A strategic framework for terrorism prevention and mitigation in tourism destinations

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Received 28 September 2006; accepted 8 February 2007

Abstract

Tourism destinations and tourists have always been ‘soft targets’ for terrorist activities. Although it is widely acknowledged that it is no longer a question of ‘if’ terrorists will strike but rather a question of ‘when’, ‘how’ and ‘how prepared’ the destination is to deal with them, the crisis management frameworks proposed by the literature appear to offer little help to tourism authorities in the development and implementation of a strategy aiming at the prevention and mitigation of terrorist attacks. This paper first discusses the premise that Destination Management Organizations can and should play an active role in the co-ordination of tourism stakeholders in addressing the threat of terrorism. Then, based on the analysis of interviews with 16 experts on terrorism and tourism, it offers a framework for the development and implementation of a destination-specific anti-terrorism strategy.

1. Introduction

Tourism destinations and tourists have always been ‘soft targets’ for terrorist activities. In their seminal work on terrorism and tourism Sönmez, Apostolopoulos, and Tarlow (1999) suggest that, for a terrorist group, tourism destinations are easy to infiltrate, acts against tourists provide guaranteed international media coverage, impacts of an attack can be massive and, in overall, tourism destinations offer “a cost-effective instrument to deliver a broader message of ideological/political opposition” (p. 15). They also cite experts (Atkinson, Sandler, & Tschirhart, 1987; Jenkins, 1988) predicting that attacks will become more indiscriminate, terrorism will become institutionalized as a method of armed geographically spread conflict and that the public will witness more terrorism than ever due to the media’s ability to cover terrorist incidents. Less than a decade later, these predictions could not be truer. In the post-9/11 era, there have been at least 18 major terrorism incidents specifically aiming at tourism targets (see Table 1). Despite the fact that it is widely acknowledged that it is no longer a question of “if” terrorists will strike but rather a question of “when,” “how” and “how prepared” the destination is to deal with them (Mitroff, 2005), destinations have been struggling to recover from the adverse effects of terrorism attacks. Recognizing this problem, several tourism researchers have proposed destination recovery strategies (e.g., Beirman, 2002; Berno & King, 2001; Blake & Sinclair, 2003; Cassedy, 1992; Fainstein, 2002; Henderson, 2003; Richter, 1999; Wall, 2005) whereas others have mainly focused on terrorism impacts (e.g., Aziz, 1995; Drakos & Kutan, 2003; Enders & Sandler, 1991; Enders, Sandler, & Parise, 1992; Pizam, 1978; Pizam & Smith, 2000). However, although more recent research on tourism crisis management argues for a more proactive and strategic approach to crises and disasters (Faulkner, 2001; Ritchie, 2004) there seems to be no study suggesting an approach to the formulation of a destination-specific anti-terrorism strategy. Arguably, such a strategy is in the remit of governmental agencies and local authorities. However, over-reliance on these agencies and authorities does not

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Terrorist attack</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Human cost</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Airlines Flight 63</td>
<td>December 22, 2001</td>
<td>Richard Reid—alleged/self-proclaimed Al Qaeda operative—carried shoes that were packed with two types of explosives. He was subdued by other passengers and crew on the airliner flying from Paris, France’s Charles De Gaulle International Airport to Miami, Florida, United States’ Miami International Airport.</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karachi Bus bombing</td>
<td>May 8, 2002</td>
<td>A man detonates a car bomb stopped next to a bus outside the Karachi Sheraton Hotel and Tower.</td>
<td>13 people dead and 40 injured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Bali bombing</td>
<td>October 12, 2002</td>
<td>Series of tourist-target bombings in the resort town of Kuta. Abu Bakar Bashir, the spiritual head of the Jemaah Islamiah organisation was accused of being behind the attacks</td>
<td>202 people dead and a further 209 injured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suicide bombing and missile attack Mombasa, Kenya</td>
<td>November 28, 2002</td>
<td>Three suicide bombers detonated an SUV in the lobby of the Israeli-owned Paradise Hotel. Two Strella-7 missiles fired on Arkia Airlines flight IZ582 with 261 passengers and 10 crew on board miss their target.</td>
<td>13 people dead and 80 injured in the hotel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davao City Airport bombing</td>
<td>March 4, 2003</td>
<td>Bomb explodes in a packed waiting area of Davao City airport on the southern Philippine island of Mindanao. Abu Sayyaf and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front claimed responsibility.</td>
<td>21 people dead and 149 injured</td>
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<tr>
<td>Casablanca bombings</td>
<td>May 16, 2003</td>
<td>Suicide bombings planned and carried out by Salafia Jehadia, a local Moroccan group with suspected funding and training links to al-Qaida. Among the targets were the restaurant “Casa de España”, and the Farah hotel.</td>
<td>20 people dead in the restaurant and 2 in the hotel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JW Marriott Hotel bombing, Jakarta, Indonesia</td>
<td>August 5, 2003</td>
<td>A suicide bomber detonated a car bomb outside the lobby of the hotel.</td>
<td>12 people dead and 150 injured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canal Hotel bombing in Baghdad, Iraq</td>
<td>August 19, 2003</td>
<td>The blast targeted the United Nations (UN), which had used the hotel as its headquarters in Iraq since 1991 and caused by a suicide bomber driving a truck full of explosives.</td>
<td>22 people dead and over 100 injured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superferry 14, Manila, Philippines</td>
<td>February 27, 2004</td>
<td>90 min out of port, a television set filled with 8 lb (4 kg) of TNT placed on board by members of the Abu Sayyaf guerilla group exploded.</td>
<td>63 people were killed immediately, and 53 are presumed dead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Russian airliners’ bombings</td>
<td>August 24, 2004</td>
<td>Flight 1303 of Volga-Avia Express and Flight 1047 of Siberia Airlines that had flown out of Domodedovo International Airport in Moscow exploded almost at the same time while on flight (around 23:00 h). The subsequent investigation has found out that the bombs were triggered by two female Chechen suicide bombers.</td>
<td>72 passengers and 19 crew dead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sinai bombings</td>
<td>October 7, 2004</td>
<td>Three bomb attacks targeting the Hilton Hotel in Tabo and campsites used by Israelis in Ras al-Shitan. The attacks killed 34 people and injured 171. In the Tabo attack, a truck drove into the lobby of the Tabo Hilton and exploded. Ten floors of the hotel collapsed following the blast.</td>
<td>34 people dead and 171 injured. In the Hilton alone, 31 people were killed and 159 injured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharia al-Moski, Cairo, suicide bombing</td>
<td>April 7, 2005</td>
<td>A suicide bomber set off his explosive device on, near the Khan al Khalili bazaar—a street market popular with tourists and locals alike—and the al Hussein Mosque.</td>
<td>3 tourists were killed, and 11 Egyptians and 7 other overseas visitors injured</td>
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<td>The Sixth of October Bridge and Citadel bombings, Cairo</td>
<td>April 30, 2005</td>
<td>Suicide bomber detonates nail bomb in a city bus station located in a 300-metre-wide concourse between the Ramses Hilton Hotel and the Egyptian Museum. Two hours later two veiled females armed with guns opened fire on a tourist bus not far from the Citadel. After firing on the coach, one of the women shot the other dead before turning her gun on herself.</td>
<td>6 Egyptians and 4 tourists injured</td>
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<td>Sharm el-Sheikh bombings</td>
<td>July 23, 2005</td>
<td>A series of bomb attacks on, targeting the Egyptian resort city of Sharm el-Sheikh in a market in downtown Sharm and the Ghazala Gardens hotel, a 176-room four-star establishment in the Naama Bay area. by the blasts, making the attack.</td>
<td>88 people dead and over 150 injured</td>
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<td>Second Bali bombing</td>
<td>October 1, 2005</td>
<td>A series of bombs exploded at two sites in Jimbaran (one was near the Four Seasons Hotel) and Kuta, both in south Bali.</td>
<td>23 people dead and 129 injured</td>
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</table>
decrease the vulnerability of tourism destinations and their stakeholders to terrorist attacks nor does it create an improved sense of security among visitors (Hall, Timothy, & Duval, 2003). On the other hand, several tourism companies (hotels, airlines, visitor attractions) are increasingly developing their own plans and taking anti-terrorism measures (Burton, 2006), which, although carefully organized at company level, result in a very uneven approach to the problem at destination level. This empirical study discusses the premise that destination management organizations ((DMO) notably National and Regional Tourism Boards) can and should play an active role in the co-ordination of tourism stakeholders in addressing the threat of terrorism and proposes a framework for the development, implementation and monitoring of a destination-specific anti-terrorism strategy.

