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## **Futureproofing against shock: Institutional responses to terrorist risk in London, 1990-2020.**

### **Abstract**

Employing an institutionalist approach to governance, and engaging with recent scholarship on organisational resilience and scalar politics, this paper focuses upon institutional reactions to terrorism in London between 1990-2020 and explores the mechanisms through which responses to disruption occurred. Empirically, this applied paper tracks specific emergency processes, governance assemblages and policy mechanisms that have been enacted in London in response to terrorism. More specifically, it tracks changes in the institutional dynamics involved in the reorganisation of traditional governance apparatus, the mobilisation of adaptive capacity, and the generation of multi-stakeholder visions for futureproofing against terrorist attack. Such institutional changes are explored through three vignettes of responses to terrorist incidents: against financial targets in the 1990s; in relation the risk of attack after 9/11 and in preparation for securing the 2012 Olympics; and in response to recent attacks against crowded places since 2012. This paper illuminates how institutional responses to terrorism have evolved from a focus upon small specialist networks that dealt just with terrorism, to much larger multi-institutional, multi-scalar and multi-hazard responses to, and preparations for, complex emergencies that cut across numerous administrative jurisdictions. The paper concludes by posing wider questions about optimal institutional form(s) required for responding to future shocks.

*Key words:* shock, institutions, terrorism, governance, London, resilience

### **1. Introduction: Institutional transformation to abrupt shocks**

Western states and city authorities are increasingly preparing for an array of risks, especially low-probability high-impact shocks, that have dramatic, far-reaching effects and which invariably lead to an immediate response effort in order to anticipate and plan for similar future occurrences. Here shock events are seen as sudden and unpredictable exogenous events that must be countered, but that also open up the possibility of endogenous institutional change and transformation. Whilst historically, state and municipal governments have sought to prepare for likely repeat hazardous events, in more recent years advanced levels of preparedness for such supposedly existential shocks have catalysed different institutional behaviours that have either sought to stabilise the impacts of disruption and return to 'business as usual' quickly or promoted adaptation and improved agility to

shocks as desired organisational traits alongside fostering contingency planning in anticipation of the next impending catastrophe.

Whilst for many decades Governments and institutions have concerned themselves with planning for the risk of disruption, in the current century preparation for such shocks have become a central focus of government action, driving specific policy measures and generating a push for new and better coordinated governance, commonly under the banner of enhancing resilience and emergency measures to an array of civil contingencies. Such responses to, or anticipation of, large scale shock events have frequently been promoted by Western states as being more complex, unpredictable, frequent and impactful, symbolising an apparently riskier world where new governmental and institutional responses were required to maintain the existing social and economic order and control aspect of modern life which evade liberal forms of government and require new forms of governing<sup>1</sup>.

In most countries that have operationalised resilience-like policies in response to the growing frequency and future fear of shock events, such approaches have been premised on a top-down approach from central government and been actualised through meta-strategies linked to national security or emergency management. The aim here has been to transform the conventional and often outdated ways in which such institutions operate in order to futureproof - to ensure that systems and process will continue to be useful or successful in the future - against prospective disruption. Such approaches have both tested the capacity of institutional systems and key actors within it to resist the return to business-as-usual, as well as loosening institutional arrangements so as to catalyse adaptation and organisational learning.

In this context, this paper employs an institutionalist approach to governance, and engages with recent scholarship on organisational resilience and scalar politics (Healey, 2006; Fraser, 2010; Boin and van Eeten, 2013; Stark, 2014) to analyse data from a longitudinal case study of institutional reactions to terroristic shock - the impacts from the shock of terrorism - in London between 1990 and 2020. This analysis covers both reactive institutional responses to significant terrorism events *and* the institutional discourses that emerged to focus on expected future occurrences of terrorism that were imbued by an increasingly preemptive and anticipative logic that had very different institutional and policy implications. In focusing on a thirty-year time series this study further responds to critique of current research into governance responses to unpredictable events that highlight a lack of long-term

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<sup>1</sup> By contrast others highlighted that statistically speaking risk has reduced and that 'we are the healthiest, wealthiest and longest-lived people in history. And we are increasingly afraid. This is one of the great paradoxes of our time' (Gardner, 2009, p.11).

studies of policy design and implementation that uncover institutional mechanisms through which responses to shock occur (Coaffee, et al 2018). Such limitations have further had the effect of restricting the production of knowledge and the generation of policy lessons with wider applicability across scales (Rodríguez-Pose, 2013).

Moreover, this paper connects to recent studies on the governance of emergencies that has drawn attention to neoliberal political discourses that favour enhanced preparedness and anticipatory responses (Anderson, 2010) and which, emphasised a twin-track process of adapting government structures in response to security threats to 'strengthen strategic direction at the centre of government and breaking down departmental stovepipes' together with the 'decentralization of the detailed policies and tactics to deliver the strategy... to those closest to the frontline' (Omand, 2010, p.13). Such forms emergency governance, and in particular the broadening out of governance networks alongside the corresponding adoption of new roles and responsibilities in enacting policy priorities, have inevitably led to longstanding concerns resurfacing over the political delegation of responsibility - responsibilisation (Dean, 1999) - for preventing and preparing for urban security challenges onto institutions, professions, communities and individuals, rather than the State (Coaffee et al, 2008). This represented a return to the political logic of decentralised responsibility, or what Collier and Lakoff (2008), referring to Cold War planning, termed 'distributed preparedness', where, 'responsibility was delegated to different levels of government, and to both public and private agencies according to their competencies and capacities' (p.128).

Whilst there is a long-held normative recognition within emergency management scholarship that a set of well-defined institutional structures, response networks, command chains and detailed planning should be advanced to prepare for multiple types of shock, how these are operationalised in practice varies between and across different territories. Here, effective organisational responses have been shown to depend upon a combination of the adaptability and flexibility of place-based institutional architectures, the local mobilization of power and, the uptake of experiential learning that allows a blurring across scales when established scalar hierarchies are unsettled by complex operational needs (Aldrich, 2019). This poses a fundamental question about how complex institutional configurations, such as those in cities, emerge and evolve to deal with shocks, and are able to shape more proactive and adaptive responses to actual, or possible future, disruption?

Using an institutionalist lens to interrogate such questions refocuses attention on the *processes* of catalysing transformation in existing urban governance arrangements, and in promoting responses to shock which consistently emphasise preparedness, adaptability, systemic thinking and better

integrated decision-making processes as desirable attributes (Duit, 2016). However, whilst acknowledging the long standing adoption of such approaches by municipal governments the evidence that such governance configurations are as transformative as envisioned, is limited. In large part, this is because understanding how institutional governance is reshaped requires a detailed and long-term examination of the precise mechanism involved that establishes a wider, but equally crucial conceptual question, related to: what it might take for innovations in governance to become institutionalised, in ways that actively transform the mainstream rather than just incorporate new ideas and practices into conventional practices?

