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Plan for the worst, hope for the best? Exploring major events related terrorism and future challenges for UK event professionals

Daniel Baxter, Jenny Flinn and Lucrezia Flurina Picco

Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to investigate major event related terrorism and the resulting challenges that event professionals may face when hosting major events in cities as part of a destination marketing strategy.

Design/methodology/approach – The research was based in the UK due to the significant rise in terrorist activities that have taken place in its urban cities in recent years. The exploratory nature of this study utilised semi-structured interviews with UK event professionals, enabling a preliminary, in-depth investigation of the challenges that events professionals face as a result of major event related terrorism.

Findings – The research findings identify three challenges faced by event professionals when organising major events: knowledge and understanding in relation to major event related terrorism; the impact of major event related terrorism in terms of responsibility and accountability; and managing for major event related terrorism in budgetary terms.

Research limitations/implications – The research is limited to the UK, other destinations will pose their own unique challenges when hosting and managing events. It is suggested that this research be evaluated against similar studies in other destinations. This is a preliminary study and each of the topics identified within the findings warrant further exploration in their own right.

Originality/value – The paper offers an insight into the challenges faced by event professionals in the UK when delivering major events as part of a destination marketing strategy. With the increase in major event related terrorism in cities the findings of this research are of relevance not only to event professionals but anyone with a role in destination and tourism development.

Keywords Cities, Urban, Challenges, Terrorism, Event professionals, Major events

Paper type Research paper

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Introduction

In an increasingly homogenised world, cities, regions and nation states often seek to develop a portfolio of cultural assets as a means to create and enhance their destination image; positioning themselves in an ever competitive marketplace (Ritchie and Crouch, 2003). Major events regularly form a central part of this portfolio, acting as a showcase for the destination. They act as drivers of tourism, bringing large numbers of people to the host city and provide a unique opportunity to market the destination to a potentially global audience through the media attention that they attract (Dredge and Whitford, 2011; Raj *et al.*, 2013). Event professionals therefore play an increasingly important role in contributing to the overall image of the city. However, while events bring numerous benefits, if they are not managed correctly they can also garner negative attention that will detract from the destination's appeal (Kissoudi, 2010). As has been witnessed in recent times, the nature of major events makes them susceptible to terrorist attacks, which can be detrimental to the destination image. Not only do events afford the opportunity to inflict

major damage due to their size (Spaaij and Hamm, 2015) but the media coverage that they gain reaches a wide audience thereby fulfilling the aims of terrorist groups to create widespread fear and obtain international recognition (Lynn, 2012). In order for cities to be able to leverage major events to drive tourism and enhance their brand image, it is evident that they must be able to deliver such events safely and securely. Thus, with the varying risks associated with hosting major events it is imperative that those empowered with their delivery manage, plan and prepare for all eventualities.

Major events have historically been linked to terrorist activities with the attacks on the 1972 Olympic Games in Munich and the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games appearing to be the most noteworthy in the context of MERT research (Yarchi *et al.*, 2015; Spaaij and Hamm, 2015). Since 9/11, western societies have experienced an increase in terrorist activities (IEP, 2016) with major events considered as a sought after target (Spaaij, 2016). Much of the academic literature surrounding MERT has focussed specifically on major sporting events (Carroll *et al.*, 2014; Yarchi *et al.*, 2015) including those mentioned above and more recently the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing and 2015 Paris attacks, which impacted upon the security measures and budget for the 2016 UEFA Championships (Shepard, 2016). However, the recent rise in lone actor attacks indicates that cultural events are being increasingly targeted by terrorists, as can be seen in examples such as the 2016 Nice attack and 2017 Manchester Arena bombing. This justifies the need to explore event professional's perceptions of MERT and the implications for managing events safely and securely in western cities. The purpose of this paper is therefore to investigate MERT and explore the resulting challenges that event professionals may face when delivering major events in cities. It offers an insight into the issues faced by event professionals when delivering major events as part of a destination marketing strategy, highlighting the potential challenges that may arise when hosting future major events. The research is based in the UK due to the significant rise in terrorist activities that have taken place there in recent years (IEP, 2016); thus, enabling a preliminary exploration of the challenges that events professionals face within cities.