2. Terrorism and tourism

The definition of terrorism has triggered a quite vivid scholarly debate over the years with regards to who is a terrorist and who a freedom fighter, what acts and behaviors—depending on their legality and morality—can be labeled as terrorist and how state and non-state terrorism can be distinguished (see for example Chomsky, 2001; Cooper, 2001; Jenkins, 2001; Lizardo & Bergesen, 2003; Schweitzer, 2002). Ruby (2002, pp. 10–11) in an eloquent analysis of various definitions isolates five defining criteria: motivation for the terrorist act (political or other), target towards which it is directed (non-combatants), actors (sub-national groups or clandestine agents), objective (creation of a fearful state of mind) and intended audience (larger than the immediate victims). Enders and Sandler (2002) use the very same criteria when they offer the following definition:

Terrorism is the premeditated use or threat of use of extranormal violence or brutality by subnational groups to obtain a political, religious, or ideological objective through intimidation of a huge audience, usually not directly involved with the policy making that the terrorists seek to influence (Enders & Sandler 2002, pp. 145–146).

Apart from their immediate media visibility, tourism destinations have more recently been primary targets of terrorist attacks because usually tourists represent all those ideologies and values terrorists are fighting against. Politically, an attack on tourists symbolizes an attack on their governments (Richter & Waugh, 1986). As the tourism industry for many countries such as Egypt, Israel, Greece, Sri Lanka and Indonesia is a major source of wealth, freedom of choice, or independence and everything that is associated with Western consumption and corruption “are too valuable to be left unexploited” (Sönmez et al., 1999, p. 15). Terrorism targeting tourists

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<tr>
<td>Amman bombings</td>
<td>November 9, 2005</td>
<td>A series of coordinated bomb attacks on three hotels in Amman: the Grand Hyatt Hotel (one suicide bomber in the lobby bar), the Radisson SAS Hotel (two suicide bombers in a wedding reception), and the Days Inn (suicide bomber failed to detonate in the restaurant and succeeded in the hotel entrance).</td>
<td>60 people dead and 115 injured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dahab bombings</td>
<td>April 24, 2006</td>
<td>Three bomb attacks in the Egyptian resort city of Dahab: at two restaurants (Aladin and Nelson) and at the Ghazala market. Later investigations revealed the blasts were suicide attacks.</td>
<td>23 people dead and 80 injured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Transatlantic Aircraft Plot</td>
<td>August 10, 2006</td>
<td>A terrorist plot to detonate liquid explosives carried on board several airliners travelling from the United Kingdom to the United States, was foiled by the secret services.</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkish resorts’ bombings</td>
<td>August 28, 2006</td>
<td>A series of bombings in the heart of the resorts of Antalya (one explosion) and Marmaris (three explosions). Kurdistan Freedom Falcons (Tak) with links to the banned PKK has claimed responsibility and warned tourists not to visit Turkey.</td>
<td>3 people dead and at least 20 injured in Antalya while 21 were injured in Marmaris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gun attack in Amman, Jordan</td>
<td>September 4, 2006</td>
<td>A Jordanian militant, fired at least 12 shots at the small group of tourists, at the Roman amphitheatre, a popular Amman attraction. The perpetrator was arrested.</td>
<td>1 tourist dead and 5 injured</td>
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The list is not exhaustive. It also does not include the bomb attacks in the Moscow Metro (6 Feb., 2004), the Madrid trains (11 Mar., 2004), the London’s public transport system (7 Jul., 2005) and the Suburban Railway in Mumbai (11 Jul., 2006) because these are not considered as direct tourist hits.
can be viewed as an act to protect the threatened sacred beliefs, societal norms, traditions, value systems and religious convictions (Wahab, 1995; Tarlow, 2005).

