

Terrorism, rugby, and hospitality: She'll be right

Abstract

In 2011, international attention was focussed on New Zealand, host of the Rugby World Cup (RWC 2011), which brought 133,200 visitors to New Zealand over a three-month period. This exploratory study, undertaken before the event, investigates the attitudes of hotel managers and staff as they prepared to host spectators, rugby teams, and media personnel. The aim of the study was to determine preparedness for an attack, and assess attitudes and approaches to risk management in relation to terrorism. Interview data collected from senior hospitality managers revealed a distinctly *laissez faire* approach to security, which is partly explained by Hofstede's (1984) low uncertainty avoidance category for New Zealand. This attitude is reputedly common in New Zealand, where it is proudly expressed as 'she'll be right'. It is hoped that this study will bring attention to the weak security measures in New Zealand, which would have been insufficient protection for life and property, had a serious terrorist attack been planned.

Keywords

Hotel management, New Zealand, security, safety, sports mega events, terrorism

1. Introduction

This study was prompted by concerns about the preparations for the 2011 Rugby World Cup. Rugby officials, government, police and other emergency services, and tourist and hospitality organisations had six years between winning the bid and hosting the event, but there was no indication of any preparations for a terrorist attack. Given the considerable literature about terrorists' use of international, media-friendly and high-profile events to publicise their causes to the international community (Hassan, 2012; Paraskevas, 2013), it seemed common-sense that the New Zealand government and emergency services would work with stakeholders such as the hospitality and events industries, to ensure the RWC2011 could not be disrupted by terrorists (see Bergesen, 2006; Larobina & Pate, 2009; Ruby, 2002). However, authorities focussed their attention instead, on how to host and move large numbers of people around, and how to manage intoxicated fans (Dudding, 2010; McRoberts, 2010; Vass, 2010). There was no evidence in the media of heightened security

measures other than around the racketeering of tickets ("Ticket scalpers warned of tough action," 2011).

Between 1972 and 2003, sports events were disrupted by terrorism 168 times - an average of five attacks per annum (Taylor & Toohey, 2007). Although there is no comprehensive list, there have been several recent major attacks on sporting events such as the bombings of the Boston Marathon in 2013, the Tamil New Year Marathon in 2008 ("Ten sporting events that came under terror attack," 2013), and the 2010 bombing of fans at a Rugby World Cup game in Uganda, which killed over 50 people (Lee, 2013).

The New Zealand RWC2011 games were played in eleven cities, with the finals at Eden Park stadium in Auckland. 'Rugby fever' was so strong, the Prime Minister (John Key) boasted that games would be played to 'a stadium of four million' (Economic Development Agencies of New Zealand, 2011); that is, every New Zealander was expected to watch the games and support their All Black team. Such widespread attention from a small population added to the challenge of providing a safe environment for the games, which coincided with the tenth anniversary of the destruction of New York's Twin Towers on 11th September 2001 (9/11). This, combined with the media attention and size of the event, increased the likelihood of an attack because of the enhanced opportunities for publicity. Data after the RWC2011 show that international guest nights rose 21% in 2011, with most visitors coming from Australia, the United Kingdom (UK) and France. Between July and September, visitors' spending on retail, accommodation and restaurants was estimated at \$387m (Statistics New Zealand, 2012). This was a significantly sized event for a small country to host.

The aim of this study was therefore to investigate hotel operators' attitudes to risk management prior to the event, to determine whether the industry was adequately prepared to host the RWC2011 safely. Determining attitudes and levels of preparedness in the face of a potential attack can help with future risk management by highlighting any weaknesses and possible causes. The study also aims to add to the growing body of literature on terrorist attacks, as there is no prior research on hotel operators' attitudes to a potential terrorist attack on a specific event.

2. Literature review

2.1 *Terrorism at sports events*

Mega events such as international sports tournaments increase the likelihood of terrorist attacks, on both the games venues and on hotels. Sport facilitates hospitable relations between regions and peoples and focuses the attention of different people on a single goal, which can bring disparate elements of a group together, or create a sense of well-being or healing after a traumatic time (Branscombe & Wann, 1991; Goldberg, 2000; Kavetsos & Szymanski, 2010; Reid, 2006). There are significant economic benefits of a successful and incident-free sports event (Barclay, 2009; Brown, 2004; Burgan & Mules, 1992), so the waiting lists to host major events such as the Olympic Games are often long. However, as Czula (1978) pointed out in a review of the Munich Olympics assassinations, politics often influence participation in sporting events through boycotts or protests, disrupting the potential benefits to hosts and participants.

