

“Examination of Counterterrorism Strategies to Reduce the Vulnerability of Mega-Event Populations” by Steven Jones, Ph.D., AEM

Preceding Events



2013 Boston Marathon
(Hunt & Jalette, 2021)



Bataclan & Stade de France
(Purdue University, 2024)



Ariana Grande Concert
(Wall Street Journal, 2017)



Route 91 Harvest Festival
(Reuters, 2017)

Emergency Management Significance

With thousands to tens of thousands of attendees, mega-events present Emergency Management officials with a host of unique challenges, including:

- Effective interagency communications
- Perimeter / ingress point security
- Accurate response to perturbations

The significance of identifying formative gaps in policies and procedures for securing a mega-event will help local venues to devise pertinent, accurate, and efficient plans that adaptively counter risk and supplement community safety at the macroscale level (Carr & Jensen, 2015). In addition, the alignment and synchronization of LEOs and Emergency Management agencies will permit such authorities to collaboratively assess and manage disaster risk reduction in advance of an actual or perceived terrorist threat.

Problem Statement

The problem addressed in this study is the absence of comprehensive preparedness plans for diversified terrorist attacks at mega-events. Collaborative strategies that can improve emergency management agencies to more pertinently address the preventable loss of life associated with a terrorist attack during a mass-population attending mega-event are currently unknown.

Methods

The 4-D Model of Appreciative Inquiry:

- Researcher provides questions and allows participants to elaborate on qualitative content to approach data saturation.
- Participants included 20 local, county, and state police officers and federal agents.

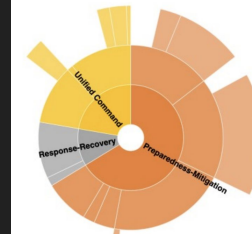
Findings

Table 1

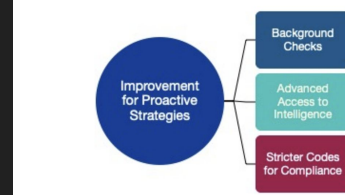
Coding Frequency for Preparedness & Mitigation

Code Name	Files	References
Preparedness - Mitigation	9	241
Improvements	8	61
Pre-Event Planning	9	64
Proactive Strategies	9	68
Risk-Threat Assessment	8	13
Shortcomings	5	8
Training	9	27

(Jones, 2021)



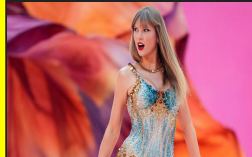
Tri-lateral Approach for Improving Proactive Strategies



Post-study Events



Assassination Attempt in PA
(CNN, 2024)



Planned Attack in Vienna
(NBC, 2024)

Conclusions and Next Steps

- Data analysis suggests that law enforcement and emergency management participants are concerned with:
 - The lack of strategic policies and proactive procedures for advanced mega-event securitization.
 - Technological and physical improvements at venues hosting mega-events, SSEs, and NSSEs.
 - Open-air venues hosting mega-events as they do not eliminate all credible external threats.
 - Interagency collaboration and information sharing in advance of and during mega-events.
- Research (Threat & Risk Assessments) focusing on the vulnerabilities of individual venues should be conducted without bias.
- Identified vulnerabilities should be addressed in a timely manner; decisions made through the Unified Command Structure.