SPECIAL ISSUE – *The Dialectics of Borders Empires and Limens*

Risk, Dread and the Crisis of Counter-Terrorism Security.

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ABSTRACT

The present research explores not only the diverse definitions of terrorism but also the social conditions for the appearance of counter-terrorism. 9/11 was undoubtedly the epicenter of a new way of interpreting the risk-society. Combining empirical examples with a rich conceptual framework, our thesis is that while complete, no-gaps security may prove elusive, counterterrorism security can (and should) make people feel good about moving through public places. Last but not least, the 'representational' practices of security have become a central concern for counterterrorism thinkers in the post-9/11 world. Indeed, these authors have described these representations of security in only slightly different ways. These security methods and styles share much in common. Given the right situation, it might be argued that these authors are all describing something similar, if not the same thing. These methods are designed to mitigate fear and foster feelings of safety, certainty and security in inexpensive ways. We will conclude with two post-9/11 stories that illustrate this argument. The first story is drawn from an interview conducted with an Australian school teacher who worked for a year in a small town in Virginia. During her one year teaching assignment in 2006 and 2007 she was struck by the paradox of the everyday lives of the children she taught in this town. She marveled at their wonderful play equipment, sporting equipment and their pristine suburbs. She also marveled at how this play equipment and sporting facilities were never used.

Keywords: Terrorism. Counterterrorism. Simulated security. Aesthetic security.

RESUMO

A presente pesquisa explora não apenas diferentes definições de terrorismo, mas também as condições sociais para o aparecimento das teorias do contra terrorismo. O 9/11 foi, sem dúvida, o epicentro de um novo caminho de interpretação da sociedade de risco. Combinando exemplos empíricos com a riqueza conceitual de um quadro teórico (framework), nossa tese é a de que a ideia de uma sociedade sem falhas de

Palavras-chave : Terrorismo. Contra terrorismo. Segurança Simulada. Segurança Estética.

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segurança, como apregoado pelo contra terrorismo quando busca fazer as pessoas sentirem-se bem ao se deslocarem por locais públicos, pode ser enganosa. Por último, mas não por fim, as práticas 'representacionais' de segurança tem se tornado um consenso para os pensadores do contra terrorismo, no mundo pós 9/11. Entretanto, esses autores descrevem as representações de segurança de maneiras ligeiramente diferentes, embora seus métodos tenham muito em comum. Dada a situação, cabe explicar que todos esses autores descrevem algo similar, quando não a mesma coisa. Seus métodos buscam reduzir o medo e promover o sentimento de segurança e certeza, de modo simplificado. Nós concluiremos com duas histórias pós 9/11, que ilustram tal argumento. A primeira história surge da entrevista com uma professora australiana que trabalhou por um ano em um lugarejo na Virginia. Durante seu ano de trabalho, entre 2006 e 2007, ela se viu frente ao paradoxo da vida cotidiana das crianças para as quais lecionava, na cidade. Por um lado, ela se maravilhou com os equipamentos de lazer e esporte, nesses subúrbios imaculados. Mas ela também se surpreendeu ao ver que esses equipamentos nunca eram utilizados.

INTRODUCTION: THE BORDERS SEPARATING THEORY AND SECURITY

The purpose of this paper is to provide a theoretical framework for understanding the consequences of terrorism in a post-9/11 world. It is a framework that addresses why counterterrorism security in major cities, at major event and the associated industries (hospitality and tourism chief among them) has been explained in reference to 'risk society' theories and concepts. Using this framework we will provide practical descriptions of how managers and business leaders can protect the locations where their businesses operate from the consequences of the threat of terrorism.

We are guided by Magnus Ranstorp's (2011) account of the goals of counterterrorism. He argues that the goal of a successful counterterrorism operation may have more to do with making people feel safer than substantially improving physical security. Ranstorp's account acknowledges that a committed and determined suicide terrorist will likely be successful in carrying out an attack. It is close to impossible to stop someone wearing a bomb from walking into a public place and detonating. Stopping this kind of attack should probably not be the goal of counterterrorism security (Howie, 2012). Our goal for this paper is to argue – with the use of social theory and some practical and empirical examples – that whilst complete, no-gaps security may prove elusive, counterterrorism security can (and should) make people feel good about moving through public places. For this reason the methods for countering terrorism proposed in this paper are in the form of a framework for responding to the threat of terrorism in places where the threat is considered low or moderate. Managers and owners of tourism and hospitality businesses located in countries without major political unrest are our target audience but others in more volatile countries and locations will benefit too. Written in an Olympic year, this paper offers a way to respond to what may be unprecedented security challenges.

