

Governing Security at the 2008 Beijing Olympics

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As sports mega-events (SMEs) attract growing worldwide attention, the security aspect of these events has assumed greater global importance, especially in the post-9/11 anti-terrorism context. The 2008 Beijing Organizing Committee for the Games of the XXIX Olympiad set security concern as a top priority. This paper analyses the empirical data derived from fieldwork in Beijing in early 2008 as well as information gathered from official documents and media articles. It presents the types of forces and agencies which shaped the Olympic security plan and explains how the Chinese government integrated its preventive, engaging and repressive strategies. The paper advances a number of preliminary arguments in connection with four main developments at work within the current dynamics of security governance at SMEs: the globalization, technologization, commercialization and standardization of SMEs' securitization.

Introduction

Sports mega-events (SMEs) such as the Olympic Games not only generate immense economic and socio-cultural opportunities for host cities and nations but also evoke local, national and international security concerns. Since 9/11 and the invasion of Iraq, the risk of terrorism has greatly intensified the security dimension of SMEs. Security expenditure for the 2004 Athens Olympics amounted to US\$1.5 billion, more than double that for the 2000 Sydney games. [1] The projected security bill for the 2008 Beijing games – although not officially revealed by the Chinese Government – is widely believed to have topped the amount spent in Athens. [2] It thus seems almost inevitable that the Beijing Olympics would be seen as ‘the largest peacetime security operation in history’. The massive cost in security matters at SMEs is admittedly justified by the need to provide safe and risk-free games not only for the athletes but also for international visitors and the local population.

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Drawing on information gathered from field interviews, official documents and media articles, both in English and in Chinese, this paper analyses the multiple security partnerships and strategies associated with the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. With respect to the problematic of security governance at SMEs more generally, we shall advance a number of preliminary arguments in connection with four main developments at work within the current dynamics of security governance at SMEs: the *globalization*, *technologization*, *commercialization* and *standardization* of SMEs' securitization.

In order to address these issues, the Beijing case-study has special appeal for several reasons. First, recent political and socio-economic changes in China's position within the global, neo-liberal economic system raise important issues about both China's general role and responsibility within international security politics and about China's involvement in the joint, international securitization of SMEs more particularly. Second, China's specific socio-economical characteristics present a strong challenge for the involvement of traditionally Western dominated actor-networks in SME-security matters, making it particularly relevant to study the relationships between the various actors involved in the securitization of the Beijing games. Third, current debates about minority rights and human rights in China raise a number of acute ethical issues linked to the employment of large-scale high-tech security and surveillance strategies which call for critical investigation.

Our investigation is situated in the intersection of three growing – yet largely unconnected – domains of theoretical and empirical research. First, a growing body of research has in recent years sought to investigate the problems and opportunities associated with the organization and staging of SMEs. In this field, two types of studies can be distinguished: one tends to be focused on the economic value of SMEs in terms of 'urban entrepreneurialism', [3] promoting cities' and nations' tourist image, [4] facilitating urban transformations, attracting financial investments and thus producing economic developments. [5] The other genre tends to be more interpretative and qualitative, referring to the 'sociology and politics of mega-events'. [6] While both of these genres offer important insights into the roles of SMEs as catalysts for promoting socio-economic, urban, political or cultural outputs, little critical attention has been paid to the causes and effects of the wide-ranging security issues at SMEs. Second, a substantial international body of research has been focusing especially on the problems of sport-related social risks, emphasizing the threat of 'crowd violence' and hooliganism. [7] Yet this research field has not produced a systematic, comparative body of analysis of SME security issues (including counter-terrorism) with reference to themes of urban development or post-SME social 'legacies'. Third, this paper draws on the increasingly sophisticated body of theoretical and empirical research about the shifting modes of global security governance in general, [8] and about the question of how contemporary security practices in the war on terror impact upon everyday (urban) life in particular. [9] There is, however, a major research lacuna in this body of literature regarding the question of how the exceptional circumstances of mega-events – as specific 'moments

and places at risk' – act as a catalyst in the 'making' of urban-centred security governance.

Despite the growing importance of security issues at SMEs, very few academic works have provided critical accounts of the wider social implications of the massive security efforts surrounding SMEs. Addressing this important gap of research, our paper provides an opportunity to complement and extend the existing literature on mega-events through its explicit focus on risk, security and surveillance at the 2008 Beijing Olympics. We divide our paper into four main parts: (1) the spatialities; (2) the actor-networks; (3) the security strategies; and (4) the implications of the security agenda at the 2008 Beijing games.