Overall, within this conceptual and applied framing, this paper analyses how the shock of terrorism opened up the possibility of changing long-standing emergency management procedures in London and explores the mechanisms by which such institutional change and transformation was enabled. Empirically, this applied research tracked the specific emergency management processes enacted by municipal authorities, and associated governance assemblages and policy mechanisms, that were established, in response to the changing nature of terrorist risk in London over a thirty-year period. Such institutional changes are explored through a series of vignettes of responses to terrorist threats: against financial targets in the 1990s; in relation the enhanced risk of attack after 9/11 and in preparation for securing the 2012 Olympics; and in response to more recent diverse, less sophisticated but still lethal, terror attacks that catalysed further review of London's terrorism preparedness in the 2010s. These vignettes track changes in the institutional reorganisation of emergency arrangements in London, showcasing how responses to terrorism evolved from a focus upon small specialist networks that dealt solely with specific terrorist threats, to much larger multi-institutional configurations that cut across numerous administrative jurisdictions, and ultimately, to new forms of networked and learning-based governance that operate beyond the municipal scale. Governing such increasing organisational complexity - undertaken most recently under the umbrella of enhancing city-based resilience - has further exposed a range of horizontal, vertical and boundary level misalignments and implementation challenges.

The remainder of the paper proceeds in three main sections. *First*, institutional approaches to governance and emerging work on organisational resilience are unpacked, highlighting the requirements to transform conventional governance practices, and framing the methodological and analytical techniques deployed. *Second*, a series of chronological vignettes of responses to terroristic shock in London are analysed, showcasing different institutional responses to disruption caused by terrorist threat. *Third*, the thirty-year evolution in institutional responses to the risk of terrorism in

London is analysed and wider questions posed about optimal institutional form(s) required for responding to future shocks.

## **2. Institutionalism and the emergence of organisational resilience**

Conceptually, this paper adopts an institutionalist perspective that is associated with a broad wave of analysis in the social sciences since the 1980s that interrogates the significance of the institutional context of economic, political and social life, and where governance refers to the processes for the regulation and mobilisation of collective action (Powell and DiMaggio, 1991; Healey, 1998). Institutionalism is premised on the observation that contemporary governance regimes are often trapped in established bureaucratic routines and rigid organisational practices which are increasingly undermined by the increased uncertainty and complexity of the modern world, casting doubt on the utility of existing structures and function. Such work specifically focuses on understanding how conventional institutional routines shape future possibilities, in what ways new institutional capacities get built and how 'institutionalisation' occurs, and in what ways new practices and capacities can be learnt, established and mainstreamed across and beyond institutions (Healey, 2006; Pitidis and Coaffee, 2020). The core mission of institutionalism, in an applied context, has therefore been to recognise how the discourses, practices and cultures of governance can be transformed from arrangements characterised by narrow, elite relations, bureaucratic practices, policy silos, and sectoral organization, to ones that embrace multiple and diverse relations, encourage innovative and adaptable approaches, and promote system integration and learning. In the twenty-first century, and especially after the events of 9/11, analysis has been readily applied to cities in seeking to understand how municipal authorities are responding to widespread disruption by reimagining governing arrangements and promoting *urban resilience* (Coaffee and Lee, 2016; Huck et al 2020).

### *2.1. Managing shocks and the post-9/11 push for resilience*

In the late 1980s an innovative range of 'risk theory' emerged centred around concerns about the impact of global shocks that challenged existing political governance configurations and illuminated the way in which mega-scale risk was conventionally imagined, assessed, managed and governed, but not eradicated (see for example, Beck, 1992; 1999). More specifically, such analysis exposed the failures of governance where existing risk management strategies could not be relied on to govern in the face of increasingly likely repeat events<sup>2</sup>. This work foregrounded more recent scholarship on 'anticipatory logics' underpinning risk, notably preparedness, that have become a defining feature of

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<sup>2</sup> This is not to suggest that pre-9/11 emergency planning regimes did not focus upon preparing for repeat events. The argument here is that such approaches became far more preparedness-focused after the 9/11 attacks.

policy-making associated with national security and counter-terrorism (Amoore, 2013). Here as Anderson (2010, p.791) noted, 'preparedness does not aim to stop a future event happening. Rather, intervention aims to stop the effects of an event disrupting the circulations and interdependencies that make up a valued life'.

Notably, in the wake of the terrorist attacks of 9/11, 2001, the purported need for transformation in risk governance to facilitate greater business continuity (Coaffee et al 2008) further led to new forms organisational theory emerging to interrogate why certain types of institutions are better than others at responding to unknown disruption in their current operating environment (Sheffi, 2005). The changing nature of risk and response increasingly saw policymakers seek to address enhanced vulnerabilities and interdependencies through advancing strategies and stakeholder networks across multiple scales, and saw ideas of preparedness, adaptability and the associated practices of *organisational resilience* become central to policy making around responding to a range of expected and unexpected disruptive challenges. More critically, many viewed the emergence of such resilience discourses as fitting with liberal forms of governance that served as a vehicle for 'neoliberal decentralisation' (Amin, 2013). This indicated a shift in state policies, reflecting a desire to step back from its responsibilities to ensure the protection of the population during crisis and to delegate to certain professions, private companies, communities and individuals.

These emerging approaches to enhancing such organisational resilience went beyond existing risk management practices to address the complexities of large integrated systems and the uncertainty of future threats with a focus upon capacity of a system to absorb and recover from adverse events and then adapt, transform and learn (Weick, and Sutcliffe, 2007). In policy and practice, the ideas of resilience that emerged in the early twenty-first century, often became the cornerstone of institutional responses required in the post-9/11 world to cope not just with disruption caused by terrorist risk, but a wide variety of possible shocks. That said, despite the statistical evidence highlighting that you're more likely to die as a result of falling off a ladder or slipping in a bathtub than from a terror strike, in many locations, notably the US and UK, the fear of terrorism catalysed fundamental changes in emergency governance that systematically siphoned up an increasingly large proportion of government emergency budgets and led to concerns over the myopic prioritisation of terrorist-related threats as the subject of resilience enhancement (O'Brien and Reid, 2005; Flynn, 2007).

Here, resilience was commonly viewed as the governing of growing complexity, and of thinking through how best to organise a response to crisis in order to bounce back to normal functioning as

quickly as possible. Emerging theories and practices of organisational resilience increasingly drew attention to approaches that were adaptable, flexible and learning-based, and which fostered 'adaptive capacity' with a focus on learning how to survive and thrive in conditions of uncertainty *before* disruption hits (Sheffi, 2005). Concomitantly, emergency or 'resilience' planning at national and municipal level became highly influential areas of strategic policy where reimagined institutional arrangements put an emphasis on more holistic and less hierarchical management, with new forms of governance carried out by a wider and more integrated network of stakeholders that facilitated collaboration across organisational boundaries<sup>3</sup>. The growth in attention to organisational resilience further identified the need for institutional arrangements to be more flexible and agile and to foster the capability to build a set of 'institutional capacities' that would allow organisations to cope with an array of disruptions and return to normal as swiftly as possible. Emphasis was further placed on seeking to evolve 'learning organisations' that continuously transform as a result of lessons from incidents or failure, and by facilitating knowledge exchanges across, and between, institutions. Overall, in these circumstances, the implementation of resilience practices challenged established modes of public administration and sought change towards more integrated working; replacing silos with horizontal management (Matyas and Pelling, 2015), encouraging flexible processes rather than regular routines that maintain the status quo (Stark, 2014) and improving coordination across multiple organisations and scales of action in order to achieve coherent 'networked governance' (Therrien and Normandin, 2020).

