceptance of risk is not affected by specialist qualifications or education in events management because some organisers with specialist education do not enact risk management procedures such as setting objectives and conducting after-event evaluation. Also, one of my participants who does have specialist education was the only organiser I interviewed who failed to mention risk whereas every other participant did, including those without specialist education. Specialist education does, however, inform organisers how to enact risk management procedures which points to knowledge of risk procedures, risk control and risk management being fundamental. For my thesis, I argue that an emerging events industry can learn about risks at events from the tragedies that have already happened in a developed industry so that the former does not need to learn from the experiences of its own tragedies. For this to happen will require international policy transfer and imported knowledge from graduates of events management who have been educated by studying past tragedies, risk milestones, and the legislations and practices which shape an events industry after it has experienced tragedy.

The problem is the gap between rules and what people do in actual behaviours. Triandis (n.d., cited in Gillespie and Hennessey, 2016, p.112) views this as dependent upon the construct of either a 'tight' or 'loose' culture whereby a tight culture has many rules, norms and standards for correct behaviour as can be seen in the UK events industry. In the UK, rule-breakers risk criticism or punishment, or at least judgement and damage to reputation. This concept has relevance with events because of their temporary nature making them less likely to be identified as noncompliant before they are gone, and the organiser less likely to be criticised or punished which drives towards a loose culture, particularly in Poland. The basis of social order is conforming to social rules and norms, and deviance occurs when norms are broken (O'Donnell, 1997). Being less likely to get noticed, criticised or punished encourages organisers in Poland to be less driven to professionalism, or even to perform deviant behaviour which I will come to discuss, but is also visible in the high level of risk acceptance of other emerging social constructs such as the Sochi Winter Olympics (Shaw, Anin and Vdovii, 2015), the Qatar World Cup (*The Guardian*, no date), and is reflected in this comment by PL4:

> "S*ometimes I do come across things which for us would be unthinkable; poorly managed; poorly organised."*

> (PL4 – organiser of charity events)

Even operating within a loose culture herself, PL4 recognises variances in risk acceptance behaviours at other events which for her *"would be unthinkable"*. She is therefore able to determine what is good practice and what is not, by her experience only. It is not clear to me how or why she might judge an event as being *"poorly managed; poorly organised"* because these are not questions that I asked her, but her tone at this point in the interview revealed her pride and defiance, so she believes it. I am more interested in the position she has adopted in

distancing her events from those which are doing things which, for her, *"would be unthinkable; poorly managed; poorly organised"*. My point is that she feels able to differentiate her events from others that she experiences and is benchmarking what she believes are her good practices against her observance of lesser practices. She can do this, she feels, because she has learnt from her experiences of other organiser's events. This has positive implications for my thesis that the role of tragedy facilitates organisers in an emerging industry to learn from the tragedies which have shaped an industry that is further developed. In this instance, if PL4 learnt about risk from (international) organisers and from the previous tragedies at events in other locations, her risk procedures would be improved, and her events would be safer. It also means PL4 will be more professional in her performance, driven by her own learning, than by any requirements of the insurance industry or her consumers.

My insider observations reinforce what PL4 is saying because I have witnessed events in Poland where rules and norms do get broken. Mostly, I observed partial compliance behaviours happening in Poland whereby organisers had identified a hazard and went partway to mitigating the risk of it causing harm, but without fully negating that potential consequence from occurring. This is a clear finding that organisers are driven to professionalisation by compliance and can be less professional if they are less likely to be identified as non-compliant. By conducting partial compliance an organiser cannot be accused of ignoring the hazard because they have identified it, firstly, and have gone some way in dealing with it, secondly – albeit not going as far as to fully mitigate the risk from potentially causing harm. That last bit of not totally mitigating the risk, is deemed to be 'worth the risk' because it is unlikely it will be noticed before the event is gone. Anyway, for it to be noticed would require a safety official visiting the event, which is unlikely in Poland. I have provided two images in Appendix H as examples to demonstrate partial compliance behaviour by organisers at events in Poland. In one image of the Pope falling on a stage in Poland, there are carpeted steps where some of the

edges have been highlighted but others were not: the Pope has fallen on those not highlighted. Another image shows power cables laid across a walkway at a festival in Warsaw, with the cables partially covered but mostly left uncovered where consumers are walking – some of whom are elderly, or young, or carrying glass bottles. There is an ambulance parked close-by which evidences awareness of the presence of risk at that event, but not all risk has been mitigated – only partially.

Acceptance of risk at events by organisers in the UK is lower than Poland because it is more likely to be noticed in the UK and if it is, it could close the event or incur litigation. Silvers (2008) attributes this to the variance in different cultures and different locations, and Boyne (2003) concurs that standards of acceptability may vary across cultures. I can provide an example where I was involved with a concert in Hyde Park for Prince Charles's charity *The Prince's Trust* and we were providing catering from a temporary kitchen. At the start of the event day, once the kitchen was beginning its operation, a gentleman knocked on the door of the temporary kitchen and put on a white coat. He was a food quality inspector from Westminster City Council and he stayed to observe my chefs for the duration of the event to ensure food hygiene regulations and standards were being adhered. We welcomed this intervention from an authoritative body because it was helpful to protect us if anything were to go wrong, such as a case of suspected food-poisoning, in which case we would know we had adhered to all regulations and standards, and had proved it to the health inspector in our kitchen. It also provided my chefs with the opportunity to learn from a specialist, which is always an advantage with risk, health and safety.

Attitude to Risk

"It's about health and safety. So, what to do if something goes wrong, if somebody is taken ill and how you can get help quickly. It's about who we might be expecting, who

> *we need to look out for, any VIP guests. It's things like, you know, security. Security can be a big one for some events. About looking out for odd behaviour or areas that people should not be going into and how to raise help if we need it. Just making sure everything is as we would want it to be…"*

(UK2 – organiser at an institution)

UK2 is using future tense which indicates she considers risk during the planning stage of her events to identify what those risks might be. This is underpinned by her statement *"what to do if something goes wrong"* which indicates her forward-thinking stance, and not waiting for something to go wrong before thinking what to do about it. She uses the phrase "*who we might be expecting, who we need to look out for"* which is further corroboration of her forward approach to risk by knowing in advance who will be attending and looking out for them to arrive. Even though UK2 told me that she does not routinely set objectives (to have a safe event is an objective) nor does she conduct after-event evaluation (to measure that the event was in fact safe, and to identify what risks could be mitigated for future events) her interview informed me that she is attuned to the presence of risk at her events which makes her behaviour risk averse. Haniff and Salama (2016) describe three levels of risk attitude: risk averse where risk is avoided and opts towards less risky events; risk seeker where the higher the risk the higher the returns; and risk neutral where decisions are based on detailed analysis. I would argue that all events should start from the perspective of risk aversion where risk is avoided. Having said this, participant UK3 failed to mention risk or safety during our 46-minute interview and he is the departmental managing director at a mass-participant sports venue with a capacity in excess of 30,000 where both individual and societal risks (Gerber and Von Solms, 2005) are present. I have considered that his mind may not have been on safety or risk whilst speaking with me, but some of my questions did invite risk and safety to be discussed. Anyhow, this still indicates he does not hold risk uppermost in his mind. I also considered that safety and risk is managed by a specialist department at a venue of the size of UK3, so risk is not his direct role. But UK2

also has a specialist risk department at her institution, and she did raise health and safety during her interview, as did every other participant. So why would UK3 omit to mention risk or safety when it has to be as UK6 stated: *"…everything should fall behind safety… everything is about the safety… It is the number one of everything…".*

With UK3 failing to mention risk suggests he relies on others to consider risk for him, because of course he will be aware of the presence of risk at events. And I found other examples of organisers who appear to delegate the responsibility of risk management:

> *"We would have a supplier's meeting pre-event 3 or 4 weeks before an event. I would present how we saw the whole event running. When we go onsite at venues they will do sort-of fire safety briefings… They will only do a fire and safety briefing of the venue, of where to go."*
>
> (UK8 – organiser for a pan-European publishing company)

This type of risk-deferment behaviour reinforces that some organisers accept there is the presence of risk, but are not prepared to accept responsibility for mitigating them. Here, UK8 demonstrates her expectation that her suppliers will take responsibility for *"sort-of fire safety briefings"*. This could be fine because delegation is acceptable, had she not used the terms *"sort-of"* and *"only do a fire and safety briefing of the venue, of where to go"* because these ambiguities indicate a level of complacency on top of delegating the utmost priority to a supplier.

I did not question UK8 with what would happen if something went wrong at her event, but I consider it likely the blame would be directed to the supplier who was charged with delivering the fire safety briefing. That would be evidence of a blame shift. Douglas (2003) discusses risk and blame where she cites Hegel and Weber identifying that knowledge and awareness increases technical control. If organisers such as UK3 and UK8 delegate the responsibility of

risk management to other parties they will fail to evolve their own knowledge and awareness of risks that are present at their events and plan the measures to control them. Pearn, Mulrooney and Payne (1998) discuss turning blame cultures into gain cultures by learning from mistakes which all organisers should be doing, but UK3 and UK8 are not involving themselves with the risk aspect of their events so they will not gain, but they will blame. Learning from what happened was the objective of the Manchester Arena Inquiry (see 6.0) seeking to answer the question of accountability without apportioning blame but to identify who was accountable for the missed opportunities to prevent the bombing or mitigate the harm it caused. An incident of this magnitude will reshape the UK events industry and will update legislations and practices, with wider implications for organisers outside the UK to learn from the tragedy. But this will happen only if there is international and cross-cultural engagement in place to facilitate the learning. There is opportunity for more research in the area of organisers delegating their responsibilities of risk to other stakeholders who would then be held accountable if something did go wrong.

