



Introduction: Managing and Experiencing an Equestrian Event

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Abstract

This introductory chapter begins with a brief discussion of key findings in the wider field of event studies, focusing mainly on sports events as our case study is primarily an elite sporting competition. We then introduce the idea of multispecies events, drawing on insights from human–animal studies to consider how the active involvement of nonhuman animals shapes all aspects of the event experience. After discussing equestrian tourism and equestrian events more broadly, we introduce the case study event – Landsmót, the National Championships of the Icelandic horse – in more detail to provide the reader with important background information to the event which provides the empirical base and therefore unites subsequent chapters. The chapter ends with an overview of the research process underpinning the book and an outline of the chapter contributions that enable holistic critical examination of a multispecies event and cultural festival.

Key words

equestrian; events management; Landsmót; sports events; tourism

1.1 Introduction

Events are important social, cultural, economic and often political phenomena that bring people together in a specified place and time to share activities and experiences. Human societies have organized events for centuries, but the study of planned events and events management is still in its relative infancy. Numerous textbooks are now available to guide students through the core aspects of events management from concept, to implementation, to evaluation. An expanding number of articles and reports explore specific aspects of event design, delivery and experience through a wide variety of different case study examples. This developing body of knowledge illustrates the growing popularity of events at international, national, regional and local levels, and the complexity of understanding events from the perspectives of different stakeholder groups, ranging from organizers, to workers, to spectators and local communities.

Nonhuman animals play diverse and important roles in event experiences, yet are rarely acknowledged as stakeholders in the ways that humans are (Marinova and Fox, 2019). The events literature identifies different types of events and different stakeholder groups, yet conspicuously absent from most of these discussions are nonhuman animals, whether as the focus of an event, such as a horseracing meeting, as active participants in

an aspect of an event, such as a falconry display, as companions to human event guests, such as a guide dog for a visually impaired person, or even as native species that clash with human event participants, such as wasps at a summer festival. This represents a serious gap in knowledge about events, as the involvement of nonhuman animals in event spaces – whether as active or passive participants – has profound consequences for all aspects of events management, design and experience (Dashper and Brymer, 2019; Dashper and Buchmann, 2020).

This book begins to address this gap in events knowledge through focusing on multispecies aspects of events through examination of a single case study: Landsmót, the National Championships of the Icelandic horse (Landsmót translates literally as ‘national championships’; Landsmót hestamanna means ‘national equestrian championships’). This event is an elite sports competition focusing on a specific horse breed – the Icelandic horse – and also a social and cultural festival, celebrating aspects of Icelandic culture and heritage and offering a space for fun and hedonism. The event is a biennial week-long outdoor sports event and festival held at different sites around Iceland (Sigurðardóttir and Helgadóttir, 2015b; Helgadóttir and Dashper, 2016). From its inception in 1950, Landsmót has been one of the major regular sports events in Iceland. A relatively stable number of visitors has attended Landsmót since about 10,000 people gathered for the first event, which was held in the historically important site of the world’s first parliament. Landsmót attracts domestic participants as competitors, spectators, volunteers and workers and to some extent international spectators and volunteers.

While this volume addresses sports events, and particularly equestrian sports events, there is a key concept that merits attention here: the term festival. Festivals are, like so many concepts close to the human heart, not easily defined. Mair (2018) suggested that the following should be factors in defining events as festivals: short term, recurring, publicly accessible, culturally celebratory and/or performatory, relevant to a community, entertaining or recreational and engendering a sense of belonging and sharing. Getz (2010) identified three main discourses on festivals that have relevance for this volume: classical, focusing on the core socio-cultural meaning of the festival; instrumental framing of the festival as a tool for promoting economic and social growth; and events management concerned with the production, management and marketing of festivals. In this volume we engage with all these aspects of the festival that is Landsmót.

