KNOWLEDGE GENERATION IN EVENT STUDIES: WHAT CAN DOCTORAL RESEARCH TELL US ABOUT EVOLUTION OF THE FIELD?

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The growth path of event studies as an emergent field of study has been documented in a number of reviews and summations of the extant literature to study key topics of research interest, identify gaps in the prevailing research agenda, and map progress towards the field gaining academic legitimacy. These studies have focused on the discourse as generally presented in academic journals. As a marker of maturity, no study has yet to examine the discipline bases, topics studied and methods applied in respect of doctoral research in the field. The current examination attempts this, following a tradition of such studies in the related field of tourism. The study interrogated the abstracts of 41 Ph.D. theses conferred by Australian universities over a 20-year period from 1995 and 2015. Content analysis revealed tentative evidence of discipline development in terms of the generation of event-specific knowledge and discipline integration, with sociology the dominant disciplinary influence informing the theses studied. Gaps and opportunities for further advancement of the field are identified.

Key words: Event studies; Doctoral studies; Event-specific knowledge;
Discipline development; Discipline integration; Theses

Introduction

Spurred by unprecedented global growth in events and global media coverage, event studies have emerged as an increasingly popular field of study (Baum, Lockstone-Binney, & Robertson, 2013). Since the mid-2000s, event studies have undergone a decade of rapid growth in exploration and understanding (Getz, 2012) heralding a promising era for the field.

However, emergent literature questions the maturity of event studies as an area of study and

its progress towards moving beyond the dominance of “management” studies (Lamond & Platt, 2016; Page & Connell, 2012; Thomas & Bowdin, 2012). Getz (2012) adopted a critical perspective in highlighting that the discourse of event management is in large “instrumentalist,” concerned with the immediate value of events to allied sectors. Getz’s (2007, 2008) numerous reviews have situated “event studies” as the third and highest level of event education, positioned at the pinnacle of a pyramid structure, with what he labels the more applied level of “event design and event

production” at the base and “event management” the intermediary between the two. In a later work, Getz (2012) mapped the dominant discourses in the field. Most thoroughly he mapped a classical discipline-based discourse that draws upon established social science disciplines to explain event experiences, as distinct from the more applied discourses of “event tourism” and “event management.” In doing so, he calls for “those who consider themselves to be event scholars to assess and interpret the vast and growing literature from many disciplines and fields” (Getz, 2012, p. 182).

It is timely given the above-mentioned calls for disciplinary development and integration to examine progress towards developing event-specific theories and knowledge in respect of doctoral theses. In particular, theses aligned with the event studies field generated by researchers from various Australian universities over the period 1995–2015 provide the sample for the current study. Following a tradition of such studies in the tourism field (Afifi, 2013; Meyer-Arendt & Justice, 2002; Weiler, Moyle, & McLennan, 2012), the abstract data accompanying each thesis is content analyzed to scope out the disciplinary lens used by the next generation of event studies researchers to elucidate new knowledge in the field. Gaps and opportunities for further development will be identified.

Literature Review

The growth path of the field of event studies has been documented in a number of reviews and summations of the extant literature. These works generally fall into the following categories: general reviews of progress in the field (Formica, 1998; Getz, 2000, 2008, 2012; Getz & Page, 2016), analysis of key research topics and publishing patterns (Kim, Boo, & Kim, 2013; Mair & Whitford, 2013; Park & Park, 2016), literature reviews focused on particular types of events (e.g., business events: Mair, 2012; conventions: Yoo & Weber, 2005; exhibitions: Lee & Kang, 2014; Lee & Lee, 2014; hallmark events: Hall, 1989; festivals: Getz, 2010), reviews and meta-analyses focused on particular research topics (motivations for festival attendance: Maeng, Jang, & Li, 2016; festival attendee satisfaction and loyalty: Tanford & Jung, 2017; conference attendee satisfaction and loyalty: Jung & Tanford,

2017; event evaluation: Brown, Getz, Pettersson, & Wallstam, 2015; image impacts of planned events: Lai & Li, 2014), and studies of the methods applied to research events (e.g., event segmentation: Tkaczynski & Rundle-Thiele, 2011; mixed-methods research: Sweeney & Goldblatt, 2016). It is beyond the scope of this article to synthesize the learnings from all of these works; however, to frame the study, collective insights drawn from these studies related to progress in the field will be outlined.