It is important for organisers to work with risk so they learn to identify, assess and mitigate risk from causing harm. Cottle (no date) writes that contemporary risks are historically unprecedented, so their potential catastrophic effects are invisible. He states they can only become visible when defined within knowledge, the legal system and mass media. He further asserts this is a social-constructionist formulation where risks are dependent upon how they are made socially visible. Until a tragedy occurs, the issue with risk acceptance is normalisation, which Vaughan (1996) concluded with her investigation into the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Challenger disaster. In determining how Challenger was launched against objections from engineers with a design known to be flawed, Vaughan revealed a culture of incremental descent into poor judgment and a pattern of normalisation in engineering risk assessments. There is danger of this attitude happening with events in an

evolving industry such as Poland if the societal acceptance of risk becomes the embedded culture of that location, which is a very likely possibility because nobody in that social construct knows any better. If this should happen it will shape a localised tier of lower risk aversion compared to known and accepted levels of higher risk aversion in the global marketplace for international events. The question is, how will an organiser in Poland contrast the practices in their own industry, with which they are familiar with, against those in an industry that is already shaped from its tragedies, and identify the disparities? The impact of this gap is that event tourist clients booking their events into Poland, and event tourist consumers attending events that are happening in Poland, will be unaware of their exposure to a higher level of risk acceptance and lower level of mitigation of risks. This disparity already exists according to this excerpt from PL7:

> *"International clients almost always would sit with us and expect a debrief to see what can we learn, how the event went. What can we learn from it, what could we do better, what did work, what didn't work. Sit and think about how did it go. Very important to see if the client is happy and if their goals were met."*
>
> (PL7 – organiser of events)

PL7 is identifying a difference exists in the approach of international clients expecting an after-event debrief whereas his Poland clients would not have that same expectation. It informs me that approaches vary from location to location which is why the gap of risk-acceptance needs to be at a consistent low level within the global marketplace for international events. Wynn-Moylan (2018) asserts that structured evaluation after an event should lead to improvements in planning the next event, changes needed to the venue, current or potential problems, ways of improving the system and feedback from staff. PL7 clearly recognises the value in learning from his international clients: *"What can we learn from it, what could we do better, what did work, what didn't work"*, yet he appears to accept that his Poland clients do things differently

and there is no debrief to inform him about how the event went, how the venue performed, and what he could do better such as risk identification and risk mitigation. I did not ask PL7 why he does not import the behaviours of his international clients and adopt those practices with his Poland clients, but it does inform me that the cultural gap exists. PL5 confirms the existence of this same gap:

> *"There is a difference between Polish – maybe ten years ago in Poland – and agencies from Europe, mostly Western Europe. Because the Western European agencies are very used to having feedback so they are sending letters with 'maybe you can consider something'. Usually, they are pleased, I must say, with our work. But for the Polish companies they say 'thank you, okay, bye. Now it has slightly changed."*
>
> (PL5 – landmark historic venue)

Like PL7 before, PL5 is being handed the opportunity to improve his venue and the service he provides to international clients because this category of client is giving feedback to tell him where he could improve. But he points out the gap with his Poland clients who do not give feedback. Still, he has identified from his international clients the importance of feedback, even though it has not prompted him to ask for it from his Polish clientele. There is a barrier here which is preventing Poland organisers from adopting international practices which I conclude is due to the socio-cultural factors discussed in 2.1. PL5 does say *"Now it has slightly changed"*, which suggests international knowledge transfer is happening and will help to reshape the practices in the Poland events industry towards international practices and narrow this gap. This is something which is corroborated by PL4:

> *"I pick up so many things, even in Vienna, you wouldn't believe it. But, you know what, I'll tell you that your teachings have… I have learnt quite a lot. At the Polytechnic [venue in Warsaw] for example I made a point that guests do not see caterers with their stuff. I said, 'you cannot have this, so think of something'. The tables on one side of the hall and they had blinds brought down and it was cut off for the public so they couldn't go there and see everything. I told myself that also the sound engineer must cover his*

*stand with special material so you don't see it – he's not there, if you know what I mean;
everybody has to have black suits which was good, and also the technicians. Lots of
stuff, lots of stuff, lots of stuff."*

(PL4 – organiser of charity events)

PL4 is evidencing her willingness to learn from sources which are not available in Poland –
from working with me also – and she is excited and pleased with herself for picking up on these
elements and importing the learning to her own events. She is talking about aesthetics in her
statement, but it is reasonable to expect her learning will extend to other areas of managing
events which she experiences outside her Poland habitus, such as risk management, learning
from tragedy elsewhere, and a lower threshold of risk acceptance. Indeed, my research here
has shown that risk acceptance is impacted by experience, but not specialist qualifications. I
have found no evidence that an event organiser is more likely to mention risk if they are
formally educated in events management, so it is mostly impacted by the experiences to which
an organiser is exposed. The problem is that Poland organisers receive less experiences unless,
like PL4, they are involved with events in a different location with perhaps a further evolved
socio-professional construct. Otherwise, Poland organisers do have the opportunity to achieve
experiences from international clients and consumers at their home events, plus to learn from
the experiences of tragedies which have already happened in other countries without having to
learn from the experiences of their own failures, so long as they recognise these learning
opportunities and are willing to adopt the learning into their practices.

6.2 Learning from Experience

People learn from the mistakes they make whilst doing the job. This is what builds career
experience and is why experience is valued by employers on a candidate's curriculum vitae. In
many cases it is why some firms and individuals are trusted implicitly and their word and
abilities are considered more significant than any qualification – even in the recruitment

process where qualifications should matter significantly. However, where organisers rely on career experience to learn from, rather than a formal education, it can be too late for mitigating risks at events. As already discussed in this thesis, events are consumed at the point of delivery, plus they cannot rehappen, so if a risk is left to cause a consequence it cannot be recovered. This is going to be more prevalent in Poland than the UK because organisers in Poland do not yet have access to formal education in the specialisms of managing events, whereas in the UK there is already wide provision of university courses in events management. Therein lies the cause of a gap even though the UK events industry eschewed formal education or qualification until recently. In addition, it would be helpful (and safer) to learn from the mistakes which other organisers have already made, than to learn from one's own mistakes as they happen and those which are yet to happen. This is imperative not only for achieving client and consumer satisfaction, quality, and meeting the event objectives, but becomes real and essential with mistakes that can be determined as 'tragedy', such as the Manchester Arena bombing at the Ariana Grande concert, or the murder of Gdansk's mayor onstage at a festival.

Event literature does widely provide help with risks at events, but it tends to be practical operational guidance rather than cross-cultural studies or milestones of tragedies, legislations and practices from which an organiser might learn. For example, Wynn-Moylan (2018) proposes an Event Safety Management System (ESMS) which is a set of planning activities leading to a formalised set of procedures for the management of safety at events and venues. He asserts that an event safety policy defines the commitment to society that the event organiser makes in hosting a safe event. So, the delivery of a safe event is not an option but a societal expectation. UK5 described his procedural approach to risk which begins with the Event Management Plan (EMP) which gets disseminated to a Safety Advisory Group (SAG):

> *"For any event, you prepare an EMP, which is an Event Management Plan. That EMP is usually produced twelve weeks before an event at a minimum. That will be presented at something called a SAG Group, Safety Advisory Group, and then you have feedback from the statutory authorities around that table."*

<div align="right">(UK5 – organiser of local authority events)</div>

By UK5 stating *"for any event"* indicates the EMP is a procedure for all his events to facilitate feedback from his SAG made up of statutory authorities. This means an organiser does not have to be a risk or safety specialist but can bring together a group of advisers with authoritative knowledge, experience, training and qualifications to support the event, provide advice and ensure it is safe. This is important to know by organisers operating in a developing events industry because it enables them to gain specialist knowledge from expert sources other than formal education or years of experience. I made this point in Section 6.0 when PL3 stated: *"We had firefighters, we had security, we had medical, we had special guards"*. Armstrong, Giulianotti and Hobbs (2017, pp.133-141) give a detailed account of the function of the SAG at the 2012 London Olympics which they refer to as the OCZ (Olympics Command Zone). The assembled SAG is flexible and adaptable by necessity for each situation at each event. Paraskevas (2006) presents this as a living co-evolving system for effective response to crises. I can relate this to when Princess Diana visited Thorpe Park with Princes William and Harry, and I was the head of events. Our existing crisis management protocols were reviewed and adapted with statutory authorities (the SAG) to accommodate the increased level of risk. Working with a safety advisory group is a learning experience for an organiser, however not all events warrant an SAG because the event might be low risk and not complex. In the UK, just as anywhere else, there is no guarantee that an organiser will learn from working with SAG specialists. It leads me back to the way most organisers learn about risk: from their own experience, which obscures the potential (and need) for learning from other organiser's

tragedies that have already happened elsewhere, and the role of tragedy in shaping an events industry. This obscureness also masks the importance of an international cross-cultural learning environment. What is intrinsic to all organisers, then, is to formalise their learning:

> *"A lot of our events are repeat annual events so just because it's finished doesn't mean it's not immediately starting again for preparation for the next year. What we are very, very keen on at the moment is understanding where we can improve after an event, as soon as possible. We task our event managers now with starting the debriefing process six weeks before the event even comes to site… I presented at the AEO [Association of Event Organisers] three weeks ago at their ops forums and I talked about debriefing an awful lot and saying how it needs to loop continuously so it's almost not a debrief but an ongoing process, a continuous event life-cycle – just because it finishes on [date] doesn't mean the event has finished, it's actually going to start again for next year so your planning starts the moment it finishes. And we look at the way this continuous event life-cycle loops and how it feeds, and how we can continuously improve."*

> (UK6 – landmark convention centre)

The Self-Learning Environment

Clearly from this excerpt, UK6 fully understands the cyclical need of learning from one event to the next as a formalised and structured process. He does not attempt to do this alone, but in cooperation with *"venue and organiser and contractor",* what he calls the *"three pillars to making a successful event"*. The difference here from learning from the SAG is that UK6 is steering his learning by knowing to engage with people in his habitus. Working with an SAG provides the opportunity for passive learning but in the frequent and most-often absence of an SAG, UK6 highlights an organiser's ability to conduct active self-learning. This is an unexpected finding and will be discussed in later sections of my thesis.