Climate of Insecurity

Before we investigate the spatialities, partnerships and arrangements in security governance at the Beijing Olympics, it is important to provide a context of the prevailing 'climate of insecurity' in which security measures were being legitimized. We explore this issue by engaging with the risk discourses propagated by the Chinese media in the run-up to the games.

In the months leading up to the 2008 Olympics, the Chinese media reported at length a wide range of threatening forces to the games, three of which stand out. First, media articles focused on various forms of criminality – both indigenous and foreign originated – ranging from petty crimes, frauds, rapes and kidnappings to internationally organized crimes and people trafficking (prostitution and labour). Stressing the city's high population density and diversity, as well as the games-induced influx of immigrants, resources and business opportunities, Beijing was seen to present higher crime rates, higher rates of floating delinquents and higher levels of professional criminals than previous Olympic sites. [10]

Second, and comparable to the security rhetoric at SMEs in the Western world, the Chinese media focused on the threat of terrorism, which was described as the most critical security issue at the games. In contrast to the almost exclusive Western preoccupation with Al-Qaeda terrorism, however, the Chinese media reported widely on the potential of terrorist attacks by Chinese ethnic minorities and religious groups. In this regard, 'Xinjiang independence' organizations were treated as the most dangerous terrorist enemies to Olympic security. [11] Tian Yixiang, director of the military bureau of the Security Command Centre of the games (SCC), said that 'the main danger is a terrorist attack from three possible threats: East Turkistan terrorists, Tibetan separatists and the evil Falun Gong cult'. [12] From March to May 2008, for example, *Xinhua News* reported a series of alleged sabotage and terrorist activities by East Turkistan separatists. [13]

Third, the Chinese media repeatedly expressed strong concern about the multiple threatening forces of the games' sociocultural and political symbolism. Sabotage activities of Tibetan independence organizations were not only seen to endanger the athletes and population, but also to threaten the carefully constructed image of the

Olympics as a symbol for China's unity and rising power in global affairs. 'The goal of all Dalai Lama schemes,' Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Jiang Yu was quoted in the press as saying, 'is to split the motherland, sabotage ethnic unity, sabotage China's relations with other nations and interfere with the Olympic Games.' [14] Yet the understanding of 'disturbances' as threatening forces for the games' symbolism can also be seen in connection with other stigmatized social groups, ranging from complaining migrants to revolting demolition victims, from human-rights advocates to religious petitioners, from political dissidents to environmental activists and to international boycott forces. [15] In the press, China warned repeatedly against any activities by organizations that tried to undermine the preparatory work of the Olympics and made clear regulations and legal guidelines for the entry, exit and stay of foreigners in China during the games. According to the official website of the Beijing games, 'unwelcome' foreigners included

those who have been deported or prohibited from entering China by the Chinese government; those who might commit acts of terrorism, violence or subversion after entering China; those who might engage in smuggling, drug dealing or prostitution after entering China; those who are suffering from mental disorders or insanity, sexually transmitted diseases, tuberculosis or other infectious diseases; those who cannot guarantee their ability to support themselves financially while in China; and those who might engage in any acts that threaten the security or interests of China. [16]

Spatialities of Security Governance at the Beijing Games

It is important to investigate the spatial dimension of the security strategies and arrangements at the Beijing games, not only to understand how security operations addressed different types of risks in the urban environment but also to study how these operations gave rise to cumulative effects on public urban order.

First, security governance at the Beijing games focused on specific *points* within the urban environment, corresponding both to central, interrelated *nodes* within the Beijing transport networks such as airports and railway stations and to high-risk points such as stadiums and hotels for International Olympic Committee officials. Securing these high-risk points became one of the main concerns of Chinese police forces and private security staff before and during the games. In this respect, it is of critical importance to highlight the role of *access control* for security purposes. Aimed at creating safe and risk-free places by controlling the flows of people and objects crossing the borderline between the inside and the outside at specific points in space, access control illustrates the spatial logic of security governance, which consists of selecting, classifying, differentiating, arranging and controlling specific portions of space, without according the same type of attention to the whole territory. Access control therefore aims to guarantee the good functioning of separated, differentiated and hierarchically organized parts of the urban environment, often carried to the point of complete segregation between indoor (secured) and outdoor (unsecured) space. [17]