General reviews have highlighted the rapid growth in event studies post-2000 as an area of research interest. Additionally, these studies have highlighted the predominant early focus of the disciplines of economics and management as informing the field (Getz, 2000; Page & Connell, 2012). Given these disciplinary foci, it is unsurprising that the chief topic of early research interest was the study of the value of events, specifically their economic impacts (Formica, 1998). In a study of 178 event-related articles in three leading tourism journals (*Annals of Tourism Research*, *Journal of Travel Research*, and *Tourism Management*), Kim et al. (2013) found that this topic remained persistently popular over the periods 1980–1989, 1990–1999, and 2000–2010. However, their study noted that despite this popular focus, the topics of research interest in the event studies field had become more diverse over time to include increasing interest in the attitudes, motivations, behaviors, satisfaction, and intentions of event attendees. Park and Park’s (2016) secondary analysis of a larger sample of 541 research articles sourced from event and tourism journals concurred with this assessment noting that “recent articles from 2006 to 2013 more frequently examine visitor behaviour and experience; visitor perceptions and satisfaction” (p. 114). Mair and Whitford (2013) found in their study of 22 event experts that the principal topics of their (then) current research efforts were: event impacts and legacy, events and community engagement, heritage and culture related to events, events governance and policy, and events as a form of inclusionary/exclusionary practice. In comparing these topics to the extant literature, Mair and Whitford (2013) suggested there is evidence that event scholars are extending the boundaries of event studies knowledge beyond what is known in the field.

Counter to this view, across these reviews some noted research gaps remain persistently stubborn, while popular topics of study continue to attract focus. In the former category, Harris, Allen, and Jago (2001) noted the dearth of research on risk management in the early 2000s, with Page and Connell suggesting the same topic to be a research theme of the future in their 2012 *Handbook of Events*. Likewise, Harris et al. (2001) highlighted the limited research on event failure with calls for studies on this topic continuing in recent years (Getz, 2010; Getz & Page, 2016). In addition to the general popularity of economic evaluation studies, within particular niches of the events field, there have been noted parallels among the predominant topics of study. For example, Yoo and Weber (2005) in their review of 115 articles published between 1983 to 2003 on convention tourism found that meeting planners were the major focus of this research effort and that “areas such as service quality, loyalty, customer satisfaction, site selection issues, and market research received the most attention” (p. 198). In a later review of the business events literature by Mair (2012), meeting planners and their evaluation and site selection processes continued to be a prominent focus of the 152 articles content analyzed (published between 2000 and 2009). Page and Connell (2012) lamented a lack of research at the macrolevel of event studies as an indicator of the field’s infancy.

Beyond specific topics of research interest in the field, Getz (2012) noted that theory has been slow to develop in event studies with no seminal theories yet to gain prominence grounded in the event experience, despite recognition that such development would be instrumental in cementing the status of event studies as a disciplinary field (Baum et al., 2013; Getz, 2000). Baum et al. (2013) argued theory development in the field will likely take the form of Henderson, Presley, and Bialeschki’s (2004) “middle range” theories, which are of modest scope, providing the solid building blocks of their field, accounting for the premise that “postmodernists debunk the possibilities of finding a universal truth or grand theory regarding any topic” (p. 413). The recent movement to Critical Event Studies, which challenges existing neo-liberal conceptualizations of event management and event studies, to view events as contested concepts (Spracklen & Lamond,

2016), further supports the need for events research and scholarship that blurs disciplinary boundaries to more broadly and inclusively examine the role of events in society (Lamond & Platt, 2016).

