

Impact case study (REF3b)

Institution: Warwick University
Unit of Assessment: Warwick Business School
Title of case study: Informing Debate on and Improving Preparedness for Extreme Events
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>In the wake of a series of terrorist attacks (e.g. 9/11, the London bombings of 2005), there has been an increased awareness of the importance of governmental, organisational and civil society's preparedness for responding to major catastrophic events. Dr Sullivan-Taylor's research examines risk and resilience management of extreme events by taking a practice-based point of view that seeks to integrate private and public sector management. As a result of the research, policy-makers have a more robust evidence base to draw on and individual organisations are better placed to ensure their own resilience through improved business planning.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Previous research in this area had tended to neglect decision makers responsible for business continuity management (BCM) in private sector organisations. To address this gap, Sullivan-Taylor (at WBS 2002-2013) set up the Strategy, Organisational Learning and Resilience (SOLAR) research unit and conducted a series of research projects in the area of organisational risk and resilience in the face of extreme events (http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/wbs/research/solar/). Between 2004 and 2006, she conducted the study <i>The Strategic Management Implications of Global Terrorism</i>, which extended the 'Think Global, Act Local' analytical framework, by including terrorism in its scope. The concept relates to the dilemma faced by organisations in deciding the extent to which they should provide a standard product or service in international markets, or should adapt them to recognise differences in national markets. The study was distinctive in adopting a qualitative inductive approach to data capture and analysis. It consisted of six in-depth case studies of organisations in the UK travel and leisure sector, all highly exposed to threats from terrorists. It examined the impact of global terrorism on their strategic management practices and processes, and how these organisations, comparatively, learnt to adapt in the context of uncertainty and ambiguity. The research found that (1) perceptions of uncertainty and threats from terrorism and theories of action differed in and between organisations depending on factors such as the accuracy of information and, (2) that senior managers and organisations varied widely in their preparedness for managing the threat and actuality of extreme events. Practitioners responded typically either defensively ('we have done all that could reasonably be expected of us') or fatalistically towards terrorist threats ('an attack is inevitable and will be overwhelming, so there is not much point worrying about resilience') (Sullivan-Taylor and Wilson, 2009). They tended to have a complacent attitude towards investing and preparing for extreme events, and mainly relied on government information to inform their actions.</p> <p>The research was developed further in 2008 when Sullivan-Taylor led a major four year study with Dr Layla Branicki (2008,WBS SOLAR Research Fellow), which examined how managers perceived extreme threat and the extent to which organisational systems were prepared to cope with such events. The study also included an in-depth focus on Critical National Infrastructure organisations including transport, water and energy. Data was gathered from a broad field via 11 high-level focus groups for senior decision makers involving 161 participants from 135 organisations across 18 sectors from public, private and voluntary organisations. The study identified ways in which organisational resilience might be embedded through the transfer of best practice within and between different regions and sectors. Key findings demonstrated that: (1) in competitive commercial environments there has historically been a resistance to information sharing between businesses (because it is thought to weaken any competitive advantages deriving from holding unique resources and information); (2) extreme events give multiple organisations a stake in each other's preparedness, because a neighbour or suppliers' fallibility may have a direct impact on others across the supply chain, districts and infrastructures; (3) wider engagement and access to relevant resources is required; (4) it is important to understand the approaches and definition of the term 'collaboration' as its meaning varies between people, organisations and sectors; (5) Business Continuity Managers (BCMs) are disempowered and need to be legitimised by inclusion in board-level positions and decision making, if organisations are to develop resilience in thinking at the strategic level.</p>

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3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

