CHAPTER 1

Risk Management:
An Applied and Theoretical Sociological Perspective

Ask not that all troubles/risks cease, for when they do life ends.

—*FOLK SAYING*

IN THIS CHAPTER, WE WILL EXPLORE:

- What events are and what they are not
- Theories of how we use events to facilitate leisure time
- Basic sociological theories used in event risk management
- Postmodernism and event risk management
- The life cycle of a crisis

The Olympic Games are one of the largest "meetings" in the world.
People from all over the world gather together to compete for gold

medals. Hypothetically, this meeting fosters goodwill and mutual respect. Yet, the history of the Olympic Games shows that ever since Adolf Hitler tried to turn the games into a political statement, the Olympic Games have been a challenge for risk managers. The pinnacle of that risk was the 1972 Munich games when Palestinian terrorists murdered members of the Israeli team. The Atlanta Olympic Games of 2000 were, unfortunately, part of the rule that connected risk to security and serve as an example of how even events dedicated to peace can become acts of war. The bombing at Constitution Park placed a pall over the rest of the Olympic Games. Not only did the bombing kill someone and injure many, but both the FBI and the city of Atlanta had their reputations severely damaged. One of the great lessons of the Atlanta Olympic Games is that when risk is not taken seriously enough not only is the event marred, but there is also collateral damage to other institutions and to the host location.

Scholars of risk management, history, and tourism science will long debate the Atlanta Olympic Games. For example, should the park have been left open to the public? Did the FBI merely arrest the wrong man, or was this false arrest a means to calm the public and thus encourage the public to return to the Olympic stadium? Why were the police confused as to where the 911 call originated? Who actually did the bombing? Was this bombing an act of a madman or a planned political statement that can be connected to other Atlanta bombings that took place soon after the Olympic Games? While these questions will become the fabric for both researchers and novelists, there can be little doubt that Atlanta's image suffered greatly, a great deal of money was lost, and Atlanta has had to work hard to recapture its image as the South's most dynamic city. Looking at the Olympic Games as an event provides us with some of our first principles of risk management:

1. Events and meetings are a form of tourism and thus suffer from the same sociological phenomena as tourism.
2. Events and meetings often follow the same patterns, be they mega-events, such as an Olympic Games, or mini-events, such as a community's Fourth of July picnic.
3. Whenever an act of violence occurs within the world of events or meetings, the media are almost certain to report it,

forcing the local event industry to be embroiled in acts of crisis management.

4. Perceptions about an event crisis tend to be almost as devastating as the crisis itself.
5. The farther away one is from a crisis location, the worse the crisis will appear to be and the longer the crisis will remain in the collective travel subconscious.

These basic theoretical principles form the foundation for why risk management is so important to every aspect of the tourism industry from attractions to events, from hotels to meetings. Figure 1.1 gives you some idea of how interlocked the events and meetings part of the tourism industry is.

Meetings and events are businesses; in fact, even a family event such as a wedding, christening, or bar mitzvah is a business. Events employ hundreds of people and involve large amounts of money. Event-goers pay money to attend these events, stay in hotels, and eat in public places. People are served by staff that have
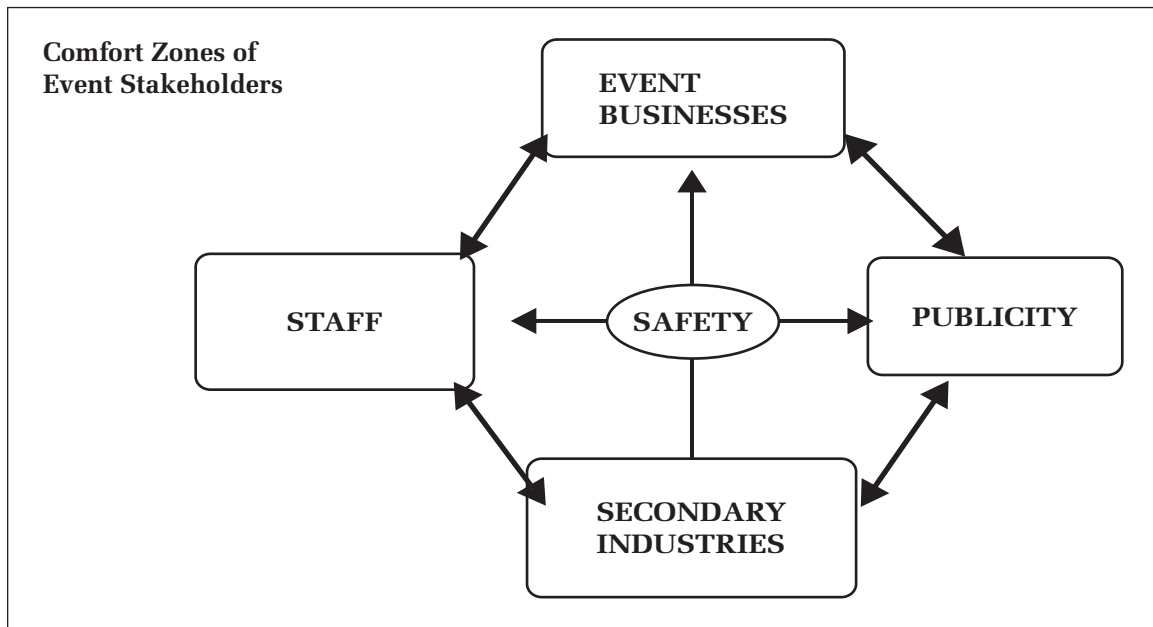
Figure 1-1
Tourism/Convention System of Comfort Zones

access to rooms, prepare food, or handle vast amounts of goods at shows. Within this system, then, there are numerous risks. The event cannot afford to have merchandise lifted, to have guests assaulted, or to have money stolen. Not only are events open to risks by staff members, but they also attract large numbers of secondary people. Among these are vendors, restaurants, gas stations and transportation providers, places of lodging, and local store owners. These people are not directly linked to the event, but earn their living due to the event. Indeed, the larger the event, the more likely that it will cause spin-off economic opportunities. All of these factors carry two risks: (1) the risk of a negative occurrence both on site and off site and (2) the negative publicity that comes from this negative occurrence.