UK6 then says *"I presented at the AEO"* so he has in fact elevated his status from learner to teacher. The way UK6 described the continuous event life-cycle as a *"loop"* and an *"ongoing process"* reflects his understanding of the need to implement continuous evaluation for his

venue to become a learning organisation, to achieve their goals and meet standards (Getz, 2018). Allen, Alston and DeKerchove (2019) agree that employees must perform safely and in compliance with requirements as well as continuously seeking ways to improve operations and processes, which UK6 demonstrates in practical terms. I have identified, therefore, that organisers need to shape their socio-professional construct to facilitate a self-learning environment. This finding is especially important to understand for locations where there is limited or no access to formal education, and organisers are less likely to learn from experience because they do not conduct structured debrief and evaluation procedures, as PL5 shows here:

> *"If everything is okay, we have another event next day or we have some days with four events so there is no time for it [evaluation]. So, if everything is okay, we just need to do our paperwork after this and rub our hands and forget it."*
>
> (PL5 – landmark historic venue)

The difference between the learning approach of PL5 and that of UK6 is stark. UK6 is aware of creating opportunities for his self-learning whereas PL5 says they *"rub our hands and forget it"*. Getz (2018) highlights the need to measure ROI (Return on Investment), ROO (Return on Objectives) and ROE (Return on Experience) but PL5 is omitting these measurements of return by allowing *"there is no time for it"*. So, he is not allocating time to debrief with his clients, consumers and other stakeholders – what UK6 termed as the *"three pillars to making a successful event"*. My concern with PL5 is how he would know *"everything is okay"* if he is not routinely conducting debrief meetings and evaluations for self-learning to inform him. During my interview with PL5, I did not ascertain from him that he does not want to learn – that was not his mindset; he is very proud of his historic landmark venue – it must only be down to him not having the same understanding as UK6 to create his self-learning environment. I did find, however, that where organisers fail to enact procedures from which they could learn,

they are inclined to blame the lack of time. This was true of organisers in both the UK and Poland, as if they know they are wrong to be omitting some procedures, and are reluctant to admit it is their fault:

> *"There is never time to debrief customers. Customer is always running away and [laughs] chasing other subjects and we actually marching into the next project, so it is very difficult. But we always try to debrief on email or conversation on the phone maybe to catch-up later on. But I know international clients almost always would sit with us and expect a debrief."*

(PL7 – organiser of events)

PL7 provides another example of an organiser blaming time, not himself. I have identified the need for organisers to conduct after-event feedback and evaluation procedures for their self-learning from one event to the next, which UK6 underpinned with his practices. This is even more important for PL7 because he has no access to formal education in events management, he operates in a fragmented socio-professional construct with high autonomous working, and he does not have a background of experience in organising events. Still, just like PL5, PL7 is a passionate organiser who wants to be professional – it is not that he does not want to learn, just that he does not have the understanding of the need to create his self-learning environment.

PL7 says *"we always try to debrief"* which makes it not a procedure because sometimes he does not debrief, and possibly he might always not debrief. Yet, he has learnt that his international clients do expect a debrief: *"I know international clients almost always would sit with us and expect a debrief"* so he acknowledges the gap between his international clients and his domestic clients. Even so, he has not learnt to conduct feedback procedures every time. It is true that not all UK participants routinely conduct debriefs, evaluation and after-event feedback procedures to learn from one event to the next, so this is not where the gap exists. But

organisers in the UK do have opportunities to learn from formal education and professional associations, so this is the knowledge gap. In summary, I have made the unexpected finding that all organisers can conduct active self-learning, and an events industry needs to form this behavioural understanding as the shape of their socio-professional construct, especially where the industry is eschewing any formal education or qualification in events management. Where this happens, there is tension between experience and academic qualification because experience is valued over academic qualifications in the belief that if qualifications are not available, they cannot be needed.

6.3 Consumer Risk Perspective

Risk and uncertainty in events are not limited to how an event is planned and executed but extends to the organiser's responsibility for the protection of consumers attending an event. Also, the risky behaviour of consumers is a factor at events and is often exacerbated by large crowds and the presence of alcohol and drugs. Such factors are common to events all over the world, so the potential to share knowledge at an international level from a developed industry to one which is emerging, and facilitate learning from previous tragedies, is very relevant. Further, the trend for providing experiential events for fun, adventure and thrill means consumers are closer to the risk of injury and harm whilst being carefree with their personal safety which they place into the hands of an event organiser. Bladen *et al.* (2018) state that event design is among the greatest challenges facing the events specialist due to clients demanding ever more creative events for their attendees to experience. Clearly, in the face of these trends, it must be beneficial, and safer, for an international approach to learning from tragedy and shape emerging and developing events industries from those which are already developed.

Consumers have a societal subliminal expectation to be safe at an event and there is a distinction provided by Douglas and Wildavsky (1982) between voluntary and involuntary acceptance of risk by consumers. They write that if people wish to expose themselves to risk that is their own business and voluntary, but if they are unaware of the risks or associated risks it is involuntary. Their answer to this is 'better information' so that people either reject a known risk or seek additional compensation for assuming it. This means involuntary risk is due to ignorance but can be converted to a voluntary risk by knowledge. Organisers should understand this when producing events and marketing them to consumers. The consumer risk perspective needs to be considered by organisers so that they ask themselves whether the risks are being communicated to the consumer, so that the consumer can voluntarily expose themselves to those risks. However, the data I have gathered from my participants identifies event organisers do not consider the consumer risk perspective, but instead tend to focus on the commercial objectives:

> *"With an event, obviously there's usually key drivers. So, it's either a financial, or a community, or best-practice initiatives, really. If there's a financial driver to an event we'd want to know all the information upfront in terms of what the costs were, what the percentage income, what the breakeven was, obviously what the community benefit was – engaging with the residents and engaging with the local community. The economic benefit as well, in terms of gauging how many visitors we maybe could get to an event, what the secondary spend opportunities were around that… but I think you need to be very clear on what your aims and objectives are so you can actually achieve them, otherwise you could end up delivering something which isn't quite as good as you wanted it to be and it doesn't achieve the objective what you set out with."*
>
> (UK5 – organiser of local authority events)

UK5 is concerned with financial targets and commercial objectives because he organises events on behalf of a local authority and is naturally driven by budgets, spend, and return on investment. Although, in this instance he does mention *"community"* as a *"key driver"* which

is to be expected from an organiser of events for a local authority. But local authority community events are organised for people – as all events are – yet UK5 leaned towards the financials more than consumers during our interview, which the excerpt above demonstrates. Bowdin *et al*. (2011) reminds organisers they have a legal responsibility to provide a safe event, and Wynn-Moylan (2018) points out that Duty of Care is a legal principle which places the event organiser as the responsible person to avoid acts of omissions that could injure another. As the legal implications become more impactful when an events industry matures, organisers might indeed welcome and be willing to accept and engage with an international approach to the role of tragedy in shaping their industry.

As it stands, however, I have identified barriers to engagement which are outlined in section 7.1, because just like UK5, none of my participants included 'keeping people safe' as an objective of their events even though risk can be defined as the likelihood of an event not fulfilling its objectives (Allen, 2009). UK5 does recognise the value of objectives, saying *"I think you need to be very clear on what your aims and objectives are so you can actually achieve them, otherwise you could end up delivering something which isn't quite as good as you wanted it to be and it doesn't achieve the objective what you set out with"*. Even so, his consumer perspective (which he calls *"residents, local community, visito*rs*"*) reflects the commercial objectives and not the safety of people. Commercial objectives are easier to define then consumer safety because costs, revenue and profit can be measured whereas it takes greater effort to obtain, evaluate and measure consumer feedback. But the issue here is that organisers put on an event for financial reward, not for safety – which is why they will focus on their financial objectives at the cost of the risk objective, which UK10 demonstrates here:

> *"Our objective is to get the people in and out the building, get them to empty their pockets – being very commercially driven [laughs] – and leave with a smile on their face. I use my cynical commercial outlook but we're there to service people and keep*

people coming back, that's the nature of what we're trying to do. We get around 1.5 million visitors a year… We've tried things like customer thermometers which actually work – smiley faces. There are some good tools out there and I would encourage more venues to engage with those tools and really benefit from them."

(UK10 – landmark exhibition centre)

UK10 is at a significant landmark venue which has a good reputation to protect, so he is not dismissing the value of his consumers being satisfied, and he makes that clear in the above excerpt referring to *"customer thermometers… smiley faces"*. He further recommends other venues to *"engage with those tools and really benefit from them"*. But even when he was talking about consumers, his perspective was to view people as a commodity to reach the financial objective by getting *"them to empty their pockets"*. So, UK10 is interested in the consumer perspective, only because he needs to *"service people and keep people coming back"* for them to continue spending money at his venue and keep it commercially viable. He did not include the safety of his consumers as an objective or a measurement of the success of his events. But UK10 is not out of step with every other respondent I interviewed. So, although this may be a worrying finding, it is not an identified gap between the UK and Poland because respondents in both locations failed to mention consumer risks and safety. This does indicate a shortfall in the consumer risk perspective overall, rather than any difference caused by the stage of development of an events industry.

There also appears to be stubborn focus on financial objectives in existing theoretical event literature, including omitting safety as an objective. For example, Shone and Parry (2013, pp.139-140; p.333) discuss objectives and financial planning within several sections of their textbook including 'cultural events, financial, leisure events, new events, organisational event, personal event, planning, setting', but objectives is not included in the 'safety' section. They do discuss risk, but do not present risk and objectives with any linkage. Silvers (2008) only arrives at the consumer risk perspective in the very last chapter of her *Risk Management for*

Meetings and Events textbook, although Wynn-Moylan (2018) does devote three chapters to the consumer risk perspective in his *Risk and Hazard Management for Festivals and Events* textbook. Overall, there remains a gap in the literature in addressing consumer risk and safety to impart the awareness to organisers – particularly students of events management – that consumer risk is the priority objective ahead of other objectives such as the financial goals and targets. This would have a behavioural impact in the UK profession because students on formal courses will adopt the learning into the socio-professional construct of the industry. It would not yet impact the Poland events industry where there are no courses in events management, although if an international approach were to happen, Poland would learn from the UK.