## *2.2. The push for urban resilience governance*

Over the last twenty years, resilience building has been most advanced in the urban realm, where global strategic frameworks by which cities can develop capacities to become more resilient have developed. Most notably, major cities throughout the world joined the 100 Resilient Cities programme pioneered by the US-based Rockefeller Foundation between 2013 and 2019 to advance resilience strategies that addressed vulnerabilities that amplify crises and erode coping abilities. Here, urban resilience was seen as 'the capacity of individuals, communities, institutions, businesses, and systems within a city to survive, adapt, and grow no matter what kinds of chronic stresses and acute shocks they experience' (Arup, 2014). Other studies have also drawn attention to the importance of such resilience initiatives functioning as learning platforms and catalysing peer-to-peer networking (Fastenrath et al 2019; Acuto and Leffel, 2020). However, despite the popularity of resilience and much policy formation, empirical studies have consistently shown its implementation by municipal

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<sup>3</sup> The push for resilience also necessitated a focus upon enhancing social and community engagement in emergency planning efforts (community or social resilience). Whilst an important area of policy development, this is not a central concern of this paper.



authorities often led to business-as-usual approaches being consolidated rather than transformed (Coaffee et al 2018; Meerow et al., 2019)

Whilst it is acknowledged that ‘the building of urban resilience will be most effective when it involves a mutual and accountable network of civic institutions, agencies and individual citizens working in partnership towards common goals within a common strategy’ (Coaffee, et al, 2008, p.3), municipal authorities have undoubtedly struggled with this objective. A significant implementation gap therefore remains between city resilience as abstract policy vision and the ‘demonstrated capacity to govern resilience in practice’ (Wagenaar and Wilkinson, 2015, p.1265). Recent evidence has shown that the transition from resilience as an ambitious strategic objective, to a truly transformational concept for urban governance, is frequently incomplete and often derailed (Fitzgibbons and Mitchell, 2019). In particular, current studies often fail to show the mechanisms through which resilience as a transformational process becomes ‘mainstreamed’ or ‘institutionalised’ across city management as a core governance concern that is woven into regular policy and decision-making, and/or where attempts are made to generate ‘shared understandings and knowledge, develop competence and steer collective issues of adaptation’ across departmental and sectoral boundaries (Wamsler and Pauleit, 2016, p.73).

### 2.3. *Data and methods*

In seeking to understand these gaps in policy implementation, this paper analyses the ways that the application of risk management and more recent resilience policies catalysed greater partnership working and governance change as municipal authorities in London responded to the occurrence and continual threat of terrorism by devising short and long term futureproofing strategies<sup>4</sup>. Specifically, the analysis in this article draws from a mixed-method study of institutional and governance responses to the shifting threats of terrorism in London, and tracks the city’s counter-terrorism journey from 1990 to 2020 using a number criteria drawn from institutional and organisational resilience theory. This particular case study, part of a much wider set of research enquires, utilised a combination over 100 semi-structured elite interviews with key emergency and security stakeholders and policymakers

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<sup>4</sup> London was chosen as the case study for this paper given its tangible pre and post-9/11 experiences of dealing with the occurrence of, and threats from, terrorism. The broader research undertaken by the author over the last 25 years has also encompassed, similar but less detailed analysis in the US, Australia and across Europe with regard to the enactment of preparedness and resilience policies in the post-9/11 world.

following the process tracing method<sup>5</sup>. Table 1 highlights the spread of interviews by organisational focus and agency affiliation.

<b><i>Organisational focus</i></b>	<b><i>Examples of London-based agencies interviewed</i></b>
Political leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporation of the City of London</li> <li>• Greater London Authority</li> <li>• Government Office for London</li> </ul>
Risk management/Insurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Security and Contingency Planning Group of the Corporation of London</li> <li>• Pool Reinsurance</li> <li>• Olympic Delivery Authority</li> </ul>
Policing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of London Police</li> <li>• Metropolitan Police</li> <li>• Counter Terrorism Policing</li> </ul>
Security management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• London-based counter-terrorism security advisors</li> <li>• Counter Terrorism Preparedness Network</li> <li>• The Home Office</li> </ul>
Counter-terrorism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Counter-Terrorism Office</li> <li>• Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure</li> <li>• Office for Security and Counter-Terrorism</li> </ul>
Resilience management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• London Resilience Forum</li> <li>• London Resilience Partnership</li> <li>• London Resilience Group</li> </ul>
Emergency services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority</li> <li>• London Fire Brigade Emergency Planning Team</li> <li>• London Resilience Team</li> </ul>

*Table 2: Interviewees by organisation focus and agency affiliation*

The study also employed a discursive analysis of published documents related to counter-terrorism, emergency planning and resilience/preparedness<sup>6</sup>, alongside active engagement in, and participant observation of, a large number meetings and events involving senior policymakers and security professionals (including those related to security for the 2012 Olympic Games in London) and, most recently, contributions to the setting up and running of a London-based global learning network for counter-terrorism preparedness. The focus of this combined analysis was upon both the governance changes enacted, or suggested, in terms of strategies and tactics in response to terrorism, as well as the discourses that were centred on preparing for, and anticipating, future attacks.

Whilst the wider research programme of which this study was a part, collected data that represented a wider range of viewpoints (including from NGO's, protest movements and civil society organisations),

<sup>5</sup> The process tracing method has been increasing used in qualitative research where elite interviewing is the focus and where there were concerns raised about statistical sampling methods missing out the viewpoints key actors (Tansey, 2007). The aim of process tracing is to draw a sample, often through snowballing, that includes the crucial actors that have participated in the political events being studied.

<sup>6</sup> Documents analysed included public consultation documents, training manuals, strategic policy reports and the minutes of municipal meetings.

the analysis for this paper focused specifically on the perspectives of institutional actors and their role in translating viewpoints into counter-terrorism practices and reconfiguring governance arrangements in response to the occurrence of acts of terrorism, as well as inculcating the institutional imperative to anticipate and prepare for, further terror threats. Specifically, the data collected analysed the process of governance change and how municipal actors and emergency stakeholders working within particular institutional arrangements understood their roles in the resilience-building process and interpreted and implemented responses to terrorist shock. Attention here was primarily concerned with how institutional policy and decision makers constructed notion of risk, security and resilience and embedded these within their operating logics.

To track this thirty-year change process, the paper utilised an analytical framework (coding frame) informed by inductive and interpretivist approaches, to draw out a set of hierarchical themes that revealed how decisions made around responding to the risk of terrorism impacted upon the mechanisms and institutional architecture that evolved in response to, recovery from, preparation for and adaptation as a result of terroristic shock. Here, attention lay in documenting the evolution towards a more flexible institutional environment that would allow a quick and well tested response to terror attack, to but also to anticipate them, and hence encourage proactive planning for the future. This ex-post and ex-ante analysis centred on the desired objectives for transforming the institutional architecture of London's municipal terrorism threat preparations as well as a number of criteria by which the success could be assessed. The *first* desired objective was the reorganisation of existing governance apparatus that was judged against the extent to which security responsibilities were devolved to a wider array of stakeholders and the alignment of sectoral plans with an overarching security vision of the city. *Second*, was a focus upon the mobilisation of integrated governance capacity through the breaking of cross-sectoral silos, the promotion of inter-departmental coordination, and the advancement of more holistic thinking so as to build a greater capacity to respond and recover from shocks. A *third* desired objective was to analysis the extent to which resilience principles could be integrated or 'mainstreamed' into counter-terrorism planning and testing as part of the setting of strategic directions regarding preparedness and anticipation of future shocks. *Fourth*, analysis assessed the evolution of wider more networked governance with other municipalities through peer-to-peer learning to improve capacity to respond and aid the generation of transnational best practice lessons.