Acknowledging these increasing calls for discipline integration and development in regards to the events studies field, the content analysis of theses can be a rich source of data with which to assess such progress (Das & Handfield, 1997) given it is a requirement that doctoral studies make an original contribution to theoretical knowledge (Weiler et al., 2012). To the authors’ knowledge, no study has undertaken this task to date in relation to event studies. However, lessons can be learned from similar type studies in the closely-related field of tourism. In their 2002 study of North American tourism dissertations, Meyer-Arendt and Justice flagged that “50 years have passed since the first dissertation in tourism research” (p. 1171). The growth of tourism-related research degrees in the UK was linked by Botterill, Haven, and Gale (2002) to the growth of undergraduate and postgraduate tourism course provision. Indeed, Afifi (2013) noted the rise of Ph.D. students in the UK from “pure tourism backgrounds” (p. 30) as opposed to earlier years (in particular the mid-1960s) when students generally came from established disciplines. A number of these studies highlight the explosion of tourism theses in recent years (Afifi, 2013; Huang, 2011; Meyer-Arendt & Justice, 2002), which Botterill et al. (2002) suggested is evidence of the status of tourism as a distinct field of study in its own right. Additionally, there is evidence that the disciplines informing tourism theses are growing in scope and variety (Meyer-Arendt & Justice, 2002; Weiler et al., 2012).

Botterill et al.’s (2002) study of tourism theses completed in the UK and Ireland in the years 1990–1999 noted that the disciplines of “economics, geography, sociology, anthropology, business studies and environmental science” (p. 292) had most informed the theses studied. Weiler et al. (2012) offered a useful multinational study of 1,888 tourism theses completed in the US, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand over the period 1951–2010. Sharing some similarities with Botterill et al.’s (2002) earlier findings, Weiler et al. (2012) found that psychology, environmental studies, and anthropology were the most prominent disciplinary influences in

their sample of tourism theses. Interestingly, coding of the theses as to the number of disciplines they were informed by, revealed that 40% of the theses were multidisciplinary in nature. Comparing the level of disciplinarity over time (1950–1999, 2000–2009), Weiler et al. (2012) noted only a small rise in the number of multidisciplinary theses in the most recent decade leading them to conclude that “there is no evidence of an increase in multidisciplinary over the first 50 years of doctoral-level tourism research” (p. 1442).

Given the raft of insights these collective studies have yielded regarding tourism as a field, it is timely to apply such an analysis to the theses informing event studies, with academic legitimization of the field some 25–30 years behind tourism (Getz, 2012). An increase in the number of doctoral theses focused on event studies will be an important marker of further legitimization of the field. Such an increase will also enable identification and training of the next generation of event studies academics, which is particularly important given many of the current generation of scholars completed their doctoral theses outside of the field (Page & Connell, 2012).

Method

Secondary data for the study was collected in late 2017. The study sample was created by searching the digital repositories of Australian universities that offer undergraduate and postgraduate event management degrees. The rationale behind this decision was based on the assumption that Botterill et al.’s (2002) observance regarding the linked growth of tourism research degrees to tourism coursework provision may also apply to the emergent field of events. In total, the repositories of 16 universities that met this course criteria (out of the total 43 universities in Australia) were searched using the search terms: “event,” “events,” “event studies,” and “events management.” To supplement this initial search, the same search terms were used to search Trove, an online library resource supported by the National Library of Australia and Australian State and Territory libraries, which includes abstracts from theses published by all Australian universities. By doing so, theses were also captured from universities that did not meet

the course criteria noted above. However, it should be noted that the majority of theses were sourced from the initial search.