This event, which is introduced in more detail below, provides a single case study for the contributions in this book, which draw on empirical research conducted at Landsmót to consider different aspects of events management, impacts and experiences in a multispecies context. The use of a single case throughout the book enables in-depth examination of the processes of managing an event and consideration of the larger theoretical implications of events management. Most textbooks and edited collections use multiple cases, where the description lacks the depth and detail to sustain thorough analysis and discussion. This book is based on original research by authors using various theoretical perspectives and disciplinary positions to offer a more complete picture of a single case, while also drawing wider comparisons within the broader events field (see Chapter 15, this volume, for a comparison between Landsmót and the World Equestrian Games).

The book is, consequently, a contribution to two fields: events management and human–animal studies. Chapters connect events management to larger themes in the social sciences, such as human–animal relations; events and nationalism; place branding through events; economic impacts of events; the nature of event experience; events and community building; and inclusion and exclusion at events. The book considers various

issues in relation to events management, including the role of the event in community building and the practical aspects of running a sustainable equestrian event, as well as addressing issues that arise in the context of multispecies events.

This introductory chapter sets the context for subsequent chapters which present different aspects of events management and experiences, drawing on original research conducted at the multispecies event: Landsmót. The research team behind this project included participants from the UK, Norway, Sweden, France and Iceland. The team consists of specialists and researchers in events management, tourism, equestrianism/equine science, human–animal relations, veterinary science, business administration and economics. The multidisciplinary nature of the research team enables critical discussion of different aspects of events management from a variety of perspectives. The shared case study guides the reader through the event experience from multiple perspectives and positions.

1.2 Sports Events: Key Issues and Challenges

The focus in events management literature is on ‘planned events’; that is, a deliberate, managed and choreographed (to varying degrees) occurrence that is a combination of programme, people and place (Getz, 2005). Events are temporal phenomena, with a beginning and an end and a programme that is planned and publicized in advance, to enable participants and spectators to choose if they want to attend (Getz and Page, 2016). Events can be classified in various different ways. One approach is in terms of size: mega-events are those with global reach and impact, like the Olympic Games; hallmark events are those so closely identified with a place that they become synonymous with that location, such as Glastonbury music festival; major events are large in size and reach, and attract considerable interest and attention, such as the Open Golf Championships; while local or community events refer to the vast majority of events that are targeted mainly at local communities, such as a food festival (Bowdin *et al.*, 2011). Another means of classification is in terms of content or focus of an event, ranging from business events and conferences, to cultural events and sports events. Events are often symbols of celebration and ritual, and can mark the passing of time in contemporary societies (Roche, 2003). Events are varied in focus, scale, frequency, impact and legacy, but form integral parts of human societies around the world and thus warrant sustained academic examination.

Sports events form one of the largest sectors of the events industry and can take many formats, from the sports mega-events of the Olympic Games and the FIFA World Cup, to hallmark events like the Wimbledon tennis grand slam, major events like individual sport world championships, and minor sports events which tend to be more community based with relatively low attendance and media attention (Parent and Smith-Swan, 2013). Sports events can be further classified according to criteria such as: professional or amateur; indoor or outdoor; regularly scheduled (leagues, championships) or one-off (exhibition or friendly matches); single or multi-sport events; for participants, for spectators, or both; and local, regional, national or international (Getz and Page, 2016). This indicates the diversity of the sports events sector and this wide variety of event formats may require some different management approaches and result in different types of experiences for spectators and participants.

Sports events, perhaps more than many other types of event, have the capacity to excite and inspire high levels of emotion and devotion among attendees, due to the popularity of sport as a phenomenon that both unites and divides people within and across

societies (Green, 2009). Consequently, sports events can produce highly meaningful and intense experiences for attendees. Sport event tourism is a popular subsection of the tourism industry, as many sport fans choose to spend their holiday time engaging in sports events – whether actively as sports participants or more passively as fans and spectators – both at home and away (Weed and Bull, 2012).