To conclude, this data analysis chapter has identified a variance in the behaviours and attitude of organisers towards risk at events. Organisers in both the UK and Poland are aware of risk but in the UK there is higher likelihood of repercussions and litigation if noncompliance is identified or something goes wrong at an event. This has driven organisers in the UK events industry to recognise the need to be compliant with regulations and legislations. In turn, this has shaped the UK events industry to be a risk averse socio-professional construct whereas in Poland it is 'worth the risk' to accept risk because it will likely not be discovered. It reveals how compliance with the law is the driver for individuals or the company they work for to be professional, rather than consumers or the insurance industry responding to previous tragedies at events.

I have made the further finding that the awareness of risk at events is not dependent upon formal education in the specialisms of organising events although education does help an organiser to understand risk and know how to identify, assess and mitigate risk. Experience in managing events is the main factor for an organiser to manage risk because people learn from past mistakes and try not to repeat them. However, this only works if a risk has already caused an impact to learn from, by which time it is too late for that event. Organisers would benefit by

learning from academic qualifications but the industry places trust in firms and individuals' word and abilities from their experience which is demonstrable by reputation, client portfolio, testimonials, and track record of delivering successful events.

The events industry does not lead organisers to achieve academic qualifications and to a large degree eschews any formal education or qualification in events management. The socio-professional structure takes shape around organisers organically evolving their learning unaided and relies on individuals or the company they work for to identify learning needs by themselves, which tend to be driven by the need to be compliant. Thus, an industry taking shape recognises experience as more valuable than qualifications in the belief that if qualifications are not available, they cannot be needed in order to run an event. But, as an industry matures and academic qualifications become available, entrants to the industry seek to study to make themselves employable, and employers respond by advertising job vacancies requiring candidates to be qualified. It should be noted, however, that this situation is still organic development by organisers and is not being led by the industry, so there are naturally occurring tensions between academic qualifications and experience. Such tensions are due to experienced organisers abstaining from gaining qualifications which have now become available, an understanding in the industry of the 'right' level of experience versus the 'right' level of qualifications, and the social barriers of organisers thinking they know how to do the job, so they devalue qualifications and qualified organisers, and their rejection of academically qualified entrants who lack experience.

This is where an international cross-cultural approach to knowledge sharing and learning will be valuable to facilitate the emerging industry to be safer in its practices of managing events by learning from tragedies that have already happened elsewhere. Also, if organisers do not routinely set objectives, omit the risk management procedures, and fail to conduct after-event evaluation, they will not identify or learn from their own experience of mistakes. Therefore, I

have made the unexpected finding that the most significant factor for an emerging events industry to address risk, is for the socio-professional construct to shape an active self-learning environment where organisers professionalise by identifying learning from other organisers, specialists, and outside sources such as their international clients and foreign consumers.

7.0 Research Conclusions

This research project set out to identify differences between the developed events industry in the UK and the emerging events industry in Poland to understand the socio-professional cultural factors that shape an events industry. The global events market is a transient joined-up socio-cultural community yet there is no recognition of the gaps that exist in different event locations that are at different stages of development. As such, my thesis is a rare and innovative cross-cultural study with the use of the qualitative methodologies of in-depth interviews and autoethnography. My aim is that by exposing gaps and their causes, could lead to finding ways of closer alignment in the global market for international events. The wider contribution of this study in the field is that current organisers in all locations will understand there are factors which shape an events industry, and will then identify the specific factors which shape their particular socio-professional construct in the events industry in which they perform their job. If organisers begin to understand this dynamic, they can identify gaps and pivot themselves to creating their own self-learning environment where they learn behaviours and practices from cross-cultural opportunities outside their locality: from their international clients, other organisers, and foreign consumers.

Another implication of my research, in the field, is the education of students of events management who can be instructed in the way an events industry takes shape, the gaps across the global market for international events, and the benefits of creating an active self-learning environment. This study provides empirical evidence that students do in fact import their knowledge into the field which influences the behaviour and practices of current senior-level organisers, so my study could impact change in the field brought about by graduates.

Undertaking this project has enhanced my specialism in events management as an academic, researcher, educator and author. I no longer consider myself an events practitioner, but my

authority is founded from my career as a privileged white male organiser 'par excellence', so the findings of this study – in particular the unexpected finding of the importance of event managers developing a culture of learning and learning from each other (what I have described as 'creating a self-learning environment') – shows me there are areas I can yet discover from the field I have already exited.

It is therefore my intention that this thesis will contribute to literature in the field of international events management and provide inspiration for future research with the aim to impact and improve the field of events management. Mine is a novel and innovative study because of my unique perspective as a privileged white male organiser of prestigious events and having lived and worked in both the UK and Poland. As such, I have produced an extremely rare cross-cultural study of the event industry, which continues to be dominated by single case-studies. I will make this work and its findings available to professional associations such as the Association of Event Organisers (AEO), The Event Services Association (TESA), the International Live Events Association (ILEA), the Society of Event Organisers (SEO), the Poland Convention Bureau, the Polish Tourism Association, and Poland MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions). I also propose to present my findings to industry-relevant academic conferences such as the Association of Events Management Education (AEME), the Academic Event Professionals (AEP), Confex, and The Special Event (TSE). I will make submissions for publication in academic journals including the International Journal of Event and Festival Management, Event Management journal, the International Journal of Hospitality and Event Management, and the International Journal of Event Management Research.

Beyond the key findings, my research contributes knowledge in different fields and adds to the literature on event tourism, the experience economy, risk management, cross-culture, learning from tragedy, and socio-professional cultural constructs.

7.1 Event Culture

In exploring the culture of the events industry in both the UK and Poland, I have identified the characteristics of a developed industry and one that is emerging. Although the two locations of this study differ in that the UK is a long-time democratic nation versus the post-communist nation of Poland, I am not concerned with such wider cultural complexities including those of gender, religion or command cultures. This study is therefore limited to its focus on the socio-professional cultural construct of the events industry in both target locations. This has helped me understand that the evolved community of practice in the UK events industry has shaped a socio-professional construct to support organisers through networking and activities, professional associations, and accreditation bodies. This is important in professionalising the industry because it provides opportunities for organisers to share best practice and gain knowledge from other professionals within the same industry. I have made the unexpected finding of the importance for organisers to develop a culture of learning and learning from each other by creating an active self-learning environment where they learn from sources outside their own experience or formal education, such as networking with professional associations. However, there are around 42 professional associations in the UK events industry which is at oversaturation point and is weakening the cohesion of the industry. Certainly, empirical data evidences the need and the benefits of professional associations. But too many associations means organisers are networking within ever-decreasing circles which fragments the industry and is counterproductive to the purpose of industry associations.

Poland could learn from this. It is at the beginning of creating a community of practice with a limited range of professional associations. As their events industry grows and takes shape, it will grow the abundance of professional associations to support organisers. This will be helpful for creating the environment of self-learning, networking, compliance, training, and knowledge

sharing of best practices. But if Poland reaches the level of the UK where there is oversaturation of associations, it will splinter the industry. It is unlikely Poland will avoid this because there is nothing they could do about it until it has already happened, by which time it is too late to reverse. Besides, it is not a legislative issue and would be unpopular to curtail the growth of an industry, particularly if it harks back to state communist times. Also, too few associations to support organisers means there are limited opportunities for knowledge sharing or learning from other professionals in the same industry. Plus, there is no opportunity for formal education in the specialisms of managing events, so the presence of professional associations is urgent. Still, the Poland events industry is not at a stagnant stage of growth, and I have found signs that it is progressing and in fact was spurred on by the dramatic changes brought about with the arrival of COVID-19 and the need for organisers to seek collaboration in reacting to the changing situation of the pandemic. There is evidence of organisers in Poland creating a self-learning environment by seizing learning opportunities at events outside Poland and from their own international clients and foreign consumers, for change to occur from continuous contact between groups of individuals which is known as 'acculturation' (Ward, *et al.,* 2010). So long as the industry continues to grow, it will develop the need for professionalisation and so the associations will spring up to support that demand.

As an industry does grow, I have revealed that it pivots from eschewing any formal education or academic qualification in events management. This is because in the developing stages, there is no access to courses which fosters the belief that if they are not available, they are not needed for the job of organising events. The result of this is that experience is valued more than qualifications and trust is awarded to the word and abilities of some firms and individuals because of their experience, not for any qualifications. Trust, then, is based upon an organiser's client portfolio, reputation, experience of events in the genre, testimonials, and track record of delivering successful events. Indeed, this is how I won event jobs: through the trust of a client

looking at my track history and my reputation which is considered more significant than any qualifications. After all, qualifications do not convey trust for the responsibility of placing an event job with an organiser, as much as a track record of delivering successful events. Tensions between academic qualifications and experience arise where experienced organisers who feel they know how to do the job, devalue qualifications and qualified entrants who have academic qualifications but lack experience. Furthermore, experienced organisers may reject the need for qualifications or qualified organisers (staff). It is individual organisers or the company they work for who identify their need for learning which is largely driven by the need to be compliant. The industry itself is not leading organisers to be qualified which is why actors in the industry place significance on experience. Once courses become available, entrants to the industry seek academic qualification to make themselves more employable and recruiters respond by requiring qualified candidates to apply for advertised job roles. This is still led by individuals rather than the industry.

In both the UK and Poland there is a lack of formal education because although the UK is further advanced with its provision of events courses at Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) (universities), it is still too recent to show an impact at senior level. Formal education is impacting entrants at junior level but current senior organisers did not have access to formal education in events management when they entered the industry. However, there is evidence of entrants importing their formal education to the industry which is reshaping the behaviours and practices of senior-level organisers. Other than this, current senior-level organisers in the UK rely on their formal education in related fields such as hospitality, catering and hotel management which is where a gap appears because organisers in Poland are not entering the events industry from related fields. This means events in Poland are being organised by people without transferrable learning and competences to draw upon, such as communication, co-operation, people skills, taking care of others, working collaboratively, teamwork, and verbal

reasoning (Schulz, 2008; Cserháti and Szabó, 2014; Pielichaty *et al.*, 2017; Clegg, Skyttermoen and Vaagaasar, 2021). This is not to suggest there is disparity in professionalism between organisers in the UK and Poland, rather I am concluding the point that although professionalism may be present in the social construct of both industries, in Poland it is professionalism gained from an irrelevant sector and is thus less likely than the UK to meet the needs of the global market for international events.