The results of this analysis are summarised in the discussion section, and draw upon the three time-specific vignettes presented below that focus upon: the 1990s, when London's financial centres were under constant threat of vehicle bombing; the post-9/11 development of initial city-wide resilience responses, alongside security preparation for the 2012 Olympics; and finally, more advanced resilience

approaches enacted after 2012 tied to wider institutional change in London and the perceived necessity of learning the lessons from international experiences of urban terrorism.

### **3. The localised risk management response to terrorist shock**

From the mid 1980s until the early 2000s, the institutional planning for shock events across London was seen as ineffective, outdated and reactive, characterised by short-term, top-down and fragmented management that was struggling with change and transformation<sup>7</sup>. As illuminated by attempts at this time to mitigate the impacts of flooding, air pollution and terrorism, there was seen to be an over reliance on 'narrowly conceived technological-fixes, and a reluctance to tackle the more fundamental causes of hazards' (Parker and Tapsell, 1995, p.314). This was compounded by global economic restructuring, a reduction in public spending on emergency management, and the dissolution of London-wide metropolitan government with the closing of the Greater London Council in 1986, that left a complex and fragmented institutional setting. Here, each of London's 32 boroughs and the City of London became responsible for its own emergency management with little integration with other borough's plans, or the plans of public agencies. In addition, an emerging market-driven philosophy was pushing the burden of managing risk onto the private sector as public spending was reduced and deregulation enhanced (Hood and Jackson, 1992).

This emerging institutional landscape was to have implications for responding to a wave of terrorist attacks that targeted London's global financial centres in the 1990s - not only cause severe damage directly to valuable buildings, but to produce great uncertainty about future insurance coverage, and to dent the city's economic reputation. The primary terrorist target at his time was the City of London - the Square Mile - with a secondary target emerging in the newly regenerated London Docklands. More specifically, during this decade the IRA's,<sup>8</sup> 'economic disruption' bombing campaign successfully attacked the City of London with large vehicles bombs in April 1992 and April 1993 and in the London Docklands in November 1992 (unexploded) and February 1996. The large vehicle bombs detonated in the Square Mile, in particular, illuminated the exposure of the City, as the UK's financial services centre, to economic terrorism, the likelihood of steeply rising property insurance premiums, and the departure of some foreign companies if security was not rapidly improved. These bombings, and the subsequent institutional reaction, was reflected in territorial and technological approaches to security that emerged in order to give those inside the security zone that was established an increased feeling of safety. Such enhanced levels of security were a result of the strategies of a number of key institutions – the police,

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<sup>7</sup> From 1973, there was a London Emergency Services Liaison Panel to provide guidance on improving the abilities of emergency responders to work together.

<sup>8</sup> From 1969 until 1997, the Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA) conducted an armed paramilitary campaign primarily in Northern Ireland and mainland England, aimed at ending British rule in Northern Ireland.

local government, the insurance industry and private businesses – that sought to defend their own spatial territory (the Square Mile) from terrorist shock, whilst increasingly splintering themselves from the rest of London in both physical and technological terms (Coaffee, 2000).

Institutional responses to these high-impact shocks followed a conventional risk management approach where decision-making was based on the likelihood of shock events (re)occurring and the consequences if they did. Before the first major bombing in 1992<sup>9</sup> the perceived threat level was not considered sufficient to establish any special security measures. Even after this initial attack, the City of London Police, who led the response effort, adopted a ‘containment’ approach assessing that an increased police presence, with officers monitoring vehicle movement around the City, was a suitable response<sup>10</sup>. As the City’s senior security advisor noted in 1995, “St. Mary Axe was a watershed as far as counter-terrorist measures were concerned - it focused the minds of people on what could be done. This advice was taken up by some but others held the view that lightning doesn’t strike twice and failed to heed the warnings.” He continued by indicating that this view began to change after the 1993 bomb, and that “Bishopsgate was therefore much more significant than St. Mary Axe as it proved this wrong”.

Moreover, in November 1992, the decision of European reinsurers to remove themselves from terrorism coverage due to its incalculability, compelled the UK Government to step in as ‘insurer of last resort’ which, saw some business premiums increased by over 400%. This, combined with the delicate state of political dialogue aimed at brokering an IRA ceasefire, significantly increased the risk of further attack to the City that was realised in April 1993 when a further vehicle bomb exploded in the City at Bishopsgate<sup>11</sup>.

In the wake of this second bombing, the business community mobilised to support drastic changes to security, notably a permanent security cordon to deter terrorists from the City. Following the establishment of the *Security and Contingency Planning Group* at the Corporation of London<sup>12</sup> to manage the new realities of terrorist threat, a consultation exercise began amongst the business sector to seek views on initiating a series of enhanced security measures<sup>13</sup>. An overwhelmingly positive response to consultation led to a package of largely technological responses being quickly enacted based on modification to existing traffic management, enhanced camera surveillance activities and the

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<sup>9</sup> The St. Mary Axe bomb exploded outside the Baltic Exchange on the evening of 10th April 1992. Three people were killed and over 100 were injured, with a large area being devastated.

<sup>10</sup> The City of London was, and still is, unique in London for having its own dedicated Police force.

<sup>11</sup> This device killed one person, injured 94 and caused considerable damage, initially estimated at £1 billion.

<sup>12</sup> The Corporation of London is the business-centred local authority for the City of London.

<sup>13</sup> Consultation came through two draft papers for *The Way Ahead - Traffic and the Environment* and *Security Initiatives*, that were issued by the Corporation of London in mid-1993. It is also worth noting that during this time the City Police were in regular dialogue with the Royal Ulster Constabulary in Northern Ireland, that had set up a security cordon around the centre of Belfast in the 1970s to restrict terrorist bombings, in order to learn from their experiences.

establishment of a pager-alert system. Most markedly through, given the perceived risk of further attacks, the construction of a security cordon – the so-called ‘ring of steel’ - began in June 1993, with the introduction of security checkpoints to bar all non-essential traffic<sup>14</sup>. Road-checks were established on these routes which were guarded by armed police. The ring of steel, or ‘Experimental Traffic Scheme’ as it was referred to by the Corporation of London, was put in place for an initial period of six months, after which, it was made permanent. Relatedly, under pressure from local businesses, the City enhanced its electronic surveillance capabilities with over 70 police-operated security cameras assembled to monitor all vehicles entering the Square Mile. Additionally, in September 1993, the police launched an innovative scheme for local businesses called CameraWatch, that aimed to establish an effective private camera network for the City to complement the public system already in place.<sup>15</sup> Risk communication campaigns launched by the Corporation of London and National Government also sought to improved emergency readiness and contingency planning practices amongst public and private sector institutions, enhancing their organisational resilience and ability to take swift and decisive action when presented with large scale disruption.

Following an IRA ceasefire called in August 1994, the ring of steel security cordon was scaled back under pressure from businesses, with armed guards taken off most of the checkpoints. The cessation of terrorist violence lasted until early 1996 when a large bomb exploded in the London Docklands to the east of the City of London, meaning a ‘fortress mentality’ returned to the City with the full ring of steel being reactivated and made operational within a number of hours due to fears that the City would be attacked. The impact of this shock event meant that in time the City’s security cordon was further modified with the establishment of a network of automated number plate recording (ANPR) cameras established.

