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Global Event Management: a critique

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Within the professional Event Management literature considerable claims have been made for Event Management. Investment in the area and student enrolments has risen dramatically. In some circles, Event Management is portrayed as challenging Leisure Studies and even undermining it. However, if one examines the professional literature, one quickly finds that it is overwhelmingly uncritical and self-congratulatory. The relationship between Events, manipulation, corruption and social control has not been rigorously examined. This paper distinguishes the main types of Global Event (Single Issue and Cyclical). It attempts a balanced account of the claims made by Event Management. It examines data from Live Aid, the FIFA World Cup and the Sydney Olympics to test the claims against practice. It also includes two longer examinations of Global Event Management, namely the Sydney Mardi Gras and the Live 8 (2005) concert. The paper concludes that Event Management is based in principles from neo-liberalism and communitarianism. This produces an attitude to Events and leisure which is Reformist. This perspective is contrasted with the critical tradition in Leisure Studies which supports a more radical perspective on leisure.

Keywords: event; global; power; regulation

Introduction

Organised Events are a category of Leisure Studies that now receive unprecedented prominence in the curriculum and research. By some distance, they constitute the main front of student growth and arguably, innovation in the field. Analytically speaking, among other things, they are linked to effective fund raising, building consciousness, mounting publicity and creative solutions to inequality, injustice and equitable resource distribution (Bowdin, Allen, O'Toole, Harris, & McDonnell, 2011; Getz, 1997, 2007). On the whole, the contrast between Events and conventional Leisure Studies has been much over stated. The Carnival form, national celebrations (such as Labour Day or the Jubilee for the Monarch) and fixture-listed sporting Events have been directed to the same ends. We can quibble about the details, but this type of leisure form and the Event format shares the same characteristics to achieve the objectives of escapism, integration and transcendence. To my mind, as I aim to support below, Events are part of the neoliberal turn, drawing on elements of Communitarian thinking and market logic to identify and *finesse* their

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objectives. In contrast, I maintain, conventional Leisure Studies has greater allegiance with Keynesian/welfarist intervention organised ultimately around the state.

I wish to characterise Events as *stateless solutions* to particular issues (hunger, disease, injustice and exclusion) or, for want of a better phrase, the periodic celebration of brotherhood. In saying this, I do not mean to be comprehended as proposing that Events are aloof from states. How could they be? Any Event involves a setting, finance streams and a congregation of some sort. As such, the state has to be involved in protecting territorial jurisdiction through policing, licencing and other types of regulation. Self-evidently, calendarised Global Events like the FIFA World and the Olympics involve lobbying states that wish to act as hosts and, once the Event has been decreed, multilayered, renewable support from state policing, health and safety and financial auditing agencies.

Nonetheless, without gainsaying this, the Communitarian ethos of Events requires that they be presented as extra-Parliamentary, spontaneous solutions. In these terms, they are heralded as ‘popular’ fixes and ‘popular’ unions. They are ‘stateless’ in that they are hatched outside the parameters of government, do not rely on government sponsorship and appeal to ‘the people’, not party political congeries.

You might ask, what then is an Event? Especially, as protest movements such as what? Occupy or counter culture responses to the G8 summit and other convocations of global regulation have recently proved so adept in disrupting the well-drilled machinery of public relations facilitators and seizing air-time (Gorringe & Rosie, 2008; Routledge, 2011). The counter culture has learned from Event Management and, with the aid of digital networks, now possesses low cost means to get their case across to global communication networks (Castells, 2009). They are, if you will, exercises in radical Event Management. With access to the network power of digital communication and the ear of the global media, these radical Events are destined to become more common in the future.

But let me be clear. In general, the field of Event Management does not extend to the analysis of these forms of counter-cultural process. Instead it holds that Events are part of the political and cultural mainstream and come in three shapes and sizes: minor, major and mega (Roberts, 2004, p. 108–120). Without wishing here to go into this too far, minor Events refer to neighbourhood responses (garden parties and street festivals); major Events are regional or national gatherings (sports fixtures, literary and drama gatherings) and mega Events are global (the Olympics, FIFA World Cup, Live Aid, Live Earth and Live8, etc).

Thus, it would be absurd to propose that *all* Events are about deception and mystification. The urge to ‘do good’ by publicising and mobilising concomitant resources for a calendarised celebration or directing public attention to a matter of immediate concern beyond the sphere of private interest is human, incorrigible and will always, therefore, be with us.