Without experience in related fields and the absence of the socio-professional culture from which UK organisers benefit, organisers in Poland evolve their learning of how to do the job in an environment which is both informal and autonomous. This is characteristic with Bourdieu's habitus concept (Grenfell, 2012) where social practices occur as regularities without the presence of rules to dictate practice. Although Foucault (Carrabine, 2007) recognises that strange practices are governed by structural codes of knowledge, my observations and immersion in the field in Poland have shown that their learning has developed through their way of doing things which does not make it the best way of doing things or the safest way of doing things.

Although Poland organisers have the opportunity to learn from sources other than formal education or years of background in events, such as their international clients and other organisers' events, I have identified three barriers to do with sociological behavioural traits that exist because of the legacy of communism. The first is how society needed to turn their hand to whatever needed to be done, which Rojek (2013, p10) recognises as informal 'social ordering'. The legacy impact is that it is embedded in Poland society that they can do anything, that everything they do is the right way, and there is no better way of doing it. An example of this is when I was organising a *Miss Polonia* event in a Warsaw venue. When I went for a short break, the venue owner decided to rearrange the entire décor and branding because he thought it would look better. Upon my return, both the client and the event sponsor were deeply upset

because the look of the event was not how we had discussed and agreed, and it was too late to rectify before the event opened. The second barrier to embracing outside expertise is the mistrust in one's neighbours. Mishler and Rose (1997) identify distrust as the legacy in post-communist Europe, too. At this level of embedment in society, to ask for trust in the expertise from a foreign source is incomprehensible. The third barrier is the slowness of societal behaviour change which continues to make it difficult for Poland organisers to accept foreign expertise. This slowness is because the long reach of communism across the generations repeats communistic cultural patterns and societal behaviours. Although Poland is a post-communist society since 1989, the grandparents who lived under the communist regime taught today's parents, who teach today's children, who will be teaching tomorrow's children. The impact is that changing the informal authority of societal norms is incredibly slow and resistant to change. However, change from the formal authority of education would enact quicker change and with less resistance.

These are cultural barriers in shaping the events industry in Poland to align with the global marketplace for international events and the expectations of event tourist clients and consumers. This is problematic because Poland is already a key player in the global events marketplace having hosted significant international events such as Euro2012 and COP24. To narrow the event culture gap between a developed events industry and one which is emerging will require a socio-professional culture change in the global market for international events. This could be accomplished with the creation of an international accreditation association to lead emerging events industries in shaping their socio-professional construct in the same fashion as those already-established events industries. This would both encourage and provide understanding of the need for support structures to facilitate networking, knowledge sharing, formal education, and best practice across the one global marketplace for international events. In fact, the importance of a self-learning environment whereby organisers develop a culture of

learning from each other is an unexpected finding that is important in the shaping of an emerging industry which has yet to establish a socio-professional construct. However, from my experience in the field, self-learning is a trait which organisers adopt naturally and organically. Currently, then, it will go against the grain for the industry to actively lead organisers to develop their own self-learning environment. It is the individual or the company they work for which tends to identify a need for learning, development, progression, or training in order to comply with the law. In fact, it is the law that is driving learning, rather than any pressure from consumers or the insurance industry responding to past tragedies at events.

Because individuals or the company they work for are driving the impetus for education and professionalism in the industry, there is an autonomous and fragmented approach to self-learning. This has impacts for elements such as setting industry Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and raising the need for the pro-duction and re-production of knowledge in the industry without an international professional association leading the way for organisers to align their behaviours and practices across the global marketplace for international events. In fact, international collaboration is another counterfactual finding, but without international cohesion an events industry in one location will develop a fractured shape where their way of organising events gets embedded in the socio-culture of the events industry in that location. This will create tiers of varying standards specific to each location within the one global marketplace for international events.

7.2 Tourism and Events

This study targeted participant organisers at landmark venues in London and Warsaw. Capital city venues are in the market for attracting foreign clients and international consumers – both of which groups travel to the host location as event tourists. All my participants are in direct

engagement with tourists because they either organise events to attract event tourists, or they host international events at their landmark venue, or both.

I have found that UK organisers have created a plurality of approaches in reaching foreign markets by immersing themselves into a foreign target market, and by drawing foreign markets to the home destination. They are active in penetrating foreign markets through targeted marketing and promotion initiatives, but they also visit foreign clients in their home territory to attract bookings into their London venues. This level of activity is due to intense competition in London with its abundance of landmark venues which is driving organisers to have to win clients quickly by developing close relationships with bookers and agencies. In Warsaw there is less demand from foreign clients so the competitive culture is less intense. At first glance it might seem to be an advantage to have less competition in the marketplace, but I have found it means organisers are not driven to fight to win business, so they are complacent about penetrating foreign markets. However, my research objective is not concerned with any gap between the UK and Poland in terms of the level of event tourism business they are attracting, nor the gap in their competitive culture, but the gap I have identified between their approaches to winning event tourists. UK organisers are active and proactive in winning foreign business to capitalise on capturing the event tourism market in proactive, immersive, and technological ways. This is necessary to do because European regions are increasingly competing to attract visitors with soft factors such as the location's image which is referred to as 'place marketing' (Warnaby and Medway, 2013). Conversely, Poland organisers adopt a non-interventionist approach and wait for foreign business to knock on their door. My data reveals this is because Poland organisers do not feel the drive to be competitive in winning event tourist business, so they do not invest in knowledge, resources, or effort to attract event tourists, reach and penetrate foreign markets, or meet the expectations of event tourist clients and consumers as a transient social demographic. This would not be a concern if Poland were a standalone events industry,

but it exists within the global market for international events and is already in the event tourism marketplace. This means firstly that Poland is missing out on business opportunities from foreign clients and international consumers, and secondly it is shaping its own tier of event provision, and therein lies another gap.

For a destination to increase its visibility to foreign markets it needs to create an identity by drawing on sociological, geographical, economic and cultural aspects to maintain the competitive edge as an urban landscape shifting from industrial to cultural capital. Other European municipalities are becoming more professional in events policy due to their recognition that events are important for urban economy, the quality of life and the attraction of a city. Armstrong, Hobbs and Lindsay (2011) describe the place marketing undertaken to impress inspectors for the 2012 London Olympics which included relocating undesirable elements of the public, carpeting a train station and hiring a brass band. But event organisers in Poland tend to think local and are not thinking global in their response to the globalisation of the international events marketplace they exist within.

Tourists search for pleasurable experiences (Urry, 2002b) to escape from everyday life (Berridge, 2011) and the experience economy is about making money out of experiences. My findings show that UK organisers have begun to strategically align their events offering to meet the experience economy, whereas in Poland they know it exists but take a non-interventionist stance by waiting for it to arrive to them by chance. It requires an events industry to be actively marketing to engage with prospect consumers of both the domestic experience economy and the foreign experience economy who will decide whether to travel to attend an event. Because event tourists are choosing to spend their money on tickets, travel, accommodation, hospitality and merchandise the event experience must live up to the promise and fulfil their expectations. Otherwise, the social value of the experience concept will become devalued – and global-oriented consumers are more demanding. Event tourists in different locations will have

different levels of expectation for the experience they receive at an event. Applying Symbolic Interaction (Berridge, 2011) will assist organisers to understand how consumers interpret experiences but as Berridge points out, experience is a complex series of relational components that are not uniform during the length of time it occurs, nor the same for all those involved. UK consumers, for instance, will have wider experiences of previous events and have a wider availability of choice of which events to attend, than Poland consumers. Still, the Poland events industry needs to get it right regardless of the stage of their development because as soon as a country reaches a certain level of affluence the demand for services shifts to experiences (Boswijk, Thijssen and Peelen, 2007).

Evolving societies take on a new character by the constant requirement to adjust to changes induced by the evolution of a host society (de Kadt and Williams, 1976) which in the case of Poland is the European society. This means an evolving society with an industry that is emerging into the global marketplace cannot do so if the service quality of that industry does not meet international expectations. The issue for Poland is that if they, as an emerging events industry, do not develop to shape with the socio-professional construct of the global marketplace for international events, their autonomous events industry will take shape around the limitations of its own societal environment. The impact will be in exposing foreign clients and international consumers to gaps in safety, quality, and standards, and there is a danger of Poland evolving a substandard tier of events within the one global marketplace for international events.

For a socio-professional culture shift to happen in the Poland events industry, international experience would be a valuable contribution to the profession as it develops the four characteristics of profession identified by Ritzer and Walczak (1986) as theoretical knowledge, self-regulated training and practice, authority over clients, and orientation to community rather than self-identity. Without the international unification of standards of international events,

Poland is shaping a loose socio-professional construct with fewer rules whereby a tight culture has many rules, norms, and standards for correct behaviour, as can be seen in the UK events industry.

The events industry in both locations of this study do not seem to be in alignment with local and national destination marketing and place marketing initiatives. Local and national authorities and associations need to include organisers, venues and specific events to reach event tourists as well as leisure tourists and extend inbound visitor traffic. This will enhance the profile of London and Warsaw destinations with their experiential offering to visitors through leisure events and corporate events and will attract higher levels of event-related spend at each destination such as on accommodation and visiting other attractions.

Another finding is that 'event tourism' is the accepted term in the literature for consumers who travel to attend events, but there is no term to identify organisers who travel to place their events in a foreign location. Identifying 'client tourists' as an individual stakeholder group distinct from event tourists would allow targeted marketing to reach that stakeholder group and will identify their specific needs and expectations which are required to be met and are different from consumers attending events. The distinction will also assist with event literature and events education in marketing and meeting the needs of 'client tourists' if it were an identified individual stakeholder group and separate to event tourists as consumers who attend events.