In the case of two universities offering undergraduate and postgraduate event management degrees (Curtin University, Griffith University), their repositories could not be searched for one of the following reasons: they could not be located on the institutional website or accessed as a stand-alone resource distinct from the library catalogue. The final results list was checked to ensure the following details were captured: thesis title, author, year of conferral, awarding university, and the thesis abstract. It should be noted that two theses were embargoed due to their recent publication, with only the thesis title and author name made publicly available. These records were excluded from subsequent consideration. As a result of this search process, the relevant details of 41 theses were collected, produced over the period 1995 to 2015. Although this final sample appears relatively small, it is important to situate this figure relevant to the emergent standing of event studies as a field with only two Australian universities offering postgraduate event studies in the late nineties (Harris & Jago, 1999) and beyond the Australian context, Page and Connell (2012) noted more generally that the number of event Ph.D.’s is limited.

Following a tradition in tourism studies (Afifi, 2013; Meyer-Arendt & Justice, 2002; Weiler et al., 2012), the thesis abstracts (ranging in word limit from 37 to 1,091 words) were content analyzed and coded according to the variables detailed in Table 1. The data were initially coded by an experienced research assistant and then code checked at length by the researcher. The data were then entered into IBM Statistics v. 25, and frequency analyses of the study variables were conducted.

Results

Firstly, the year of Ph.D. conferral was examined. The current findings support the contemporary nature of the field with the majority (73%, $n = 30$) of the theses conferred between 2006–2015, compared to 27% ($n = 11$) conferred between the earlier period 1995–2005. These results would at face value appear to support the pattern of research growth in the field as noted in various review studies

Table 1
Study Variables

Variable Label	Variable Options	Source of Variable (if Applicable)
Event type	Sporting events, cultural/arts events, historical events, political events, food/culinary events, religious events, business events, private events	Kim et al. (2013); Community event, special event, and other options added by author
Event location	Local/regional, national, international	
Key discipline(s) informing study	Geography, Management, Tourism Management, Forestry, History, Ecology, Geology, Literature, Ethnology, Environment Science, Agriculture, Botany, Horticulture, Archaeology, Architecture, Arts, City Planning, Cultural Relic Studies, Fishery, Psychology, Sociology, Theatre, Recreation, Information Science, Health Science, Music, Political Science, Marketing, Education, Other, Not Mentioned, Event Specific	Huang (2011); Meyer-Arendt and Justice (2002); Weiler et al. (2012); Event-specific option added by author
Number of disciplines informing the study	Single discipline; Multidiscipline	
Event topic(s) studied	Sociocultural and community impacts; economic impacts, environmental impacts, political and policy dimensions of events, sustainability and events, event tourism, HR and events, risk management, leveraging events, event education, event location benefits, event manager/organizer skills, training, capacity, urban development/urban renewal, venues, job creation/economic development, events and identity, media, financing for events, reasons for event failure, sociological/anthropological analysis of events, event service quality, events and heritage, indigenous events, future forecasting of events, event branding, event logistics and staging, understanding subtypes of events, other	Mair and Whitford (2013)
Study method	Quantitative, qualitative, mixed method	

(Kim et al., 2013; Park & Park, 2016). Additionally, as Allen, O'Toole, McDonnell, and Harris (2011) noted, the Sydney Olympic Games in 2000 were a driver of event research in Australia, which may also be a contributing factor to this growth.

Investigating the spread of institutions supervising event doctoral research, the three Australian universities with the greatest number of event Ph.D. conferrals were the University of Queensland (UQ) ($n = 11$), Victoria University (VU) ($n = 5$), and the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) ($n = 3$). Interestingly, VU and UTS were early providers of postgraduate courses related to event management

(Harris & Jago, 1999), supporting Botterill et al.'s (2012) link between specialist coursework programs and research degrees. Additionally, 8 of the 11 Ph.D. conferrals from UQ were post-2005, indicating their more recent involvement in the field. In total, 18 Australian higher education institutions conferred doctorates related to events over the study period.

To examine the contextual study settings captured in the thesis abstracts, the event type and event location variables were analyzed. Although the event types defined by Kim et al. (2013) were used as the initial categorization of events examined

in the theses, emerging from the data, three additional categories were added to supplement this categorization—special events, community events, and an “other” category. The results of the analysis in Table 2 suggest *cultural/arts events* were the most popular event type studied among the theses sampled, followed by *sporting events*. This finding mirrors Kim et al.’s (2013) study of event articles published in the top three tourism journals for which they found these two event types attracted the most research attention, although unlike their study, it should be noted the more pronounced dominance of “cultural/arts events” in the event theses.