For example, let us look at a simple event, the family wedding. Weddings ought to be both simple and almost risk free. From a theoretical perspective, everyone shares a common joy, people are either family or friends of the bride and groom, and we suppose that from the caterer to the couple all want the same outcome. Yet, anyone who has ever attended a wedding knows that it is filled with risks. From the two families fighting, to the caterer serving the wrong food, to paint on chairs, to the loss of a wedding license, there is barely a wedding that occurs without some risk and some crisis.

Examples of Event Risk Management Incidents

- Food poisoning occurs at the cake-eating contest at a state fair, and guests are taken to the hospital.
- A tent collapses at a wedding and people are severely injured.
- A local gang decides to have a "turf war" at a rock concert and someone is injured.
- Poor drainage causes sanitation facilities to overflow.
- Poor construction causes a bridge over a creek to collapse, resulting in death at a military historical reenactment.
- A bomb is planted at the Olympic Games.

As an event professional, it is important that you understand that it is significantly less expensive to manage a risk prior to the event than to deal with the crisis after it has occurred. Note also that in the world of events and meetings, safety and security issues often merge. Both safety and security are issues that must concern the event risk manager. In today's world of instant biochemical threats, it is dangerous not to view safety and security as two sides of the same coin.

According to the Travel Industry Association and the World Tourism Organization, in the coming decades event managers can expect to see greater numbers of people traveling to concerts, conventions, meetings, and sports activities. The growth of the leisure industry will increase risk, and the need to manage that risk is becoming an ever-greater challenge to the entire tourism/leisure industry. Before we can even begin to examine some of the issues in managing risk, it is essential to review how leisure time is changing in the United States. Over the last decade, scholars have noted that leisure time has taken on the following characteristics:

- Shorter vacation periods
- Competition determined not by distance but by cost of travel to destination
- Greater access to information due to the Internet and the World Wide Web
- Greater exchange of "word of mouth" information between people who have never met each other
- New opportunities for cybercriminals (Tarlow and Muehsam, 1992)

Throughout the world, both in developed and in emerging nations, risk managers in tourism and travel, and meetings and events must face and seek ways to confront crises prior to their occurrence. Risks to the events and tourism industries may come in many forms. Some of these risks are due to issues of potential violence, health and safety concerns, or unique and unexpected weather events such as floods, droughts, and hurricanes/typhoons. As Gui Santana has noted, "Crises in the tourism industry can take many shapes and forms: from terrorism to sexual harassment, white collar crime to civil disturbance, a jet crashing into a hotel to cash flow problems, guest injury to strikes, bribery to price fixing, noise to vandalism, guest misuse of facilities to technology change . . ." (Santana, 1999).

Whether they are natural or man-made crises, writers such as Gui Santana have argued that "there is no doubt that the travel and tourism industry is especially susceptible and vulnerable to crisis." Furthermore, Santana goes on to state that "Tourism is often unable to rebound as quickly as other businesses, since much of a destination's attraction is derived from its image" (Santana, 1999). The risk of these crises is the very social cancer that can eat away at the events industry. Postmodern tourism is often driven by events and therefore the industry must improve its risk management practices to destroy this potential disease.

The current period seems to be prone to great sociological mood swings. What may be seen as a risk or a crisis in one year may be ignored by the media in another year. The age of instant communication via satellite television and computers means that there is now selective knowledge and ignorance. Never have individuals around the world had greater access to information and never has there been greater levels of "information overload." What this plethora of information means is that we now have more information on how to handle risks and to prevent crises, and that the consequences of failure can be more devastating than ever before.

To begin our understanding of the role of risk management in the event and tourism industries, it is important that we review some of the historical perspectives that have shaped the role of risk management in the world of events and tourism. Historically oriented sociologists have observed the similarities that link the end of the nineteenth century to the end of the twentieth century. For example, Stjepan Mestrovic (1991) notes that just as at the end of the nineteenth century, the intelligentsia, and many around the world, live in a bifurcated world filled with a combination of hope and despair.

Event risk managers, then, must work in a world that can be very confusing as well as trying. As John Urry has noted, "Making theoretical sense of fun, pleasure, and entertainment has proved a difficult task for social scientists. There is relatively little substance to the sociology of tourism" (Urry, 1990, p. 7). To confound matters, postmodern scholars point to the blurring of sociological categories in the daily lives of people living in the developed countries:

> *Postmodernist vacations are usually stressful; there are few exotic places left in the world, and most vacation spots promise to deliver the same bland product—fun*

*. . . one could just as well spend one's time in a shopping
mall. In fact, shopping frequently becomes the primary
activity in postmodernist vacations. (Mestrovic, 1991,
p. 25)*

Examples of these forces in the world of tourism and events
can be seen in the multiple conflicts that challenge the risk man-
agement specialist. How much freedom is given to a guest who
may be engaged in risky behavior? How does one deal with the
risks involved when a tourism or leisure event takes on a politi-
cal tone?

Some of the major differences between life at the end of the
nineteenth century and life at the end of the twentieth century in-
dicate that we not only classify leisure in different ways, but that
the risks involved in the pursuit of leisure have changed. Christo-
pher Lasch has written about some of these changes, For example,
he notes:

*The first envisioned the democratization of leisure and
consumption; the second the democratization of work. If
culture was a function of affluence and leisure, then uni-
versal abundance . . . held out the best hope of cultural
democracy. (Lasch, 1991, pp. 355–356)*

Leisure is no longer viewed as simply idle time for the rich.
Indeed, a simple list of some of the ways that we spend our leisure
time would surprise our grandparents and great-grandparents. Fol-
lowing is a list of some of the events that occupy our time:

- Family and human life cycle events, such as weddings, fam-
  ily reunions, and barbecues
- Community events, such as school picnics, business outings,
  and holiday celebrations
- Organized shopping exhibitions
- Civil and political events
- Business meetings and conferences
- Sports events, ranging from Little League to the Olympic
  Games
- Concerts
- Religious gatherings and pilgrimages
- Local and national political gatherings
- Fairs and festivals