7.3 Risk Awareness at Events

This study project concerns risk differences because of consumer demand for events to fulfil the need for transcendence and escapism for intense emotionalism and unrestrained exhibitionism (Rojek, 2013). Events are a service rather than a product because services must be experienced to be consumed, it means the delivery and consumption are inseparable and it is difficult to recover anything which goes wrong. Events are one-off live happenings which

involves the management of short-term risks from event to event, whereas most risk cultures view risk for the longevity and long-term sustainability of an organisation or society. This means organisers are less inclined to adopt strategic risk management behaviours and practices. I was therefore interested in the approach to risk by organisers, their levels of accepting risk, and how organisers in the UK and Poland learn from the experience of tragedy and about new and changing legislations so that they are compliant. Silvers (2008) acknowledges ethical practices are based on precedent, custom, tradition, standards, and fairness but what is standard and customary will vary in different locations with different cultures. But I found that organisers in both the UK and Poland do not routinely set objectives for their events and none of the respondents in either the UK or Poland mentioned safety as an objective. Neither is formal education a factor in risk awareness because all participants, except one, mentioned risk or safety during the interviews whether they were formally educated or not. The one participant who failed to mention risk or safety does have a formal education. Mostly, the focus of organisers for a successful event is on financial return rather than a risk-free and safe event. This is likely due to events being organised for financial gain and not for safety even though every event is for people. This finding may cause concern in a wider context, but it is not my concern in this study because it is not a gap between the developed industry and the emerging.

Where there is a gap between the UK and Poland is in the level of acceptance of the presence of risk at events. Organisers in the UK are more likely to understand risk and the risk management processes to mitigate risk from causing harm because they are more attuned to living in a risk society with an audit culture approach. My finding, then, is that it is the law which drives organisers or the company they work for to identify areas of learning towards professionalism. Indeed, it is younger individuals who choose to study events management at university to make themselves more employable, and it is recruiters who are responding by advertising for qualified candidates to apply for job vacancies. Currently, there is no cohesive

recognition by the industry, or consumers, or the insurance industry to develop a culture of learning. This means there is a fragmented approach to the behaviours and practices of organisers, such as setting KPIs and raising the need for the pro-duction and re-production of knowledge.

UK organisers do benefit from operating as a community of practice (Brown and Stokes, 2021) which has shaped to support organisers with compliance otherwise they face the real risk of repercussions and litigation. Whereas, in Poland, organisers are largely autonomous and immune to formal management regimes (Thiel, 2012) because the threat of repercussions due to noncompliance is distant. It is less likely for an authoritative body in Poland to visit a live event, and the event will be gone the next day, anyway. This has shaped a culture that encourages organisers to be complacent or perform deviant behaviour whereby risk is either ignored or partially addressed but is not fully mitigated from the potential to cause harm or injury. Thus, the acceptance of risk at events is lower in the UK whereas there is a higher level of accepting risk by Poland organisers.

I have considered the notion of fate and leaving risk to chance, or God, in the devout Catholic society of Poland because the issue with risk acceptance is its normalisation. Vaughan (1996) revealed a culture of incremental descent into poor judgment and a pattern of normalisation in engineering risk assessments by NASA before the launch of Challenger which resulted in disaster. There is a danger of the same occurring in Poland if societal acceptance of risk becomes embedded in event culture. If this should happen it will create a localised tier of higher risk acceptance compared to known and accepted levels of lower risk acceptance in the global marketplace for international events. This is troubling because events are becoming riskier with clients demanding evermore creativity, consumers expecting greater and greater experiences, and the societal shift towards adrenalin events, challenge events, and deviant events. This is at odds with how my participants considered their top three roles as an organiser of events: most

responded with subjective aesthetical or emotional considerations such as good feelings and people being happy; others considered measurable commercial targets; and just three mentioned safety within their top three roles – none of whom are Poland organisers. Anyhow, I did not identify any organisers leaving risk to chance, fate, or God. In fact, from my observations of Polish society, practices and behaviours, their faith in God stems from communist times and is now largely symbolic and even an outward show of religious observance as a sense of duty or expectation. For example, I observed teenaged boys queuing outside churches at Easter to get eggs blessed in small baskets with frilly lace trimmings – the same adolescents who smoke, drink alcohol, swear, and piss in the street. It is clear to me that organisers in Poland are not placing their risk observance into the hands of God.

Some respondents indicated they are deflecting their social responsibility of delivering a risk-free event to other collaborators in their art world such as the venue, the client, or a supplier. By absolving themselves of this responsibility, organisers will not learn from their mistakes, which Pearn, Mulrooney and Payne (1998) say is important in turning blame culture into gain culture. The impact of this is that international clients and foreign consumers will not be aware of their exposure to a higher level of risk acceptance and lower level of risk mitigation from one location to another. Organisers should be communicating risks to consumers to convert involuntary risk acceptance to voluntary risk acceptance (Douglas and Wildavsky, 1982). This relates to safety, but there are other risks which may cause harm to the success of an event such as unfulfilled revenues, financial loss, poor service, dissatisfied consumers, poor levels of attendance, psychological loss, and reputational harm. To close this gap will require closer international collaboration across the global marketplace for international events so that organisers in emerging events industries can learn from the mistakes already experienced by a developed industry and begin to mirror the shape of their approach to risk, acceptance of risk, and mitigation of risk. Mostly, events are the same wherever they take place in the world, and

the risks are the same, which means they are preventable if organisers adopt a self-learning environment to learn from mistakes which have already happened at events elsewhere. Thus, an international approach would allow for the role of tragedy to shape an emerging events industry by learning from the disaster experiences of an industry which is further developed and has shaped itself around tragic experiences that have already happened. This would prevent organisers in an emerging industry such as Poland having to experience painful tragedies for themselves. This would, of course, make events safer around the globe for event tourists, international clients and foreign consumers, and would align organisers in a united approach to risk and safety and reduce that gap.

If there were international collaboration and cross-cultural policy transfer learning to raise the need for the pro-duction and re-production of knowledge, an emerging events industry could shape itself around the premise of developing a culture of self-learning. Here, they would learn from other organisers by adopting legislations and practices that have come about because of tragedies already experienced and have shaped a developed industry. Such examples include the Bradford fire in 1985 with the deaths of 56 sports attendees (BBC.co.uk, 2022), the Hillsborough stadium crush in 1989 with the deaths of 97 attendees (BBC, 2022), and the Manchester Arena bombing in 2017 with the deaths of 22 concertgoers (Gardham, 2020). Each of these tragedies at events resulted in inquiries that led to safer practices driven by legislations from the lessons learnt. In real comparative examples which demonstrates the starkness of the gap here, Stephenson (BBC 2015) reports that one worker died during the build of the London 2012 Olympics, whereas 'hundreds' of construction workers died for the Sochi 2014 Olympics (Shaw, Anin and Vdovii, 2015), and 6,500 people died during construction for the Qatar 2022 World Cup (*The Guardian*, no date).

7.4 Overall Conclusions

The research objective for this PhD was to determine factors which shape the development of an events industry by identifying differences between an events industry which is fully developed (the UK) and one that is evolving (Poland). Having lived and worked as an organiser of events in both London and Warsaw for 10 years respectively, I had identified cultural and social differences, or 'gaps', in the approach to organising events which impact event tourists (clients and consumers) in the areas of service delivery, quality and safety. My thesis is that gaps between events industries at different stages of development in different locations will have negative impacts within the one global marketplace for international events.

My conclusions are made in the context of my status as a former organiser of prestigious events who enjoyed privilege in the UK as a white male with a Bachelor of Arts degree in hospitality management, and in Poland as a 'celebrity' or curio organiser with a client portfolio of rock stars and royalty, notably Bon Jovi, Jennifer Lopez and Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. In both London and Warsaw, my status gained access to the socio-professional construct without delay, question or difficulty. I acknowledge that my status is unique in the events industry and the outcomes might be different for a researcher with other ethnicity, gender, or career pathway.

I have found there are omissions in event practices and procedures in both the UK and Poland which are: the failure to routinely set event objectives for every event to measure the success of the event against reaching those objectives; failing to conduct after-event feedback and evaluation procedures to understand if the objectives were met and obtain learning from feedback; and failing to conduct risk management procedures to identify, assess and mitigate risk. These failures are replicated in both the UK and Poland events industry, regardless of their stage of development, so it is not a gap between a developed and an emerging events industry. It is an important finding, nonetheless, because it unexpectedly revealed that the cause of these

omissions is because of the shape of an industry not encouraging a culture of self-learning where organisers can learn from each other. I have concluded that it is the law which drives individual organisers or the company they work for to seek learning so that they are compliant. It is not the industry itself driving professionalisation of the industry, nor consumers, nor the insurance industry responding to previous tragedies at events. As the UK events industry took shape, it pivoted from the stance of eschewing any formal education or academic qualification in events management. This is because universities now offer such qualifications and entrants to the industry seek formal education to make themselves more employable. Recruiters respond by advertising for qualified candidates to apply for job vacancies. Still, it is not the industry leading or driving this change in learning, but it is happening organically. An emerging industry without access to formal education in events management fosters the belief that if qualifications are not available, they are not needed for organising events. This is why the industry places value in experience rather than qualifications and why some firms and individuals are trusted implicitly for their word or abilities. Trust, then, is demonstrable by client portfolio, reputation, testimonials, and a track record in delivering successful events: qualifications are less significant. Tensions arise between experience and qualifications when the developing industry pivots towards formal education because it cannot determine the 'right' level of experience, the 'right' level of qualifications, and the resistance to qualifications and qualified entrants by current organisers who are already doing the job.

It means elements of managing events such as setting KPIs or identifying the need for the production or re-production of knowledge is fragmented because it is not led by industry-wide cohesion. It would require an international professional association for this to happen across the global marketplace for international events. An emerging industry can learn from this finding and shape itself to understand and encourage organisers to perform acculturation: to create their environment for self-learning from the socio-professional network, engaging with

professional organisations, observing the behaviours and practices of other organisers and other events (particularly abroad if the opportunities arise), and learning from the behaviours and practices of their international clients and foreign consumers. This led me to the finding that gaps do exist between a developed events industry and one that is emerging in the key areas of learning, experience, pathway of entry to the industry, marketing to the foreign event tourism sector, and levels of acceptance of risk at events. The gaps occur because a developed industry will have evolved a socio-professional construct to facilitate a self-learning culture whereby organisers are able to gain knowledge and learning from professional associations, networking activities, formal education and training, and observing specialists and other organisers.