Additionally, the scale of the events examined in the theses was analyzed. The majority focused on local events (78%), with only 15% examining large-scale international events and a further 7% studying events at the national level. This pattern is also similar to the findings of Kim et al.’s (2013) study.

Two rounds of analysis were conducted to discern the disciplinary influences informing the event theses studied. This was in light of the initial analysis of disciplinary bases revealing that 51% ($n = 21$) of the theses were multidisciplinary in nature.

Interestingly, the results reveal tentative evidence of event-specific knowledge strongly informing the theses studied. This is perhaps unsurprising given the dearth of such event-specific theories and knowledge to date in the field (Baum et al., 2013) and the onus being on Ph.D. scholars to make an original contribution to knowledge (Weiler et al., 2012). Some of these original contributions took the form of model development, such as the generic model of the mega-event hosting process (Haxton, 2000), while others concentrated on the development of event-specific measures such as the triple bottom line of event evaluation (Sherwood, 2007).

Table 2
Event Type

	<i>N</i> (%)
Sporting events	7 (17.1)
Cultural/arts events	23 (56.1)
Community events	4 (9.8)
Special events	5 (12.2)
Other	2 (4.9)
Total	41 (100)

Of the established disciplines, sociology was the most prominent discipline informing the event theses studied across both rounds of coding. This finding supports Getz’s (2012) discipline-based discourse of event studies for which he notes sociology can be viewed as a “classical” contribution given it is one of the earliest disciplines that continues to be highly relevant to event studies as a field. The disciplines of economics and management, noted in the broader events literature as an early influence on the field (Getz, 2000; Page & Connell, 2012), appear to be poorly represented in the disciplinary bases studied by this sample of Ph.D. scholars. Likewise, tourism, as a close cousin of events, also had minimal influence in informing the theses examined.

In italics in Table 3, *music* and *city planning* emerge as the only two disciplinary bases not common across both rounds of coding. Also, surprisingly, none of the theses were mapped relative to the disciplines of marketing and education despite the broader body of events research highlighting

Table 3
Disciplines Informing Event Theses

	<i>N</i> (%)
1st round of coding	
Event-specific	10 (24.4)
Sociology	7 (17.1)
Arts	4 (9.8)
Ethnology	4 (9.8)
Geography	3 (7.3)
Psychology	3 (7.3)
Economics	2 (4.9)
Management	2 (4.9)
Political Science	2 (4.9)
Health Science	1 (2.4)
History	1 (2.4)
Recreation	1 (2.4)
Tourism Management	1 (2.4)
	41 (100.0)
2nd round of coding	
Sociology	8 (19.5)
Ethnology	2 (4.9)
Management	2 (4.9)
Tourism management	2 (4.9)
<i>Music</i>	2 (4.9)
Arts	1 (2.4)
<i>City planning</i>	1 (2.4)
History	1 (2.4)
Psychology	1 (2.4)
Recreation	1 (2.4)
	21 (51.2)

the importance of event management education and event marketing as research topics (Mair & Whitford, 2013).

Using Mair and Whitford's (2013) event subtopic categorization, Table 4 outlines the results of the first round of coding of event topics studied in the theses examined (acknowledging multiple topics may be covered by a thesis, up to four topics were coded per abstract; however, only the first round of results is presented here for brevity sake).

The most popular topics studied, *events and identity* and *sociocultural and community impacts* appear to closely mirror trends and calls for future research in the broader events literature (Mair & Whitford, 2013). Indeed, further analysis revealed that for both topics, all but one of the associated theses were conferred post-2005, supporting the growing momentum around these topics. There also appears to be little uptake of thesis topics relating to event *environmental impacts* and *sustainability and events* despite the topicality of issues such as climate change.