Understanding terrorism

Terrorism has been a topic of academic research for over 50 year yet no concise or widely accepted definition has been agreed upon (Schmid, 2004, 2011; Giuliannotti and Klauser, 2012; Dominguez, 2015, Tofangsaz, 2015; Sandler, 2016; Horgan, 2017). Any definition of terrorism will depend upon the observer's perception, location and opinion as explained by Teichmann (1996, p. 5) who states that, "the same kind of action will be described differently by different observers, depending on when and where it took place and whose side the observer is on". In defining terrorism for the purpose of this paper, no association is made with the generally positive connotation of a freedom fighter. Rather terrorism is found to utilise characteristics such as the unlawful use of violence; victimization of non-combatants; motivation by religious, political, or ideological belief; and the desire to reach international attention (Taylor, 1988; Enders and Sandler, 2002; Schmid, 2004; Department of Defence, 2016; Sandler, 2016). Terrorism has various complex social, political and economic characteristics (Giuliannotti and Klauser, 2012; Tofangsaz) and can also be identified in different forms (NACTSO, 2009). Schmid (2004) provides an encompassing description of the key characteristics of terrorism that is applicable to a variety of contexts, irrespective of the country in which terrorism is occurring or the industry(s) it is affecting (see Table I).

The characteristics outlined by Schmid (2004) assist in distinguishing terrorism from guerrilla or conventional warfare but much controversy exists with regards to the characteristics that are best suited to describe terrorism itself. The on-going academic and professional discourse shows the need to be explicit about exactly what is meant by the term for the purposes of this research. Therefore, a definition based upon the understandings of Schmid (2004), Sandler (2016) and the US Department of Defence (2016) is developed. Terrorism is identified as an act of violence against innocents that is based on ideological beliefs, has the goal to inflict maximum damage and/or create an atmosphere of fear; and is communicated to a large audience.

Since 9/11, western countries have become more aware of their vulnerability as targets for terror-related activities with an Al Qaeda propagandist stating that inflicting damage and
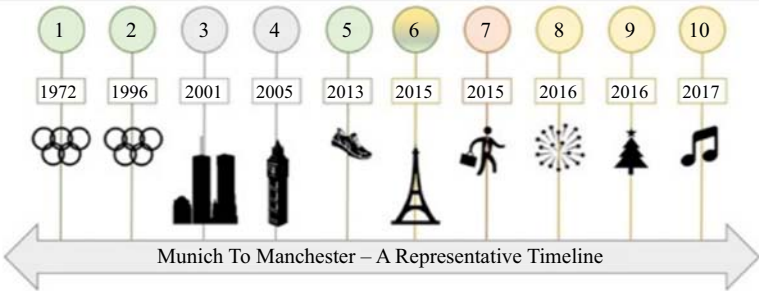
Table I	Defining characteristics of terrorism
Number	Key characteristic element of terrorism
1	The demonstrative violence against human beings
2	The (conditional) threat of (more) violence
3	The deliberate production of terror/fear in target groups
4	The targeting of civilians, non-combatants and innocents
5	The purpose of intimidation, coercion and/or propaganda
6	The fact that it is a method, tactic or strategy of conflict waging
7	The importance of communicating the act(s) of violence to larger audiences
8	The illegal, criminal and immoral nature of the act(s) of violence
9	The predominately political character of the act
10	Its use as a tool of psychological warfare to mobilise or immobilise sectors of the public

Source: Schmid (2004)

significant human losses at major events "is very easy, since there are numerous […] targets such as crowded sports arenas, annual social events, large international exhibitions [and] crowded buildings […]" (Abu Mus'ab al Suri, 2012, p. 249). This testimony demonstrates that major events are officially on the target list of terrorists. The Global Terrorism Index highlights the recent transnational tactics of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) combined with lone actor attacks as driving terrorism to its highest ever level. The increased frequency of terrorist threats and attacks (particularly in the UK, France and the USA) are impacting upon the public, various industry sectors and governments economically, socially and culturally (Baker, 2014; Berrebi and Klor, 2010; Marlett et al., 2003). Several member countries of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) have reported a sharp rise in acts of terror over the last three years; culminating in a 650 per cent increase in deaths from terrorism between 2014 (77 deaths) and 2015 (577 deaths), of which half resulted from attacks inspired or directed by ISIS (IEP, 2016). More recently, a change in tactic has been observed, with attacks increasingly carried out by lone actors (e.g. Boston Marathon bombing) and popular methods including vehicle-driven attacks (e.g. Berlin attack), home-built devices (e.g. Manchester Arena bombing) or the use of everyday objects (e.g. Nice attack). These changes are considered to be of significance for city tourism practitioners and event professionals, as lone actors and homemade devices are considerably harder to detect than a large terrorist cell or sophisticated explosives.