The terrorists responsible for shooting two tourists in New Delhi prior to the Commonwealth Games in 2010, caused several New Zealand and Australian athletes to withdraw from the games due to security fears. Terrorists have a range of methods for disrupting such events, such as explosives and other incendiary devices, bio-terrorism, food terrorism, nuclear terrorism, cyber-terrorism, suicide bombings, kidnappings, and hostage taking (Bergesen, 2006; Bloom, 2007; Tosini, 2009; Yoon & Shanklin, 2007). The impacts of such measures on tourism and sporting events have been extensively examined (e.g. Clark, 2004; Estell, 2002; Reisinger & Mavondo, 2005; Taylor & Toohey, 2007; Toohey & Taylor, 2008), and can be far reaching. Crisis planning in hotels has also been examined (e.g. Pennington-Gray, Thapa, Kaplanidou, Cahyanto, & McLaughlin, 2011; Wang & Ritchie, 2010; 2012; 2013), but until now there has been no study of hotel operators' actual preparations for a large sporting event.

2.2 *Terrorist attacks on hospitality operations*

Because hotels and bars often host large groups of people, along with places of worship, educational institutes, transport systems, sports arenas, hospitals and businesses, they are obvious targets for terrorists. A major hotel attack occurred in 1946, when the King David Hotel in Jerusalem was bombed, killing 91 people and injuring 46 (Hoffman, 2006). In 1971, McGurk's Bar in Belfast, Northern Ireland,

was bombed, killing 15 people, and injuring a further 17 (MacAirt, 2012). Other significant attacks include the Bali Bombings of Paddy's Bar and Sari Nightclub in 2002, killing 202 (Sheridan, 2002) and the Mumbai Bombings of the Taj Mahal Palace and Tower in 2008, killing 101 and injuring around 200 (Gupta, 2008). Whereas the perpetrators of the Bali bombings claimed they did not intend to kill so many (Sheridan), the Taj Mahal attack was apparently launched because of the number of Westerners regularly staying at the hotel (Gupta). Wernick and von Glinow (2012) noted an increase in attacks on hotels since 9/11, especially luxury properties, whereas Paraskevas (2013) argues that all hotels are vulnerable, citing the 2010 attacks on both the Park Residence and Hamid guesthouses in a secure area of Kabul.

Being open and welcoming to all, hotels are vulnerable to attacks because they provide a low chance of failure (Pizam, 2010). Although they have a responsibility to protect their guests (e.g. Feickert, Verma, Plaschka, & Dev, 2006; Groenenboom & Jones, 2003; Lashley, 2000; Palmer, 1989) as Lisante (1972, p. 2) explains, they are really just 'private property with public areas', so are particularly exposed to risk. Pennington-Gray *et al.* (2011) found that hospitality organisations in the United States (US) have a high level of preparedness, and Enz (2009) observed that many large hotels are now designed with in-built security features. While traditional terrorist targets become more fortified (Brandt & Sandler, 2010), by comparison, hospitality businesses are becoming more exposed because of their multiple access points and regular use of temporary (and therefore unknown) staff for large events (Cetron, 2006; Clement, 2011; Frewin, 2004).

An analysis of terrorist events involving hospitality properties reveals 50 terrorist incidents between 2001 and 2011, leaving 915 people dead and 2095 injured (Peter, 2012). As hotels are becoming increasingly common targets, perceptions of risk in affected areas likely to negatively affect tourism in those locations. This study is therefore interested in how hotel operators in New Zealand anticipated and prepared for a terrorist attack, in order to protect the safety of their guests and employees.

2.3 Responsibility for guest safety

Lashley (2000, p. 6) considers a host's duty is to protect 'not only immediate family but also guests', citing the Shakespearean murder of Duncan by his host Macbeth, as a particularly abhorrent breach of this sacred responsibility. Telfer's (2000, p. 39)

view is that hospitality has always been ‘a kind of sanctuary, and the host was thought of as having a solemn obligation to make sure no harm came to his guest while under his roof’. O’Gorman (2007; 2009) explained that this duty of care for strangers was known as *philoxenos* in Ancient Greece, which translates as ‘love of strangers’, based on the idea that a stranger might be a deity in human form.