All events have a variety of impacts, positive and negative, that can affect a wide range of stakeholders. Economic impacts have been widely researched, especially in relation to sports events, as this is one aspect that investors (whether public or private) may be particularly interested in. Mega and major sports events are believed to act as catalysts for economic growth in host communities, although these economic impacts may often be overstated (Li *et al.*, 2013). Smaller sports events can also bring positive economic benefits to host communities as long as these impacts are planned and well managed (Wilson, 2006; see also Chapter 12, this volume). Sports events can contribute to positive social and cultural impacts, such as increased sense of pride and a general ‘feel-good’ factor (Leng *et al.*, 2014). Sports events can also bring about numerous negative social and cultural impacts, however, such as marginalizing indigenous peoples and provoking increased incidents of domestic violence (Gantz *et al.*, 2006; Sykes, 2016).

There is increasing attention being paid to the environmental impacts of sports events, which can be significant in terms of things like travel (of spectators, competitors, officials, etc.) and the building of facilities (Collins *et al.*, 2009). Sports events may also have potential for contributing to more positive environmental impacts, such as through educating attendees about the outdoors and ways to experience nature responsibly. Many sports events also have political impacts, as has been demonstrated frequently in relation to the use of mega-sports events as political tools by governments around the world (Grix, 2012).

There is now a well-developed body of literature on sports events and sports events management that is beginning to pose critical questions related to sustainability, accessibility, inclusion and exclusion. However, the events field has yet to really consider the role of nonhuman animals in events and to question some of the practical, ethical and organizational issues posed. In the next section we introduce the idea of multispecies events and suggest some issues that will be relevant when human and nonhuman actors are together within event spaces.

1.3 Multispecies Perspectives on Events Management

Nonhuman animals are involved in events in many roles and positions, but in this book we concentrate on the active involvement of nonhuman animals (horses, in this case) as part of the core programme of the event. Horses and dogs are the animals we most commonly involve in events, although various other species, including certain birds, sea mammals and other land mammals, can also be found ‘performing’ for and with humans for our entertainment.

Events are run for human pleasure, or business needs, and not for the benefit of nonhuman animals. Consequently, when we involve other animals in events, we need to think carefully about how we involve them, what we ask them to do, what we expect from them and what we provide for them, in terms of things like facilities, care and respect. Jönsson (2012) argued that as horses cannot give informed consent to take part in sport, as human participants can, this places significant moral responsibility on humans who do involve them to ensure their welfare and wellbeing are taken into account. This does not mean

that it is automatically morally indefensible to involve other animals in sport and events, but it does raise important questions to do with power, responsibility and welfare (Dashper, 2017a,b).

This leads on to practical, operational issues. As discussed in subsequent chapters, involving nonhuman animals in events raises complex logistical questions. What facilities will be required? How much space is needed for this? How will nonhuman animals arrive on site? Where will they be housed? How will the safety of human and nonhuman guests be safeguarded? How will interactions between humans and other animals be managed to reduce risk but ensure enjoyment and entertainment? What kinds of additional arrangements may need to be in place, such as veterinary support? What extra preparation is needed in case of an emergency, such as a venue needing to be evacuated? What will happen if there is an animal health crisis, such as the outbreak of an infectious disease, which may restrict movement? These, and other questions, illustrate some of the organizational complexity of multispecies events, in addition to the requirements of other forms of planned events.

There is increasing attention being paid in event studies to the importance of experiences in delivering memorable, and therefore successful, events (Morgan, 2008). This also applies to multispecies events, where nonhuman animals have important roles to play in helping to co-create those experiences (Dashper and Buchmann, 2020). Event managers try to create memorable experiences for guests, through carefully choreographing factors such as amenities (e.g. parking, accessibility, toilets, signage), marketing (e.g. promotion, providing enough quality information, technical aspects of the event), personnel and provisions (e.g. friendly, well-trained staff, good viewing, security) and comfort and visibility (Kruger and Saayman, 2012). The involvement of nonhuman animals adds an extra layer of unpredictability to this, as animals cannot know the schedule and expectations of the event format, and consequently may act in unexpected ways which have potential to disrupt the carefully choreographed programme and impact on the experiences of paying guests (Dashper and Brymer, 2019). This extra unpredictability adds further complexity to multispecies events management (see Chapters 5 and 11, this volume).