Conversely, in locations where the events industry is emerging, organisers have limited or no access to formal education and there are few or no professional associations. Because of this, organisers are not encouraged to develop their professionalism through self-learning and will not recognise the need to create for themselves a self-learning environment, so my finding is counterfactual to what is happening in the events industry. Not having a level understanding across international borders for setting KPIs and the need for the pro-duction and re-production of knowledge shapes a culture of autonomous working and fragmented behaviours and practices which causes gaps in both the domestic events industry and within the global marketplace for international events with variant levels of quality, service, risk control and safety.

I have concluded that there is a role for tragedy to shape an emerging events industry from the experiences which have already occurred in a more advanced industry. To be more explicit, the legislations and practices which have shaped a developed industry because of the tragedies they have already experienced at events, can shape an emerging industry and help prevent the reoccurrence of tragedy by repeating the same mistakes, thus not having to learn from their own painful tragedies. This requires an international approach of sharing knowledge and

creating a socio-professional construct of cross-cultural learning, but the advantages are safer events, aligned practices, and the closure of that gap in the global market for international events.

My conclusions are drawn from an extremely rare cross-cultural study project and, as such, is a worthwhile and significant contribution to a field in which current academic literature continues to be dominated by single case-studies. The events industry could learn from my findings to prevent the international events industry continuing to provide disparate practices and variants depending on where an event is happening and how the events industry in any location has shaped or is shaping due to its state of development. To this end, I have identified the need for an international umbrella association to facilitate a recognised professional accreditation which would align events industries to a cohesive global narrative. This would enable organisers working within less mature events industries to rapidly catch-up with a further developed events industry, understand how to reach and attract foreign clients and international consumers, narrow the gap between consumer expectations and the actual experience they receive, to learn from mistakes and crises that have already happened elsewhere so they do not get replicated in different locations, to adopt legislations to ensure organisers are compliant with risk management and safety protocols, and to enact best practices and procedures such as setting event objectives and carrying out after-event evaluation.

Key to this would be to provide all organisers in the marketplace for international events, with the understanding of the need to create for themselves an environment of active self-learning, which is an unexpected finding. This is particularly important for organisers who do not have formal education or years of experience in events or a related sector, regardless of the stage of development of the socio-professional environment in which they perform. The intention would be to standardise international events so that international clients and foreign consumers receive a more consistent level of event management and safety wherever they are in the world.

Currently, however, the field is counterfactual from my contribution to research and industry. The events industry in the UK is disparate to that in Poland. It must follow, therefore, that all events industries in all locations have 'gaps' because each is at a different stage of development, and each have socio-cultural idiosyncrasies which shape their industry in a unique (thus disparate) way. In the field, I would like event practitioners to recognise the need for creating their own self-learning environment to learn from each other, and the potential benefits of doing so for the professionalism of themselves and the wider industry in which they are an actor. For this to happen, I would like academic infrastructure to recognise and adopt cross-cultural content in courses on events management, with the purpose to educate students in understanding there are factors which shape an industry and how they can (and should) implement their own self-learning environment. I view this is an imperative piece of events management education. I would like leading academic figures to respond to my work by beginning to diversify their own research methodologies from the current domination of single case studies and instrumentalist approaches, and move further towards cross-cultural research. In my novel methodological approach, I have shown there is much to be contributed from qualitative autoethnography, and I feel there is great potential for leading academic figures to place themselves into their research by drawing on their own unique experiences and interpretations, as I have done. This would expand literature beyond its current limitations and provide a whole new range of theoretical studies from other researchers' perspectives alongside mine.

I would like to see theoretical contributions in future research to facilitate the understanding for the need to be more cohesive across the global industry for international events, beginning with further investigations into the factors which shape events industries. I would like to see in the field, the move towards a holistic international strategy of organising events, to provide cohesion and consistency, and narrow the gaps. This would be led by better streamlining of

university course content which currently is individual and autonomous – much like, and reflective of, the events industry itself. To import the pro-duction and re-production of knowledge of graduates of events management who enter the industry, students should have access to cross-cultural, autoethnographic, qualitative literature, as described above. However, I feel that the priority value of my research is the unexpected finding that an emerging events industry must develop a culture of learning and learning from each other, including learning from an advanced industry and the role of tragedy in shaping an emerging events industry from how a developed industry has already shaped itself from the practices and legislations brought about by tragedies already experienced.

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Appendices

Appendix A – SERVQUAL Model of Measuring Service Quality

Source: Parasuraman *et al*. (1985)
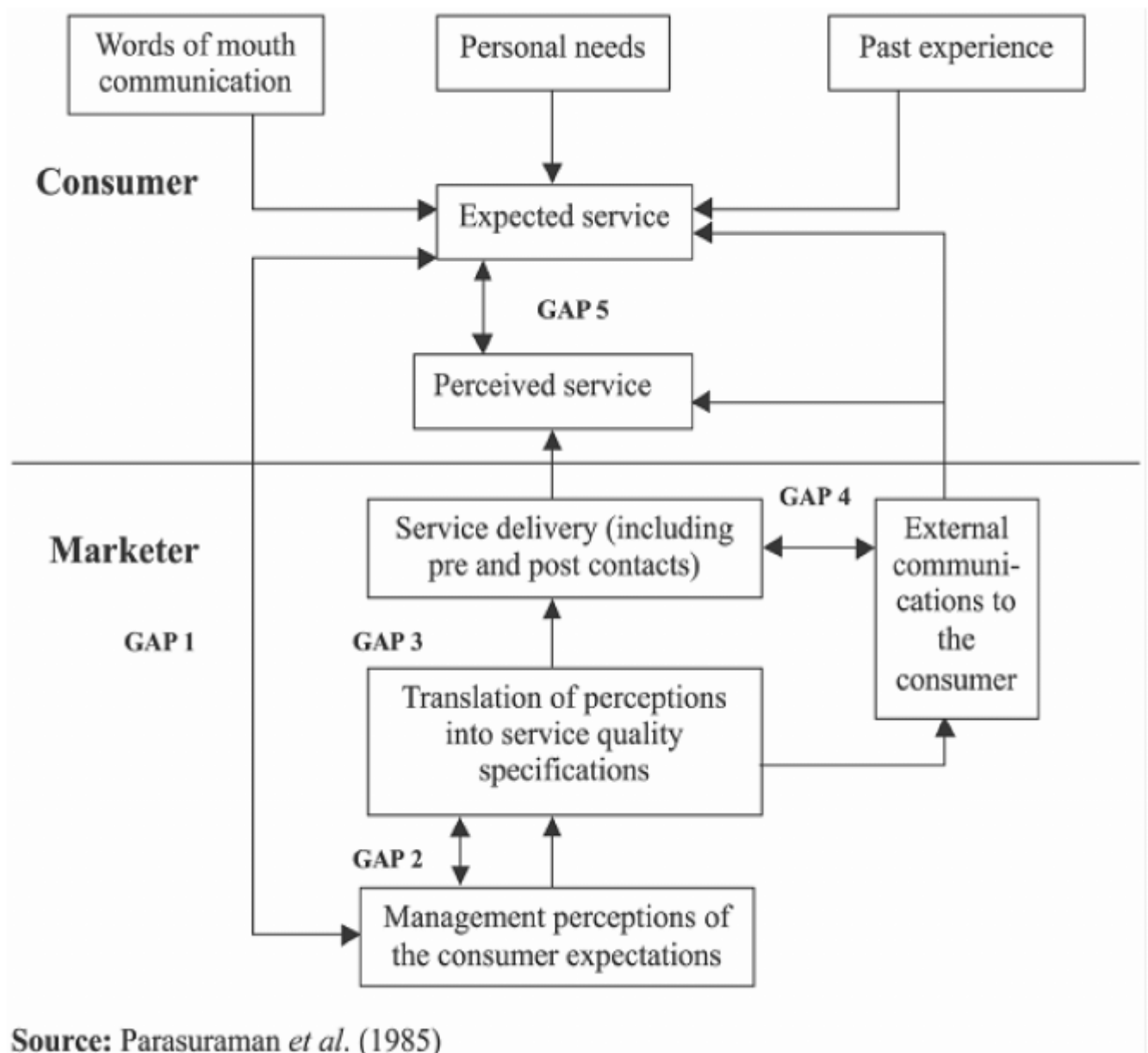
Appendix B – EMBOK Model (Event Management Body of Knowledge)
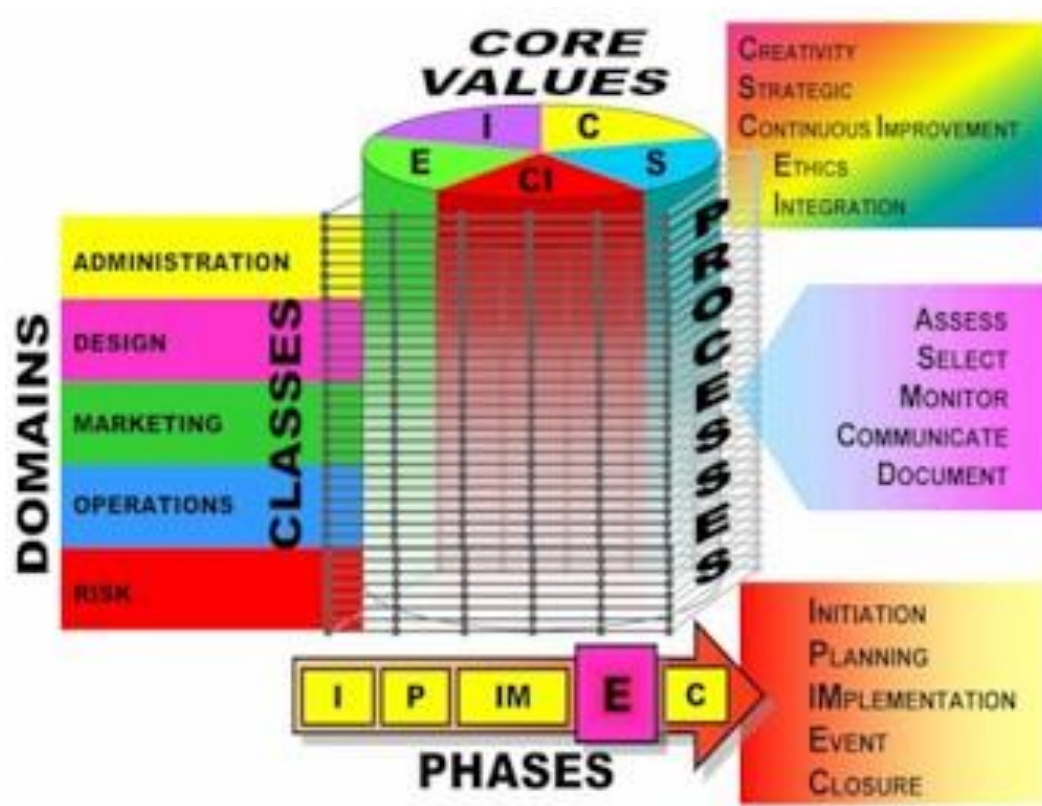
Source: embok.org

Appendix C – Interview Questionnaire

Research Questions to event organisers at international venues – London & Warsaw

These questions are part of a Doctorate research project at the Department of Sociology, University of Essex, U.K. in the field of international events management.