Major event related terrorism

As outlined previously, the 1972 Munich Olympics and 1996 Atlanta Olympics are regarded as the main MERT incidents prior to 9/11 (Boyle and Haggerty, 2009; Giuliannotti and Klauser, 2012; Spaaij and Hamm, 2015; Spaaij, 2016) with the Munich attack being considered to have had a significant impact on security arrangements for future events. As Spaaij (2016, p. 452) postulated, the incident was a "landmark in the intersection of terrorism and the Olympics". While both attacks undoubtedly led to stricter security measures for Olympic Games, 9/11 is thought to be the key turning point that has accelerated and amplified the course of security requirements for major events more generally (Spaaij, 2016). Despite the growing relationship between major events and terrorism no academic consensus appears to have been reached regarding which major events to include in studies on MERT in a post 9/11 context (Spaaij and Hamm, 2015; Yarchi et al., 2015; Spaaij, 2016). In order to demonstrate the evolution of MERT, a timeline of ten terrorist attacks which have either occurred at a major event or have had a direct impact on events in the period between the 1972 Munich massacre and the 2017 Manchester Arena bombing is presented in Table II. This highlights the variety of events that have been targeted and points to an increased frequency of attacks following 9/11 and particularly since 2013. While this timeline does not attempt to include every incident that occurred within the chosen period it highlights those attacks that have had the most saliency in the media, with many of these events having occurred too recently to be mentioned in academic studies. While the

Table II Representative timeline

Munich To Manchester – A Representative Timeline

No.	Terrorist Attack	Event Category	Impact
1	1972, Munich Massacre Munich, West Germany	Sporting event	Direct impact on security measures and budget of large sporting events (Spaaij, 2016)
2	1972, Atlanta Olympic Park Bombing Atlanta, GA, USA	Sporting event	Direct impact on security measures and budget of large sporting events (Spaaij, 2016)
3	2001, September 11 Attacks (9/11) New York City, NY, USA Arlington County, VA, USA Shanksville, PA, USA		Global impact across a variety of industries, including the event sector. Stringent security measures start to be introduced in public areas, predominantly airports, and at events (Spaaij, 2016)
4	2005, London Bombings (7/7) London, UK		Impacted the allocated security budget (more than £550m) and terrorism was identified as the greatest threat for the London Olympics. Occurred one day after the announcement of winning the did for the 2012 Olympics (Home Office, 2011)
5	2013, Boston Marathon Bombing Boston, MA, USA	Sporting event	Introduced awareness about vulnerability of public sporting events that are not confined to a securable venue
6	2015, Paris Attacks Paris, France	Cultural event Sporting event	Significant and direct impact on security measures and budget of the 2016 UEFA Championship (Shepard, 2016)
7	2015, San Bernardino Attack San Bernardino, CA, USA	Business event	Introduced awareness about vulnerability of business events which have low security in place

(continued)

Table II

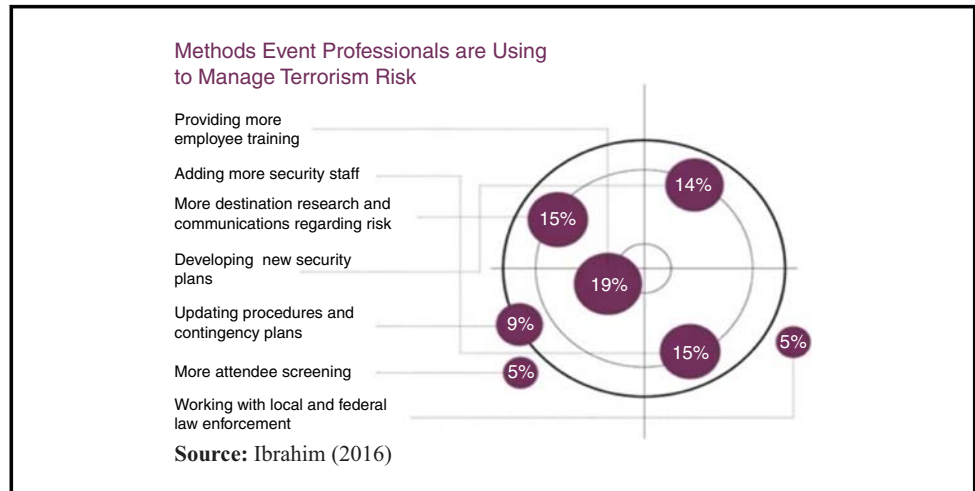| 8	2016, Nice Attack Nice, France	Cultural event	Introduced awareness about vulnerability of public spaces which are highly frequented during cultural events
9	2016, Berlin Attack Berlin, Germany	Cultural event	Highlighted the challenge of securing cultural events in public places, despite awareness of vulnerability
10	2017, Manchester Arena Bombing Manchester, UK	Cultural event	Highlighted vulnerability in securing perimeters of protected event venues

majority of MERT research tends to be focussed on major sporting events (Leopkey and Parent, 2009; Fourie and Santana-Gallego, 2011; Carroll *et al.*, 2014; Yarchi *et al.*, 2015; Spaaij and Hamm, 2015; Spaaij, 2016) the timeline demonstrates a clear shift in focus from sporting to cultural events. This can be explained by the increasingly stringent security measures adopted by sporting events (Boyle and Haggerty, 2009; Sugden, 2012) and the shifting modus operandi of terrorists outlined above.