Yet, one of the aims of this paper is to suggest that mega Events play into the hands of established, semi-invisible social and economic interests. They do so primarily by positioning ordinary people in the illusory location of a ‘can do’ stance that persuades them that their actions ‘make a difference’. Ideology, let us recall, is not so much a matter of naked force or guileful persuasion, but *positioning*. In urban industrial, outwardly democratic society, it operates optimally when it normalises behaviour and hierarchy. Today, ideology works by making ‘the person’ political. It aims to convince individuals that their personal behaviour counts, that what

they do through charitable acts matters and the world would be a hopelessly depleted place without them. The deliberate, latent objective of all these lubrications is precisely to leave the essentials of the underlying power structures and processes of regulation intact (Hedges, 2010; Wolin, 2010). If this is allowed, it is perfectly consistent to hold that the faithful support of Events by audiences and spectators is sincere and moreover, pursued from the highest personal motives. Simultaneously, the consequences of these interventions are recidivist, in that by succumbing to the media lather of apparent decisive change and rarely going beyond the motif of representation as resistance, the real payoff is to reinforce business as usual. By not moving beyond the principle that 'the person is political', the collective ties that are the prerequisite of social change are not forged. The illusion of doing something hides the reality of leaving every fundamental remain the same. In this paper then, my focus is upon Global Events. I have no truck with the proposition that Global Events are always and only part of a conspiracy of power. The critical issues that Global Events make in respect of the absence of universal brotherhood and the need for justice in everyday life are not matters to be disdained. My point is that they draw us away from system fundamentals (having to do with fiscal redistribution in the economically advanced nations and the direct transfer of other resources from the economically advanced countries to the emerging world).

Let me go into the question of how Global Events manipulate, and how the best intentions result in conditions that reproduce the power of vested interests. Before doing so, I need to characterise what we mean by Global Events.

Global Events: Single Issue And Cyclical

Global Events come in two forms: Single Issue and Cyclical Events. Single Issue Events refer to the use of celebrity figureheads and corporate network power to publicise a social or political cause and raise funds. Examples include *Live Aid* (1985), *Live Earth* (2005) and *Live 8* (2005). Single Issue Events are *stateless solutions* to various kinds of global problems. Mostly, they are exercised in crisis management designed to solve emergencies or incidents. Publicity and resources are concentrated upon questions of immediate, decisive action. In publicity terms, questions of post-Event evaluation, including the important matters of external monitoring and independent regulation, are not central in publicity or public opinion. This is no accident.

Single Issue Global Events are emotionally driven. Typically, they spring from indignation with media reports of injustice, inequality or hunger. It is the reaction to the perceived outrage or injustice, usually staged and milked by the media, rather than an analysis of the structural causes behind them that is the lever behind most humanitarian Global Events. Cyclical Global Events refer to calendarised festivals, sporting Events and expositions. Generally, they are designed as festive Events that celebrate individual or team prowess in sport, industry or the arts in the name of international brotherhood or global unity. Leading examples are the Olympics, FIFA World Cup and international trade expositions.

An important sub-branch of Cyclical Global Events, are *Hallmark Events*. These are calendarised Events that are designed to showcase a city or region by holding a festive gathering, usually on an annual or four yearly basis. Examples include the Edinburgh Arts Festival, the Munich *Oktoberfest*, the Sydney Mardi Gras and the Newport Jazz Festival, Rhode Island.

Global Event Managers strive to publicise Events by developing what is known as the Event concept. Typically, this is simple, eye-catching, easily digestible and media friendly. 'Feed the World' (Live Aid) and 'Make Poverty History' (Live 8) are two recent cases in point. 'One World, One Dream' was the slogan of the Beijing Olympics (2008); while 'KeNako: Celebrate Africa's Humanity' was the slogan for the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa.

The problem with these sound-bite concepts and the rationale behind them, is that they confine Event consciousness to a vantage point that views the world as a series of incidents, emergencies and episodes rather than a conjunction of structures of power and causal sequences. While this fits well with the media programme schedules upon which Global Events are heavily indebted, the consequences of this are serious and far reaching. Instead of constructing a holistic perspective and approach, it portrays the world as either a chaotic sequence of fragmentary Events or regular, spontaneous celebrations of humanity.

The Event slogan provides the first route into the contradictions and delusions of Event consciousness. With respect to Single Issue Global Events, the use of sound-bite slogans is understandable enough. Because Events rely so heavily upon communication power for their impact, the sound-bite slogan lends itself neatly to publicity campaigns. Yet, one of the delusions at issue here is to neutralise human involvement from the creation of crisis and disasters, and instead present these issues as the work of nature or the hand of God. In the end, 'Feed the World' and 'Make Poverty History' must be regarded as metaphysical slogans unless the human causes of global hunger and poverty are exposed and interrogated. If we are inured to see incidents and emergencies as the consequence of physical forces, it is difficult to conceive how they can possibly be anticipated and regulated. However, there is a category error here.