The objectives of intimidation and creation of a fearful state of mind among tourists are clearly demonstrated in the earlier work of Sönmez and Graefe (1998a, 1998b) showing that terrorism risk and concern about safety are particularly influential factors in travel intentions, even among experienced travelers. Even from the pre-9/11 period, in their examination of the directions of causality between terrorism and tourism in Spain, Enders and Sandler (1991) concluded that a typical terrorist incident resulted in a subsequent reduction of 140,000 tourists. In a later study, which analyzed the impact of terrorism on tourism in Greece, Italy, Austria, and a sample of other western European countries, they assert that in addition to a dramatic reduction of tourism demand in the targeted country, also neighboring countries are negatively affected (Enders et al., 1992). Mansfeld (1996), on the other hand, suggests that Cyprus, Greece and Turkey have benefited from conflict in Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria as tourists looking for an Eastern Mediterranean touch in their holidays chose those destinations perceiving them as safer. More recently, Drakos and Kutan (2003) in their study of terrorist events in Greece, Israel, and Turkey between 1991 and 2000, confirmed that, although—subsequent to a terrorist attack—neighboring countries may be considered immediate substitutes, there is always a negative impact in tourism demand for the wider region. Tourists usually tend to predict worst-case scenarios when assessing terrorism risks in their holiday planning (Viscusi & Zeckhauser, 2003) and focus on the gruesome outcomes of a terrorist attack rather than on the probability that it will occur (Sunstein, 2003). This negative impact may be transitory and a tourism destination may rebound from the “terrorist shock” (Aly & Strazicich, 2000; Narayan, 2005) but Pizam and Fleischer (2002) warn that frequent terrorism incidents have a more lasting effect that eventually can lead to a complete collapse of a tourism destination. It is noteworthy, however, that the effect of frequent terrorist attacks on domestic tourists is much lesser that on foreign tourists. In their evaluation of the effects that Intifada had on the occupancies of Israeli hotels, Yechiam, Barron, and Erev (2005) found significant behavioral differences between foreign and domestic tourists. In the period following the rise of attacks there was a drop in occupancies of almost 60% from foreign tourists compared to approximately 10% from domestic ones. In the following year, however, the drop in rooms demand from foreign tourists reached the area of 80% whereas domestic demand rose by almost 20%. It appears that repeated exposure to terrorist attacks reduces the risk sensitivity and the fear of domestic tourists. These findings suggest that, alongside the development of anti-terrorism measures and the launch of marketing campaigns to persuade overseas tourists to visit again, campaigns towards domestic tourism should not be overlooked as the may yield faster results.

2.1. Terrorism and crisis management

The business literature has long ago classified terrorism as a type of ‘man-made crisis’ (Mitroff, 2005) as a terrorist attack can be clearly considered as a “low-probability, high-impact event that threatens the viability of the organization and is characterized by ambiguity of cause, effect, and means of resolution, as well as by a belief that decisions must be made swiftly” (Pearson & Clair, 1998, p. 60). Crisis management scholars have developed several models of crisis management that, in their most part, achieve to explain crises but do not always offer an approach to deal with them or focus more on crisis communications (for an evaluation of the main crisis management models, see Evans & Elphick, 2005). The model most referred to in the business literature for the systematic design of response to a crisis is the one proposed originally by Pauchant and Mitroff (1992) and later by Mitroff (2005) in which six distinct “mechanisms” need to be in place: signal detection; prevention/preparation; containment (damage limitation); recovery, ‘no-fault’ learning; and redesign. This model is indeed ‘holistic’ in the sense that it prompts action throughout the crisis lifecycle and not only at the post-crisis period as most of the others do. However, no particular model has been empirically tested in the context of terrorism and organizational response to crisis.

With regards to how tourism organizations should deal with a terrorist attack, the literature is scant. Apart from a few focused studies evaluating the recovery of the US industry from the 9/11 attacks (Blake & Sinclair, 2003; Bonham, Edmonds, & Mak, 2006; Rupp, Holmes, & DeSimone, 2005) most of the related literature (as indicated in the introduction of this paper) refers to post-crisis/disaster communication planning and recovery marketing. Notable exceptions to this are the work of Prideaux, Laws, and Faulkner (2003) who advise a proactive approach to crises and suggest the use of forecasting techniques to predict the occurrence and potential impact of complex crises and disasters and of Tarlow (2006) who talks about “travel surety”. He borrows the word “surety” from the insurance industry and defines “travel surety” as a lowering of the probability that a negative event will occur, without promising perfection. He argues that this is the point where security, safety, economics and a location’s reputation converge. A year before, Yeoman, Galt, and McMahon-Beattie (2005), used a scenario planning methodology to put terrorism into the context of tourism and explore the degree of disruption a terrorist attack could cause to Scotland and how it would link with other mitigating factors such as economics and consumer behavior. The testing of four different scenarios lead to the implications they would have on VisitScotland policies. Still, even in this case the authors concentrate on
the reactive element of dealing with a terrorist event. They focus on the role of the DMO in (1) developing a communications and contingency plan that deals with the terrorist events; (2) mapping marketing activities to deal with consumers’ risk averse behavior; and (3) preparing themselves with simulation exercises to avoid an issue-reaction syndrome (Yeoman et al., 2005, p. 18).