The various factors outlined in the examples above have led to a tightening of security measures at major events, especially in the initial aftermath of an attack (Heward, 2017; Reuters, 2017; Scally, 2017). Several events in the UK adopted more stringent security as a result of recent attacks: Wimbledon 2017 was protected with a ring of steel (Sawyer, 2017), Glastonbury 2017 introduced extra bag searches and separate search lines (*Express*, 2017) and anti-terrorism barriers were installed at the Edinburgh International Festival in 2017 to prevent terrorists from driving vehicles into crowds (BBC, 2017). As a result of the threat of terrorism, the organising process for major events appears to have become much more complex and a professional approach towards risk management strategies and the implementation of security measures is required. While the risk of terrorism is just one amongst many to consider when planning and hosting an event (Leopkey and Parent, 2009; Piekarz *et al.*, 2015), the consequences of a successfully carried out attack are severe. An event security plan must therefore include strategies to "deter such [acts of terrorism] or to at least minimise their impact" (NACTSO, 2009, p. 5).

Ibrahim (2016) provides a useful study on the methods used by event professionals to manage the risk of terrorism with the risk management methods discussed being seen to reflect the security measures that are currently implemented at major events in the UK as is highlighted in Figure 1.

The method of providing more employee training appears to have become more important in the UK: The Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds specifically mentions the certification requirements for stewards at spectator events (DCMS, 2008, Section 4.8). Choosing to increase the number of security staff can also be observed at various events, for example, security presence was increased at Glastonbury 2017 in response to the London and Manchester attacks (*Express*, 2017). Regionally, in the UK, the organisers of TRNSMT festival in Glasgow decided to add more security staff and also employ civilian clothed police officers who monitored the crowd and looked for suspicious behaviour (McCool, 2017). Undertaking destination research and working with local stakeholders, including all security partners allows access to expert knowledge and shared resources. No indication is given as to whether the graph refers to attendee screening prior to the event or screening at egress and ingress points. Screening of bags before entering an event venue has, however, become common practice and restrictions on bag sizes have frequently been imposed (The SSE Hydro; Wimbledon). While all of these methods intend to make events more secure, they have subsequently led to an increase in security costs with an analysis conducted by the *Wall Street Journal* in 2004 highlighting the sharp rise in the security

Figure 1 Methods for managing terrorism risk

Methods Event Professionals are Using to Manage Terrorism Risk

Providing more employee training

Adding more security staff

More destination research and communications regarding risk

Developing new security plans

Updating procedures and contingency plans

More attendee screening

Working with local and federal law enforcement

14%
15%
19%
9%
15%
5%
5%

Source: Ibrahim (2016)

expenditures of the Summer Olympic Games post 9/11 (Sugden, 2012). Since this time, security costs have remained between $1bn and $2bn (McBride, 2016).

International sporting events such as the Olympic Games are expected to have sophisticated security measures in place and therefore require access to large security budgets (Giulianotti and Klauser). However, that this is not always the case with major events organised on a national scale that, despite their international recognition, will still be required to address security; but on a reduced budget. While there is limited data available, it can be suggested that increased measures of security will have a significant impact on the future budgets of major events such as Glastonbury, Wimbledon and the Edinburgh festivals. This suggests that the organisational costs for such events might increase in the future, potentially impacting upon their long-term sustainability.

MERT and the urban city

Events continue to be a key element used to develop and market destinations (Getz, 2008). They have a complex ambassadorial role for nations and regions, and have considerable economic, social, cultural and environmental impacts (Yeoman; Stokes). Event tourism within cities is an industry that is growing rapidly. Already established as a multi-million-pound industry event tourism engages planned events as a pull factor to attract tourists to the destination (Rajesh, 2014). Such initiatives encourage boosterism and provide the opportunity to develop the image of the city (Jones, 2001; Getz, 2005, 2013; Dansero and Putilli, 2010). Moreover, it encourages media attention, combats seasonality and attracts significant numbers of people. However, this can also bring various challenges to the destination.

It has been demonstrated that it is the very characteristics that make major events attractive to host destinations that also make them attractive to terrorists. They afford the opportunity to inflict maximum human losses and the presence of the media ensures that any attack is communicated to a large audience (Spaaij and Hamm, 2015; Yarchi et al., 2015). As mainstream and social media reporting on major events continues to grow, so to a platform to communicate to a large audience is created, thereby increasing the attractiveness for a terrorist attack (Giuliannotti and Klauser, 2012). It is therefore imperative that such events are delivered safely and securely in order to reflect a positive image that positions the city as both a dynamic and safe destination. Rather than hoping for the best, event professionals are challenged to plan for the worst and terrorism undoubtedly falls under the category of worst outcomes possible.