When travellers are in unfamiliar environments they are more susceptible to harm, so consider their hotel as a sanctuary, or refuge (Hemmington, 2007). Ritchie (2008) warns that tourists are often unfamiliar with emergency procedures or even the geography of their locations, so are vulnerable targets. Hospitality has therefore been historically concerned with security; as Nailon (1981, p. 4) noted, ‘the essential components appreciated by the travellers emerge of a welcoming host, attentive staff and security from the elements and evil-doers’. Notwithstanding the well-cited responsibilities of hoteliers, there have been several successful attacks on hotels. In view of these philosophical and historical duties of care, it might reasonably be expected that hoteliers offering accommodation during a mega (sporting) event would address any likely safety or security issues associated with the event, and so meet their responsibilities for guest safety. Attitudes to risk management are therefore explored.

2.4 *The New Zealand psyche*

The potential influence of national characteristics on attitudes to preparation is also examined in this study. Some cultures are risk-averse, whereas others are more accepting of risk. McKenna (1993, p. 39) offers two possible reasons for high levels of risk acceptance: ‘unrealistic optimism and illusion of control’. The lack of apparent security measures in preparation for the RWC2011 suggested that New Zealanders may be part of the ‘unrealistically optimistic’ category, having illusions of control over matters in which they have little real influence.

In a well-cited study of national characteristics, Hofstede (1984, p. 82) defined cultures as ‘the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or society from those of another’. He compared individuals and companies from different countries and found that individuals working for the same parent company but in different countries exhibited different responses and behaviours, whereas individuals working in the same countries, even for different

companies, had similar responses. From this he concluded there are very generalised but none-the-less significant national characteristics. While this does not mean that individuals in the same country will behave uniformly, there are specific characteristics reputed to exist, such as (for example) the Swiss's attention to precision, or the Scots' reluctance to spend money. New Zealanders' characteristics are perhaps best described as relaxed, inventive, and fearless, exemplified by national heroes such as mountaineer Sir Edmund Hillary ("On top of the world: Ed Hillary," 2013) and motorcycle speed record holder, Bert Munro (Ryan, 2011). The lack of concern about terrorism prior to the RWC2011 is consistent with Hofstede's (p. 83) classification of New Zealand as having low uncertainty avoidance, which he describes as 'the degree to which members of a society feel uncomfortable with uncertainty and ambiguity'. The absence of media interest in terrorism and prevention against terrorist attacks prior to the event, suggests that those involved in preparations for the RWC2011 were comfortable with the uncertainty around the possibility of an attack, despite the 2010 attacks on Rugby World Cup fans in Uganda (Lee, 2013).

2.5 Summary

Toohy and Taylor (2008) warned that as there have been several terrorist attacks at sporting events, it is important to minimise risks through judicious management. Furthermore, as stadia are increasingly better designed, venues such as hotels become more exposed to risks, being softer targets (e.g. Paraskevas, 2013; Pizam, 2010; Wernick & Von Glinow, 2012). The following section will therefore overview the approach taken to determine the attitudes of hotel managers towards security for the RWC2011, with particular emphasis on the potential for a terrorist attack.

3. Research method

As no prior studies could be found examining hotel operators' security preparations for a specific sporting event, this study takes an exploratory approach. Qualitative data were collected in semi-structured interviews with hotel managers and helped develop an understanding of perspectives on security (see Altinay & Paraskevas, 2008). Given the sensitivity of information sought (field work was undertaken in the weeks prior to the RWC2011), a large-scale quantitative survey tool was not utilised, as this would have been unlikely to produce sufficient responses for a robust analysis. Interview data were considered more helpful in understanding the thinking behind what seemed to be a *laissez faire* approach leading up to this major event (see Denzin

& Lincoln, 2000; Neuman, 1997). As all hotels are regarded as soft targets for terrorists (e.g. Paraskevas, 2013), the sample included properties hosting teams, officials, media, dignitaries, volunteers and supporters.

3.1 Research question and interview questions

The central purpose of the study was to determine whether the New Zealand hospitality industry was adequately prepared to host mega events safely, which involved examining attitudes towards safety preparation. All participants were asked the same questions, but as some offered supplementary information, probing questions were added as appropriate. Indicative questions were categorised under the headings of security preparation, guidance and support from authorities, policies and manuals, and insurers.