By way of example, consider the security design of Beijing's most famous Olympic stadium, the 'Bird's Nest'. The stadium's ticket gates were integrated into an oval-shaped close security fence at a distance of approximately 20 metres from the stadium. This security fence allowed the division of the stadium's adjoining space into two distinct zones: the publicly accessible check-in zone for ticket and security checks and the inside security perimeter, leading directly to the stadium and allowing the audience to look for platforms or to wait for exit. This inside space was not set arbitrarily but in accordance with the needs of space per capita, measured by the size of the venue to accommodate the audience.[18]

Second, and beyond the securitization of specific high-risk points within the urban environment, security efforts at the games were directed predominantly towards Beijing's Chaoyang district, where the Olympic Green as well as 13 of the 31 Olympic venues were located (see Figure 1). According to *Beijing News*, an extra 2,000 cameras, partly equipped with face- and licence-plate-recognition software, were installed in the Chaoyang district, covering 54.2 per cent of the district's surface by CCTV. [19]

Third, the security arrangements at the Beijing Olympics not only covered specific high-risk points within the urban environment such as stadiums and key buildings, nor were they restricted exclusively to the Chaoyang district. Rather, they affected Beijing and its population much more generally. In total, ten million people signed and pledged to participate in Olympic security. [20] The universalizing of security consciousness and responsibility into people's everyday life had been achieved gradually through mechanisms of mass mobilization, media propaganda and mass participation such as Beijing's 'Olympic security law and order campaign' launched on 26 April 2008.

Actor Networks in Security Governance at the Beijing Games

Security governance is the product of relationships mediated by various partnerships, intentions and domains of expertise. It is therefore useful to examine the networks of actors involved in the setting up, development and use of the security system at the 2008 Beijing games. Instead of providing an exhaustive analysis of the whole panoply of actions and actors engaged in the securitization of the Beijing Olympics, we place particular emphasis on two interlinked developments: the proliferating range and scale of multinational security collaborations; and the increasing importance of high-tech surveillance technologies.

Security Collaborations on Local, National and International Scales

In the post-9/11 context of the 'war on terror', threats of political violence and terrorism are increasingly fuelled and sustained by transnational networks that can be global and local at the same time. [21] The interdependences of security strategies on local, national and global scales find exemplary expression in sports mega-events as privileged loci, where globally operating actors – moving from country to country,

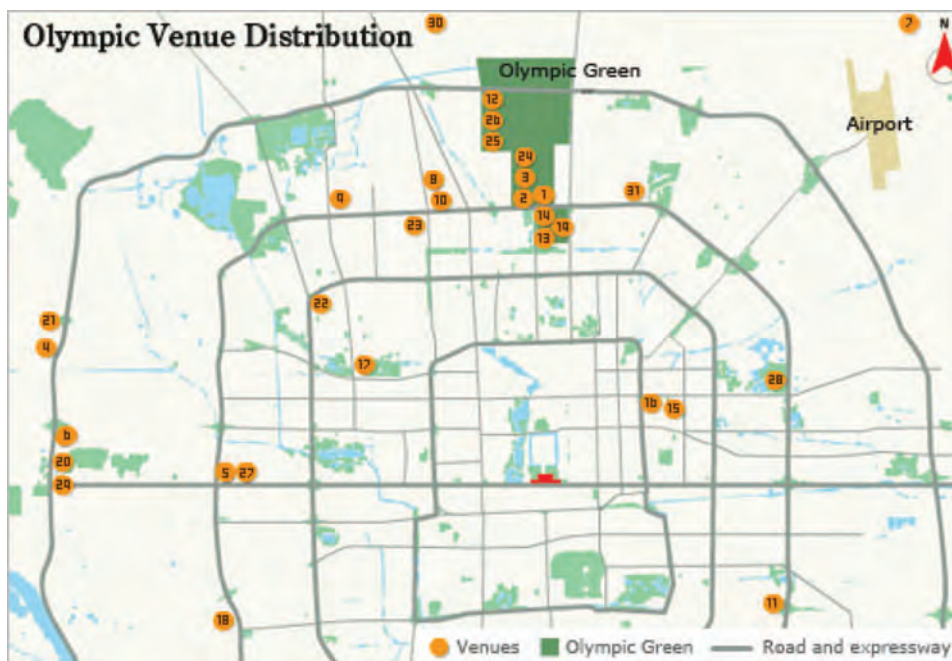


Figure 1 Spatial Distribution of Olympic Venues in Beijing

Source: Official website of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, available online at <http://en.beijing2008.cn/cptvenues/venues/>, accessed 26 June 2008.