Here we have highlighted just a few potential issues that may arise in multispecies events that are not present in other, human-only focused event contexts. Multispecies events are complex and carry risk, but are popular and well established in many regions of the world. Our focus in this book is on horses and equestrian events and in the next section we introduce horses and tourism as the broader context in which equestrian events are positioned.

1.4 Equestrian Tourism

Tourism based on horses has been developing around the world for decades but academic research on this form of tourism is relatively new (Ollenburg, 2005, 2006; Helgadóttir, 2006; Helgadóttir and Sigurðardóttir, 2008; Vaugeois, 2015; Buchmann, 2017). In 2005, Claudia Ollenburg pointed out that there was at that time an existing ‘specialist horse tourism industry in the same way that there are specialist ski, surf and dive tourism industries’ (Ollenburg, 2005, p. 47). Her paper on the worldwide structure of the equestrian tourism sector was followed by a book chapter on horse riding as adventure tourism (Ollenburg, 2006). Before those publications, most research in this field had ‘been on

recreational horse riders; notably, on the demographics, social and environmental impacts, and management of recreational horse riders in national parks and other public lands in North America and elsewhere' (Ollenburg, 2005, p. 53).

The developing body of research on horse tourism stresses the cultural importance of horses in different regions of the world, from Australia to Iceland to France, and in various ways this is translated into different tourism offerings aimed at specialist and casual equestrian tourists (White, 2011; Nieminen, 2014; Pickel-Chevalier, 2015; Sigurðardóttir, 2018). Numerous challenges to the development of horse tourism have been identified, including high operating costs, safety, and access to and impact on trails in rural areas (Beeton, 2001; Newsome *et al.*, 2008; Gilbert and Gillet, 2014). As a tourism practice centred around interactions between people and other animals (horses), equestrian tourism also raises questions about ethics, welfare, agency and wildlife management (Notzke, 2016; Sturød *et al.*, 2019).

Equestrian tourism is a key aspect of the tourism industry in Iceland. Tourism in Iceland has grown exponentially in the first decades of the 21st century and the Icelandic horse has been an icon in the marketing of destination Iceland (Helgadóttir, 2006; Helgadóttir and Sigurðardóttir, 2008; Schmudde, 2015; Helgadóttir and Dashper, 2016). The horse has taken an increasingly important role in the recreation and experiences of visitors, as well as in the leisurely activities of local residents. Many Icelanders practise both long tours with groups of horses in the summer and equestrianism close to home year-round (Helgadóttir and Sigurðardóttir, 2008; Sigurðardóttir and Helgadóttir, 2015b). While horses were from the outset important for travel and transport in Iceland, commercial equestrian tourism for the international market started in Iceland around 1970 and has been in constant growth and development since (Sigurðardóttir, 2016), resulting in attention to Iceland as an example of best practice in the field of equestrian tourism and its development (Pickel-Chevalier and Evans, 2015).

While research on equestrian tourism is still scarce, Iceland is somewhat of an exception. Research on Icelandic horse tourism has focused on different topics, such as:

- the nature and development of horse-based tourism as a cultural heritage phenomenon (Helgadóttir, 2006);
- the business and industry development of equestrian tourism (Helgadóttir and Sigurðardóttir, 2008; Sigurðardóttir, 2015, 2016);
- expectations, experiences and satisfaction of equestrian tourists (Sigurðardóttir and Helgadóttir, 2008, 2015a; Helgadóttir and Dashper, 2016);
- environmental and social impacts of equestrian tourism in national parks (Schmudde, 2015);
- marketing and product development relating to health, wellness and slow adventure tourism (Sigurðardóttir, 2018);
- the relationships between the horse, tourism and agricultural industries (Sigurðardóttir, 2016; Sigurðardóttir and Steinþórsson, 2017, 2018); and
- infrastructure, particularly riding trails as a geotourism attraction (Helgadóttir and Sigurðardóttir, 2018).