1. Sullivan-Taylor, B. and Branicki, L. (2011), 'Creating Resilient SMEs: Why One Size Might Not Fit All', *International Journal of Production Research*, 49, pp. 5565-5579. Peer reviewed journal article
2. Wilson, D.C., Branicki, L., Sullivan-Taylor, B., and Wilson, A.D. (2010), "", *Accounting, Auditing and Accountability Journal*, 23: 699-721. Peer reviewed journal article
3. Sullivan-Taylor, B. and Wilson, D.C. (2009), 'Managing the threat of terrorism in British travel and leisure organizations', *Organization Studies*, 30: 251-276. Peer reviewed journal article
4. Sullivan-Taylor, B. (2007) Chapter 6: Resilience and Complacency in the Private Sector, in *Britain and Security* Cornish, P. (ed.). The Smith Institute: London, pp. 57-69. Chapter contribution. Independent think tank

Associated grants

1. B. Sullivan-Taylor (PI) 'Early Career Fellowship: Strategic Management of Global Terrorism'. (Total award £72,084, from 1 October 2004 to 30 September 2006. Co-funded by Leverhulme Trust (50%) and Warwick Business School (50%).)
2. B. Sullivan-Taylor (PI) Strategic Award from the University of Warwick's Research Development Fund and University of Warwick International Security Initiative (total award £40,000, from 2008 – 2011).

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Sullivan-Taylor has worked closely with a number of commercial organisations and government bodies to identify organisational shortcomings in preparing for extreme events. Her research has helped to improve professional business thinking and planning practices around risk and resilience management at strategic and operational levels. The two principal beneficiaries of the research have been organisations and their BCMs, who evaluate potential risks and ensure effective responses to minimise impacts of events, and UK policy-makers. The key impacts can be summarised as follows:

i. *Organisational Resilience*. The research has been recognised by numerous private sector organisations for its value and thought leadership in developing organisational resilience. Consequently, in 2012 Sullivan-Taylor was approached by British Airways (BA) to assist in the evaluation of their approach to managing disruption across the airline. The internal report produced through this process has since been used by the Board Director responsible for Operations in redefining the BA approach to managing disruption and has resulted in a more robust strategy to reduce operational disruption (corroborating source 1).

In 2013, following a presentation at a conference organised by the Industry and Parliament Trust (IPT) (see iii below), the Global Head of Risk and Resilience at the Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS), initiated the creation of a knowledge exchange partnership with WBS based on the work and expertise of Sullivan-Taylor and asked her to sit on their inter-organisational Business Resilience Policies Steering Group, which aimed to develop a Global Resilience Strategy Policy. The Policy has been adopted by the RBS Steering Group, with continuing advice and support from Sullivan-Taylor.

In January 2012 Marsh Risk Consulting invited Sullivan-Taylor to give the keynote address at their annual conference for global consultants. The presentation challenged the organisation's thinking around its resilience services for clients and helped them to refine their value proposition for specific target client markets (corroborating source 4).

ii. *Training and Development of Senior Managers*. In 2012 Sullivan-Taylor was commissioned by Emirates Airline to help design their Executive Leadership Development Programme for Dnata and Emirates senior management. One of the programme's sessions, titled 'Organisational Resilience in Growth', was a synthesis of Sullivan-Taylor's work in this area. Feedback from participants confirmed that the session impacted on their attitudes towards risk management and dealing with uncertainties.

iii. *Promoting Dialogue between Managers and the Policy Community.* Between 2011 and 2013, Sullivan-Taylor presented her research at the annual series of IPT conferences at Westminster, attended by UK members from the Houses of Parliament, and senior risk managers from private sector organisations. The sessions highlighted best practice behaviours and processes, and helped improve learning about business continuity at a strategic level (corroborating source 6). They stimulated discussion on the need for greater collaborative working between the UK Government, public bodies and the private sector in preparing for extreme events and generated ideas for the creation of inter-organisational bodies designed to protect the UK critical national infrastructure against extreme events and threats. As a result of these discussions, the IPT has developed a series of further briefing sessions in Parliament and has also a link with City Security and Resilience Networks (CSARN - a UK based business security and resilience membership network) to further explore some of the issues highlighted by Sullivan-Taylor's research.

iv. *Contributing to Understanding Resilience at UK Government Level.* In 2010 Sullivan-Taylor presented her research findings to the UK Cabinet Civil Contingency Office. The research was fundamental in informing their approach to engaging with the private sector and developing relationships with corporate organisations. It also helped inform the Cabinet's approach to protecting specific Critical National Infrastructure (CNI) sites after the 2007 Pitt review of the UK Floods, by highlighting the need to focus on managing business resilience around broader risks. Within Whitehall, the research influenced the development of various Cabinet Office strategies on resilience. It also contributed in part to the Government's approach in setting up the 'Critical Infrastructure Resilience Programme' (CIRP) (March 2010), a collaboration between operators/owners of the CI and government departments and regulators' (corroborating source 5).