2.2. The destination management organization’s role

The approach that views crisis preparedness more as a communications (public relations and marketing) exercise about how to handle a crisis after it occurs rather than as a strategy to prevent or mitigate the crisis itself reflects the majority of the extant academic research. This is perhaps due to the fact that historically DMOs have been viewed as organizations that promote tourism destinations (Dore & Crouch, 2003; Gartrell, 1988; Pearce, 1992; Page & Connell, 2006; Riege & Perry, 2000). There have been, however, voices advocating a more comprehensive role for DMOs. Choy (1993), for example, maintains that their role should evolve over time and in accordance with the destination’s life cycle whereas Heath and Wall (1992) argue that they have an important role in enhancing and maintaining destination competitiveness and coordinating some of the various tourism stakeholder activities. By “stakeholder” we define any business entity that may influence, or, is influenced by the activities of a DMO. Sheehan and Ritchie (2005) have identified up to 32 tourism destination stakeholders, which they divide into primary and secondary depending on their potential to cooperate but also to threaten the ability of the DMO to achieve its objectives. Their study shows that hotels are the most important stakeholders in a destination followed by city/local government, regional/county government, attractions/attraction associations, and state/provincial tourism departments. Dore and Crouch (2003) acknowledge that DMOs may play some role in product development and operations while Ritchie and Crouch (2003) suggest that the ‘M’ in DMO should be more linked to ‘management’ rather than ‘marketing’. They continue (p. 63) by identifying the activities that DMOs are managing in order to ensure the quality of the visitor’s experience: visitor management; inflow and outflow of information; human resources development; resource stewardship; access to finance and venture capital; and crisis management. However, central to all these management activities is the DMO’s ability to coordinate the destination stakeholders in shaping a common vision and developing consistent visitor experiences as well as to act as a conduit between the governmental agencies and the destination with regards to the implementation of national policies. This ability is invariably determined by the quantity and quality of the DMOs connections with the destination stakeholders and the governmental agencies.

Henderson (2002, p. 103) argues that conventional theories of crisis management may not be always applicable to DMOs as many crises arise “in external environments where they have no authority and over which they can exercise little control”. Although a terrorist attack would perfectly fit the description above, one could counter-argue that conventional crisis management models and theories do apply very well in this case. DMOs may have a leading role not only in the recovery of the destination’s image when terrorists strike but in all six stages of the crisis lifecycle as defined by Faulkner (2001): pre-event; prodromal; emergency (when the attack takes place); intermediate recovery (restoring the destination); long-term recovery (image) and resolution (business as usual). In each of these stages the DMOs can undertake all the “management” activities identified by Ritchie and Crouch (2003) in order to coordinate the individual “mechanisms” of a Mitroff’s (2005) model of crisis response. The underlying thinking here is that, by minimizing the destination’s vulnerabilities, the DMO and the other stakeholders will effectively reduce the likelihood of terrorist attack and limit the damage (in terms of human and material losses) of an actual terrorist strike.

In the pre-event and prodromal stages, the DMO may have an active role in developing the destination’s signal detection and terrorism prevention/preparation competences. In signal detection, crisis management activities focus on seeking signals that might warn of a crisis, and isolate these from other more normal signals that occur in the daily operations of organizations. The DMO can coordinate the various stakeholders’ surveillance activities within the destination help them develop the relevant skills and apply the available technologies as well as facilitate information inflows from governmental agencies, stakeholders and other destinations and outflows to all destination stakeholders. The prevention/preparation activities concern the implementation of measures that eliminate or minimize the destination’s weaknesses and vulnerabilities so as to prevent a terrorist attack from happening or to be well prepared for such an event. Training and development of crisis response skills are essential in this stage. The DMO can encourage and facilitate the implementation of national anti-terrorism policies by all destination stakeholders, ensure a balanced allocation of resources throughout the destination and facilitate stakeholder access to finance for investments regarding security. In the emergency and intermediary recovery stages apart from its vital crisis communication role, the DMO has the responsibility to manage and ensure safe visitor flows within the destination (by relocating them, for example, to safer accommodation) and the business continuity (restoration of mission-critical operations) for both the organization and the destination stakeholders. Finally, in the long-term recovery and resolution stages, apart from the well-discussed in the extant literature media management and image recovery roles, the DMO has also the role of advocating a “no-fault learning” culture within the destination, i.e., the
development by and sharing between the destination stakeholders and other destinations of crisis management-specific knowledge and experience and can act as a facilitator for this learning transfer. The creation of such a culture entails ample introspection and critical assessment of lessons that were learned from the terrorism incident and avoiding to blame any particular individuals (Pearson & Mitroff, 1993, p. 54). This, in turn, will facilitate the redesign of the destination anti-terrorism strategies in the light of the newly acquired knowledge and experience.

Considering, therefore, that there is far more to crisis preparedness than crisis communication planning, there is need for a more holistic approach in developing a crisis prevention and mitigation strategy. Most models offered by the tourism literature, however, emphasize the communications aspect of the crisis mitigation strategy at the expense of other elements (e.g., Young & Montgomery, 1998) and only a few take a more balanced approach (Cassedy, 1992; Drabek, 1995). The framework that synthesizes these contributions with those of other fields is the disaster management framework developed by Faulkner (2001) and further refined by Faulkner and Vikulov (2001). This framework considers risk assessment and disaster contingency plans as principal ingredients of the disaster management strategies whilst it identifies specific elements that have to be in place at each stage of the disaster lifecycle. Miller and Ritchie (2003) applied this framework to the 2001 foot and mouth outbreak (FMO) in the UK, but found that although it could be used as an analytical tool to understand what happened in this particular crisis, it would have limited value in enabling tourism authorities to change the course of the crisis. However, they recognize that this inefficiency may be attributed to the fact that the FMO was primarily a farming crisis that caused a devastating “ripple effect” for the tourism industry (p. 169). Ritchie (2004) takes a more strategic perspective on crisis and disaster management and offers a “strategic and holistic framework” which starts with proactive pre-crisis planning, moves through strategic implementation and concludes with the crisis resolution and the strategy evaluation and feedback. Although it has many common elements with Faulkner and Vikulov (2001), this framework is more open to other types of crises (ranging from employee strikes, terrorist attacks, economic recessions, etc.) but also introduces broader strategic issues such as environmental scanning, strategic choice and control, resource management and organizational learning. However, its weakness is that it is quite generic and it would be of little use to tourism organizations that would wish to develop a tourism destination-specific coordinated anti-terrorism strategy aiming at the prevention or mitigation of a terrorism attack.