The theme of this special issue of **Rosa dos Ventos** is 'The Dialectics of Borders'. We have interpreted this in two key ways. In one, we identify dialectics on the borders of social theory. In particular, we want to explore what is understood as 'risk' in the contexts of contemporary efforts to counter the threat of terrorism and what distinguishes 'risk' from other possible ways of understanding danger. In the other, we identify borders at the locations where people gather at major events in contemporary cities. It is at these borders where 'security' enters the world and our consciousness. Within this secured boundary that separates events from the unruliness of society people of differing

walks of life operate – many as patrons and customers, others as workers. In the context of major events, these workers are in the hospitality and tourism industries. *Liminality* – that ambivalence and uncertainty that emerges when one achieves a twilight status between certain *ways of being* – can emerge in differing ways. In this paper, the liminal emerges at the crossroads of post-9/11 uncertainty and our best attempts to deal with it. Our attempt to deal with it here is theoretical, but it is not divorced from practical events and reality. To demonstrate this, we have organized this paper in the following way; first, we examine the social theoretical literature that argues that we live in a *risk society*. We argue that the cognitive assumptions that this branch of theory holds about people and their actions is problematic in its failure to account for the possibility that people are not economic rationalists and so called *utility maximisers*. Unfortunately, as Korstanje (2011) points out, it is the chief paradigm for explaining the threat of terrorism to the tourism and hospitality industries. Second, we consider the status of 'risk' and 'dread' in the context of securing cities, major events, the associated industries, and people and places. This brings together many elements of the tourism and hospitality industries. This serves as a backdrop to the arguments we make in this paper. Primarily, we are interested in the possible forms that security can take in a world in which counterterrorism security is guided by problematic assumptions about how people understand and respond to danger.

THE NATURE OF RISK AND DREAD

Korstanje (2011, p.4) argues that 'risk', in the cognitive psychological tradition, took on new meanings in the tourism and hospitality industries after 9/11. The identification – and the self-identification – of being 'at-risk' of becoming a victim of a terrorist attack became an everyday fear for people that travelled by plane or found themselves in the uncertain surrounding of a foreign land. Stated differently, the 9/11 attacks caused *anxiety* and *terror* as they were designed to. When under the influence of an acute response bound to anxiety, terror or dread, people will often act out in unpredictable ways. Or, as Žižek (2001) has argued, anxious people effortlessly spin out stories designed to relieve them of the uncertainty they feel in confronting trauma in their everyday lives:

> […] 'trauma' designates a shocking encounter which, precisely, DISTURBS this immersion into one's life-world, a violent intrusion of something which doesn't fit in […}. Man [sic] is not simply overwhelmed by the impact of the traumatic encounter […] but is able […] to counteract its destabilizing impact by spinning out *intricate symbolic cobwebs* [our emphasis] (p. 47).

The phrase 'intricate symbolic cobwebs' is significant here. It suggests that in times of heightened trauma we tell ourselves beautiful stories. Beautiful stories help us move forward, forget and live a life that would otherwise be consumed by uncertainty and ambivalence. We still know that danger potentially lurks everywhere (Bauman, 2006), but thinking about it too much won't help. We are forced to act as though we do not know. It may be the next best thing to not actually knowing.

Those living in a 'risk society' are assumed to understand the risks that they face and how to take the most productive steps to reduce their exposure to risk. 'Risk' was quickly established as the dominant socio-cultural ideology for interpreting the meanings and consequences of terrorism after 9/11 (Amoore & De Goede, 2008; Korstanje, 2011) this logic extended into economic and financial matters too, see for example Drakos (2004). It is a concept that has been deployed in diverse contexts, but it is usually attributed to sociology and the works of Ulrich Beck (1992) and Anthony Giddens (1991). In this sociological context, and appropriately for discussions concerning the risk of terrorism, Alan Petersen (1997, p.190) has drawn particular attention to those low-probability, but 'high-consequence' risks and their relationship with capitalism and those that oppose it – that is, those that don't benefit from the global propagation of unrestricted money-making, people seeking

selfhood, identity and, above all, a 'personal sense of security'. In the context of cities, Coaffee's (2003, p.6) appropriation of 'risk' theory allows him to conclude that 'the potential threat of urban terrorism' has generated a counter-effort to 'design out' risk through security advancements that must evolve quicker than terrorists do.