'Natural' disasters are always partly man made. Take Hurricane Katrina (2005), to be sure, it was the product of physical forces. Yet, its catastrophic effects in New Orleans reflected decades of under investment in flood defences, emergency relief agencies and related hazard mitigation. Although 80–90% of the city was flooded, the worst affected area was the lower 9th ward. This was an area that real estate developers had long identified as supporting under-priced housing. Commentators agree that the black population suffered most damage and loss of life in the flooding (Allen, 2007, pp. 466–467; Atkins & Moy, 2005, p. 917). This has prompted accusations that generations of under investment in hazard mitigation carried racist undertones (Brinkley, 2006; Kellner, 2007; Trotter & Fernandez, 2009).

Similarly, the famine in Ethiopia in 1985 was partly the product of the civil war. We now know that food shortages in the rebellious Northern provinces were deliberately engineered by the military *junta*. We also know that, after *Live Aid*, absconded charity funds were used to reinforce shortages of food and other supplies in the region (Polman, 2010; Trilling 2010). In addition, the military *junta* and *Tigray Liberation Army* also seized *Live Aid* funds to buy arms and munitions. Franks (2010, p. 55) notes that an inadvertent effect of the *Live Aid* intervention was to prolong the war and so increase suffering.

These issues do not come out readily in discussions about Single Issue Global Event Management. This is because these projects are fuelled by powerful emotions that prioritise the idea of indignation and self-righteousness in the face of incidents, episodes and emergencies. The virtuous sentiment that stimulated the response to suffering becomes self-confirming and, in some, accounts, is beyond criticism.

Thus, *Live Aid* (1985) is portrayed and, in folk memory, largely persists, as a direct, concrete response to hunger in Ethiopia that cut through the red tape of state responses. More recent examples include the concert for the victims of Hurricane Katrina (2005) and the victims of the Haiti earthquake (2009). It took over a quarter of a century for the probity of *Live Aid* resource distribution and the relevance of social and investment programmes to be critically exposed (Polman, 2010). When BBC reporters alleged that 95% of *Live Aid* funds were appropriated by the Ethiopian government led by the Communist dictator, Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam and the Tigray Liberation Movement to accumulate arms and food supplies, Sir Bob Geldof issued an uncompromising denial. According to him, ‘not a penny’ of Live Aid money had been appropriated. Yet while BBC allegations were eventually withdrawn, *Live Aid*’s own field director in Ethiopia, John James, is reported as estimating that between 10 and 20% of the organisations relief hands were absconded (Gilligan, 2010).

Single Issue Events exploit and develop a spirit of self-righteousness that obstructs rational discussion. Instead, the overwhelming, paramount assumption, propagated by Event Management Teams and network power, is that these Events are an intrinsic social good. The pairing of Global Events with natural justice is so powerful that, until recently, it has been very difficult to criticise the organisation and consequences of these projects (Polman, 2010). To do so has been to be marked as a bad egg, negligent in giving due to humanitarian agents and the uses of leisure to make a difference. It is now time for this to change.

Cyclical Events, cyclical irregularities

Turning to Cyclical Global Events, of course the public is aware that the Olympic Games are organised and supervised by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the FIFA World Cup is run by the International Federation of Association Football. The representative character of these organisations has been extensively challenged. The ‘inner circle’ of FIFA has been described as steeped in ‘oligarchic and corporate patronage’ (Sugden & Tomlinson, 1998, p. 178). The same charge has been levelled at the IOC (Booth, 2011; Jennings, 2011). While these organisations devote considerable resources to presenting themselves as inclusive and transparent, they have a long history of secrecy mired with allegations of corruption. At the time of writing, FIFA officials are under investigation for allegedly accepting bribes to vote for Russia and Qatar to host the World Cup in 2018 and 2022, respectively.

The conduct of the FIFA management cadre has long been criticised by commentators. The FIFA President, Sepp Blatter has been accused of making campaign undertakings in return for votes (Campbell & Kuper, 1999). FIFA funds are alleged to have created ‘personal fiefdoms’ (Sugden & Tomlinson, 1998, p. 313).