The preceding list demonstrates one of the major problems of risk management in the meetings and events industry. In the modern world, there is a great deal of spillover from a leisure activity to a business activity. Classical nineteenth-century authors of leisure such as Veblen enjoyed clear distinctions between leisure and work. In the twenty-first century, these distinctions no longer exist. One example is the major religious pilgrimage known as the hajj. On this journey, millions of Muslims travel to Mecca. How do we classify this event? Is it tourism, travel, business, or convention? Certainly all of the risks that are inherent in the other four entities mentioned are also part of the hajj. From the moment the traveler sets out for Mecca, he or she is subject to risk, be it in the form of clean water, sleeping facilities, safe travel, or crowd control. This spillover from one field to another is called "dedifferentiation." In today's modern world, it is hard to dedifferentiate between what was once a simple family gathering and what is today a small convention.

Today's mobile society has a very different view of leisure from that of past societies. "Leisure for them [us] closely resembles work, since much of it consists of strenuous and for the most part solitary exercise. Even shopping, their ruling passion, takes on the character of a grueling ordeal: 'Shop till you drop!'" (Lasch, 1991, p. 521). This dedifferentiation between work and play, as exemplified by the shop/drop syndrome, is one of the theoretical underpinnings to the understanding of risk management. As Urry observes in his work on postmodernism, "Postmodernism problematises the distinction between representations and reality . . . or what Baudrillard famously argues, what we increasingly consume are signs or representations" (Urry, 1990, p. 85). Risk management's job, then, is to keep substance from forming into the basis of a crisis, and if such a crisis should occur to contain its secondary effects.

The onset of the information age in the twentieth century has closely paralleled the growth of the travel and tourism industry. Mass tourism is a phenomenon of the twentieth century. It was only with the end of World War II that travel, like so many products, entered the modern world of mass production. This success story also contains within it the seeds of crises. With millions of people traveling daily, and with the onset of the information age, word-of-mouth/computer information spreads rapidly, diseases

are carried from one nation to the next, and the potential for violent cross-fertilization, both in ideas and actions, becomes ubiquitous. For example, throughout the world, tourists have been inundated with accounts of widespread acts of violence: in schools, in the workplace, and on public highways. The spread of information, both in written and in pictorial form, has never been so ever present. For example, television and radio broadcast events as they unfold, and the Web permits word-of-mouth dialogue in computerized form to spread instantaneously. Furthermore, the use of e-mail has transformed the world into an electronic village. All this rapid interchange among people makes the life of the event risk manager even more difficult as even small events can become large crises.

Today's event guest is aware of violence not only in urban centers around the world but even in rural areas, be they in Uganda or in the United States. This vast sea of information means that event guests have greater access to information and that the events industry has less ability to hide information. What is still unknown is at what point an excess of information may cause guests simply to shut down and undergo a rejection process. Leisure-oriented risk management specialists face the irony that, as information spreads, it increases the potential for violent behavior. This violence is then reported with the potential of making today's world more dangerous than in any era since the Dark Ages. Umberto Eco illustrates this position clearly when he writes:

> *Insecurity is a key word. . . . In the Middle Ages a wanderer in the woods at night saw them peopled with maleficent presences; one did not lightly venture beyond town. . . . This condition is close to that of the white middle-class inhabitant of New York, who doesn't set foot in Central Park after five in the afternoon, or who makes sure not to get off the subway in Harlem. . . . (Eco, 1983, p. 79)*

Risk managers, then, must deal with an industry that not only is an integral part of many nations' economies, but also plays a major role in the disbursement of information. It is an industry that produces and is produced by information, an industry that sells reality and education, while creating its own postmodern realities based on simulata and plausible facts.

In such a diverse industry as the events industry, it is not surprising that there is no one single unifying theory of event risk

management. This is a multifaceted industry that has yet to be defined: Are event attendees the product or the consumers of the product? Is the industry composed of tangibles or is it an intangible many-headed hydra that no one can quite tame? The events industry encompasses such diverse individuals as business travelers, people passing through a locale, people visiting family and friends, delegates to conferences and conventions, audience members, and pleasure seekers. As Chris Rojek notes, in writing about the modern traveler whom he calls the "post-tourist,"

> *[t]he post-tourist is stimulated by the interpenetration or the collision between different facets and representations of the tourism sight. The accessories of the sight—the gift shops, the eating places, the tourist coaches and other tourists—are celebrated for being as much a key part of the tourist experience as the sight itself. (Rojek, 1993, p. 177)*

Many event professionals, however, tend to divide the industry into two broad groupings: movement for pleasure and movement for work (Steene, 1999). Although in this chapter we will concentrate on the person who attends an event for pleasure, much of the material is also applicable to the person who travels or attends an event for reasons of work.

Vacations or leisure events traditionally have been a means by which people attempted to escape from the stress and rigors of everyday life. What once served, however, as a way to repair body and soul has now become a new area for victimization, and that victimization often forms the basis of the job of the risk manager in the prevention of crises.

The perception that pleasure travel to a particular location may result in the visitor's bodily harm, loss of property, or even death can destroy that locale's tourism industry or the reputation of an event. Riots at rock concerts and European football (soccer) matches, highly publicized acts of crime in Mexico, terrorist acts against tourists in Egypt, Yemen, and East Africa have all caused a major loss in revenue. These risks turned into reality serve to remind travel/visitor officials of just how sensitive their industry is to security issues. These "crises" often force two components of a nation's society, the travel/events industry and the security industry, to interact with each other and to learn just how interdependent they are on one another.

Questions of violence directly impact these industries' ability to promote a safe and worry-free experience. Vacationers, viewing their trips as an escape from their personal problems and those of the world, tend to assume that they are safe from crime, disease, and even natural calamities. Business travelers, being more cognizant of safety issues, may also shy away from high-risk locales. Although no locale can provide a perfect security/safety environment, an understanding of some of the sociological theoretical models under which visitors operate can help the student of event risk management to prepare for, deal with, and recover from moments of crises.