A failure to do so might create a heightened *perception* of being at risk from terrorism and a significant decline in social confidence. In this way, Coaffee (2003 p.7) argues that the urban landscape is 'materially and symbolically' undermined by the threat that terrorism poses. His emphasis on perception is significant. It suggests that the material reality of *danger* is something quite different to *risk*. As Korstanje (2011) points out, risk is at least partly about cognition, response and perception. It involves a judgment, one that is made whether there is enough information available or not. Indeed, the less information we have the more likely we may be to believe in some alarming and scary possibilities – dangers of all kinds that we may feel susceptible to. Terrifying 'symbolic cobwebs'. Risk theorists, however, often show little concern for 'the underlying assumptions of risk theory' (Howie, 2009, p.58). Those who practice various kinds of risk analysis – whether they consider themselves security experts, financial gurus or sociologists – often assume that people are autonomous, rational and capable of evaluating risk and making appropriate judgments to avoid dangers. They also assume that people will make decisions that provide them with a *net gain*. We don't think people are so predictable. The lessons of Neo (from *The Matrix* films) and Anakin Skywalker (from the *Star Wars* franchise) are allegory for this so-called irrationality. Neo makes a decision that no machine could understand – he chooses to save one person, the woman he loves, and damns civilization in the process. Anakin Skywalker turns to the 'Dark Side' in the hope that he can save his love. He risked it all and failed. The resonance that these characters have in contemporary popular culture should serve as a timely reminder to risk managers that people will often act in ambivalent and contradictory ways. People are rarely *utility maximisers*.

This all relies heavily on the assumption that regular people are able to reasonably calculate risks as they go about their lives. Few consider whether we are ready to perform this task. When the word 'terrorism' is uttered, we may be less prepared than ever. '[T]his theory of the risk society falls short', according to Žižek (2002, p.248), when 'common subjects' are compelled to decide despite being aware that our decisions might well prove arbitrary and ineffectual. The potential benefits of the 'risk society' include 'the democratic discussion of all options and consensus building'. The consequence is an 'immobilizing dilemma: Why should the democratic discussion in which the majority participates lead to better results, when, cognitively, the ignorance of the majority remains?'

This highlights a significant paradox that is at the heart of risk frameworks – in order to measure the degree of 'risk' we inevitably rely on how people perceive their worlds and how they understand danger. These perceptions are relied upon regardless of whether they are reasonable/accurate/well-informed/well-considered. It seems plausible that risk analysis may do little more than reflect the fears, dreads and uncertainties felt by those conducting the analysis. If we go seeking riskiness, we will find it. It becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy circulating around choosing to view the world as a dangerous place. The question of how the world might look if we chose to view it as safe would be one of considerable importance if we found the courage to ask it.

This dilemma is especially problematic for those who find themselves making decisions about risk on behalf of the public, employees, and patrons and customers. Risk analysts face a difficult job, coming to terms with a myriad of data, personal anecdotes and accounts and, in particular, sensationalised media reports. Consider the following stories that received global attention in the lead up to the 2012 London Olympic Games. These accounts of supposed security failures stirred the anxieties of the Olympic going public. Media audiences witnessed:

- Initial media reports raising doubts about the ability of the firm contracted to provide security at the Olympics (*G4S*) to the hire the targeted number of highly trained security guards (10400 guards) (Gavaghan & Bond, 2012);

- Security analysts commenting on what this means for security at Olympic events and the risks posed by deficient security, especially in the context of the terrorist threat (MacIntyre, 2012; Kirka, 2012);

- The chief executive of *G4S*, Nick Buckles, admitting that the failure to provide enough guards was a 'humiliating shambles' to the company (Greene, 2012);

- Reports that the government had lost 'faith' in the security company (Booth & Hopkins, 2012).

The Games came and went without alarm or major security failure. We were intrigued by the media response to the perceived security problems, however. We wondered why when a particular goal for recruiting and training guards is not met it was perceived as a significant problem. Yet little concern is shown in relation to the generally disadvantaged employment situations that security guards face. Security guards, for the most part, are paid poorly, do not enjoy a significant social status associated with their work and yet are asked to occupy the frontlines of the war on terror. They are the '*first* first responders' (Howie, 2012, p. 133) – on-site before emergency services arrive.