The organisation’s domicile in Switzerland is widely regarded to contribute to clandestine deal making and a lack of accountability. Under Swiss law, legal charitable status minimises routes of disclosure about income distribution. Fundamental, and legitimate issues of public interest, such as the salary of the President and the network of financial transactions are *sub judice* (Armstrong, 2007; Jennings, 2011).

Similar allegations of secrecy and corruption have been made of the International Olympic Committee. Shaw (2008) fired a bitter fusillade against the IOC management of the Winter Olympics in Vancouver (2010). Specifically, he submitted that the IOC engaged in profiteering in conjunction with British Columbia (BC)

Real Estate developers and initiated lucrative tax avoidance schemes. The 'spirit of brotherhood' espoused by the IOC was used to evict tenants from low-cost housing and initiate real estate development and infrastructural renewal that inflated prices and disempowered citizens (Eby, 2007; Shaw, 2008). In addition, the destruction of the ecologically sensitive Eagleridge Bluffs to make way for a highway to the sky resorts is now seen in many quarters as an act of environmental vandalism.

The run-up to the Olympics often involves clean up programmes to make host venues 'media friendly'. The bidding process for the London Olympics leaned heavily on presenting the Games as 'green', 'carbon neutral' and a 'young people's' Games. The Event Planning Team emphasised the economic value of the Games as a catalyst for 'urban regeneration'. At the heart of the bid was an undertaking to 'reinvent the nation' by confronting and embracing multiethnic, post-imperial realities (Dench, Gavron, & Young, 2006).

The London Games also involved risk assessment and securitisation issues. Kennelly and Watt (2011, p. 776–777) point to the intensification of police 'stop and search' powers in relation to young people and related 'clean up the streets' operations in preparation for the inspection of the global media.

The same thing is happening as Brazil prepares to host the 2014 FIFA World Cup and the 2016 Olympics. In November 2011, as part of a 'cleansing strategy', 3000 police troops swept through the Rocinha *favela* in Rio De Janeiro with a brief to clear up crime and street prostitution. Rochina had been under police surveillance for decades. It is the largest favela in Rio de Janeiro and has a long history of gang warfare. The onset of the Games was used as a pretext to intensify the mobilisation of state forces against residents and to uproot drug dealing. As with the *Beijing and London Olympics*, the underlying aim of the IOC and the Brazilian Tourist Authorities is to present a positive image of the host venue to the global media (Perelman, 2012, pp. 5–6). One interesting aspect of this is the increasing importance of risk assessment and securitisation in the Event Management planning and operations process. This has led to lucrative deals with security companies to create fortress security in host venues. Samatas (2007, p. 235) submits that pressure from security high-tech corporations, especially those based in the USA and Israel, forced the Greek government to vastly upgrade risk management provision for the 2000 Athens Olympics. The heavy investment to make the Games safe is now seen as a contributory factor to the collapse of the Greek economy after the 2008 global financial crisis. For it is now held to have encouraged a national investment climate based in high levels of public borrowing. Research into the build up to the London Olympics (2012) is just as alarming. The issue is partly one of economics. At a time when austerity measures are being strictly applied to public expenditure, the UK Watchdog Committee (March 2012) reported that the costs of the Games had soared to £11 billion. That is, fully £2 billion over budget. It should be remembered that the estimated cost of the Games during the bidding process was £2.37 billion.

According to Graham (2010, 2012), more troops were allocated to the London Olympics than fought in Afghanistan (around 13,500). As with Shaw's (2008) critique of the IOC planning process in the Vancouver Olympics (2010), Graham maintains that the Games involved worrying infringements of Civil rights that have largely been ignored by the media and neglected by the public. The 2006 London Olympic Games Act provides for the use of force, and potentially extends it to private security companies, to prevent Occupy-style protests. Securitisation investment has contributed to the electronic wiring up of the city with a new range of scanners,

biometric ID cards, number plate and facial recognition closed circuit television (CCTV) systems, disease tracking systems, checkpoints and new police control centres. In Athens, the cost of 'super panopticon CCTV' security provision was £90,000 per competing athlete. In London, the cost is set at approximately £59,000 per athlete.

Graham's point is that Global Cyclical Events boost evaluations of 'perceived risk' to 'homeland security'. Further, that this perception is distorted and exaggerated by lobbyist's working for international security corporations. There is also a troubling legacy issue here. Namely, securitisation investment in Global Cyclical Events increases fixed and variable capital provision in policing that will be turned to provide post-Event 'safe city environments'. The implication is that 'the clean up the city' provisions used during the Event, will be reframed to monitor 'high risk' (ethnic/religious) minorities and 'unstable' metropolitan spaces in a post-Event setting.