### 3. Study method

The apparent lack of such a framework has triggered the present study. As the purpose here was to produce insight rather than to test theory, the study was inductive in nature and used a qualitative, interpretative approach (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2003). The authors conducted 16 semi-structured interviews with experts involved with corporate and government level security and safety as well as with policy planning in tourism destinations. A list of semi-structured questions—formed by the frameworks proposed by Faulkner and Vikulov (2001) and Ritchie (2004) but more focused in terrorism—was drawn up and used as an interview guide. Purposive sampling (Patton, 2002) allowed the selection of interviewees based on their expertise in anti-terrorism policy planning and their involvement with the tourism industry (participants profile in Table 2). Although usually small in size, purposive sampling offers the advantage of generating information-rich answers on the basis that they can provide critical insights on the research questions (Saunders et al., 2003). The selection of these experts was facilitated by the political sciences background and contacts of one of the

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<th>CODE</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
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<td>Research specialist (front-line terrorism prevention)</td>
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<td>Diplomatic corp</td>
<td>Crisis Management specialist (Bali bombings)</td>
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authors and the hospitality and tourism background of the other. It was further facilitated by the use of a snowballing method (Patton, 2002), with some US-based participants with strong links in governmental agencies directing the authors to other experts in the anti-terrorism field. Interviews were either face-to-face or conducted by telephone, involved both researchers and were taped and transcribed to ensure reliability (Eisenhardt, 1989).

The interview transcripts were coded and analyzed by each one of the authors separately following Rubin and Rubin (2004); however, many codes were derived from the interview guide and thus from the authors’ theoretical pre-understanding of the situation (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). Building upon the two disaster/crisis management frameworks on which this study was based, the participants answers were coded and classified under five different headings: destination anti-terrorism group (DAG); terrorism exposure analysis; anti-terrorism strategy formulation; strategy implementation and management; and strategy monitoring and maintenance.

4. Study findings

4.1. Destination anti-terrorism group (DAG)

One of the most contentious points in the study was the size and the composition of the anti-terrorism strategy planning team. Although everyone agreed about an “all-inclusive” planning team, they also expressed concerns about “blurry jurisdiction boundaries”, disconnectedness between and increased territorialism among the various destination stakeholders as well as the possibility of conflicting agendas. Indeed, Sheehan and Ritchie (2005) have identified 32 tourism stakeholders which may have a high potential for cooperation but equally high potential to hinder the DMO from achieving its objectives. An anti-terrorism team needs to be representative of all these stakeholders and at the same time flexible enough to make decisions. One participant (J) noted that in a typical security meeting in the airport terminal he runs “as many as 60 people will attend, representing Cityport (the independent public authority managing the airports, seaport and public transport infrastructure in the city), Transport Security Administration (TSAT), the state police, the customs, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the FBI, the air marshals and the air carriers, among others”. Obviously, a team of this size will not be able to achieve much. The authors asked the participants to evaluate the Tourism Industry Emergency Response (TIER) group model of VisitBritain consisting of representatives from VisitScotland, VisitWales, VisitLondon, the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, English UK, Tourism Alliance, UKInbound, the Association Leading Visitor Attractions, the British Hotels Association, British Airways and the Association of British Travel Agents. Although, all participants agreed in principle with the composition of this team as a crisis communications team, several participants observed that the participation of yet another governmental organization, such as DCMS, was not necessary in this group, since the DMO is the link with the government. Few of them noted that in the case of an anti-terrorism group the participation of “blue light” (emergency) services, entry point security authorities and private security experts (usually consulting the stakeholders) is essential. In the words of one participant (H): “crisis and disaster preparation hinges on the active involvement of the blue light services. Their expertise, advice and presence are the key measure in the successful prevention of terrorism”. This corroborates with Sönmez et al. (1999) who emphasize the importance of the tourism industry partnering with law enforcement officials (p. 17). However, another participant (D)—based in Bali—expressed her concerns: “They [the police] are overworked and underpaid and have no time for their everyday duties, let alone terrorism mitigation planning. Where would the money come from?” This question highlights the need for appropriate resource allocation and access to funding, two of the management activities that Ritchie and Crouch (2003) identified for the DMO. The role of the DMO in a DAG is considered to be an extremely difficult one. A security expert from Israel stated: “They [the DMO] will have to find a balance between being a support partner for all the stakeholders and a champion of the national and local anti-terrorism strategy”. As the DAG convener it will have to unite diverse set of interests and articulate the group’s vision in a language that all stakeholders will be able to understand. It will have to influence their behavior mindset so that they all “the industry as a whole [will stand] to gain significant returns in the long term” (Sautter & Leisen, 1999, p. 326).

An unanticipated candidate for DAG membership that emerged in this study was the urban planning authority. A US-based participant (F) suggested that: “tourism destination authorities would benefit a lot from a CPTED approach in order to ‘harden’ targets and create a safer visitor environment”. CPTED (pronounced ‘sep-ted’) stands for Crime Protection Through Environmental Design and has as its basic premise that the proper design and effective use of the physical environment can lead to a reduction in the incidence and fear of crime, thereby improving the quality of life (Zelinka & Brennan, 2001). The participation of urban planners in DAG, may, therefore, be proven critical. Obviously, the CPTED approach will have limited application in certain elements of tourist destinations such as historical sites and areas of natural beauty and other areas that are protected by environmental laws.