An unlimited wealth of data demonstrates that the travel and events industries cannot tolerate an environment that is perceived to be unstable. As noted by Sonmez, Apostolopoulos, and Tarlow, and demonstrated by the example at the beginning of this chapter, the aftermath caused by media coverage may become the second real tourism crisis: "The ensuing negative publicity often characterizes the period after a disaster occurrence that lasts until full recovery is achieved and predisaster conditions resume" (Sonmez et al., 1999, p. 13).

City, county, state/provincial, and national law enforcement agencies play a vital role in making tourists and event attendees feel safe. Convention and visitor bureaus (CVBs), resort hotels, convention organizers, and event planners are aware that a pleasure visitor need not come to their particular community, conference, or event, and therefore see any attack against the safety or security of their guests to be an attack against the essence of their industry. For example, high crime rates, especially at night, do more than just keep visitors and locals alike from frequenting downtown establishments. These crime rates produce a sociological cancerous blight that in the end gnaws away not only at the tourism industry, but at the chance for holding a particular event, eventually destroying it from the inside.

To make matters even more difficult for the event risk management professional, many security forces have only a superficial knowledge of event tourism and travel practices and theory. Few police departments are cognizant that, taken together, the travel and events industry is the world's largest industry or of the relationship between travel and their own community's economic well-being. There are several exceptions to this rule. To illustrate

this point, let us examine one city, Anaheim, California. Anaheim has created a special police unit, called Tourism Oriented Policing Services (TOPS), to deal with almost every travel, meeting, and/or convention problem imaginable. A special Anaheim police unit now works with Disneyland and its convention center, focusing on the unique risks involved with conventions and travel. Some of the risks that this unit has learned to handle are risks to non-English-speaking guests, robberies at local hotels, specific crimes targeted at the convention market (such as the stealing of laptop computers), and the special risks that take place in valet companies serving the events industry. In other words, tourism-oriented policing is not just crime fighting but also understanding the risks that event-goers face and developing ways to manage those risks.

Police and other security personnel are often geared to the ideal of "to protect" rather than the marketing ideal of "to serve." The TOPS philosophy changes this equation and declares success not as "How many crimes did we solve?" but rather as "How many risks did we identify and how many crimes did we therefore prevent?" TOPS hopes to change the role of law enforcement agencies by helping them to understand how the events industry impacts a community: what its role is in gaining often needed foreign currency, creating employment opportunities, or improving a community's public image and perception of itself. Additionally, many of the attributes that attract visitors to a community also add to that community's uniqueness and quality of life. Figure 1.2 provides an overview of some of the costs and benefits of tourism to a community.

Because tourism and events are nontangible products—a "feeling" rather than a "thing"—risk management is dependent not only on concrete plans but also on attitudes held by both the risk management professional and the public. Xenophobic attitudes or simply a "take the guest for granted attitude" are felt by the industry's clients who react negatively to such attitudes, be that person an employee or simply a citizen of the locale being visited.

The risk management professional's attitude is therefore a critical element to his or her success. If these professionals resent their guests and view them as intruders, then no amount of fancy marketing will undo the economic damage done to that community's tourism or events industry. If, on the other hand, these pro-
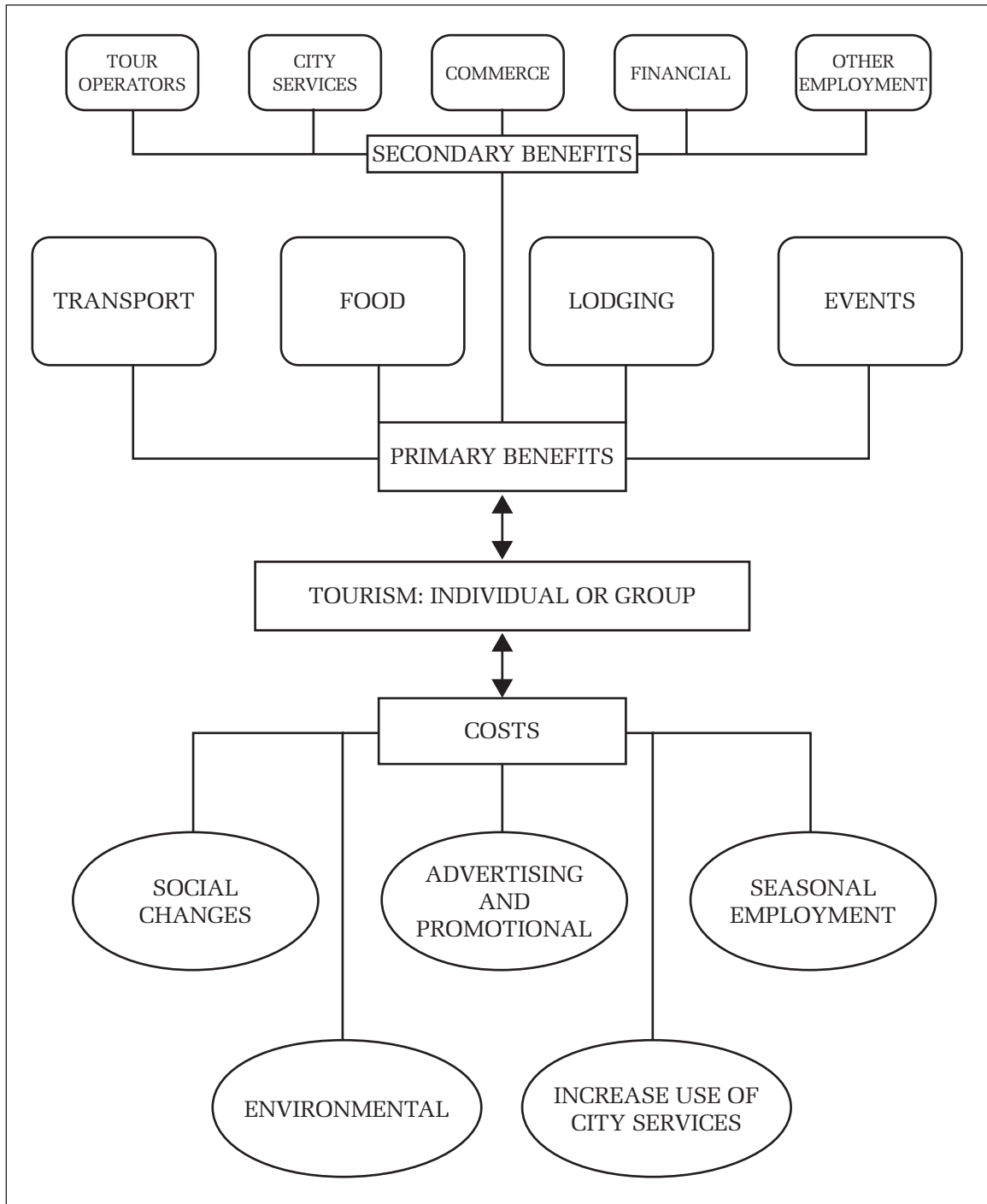
Figure 1-2
Costs and Benefits of Private Tourism