1. Would you please outline your career path and how you got into events management. Did you study events management or…

2. Gain qualifications such as:

   a. Event management qualifications

   b. Risk management training

   c. Health and Safety training

   d. First aid training

   e. Customer service or account handling training

   f. Sales training

   g. Other……………………………………………………

3. When handling international clients or their agents, how have you arrived at knowing which way to handle their requests and needs?

4. Are you aware of any industry bodies that provide assistance with and knowledge of events management, risk, legal compliance, or health and safety. (EMBOK / AEME / EVCOM / NOEA). How do you engage and/or connect with the event industry?

5. Do you conduct onsite staff briefings?

    a. If yes; to whom?

    b. If yes; what is the purpose?

6. Do you conduct pre-event ops (operations) meetings?

    a. If yes; who attends?

    b. If yes; what is the purpose?

7. Do you conduct post-event debriefings?

    a. If yes; to whom?

    b. If yes; what is the purpose?

8. Do you set event objectives for each event?

    a. If yes; how do you arrive at setting the objectives?

    b. If yes; how do you measure that the objectives were met?

9. Do you conduct any post-event evaluation?

    a. If yes; what methods of evaluation do you use?

    b. If yes; what is the purpose?

10. After an event, how do you know that you have done a good job?

11. As an event organiser, what do you view as your three top roles?

    a. Main role………………………………………………….

    b. Secondary role………………………………………………...

    c. Tertiary role………………………………………………….

Source: Researcher's own

Appendix D – Key to the Code of Participant Interviewees

Code	Venue	Location	Method	Observation
	United Kingdom			
UK1	o2 Arena	London	Telephone	Yes
UK2	University of Essex	Essex, UK	Video call	Yes
UK3	Goodwood Sports Estate	Chichester, UK	Video call	No
UK4	ExCeL Convention Centre	London	Face to Face	Yes
UK5	Colchester Events Company	Essex, UK	Video call	Yes
UK6	ExCeL Convention Centre	London	Face to Face	Yes
UK7	QEII Conference Centre	London	Face to Face	Yes
UK8	Hemming Media Group	London	Video call	No venue
UK9	University of Essex	Essex, UK	Video call	Yes
UK10	Olympia Exhibition Centre	London	Video call	Yes
UK11	Wivenhoe House Hotel	Essex, UK	Face to Face	Yes
UK12	Grosvenor House Hotel	London	Video call	Yes
UK13	Pan Pacific Hotel	London	Video call	No
UK14	Royal Museums Greenwich	London	Video call	No
UK15	Royal Lancaster Hotel	London	Video call	Yes
UK16	Milsom's Group	Essex, UK	Video call	Yes
UK17	o2 Arena	London	Video call	Yes
	Poland			
PL1	National Stadium of Poland	Warsaw	Phone	Yes
PL2	Palace of Culture & Science	Warsaw	Video call	Yes

PL3	Queen Maria Kazimiera Foundation	Warsaw	Video call	No
PL4	Queen Maria Kazimiera Foundation	Warsaw	Video call	No
PL5	Royal Castle	Warsaw	Video call	Yes
PL6	Spodek Convention Centre	Katowice, Poland	Video call	No
PL7	Priorytet Publishing	Warsaw	Video call	No venue

Source: Researcher's own

Appendix E – Images of Participant Venues named in section 3.3

London Olympia

Source: lbhf.gov.uk

London o2 Arena

Source: gigantic.com

London ExCeL

Source: bestvenues.london

Warsaw Palace of Culture and Science

Source: mediastorehouse.com.au

Warsaw National Stadium of Poland

Source: euronews.com

Warsaw Royal Castle

Source: europeanhistoricgardens.eu

University of Essex ERAMS

05/09/2019

Mr Philip Berners

Edge Hotel School, Sociology

University of Essex

Dear Philip,

Ethics Committee Decision

I am writing to advise you that your research proposal entitled "The approach to international event management in evolving event industries: a comparative analysis of Poland and the United Kingdom." has been reviewed by COMMITTEE.

The Committee is content to give a favourable ethical opinion of the research. I am pleased, therefore, to tell you that your application has been granted ethical approval by the Committee.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any further information or have any queries.

Yours sincerely,

Sandya Hewamanne

Ethics ETH1819-0197: Mr Philip Berners

This email was sent by the University of Essex Ethics Review Application and Management System (ERAMS).

Source: Researcher's own

Appendix G – Informed Consent Form

Informed consent form for Philip Berners

This consent form is consistent with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which comes into effect from 25 May 2018.

The purpose of this research is to support the requirements for the PhD programme of the Department of Sociology at the University of Essex.

The research title is *"The approach to international event management in evolving event industries: a comparative analysis of Poland and the United Kingdom"*.

The research activity consists of face to face interviews with international event organisers (Poland and the U.K.), and observation at international event venues (Poland and the U.K.).

By participating with this research project, you are agreeing to do so on a voluntary basis and in anonymity. No personal data is required. You are free to opt out at any stage of the process by providing a written request to the researcher p.berners@essex.ac.uk .

There are no identified risks. All data will be stored securely by the researcher on password protected devices kept in a locked office. The research project will be deposited in the University of Essex repository and may be published in academic or industry journals and publications.

If you have any comments, questions or complaint, please contact the researcher Philip Berners, Department of Sociology, University of Essex p.berners@essex.ac.uk or the researcher's supervisor Professor Eamonn Carrabine eamonn@essex.ac.uk .

Thank you for participating with this research project – your participation will assist with the research and understanding of the international event industry.

1ˢᵗ August 2019

Please complete the form, below…

Informed Consent for Philip Berners

Please tick the appropriate boxes

	Yes	No

1. Taking part in the study

I have read and understood the study information dated 1ˢᵗ August 2019. ☐ ☐
I have been able to ask questions about the study and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study and understand I can refuse to answer ☐ ☐
questions and I can withdraw from the study at any time, without having to give a reason.

I understand that taking part in the study involves a short interview and permission to
observe the Venue. ☐ ☐

Data will be captured by a short face to face interview which will be recorded and transcribed as text. Once transcribed, the recording will be erased.

2. Use of the information in the study

I understand that information I provide will be used for research purposes only. ☐ ☐

This research will be part of the research thesis and may be published in academic or industry journals.

I agree that my quotes can be quoted in research outputs. ☐ ☐

3. Future use and reuse of the information by others

I give permission for the data that I provide for this research project to be anonymised and deposited in the University of Essex repository so it can be used for future research and learning. ☐ ☐

4. Signatures

_____   _____   _____

Name of participant [IN CAPITALS]   Signature   Date

I have accurately read out the information sheet to the potential participant and, to the best of my ability, ensured that the participant understands to what they are freely consenting.

_____   _____   _____

Name of researcher [IN CAPITALS]   Signature   Date

5. Study contact details for further information

Philip Berners p.berners@essex.ac.uk
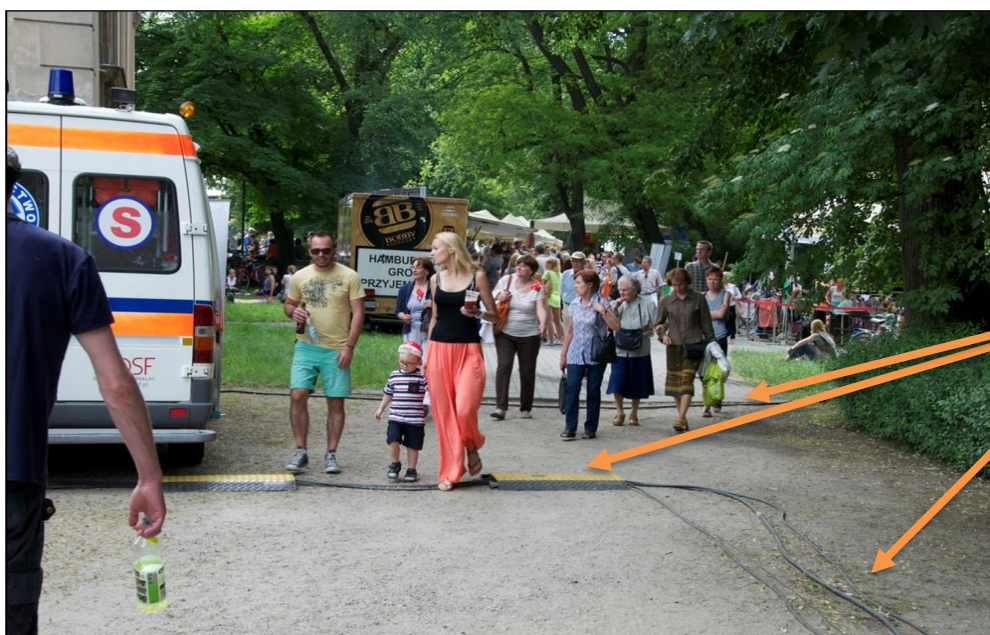
Source: Researcher's own

Appendix H – Images of Partial Compliance at Events in Poland

The Pope Falling on Partially Highlighted Steps

Source: EPA

Consumers Walking Over Partially Covered Cables

Source: Researcher's own