The increase in terrorism incidents in the UK have impacted the events industry significantly (Boyle and Haggerty, 2009; Giuliannotti and Klauser, 2012; Spaaij and Hamm, 2015; Spaaij, 2016) with Silvers (2008) suggesting that event professionals require not only a large scope of

knowledge, but also an awareness of the legal and ethical responsibilities commonly associated with events. As a result, event professionals will face new challenges when organising major events and by exploring their knowledge on MERT, this will act as a viable tool in creating synergies between event professionals and city tourism practitioners when using major events to develop city tourism strategies.

Research methodology

The study at hand seeks to address the development of MERT and investigate the resulting challenges that UK event professionals face when delivering major events. The exploratory nature of this study meant that an interpretivist paradigm was most appropriate with Black (2006, p. 319) suggesting that such an approach allows "the complexity and meanings of situations" to be addressed. This is further supported by Shaw (1999, p. 70) who argues that interpretivism lends the researcher the ability to "embrace the complex and dynamic quality of the social world and allows (him) to view a social research problem holistically, get close to participants, enter their realities and interpret their perceptions". Shaw's statement is considered to be of considerable relevance for this research as the subjective perceptions and opinions of UK event professionals are researched, interpreted and analysed. The observational nature of the research meant that an inductive approach was followed with Hyde (2000) defining this as a theory building approach that starts with observations and seeks to generalise the phenomenon that is being investigated. Rather than seeking to explicitly test one theory, the research aims to add to existing knowledge surrounding the challenges MERT presents to city destinations.

As the focus of the research sought to gain personal insights of UK event professionals, a qualitative research approach was considered to be the most appropriate strategy. This permitted for the flexibility required of the subject area (Creswell, 2013) and allowed for primary data to be gathered in the natural environment of the UK event industry. Semi-structured interviews were chosen as the most appropriate method enabling an in-depth understanding of the interviewee's views and opinions to be gained (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016). To prevent subjectivisms and impairing the research, careful attention was paid to the verbalisation of probing questions.

A staged sampling procedure was followed as outlined by Wilson (2014): first, the overall population was defined as event professionals who had been exposed to major events within the UK. Second, the sampling frame was selected from the researchers' networks and contacts which extended to both academics and practitioners with knowledge of the subject area. A combination of purposive sampling (Bryman and Bell, 2015) and convenience sampling (Wilson, 2014) was utilised to identify potential participants for the research. The sample size was then decided with Hoinville and Jowell (1985) arguing that sample size is a matter of judgement rather than calculation. Using an interpretivist approach and researching the phenomenon of MERT allowed for a small sample size. As the research was not looking to generalise findings or represent the opinions of an entire population, a sample size of five to ten participants was deemed to be appropriate for allowing in-depth knowledge to be gained and comparison of opinions to be made. Of the 12 event professionals contacted to participate a sample of five was gained. As can be seen in Table III these professionals demonstrate a range of expertise within the event management profession, creating a viable sample for this initial exploratory study. While it is acknowledged that the findings are not representative of all event professionals in the UK it should be noted that this research does not seek to create new theories but rather explore the phenomenon of MERT and understand the opinions and perceptions of UK event professionals, thereby determining the future challenges posed when organising major events in cities.

Interviews were conducted during July 2017 with the following research questions providing the underpinning for the interview schedule:

RQ1. What is the extent of knowledge of the UK event professionals in relation to terrorism and terrorism development?

RQ2. How do UK event professionals perceive the event industry to have been impacted by major event related terrorism?

Table III	Participant sample	
Code	Current profession	Areas of expertise
P1	Academic practitioner	Tour management, artist management and representation, crowd safety management, event management, festival marketing and promotion
P2	Resilience and contingencies manager (public sector)	Testing, exercise and readiness, contingency planning, crisis management, major sporting events, risk management
P3	Event company director (private sector)	Event logistic, event delivery, transport planning and management, contingency planning, crowd management
P4	Project manager (public sector)	International relations, government policy, external engagement, project management, communication, MICE sector
P5	Senior event management researcher	Crowd management, risk management, event planning and delivery, event tourism and policy, cultural events, mass participation sporting events

RQ3. What are the resulting challenges faced by UK event professionals in delivering future major events?