This dilemma will undoubtedly need to be confronted again when the Olympics come to Brazil in 2016. Already, security is high on the agenda for the Rio games. Organizers of the Rio games have already been asked by journalists about the chances of similar security failures occurring – '… in Brazil we are now much more aware of the need to get the right balance of armed forces, private security people and stewards in 2016' (Fernandes in Smale, 2012). At this point, only a few years out from the opening ceremony, cyber security is among the chief concerns (McCallion, 2012). Predicting the future security needs for major events is part of the challenge faced by those in charge of understanding danger and risk in managing public events. Or, perhaps, this is little more than evidence of the incredible human ability to see the worst in every situation. Indeed, in the world of terrorism and counterterrorism, worst-case scenarios play a significant role.

This is why the 'Armaggedon complex' (Haraway, 2000) is such a significant part of security culture and why worst-case scenarios are so easy to imagine. This was the context for a recent short story competition in Australia. Organized by the Australian Security Research Centre (ASRC) in Canberra, this competition asks contributors to consider what national security 'nightmare scenarios' we may have to face in the future (Australian Associated Press, 2012). We have also sat through many counterterrorism conferences in which debates took place about 'what would we do …?' in the event that full-scale nuclear, biological, radiological and chemical attacks were carried out by terrorist networks (presumably the same ones hiding in caves in the disputed territories between Pakistan and Afghanistan); if the water and power infrastructure was destroyed; and what if millions of people were dead? When it comes to discussions of terrorism, powerful reactions and responses (overreactions?) may not be far away (Mueller, 2006).

Perhaps we need a different way of talking about 'terrorism'. A different language may provide a way forward for cutting through the uncertainty and ambivalence that terrorism-talk creates. Can we find somewhere between *complete, no-gaps security* and *total annihilation*? We argue that this is where a distinction can be drawn between the idea of *risk* and the concept of *dread*. Risk and dread are related. Those that ascribe to the idea of 'risk' as a way of understanding danger believe in the magical abilities of calculations, probabilities, inputs, facts and figures to understand dangers. Risk calculations claim *knowledge* through mathematical approximations. It involves a trade-off between the psychological comfort that might be found in numerical certainty, and the impossibility of

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producing accurate numbers/data. Mueller (2006) has suggested that the inability to understand terrorism has led to the threat of terrorism being consistently and irrationally 'overblown'. Mueller (2006, p.1) poses a vital question: 'Which is the greater threat: terrorism, or our reaction against it?'

The consequences of our reactions to terrorism can be significant. The *reaction* to 9/11 has cost far more than the attacks themselves. In Australia alone, defense spending has increased 59% since 9/11. The Australian government over this same period has introduced 40 new counterterrorism laws. During this time, 0 (zero) Australians were victims of terrorism and no terrorist attacks occurred on Australian soil (Healey, 2011). Michaelsen (2005 p. 330) argues, however, that Australians hold a 'general assumption' that terrorists are trying to carry out an attack. A poll conducted in the *Sydney Morning Herald* found that 68% of respondents believed that terrorists would strike in Australia before too long. In a study conducted by The Lowy Institute (Cook, 2005), 'international terrorism' was viewed as the third most worrying outside threat behind nuclear proliferation and global warming, and ranking ahead of international disease, population growth, and China's growth. Evidence from the US tells a similar tale. *Time* magazine reported in 2008 that the 'War on Terror' had cost around one trillion US dollars to fight (Thompson, 2008). Mueller (2006, p.3) and Healey (2011) both point out that whilst many Americans died in terrorist attacks in 2001, triple the number died of malnutrition, and 40 times as many died in car accidents. Alan Harris (Mueller, 2006 p. 2) argues that the lifetime probability that someone living on Earth will die in a terrorist attack is around '1 in 80,000'. That is about the same likelihood of being killed by an asteroid or a comet.

We don't want to be drawn into a numbers game however. Indeed, we argue that the numbers games are part of the problem. But perhaps we can argue that terrorism remains a highly unlikely occurrence that should rank much lower than other threats and risks that we are faced with in the course of everyday life. It is more likely that someone will be killed as a passenger in a motor vehicle or even struck by lightning, but these more likely dangers can probably be more easily avoided. We can choose not to travel in cars and we can choose not to stand in fields holding metal poles during storms (and, of course, we can do things like unplug our electrical equipment in our homes). But what behaviors should we engage in to avoid becoming a victim of terrorism? This is a question that is more difficult to answer. How do we manage the risk that terrorism, and the threat of terrorism, poses?