4.2. Terrorism exposure analysis

All participants pointed the systematic analysis of terrorism-related vulnerabilities and risks as the first task for DAG. Although it was pointed that “a terrorist target can be anything, anywhere” as the recent bombings in Turkey (explosives in garbage bins) showed, terrorism
exposure will largely depend on the political environment of the destination, i.e., its political stability and its international relations (Richter, 1999). This is one of the strategy formulation stages that security and risk management expertise would be proven crucial. Terrorism exposure analysis is a two-phase exercise, in which the first phase aims at the terrorism risk assessment and the second at the estimation of potential attacks impact analysis. Terrorism risk assessment will consider factors such as potential terrorist entry points, key destination assets (of tourism and economic value, political, ideological, or religious significance and history of past targeting) that are likely terrorist targets and probability of these targets being attacked. As one participant (K) noted: “Risk equals the destructive power of a terrorist attack multiplied by the likelihood of its occurrence. At the end of this exercise, the residual risk of a potential target or a security gap open beach will have a defined value based on the best judgment the [DAG] team can give it”. The incident impact analysis may involve advanced modeling techniques to quantify the severity of a number of terrorist attack scenarios (Prideaux et al., 2003) and will be the basis of future decision making related with anti-terrorism measures and capital to be invested on them. It will also be the basis for a more comprehensive negotiation of the DMO and the tourism stakeholders with insurance companies. However, the security experts in our sample agree that: “This should not be a ‘one-off’ thing but a continuous process because the risk values may fluctuate with time”. As these ‘risk values’ are destination-specific, they give a more accurate estimation of the destination’s terrorism exposure allowing the stakeholders a degree of independence from the central government. One of the participants (N) asserted that: “If we worked like this, we could be able to raise the [terrorism] threat level from ‘moderate’ to ‘substantial’, based on our new calculations, without the government telling us to do that. We might even be in the position to tell the government that we think we ought to go to ‘substantial’ and list the reasons why”.

4.3. Formulation of anti-terrorism strategy

The strategy will draw on the policy-making, risk, safety, security, intelligence, and anti-terrorism expertise of the DAG members and will involve terrorism prevention and mitigation measures and practices, specifically focused and tailored towards the tourism destination according to its terrorism exposure rates. The starting point for this strategy, according to the participants, should be the central government’s (such as, for example, the US Department of Homeland Security) anti-terrorism policies and directives. Cross-pollination of information with international industry bodies and open communication channels to other destinations around the world with anti-terrorism expertise needs also to be ensured. Advice and guidelines from bodies such as the UN World Travel Organization (UNWTO), the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) and the International Hotel and Restaurant Association (IH&RA) will be quite helpful in the strategy development. For example, one of the actions in the Awareness and Preparedness for Emergencies at the Local Level (APELL) project of the United Nations Environment Programme, brings together several industry bodies for the development of a tourism destination APELL kit which will include an adapted, stepped approach to implement a crisis prevention, preparedness and response scheme (including anti-terrorism measures) to be first implemented in India (Kanniyakumari, Tamil Nadu State) and Thailand (Pi-Pi Island, Krabi and Patong, Phuket).

The participants concur that the first element of the strategy should be the “detection of warning signals”, for which the appropriate use and sharing of intelligence is fundamental. Our participant from Australia (D) contended that: “Each stakeholder has a different set of information on their ‘dashboard’ and a common outlook of the situation is imperative. We all saw what happened on 9/11 when the available intelligence was not shared by the ‘competing’ agencies”. Apart from intelligence sharing the possible signals for an imminent terrorist attack will largely depend on the type of the attack. The most usual forms of terrorist attacks in tourism destinations are conventional bombs (in packages, briefcases, etc.), suicide bombs and vehicular bombs. A common among all stakeholders approach to the inspection for and identification of suspicious objects or parked vehicles is one way of prevention. However, there was a high consensus among the participants that the most promising early signal detection method is the “behavioral pattern recognition”, based on the premise that looking for the terrorist attack medium (weapon, bomb, etc.) is not enough and therefore the focus should be shifted to looking for malicious intentions. Participant M stated that: “a person about to carry a terrorist attack that will probably end their life as well as of others cannot be in a sound state of mind; even if they have very good self-control their behavior will most probably not be normal, this is their Achilles’ heel”. However, concerns were expressed that this profiling may become racial and target only specific parts of the population. If this is to become part of the destination’s strategy, every care should be taken so that it does not become racial. “Richard Reid, the shoe bomber, did not fit a racial profile and it was its abnormal behavior that warned the crew members who arrested him” noted another participant (F).

The various measures proposed by the participants for the destination anti-terrorist strategy include all the physical, technological and operational measures intended to “devalue, deter, deny and defend” the destination against terrorism acts (Grosskopf, 2004). To “devalue” potential targets is to lessen the significance of critical infrastructure and key destination assets for terrorists. Physical measures such as landscape barriers, shapes and spatial arrangements that create controlled access, minimize large assemblies of people in unprotected areas and
enhance visibility of potential terrorists could be examples of measures where the contribution of urban planners would be invaluable. To “deter” terrorism is to create a perception of unacceptable risk to those planning a terrorism attack, by providing a quite visible security presence. Participant A commented: “There is no silver-bullet here! Terrorists will not go anywhere near a target that their chances for success are less than 50/50. All we have to do is flip those odds and make them 40/60 or—even better—30/70”. The use of technology for access control, surveillance, lighting and communications is normally an effective terrorist deterrent. To “deny” terrorism is to prevent the access of both perpetrators and their resources to destinations, attractions and specific destination target assets. Thorough identity controls in entry points and restrictions on potentially hazardous equipment and materials would be some of the measures taken towards this end. The assumption is that unless the terrorists live in, for example, the target destination, they have to arrive at a port, airport, train or bus station. Such measures are not aiming only at foreign terrorist groups but also domestic groups and lone individuals (Cordesman, 2002). Here, there is always a fine line between security and visitor convenience. Participant K pointed that: “Guests do not want to feel they are entering Fort Knox. The technology that’s out there today—cameras, monitors, detectors in walls that look like clocks, light switches that detect odors in the air—can really be discreet”. On the other hand, participant L stated that the guest satisfaction survey ratings on ‘feeling safe’ in a particular property of her chain were very low until the security officers changed their uniforms from a discreet blazer-suit to a police-like uniform. Finally, most of the participants suggested that the measures to devalue, deter and deny terrorism activities should be complemented by specific operational measures and action to “defend” the destination during a terrorist attack.