The London Docklands, containing the Canary Wharf complex, was also the focus for counter-terrorist planning through the 1990s, suffering a failed terrorist bombing in 1992 as well as the 1996 attack noted above<sup>16</sup>. Following the 1992 incident, managers at Canary Wharf initiated their own ‘mini-ring of steel’ essentially shutting down access to ‘their’ private estate within the Docklands complex. Such an approach combined attempts to ‘design-out terrorism’ with changing approaches adopted by the police and private security industry. Security barriers were thrown across the road into and out of the complex, with no-parking zones implemented, a plethora of private CCTV cameras installed, and

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<sup>14</sup> This left seven routes (plus one bus route) through which the City could be entered. Locally, the ring of steel was often referred to as the ‘ring of plastic’ as the temporary access restrictions were based primarily on the funnelling of traffic through rows of plastic traffic cones, as the scheme was still officially ‘temporary’.

<sup>15</sup> By 1996, over 1,000 private security cameras (in over 375 camera systems) were operational in the City.

<sup>16</sup> In the 1992 attack the IRA attempted to plant a van bomb near the main Canary Wharf Tower but were thwarted by the vigilance of security guards.

identity card schemes initiated. After the devastating 1996 bombing in the southern part of the Docklands, the business community successfully lobbied the London-wide Metropolitan Police to set up an anti-terrorist security cordon to cover the whole of the Docklands - the so-called 'Iron Collar' modelled on the City of London's prior approach - amidst fears that high-profile businesses might be tempted to relocate (Coaffee, 2000)<sup>17</sup>.

Through the evolution of these territorial and technologically-mediated strategies in the 1990s, space within the financial zones of London was increasingly secured, controlled and regulated. They were operationalised through 'just in time' principles and a command and control governance model that allowed well financed business communities, in partnership with local policing, to impose enhanced security measures without wide-scale public consultation. Here, the intention of the municipal authorities was to strike a balance between a flourishing business environment, and safety and security concerns; a balance seen as vital if London as a whole was to be competitive within the global economy. As a result, these areas - the City and the Docklands - became the simultaneous focus of global connection and local disconnection - a condition, that characterised their dislocated nature of their relationship with the rest of London in institutional terms. Whilst the risk of terrorist shock in the financial zones might have decreased as a result of imposed security measures, it arguably had a displacement effect, transferring this growing threat onto the rest of London.

Despite the experiences of the financial areas of London effectively managing terrorist risk through the 1990s, entering the new millennium, the ability of London as a whole to respond to major shocks was still seen as limited by a fragmented institutional environment and a lack of longer term planning that was to be further exposed by the events of 9/11.

#### **4. London Prepared: the rise of resilience as an institutional response to shock**

The responses to terrorism in London during the 1990s elicited a growing awareness of the need for public authorities, the private sector and local communities to be prepared for disruptive events across the entire city, and stimulated a requirement for reinvigorated and increasingly well-funded emergency procedures for dealing with a range of low probability but high-impact shocks. Notably, in the immediate wake of the 9/11 terror attacks, across the UK, and particularly in London, there was a wide held concern that major cities were ill-prepared to respond effectively against evolving terrorist methodologies such as the use of CBRN sources, suicide bombings or attacks against crowded public areas. The multitude of potential terrorist targets across London necessitated that a city-wide

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<sup>17</sup> This security cordon comprised four entry points which at times of high-risk assessment would have armed guards. High resolution ANPR CCTV cameras were also installed.

approach to managing such threats be adopted, representing a departure from previous short-term localised efforts that had securitised the financial zones. Institutionally, emergency management policy also began to shift towards proactive and anticipatory solutions to cope effectively with what Government viewed as the 'new normality' of no-warning and indiscriminate terrorist threats, which was realised in July 2005 when London was targeted by multiple coordinated attacks on its transport network.

Whereas during the twentieth century emergency planning was largely controlled by central government with response from a small number of specialist public agencies, the twenty-first century world of 'resilience planning' became increasingly focused upon a series of complex threats (including terrorism). Here, municipal governments were expected to take a leading role in the response and recovery to shock events, enabled by a far higher level of involvement from multiple stakeholders and business interests across scales. In institutional terms, this further resulted in a greater emphasis upon horizontal and integrated connections between emergency responders rather than vertical command and control procedures that had previously characterised the governance of crisis response.

Such transformation occurred slowly at first and pre-dated 9/11. In 2000, a UK Government review of the historic response to emergencies highlighted a number of institutional failings and especially a disorganised 'chain of command' without clearly visible leadership. This posed a critical question about who was in charge of co-ordinating an effective response across scales, indicating that reform of national emergency planning procedures was long overdue<sup>18</sup>. The post-9/11 concern that UK cities would be targeted by terrorists, accelerated this ongoing process and made reorganisation of emergency preparedness a key political priority. As a result, in the early 2000s, the discourse of 'resilience' came to the fore to symbolise this institutional change, eventually being formalised through the 2004 Civil Contingencies Act (CCA) that sought to provide a central strategic direction for developing resilience, based on a cycle of anticipation, prevention, preparation, response and recovery. Organisationally, this resulted in the development of a co-ordinated multi-scale resilience governance infrastructure (local, regional and national) replacing previous emergency planning processes, with the aim of establishing a consistent degree of emergency preparedness across the UK (Walker and Broderick 2004).

In seeking to enhance such organisational resilience at the city level, CCA legislation mandated city governments to develop Local Resilience Forums to improve responses to a range of emergencies and

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<sup>18</sup> This review was also catalysed by strategically targeted nationwide protests on the transport network regarding the price of fuel, serious outbreaks of foot-and-mouth disease and a series of catastrophic flooding incidents in 2000–2001 (the so called 3f's).



to break out of conventional practices and develop a coordinated multi-agency environment across a defined geographical area. Once launched, Local Resilience Forums were tasked with developing strategic emergency plans detailing how public authorities, emergency services, business and civic communities, and others, would cope with, respond to and anticipate disruptive events of all kinds. The focus here was on both developing a generic plan based on capabilities required to cope with multiple and interdependent types of disruption, as well as detailed plans for particular priority risks. This contemporary resilience governance system also sought to broaden the scope of the risks to be focused upon, with priorities emerging from more detailed risk assessment and horizon scanning activities, notably local and regional 'risk registers'<sup>19</sup>. Periodic 'capability reviews' were also central in identifying gaps in organisational ability, informing the planning process regarding the scale of response required and, with operational exercises routinely used, to trial procedures and to learn lessons through stress-testing.

In London, in 2002 and pre-dating the CCA, a specialist emergency planning partnership - the London Resilience Forum (LRF) - was quickly established to address the strategic emergency planning needs of the UK Capital, which were seen as adequate for dealing with conventional emergencies and terror strikes, but required urgent re-evaluation in the light of 9/11 attacks. As the Resilience Director for the Government Office for London noted at interview, "the day after 9/11 the Government very quickly set up cabinet sub-committee with the Mayor and key players, and established a resilience team tasked with doing a review of probabilities, capability, [and the] ability to cope with something on the scale of 9/11. This was formalised within a few months". As London Prepared (2003), the communication arm of the LRF, further noted, 'a coalition of key agencies joined forces in May 2002 to plan and prepare for potential emergencies. *This was the first time a strategic, pan-London regime was established that could co-ordinate [emergency] planning across London*' (emphasise added)<sup>20</sup>.