Despite the fact that this research adopted an inductive approach, an a priori (deductive) coding approach was adhered to when analysing the interview data. Using such an approach meant that emphasis was given to similarity of answers rather than the frequency of individual words when analysing the data. Three themes emerged which reflected the research questions posed: knowledge and understanding of event professionals in relation to MERT; the impact of MERT in terms of responsibility and accountability; and the future challenge of managing for MERT in budgetary terms. These themes are explored within the results section below.

Results

Knowledge and understanding

It was important to understand how event professionals defined and understood the concept of terrorism, as this would influence the way in which they managed for potential terror attacks. All of the participants identified at least one of the elements of terrorism discussed in the earlier literature review. They specifically highlighted the changing nature of terrorism and a shift from domestic terror attacks to those conducted on an international scale. As explained by Participant 2, "I think we have become far more aware of global terrorism as a whole world population. The levels of extremism have probably drifted from, in many respects, what would have been more considered domestic extremism probably 40-50 years ago to more global extremism". It was evident that event professionals recognised terrorism as a global issue and they further acknowledged that its focus and purpose is evolving with Participant 1 suggesting:

> In the past, it was more about making a statement. And if you look back to a significant number of the previous forms of terrorism that we dealt with, particularly in the UK, it seems looking back that it was the statement that was the important issue. Whereas I would suggest now it's the actual damage that can be done to individuals that seems to be the motivation [...] I think there was less of an intention to harm people than perhaps the modern forms of terrorism we are seeing now from radical Islamic terrorism and also to a lesser extent the extreme right wing terrorism that has been starting to surface in Western societies.

This evolution appears to have placed the general public more at risk of attack as evidenced by the 650 per cent increase in terror-related deaths reported in OECD member countries between 2014 and 2016 (IEP, 2016). Several of the participants alluded to the increased frequency of attacks with Participant 3 highlighting that attacks have "absolutely spiralled". With major events often being the subject of significant media coverage (Yarchi *et al.*, 2015) they remain a significant target for terrorists. This is of concern not just to event professionals but wider city tourism practitioners as any such attack on a major event would have negative implications not only for the event but also the destination image and tourism potential of the city more widely as explained by Kissoudi (2010).

While all participants identified that there had been an increase in terrorist attacks and a shift from domestic, regionally contained terrorism towards acts of terror on a global scale general understandings of terrorism were varied and appeared to be very much dependent upon the individual's own experiences and how they perceived media reporting of terrorism. This reflects Teichmann's (1996) notion that definitions of terrorism will depend very much on the perception, location and opinion of the individual. It is important to consider that city tourism practitioners will also have their own understandings of terrorism, which may differ from those of event professionals. As such, this could lead to differences of opinion as to how best to plan and manage for MERT within urban destinations. This was recognised by the participants who recognised that security strategies would be dependent upon the specific event and host city.

There was a consensus supporting the need to develop and implement coherent understandings of terrorism and its potential implications for managing major events. It was recognised that this would require event professionals to enhance their knowledge and understanding of this area, as it had not been embedded in their initial training and education. Despite there being an increase in training provision across the UK (DCMS, 2008) there was some disagreement amongst participants as to the quality and relevance of existing provision. Reflecting on their own experience of attending training Participant 3 stated that it was a "load of s***e". It can therefore be surmised that while there is a need for training as outlined in Ibrahim's (2016) model, it is essential that when delivered it is relevant and of a high standard. Content must enable employees to provide efficient and effective security when hosting major events.

It was evident that UK event professionals had an awareness of terror developments but this was somewhat varied, being shaped by their own prior knowledge and world-view. The sector in which they worked had clearly influenced their understandings of MERT and how it could best be planned and managed for. What is of interest here is how this view may differ from that of city tourism practitioner's and other key stakeholders whose understandings will be based on their own experiences and sector; this raises questions surrounding responsibility and accountability in relation to MERT.

Accountability and responsibility

There was a considerable difference of opinion when participants were questioned as to whether they felt that events were a legitimate target for terrorists. On the one hand, it was acknowledged that major events could be viewed to be at considerable risk due to the large crowds that they attract and associated media coverage that they gain (Spaaij and Hamm, 2015; Yarchi et al., 2015). However, a number of arguments were also presented as to why events may no longer be such a legitimate target. Most specifically, the participants felt that the enhanced security now present at major events lessened the risk of them being targeted by terrorist activities. As Participant 5 stated, "major events have that security ring around them. So although they seem like a good target, actually it would probably be much easier to just go and walk into a shopping centre". This echoes the views of Boyle and Haggerty (2009) and Sugden (2012) who point out the increasingly stringent security measures now adopted at sporting events in particular. However, with the shift in the modus operandi and focus of terrorists (e.g. London attacks, 2017) it could be argued that events do remain at threat. As Participant 5 purported, the emotional and shocking aspect of targeting an event ensures that they remain at risk.