 Perhaps we could stay at home and not attend work, shopping malls and schools. We could become agoraphobic and reclusive. That would be likely to protect us from terrorist attacks. Few would be willing to react in this way. Perhaps part of a life well lived is danger. Leaving our homes poses risks. Driving our cars poses risks. Catching public transport can be risky. One might even say that risk and danger are routine, even banal, features of everyday life.

If we were to find ourselves frozen by what we view as intolerable danger, then we might forget to live our lives. Relevant here is the writings of the great philosopher Søren Kierkegaard (1957) and his thoughts on dread and our existential anxiety towards death. He distinguished between *fear*, an emotion bound in events and occurrences that we can know and rationally understand, and *dread*, a fear of events and occurrences that we cannot understand or yet fathom. Kierkegaard's (1957 p. 38) intention was to draw "attention to the fact that it [dread] is different from fear and similar concepts which refer to something definite [...] dread is freedom's reality as possibility for possibility".

This is dread. It is quite different to fear as it is borne of our uncertainties, anxieties and perceptions of ambiguity. Fear is simpler and more straightforward. Fear is a valuable evolutionary adaptation. It tells us that certain things are dangerous and should be avoided. Dread, however, is our inability to understand the nature of danger and our belief that it may lurk everywhere. Dread is our response to the impossibility of effectively calculating risk. When the threat of terrorism is ubiquitous, then we

have nothing to rationally avoid. When there is nothing to flee from, one cannot flee. Despite there being no acts of terrorism in Australia since 9/11, Australians became desperately afraid of terrorism. On and since 9/11, significant acts of terrorism have occurred in New York, Washington DC, Bali, Madrid, London, Mumbai, Oslo and a host of other locations. Why then do people in other cities throughout the world fear the possibility of terrorism? To avoid becoming a victim of crime, one can avoid high crime suburbs. But how is terrorism to be avoided when it doesn't even occur in one's city (yet)? How are we to understand who a terrorist is when they might be one of *us*? The dreaded *possibility* of terrorism can be said to lurk in every corner of every city. If recent acts of terrorism had proved unable to generate dread in cities throughout the world, then we surely would not have described them as acts of *terror*.

Part of terrorism's power, and the source of its effectiveness as a tactic, is drawn from its ability to have significant consequences amongst people who are not *directly* affected by terrorist violence. Those in close proximity to the flames of terrorist violence – those who live or work in the same street, neighborhood or city – might be killed, severely injured or maimed, and their homes and workplaces might be destroyed. The wives, husband, partners, children, other relatives and friends of the victims will feel trauma, and so will those who live and work in the targeted city. But terrorism has consequences for people across time and space. Trauma is felt in distant locations and many years after the attack has occurred. Even if terrorism does not occur on the streets of our home city in Melbourne, Australia, terrorism still has very real meanings and consequences. In the remaining sections of this paper, we want to paint a picture that is part empirical and part theoretical. We want to draw on several practical examples to illustrate how the ideas discussed in this paper to date have consequences for real world security, especially in the context of major cities and major events. We argue, with the theme of this special issue in mind, that all manner of human services – hospitality and tourism chief among them, but also related industry sectors like public transport, sporting events and shopping malls and strips – serve as a backdrop for this analysis.

THE THREAT OF TERRORISM IN MAJOR CITIES AND THE TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY INDUSTRIES

The city becomes a precarious and contested location during and after terror scares. The city is home to the wealthy and affluent, to business people and the corporations where they spend their days. It is also the home of the criminal and the terrorist. Turner (2006 p.26) argues that 'Human beings are ontologically vulnerable and insecure, and their natural environment, doubtful'. People engage in routines to guard against this 'doubt' and form relationships with social institutions and the people that dwell within. These relationships and institutions will often be described as *society* or perhaps even *culture*. In the bricks and mortar of city-spaces, people form friendships, find lovers and start families, find employment and middle-class economic security. They forge close bonds, enter into rituals that are often religiously adhered to. People attend work, go to universities and schools and shop in department stores, malls and retail strips. They attend cafes, restaurants and major cultural and sporting events. There is great social and physical strength in city-spaces. There is also great weakness. The same things valued by socialized city-dwellers (employment, relationship opportunities and social life) are the same things valued by those who seek to exploit it. Those who live and work in cities face various dangers in their daily movements through the public transport networks (that were spectacularly targeted by international terrorists in Madrid in 2004 and London in 2005), into organizations for work and leisure (such as the kinds targeted on 9/11 and in nightclub and restaurant districts in Bali in 2002 and 2005), only to return to public transport in the evenings. According to Alexander and Alexander (2002 p.149) the 'specter of terrorism' looms over every part of life in major cities. Because of this, cities have become 'public laboratories' where counterterrorism security is practiced (Howie, 2009).