The self-image of Global Event Management

As Global Event Management has made in-roads in securing lucrative contracts and enrolling students on new degree and diploma programmes, the publicity emphasis has been on the upside. The third edition of the leading British textbook in the field, accentuates the positive and minimises negative criticism (Bowdin et al., 2011). Events are credited with a variety of positive outcomes. They include fund raising, building the brand, establishing social integration, expanding cultural perspectives, urban transformation and renewal, job creation, building international prestige and increasing environmental awareness (Bowdin et al., 2011, pp. 80–109). While the possibility of negative outcomes are recognised, dealing with them is presented as a challenge for Event Management teams rather than wider agents of influence. The value of proper Event strategy and planning, the logistics of project delivery, media targeting, balanced content creation and social capital legacy programmes and transparent post-event evaluation are prominently stressed. 'All Events produce impacts', write Bowdin et al. (2011, pp. 109) 'both positive and negative, which it is the task of the event manager to assess and balance'.

The leading North American Event guru, Donald Getz, also emphasises the central importance of 'key competencies' (Getz, 1997, pp. 4–20). These encompass knowledge of the history of Events, clarity of organisational principles, knowledge of Event supply and demand factors, assurance with the variety of Event leadership styles, goal setting, knowledge of operational factors and familiarity with Event marketing principles (Getz & Wicks, 1994, pp. 108–109). While Getz's work recognises that every event should be assessed in terms of economic, symbolic, cultural, social, personal and environmental dimensions, the accent is upon a technocratic bias in what Event managers do.

When one looks at the social, cultural and economic outcomes claimed by the likes of Getz (1991, 1997, 2007) and Bowdin et al. (2011, p. 87), with their causal references to 'celebration spaces', 'cultural and economic benefits', 'building community pride', 'increasing environmental awareness' and 'introducing new and challenging ideas', it is above all, the *audacity* of the Event Management self-image that comes to mind. Questions of social control, economic inequality and moral regulation are scrupulously marginalised. This reinforces the distinguishing feature of Event consciousness, which is to picture the world as a series of episodes, incidents and emergencies that require managerial intervention and technocratic remedies.

Live Aid (2005), *Live 8* (2005) and *Live Earth* (2005) are sanctimoniously broadcast and syndicated to network publics as rapid reaction responses to, respectively, hunger, poverty and pollution. Conversely, reported unpublished research by Bengry Howell of Bath University demonstrates that a major motivation behind attending Global Events is simply escapism (Tickle, 2010). Global Events allow people to escape the drudgery of work or unemployment and momentarily experience a largely symbolic sense of meaningful intervention in global affairs. This is attractive because it stands in sharp contrast to the common response of subjective incredulity and powerlessness in the face of the big social and economic questions of the day.

The appeal and uses of transcendence

Whether they be of the Single Issue or Cyclical variety, Global Events milk a sense of transcendence. Why? Because we know that the desire to move beyond the envelope of personal existence is a (human) species characteristic (Callois, 2001; Huizinga, 1992; Turner, 1982).

Now, in traditional society the human urge for transcendence was answered, among other things, by organised religion (Kolakowski, 1982). In contemporary Western societies, organised religion has been on the wane for some time. For most in secular society, the sense of religious belonging and transcendence that was once delivered by the Church is either absent or in retreat. The non-religious sense of belonging and transcendence has been replaced, among other things, with secular forms of transcendence such as Event Management and Celebrity Culture (Rojek, 2001, 2012). It is in mass broadcast, syndicated Events and the adjoining expostulations of celebrity culture that those, disinclined to trust in God or Nature find their bedmates.

Yet, the transcendence sought by Global Events is neither innocent nor apolitical. Cyclical Global Events have a blatant commercial agenda in espousing a 'one world' philosophy of brotherhood and unity. This is why they have become such a keen target for organised racketeering and opportunistic corruption. Provision for monitoring and regulation has not stopped the abuses reported by Sugden and Tomlinson (1998), Shaw (2008) and Graham (2010, 2011).

Single Issue Events are also clearly subject to racketeering and corruption. While they are not directly set up as commercial enterprises, the funds that they raise inevitably attract the attention of self-interested, and often, criminal, agents. In addition, they invoke the comforting illusion of 'team world' putting its shoulder behind the wheel of issues such as global hunger, injustice and pollution. The regulatory and controlling aspects of Global Events in a context wherein powerlessness and authoritarianism are common experiences deserves to be investigated far more thoroughly.