Security preparation included issues around staff training, security preparation and planning, and security vetting for staff. Questions sought to confirm or refute views in the relevant literature (e.g. Cetron, 2006; Clark, 2004; Frewin, 2004; Lisante, 1972; Pennington-Gray *et al.*, 2011; Stafford, Yu, & Armoo, 2002), which discussed the need for security planning and preparation, so explored the participant property's level of preparedness. Questions around guidance and support tried to identify levels and types of support provided by relevant authorities, and were arrived at after considering issues related to providing security and who was ultimately responsible (e.g. Amur, 2005; Burton, 2005; Groenenboom & Jones, 2003). The category related to policies and manuals sought to identify any operating procedures that might help protect against attacks, and processes in the case of an attack. This category arose from the literature on security preparedness and forms of terrorist attacks (e.g. Bergesen, 2006; Hanna, 2011; Stafford *et al.*; Tosini, 2009). Insurance questions aimed at finding out whether properties had any difficulties securing insurance for the RWC2011, and whether extra clauses or caveats were placed on them. Literature that discussed the difficulties of securing insurance, the effects of political ideology on attitudes towards insurance, and risk sensitivity and aversion (e.g. Davies & Lamont, 2010; McKenna, 1993; Savun & Phillips, 2009) informed this category of questions.

3.2 Data collection

Interviews were conducted in Wellington where the primary researcher was domiciled, as he had industry contacts from industry and teaching experience there.

Wellington hosted eight games and nine teams over 64 nights (Wellingtonnz.com, 2009), with the first on September 11th 2011 (International Rugby Board, 2011). It is the capital of New Zealand with a city population of 200,100, (UNData, 2013) and was preparing to accommodate 5000 bed nights during the tournament (Wellingtonnz.com, 2009).

Participants were recruited from a representative range of properties using personal networks. A purposive sample ensured a representative range of property size, location (i.e. inner city or suburbs), ownership, and age, sex, and management experience of interviewees. Recruits were initially contacted by telephone, and once they had agreed in principle to participate, arrangements were completed by email. Managers of eleven properties were initially approached, and of these, eight agreed to participate; those who declined cited concerns about discussing their security arrangements.

The RWC2011 commenced in September 2011, and interviews were conducted in July and August that year. Each took around an hour and was recorded and fully transcribed by the primary researcher; codes (P1 – P8) were then allocated to protect participants' identities.

3.3 Analysis

A thematic analysis was used to identify themes within the data. Thematic analysis is useful for reporting and analysing the experiences of participants (Braun & Clarke, 2006), and in this study helped identify 'underlying ideas, assumptions and conceptualisations' at the latent level (p. 84). After the recordings had been transcribed, representative quotes were used to generate initial codes, which were later grouped into themes. These themes were then carefully reviewed, and the data searched for further codes within each theme. When the data's potential to surrender further codes and themes was exhausted, the resultant themes were examined for a linking pattern, and idiosyncratic themes discarded. This final step resulted in the six cohesive themes presented in the results section, which are graded progressively within the overall theme of attitude to risk.

4. Results

4.1 Participant profiles

Of the eight participants, five were male, their management experience varied from eight months to 18 years, and their ages from 26 to 55 years. Individual properties ranged in size from 52 to 260 guest rooms, and staffing levels, from 9 to 200 staff. Being an exploratory study the sample was relatively small, but still included a wide cross-section of hospitality professionals in terms of age, gender, and experience. There was an even mix of local and international brands in the sample.

Code	Employees	Rooms / Beds	Property type
P1	> 20	50 - 100 rooms	Apartments
P2	150 - 200	175 - 200 rooms	3 - 4 star hotel
P3	50 - 75	50 - 100 rooms	3 - 4 star hotel
P4	50 - 75	175 - 200 rooms	3 - 4 star hotel
P5	>20	201 - 250 beds	2 star hostel
P6	150 - 200	251 - 300 rooms	3 - 4 star hotel
P7	76 - 100	175 - 200 rooms	5 star hotel
P8	20 - 50	175 - 200 beds	2 star hostel

Table 1: Participant profiles

4.2 Thematic analysis

Results are presented by theme in order of non-compliance, and codes that were identified during the analysis are used as headings within each theme. The final themes were:

1. She'll be right
2. Near enough
3. Waiting for help
4. Supported
5. Somewhat prepared
6. Compliant

The first four themes largely relate to inaction, whereas the last two involve some kind of preparation for a terrorist attack. The over-arching theme was a laissez-faire attitude to security, although this was less apparent in participants who had worked in Australia.