A number of practical steps have been adopted in major event settings to enhance safety and security, including increased security presence, bag searches, roadblocks and other infrastructure. It could be argued that some of the security measures put in place go beyond what is required but as Participant 5 suggests, due to the proliferation of media coverage terrorist attacks receive, consumers are now far more aware of potential risks posed when attending events. This reflects the earlier points made regarding the global nature of terrorism. Hence, the perceived image of safety associated with the host city is important. Participant 5 further explains that some of the steps taken by event professionals do not always actually make the event any safer but they give a feeling of safety to the consumer. While safety is not something that consumers should have to consider when attending events, it is now a reality. Discussing an increase in security personnel at major events, Participant 1 points out that event organisers face a difficulty in that "in many ways if

nothing happens and security don't really have anything to do, that's a good result. But from the organiser's perspective it might seem like an unnecessary expense".

It became apparent that the participants felt that the increased need for security measures is exploited by some with Participant 2 stating that, "a lot of people have used the incidents that have taken place to charge a lot more money for security". They further argue, "everybody was coining, everybody was trying to get in on the action". It is therefore evident that while the security for major events within the UK has been heightened, this has come at a cost. As with any business when supply costs increase, questions will arise relating to the impact this will have on the consumer and the participants indicated that this could affect the sustainability of some events. Additionally, it also needs to be considered who should be absorbing such costs, the consumer, the organiser or the host city. Nevertheless, participants highlighted that event professionals are required to increase security measures to reduce terror attacks even if there is also a detrimental effect to the overall event experience. For example, Participant 3 discussed the security measures put in place for a large concert which took place following the Manchester Arena bombing in 2017, stating that the additional search requirements, necessitated by the change in UK security level meant that attendees had to queue for considerable amounts of time, negatively affecting their experience of the event.

While the likelihood of terror attacks occurring within major events has been minimised, it could be suggested that these risks are in fact being shifted to the perimeter of the event. As Participant 4 suggests, "event managers are stuck in a bit of a predicament they need to enhance their security checks at venues before the audience gets in. But all this is actually doing is creating a much softer target outside of a venue". This was exemplified in the case of the Manchester 2017 bombing where a homemade device was detonated within the public foyer of the arena rather than within the event itself. This attack led to venues and events across the UK enhancing security checks on entry (e.g. SSE Hydro, 2017) but in turn, this led to considerable queues forming outside venues (as mentioned above) which present a risk in their own right. As Participant 2 points out, "what we have done is push the incident from the locus". With terrorists now targeting the softer perimeter and outer areas of event, this raises serious questions regarding the point at which responsibility for crowd safety begins and ends. While event professionals are accountable for the event and its perimeter they are not responsible for wider security within the city. It is therefore vital that city tourism practitioners and other key stakeholders work alongside event professionals to not only ensure that the event itself is safe but that event attendees and tourists are safe throughout the city as ultimately any attack will reflect badly not only on the event but the destination image. As such, a co-ordinated approach to managing safety and security for future major events is advocated.

This notion of collaboration at the destination level was highlighted by participants who suggested that event professionals should prioritise stronger links and communication with key stakeholders within the city such as police and emergency services. Participant 2 supported this by establishing that greater communication links would "allow [access to] local emergency services knowledge and multi-agency knowledge". An understanding of the local environment and the ways in which relevant agencies operate will be vital to the successful delivery of major events and may lead to the sharing of best practice across events and destinations. This can be seen to reflect Ibrahim's (2016) suggestion that more destination research and communication will enhance security. This is particularly important in the planning of international events, as while this research has focussed on the UK perspective, it is evident that different countries and even different areas within countries will potentially present their own risks and security challenges.

Balancing the budget

A growing need to balance tight security budgets with the requirement of making major events as secure as possible was discussed, with Participant 5 highlighting, "it is essential to evolve with the industry and that costs money". Numerous steps have been taken in relation to managing and planning for MERT with an increasingly professionalised approach to security and risk management being adopted at events across the UK. Security measures such as hiring more personnel, imposed searches, communication with law enforcement partners and further training

have made events in the UK more secure but this has come at a price, with a significant increase in security budgets and hence the costs of such events. Each of the professionals identified that with the pressure to increase security the challenge was cost with Participant 2 stating that "adding additional security staff is a good idea but its costly". Although there was a consensus around increased budgets when hosting major events in cities, there was still scepticism with regards to the need for some of the measures being adopted with Participant 2 suggesting that event professionals were being "fleeced" due to the increased pressured placed on them to ensure event attendees safety. Additionally, Participant 4 postulated that "private security firms cost money and they will only do what they are paid to do". There was little doubt that event professionals recognise the need to increase security measures with Participant 1 highlighting that "with the diversity of audiences attending events, so new strategies and security services need to be offered and to do this more training and resources are needed which costs money". However, questions were raised as to the value of some of the enhanced measures that event professionals are expected to implement and whether these do in fact deter MERT. This could be seen to reflect the challenge noted above regarding differences in understandings relating to terrorism, how it can be defined, managed and planned for.