The data from investigations of Single Issue and Global Events suggest that it is necessary and important to introduce the new concept of *Event Appropriation*, into the Event Management literature. The task is important because of the colossal absence in this literature of a serious engagement with the question of corruption. This question goes much further than issues of economic embezzlement and financial irregularities. The media now ensures that Global Events have a secure place on the world stage. As such, Global Events have emerged as an important resource in national power brokering and international statecraft. That is, to be clear,

populist, stateless solutions are coopted by political agents to achieve independent, orthodox, fundamentally authoritarian ends.

Presently, I will illustrate what I mean by the relationship of transcendence achieved by Global Events and national power brokering and international state craft by way of some case study material. Before coming to this, I want, in a fairly formal way, to go into what is meant by the term Event Appropriation.

Event Appropriation

The term Event Appropriation refers to the seizure, by external or contingent interests, of the goodwill and spirit of escapism and transcendence that is attached to Global Events. It involves exploiting and developing the Event for separate economic or political ends. The securitisation issue that I raised above is an example of how commercial interests inflate risk assessment to secure lucrative business. It is not alone.

The logistics of Event Appropriation can be illustrated from many other angles.

Consider the recent (2011) decision by the Event Planning Team behind the Sydney Mardi Gras to drop the 'Gay and Lesbian' prefix from the Event title. The origins of the Sydney Mardi Gras lie in a Gay rights March in 1978 to protest against the repression of gay and lesbian rights and lifestyles. The police sought to curtail the protest. The arrest of 52 marchers, contributed to the politicisation of the Event. It developed into a powerful annual statement of Gay pride. As the Event evolved, it embraced bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex movements and values. From a focus on Gay and Lesbian rights, it widened out to be an all-encompassing expression of repressed, marginalised sexualities. Eventually, this was captured by the somewhat clumsy acronym, GLBTQI (gay, lesbian, transgender, queer and intersex). The commitment to Gay pride was retained in the Gay and lesbian prefix to the Event concept. However, the palette of sexual interests represented was greatly extended.

The Event went onto become a primary celebration in the city calendar and has attracted major media coverage and syndication rights. It is estimated to inject \$A 30 million into the economy of New South Wales. Lately, the Event has generated criticism that the original Event concept is obsolete. Younger generations are now held to be generally comfortable with the idea of gay and lesbian rights. Further, the tolerance extended to these rights by the authorities is held to invalidate the necessity to bind the Event to gay pride.

Accordingly, in 2011 the Event Management team announced that the 'Gay and Lesbian' prefix was to be dropped from the 2012 parade and after party. The acronym GLBTQI was dismissed as 'alphabet soup' that inhibits the commercial growth potential of the Event. The new Sydney Mardi Gras was to be rebranded as a celebration of diversity and global rights. Post-2011, the Event concept would be 'the right to be'. This was symbolised in the new logo of intertwined hearts representing 'infinite love' devised by Sydney's Moon advertising agency. While Event planners were careful to respect the sensitivities of Gays and other sexual minorities, the rebranding exercise was clearly a blatant attempt to broaden the commercial and broadcasting appeal of the Event.

What is in a name or a logo you might say? The rebranding exercise continues to respect Gay and Lesbian Rights and seeks to ally them to a wider politics of human emancipation. However, just because a right has been legally won, does not

mean that it stops needing to be defended or commemorated. The ‘infinite love/right to be’ mantra inevitably waters down the political message behind the original Mardi Gras which was the necessity and validity of resistance against established power interests. It leaves the Sydney Mardi Gras in the position of expressing everything and nothing. Yet, it undoubtedly strengthens the commercial interests behind the Event who seek to broaden sponsorship, broadcasting and syndication rights.

While this case goes some way towards illuminating the political dimension of Event Appropriation, it does not go far enough. For a paper of this type, a more detailed case study is required. So permit to come to the case of the Make Poverty History campaign that culminated in the Live 8 (2005) concert.

Live 8 (2005)

The Make Poverty History campaign was an international effort coordinated by the Global Call To Action Against Poverty (GCAAP). Comprising a coalition between international charities, lobbying groups, trade unions and religious groups, GCAAP sought to be a stateless solution to the entrenched problem of global inequality. The will of the people was invoked as the lever on rich Western nations to close the development gap and advance human rights.

It is now widely forgotten that the far reaching, radical nature of GCAAP (and Live 8) objectives was to eradicate crimes against humanity, promote democratic government, establish accountable, regulatory trade infrastructures between the economically advanced and developing countries, end discrimination against women and enforce human rights. This ambitious agenda was taken over by the media, acting in conjunction with professional politicians and reduced to three headline, achievable goals:

- authorisation of multiple debt write off,
- implementation of substantial increases in aid and
- regulatory reform of trade agreements (Harrison, 2010, p. 394).