The fact that research on equestrian tourism has developed in Iceland relates to the importance of horse-based tourism services. In turn this is based on the importance of horses culturally and economically and the prevalent use of the Icelandic horse in the nation-branding of Iceland (see Chapter 10, this volume; for further discussion about the Icelandic horse see Chapter 3, this volume).

1.5 Equestrian Events

Tourism and events are intrinsically linked, as whoever leaves their daily environment for more than a day to participate in an event is a tourist (McCabe, 2005), regardless of whether they are domestic or international tourists. Equestrian events have received remarkably little attention in the tourism, events and sports literature. This is surprising, given the long history of equestrian events such as horse-racing, and the status of equestrianism as a core and long-standing member of the Olympic programme.

Horse-racing events have been studied primarily in terms of the importance of the events to local communities, attendees and motivation, and have been found to be enjoyed largely in terms of entertainment, gambling and associated social status of attending certain events (Daniels and Norman, 2005; McManus *et al.*, 2013; McManus and Graham, 2014; Fox, 2017). Other equestrian events, such as those related to the Olympic disciplines of show-jumping, dressage and eventing, have been studied in terms of issues related to gender, (dis)ability, athletic identity and relationships between horses and riders (Wipper, 2000; Dashper, 2010, 2012a, 2012b, 2012c, 2014; Adelman and Knijnik, 2013; Hellborg and Hedenborg, 2015; De Haan *et al.*, 2016).

There has been much less attention paid to any events management aspects of equestrian events, or the role these events can play in constructing identity. Helgadóttir and Dashper (2016) touched on this as they discussed how Landsmót attendees experience inclusion/exclusion in the ‘world of the Icelandic horse’ through the event. Their ethnographic research illustrates how positions of ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ are complex and fluid, relating to equestrian culture, national culture and language, among other factors. Dashper and Buchmann (2020) investigated endurance riding events in the UK and Australia, arguing that horses and humans co-create event experiences together, helping shape and create encounters that can be both memorable and mundane. Dashper and Brymer (2019) used an ecological–phenomenological approach to understand the complex interactions between human riders, horses and the environment in the context of a pleasure horse-riding event. They argued that it is important to consider a range of actors – animate and inanimate, human and nonhuman – to appreciate the variety of affordances and possible outcomes in leisure practices. Monterrubio and Perez (2020) discussed human–horse interactions in leisure events in Mexico, arguing that a post-humanist perspective is useful for interrogating highly commercialized interspecies encounters in these settings.

Horse events attracting tourists also include non-sporting events that did not originally aim to gather spectators or tourists. An example of this is the horse gatherings in Northern Iceland, where horse farmers herd their horses back from summer pasture to sort them at the community corral and bring them back to the farm. This event has become a harvest festival and tourist attraction while remaining a community celebration (Helgadóttir, 2015, 2018; Helgadóttir *et al.*, 2010). This book contributes to this developing body of work on equestrian events, through focus on one elite sporting competition: Landsmót hestamanna, the national championships of the Icelandic horse, hereafter referred to simply as Landsmót.

1.6 Landsmót

Annually a diversity of equestrian events take place in Iceland, both indoors and outdoors. The former are gaited competitions and shows, the latter comprise, in addition to the gaited competitions, ice tölt, breeding shows and, last but not least, horse gatherings

(Helgadóttir, 2015, 2018; Sigurðardóttir and Helgadóttir, 2015b; Helgadóttir and Dashper, 2016). The nature and objective of these events differ but all centre on the important factor of horse–human relationships, as well as human-to-human factors. Most of these events have not been the focus of academic research, with the exception of horse gatherings (Helgadóttir *et al.*, 2010; Helgadóttir, 2015, 2018); and one peer-reviewed article (Helgadóttir and Dashper, 2016) and one book chapter on Landsmót have previously been published (Heldt Cassel, 2018).