It is evident that budgeting and increased costs are a significant challenge for major events and their organisers with a key consideration with regards to managing and planning for MERT relating to who should be responsible for absorbing these increased costs. This was particularly highlighted by Participant 2 who, when discussing the increased cost of policing events, suggested that the public sector "were failing the event organiser". While both event professionals and city tourism practitioners acknowledge the need for increased security measures and to manage for MERT the predicament of who should be absorbing these costs is a considerable challenge. Furthermore, as was noted previously debate exists as to where responsibility for securing events and the wider city begins and end.

Concluding remarks

The exploratory nature of this study means that it is not possible to draw firm conclusions from the findings or generalise these to a wider population; this was beyond the remit of the research. However, the research has highlighted a number of key challenges facing event professionals and city tourism practitioners with regards to the hosting of major events that warrant further exploration. The UK event professionals who participated in this research were found to be very knowledgeable with regards to terrorism and its developments. This can be attributed to the fact that their field of employment has been – directly and/or indirectly – impacted by terrorism. While all participants were knowledgeable about terrorism and its implications the varied definitions and understandings reflected the on-going academic discourse of how terrorism itself should be defined. Furthermore, it was noted that with definitions and understandings of terrorism being influenced by sector and world-view it is likely that city tourism practitioner's understandings of terrorism and MERT more specifically might differ from those of event professionals. This could lead to potential conflict between key stakeholders as to how MERT may best be planned for and managed. As such, it is suggested that further exploration as to how key stakeholders within major events view and understand terrorism and more specifically MERT is required.

Despite differing opinions, all participants agreed that the UK event industry has been considerably impacted by the increased number of attacks/threats and the changing methods of attack. These shifts are identified as having significantly impacted security measures at major events across the UK. Event professionals are increasingly expected to possess knowledge and skills to manage the risk of terrorism. This has professionalised approaches to security and risk management at events with more stringent security measures being employed. It was recognised by the event professionals that further education and training was required in relation to this with concerns being raised by some participants as to the quality and relevance of current provision. As such, it is suggested that further research is required to assess the current levels and content of training provision for event personnel in order to identify potential gaps in provision as well as cases of best practice.

It was noted that while events continue to be a legitimate target for terrorists the enhanced security measures put in place to manage for MERT could be seen to make them less attractive.

However, it was subsequently recognised that these enhanced measures can create softer targets at the event perimeter and outside of its boundary. Therefore, a key challenge for event professionals will be how they can secure the event venue/location without simultaneously creating a soft target outside of this secured perimeter. Furthermore, significant questions are raised as to where responsibility and accountability for event audiences begins and ends. This is a challenge for both event organisers and city tourism practitioners who would both be adversely affected by any attack either within or outwith the event. This further highlights that in order to best prepare for hosting a major event, collaboration and partnership working is required in order to share knowledge and expertise. With many cities and events managing this in different ways further exploration as to how this can best be managed is required.

The higher cost of security measures was pointed out by all participants with the need to balance tight security budgets with the requirements of making major events as secure as possible being viewed as a significant future challenge for major events. While other security considerations may also impact the budget, it can be argued that an increase in terrorism will make the balancing act of securing an event whilst working within the boundaries of a restricted security budget even more challenging in the future. Furthermore, questions may be raised as to who is responsible for absorbing the cost of additional security measures – the host city or event organisers. With city tourism practitioners and event professionals having responsibility for delivering a successful event and both academic literature and destination development strategies continuing to identify the use of events in enhancing a city's image, the challenge pertaining to who pays will remain prolific. Where in the past it could be argued that the benefits of hosting major events outweighed the costs, public perceptions are changing and as costs increase citizens are frequently calling into question whether these investments offer value for money. This further highlights the need to move beyond the exploratory scope of this initial research into a greater empirical study.

Each of these areas requires further research in its own right with it being acknowledged that this research has been limited to the UK. Other destinations will pose their own unique challenges when hosting and managing events. What is clear is that despite enhanced security measures, major events will continue to be impacted by terrorism. It is left open for discussion if planning for the worst and hoping for the best will be the correct strategy. What has become clear from this research is that unpredictability is the new norm and that event professionals and destinations must plan accordingly when organizing future major events.

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