4.2.1 She'll be right (we are not doing anything different)

Participants were probed about preparations such as trial runs, emergency procedure practices, structural changes, vetting of employees and contractors, and support from external agencies. While a few were pro-active, preparations related more to

operational issues than security, and managers of smaller properties were making few concessions. Categories under the 'she'll be right' theme reflected a confidence in external agencies such as the police, a vague sense that all was well, and a sense of immunity from disaster.

We know our suppliers

Most participants did not conduct checks on their suppliers. One (P1) worked only with reputed suppliers and tradesmen, '*not Joe Bloggs from Tawa*', and another (P3) explained that he did not '*change them every week*'. Their complacency revealed a serious weakness that could have undermined any security preparations they might have made. A terrorist could easily join a supplier's company and have access to the hotel almost immediately, because the supplier was well known and trusted.

Local councils had provided information about alcohol sales, street closures, crowd control and food hygiene, but responses revealed more concern about accidental food contamination than anything deliberate.

We actually trust them and we know who we are dealing with ... knowing whatever food or supplies they are providing us is ... in good condition (P3).

Everything is under control

There was a vague sense that all was well, and there was no need to worry.

Walk-ins [i.e. unreserved guests] ... pay upfront. Probably doesn't help if they have ulterior motives ... but I've found it easier to fall in ... with the 'she'll be right' attitude (P1).

I take it that everybody is just doing their own thing and organising their own details regarding RWC (P3).

I am confident that the New Zealand Government and the team organising the whole thing have done everything to make sure such [an] act doesn't occur (P3).

We probably have [information] in our health and safety procedures for things like bomb alert or some kind of threat (P4).

It won't happen to us

There was also a sense of immunity from disaster.

New Zealand is 'see what comes' ... hey we've got the Rugby World Cup coming – aren't we great – open the doors and don't rip people off with \$800 a night rooms. I believe there is meant to be security but we are not doing anything different (P1).

I guess we do get into a - 'it is not going to happen to us' (P4).

New Zealand is considered to be a pretty safe place and pretty far away from international politics (P6).

Sit tight – we have standard procedures

The 'sit tight' category reflects a sense of knowing that something might go wrong, but hoping it will not. Three participants were relying on their standard crisis management procedures, one of which had apparently been provided by HANZ (Hotel Association of New Zealand), their professional association.

Keep calm, try to get as much information from the person on the phone. Try to get as much detail as possible. Try to identify where the bomb is. What does the person sound like... 12 step...12 bullet points (P1).

HANZ put out one, which is for a bomb threat, terrorism threat. So whoever is on duty will quickly try and get the gist. We will reinforce that before the games. It is part of our everyday (P4).

There is a manual on emergencies and bomb threats. [If there is a bomb threat] we immediately call the police and get instructions from the police. The police will ask relevant questions and we will also evacuate the building or stop anybody from entering into the building (P6).

There was no standard operating procedure for hosting properties, or any specific policy or procedure except the HANZ checklist held by P4, and a half page of instructions of uncertain origins mentioned by P1. One participant referred to emergency training coordinated by the on-site manager.

We have ... training regarding armed hold-up or terrorism... and staff who have gone through that. Our manager who lives on site is actually quite vigilant on those areas so he is constantly feeding us information as to what to be aware of and how to act in such instances (P3).

No need to change anything

None of the participants planned structural changes to their properties and seemed surprised to be asked if they would (for example) erect barriers to their property. Concrete barriers or bollards can be used to protect from car or truck bombs, or even just unwanted extra visitors. They were also asked if they planned to test their security systems and identify any weaknesses, but none did, suggesting that they were confident in their processes, or had nothing to test. One talked of a trial run, but this

was in relation to operational processes during a coming busy period, rather than testing of a security system.

It will be interesting with how housekeeping is going to work with 38 arrivals, 42 departures... (P1).

This response revealed a concerning naïveté about terrorism, as the participants' main concern was an operational issue that would not even arise in a larger property (the largest hotel in New Zealand is the Rendezvous Grand Hotel in Auckland with just 452 rooms (New Zealand Tourism, 2013), so the scale of activities is relatively small compared to other countries). Most participants had no intention of testing anything prior to the event, and two even stated they saw no reason to do so. They seemed very relaxed, and taking a 'business as usual' approach.

We just take it as part of our normal business ... we are (not) treating these games any differently (P2).

There is a general understanding of how we handle these people anyway. We'll just be adhering to that. We know the process (P7).