In 2011 the Cabinet Office initiated a review of the Civil Contingency Act 2004 (CCA). Sullivan-Taylor's research informed the background discussions of committees responsible for the creation of the ISO 22301 covering business continuity management (BCM) and also the on-going development of British Standard BS45000 on Organisational Resilience. In October 2012, Sullivan-Taylor presented her full research at a meeting of Members of Parliament including Rt Hon. Baroness Pauline Neville-Jones (ex-minister of State for Security and Counter-Terrorism and Chairman of the British Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC)) along with representatives from the Cabinet Office, the Defence Select Committee, and the Joint Committee on National Security. The workshop, chaired by the Rt. Hon. Hazel Blears MP, was designed to shape the country's security policy and Sullivan-Taylor's research contributed to debate on the government's future strategy and handling of the CNI in times of terrorism and extreme events.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

Evidence of organisational impact on the operations and strategic management of risk and resilience

1. **Organisational Intelligence Consultant, British Airways.** Evidence in the form of an email confirms that Sullivan-Taylor's research has had a direct organisational impact on improving the operations and strategic approach to risk management at BA. '...I undertook a review of our approach to managing disruption due to bad weather and other environmental and unforeseen circumstances as part of a general focus on organisational resilience-both operationally and for our positive customer experience objectives...We used her [Dr Sullivan-Taylor's] resilience work, combined with her deep understanding of the aviation sector, and earlier ethnographic research at BA extensively in undertaking this detailed review. This review has since informed a board level directed implementation of change management practice in this area...'

Evidence of impact on executive management training and knowledge development

2. **Vice President-Recruitment Emirates Airline & Group Human Resources.** The Vice President can verify the impact of Sullivan-Taylor's research on the Emirates Executive Leadership Development Programme. (Copy of **Training Programme** for executive management which integrates the research into one of its sessions available from WBS.)

Evidence of impact developing knowledge-sharing partnerships

3. **Global Head of Risk and Resilience, Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS).** The Global Head of Risk and Resilience is also director and former co-chair of the Securities Industry Business Continuity Management Group forum and can corroborate claims on the organisational impact and the influence of Sullivan-Taylor's work on strategic thinking and development of resilience standards in RBS.

Evidence of impact of communication activities influencing organisation performance

4. **Managing Director, Marsh Risk Consulting.** The Managing Director can testify to the impact of Sullivan-Taylor's research on the organisation's thinking and approach to developing risk strategies.

Evidence of impact on shaping UK Government thinking and policy development

5. **Senior Manager, PwC (former Cabinet Office Assistant Director).** The Senior Manager was Assistant Director in the UK Government Cabinet Office at the time the research was conducted. He can corroborate claims that the research influenced policy thinking within the Government Civil Contingency office and its approach on resilience and CNI. He was also a member of the committees responsible for developing Standards and can corroborate that the research informed background discussions leading to the creation of the ISO 22301 on BCM and on-going development of British Standard BS45000. He will testify that the research has influenced on-going updates to guidelines on standards feeding into revisions of the 2004 Civil Contingency Act.

Evidence of impact in improving practitioner and policy understanding and stimulating debate at Parliamentary level.

6. **Head of Content and Development, The Industry and Parliament Trust (IPT), Trustee.** The Head of Content and Development can testify to the influence that the research has had on informing Parliamentarian thinking on risk and resilience practices and the development of the IPT-CSARN educational link for further briefing sessions in Parliament.