The LRF operated as a strategic partnership, including representatives from London's emergency services (forming the London Resilience Team), transport, health, faith and utility sectors, central and local government (including the Greater London Authority<sup>21</sup> and representative from borough councils), the military, the business community, and the community and voluntary sector. Operationally, the LRF was responsible for setting the strategy for the London Resilience Partnership (LRP) work. Implementing resilience in such a partnership arrangement unsettled existing governance

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<sup>19</sup> In London, terrorism, flooding and infrastructure failure were initial priority risks.

<sup>20</sup> From 'Emergency advice for London'. Available at <http://www.londonprepared.gov.uk/>. Accessed 20 December 2003.

<sup>21</sup> Formed in 2000 and administratively similar to the Greater London Council that was dissolved in 1986, the Greater London Authority (GLA) is the devolved regional governance body of London. It consists of the executive Mayorality (led by an elected Mayor) and a 25-member London Assembly.

configurations locked into siloed and concentrated management practices, and promoted a greater degree of integrated and holistic thinking and the wider distribution of responsibility.

Whilst the role of the LRF/LRP was in multi-hazard management, in countering the threat and impact of terrorism it engaged significantly with various branches of the police and security services to assess risk, implement bespoke policy, communicate with the public and business, and coordinate regimes of capability testing.<sup>22</sup> In fulfilling these tasks the LRF had four key goals. First, in line with the CCA duty to 'warn and inform' the public of risks they were liable to face, was to disseminate information to Londoners and the capital's boroughs so that they might be better prepared in the event of an attack. Second, to encourage pan-London business continuity planning that involved liaison with individual business and business associations to promote proactive contingency planning so as to enable a return to 'business as usual' strategy as soon as possible after a terrorist incident<sup>23</sup>.

Third, the LRF/LRP was tasked with developing and testing of a series of general and specific emergency plans for London. Such plans, for example for mass fatalities, responses to influenza pandemics, or the development of evacuation procedures, were established, and regularly validated in table-top or even live simulation exercises. Such testing gave an opportunity to evaluate standard procedures and assess staff competencies, and was particular focused upon terrorism scenarios. For example, one high profile test conducted was *Exercise Osiris II* in 2003<sup>24</sup> which aimed to test specific elements of the operational response to a chemical attack on the London Underground.<sup>25</sup> The fourth key goal of the LRF/LRP emerged from the summer of 2005 onwards, when the LRF was commissioned to scope the extent of Olympic resilience preparedness across agencies in London, and to co-ordinate pan-London resilience activity for the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games<sup>26</sup>. As Games-time approached this activity, also involved engagement in a widescale scenario planning exercise - *Operation Olympic Guardian* - intended to test security preparedness ahead of the Games.

Overall, the initial operationalisation of London's municipal resilience approach was driven by terrorist risk and emphasised institutional preparedness and the development of contingency and continuity plans, rather than reactive post-event recovery and management. This sought to address the question

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<sup>22</sup> This included liaison with the National Counter-Terrorism Security Office and UK Counter Terrorism policing (and their network of regional Counter-terrorism units), both headquartered in London, The Home Office, MI5 and associated bodies such as the Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure and the Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre.

<sup>23</sup> The LRF agreed a pan-London strategy to promote such measures which was significantly influenced by other organisations that promote business interests such as London First (a lobby group, campaigning for inward investment to maintain London international brand).

<sup>24</sup> For this day-long test the City of London was 'locked down' and London's emergency services were tested for their state of preparedness and their ability to work in a coordinated fashion, giving emergency services the opportunity to test the effectiveness of new specialist equipment, including chemical suits.

<sup>25</sup> The LRF also engaged in transatlantic counter-terrorism exercises such as *Atlantic Blue*, in April 2005, with the US and Canada, that simulated internationally-linked terrorist incidents, with London utilizing its transport system as its simulation test-bed.

<sup>26</sup> This involved liaison with key agencies such as the Olympic Delivery Authority, the London Organising Committee, various Government Departments involved in security-related issues, and the Association of Chief Police Officers.

‘Are we prepared?’ rather than ‘Can we prevent it?’ This further illuminated the importance of a flexible, adaptable and multi-pronged institutional approach which could deal with changing threat profiles and a range of emergency situations, as well as the key role of collaborative resilience with a variety of aligned stakeholders being brought into the overall resiliency effort. This was most notable in the emergency sector where a key recommendation of the public inquiry into the 7/7, 2005 terror attacks was directly linked to improving the interoperability between emergency services<sup>27</sup>.

The evolution of the LRF between 2002 and 2012 signalled a paradigm shift in institutional response from the reactive management of risk towards more proactive counter-terrorism emphasising preparedness and resilience. This was achieved through a well-integrated, properly resourced, and more anticipatory style of emergency planning “where a much more developed cooperative way of working both at local and regional level has developed with much clearer views on the functions and responsibilities” (Interview with Government Advisor in 2008). The appearance of enhanced resilience was further utilised by London marketing agencies to promote the city to international investors as a safe and prepared city. The LRF’s ‘London Prepared’ brand increasingly played on the importance of city resilience as part of ‘the sell’ to external investors with key partners London First<sup>28</sup> noting that aiming to make London a premier business location ‘includes improving our security and our resilience [and] London’s preparations for and protection against, terrorist attack’.<sup>29</sup>

## **5. Global leadership, networking and learning**

In practice, despite increased attention and resourcing, piecing together such resilience partnership teams and devising plans amongst stakeholders who had previously operated in relative isolation proved difficult. In reality, this initially often dictated a formalisation and expansion of pre-existing arrangements and *not* the transformation in the operation of local emergency planning networks desired by Government. This led to renewed concern that London was not as adequately prepared for a major terrorist attack, and that resilience actions had not been fully embedded, or mainstreamed, in the existing institutional architecture, as envisioned.

Despite London’s Resilience Partnership bringing together over 150 organisations who each had specific responsibilities for preparing for emergencies of all types, and having a strategy that was focused upon institutional notions of resilience – seen here as ‘the ability of institutions and

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<sup>27</sup> This led to the introduction of the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme (JESIP) which has seen 1000’s of police, fire and ambulance service personnel trained to improve joint decision making in major incidents.

<sup>28</sup> London First works closely with the London Resilience Forum and have set up their own resilience network to act as a conduit between London’s police, security services and businesses, to plan for business continuity.

<sup>29</sup> Cited in *Think London* press release - ‘Protect against but be prepared for terrorism’ (published online 26 January, 2007). Available at [http://www.thinklondon.com/press\\_centre/newsreleasedetail.asp?l2=40&newsreleaseid=3638](http://www.thinklondon.com/press_centre/newsreleasedetail.asp?l2=40&newsreleaseid=3638).

communities to work together to prevent, handle then recover and learn from disruption, and adapt to change'<sup>30</sup> - according to one study, attempts by the LRF to work in integrative ways were thwarted by 'a lack of a cohesive approach [where] the LRF perceived itself to have less legitimacy and political support to initiate a horizontal collaborative approach with other services in the strategic development of resilience' (Therrien, et al. 2021, p.5), and, to develop long terms plans where cultural change is paramount. In particular, across London there was, as in the 1990s, a fragmented picture of emergency response capability with some local boroughs having specialist resilience officers whilst others had very limited response capacity due to fiscal restraints<sup>31</sup>.