When Howie (2009) entered these laboratories to understand how security is developed in post-9/11 cities he discovered something surprising. A managing director of a major public transport organization told him that counterterrorism security is developed with the following principle in mind; '*What would I say to the Coroner's Court or the Royal Commission to defend the company's and my actions?*'

This suggests that counterterrorism security is about much more than simply physically securing buildings, premises and organizational entry points. Alongside physical security improvements, the emotional consequences for workers need to be managed, and legal frameworks need to be adhered to (Alexander & Alexander, 2002; Alexander, 2004). In Australia, these legal frameworks are often organized around 'risk' theories (see Australian Homeland Security Research Centre, 2003). The managing director of the public transport organization acknowledges with this statement that improving physical security is only one consideration in guarding against terrorism. Whether the threat of terrorism eventuates or not is not really the question. Rather, the question is what should organizations in various industries be doing? What steps are reasonable, and what would be an overreaction?

It is in this context that we argue that 'risk management' only addresses a small part of the problem that terrorism poses. The standard categorization of terrorism under risk management models is 'low probability, high consequence'. This tells us little about the threat of terrorism, the damage it might cause, its psychological consequences and how an effective response can be developed. Risk analysts are most effective when working with cold, hard numbers – they predict business trends, economic and financial swings, and national and local growth and employment figures. They predict human behavior insofar as they are rational, utility maximizers. Risk management techniques are not as effective when dealing with precarious and vulnerable people with subjective feelings, emotions and anxieties.

RISK AND COUNTERTERRORISM IN THE TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY INDUSTRIES

Here we briefly draw attention to the academic literature that examines counterterrorism and security in the hospitality and tourism industries. The account we provide is not exhaustive, but it moves this paper forward by situating the dilemma of planning for the possibility of terrorism in post-9/11 contexts in industries associated with cities and major events. This literature expanded quickly in the aftermath of 9/11 and the acts of terror in Bali, Madrid and London. The dilemmas associated with securing the tourism and hospitality industries after 9/11 served as a reminder that these sectors had always dealt with the volatility of global people movement and politics that might see favorite tourist destinations become quasi-warzones, sometimes literally overnight (Mansfield & Pizam, 2006). The idea that 'risk analyses' may be the best way of responding to the dangers of terrorism has a particularly post-9/11 flavor (Korstanje, 2010, 2011).

The consequences of terrorism in the tourism and hospitality industries have been enormous. In the aftermath of 9/11 this was especially so for regions of the world that relied on air travel to deliver tourists. Alexander and Alexander (2002) argue that not only did 9/11 lead to an 11% decline in foreigners seeking US holiday visas, but US tourism to other parts of the world declined 'dramatically'. Over thanksgiving in 2001, Americans were completely unwilling to travel by air – 40% chose to stay at home, 60% drove. As a consequence of this, Gerd Gingerenza calculated that in the 12 months following 9/11 there were 1595 extra road deaths as a direct result of their decision to drive on interstate highways instead of flying (Gardner, 2008).

As Paraskevas and Arendell (2007) argue, tourist destinations and the tourism and hospitality industries are examples of what counterterrorism professionals call *soft targets*. Soft targets are potential terrorist targets that are difficult or undesirable to secure. Examples include shopping malls, schools and universities and, in some contexts, the public transport network. Hard targets are highly secured targets, well-known to be chief amongst desirable terrorist targets. Examples include government buildings, military locations, major sporting events (like the Olympics and the World Cup), and power and water infrastructure. Tourism researchers argue that as 'soft targets' the likelihood of terrorism in the tourism and hospitality industries is a matter of 'when' not 'if' (Mitroff, 2005; Paraskevas & Arendell, 2007).