4.2.2 Near enough (we know the fire drill)

Seven participants intended to practise their fire drills prior to the RWC, perhaps thinking these may be useful for any kind of emergency. Evacuation drills are no protection against a terrorist threat, yet all mentioned them, perhaps because they included some procedures that might be useful in a bomb-scare or attack.

We do our fire drills and we do all the basic things to ensure the staff is well equipped to deal with cases of emergencies (P6).

Security wise – more on what to do in an emergency...a more general approach...what to do in a fire or earthquake (P8).

4.2.3 Waiting for help (nobody has told us what to do)

Most were awaiting advice or guidance from the police, their insurers, the council, or their professional associates, but little was forthcoming.

Hotels meet once a month informally just to discuss issues but there has been no concentrated subject about security preparations being discussed. If anything it has been [about] the bad media relating to room charges or it's been the slowness of ticket sales or the effect of the Christchurch earthquake on RWC and logistics or it's been about the shortage of skilled staff but nothing at all about security (P2).

No instructions or extra leaflets or advertising material came through the mail. No offering of any courses or guidelines (P2).

As a result, participants had to decide how to best prepare for an attack. Some guidance was provided to larger properties hosting teams or VIPs, but all participants felt under-supported, and wanted more guidance from those in authority. Managers of backpacker hostels and smaller hotels that accommodated international supporters had received no support or guidance from the police.

Nobody from the police has approached us saying what we have to do and if anything happens ... this what we have to do (P3).

Similarly, none had received advice or directives from their insurers, revealing a weakness that extended well beyond the hotel sector. One participant (P1) revealed his unease with this situation:

I keep going back to this 'she'll be right' [attitude]. I think we take that a bit too far (P1).

4.2.4 Supported (we've been asked to do certain things)

Although there had been no security requests from participating teams, supporters, media and officials, participants from the two larger properties (P6 & P7) had received directives from government agencies and the RWC Committee, but did not provide much detail about these.

Vetting has been done by them [the police] - they have been directly in touch... providing instructions regarding VIPs and what the requirements are (P6).

The police and the other departments and agencies are surrounding and covering off security for the city (P7).

A number of government security departments are asking us to do certain things. They are talking to us about the implications of security for themselves. We are pretty security conscious anyway. We'll close off the drive through (P7).

4.2.5 Somewhat prepared (we've increased security)

Participants of smaller hotels planned to increase their uniformed security presence, which is common when large numbers of guests are expected, but little protection against a terrorist threat.

We will have [a security company] do walk-throughs of the building probably three times a night (P1).

There will be extra security in the bar (P3).

We are having an outside security firm assist us during the peak period.... they will just have a presence around the place (P4).

We've vetted our staff

Although participants did not normally undertake pre-employment security checks, those from larger hotels (P6 & P7) had changed their procedures for the RWC.

We have been requested to provide a declaration from each of our staff that allows the police to search their criminal record (P7).

For these two hotels, security checks would be able to reveal criminal records, and therefore identify applicants who may pose a security risk.

We've vetted our suppliers

Three participants (P4, P5 & P7) had been directed to conduct security checks on their suppliers for the RWC. The guidelines sent them by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF) had been generated in May 2011 and the first participant to mention it had sighted the document in late July, just six weeks before the event. The other two participants that mentioned this document had not yet read it.

We've vetted all our contactors. They work for the companies that are our preferred suppliers (P1).

We'll talk about security

Some planned to brief staff on security issues, but at the time of the interview did not have specific agendas, other than the confidentiality of their guest list, rejecting walk-ins, and talking about 'different scenarios that may arise': *We'll be having world cup specific meetings where security might be a point (P6).*

4.2.6 Compliant (we're being audited)

This theme represents the most heightened state of preparedness for a terrorist attack. Only two hotels in the study were working with police and event coordinators, and the only specific preparations identified were the vetting of staff and food suppliers. However, this may have related to food poisoning incidents suffered by the New Zealand rugby team in the past (see Gray, 2012).

There is vetting for everybody and that is one of the requirements for the RWC... we are being audited by RWC and the person from the council (P6).

We have been requested to provide a declaration from each of our staff that allows the police to search their criminal (sic) record ... all they are trying to do is ascertain that there is no one in the organisation that poses a threat... we have been requested to meet with and comply with MAF and police requirements over the food chain. They are coming in to audit that (P7).