From 2010, this institutional architecture itself was in a state of flux as a result of internal reorganisation that meant the oversight of the LRF, and the associated London Resilience Team of emergency responders, was moved from the Government Office for London to the Greater London Authority (GLA) as the regional governance tier in England was abolished<sup>32</sup>. The London Resilience Team was renamed the London Resilience Group (LRG) and retained almost identical functions at the heart of multi-agency emergency planning and large scale incident response in support of the LRF. Institutional arrangements were further changed in 2015 when the LRG was transferred from the GLA to the London Fire Brigade with reduced staffing, and aligned specifically to deliver the Mayor's responsibilities for resilience<sup>33</sup>. As Therrien, et al. (2021, p.5) further noted 'over just a few years, this team went from being the policy core of resilience efforts to functioning as an implementation agency for operations and interventions, with decreasing administrative capacity and resources'.

Whilst this downsizing and realignment of London's institutional infrastructure to support the response planning for terrorist incidents reflected a new prioritizing of London risks<sup>34</sup> (which was soon to be revised again given multiple terror attacks across continental Europe), it was also a reflection of the creation of new agencies and institutions in London that begun to colonise and influence the overall city resilience agenda. Notably, London became a member of the Rockefeller 100 Resilient Cities (100RC) network in 2015, having begun its application process a year earlier. This submission process had seen the recently formed Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC)<sup>35</sup> champion a focus upon dealing with cyber-attacks and terrorist shocks; an influencing role that continued when 100RC funding was obtained with new policy priorities formulated to develop resilience strategies to

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<sup>30</sup> Cited in the *London Resilience Partnership Strategy (2016)*. Available at [https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/london\\_resilience\\_partnership\\_strategy\\_2016.pdf](https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/london_resilience_partnership_strategy_2016.pdf). Accessed December 1, 2019.

<sup>31</sup> The LRF have developed Minimum Standards for emergency preparedness for London boroughs to ensure at least adequate response.

<sup>32</sup> Most noticeably this meant the Chair of the LRF was appointed by the Mayor of London.

<sup>33</sup> In October 2016, the London Resilience Team and the London Fire Brigade Emergency Planning Team combined to form London Resilience, a collective unit delivering services on behalf of both the Mayor of London and London's boroughs.

<sup>34</sup> There was a renewed focus upon flood prevention, climate change adaptation and cyber security concerns.

<sup>35</sup> MOPAC came into being on January 16, 2012 and sets the direction and budget for the London wide Metropolitan Police.

face disruptive events, address existing vulnerabilities and advocate integrated and holistic thinking about resilience issues. Such strategies listed terror threats as a 'priority risk'.

Institutional changes in 2015 also led to renewed concern over the state of London preparedness for dealing with a terrorist shock, and in the wake of major terrorist incidents in Paris (November 2015) and Brussels (March 2016) led to the Mayor of London commissioning of an independent report to detail London's state of readiness for dealing with a wide-ranging terror attack. Published in 2016, this independent review of *London's Preparedness to respond to a major terrorist incident* (Harris, 2016), illuminated a good state of preparedness that could be enhanced through greater institutionalisation of resilience practice across multiple stakeholder groups. As noted, 'preparedness has to be proactive and the responses prepared have to enable all the relevant organisations - along with the business community and the public - to react seamlessly and effectively, whatever the nature of the incident' (p.3). Moreover, the review argued that the responsibility for such preparedness should be shared by all Londoners, noting that everyone should 'acquire a mind-set of community security and resilience, that London becomes a city *where security and resilience is designed in and is part of the city's fabric, and where everyone who lives and works here sees security and resilience as their responsibility just as much as it is for the emergency services and civic authorities*' (ibid. emphasis added).

There was a further focus given to establishing culture of resilience amongst emergency professional through continuous training<sup>36</sup> and learning lesson from London-based incidents and from terrorist attacks elsewhere. Here the Harris review argued that the LRF should be 'the repository for best practice in ensuring we are prepared for a major terrorist attack' and 'should have a bigger role in ensuring that lessons are learnt following any incidents [have] the added political weight behind them, to ensure that agencies across London implement any changes required to improve preparedness' (p.46). This state of affairs illuminated, that despite ongoing efforts, institutionalisation of resilience across city management was still an incomplete project, and, rather than transforming mainstream operations, new practices were still being incorporated into conventional governance arrangements despite strategic efforts, such as new resilience plans, encouraging innovative models of collaboration and institutional behaviour.

Whilst a range of terror attacks in London, and across the UK, in 2017<sup>37</sup> provided many lessons to aid future preparedness, in 2018 the London Resilience Group also initiated a peer-peer international

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<sup>36</sup> There are a number of training schemes set up in London for training public and private sector stakeholders about how to most appropriately respond to terrorist attacks. The two best known are Project Griffin (run by the City of London Police) and Project Argus, advanced by the National Counter-Terrorist Security Office (NaCTSO).

<sup>37</sup> Three attacks are notable here. On 22 March 2017 a vehicle as weapon and knife attack on Westminster Bridge in central London left 6 people dead and over 50 injured. On May 22, a suicide bomb attack at a music arena in Manchester left 22 people dead and 59 injured. On June 3 a further vehicle as weapon and knife attack on London Bridge left seven dead and nearly 50 injured.

learning group - the Counter Terrorism Preparedness Network (CTPN) - to reflect upon the experiences of other cities that had recently suffered the shock of terrorism<sup>38</sup>. This further complemented UK and international counter-terrorism strategies, the London Resilience Partnership strategy and the 2016 Harris review. This network commenced in June 2018 with the aim of offering a platform for international partners<sup>39</sup> to collaborate and harness the benefits of peer-to-peer interaction to identify lessons and share knowledge and experience in relation to developing counter-terrorism preparedness in a strategic context. The intention of the London-led network was to facilitate knowledge exchange between cities (also with subject matter experts drawn from academia and private practice) with a view to highlighting notable operating practices and presenting a series of recommendations to influence the institutional arrangements of cities for dealing with terrorist shock<sup>40</sup>. The initial work of the CTPN centred on preparing detailed reports outlining the comparative experience in the six initial member cities on a number of strategic themes.<sup>41</sup> Upon completion of these thematic reports, in November 2019, the network was officially launched at City Hall by the Mayor of London who noted the importance of the network for shared understanding amongst urban areas that are the target of terrorist attack, and the importance of learning from the experiences of others. He further noted on social media that ‘keeping Londoners safe is my number one priority. Today’s meeting of the CTPN brings together leaders from around the globe in London, to discuss our shared work to combat terrorism in all its forms, and keep our cities more secure for everyone’<sup>42</sup>.

In London, the recommendations from these reports have fed back into policy making and, at the time of writing, are being laminated into security and counter-terrorism policy and, at a broader scale, city-wide and multi-hazard, resilience policy. The CTPN continues to evolve and grow to build resilience from the shock of terrorism<sup>43</sup> and according to its Programme Manager, “fills a clear gap at a city-level by influencing the arrangements of multi-agency partners and offering a unique space in which to network and learn”. Its work has been further embedded into the Mayor of London’s long-term *City Resilience Strategy* published in February 2020,<sup>44</sup> as well as the relevant strategies and programmes of participating cities. Specifically, in London’s resilience strategy a key resilience action is to expand collaboration on counter-terrorism preparedness, and through the CTPN, focus ‘on the experiences and practices of cities to identify opportunities to inform and influence priorities’. Here it was

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<sup>38</sup> This was initially called the Counter Terrorism Resilience and Preparedness network.

