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## Research Paper

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

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## ABSTRACT

In 2011, international attention was focused 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.

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## 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 \$387 m

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(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 are 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

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