Overall there was remarkably little security preparation being undertaken for such a large event, and participants were more focussed on operational issues than on the risks to their properties, staff, and guests if a terrorist attack occurred. Their somewhat cavalier attitude was at variance with the traditional responsibilities of hosts, but strongly reflective of a tendency to inaction, which will be explored in the discussion section.

5. Discussion

Although hotel managers may worry that overt security measures may be unwelcoming or generate anxiety in guests (Chan & Lam, 2013; Groenenboom & Jones, 2003; Wernick & Von Glinow, 2012), this was not a consideration with this study's participants. Some participants thought New Zealand was not a terrorism risk because of its physical isolation, or because Kiwis (i.e. New Zealanders) are known as fun-loving, non-aggressive people whose international involvement is mostly in humanitarian, peace-keeping and rebuilding efforts. This view may resonate with the many New Zealanders who have a relaxed 'she'll be right' approach to life, as an optimistic 'can do' attitude is regarded with some pride as a national characteristic. This attitude can manifest as a tendency to ignore irritating details and obstacles to achieving a goal, hoping that these will somehow disappear, and everything will work out perfectly.

The 'she'll be right' attitude was the strongest single theme in the data, and was represented to some extent in each of the other five themes. In 1955, Anglican priest Peter Cape, wrote a ballad called *She'll be Right* (see Archer, 2013); one verse is appropriately about rugby:

*When they've finished off your forwards, and yer backs are wearin' thin,
And the second spell's half over and you've forty points to win,
And this hulkin' wing-three-quarter's got his teeth stuck in your shin,
Well don't worry mate, she'll be right.
She'll be right mate, she'll be right,*

Don't worry mate, she'll be right.

You won't worry who's the loser when you meet down at the boozier,

So don't worry mate, she'll be right.

One of Hofstede's (1984) four dimensions can also be used to explain this study's findings. Countries that scored high on Hofstede's Uncertainty Avoidance scale had societies that required strict rules, regulations, procedures and formal protocols to function. Those that scored lower were more relaxed, and more tolerant of mistakes. In a ranking of 1 – 50, with 1 being the least concerned with uncertainty, New Zealand was ranked 14th. Hofstede (p. 83) explains that the fundamental issue of uncertainty avoidance is 'how a society reacts on the fact that time only runs one way and that the future is unknown: whether it tries to control the future or to let it happen'. New Zealanders are therefore likely to be comfortable with an unknown future, so instead of trying to control an outcome, they let it happen. That is, they take a 'she'll be right' approach to the future, as suggested in this study.

Following a magnitude 7 earthquake in Taranaki, New Zealand in 2012, Civil Defence officers complained that 'she'll be right' is not good enough for emergency preparations (Ewing, 2012). The report notes that less than half the local residents had a survival kit of food and water, even though Christchurch had suffered a major earthquake the year before, and all New Zealanders were reminded to prepare for natural disasters. As one officer complained, 'the New Zealand psyche of "she'll be right"', is no use in an emergency.

Wang and Ritchie (2010) suggested that inaction with respect to a possible negative event may be caused by the perception that action is someone else's responsibility, a perception evident in Theme 3, 'Waiting for help'. While inaction such as sitting tight, or waiting for help is no doubt common, this is also a risky approach to potential danger. The RWC2011 was the largest sporting event to be held in New Zealand (*The Stadium of Four Million*, 2012), and its success undoubtedly increased New Zealand's chances of hosting future mega events. However, the 1985 French government's attack on the *Rainbow Warrior* Greenpeace ship demonstrates that New Zealand is not immune to terrorist attacks (Veitch, 2010). With improved security at airports and high-profile venues elsewhere, it is perhaps only time before terrorists focus more intensively on softer targets such as hotels. Hotel managers cannot afford

to expose their staff and guests to unnecessary risks, are recommended to routinely assess and mitigate risks to an acceptable level, and thereby meet their responsibilities as hosts and employers.

Shellum (2003) found that the low probability of a terrorist attack can act as a barrier to preparation; indeed, crisis planning in the accommodation industry is notably poor (see Hystad & Keller, 2008; Okumus, Altinay, & Arasli, 2005; Okumus & Karamustafa, 2005). Participants in this study were also poorly prepared, perhaps preferring to focus on more likely events such as product or service failures. Lessons to be drawn from this may include the need to more carefully balance much needed preparations for known events (e.g. guest arrivals) with those less likely to occur, such as fire, natural disasters, and terrorism. Whereas hotels in New Zealand are legally bound to reduce risks caused by fire and earthquakes (see New Zealand Government, 2006), preparations for terrorism are voluntary, and therefore less common. However, as preparation for a potential attack is an important deterrent (Radlauer, 2006), there are valid reasons for taking the threat of terrorism seriously. Some hotels have increased their security since the Mumbai attacks (Norton, 2010), but the industry lacks specified security standards, and security efforts vary not just from brand to brand, but also within brands (Brady, 2009).