fessionals work with visitors with a "cheerful countenance," then the industry creates the synergy necessary to ease it through periods of crisis.

Because risk management, from the guest's perspective, touches so many aspects of his or her life away from home, the potential for a crisis is ever present. Danger can occur not only at the event itself, but also in restaurants and places of entertainment that are in close proximity to an event site, hotels, and transportation arteries. This lack of definition means that event risk management, in its broadest scope, like the industry itself, is undefined. Like a one-cell animal, risk management grows, splits, and travels throughout the social system. Just as there is no one standard and universally accepted definition for the words "tourist" and "tourism," in a like manner there is no one definition of risk management. Working with a composite industry made up of many subindustries, risk managers must deal with crises that are often like the Russian nesting dolls: crises within crises within crises.

Sociological Theories Used in Event Risk Management

Due, then, to this interlocking of industries within tourism/ meetings and events, one useful method of understanding the role of risk management in crisis prevention is to return to classical sociological theories such as functionalism.

Functionalists understand the social system as a series of interlocking components. They assume that a change in any one component of a social system will produce changes throughout the system. From the perspective of event risk management, then, a problem/crisis in any one part of the industry is bound to create problems for that locale's entire industry. Due to this interlocking, functionalists do not distinguish safety issues from security issues. Functionalists argue instead that any problem that touches upon the well-being of the guest (and therefore the locale's industry as a whole) is one and the same, and any distinction between these two sides of the same coin is mere academic sophistry.

For example, let us return to our wedding. How are things interconnected? What happens if the wrong meal is served? What

risks are there if a person is seated next to someone with whom he or she is having a quarrel? What crises can take place if a relative, parent, or friend has a bit too much to drink? What happens if the band is too loud, the flowers wilt, or an airplane arrives late? In each of these cases, we can easily see how a change in one aspect of the wedding can cause major problems for other parts of the wedding's social system.

G. Smith illustrates this notion when she writes: "Increasingly vicious acts of terrorism against tourists and tourist destinations, rising international alarm over traveler health [and] safety, and the growing economic competitiveness of safe, hygienic, and environmentally sensitive or "green" tourism will be relentless drivers" (Smith, 2000). Functionalists argue that, from the perspective of the tourist, a safety issue and a security issue are interchangeable.

The functionalist perspective is an important tool in our understanding of the interlinkage of tourism components. What functionalists fail to measure, however, is the intensity of the crisis. Are all crises the same? If not, how does a risk manager decide how to prioritize his or her efforts? Do risks generate "time lags" so that there is a measurable amount of time from one risk to another? Must the risk manager react to all of the system's components in every crisis? Thus, while functionalist theory sends up a red flag and warns the risk manager that the potential for a crisis is developing, it fails to provide an accurate forecast about the crisis's severity. Functionalism cannot tell the risk manager what parts of the system will be most affected and what the crisis's time frame is or who in a particular crisis may come out to be the winner or the loser. Thus, a murder in a hotel may also affect restaurant business, but the tourism scholar does not know how deep the effect will be or how long it will take to become a crisis.

A second classical way of looking at a tourism risk management system is through conflict theory. Conflict theorists assume that any social system or component-driven industry has a high potential for conflict/competition, not only between locales but also within locales. For example, a city wants to bring in more conventions. A number of businesses, hotels, restaurants, and nightspots, would be highly supportive of such a decision. Nevertheless, opposition arises from locals who fear greater competition for parking space, higher road usage, and an increasing number of social problems. In such a scenario, the events industry might find itself

in direct competition with any number of coalitions that band together to limit the number of conventions brought into the city.

In conflict theory, there are always winners and losers and tourism/events are seen as a "zero-sum game." From this perspective, locations and events compete for space, publicity, and clientele. This competition, in turn, is one of the reasons for the business life cycle. Thus, a tourism or event crisis in one part of the world may be seen as an opportunity in another part of the world. Michael Fagence, for example, writes that "the greater experience and resources of the principal destinations seem to be capable of impeding the growth in market share of the lesser known destinations" (Fagence, 1998). In such a Darwinian worldview, crises are merely shakedowns in which the best and fittest survive to the benefit of the consumer. Risk from this perspective is almost a sport in which managers compete to determine who can best manage the most risks.

If we view our wedding from the perspective of conflict theory, we can note a number of risks. It can be argued that the people planning the wedding are as much risk managers, trying to head off potential conflicts, as they are wedding planners. How many of us have been to a family wedding where the bride and groom's side may already be in conflict, or where one or more of the couple's parents are divorced and not speaking to each other? How popular is the photographer with the guests? How often do waiters and waitresses lose their tempers?

From this perspective, weddings are like golf, the lower the score, the better the game is played. Such competition, however, does not necessarily signify the best tourism product. The history of consumer products has shown that survival may not be based on quality of product but rather on quality of marketing, timing, or symbiotic name recognition. Tourism crises may cause a shakedown in the tourism market and produce strong marketing agencies, but these crises do not necessarily translate into a better tourism product or a better managed event.