An event such as Landsmót is a complex social phenomenon where diverse groups and individuals gather in a given time and space for a common interest and/or mission (Helgadóttir and Dashper, 2016). In the case of equestrian events, it is most often a common interest in the horse that brings people to the event. In the case of Landsmót it is the Icelandic horse breed specifically that brings participants together (see Chapter 3, this volume). Equestrian sports events differ from most other sports in that men and women compete against each other (Dashper, 2012c). There is no formal distinction between amateur and professional riders when it comes to qualifying and at Landsmót they compete against each other. Furthermore, Landsmót distinguishes itself from other equestrian events as a festival or celebration of a particular breed and the horse culture around it (see Chapter 10, this volume).

Landsmót is a major event in Iceland and provides a good case study for exploring issues of events management within a multispecies context. In the summer of 2016 Landsmót was held at Hólar in Skagafjörður in northern Iceland for the second time; the first was 50 years earlier, in 1966. Landsmót is a biennial event with no fixed venue. Rather, it moves site each time (see Chapter 3, this volume). The location of each Landsmót is a contentious issue within the horse community in Iceland. Hosting the event brings multiple benefits to local communities and there is fierce competition between regions to gain the right to hold Landsmót (see Chapters 4, 6, 13 and 14, this volume).

Hólar is located in Skagafjörður in North Iceland (Fig. 1.1), a rural area steeped in equestrian tradition. The rural aspect of the 2016 event was an important feature, as discussed in numerous chapters in this book. The distance from Reykjavík, the capital city, to Hólar is 318 km. Hólar University offers degree programmes and conducts research on equestrianism/equine science, events management, tourism and outdoor studies. The university campus includes a stud farm and facilities for equestrian sport events.

Hosting the event at the university in 2016 provided the opportunity to conduct a multidisciplinary research project focused on a single large equestrian event. Ingibjörg Sigurðardóttir, assistant professor with the Department of Rural Tourism at Hólar University, led the project with participation from: Leeds Beckett University, UK; Dalarna University, Sweden; University of South-Eastern Norway, Campus Bø; and The Arctic University of Norway, Campus Alta.

The majority of chapters in this book draw on empirical research conducted in relation to Landsmót 2016, supplemented as appropriate with wider comparisons of previous and later Landsmót events and with an international equestrian event in France. Data collection in 2016 started in spring and the research team gathered in Hólar during the event on 27 June to 3 July. Each researcher had their own emphasis and research problem to address and selected methodology to suit. Data collection methods included interviews before and after the event, participant observation and observation at the event, surveys conducted on site and online after the event, and the production of a documentary film (see Chapter 16, this volume). Among the topics were the economic importance of the event, the experiences and interests of local residents, visitors, breeders, riders and volunteers and the impact the event had on the destination image.