The literature exploring the threat of terrorism to the tourism and hospitality industries has traditionally focussed on mitigation and recovery strategies at the 'destination' (Beirman, 2002; Blake & Sinclair, 2003; Richter, 1999; Wall, 2005). Others have focused on terrorism's impacts (Alexander & Alexander, 2002; Alexander, 2004; Drakos & Kutan, 2003; Pizam, 1978, 1999; Pizam & Smith, 2000). What follows is our contribution to this debate that sits amongst recent tourism and hospitality research that approaches counterterrorism security as a 'crisis management' dilemma that seeks more 'proactive and strategic' solutions (Paraskevas & Arendell, 2007 p.1560) and see Faulkner (2001) and Ritchie (2004). It is our way of dealing with certain security realities that are based on conceptions of 'risk' and 'risk management', whilst also dealing with the 'dread' associated with the threat of terrorism. The theoretical framework outlining *security as a visual practice* holds much promise for dealing with terrorism as not only a threat to physical safety but also as a threat to emotional and psychological well-being.

SECURITY AS A VISUAL PRACTICE – A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Skoll (2007) argues that shifts in the meanings and consequences of terrorism occur in the context of shifts in 'politics and power'. He argues that the 'relations among words and social conflict call for an analytic system that can take into account the reciprocal nature of meanings and power' (p. 107). Or, stated different, terrorism requires a particular *discursive space*, perhaps even what Graeme Turner (2004) has called (in a different, yet related, context) a 'discursive regime' (p.8). Understanding the discursive regime demands that audiences pay close attention to the 'representational repertoires and patterns employed' to frame, organize and contextualize certain spectacular events (in the context of this paper, mass mediated representations of international terrorism). We argue that the styles and methods for counterterrorism security deployed by those involved in businesses in vulnerable industries and locations are definitively part of this 'discursive regime' or 'analytic system'. It is part of the story of *terrorism*. Security, like terrorism, is situated and contextual.

According to Zedner (2003, pp. 154-155), security is 'a slippery concept' with multiple meanings that contain little clarity but can nonetheless loosely be defined as a subjective condition that incorporates a combination of 'feeling safe' and having 'freedom from anxiety'. Security professionals and security studies scholars have long agreed that security can rarely be entirely impenetrable and 100 per cent reliable (Wood and Dupont, 2006; Zedner, 2003). The word 'security' is associated with a certain degree of incompleteness and vulnerability and it is generally acknowledged that complete, no-gaps security cannot be guaranteed.

Despite massive efforts being devoted to security, breaches regularly occur. People break security barriers and cordons. People commit crimes, acts of violence and terrorism. When this occurs, it undermines the perceptions of security, safety and certainty held by those who were supposedly protected and secure. It is at these moments that seemingly secure people know that 'security' is not 'secure'. Security, in this way, can be said to have oppositional meanings. In one sense, security is

being secure. In another sense, security is deeply insecure. By *physically enhancing security*, we can become more secure. By *enhancing the visible aspects of security*, people who rely on this security can feel and believe that security is secure. One meaning requires a response that physically improves security, the other requires a response that improves perceptions of safety. By visibly improving security – perhaps with little corporeal or actual improvement to security – it is reasonable to assume that people will feel more secure. Moreover, focusing on the visible aspects of security as a way of fighting terrorism is far less arduous and costly than vainly attempting to close all security gaps (most likely without success).

Deterring terrorism – as violence and as an emotion – will likely be more effective than overwhelming and overblown security. Howie (2009) called this *simulating security* by generating an *image of safety*. Coaffee et al. (2009) referred to this as the practice of *security aesthetics*. Mueller (2006) described it as generating a *security theatre*. Boyle and Haggerty (2009) referred to it as *spectacular security*.

Table 1: Security as a 'visual' and 'representational' practice

Concept	*key authors*	*Description*
security aesthetics	Bleiker, 2006, p. 82 Coaffee et al., 2009, p. 492	Generating security that is both highly visible, yet appearing as a routine and everyday part of effective societal security systems (unsurprising but really noticeable security)
security 'theatre'	Schneier, 2003, p. 249 Mueller, 2006 p. 157	The creation of the theatre (the scene and the actors) of security. It is a security performance and a security narrative that sustains the feelings of security enjoyed by the general public
'spectacular' security	Boyle and Haggerty, 2009	In response to terrorism spectaculars we have witnessed security spectaculars – urban-located, visually remarkable security advancements, often built into spectacular and attractive city spaces
'simulated' security	Howie, 2009, PP. 137-162	The appearance of security will be, in certain circumstances, enough to deter would-be terrorists and put the public's mind at ease

The 'representational' practices of security have become a central concern for counterterrorism thinkers in the post-9/11 world. Indeed, these authors have described these representations of security in only slightly different ways. These security methods and styles share much in common. Given the right situation, it might be argued that these authors are all describing something similar, if not the same thing. These methods are designed to mitigate fear and foster feelings of safety, certainty and security in inexpensive ways. Each of these methods will significantly improve the visual aspects of organizational security. The following table depicts certain methods for practicing visual security, the associated costs, and the potential impact.