Nash (2008, p. 172) is right to observe that GCAAP saw itself as a new political agent contributing to a concept of cosmopolitan citizenship, recognising civil responsibilities of distributive justice, social inclusion and empowerment. This concept stretches far beyond the traditional territorial boundaries of the nation state. In effect, it heralds the birth of the stateless citizen, who acknowledges unity behind an agenda of progressive global change measures. Needless to say, stateless citizens recognise that the ties of jurisdiction bind them to their home state. The overwhelming majority of stateless citizens either carries a passport or has legal access to one. However, while manifest jurisdiction is acknowledged, stateless citizens are often critical, and may be wholly divorced from key aspects of the politics and culture of their home state. They are not just ‘cosmopolitan’ in that they recognised international difference and the legitimacy of multicultural diversity. In addition, and crucially, they recant key aspects of the political, cultural and economic characteristics of their home states. The publicity wing of Global Event Management often fans this sense of appealing strongly to citizens who see themselves as unconventional and disaffected with the official outlook of their home state. This may be an illusory community, in the sense that it is not based in regular face-to-face contact.

However, it is a recognised agent in influencing national politics and international statecraft. State leaders have to pay heed to this extra-Parliamentary force as an ordinary part of the contemporary political process (Beck, 1992, 2008).

The ethos of GCAAP activism was integral to Live 8 publicity and the transmission of the Event. Sir Bob Geldof and Bono, who are widely agreed to have been the primary celebrity spokesmen for the Event, went to great lengths to stress that Live 8 had much higher moral ambitions than Single Issue fund raising. For them, the Event was designed to set the seal on the radical demands of the GCAAP campaign which were, of course, timed to place maximum media coverage and electoral pressure on G8 leaders meeting in Gleneagles, Scotland. On the eve of the Live 8 concert the strategy appeared to have worked. The communique issued by Tony Blair presented the Gleneagles meeting as a landmark in the history of global aid: We do not by this communique simply make poverty history ...

we do show how it can be done, and we signify the political will to do so. (Gleneagles Communique, 2005)

Notwithstanding this, the commitments made by G8 leaders were highly conditional. They did not embrace the full suit of radical social and cultural demands made by GCAAP lobbyists. Instead, they were confined to limited economic responses to debt relief and trade reform. In the event, following the global recession of 2008, these responses have not been fully honoured by the G8. The G8 communique pledged 0.56% of gross national income (GNI) by 2010 and 0.7% by 2015. This headline commitment came with many strings attached. For example, the American delegation undertook to double aid to Africa between 2004 and 2010. However, they refused to go beyond the 0.7% GNI target. For its part, Canada reused to go beyond the 0.33% target agreed at the Monterrey 'Financing for Development' (2002) conference. Other G8 members, notably Germany and Italy, tied relief commitments to budgetary contingencies (Elliott, 2010, 2011). That is, relief could be scaled back if economic circumstances dictated.

For many commentators the Gleneagles communique had more to do with conventional party power politics than making a new deal for the developing countries. That is, the Heads of State who signed the agreement did so partly to enhance the electoral appeal of their political parties. Besides debt relief defaults of the G8, critics of the Gleneagles agreement point to a number of political issues that were quietly buried (Harrison, 2010; Payne, 2006). For a start, the GCAAP demand for profound system change is viewed to have been hijacked by Brown, Blair and other G8 leaders. Instead of committing indissolubly to the reframing of debt and trade arrangements between the economically advanced countries and the developing nations, or the structural reform of the system, the G8 engaged in tokenism.

At the time, the demand for system change was manipulated by G8 leaders and the adjoining PR/media hub who saturated the media with images of famine, suffering and illness in Africa. The purpose was twofold. To begin with it was intended to precipitate public memories of the Live Aid campaign in 1985, with all of the attendant populist self-righteousness and self-congratulation that surrounded the Event. By making emergencies and incidents in Africa paramount, G8 leaders and the PR/Media hub deflected public consciousness from the radical programme pressed upon politicians and the public by the GCAAP. Despite Sir Bob Geldof's claim that the Live 8 Event (2005) must not be permitted to become a re-run of the

Live Aid Event (1985), that is how it panned out. Most observers of the *Live 8* Event compared the public reaction unfavourably to *Live Aid*. The purported ‘compassion fatigue’ that was presented as accounting for the weaker social and media reaction was partly explained as the result of the widespread public sentiment that they were being sold the same message twice.