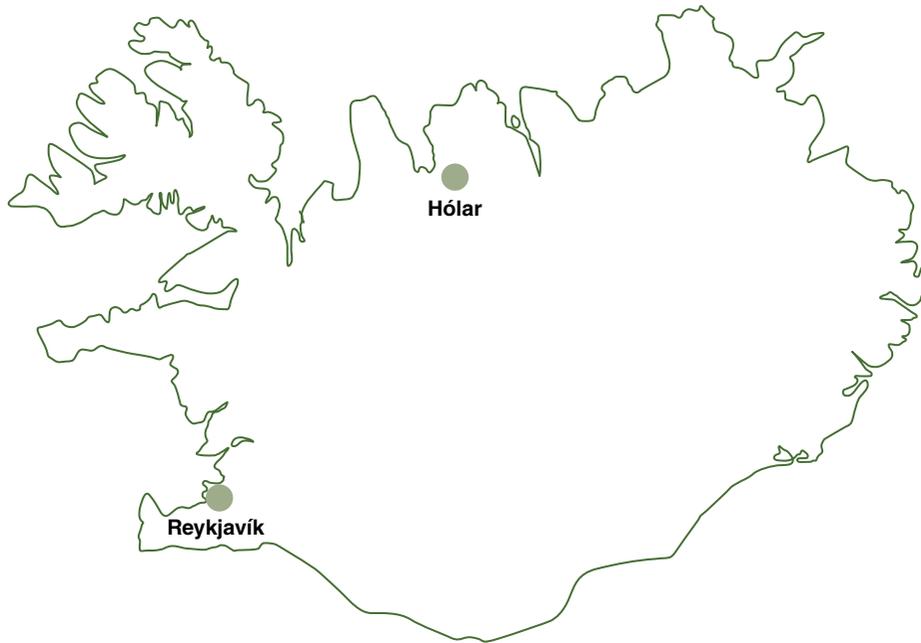


Fig. 1.1. Iceland, showing the location of Hólar, where Landsmót 2016 was held.

1.7 Outline of the Book

The remainder of this book is split into six sections, based around the planning, implementation and evaluation of a multispecies event. Each chapter stands alone in terms of offering theoretical and empirical insight on different aspects of multispecies events management, viewed from a range of theoretical and disciplinary perspectives. Taken together, the chapters provide a holistic insight into the events management process.

The Making of an Event is the first section and it is made up of two chapters that provide important background information about the wider Icelandic horse community that surrounds Landsmót. In Chapter 2, Guðrún Helgadóttir introduces the concept of event community and the sport governing bodies that form an essential part of that community. Gunnar Sturluson and Gundula Sharman discuss FEIF (the International Federation of Icelandic Horse Associations) in Chapter 2A. FEIF operates in 21 countries and organizes the equestrian associations that care for the Icelandic horse, acting as a source of guidance and leadership in the international community of the Icelandic horse. Lárus Ástmar Hannesson then introduces the Icelandic Equestrian Association in Chapter 2B, where he discusses how the equestrian community in Iceland has organized around Landsmót.

In Chapter 3, Guðrún Jóhanna Stefánsdóttir and Víkingur Gunnarsson introduce the star of the show: the Icelandic horse. As the only breed of horse present on the island of Iceland, the Icelandic horse has a unique history and relationship with the country, factors that are important underpinnings of Landsmót. They present the characteristics of the Icelandic horse, its history, breeding aims, regulations and criteria for competition that are used at Landsmót.

The second section, *Managing the Event*, turns the focus towards some of the core management aspects of the event. In Chapter 4, Runólfur Smári Steinþórsson and Hjörný Snorradóttir provide a strategic management analysis of the 1998–2008 Landsmót events. Their research draws lessons learnt from this 10-year period and introduces a strategic management approach that can be useful for future development of Landsmót and other events.

In Chapter 5, Áskell Heiðar Ásgeirsson, the event manager for Landsmót 2016 and 2018, offers a practical insight on the challenges and opportunities associated with organizing horse events. This chapter provides the reader with a real-world perspective, from the position of an experienced event manager. Among the subjects discussed are: organizing and managing the event, marketing, organizing the venue, technical issues, risks and security, and evaluation of success and failure in the events management process.

In Chapter 6, Ingibjörg Sigurðardóttir focuses on marketing and venue selection. She analyses the current visitor group of Landsmót and how the competitiveness of the event can be strengthened by deeper understanding of possible market segments, target groups and the relative attraction of different venues.

The third section, *Experiencing the Event*, focuses on what many event scholars consider to be the essence of events management: experience. Chapters in this section consider ‘experience’ as a multifaceted concept, understood differently when considered from the perspective of different stakeholders.

In Chapter 7, Ingibjörg Sigurðardóttir and Anna Lilja Pétursdóttir look into the demand side of equestrian events. The chapter draws on survey data from visitors following the 2014, 2016 and 2018 Landsmót events. The chapter investigates expectations, experiences and satisfaction of both domestic and international visitors.

In Chapter 8, Kari Jæger and Guðrún Helgadóttir draw attention to an important event stakeholder group that can sometimes be overlooked: event volunteers. Their chapter considers different types of volunteers, specifically international volunteers and members of local charitable organizations, and issues in managing these at Landsmót. This chapter is based on field observations and interviews at the 2016 event.