<sup>39</sup> Initially, the partner cities were London, Paris, Barcelona, Rotterdam, Manchester and Stockholm.

<sup>40</sup> Drawn from internal network documents and the minutes of initial management board meetings. See also Counter Terrorism Preparedness Network, 2019. An overview at: [https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/ctpn\\_overview.pdf](https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/ctpn_overview.pdf)

<sup>41</sup> These were, anti-radicalisation, the protection of major events and crowded places, strategic coordination, humanitarian assistance and psycho-social support, and community preparedness. Each report was led by a member city, paired with an external academic expert.

<sup>42</sup> Tweet by Sadiq Khan, 15 November 2019.

<sup>43</sup> As of November 2020, a number of other cities have joined the CTPN: Copenhagen, Dublin, Boston, Washington DC, New York, Montreal and Munich. As of early 2021 the City of Stockholm took over the Chair of the Network.

<sup>44</sup> This was the major obligation of London’s participation in the Rockefeller 100 Resilient Cities network.

highlighted that ‘the CTPN’s collaborative approach benefits resilience in London by exploring policy design and implementation in an integrated manner and developing a strategic and integrated multi-agency approach to prepare for, respond to, and recover from terrorism’ (Greater London Authority, 2020, p.68).

## 5. Discussion and Conclusions

Whilst from the 1970s in the emergency management literature resilience was traditionally construed as being primarily concerned with protection and recovery from natural hazards, in the context of new millennial security challenges resilience assumed a new guise as it was increasingly coupled with counter-terrorism initiatives by Western Governments amidst a realisation that they were still unprepared for dealing with large-scale terrorist shocks. The evidence from tracking thirty years of institutional change in response to the threat of terrorism in London highlights both attempts to innovate emergency governance and the frictions the evolution of terrorist risk provoked for conventional security practices that raised critical questions about the necessity for far-reaching adaptive changes to be implemented in achieving more effective organisational resilience.

Such changes, as noted earlier, were assessed over time against the degree that security responsibilities were: devolved to a wider array of stakeholders; were implemented across institutional silos promoting holistic thinking; the extent to which resilience principles were ‘mainstreamed’ into the counter-terrorism planning to anticipate and prepare for future shocks; and, how wider networking was able to facilitate greater learning and the transmission of best practices internationally. This is collectively summarised in Table 2, and showcases the journey in London from a reactive ‘just in time’ risk management configuration, through initial attempts at advancing joined-up resilience partnerships and a further evolution to focus upon networked governance that extends beyond London to encompass international knowledge transfer.

		<b>Reactive risk management, 1990-2001</b>	<b>Initial resilience approaches, 2001-2012</b>	<b>Networked resilience, 2012-</b>
<b><i>Institutional configuration</i></b>	<i>Spatial focus</i>	Small districts	City-wide	City-wide and international
	<i>Key stakeholders</i>	Policing and business communities	Emergency professionals, Olympic agencies, City Marketers	Emergency professionals, International partner cities
	<i>Key Assemblage</i>	City of London Police	London Resilience Forum/Partnership	London Resilience Group
	<i>Governance type</i>	Vertical command and control	Horizontal	Networked
	<i>Institutional architecture/change</i>	Fragmented	Integrated	Mainstreamed

<b>Key responses</b>	<i>Temporal focus</i>	Reactive and short term	Prepared, proactive and medium term	Anticipatory and long term
	<i>Overarching aims</i>	Stability and preservation	and Flexible and adaptive	Agile and learning centred

*Table 2: The evolution of institutional responses to terroristic shock in London*

These three phases of institutional transition from risk to resilience management and then to networked governance, also represent broader trends in public governance of recent decades, where the ‘regulatory state’ increasingly steers via strategy, with the ‘rowing’ of implementation carried out locally (Osbourne and Gaebler, 1993). Notably, in this case it included: *first*, devolving central state functions and responsibility onto the local realm, including responsibilities for emergency planning and terrorism; *second*, a shift towards helping ‘weave’ together policy changes through the encouragement of holistic working practices and the development of multi-organisational and multi-scale ‘resilience’ partnership approaches designed to dissolve policy silos and enhance organisationally capacity and coherence (Parker, 2004); *third*, endeavours to integrate, as well as promote, cultural change and long-term, futureproofing approaches through the mainstreaming of resilience goals into sectoral policy and decision-making (Huck et al 2020), such as the overarching London City Resilience Strategy; *fourth*, a shift from ideas of scale and territory as a fixed stable bounded container, to notions of scalar practices where governance and institutional frameworks are utilised to gain competitive advantage and to engage in new networked relations (Fraser, 2010); and *fifth*, the promotion of city-to-city learning within peer networks as a catalyst for institutional adaptation (Haupt et al 2021) as evidenced by the development of the CTPN.

Overall, as demonstrated, through the lens of organisational resilience, London has to transitioned from long-held obdurate institutional practices to more flexible and collaborative governance arrangements by putting into practice ideas and principles of preparedness, partnership and network governance. The wider implications for the governance of shock events that emerge from this study further highlight the importance of coherent and formalised strategy, strong leadership and long-term time horizons. Importantly, we can also see the significance placed upon instigating a cultural change process intended to embed a set of institutional and adaptive capacities, and to ensure these are mainstreamed, or institutionalised, through all relevant policies and decision-making processes.

In the current century such a push for enhanced resilience as an institutional response to existential or material vulnerability, insecurity and, ultimately, change, highlights the importance to state and municipal authorities of enhancing such properties as a way of futureproofing and controlling



uncertainty. Overarching these numerous deployments of resilience processes has been a paradigm shift towards new modes of engagement with risk and risk management that present different forms of possible action and bridge near-term and longer-term issues and needs. Conventional approaches in risk management, and their application across fields such as emergency planning and climate change mitigation, tended to focus on absorbing the impact of shock in the more predictable short-term, and to rapidly return to stability. By contrast new resilience approaches, informed by experiences of prior disruption, focus upon preparing for and anticipating future uncertainties in the medium and longer term that challenge the traditional bureaucratic models of public administration.

Whilst the institutional reactions to shock have been well researched over recent decades, few studies have focused the long-term enactment of such change. A thorough exploration of how different cities have, over time, attempted to deal with shock events can assist policymakers and practitioners in understanding the potential impact of such policies on existing institutional architecture as well as the importance of governance culture, local needs and past experiences. However, this fluid and complex political environment often meant that new and innovative policy design has often failed 'to stick'. Even in London's case, despite thirty years of progress, transformation is still incomplete with policy implementation often hampered by bureaucratic structures and regulatory oversight. This perhaps illustrates that when thinking through the optimal institutional forms for planning for, responding to, or recovering from shock events, a premium should be placed on developing and maintaining particular organisations traits that will allow proactive, adaptive and agile responses, based on well-tested plans and appropriate policy learning. Institutionally, this means promoting integrated and diverse procedures rather than siloed governance styles, readjusting decision-making to deal with a range of complex and unpredictable risks - not just within a singular or closed system but also across multiple networks and different scales of operation - and focusing upon new flexible and innovative institutional models rather than 'business as usual' practices.

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