Finally, the research methods used by the doctoral researchers were investigated. From the abstract data, the methods applied in the case of one thesis could not be determined. Of the remaining 40 theses, the majority (54%, $n = 22$) applied a qualitative method to their studies, and a further 11 theses (27%) used a mixed-method approach.

Only 17% of theses studied applied a purely quantitative design.

Discussion

Collectively, the findings of the present study both support and diverge from trends noted in previous review studies charting progress in the field of event studies. It is important to note that these review studies (Formica, 1998; Getz, 2000, 2008, 2010; 2012; Getz & Page, 2016; Hall, 1989; Kim et al., 2013; Lee & Lee, 2014; Lee & Kang, 2014; Mair, 2012; Mair & Whitford, 2013; Park & Park, 2016; Yoo & Weber, 2005) have been based on research published in academic journals, whereas the current study is a first for the field, informed by doctoral theses conferred by Australian universities between 1995–2015.

In support of trends noted previously, the current study highlights that from a small base of events Ph.D.'s (Page & Connell, 2012), the number of conferrals is growing, particular post-2000s, as are the number of Australian universities conferring theses, suggestive of growing supervisory capacity and expertise related to event studies.

The tentative evidence from the study suggests that in terms of discipline development, event Ph.D. scholars, as the next generation of event academics,

Table 4
Event Topics Studied

Topic	N (%)
Events and identity (community or individual identity)	11 (26.8)
Sociocultural & community impacts (resident attitudes to events, social capital, and social inclusion, community pride)	9 (22.0)
Event tourism	3 (7.3)
HR and events (including volunteering)	3 (7.3)
Understanding subtypes of events (e.g., multicultural festivals, sports events, mega-events, business events)	3 (7.3)
Political and policy dimensions of events	2 (4.9)
Sociological/anthropological analysis of events	2 (4.9)
Economic impacts (including national and local economic impacts, occupancy rates, etc.)	1 (2.4)
Environmental impacts (including climate change)	1 (2.4)
Sustainability and events	1 (2.4)
Risk management (including legal aspects, crowd control, security, and crisis management)	1 (2.4)
Event location benefits (including improved destination image, prestige)	1 (2.4)
Events and arts/culture	1 (2.4)
Events and heritage	1 (2.4)
Event branding	1 (2.4)
Total	41 (100.0)

are generating novel “event-specific” knowledge, which is extremely promising for the field. In needing to make an original contribution to knowledge (Weiler et al., 2012), it would appear that the growing number of event Ph.D.s offer a conduit to advance indigenous event theories in response to calls for such theoretical development to bolster the status of event studies as a disciplinary field (Baum et al., 2013; Getz, 2000).

Additionally, given the findings revealed that 51% of the theses studied were multidisciplinary in nature, there was good evidence to support discipline integration as well. This aligns to Getz and Page’s view (2016) that as an emergent field, event studies “is mostly multi-disciplinary in nature, drawing theory, knowledge, methodologies and methods from many established disciplines” (p. 614). In particular, the study revealed the dominance of sociology informing the theses studied in support of Getz’s (2012) classical discourse. This result is unsurprising given the elected topics of study the theses focused upon, which were primarily concerned with the social impacts of events (discussed in the following paragraph).

However, there was little integration from tourism, a close cousin of events, with Tourism Management having little disciplinary influence on the theses studied, which is somewhat surprising given “event tourism” is one of the recognized central discourses of event studies (Getz, 2012; Getz & Page, 2016). Reflective of the level of low disciplinary integration from tourism, in terms of topic areas of study in the theses, *event tourism* was also poorly represented, perhaps suggestive of some movement away from knowledge generation around this topic despite Kim et al. (2013) and Mair and Whitford (2013) noting its continued popularity in the wider events literature.

