Managing Crowds: The Possibilities and Limitations of Crowd Information During Urban Mass Events

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Abstract

This chapter, based on a mixed method research approach, offers insights into possibilities and limitations of using ICT measures for crowd management and -distribution during urban mass events (UMEs). Based on literature, practical applications and analyses of research results we propose crowd management should consider characteristics of both crowds and UMEs to increase information effectiveness. In relation to urban planning, results show that possibilities to influence a crowd's behavior depend on available (and known) choice sets offered in various locations, while distances towards locations across city centers appear less important. Limitations appear to be related to scarce knowledge on what drives crowd members to adapt or adhere to their activity choice behavior. Such insights are essential for smart cities striving for an optimal use of infrastructural capacity, as both the ambiguous effects of ICT measures, as well as a crowd's self-organizing capacity should be taken into account for delaying, solving and preventing disruptions of pedestrian flows in city centers.

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