The prism of symbolic interaction is another way by which to analyze a tourism crisis. Over the years, this perspective, as first understood by the sociologist Max Weber, has evolved into postmodernism and then into iconic theory. Scholars who accept this form of theoretical paradigm argue that tourism, meetings, or special events are highly sensitive to image creation.

The basis for their academic argument is that these industries sell memories and are "image" producers. The meetings and events

industry, for those who work in symbolic interaction, is about the packaging of a collective memory and associating it with (a) specific place(s) in time or space. From the symbolic interaction perspective, crises are interpreted in a symbolic and symbiotic manner.

An example of this symbolism is in the presence or nonpresence of a police/security force at an event site. In many event venues, a police/security presence may serve the industry as a "psychological" security blanket and a way to avoid crises. Visitors report that they feel more comfortable when they know that an area is well patrolled. In contrast, however, too many police officers in a particular location may send the message that there is a good reason to be afraid, that the officers are there as a result of a crisis, or that the area is dangerous.

Because most people connect a uniformed officer to a range of meanings, the tourism center that chooses to have a security force present must create a setting in which these security personnel symbolize hospitality rather than restraint, service over protection, and security over threat. When security departments produce negative images, they can become part of the risk crisis. For example, negative media reports about Los Angeles and Mexico City have added additional challenges to the tourism industries in those cities. The recent example of New York City police officers doing nothing while more than fifty women were molested in Central Park during the Puerto Rico Day parade has been reported throughout the world. In that case, due to poor risk management and assessment, a major crisis developed for both the city's tourism community and its police force.

The opposite can also be true. In some communities, local security forces have succeeded in becoming symbolic icons, representing not just the use of force but also a cultural attraction. In those cases, the police force is not only a deterrent to crime but also an important icon of that society. Consider, for example, the positive images evoked by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the British bobbies.

The aforementioned classical sociological theories form the framework for this book. You, as an event risk manager, must be aware of the following:

1. Events are a volunteeristic activity. As such, the industry must resell itself on a consistent basis. The theoretical consequences of this proposition are many. For example:

a. Guests need not come to a particular place or return to that place. An event, then, always involves a sense of marketing. To survive, the professional must assume that brand loyalty or even desire to buy can never be taken for granted.

b. Most guests expect a safe and secure environment. The one exception to this rule is the allocentric adventure market where people seek danger. For example, consider the rise of storm chasers or those who specifically choose to visit a war zone. Even among highly allocentric travelers, danger can be divided into expected dangers (i.e., dangers factored into the trip) and random violence (i.e., dangers that are produced in a violent manner and not considered part of the experience). The large majority of guests, however, assume that a place is safe and secure.

2. Most guests do not distinguish between the concepts of safety and security. The poisoning of food and an act of terrorism often have the same consequences. This dedifferentiation between the terms again holds a number of consequences for the industry. For example:

a. The farther the person is from a crisis, the worse that crisis seems and the longer the crisis lasts in the outsider's memory.

b. Guests tend to be more ignorant of local conditions than those who live in a locale. Thus, fear and rumor have greater consequences than does reality. Facts are those that seem plausible rather than those that are empirically provable.

c. Potential visitors are often highly unsophisticated when it comes to geography. Due to geographic ignorance, fear, and media hype, a crisis in one part of a nation may affect that entire nation's tourism and even tourism throughout that region. For example, consider the drop in event attendance and general tourism throughout the eastern Mediterranean during NATO's Kosovo action.

d. Event guests do not distinguish between one part of an industry and another. Thus, if a crisis occurs in a locale's food-handling sector, the negative publicity may produce fallout in that locale's lodging industry, attractions, and so forth. Other than a few worldwide

attractions, such as the Eiffel Tower and the Taj Mahal, most tourists, especially on first visits, come to a locale and not to a site.

3. There is no one formula to describe all guests. What may be a crisis for one person may not be a crisis for another person. Classical psychographic tourism theory tends to divide visitors along various continuums. For example, we can adapt the Plog model to event risk management and divide guests along the allocentric-psychographic continuum. This typology shows the amount of risk that a person is willing to take. Another typology is that of the inner- and outer-directed event guest. In this continuum, guests are situated according to their motivations to attend an event: Did they attend this event to impress others or merely to please themselves? In all cases, the term special events covers a number of people who view different events as indications of a crisis or lack of crisis. Figure 1.3 distinguishes allocentric from psychocentric event participants.

During the last century, all forms of event participation have grown from an activity of the well-to-do to a part of everyday life. Leisure, parasitic in nature, was once the idle time of the rich. In the mid-twentieth century, leisure became a product for the working person, and once it became producible en masse, it became an integral part of local economies.

Allocentric Event Guest	Psychocentric Event Guest
Rock concert guest	Theater attendee
Ropes course participant	Conference participant
White-water rafter	Visitor to a museum

Figure 1-3
Allocentric and Psychocentric Event Participants

There are several other theoretical models that can be of use to the event risk manager. George Ritzer discusses the McDonaldization of much of the world. This thesis holds that service-oriented businesses have undergone a paradigm shift. Ritzer (1998, pp. 138–140) offers the following postulates:

- Service industries, such as restaurants and hotels, have become rationalized to the point that efficiency over service has become the goal. Risk, then, is an issue of efficiency. Where efficiency ceases, crises begin. Even the wasting of time is a risk that can become a crisis. To understand Ritzer's position, one only need observe the rage that takes place whenever a flight is delayed or canceled or there is a traffic jam on a busy interstate highway.
- Service industries must be measured in quantifiable terms. Ritzer argues that customers want to know exactly how much a vacation or event will cost. Crises may occur, then, in cases where there are cost overruns or missed places on stated itineraries.
- Service industries are seeking scripted experiences. Disney may be the best example of the scripted, or predictable, experience, though cruises also follow this pattern. Vacations, according to Ritzer's theory, enter into a period of crisis when, on a meta level, they cease to be similar to our daily lives. In other words, even what is different becomes the same in that we "script" the differences into our play.
- Service personnel are being replaced by nonhuman apparatus. Ritzer argues that the machine is slowly replacing the human. In risk management, for example, there is the use of security cameras instead of human service agents. This dehumanization of tourism means that crises develop when machines break. The breakage leads to irrationalization due to the fact that it becomes almost impossible to speak to a human being. An example of such irrationalization is the attempt to find a human being in the maze of voice mail after a crisis has occurred at an event.
- As the tourism/event industry becomes more rationalized, Ritzer argues, in the best Hegelian sense, an irrational element occurs. Within this model, a crisis is any irrational moment/occurrence/event within the rationalized tourist experience.