Mair and Whitford (2013) in concluding their study noted that “event researchers are working on topics of immense social importance” (p. 13). Likewise, the same observation applies to the doctoral scholars in this study, with evidence that they are taking the lead and working in areas of recognized research need, to address important gaps. Case in point, as noted in the results section, the top two topics of research focus in the theses (*events and identity* and *sociocultural and community impacts*) were those topical areas highlighted by event

academics in Mair and Whitford’s study as those they were working currently in order to advance the boundaries of event studies knowledge.

Aligned to the need to generate grounded exploratory knowledge given event studies remains at a nascent stage (Getz, 2012), and it is unsurprising that qualitative and mixed methods were predominant in the theses studied. These findings also represent the methodological traditions of the disciplines informing the field, including qualitative ethnographic studies and mixed methods aligned to the classical discourse (Getz, 2012). The lesser use of quantitative surveys is somewhat at odds with trends noted in the broader events literature of the dominance of visitor surveys (Getz, 2005) and a lack of qualitative research in some niche areas (Mair, 2012).

The dominance of theses examining local events, a trend also noted in the extant event literature (Kim et al., 2013), may reflect ease of access for doctoral researchers in collecting data but is also likely to reflect the globally roaming nature of international events. In terms of the event type the theses focused on, the greater focus on *arts/cultural events* may also be linked to the local nature of the events studied as a means of these events showcasing local cultural artifacts and traditions (Getz, 2008); however, further study is required to confirm this link.

Conclusion

This study has attempted the first content analysis of event theses following a tradition of such studies in tourism as a means of charting progress towards academic legitimization. The findings support there is merit in examining theses as a marker of field development (Das & Handfield, 1997) for the valuable insights revealed. Akin to Weiler et al.’s (2012) study, there would be value comparing event theses across various countries, including the UK and US for which there is a longer tradition of event education (Barron & Leask, 2012), to replicate this study and more fully assess the extent of discipline development and integration in the field.

Given this initial evidence that event doctoral students are supporting pathways to academic legitimization for event studies, the findings highlight opportunities for future scholars to pursue their studies informed by the underrepresented

disciplinary bases and research topics that this study highlights. Not dissimilar from the current event research agenda, which has focused on event management education and event marketing (Mair & Whitford, 2013), it would appear that there are further opportunities to embed concepts from the disciplines of marketing and education in future theses. Additionally, beyond current identified areas of future research, there is much scope to integrate disciplinary bases that have yet to be conceptualized to any great extent in relation to event studies. For example, health science, which could usefully inform a Ph.D. study of health interventions that involve various forms of event participation. In terms of event topics specifically, based on the current findings, it appears there is significant latitude to advance studies focused on the *environmental impacts* and *sustainability and events* given these two topics have been highlighted as important foci for future research (Mair & Whitford, 2013) and there is substantial recognition of the fundamental symbiotic relationship between events and the environment (Holmes, Hughes, Mair, & Carlsen, 2015; Mair & Laing, 2013). Finally, as a recent framing of the field, going forward there is an opportunity for event Ph.D.'s to adopt the Critical Event Studies perspective and apply various multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary lens to articulate contested views of events and their meaning in society (Lamond & Platt, 2016).

The limitations of this study and its methods should be noted. As a self-generated dataset, it cannot be assured that all theses related to event studies were captured for analysis. Indeed, as already noted, the final sample of theses analyzed was small, reflective of the emergent nature of Australian event management education and the limited number of event-specific Ph.D.'s more generally. Related issues already alluded to include the embargoing of very recent theses and the inability to access some institutional repositories. Additionally, it has been questioned to what extent abstracts provide a valid and comparable measure of theses given their format and length vary (Botterill et al., 2002; Weiler et al., 2012). Although acknowledging this latter issue, by following the accepted practice of analyzing abstract data a manageable dataset was generated for analysis. Finally, it is beyond this study to determine, what, if any, influence Ph.D.

supervisors had on the selection of thesis topics related to events. This line of inquiry, encompassing the "supervisor" perspective on knowledge gaps and progress in the field, would make for a worthwhile extension to this study in furthering current understanding of the extent of discipline development and integration in the event studies field.

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