Be that as it may, some observers also regard the Gleneagles agreement to provide the G8 with convenient cover to pursue traditional, narrow, self-interested foreign policy objectives. Thus, Afghanistan, Iraq and Palestine have been awarded disproportionate amounts of G8 finance. Outwardly, this aid has been employed for the purposes of reconstruction, debt reform and infrastructural revision. The overriding objective has been to advance Western interests in these regions. This is a matter of the return of national and bilateral *realpolitik* rather than the birth of a new type of cosmopolitan citizenship. Oil, regional influence and protecting Western interests vie with the egalitarian philosophy of spreading wealth and expanding democracy.

Conclusion: Event Management, Leisure Studies

Rumours of the death of Leisure Studies and its replacement with Event Management are premature. Global Event Management provides the veneer of meaningful direct action to solve global problems. In addition, it operates through the painless medium of ludic energy to apparently achieve its purported moral ends. In doing so, difficult questions of fiscal reform and dismantling established global power structures that perpetuate inequality, injustice and environmental degradation are avoided. The world will not be fed, nor will poverty come to an end, by organising and transmitting global concerts in London, Philadelphia and other metropolitan centres and gathering and distributing the revenue that they generate (Easterly, 2007; Moyo, 2010; Sachs 2005, 2011).

The attainment of these goals requires fiscal tightening to subtract more in the form of taxes from the little that the Western electorate already has, and demanding new obligations of distributive justice and inclusion from the state and multinational corporations. Other levels of global fund raising may enhance the position of global problems on the horizon of social consciousness, but they are really nothing more than a distraction.

One of the traditional interests in Leisure Studies is to reflect upon radical, revisionist forms of social and economic organisation that will permit work and leisure to subsist in a harmonious balance to achieve progressive ends. The critical traditions in the subject have always emphasised the necessity to transcend capitalism. Although, of course, they have differed on their proposed remedies to achieve this goal and the nature of the new society that they wish to create (and the role of leisure therein).

In contrast, Event Management mixes market logic with communitarian philosophy to produce a doctrine of capitalist *reform*. Communitarianism presents itself as a middle road between Left and Right. It demands the revival of ‘community values’, the recognition of ‘common (stateless) responsibilities’, restoring ‘the moral voice’ and ‘principled direct action’ (Barber, 2004; Etzioni, 1995; Putnam, 2000).

Prima facie, this appears to be unobjectionable. Indeed, communitarianism and Event Management have been enthusiastically commended in some circles as a common sense response to shared personal and global dilemmas. However, if one

probes beneath the surface, one quickly finds that ‘the community’ is an assumed, unexamined category. It is therefore of questionable value. Exactly what ‘common responsibilities’, ‘the moral voice’ and ‘principled direct action’ mean in the context of entrenched economic inequality, ethnic diversity and multiculturalism is by no stretch transparent.

To the extent that Global Events suggest the contrary, they participate in the moral regulation and political quiescence of the *polis*. Global problems are not isolated episodes or random incidents. Rather they are the product of entrenched global power structures and causal sequences that have proved to be very difficult to expose, let alone uproot. While much has been made in government and charity circles that Global Events herald a new era in the management of global problems, it is naïve and dangerous to ignore the authoritarian and mystifying effects that derive from entrenched power (Castells, 2009; Curran, 2010). The romance of charity should not be permitted to obscure the logic of political economy.

A word remains to be said on the nature of the relationship between ludic and moral energy, since this is at the heart of the Global Event Management enterprise. Ludic energy has a recognised and established role to play in the politics of protest and resistance. Political marches and rallies have long used music, dance and comedy to arouse the spirit of unity. Global Events like Live Aid, Live 8 and The Olympics, explicitly articulate the power of music, sport and play to solve the world’s problems. But the influence of corporate media power (and the social and economic interests behind them) in projecting Global Events as effective stateless solutions is regrettable and should be opposed. Ludic energy must be the servant of moral energy, not the master.

Global Event Management pays lip service to this formulation. However, at the level of experience, the compelling realities of Event Management boosterism, corporate media representations and the emotional exuberance of stadium crowds and network publics strongly suggest that equation is reversed. Global Events are as much about delivering therapy to Western networks who mostly feel powerless and ignored, as forging brotherhood, unity and producing stateless solutions to global problems. Global Events are placebos. They distract Western populations from facing the difficult debates and decisions on fiscal retrenchment and resource redistribution (from the North to the South), which are the true solutions to the ills of the world.

Notes on contributor

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