On the other side of the spectrum, Ernest Sternberg argues that all business, including the events industry, manufactures meaning through the use of icons, which he defines as "thematized commodity: an object, person, or experience that has acquired added value through the commercial heightening of meaning" (Sternberg, 1999, p. 4). In Sternberg's terms, tourism or events are placed within a series of contexts that give the tourist or event guest's experience "added meaning" (Sternberg, 1999, pp. 99–100). As the added meaning develops, the first, or realist, meaning becomes depleted. Thus, as Sternberg notes: ". . . one of the turn-of-the century's early realizations is that culture is a depletable resource. This is not because it cannot be used again and again—it certainly can; rather because through repeated use its marginal evocativeness declines" (Sternberg, 1999, p. 108). Sternberg's analysis helps to explain why so many locals see themselves in a state of crisis due to tourism's interaction with the local culture.

Sternberg argues then that to manage the risk at an event, the event risk manager must prevent the risk by:

- **Staging the product.** By this, Sternberg means that the "tourism product's safety" must be organized in such a way that it achieves its aims for both the consumer (visitor) and the supplier.
- **Arranging the product.** Risk management must stand out within its geographical or psychological environment.
- **Contextualizing the product.** Risk management needs to be placed within, or purposely removed from, the context of itself, be that context physical, historical, or psychological.
- **Thematizing the product.** Sternberg challenges his readers to conceptualize how event risk management fits in with the overall theme. What expectations does it meet or not meet?
- **Authenticizing the product.** By authenticization, Sternberg does not mean real or not real, but rather he asks if risk managers provide a genuine experience while still protecting the public (Sternberg, 1999, pp. 115–119, 127–128).

In Sternberg's view, an event crisis is any event in which the visitor does not receive his or her "paid-for reality" for whatever reason. If the product does not deliver a heightened experience (even if the heightened experience is rest and relaxation) into which the client can be fully immersed, then the potential for a crisis develops (Sternberg, 1999, p. 109).

Therefore, it may be concluded that there is no one single definition of a tourism/event crisis. As such, the range of solutions to these crises is as complex as the crises themselves. Following is a potpourri of examples of how different crises have been confronted. The list is not meant to be exhaustive, but rather a snapshot of different event scenarios.

Perhaps the greatest crisis that event management can encounter is the loss of life. Be this loss from kidnapping at a diving resort in Southeast Asia or a serial killer stalking the streets of a large urban center, no destination or venue can long survive capricious and random acts of violence. To combat this threat, event security specialists have developed techniques such as:

- Interacting with guests as an implicit anticrime tool. Even in cities with high crime rates, crime tends to be highly concentrated in small geographic regions. Security specialists can instruct tourists on the safest routes between attractions. These interactions, however, require highly trained security professionals in tourism and tourism safety/security.
- Developing, in conjunction with local tourism offices/ bureaus and event organizers, plans to deal with event guests who are victimized by crime. Tourism theory predicts that kind words and caring after a crime has occurred can (but do not always) mitigate some of the crime's negative effects. A security officer's professionalism can create a situation where the victimized tourist leaves with a positive, or at least less negative, attitude about the locale's hospitality rather than as a vocal critic.
- Becoming ambassadors of goodwill for their product. Police and security departments may wish to consider the adoption of special uniforms that match their city's image. Such uniquely tailored uniforms remind local townspeople that their police department/security force not only serves and protects them, but has also adopted a proactive stance in helping to bring economic benefit to the community.

Not all crises are of a violent nature. As the range of tourism crises to manage is exhaustive, following are some other techniques that have been used:

- **Developing interesting jobs and creating high morale.** By creating interesting and well-paying jobs, the community's

stake in its local tourism industry increases. As such, when crises do happen, the entire community pulls together to help mitigate and rebuild from the crises.

- **Improving the quality of life.** Typically, tourists and event guests visit communities with sound ecologies, good restaurants, and a multitude of attractions. These same considerations are important factors in determining a community's quality of life. By creating an atmosphere that visitors enjoy, tourism/travel officials encourage leaders in both the public and the private sectors to further improve the community's quality-of-life aspects.
- **Being open and honest.** When a crisis occurs, the last thing the tourism industry can afford is to lie. Facts about the crisis should be given to the media in a nondefensive and forthright manner. Specific people should be designated as representatives who can provide the media with clear and precise facts.

From a tourism/travel perspective, crises have certain common patterns and "life cycles." Accordingly, the risk manager should take into account the following:

- Determining what preparations are already in place and what resources are available.
- Involving the local population in the disaster. Is there special attention that can be given by the locals to the survivors?
- Considering the postdisaster healing process.
- Knowing that no place is immune. The worst possible mindframe is for you to believe that no form of disaster can occur at your locale. For example, the random shootings of tourists that have taken place in the United States are exactly that, random. So far, there has been no pattern determined as to type of place, type of perpetrator, or type of victim.
- Being prepared for a worst case scenario. In any disaster, there will be a threat of personal injury and death. Disasters mean that there will be disruption of operations, financial strain on the tourism locale or company, and damage to the tourism/travel company's image. Prior to an event, take the time to plan two or three scenarios. Tourism/travel professionals should be able to answer such questions as: What actions would you take during a disruption? Do the people in

your community, or at your tourism locale, have adequate insurance to survive a disaster? Will employees and their families have adequate finances to avoid financial ruin? Does the locale have two or three generic recovery marketing plans set to go should a disaster strike?