6. Conclusions and implications

The RWC2011 was an economic and sporting success attracting fans from around the world to an exciting festival of sport – which New Zealand won. This festival, along with the London Olympics and Paralympics the following year, finished without incident. However, complacency is an inappropriate approach to terrorism, especially when combined with the New Zealanders' relaxed attitude to risks revealed in this study. As one of the participants noted in an email after his interview:

I trust that the next few weeks will go peacefully and that we will not write a dramatic postscript to the report (P2).

Fortunately there was no dramatic postscript, but results of this study indicate that this is more by chance than proactive crisis planning. Further research is therefore needed into security issues in New Zealand, to help develop an awareness of risks, and how to systematically mitigate them. The laissez-faire approach to risk management evident in this study may not necessarily be confined to preparation for a terrorist

attack. As inadequate preparations may be indicative of a general disregard to non-routine events, it would be useful to interview hotel managers about their responses to the Christchurch earthquake, and determine whether the preparations for this kind of event were adequate and implemented.

Taking a more positive view, it is also possible that the relaxed attitudes of New Zealand hoteliers enables them to react calmly in difficult situations, managing their way through situations for which they are unprepared. Working without rules or guidelines in a crisis requires good decision-making and a calm approach. Perhaps the New Zealand psyche provides an advantage in this respect, as panic or reliance on guidelines will not always work in a crisis, when managers need to make fast decisions with imperfect information (Stafford *et al.*, 2002).

The implications of being unprepared for a terrorist attack in most cases, are that more time and effort can be spent on routine matters such as improving products and services. Furthermore, as prevention and preparation activities incur costs, ignoring preparations enables operators to avoid costs, which will ultimately result in higher room rates (Amur, 2005). However, if poor security creates a softer target (Pizam, 2010), attacks are more likely, resulting most probably in injuries, loss of life, damage to buildings, and a multitude of bureaucratic issues such as increased insurance and legal wrangles about the liabilities of unprepared hotel operators (see Wernick & Von Glinow, 2012).

While it is a calculated risk to ignore an improbable but none-the-less possible event, if the unlikely occurs, hotel operators must face the consequences. This is not the only study to find that accommodation operators are unprepared for the unexpected. Shellum's (2003) finding that hotel managers are largely unprepared for crises suggests that the results of this study have implications for those beyond New Zealand, where the risk may be significantly higher. Most importantly, the study highlights a somewhat cavalier attitude to the notion of host responsibility, hopefully bringing attention to the need to improve security measures in hotels for the protection of staff and guests.

Hotel operators are recommended to maintain guest security systems and procedures to help deter attackers, and in high-risk areas and during periods of instability, to raise

levels of awareness and security to counter the increased risk. Paraskevas's (2013) anti-terrorist strategy for hotels recommends steps to take at both low and high-risk levels. Implementing some of these recommendations would go some way to making many hotels safer against terrorist attacks, while also addressing more likely risks such as fire.

6.1 Future study and limitations

This study was initially designed to explore the attitudes of managers to security at a specific mega event (i.e. RWC2011). However, as a result of participants' responses, the literature on crisis planning and management was consulted after the fieldwork had finished, and found to provide further questions on general disaster and crisis management. This would be a productive topic for further study, and may reveal similar attitudes to those identified in this study.

Ritchie, Bentley, Koruth and Wang (2011) also noted that research is needed on the relationship between security, star rating, branding or nationality of an organisation. Such a study would probably benefit from using a large-scale quantitative survey to identify the strengths of relationships between factors, although Ritchie *et al.* (p. 384) warn that 'managers' self-assessment of crisis preparedness may be different from reality'.

Hopefully this exploratory study has prepared the way for further research comparing attitudes at different types and sizes of properties, branded and unbranded properties, or investigating the views of customers, especially sports fans travelling to large events. However, more importantly, it is hoped to bring attention to risks of all kinds, and the need for hotel managers to be vigilant and aware of the responsibilities of their roles as hosts.

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