The communications element of the strategy should not be confined to marketing and recovery activities but include specific notification and awareness practices both internally (between the destination stakeholders) and externally (media and various target markets). One participant (A) advises that communications regarding safety levels should target everyone related with the destination and be “regular and not only when incidents occur as this reinforces the notion of reacting to terrorism Versus the more proactive stance of preparation and prevention”.

One further element of the strategy that came up in this study concerns the destination’s business continuity. The strategy should encourage/enforce a coordinated effort to protect critical business processes and resources required to maintain an acceptable level of business in the case of a terrorist attack for all destination stakeholders. The speedy resumption of these processes and the safety of visitors and staff should be central in this part of the strategy. The stakeholders should be encouraged to extend their business continuity planning throughout their supply chains to ensure continuity in the event of any disruption (terrorist or not). Particular emphasis was placed by the participants (D, H, I, K, L, N) on the aspect of “human continuity” through the provision of trauma counseling and support to employees and their immediate family members on issues concerning health, work, finances or other personal concerns.

4.4. Strategy implementation and management

Like with any strategy implementation, the destination’s internal context factors such as structure (power share, co-ordination and decision making practices) and culture (tradition, values and norms) will greatly affect the operationalization of the anti-terrorism strategy (Okumus, 2003). Participant C emphasized that “in the complex world we are living, it [strategy implementation] can never be merely a technical activity. It is profoundly political and at the same time philosophical”. Normally, as the strategy will be crafted by all destination stakeholders it will usually be acceptable by all parties involved and there is a higher potential for them to champion its implementation throughout the entire destination. Strategy implementation will vary depending on the specific destination characteristics, the quality and quantity of vertical and horizontal tourism networks, the effectiveness of resource allocation and on local anti-terrorism culture.

The word that was used by almost all the participants was “interoperability”. Although the term is mostly associated with telecommunications, software applications and the military, it essentially refers to the stakeholders’ ability to be flexible in their cooperation and to speak the ‘same language’ across the board. According to the participants, this is more a human rather than technical issue. It requires a culture that nurtures creative thinking, business insight to design procedures that aim at both consistency and situation-specific variation and ability to work efficiently under adverse circumstances with unexpected partners. Within such an environment the strategy should define clear roles and responsibilities for the various stakeholders. The participants emphasized that although the DMO is responsible for the overall co-ordination of strategy implementation within the destination, the accountability of implementation should lie with the professional associations of the various tourism stakeholders.

The DMO will also have the important role of managing and allocating the anti-terrorism budget (whether it comes from a national or a local fund) to its tourism stakeholders. The participant’s opinions on this issue are almost equally divided between an ‘exposure-based’ and a ‘portfolio management’ approach to resource allocation. The former approach advocates resource allocation based on the terrorism risk and vulnerability analyses results of the individual stakeholders whereas the latter suggests a portfolio management technique—just like with business financial investments—through software that can allow the DAG to manipulate the strategy into different scenarios.
regarding how and where to allocate the available resources. However, they all agreed that a structured approach should be taken because otherwise, in the words of participant N “experience has shown that very often budgets are allocated based on who screams the loudest or who has political clout rather than on what is important for the destination”.

With regards to local anti-terrorism culture, a number of participants emphasized that it is very important for the DMO to strive “not to develop a culture of fear but rather a culture of preparedness and mitigation”. One of the strategy implementation aims will be to successfully embed this proactive culture at all levels of the tourism stakeholders and in their day-to-day ‘business as usual’ ethos. The role of the local community in the successful implementation of anti-terrorism measures is of paramount importance here and the responsibility for educating it and raising strategy awareness lies with the DMO but also with all the destination stakeholders. The participants suggested a number of communication programs such as a dedicated webpage in the destination’s website, e-newsletters, local newspaper articles, flyers and events. In explaining the latter, it was suggested that the tactic of “awareness days” where the DAG members and others involved in the anti-terrorism strategy would set up kiosks in various locations within the destination to “spread the word” and hand out relevant information to both local residents and tourists.

Although this was implied above, it must be stressed that the role of the media is paramount in the anti-terrorism strategy implementation. Hall (2002) maintains that media are not only important in terms of the images that surround travel and specific destinations and which influence travel decision-making but have substantial impact on the policy measures which governments take with respect to tourist safety and security. Therefore, depending on the DMO’s media relations, they may be able to affect the funding of the strategy by the central government. They can also be used as a ‘watchdog’ for the strategy’s consistent implementation, since as Hall (2002) argues, the stringency of an anti-terrorism strategy implementation may ebb and flow in the light of responses to terrorist attacks, perceptions of risk and security and subsequent commercial and consumer pressures for convenient and cheaper travel.

4.5. Strategy monitoring and maintenance

Just as with the terrorism exposure analysis, the experts in our sample warned that the destination’s anti-terrorism strategy should not be viewed as “a one-time-exercise. One will need to constantly fine-tune and adapt it as the local and international environment changes. The strategy will, like a car engine, require a lot of maintenance if it is expected to deliver”. It is, therefore, important for the DAG to ensure that the destination’s anti-terrorism strategy remains effective, fit-for purpose and able to achieve its mission. It was suggested that periodic audits by independent security experts (an impartial review against defined standards) would be a first measure towards this end. The audited stakeholders would then be responsible for the remediation of any variances. The depth to which this audit can be carried out will depend on the available financial and human resources as well as the willingness of tourism stakeholders to cooperate. An alternative to this measure could be the administration of self-assessments (“health-checks”) by the various destination stakeholders, although this was suggested more as a complementary activity. However, the most important monitoring activity, according to the participants, is the “validation” of the strategy through testing. One participant (C), quoting the 19th century American humorist Josh Billings, noted that “the trouble with people is not that they don’t know but that they know so much that ain’t so. All strategies work well in paper and we think that we are prepared and know what to do and this is so wrong!” Testing may range from a desktop exercise to a strategy walkthrough, a simulation or a full-scale drill in coordination with the local authorities and the emergency services and it is the best means of the anti-terrorism strategy evaluation prior to a real incident. Such tests will enable the DAG to assess its ability to coordinate the implementation of the strategy and identify security gaps and managerial weaknesses between the stakeholders that need to be addressed. They can also verify critical security-related operational and technological functionality across the destination, exercise communication and interoperability skills, increase the destination’s awareness of the strategy and engage all involved stakeholders in a competence and capability self-assessment.