In all disasters be prepared for disaster fallout. This fallout can occur both during and after a disaster and can include such things as adverse media coverage, constant involvement and monitoring by outside sources, negative name brand association, damage to destination/resort's image, lowering of staff morale, and anger on the part of the victims toward their hosts.

Conclusion

There is no one magic formula to manage all forms of risk in the tourism and event industries. The professional event risk manager must always remember that crises are products of poor planning, lack of media coordination, and lack of foresight. It is the task of the risk manager to minimize the damage, maximize the aid to victims, and work to make sure that the business survives the media onslaught. Although different in nature, all crises demand that a community must be above all else: a community. Event risk managers put their efforts into minimizing the suffering of the victims and their families. Event risk management is making sure that the industry's number one concern is for its guests and their families. Risk management in the hospitality and events world manages a crisis best by caring for people and remembering that hospitality is derived from the Latin meaning "to be open and caring about our guests."

Event Risk Management Key Terms
Allocentric: The tendency to accept risk while traveling or attending an event.
Conflict theory: A theory that assumes that conflict is ever present and that we must learn to manage it as we cannot eliminate it.
Functionalism: A theory that assumes that all parts of an event are interconnected with all other parts. A change in any one part will produce a change in all parts.

Icon: Object that takes on a symbolic meaning apart from what it is. For example, a uniform may become a symbol of security.

Irrationalization: This is the result of too much structuring on the part of an organization. When rules lead to chaos and meeting breakdown rather than to efficiency.

Meeting: A peaceful gathering for a specific purpose. To qualify as a meeting, one must have more than two people, a scheduled time, and a reason for being.

Postmodernism: The theory that seeks a merging of social phenomena. For example, a business convention attendee who takes in a show while out of town.

Psychocentric: The tendency to avoid risk at all cost while traveling or attending an event.

Publicity: Information given about a business or place to people who do not know it or have not used its services in the past.

Secondary industries: Businesses that earn their money from both tourism and local residents.

Symbolic interaction: Actions are determined not by the event, but by the interpretation of the event.

TOPS: Tourism Oriented Policing Services. These are special police units developed to aid the out-of-town public and are specialists in crimes that are prevalent in the tourism industry.

Tourism: The industry that often encompasses meetings and conventions. Tourism is often defined as traveling at least 100 miles away from home and spending one night in a taxable place of lodging for either business or pleasure.

Tourism businesses: Those businesses that are directly engaged in providing tourism services. For example, an airline, a convention center, or a meeting/event planner.

Event Risk Management Drills

1. Assume that you are planning an outdoor sports event, for example, a softball tournament. List the secondary industries and tourism industries that would be important to you. Then list some of the risks involved, such as health, weather, food, crime, etc. How would each of these risks impact your event? How could a

knowledge of functionalism help you to see problems before they happen?

Where would conflict arise? Who might work at undermining your event?

What icons would make the event memorable?

2. Following are some of the major risks involved in a wedding. Under each item, you will find a list of typical things that can go wrong. How many of these can be managed? How does one prepare oneself to handle these risks? It is important to realize that you can never identify all of the risks. Each event is special and we must always be prepared to deal with unforeseen risk.

   a. Where will the wedding take place?
      - What can go wrong at this particular spot?
      - Who is responsible for the location and its working order?
      - In what type of building will the wedding take place?
      - What problems does the building have: leaks, electrical breakdowns, poor cleaning, sewage problems?
      - If this is an outdoor wedding, what can go wrong: weather conditions, attacks by animals, someone falling, trees or branches falling, surprise noise?

   b. What type of wedding is it?
      - Is this a formal or informal wedding?
      - Will a full meal be served?
      - Are there any special dietary considerations?
      - What time does the invitation state that the wedding will begin? What will you do if there is need for a delay?

   c. Who is participating in the wedding?
      - Does the clergyman or justice of the peace know the time, date, and place of the wedding?
      - Are essential people in the wedding party traveling to the wedding? What happens if they arrive late or lose luggage?
      - Is there a caterer and/or band?
      - Is the florist reliable?

   d. What types of people will attend?
      - What types of risks are inherent in these people? What do you know about them? What is fact and what is colored by your own emotions?
      - Who are the guests?
      - How many guests are coming?
      - Who does and does not get along with whom?
      - What personal grudges do people bring to the wedding?

   e. What are its special security and safety considerations?
      - Is there a safe place to hang up coats?
      - Is there a safe place for presents?
      - Is there a possibility that someone may get sick, break a leg from dancing, or need a doctor?
      - Is there the possibility of a robbery?
      - Is there the possibility of food poisoning?

   f. What resources do you have to manage the risks?
      - Has a budget been set aside?
      - Are there people ready to help?
      - Will you be paying for a police guard or security agent?

   g. What are security and safety considerations?
      - Does the site have a custodian? Will he or she be there during the event? Will you have a chance to meet with him or her?
      - Will you need to hire a police officer to handle traffic?
      - Does the caterer use bonded personnel?

- Will you need a doctor on the premises?

h. What interactions can take place? (See the section on functionalism.)

- Will Aunt Mary throw a fit because someone forgot that she is a diabetic and therefore cause a scene?
- Does Uncle Joe traditionally faint just as the groom is about to kiss the bride?

How does each component interact with the other components?

We can reduce items a to h to the following equation: The actual degree of risk involved depends on "the probability of adverse effects occurring as a direct result of the threats along with the indirect results of a threat plus the extent to which the event or meeting will be affected by the threats" (Tarlow, 1995).

3. Complete the same exercise for another more complicated event. For example, assume that you are the risk manager for an outdoor concert.

a. Where will the concert take place?
b. What type of concert is it?
c. Who is participating in the concert?
d. What types of people will attend?
e. What are its special safety and security considerations?
f. What resources do you have to manage the risks?
g. What personnel are available?
h. What interactions can take place?

How would an outdoor concert be different from and similar to a wedding? How about a sports event or a convention held in a downtown hotel?