No analysis of an equestrian event would be complete without consideration of one of the most important stakeholder groups: the horses. In Chapters 9A and 9B horse welfare is in focus. In Chapter 9A, Ingibjörg Sigurðardóttir briefly addresses some relevant issues regarding animal involvement in events and the importance of research on horse welfare issues at events.

In Chapter 9B, veterinarian Sigríður Björnsdóttir addresses the important issue of horse welfare during competition at Landsmót. She discusses the role of veterinarians at this multispecies event and some of the key welfare issues associated with Icelandic horse competitions, based on longstanding research into horse health and welfare at equestrian events in Iceland.

Events are often expressions of identity, rich with meaning for participants. In section four, *The Meanings of the Event*, the authors analyse and discuss data about the meanings that various stakeholders attach to and derive from Landsmót.

In Chapter 10, Susanna Heldt Cassel considers how identity is expressed online in relation to Landsmót. She analyses Instagram posts in relation to the event and discusses how identity and belonging are constructed through social media connected to niche events. Her analysis shows how the event both reflects and helps construct ideas about Iceland as a country, linking the nation, the event and those associated with it to ideas about rurality, the outdoors and independence.

Chapter 11 turns the focus to human–horse interactions, a key aspect of a multispecies event like Landsmót. Katherine Dashper draws on Goffman’s (1959) dramaturgical concepts of ‘front stage’, ‘backstage’ and ‘offstage’ to consider different types of interspecies encounters that can occur between humans and horses around the event site. Drawing on interview data and observational field notes, she discusses interactions between horses and various different groups of humans, from audience members to trainers and competitors.

In the fifth section, *Event Impacts and Legacies*, attention turns to the outcomes of the event, focusing on economic impacts, community impacts and the potential for longer term impacts and legacies.

In Chapter 12, Tobias Heldt explains principles and practices of economic impact analysis (EIA) of small and medium-size events like Landsmót. In this chapter, the practical use of EIA for decision making is discussed and economic impacts of Landsmót 2016 are analysed.

In Chapter 13, Ingibjörg Sigurðardóttir focuses on the impacts of Landsmót on local residents in Skagafjörður, North Iceland. Drawing on data collected before and after the 2016 event, she discusses local residents’ expectations and experiences of hosting an event of 800 horses and 8000 guests in a community of just 4000 inhabitants.

In Chapter 14, Guðrún Helgadóttir and Katherine Dashper consider if a medium-sized event like Landsmót can result in a lasting legacy for the wider community. Drawing on interviews with stakeholders conducted three years after the 2016 event, they argue that it is appropriate to consider the potential of smaller events to contribute to a broader legacy, particularly within rural communities.

Section six, *Comparisons and Conclusions*, is the closing section of the book and it steps back from the case study event, Landsmót, to consider how the issues discussed in previous chapters have relevance to the wider field of multispecies events and events management.

In Chapter 15, Céline Vial and Eric Barget offer an international comparison to the case of Landsmót through their research on the 2014 World Equestrian Games (WEG) which were held in Normandy in France. WEG can be considered a mega-event in the context of equestrian sport, encompassing eight different equestrian disciplines with over 60 countries represented. Although there are many differences between Landsmót and WEG, there are also many similarities that illustrate some of the core aspects of equestrian events and events management.

Chapter 16 briefly introduces the documentary film that forms an extra recourse in connection with the book, available online. Film maker Ragnhildur Ásvaldsdóttir presents footage taken at Landsmót 2016 to document various aspects of the story of the event.

Finally, in Chapter 17, Katherine Dashper, Guðrún Helgadóttir and Ingibjörg Sigurðardóttir draw together key issues in the planning, management and experience of equestrian events discussed throughout the book, highlighting similarities and differences with other types of events and the wider lessons to be taken from the data and discussion presented in earlier chapters. They highlight areas for further research and suggest future challenges and opportunities that may affect multispecies events.

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