Table 2: methods, costs and impacts of simulated security

Method for countering terrorism	*Potential costs*	*Impact*
Visibility of technology for security	Some costs, but less than expected	Inspires feelings of safety, even if no real safety improvement is realised
Security staff in high profile areas	Theoretically, no cost. Involves redeploying existing security staff	Inspires feelings of safety, even if no real safety improvement is realised

Conduct person and bag searches outside, not inside	Few costs, but strong organisational skills required	Creates visible security cues. Discourages would be attackers. Keeps security outside of your venue/business
Only partially disguise security improvements	Potentially significant costs but may also be implemented in cost-effective ways	Provides cues for an unconscious belief in security. Provides real security
Website design and management of social networking image	Some costs, but can be incorporated into already existing business management systems	Maintains the appearance of safety and security, and shows that the company is security-aware
Aim for low-fear, not high security	Minimal	Fosters a security conscious, not security obsessed, organisational culture

CONCLUSION

We argue that this approach may be an ideal response to *terror*ism – a word where our fears, anxieties and terrors are literally built into the description of the act. It is an approach that acknowledge that the first decade of the twentieth century – a time that we sometimes describe as an *age of terror*[3] - has been sustained by a 'deep horror which underlies our well-ordered surface' (Žizek, 2000, p. 66)

We will conclude with two post-9/11 stories that illustrate this argument. The first story is drawn from an interview conducted with an Australian school teacher who worked for a year in a small town in Virginia. During her one year teaching assignment in 2006 and 2007 she was struck by the paradox of the everyday lives of the children she taught in this town. She marveled at their wonderful play equipment, sporting equipment and their pristine suburbs. She also marveled at how this play equipment and sporting facilities were never used. *What if a student fell and was hurt? What if they were abducted by some insidious stranger?* She marveled at how those pristine suburbs were hidden behind walls in gated communities. There was little need to venture outside of these gates (Howie, 2012).

The second story is drawn from the tourism and hospitality industry and an interview conducted with a security manager at a major events venue in 2005. When asked about the '100% bag searches' of patrons' bags that occurred during major events, the manager admitted that 100% bag searches were not really possible – he used 'as many guards as you can have without blocking the entrance' (Howie, 2009, p. 152). So, how do we resolve this paradox? How do we live our lives amidst unbearable uncertainty? When can we say that we have too much security and where complete, no-gaps security becomes a paranoid fantasy? At what point are our security activities effectively *blocking the entrance*? These are difficult questions to answer.

Taking Žižek's (2002, p. 248) argument against 'risk society' theories a little further, we argue that the post-9/11 world is responsible for 'frustrations' amongst people who are called upon to 'decide' the conditions of dangerousness and risk whilst being reminded that they are 'in no position' to decide or 'objectively weigh the pros and cons'. Resorting to conspiracy theories can be viewed as a desperate attempt to resolve this risk paradox. Conspiracy theories are not solely the domain of left-wing political radicals and anti-Semitic ideologues. Some of the chief conspiracy theorists are drawn from the world of counterterrorism and business. We have sat through endless counterterrorism conferences listening to fantastic possibilities of terrorists who want to somehow 'turn our cities into

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[3] A notion that we owe to discussions with Peter Kelly.

deserts' by detonating a nuclear warhead or releasing biological, chemical, or radiological material on an unsuspecting population in a major global – always Western – city.

Perhaps the most important thing we need to know about terrorism – a threat that cannot really be calculated – is that it is always possible, but always unlikely. In other words, it probably won't happen in *your/my/our* city. But it will certainly happen somewhere. When Michael Moore in an interview on the US *60 Minutes* current affairs program said that terrorism remained a highly unlikely occurrence, interviewer Bob Simon replied 'But no one sees the world like that' (Mueller, 2006, pp. 1-2). Bob Simon is right and it is the reason that terrorism is such an effective tactic for non-state and state actors alike. An act of terrorism makes people believe that it may happen again. In this way, the consequences of terrorism are felt where it occurs and where it does not occur.

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