Although a large part of the participants were of the opinion that there are not useful metrics to monitor the effectiveness of the implemented strategy and flag deficiencies and areas that need to be reinforced or change, some of them had different views. They suggested that such metrics may include new terrorism exposure analyses (rates should be lower), process performance in strategy audits (sample employee background checks, response times in exercises and simulation, real successes or failures, etc.), value indicators (capital invested in buying, maintenance or replacement of surveillance technology, intelligence, staff, etc.) and visitor confidence measures (through visitor satisfaction questionnaires, focus groups, etc.).

It is important to note that these monitoring processes lead to what Mitroff (2005, p. 211) defines as “no-fault learning” which uses the learning acquired from failure to a new loop of strategy formulation. Even if the learning acquired from an audit or a strategy testing exercise is ‘single-loop’ (Argyris & Schon, 1978), mundane and of limited scope, it may influence several aspects of the destination that may effectively reduce its overall terrorism exposure. ‘Double-loop’ learning usually occurs in large real situations—an actual terrorist attack—and results in knowledge-based adaptation which impacts not only the fringes of the destination but the core of its anti-terrorism practices and policies (Jasanoff, 1994). As noted by
participant I, “this knowledge does not necessarily have to stem from the destination’s strategy failure; it may simply be new knowledge about terrorist practices” like in the 2006 transatlantic aircraft plot to detonate liquid explosives carried on board several airliners traveling from the UK to the USA (Laville, Norton-Taylor, & Dodd, 2006), which lead to the change of anti-terrorism strategies in several tourism businesses.

5. Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to discuss the role that a DMO should have in the co-ordination of anti-terrorism efforts within a destination and to propose a framework for the development, implementation and evaluation of a destination-specific anti-terrorism strategy. The study results offer useful insights with regards to the issues and challenges that such an endeavor would face. The findings indicate that the major challenge is overcoming the mentality of territorialism between the destination stakeholders and to move to an “interoperability” mode. DMOs can become catalysts in this mindset change and shift their activities from the pure promotional role that they are currently confined to towards a managerial role by leading and coordinating initiatives such as the development of a destination-wide anti-terrorism strategy based on integrated action, trust, open communication and realistic expectations. The expert insights offered by the participants and presented above led the authors to develop the destination anti-terrorism strategy framework presented in Fig. 1.

One of the main differences of this framework from Faulkner and Vikulov (2001) and Ritchie (2004) is that it stresses the importance of particular destination stakeholders in the planning and implementation of the anti-terrorism strategy and the pivotal role of the DMO in coordinating the entire effort. It takes further the ‘risk assessment’ of Faulkner and Vikulov (2001) as the exposure analysis considers the significance of possible targets for the terrorists as well as the impact analysis of attacks to various potential targets. It offers the key elements of an anti-terrorism strategy emphasizing the development of appropriate measures aiming at detecting threats, devaluing targets, denying terrorist access, deterring plans, and defending the destination from terrorist attacks. The framework also underscores the role of the DMO in encouraging the destination stakeholders to develop business and human continuity plans in the event of a terrorist attack as well as its role as a mediator between the central government and the destination stakeholders in terms of resource allocation. Finally, it expands Ritchie’s (2004) concepts of organizational learning and feedback by putting an emphasis on continuous validation of the strategy through the use of desktop exercises, walkthroughs and simulations as well as the input of the government, international tourism bodies and

![Diagram](image-url)
and other destinations that have experienced terrorist attacks.

Obviously the proposed framework needs refinement through further research in all of its five component areas but the study also offers a number of topics for further research. First, in this paper the term ‘destination’ has been used in a broad sense without specifying whether it refers to a country, a region or a location. The detail and usefulness of the framework will vary depending on the level of ‘destination’ and its applicability should be tested at all three levels. Second, the proposed framework is based on the premise that organizations need to be proactive rather than reactive to crises. However, it is argued that proactivity is largely dependant on business and national culture (see, for example, Okumus & Karamustafa, 2005). Although the framework’s safeguard is that decisions are made and actions are taken by stakeholders’ (hotels, travel agents, visitor attractions) associations and not individuals, it would be interesting to find out whether the former can be more proactive than the latter. Third, Mitroff (2005) argues that the “risk analysis” approach tends to disregard scenarios of low probability and high consequence or, as Mitroff puts it, “the unthinkables”. Considering that many terrorist attacks today (9/11, transatlantic aircraft plot, etc.) fall into this category, further research would be needed on how can the terrorism exposure analysis of a tourism destination become more accurate. Fourth, the framework’s anti-terrorism strategy is based on the assumption of terrorist attacks involving conventional weapons and explosives, whereas kidnappings and assassinations could also be considered and further research would be encouraged to assess the extent to which the framework should be modified to include the event of a bio-terrorist attack or a “dirty bomb”. Finally, other issues that have been well discussed in the extant management literature and mentioned in the context of this study’s strategic framework could be researched from an anti-terrorism strategy perspective. For example, research could be carried out to identify how portfolio analysis can be used for the effective allocation of anti-terrorism budgets or for the development of an integrative performance measurement model for an anti-terrorism strategy.

References


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