1) National Stadium; 2) National Aquatics Center; 3) National Indoor Stadium; 4) Beijing Shooting Range Hall; 5) Beijing Olympic Basketball Gymnasium; 6) Laoshan Velodrome; 7) Shunyi Olympic Rowing-Canoeing Park; 8) China Agricultural University Gymnasium; 9) Peking University Gymnasium; 10) Beijing Science and Technology University Gymnasium; 11) Beijing University of Technology Gymnasium; 12) Beijing Olympic Green Tennis Court.

Existing Olympic Venues in Beijing: 13) Olympic Sports Center Stadium; 14) Olympic Sports Center Gymnasium; 15) Beijing Workers' Stadium; 16) Beijing Workers' Gymnasium; 17) Capital Indoor Stadium; 18) Fengtai Sports Center Softball Field; 19) Yingdong Natatorium of National Olympic Sports Center; 20) Laoshan Mountain Bike Course; 21) Beijing Shooting Range CTF; 22) Beijing Institute of Technology Gymnasium; 23) Beijing University of Aeronautics & Astronautics Gymnasium.

Temporary Olympic Venues in Beijing: 24) Fencing Hall of National Convention Center; 25) Beijing Olympic Green Hockey Stadium; 26) Beijing Olympic Green Archery Field; 27) Beijing Wukesong Sports Center Baseball Field; 28) Chaoyang Park Beach Volleyball Ground; 29) Laoshan Bicycle Moto Cross (BMX) Venue; 30) Triathlon Venue; 31) Road Cycling Course.

city to city, and event to event – meet with locally anchored stakeholders in security governance. [22] From these exchanges, much broader and longer-lasting international security collaborations often emerge. [23]

Beijing invited experts from 75 security agencies in 12 countries, including Greece, Canada, USA, Germany, France, UK, Israel and Russia, to collaborate for the 2008 Olympics securitization. On a regional scale, exchanges were intensified among police agencies in ASEAN countries China, Japan and South Korea. Furthermore, seven countries, including China, Russia and Kazakhstan, announced a 'Beijing Declaration' to set up communication and cooperation to fight against international terrorism. [24] To coordinate the international efforts in the games' securitization, an International Police Liaison Department was established within the Security Command Centre to coordinate interactions between embassy security officers, police departments from other countries and international police/intelligence organizations. [25]

Besides cooperating with international government agencies, a wide range of military cooperation was set in place. The Chinese national army, navy and air force participated fully in the 2008 Beijing Olympics security work, with the establishment of a special military unit for non-traditional security threats focusing on threats of nuclear, bio-chemical and other terrorist attacks. [26] A specialized security department and command centre for the Olympics was established directly under the state ministry of public security, involving over 20 related state and municipal ministries/departments, including the military.

To uncover the relationships embedded in the securitization of the Beijing games, and to assess how the employed security systems were subsequently planned, set up and used, it is important not to underestimate the global alliances between government bodies, military and police forces. The elaboration and institutionalization of these alliances not only aimed to strengthen the exchanges within the international community in the field of Olympic security, but also to learn from previous experiences in the securitization of earlier mega-events. These transfers of experiences and expertise relied on a series of mechanisms which provide an exploratory picture of how global security partnerships were relating to, and intervening in, the particular local circumstances of the Beijing Olympics.

First, international collaborations in the Beijing games' securitization relied on a series of permanent expert consortia specializing in security issues at mega-events. In 2005 the International Permanent Observatory on Security Measures During Major Events was established, bringing together 24 foreign security experts from ten countries and four international organizations, including the US Federal Bureau of Investigation, the United Nations' Inter Regional Crime and Justice Research Institute and the European Police Office, in order to share their experience at earlier events such as previous Olympic Games, the 2004 European Football Cup and the 2003 Evian G8 Summit. [27]

Second, the organization of numerous security conferences in the run-up to the games helped the development of new international coalitions of authority and responsibility in the securitization of the Beijing games. The organization of expert conferences constitutes a crucial mechanism to pre-mediate future collaborations and interactions between local, national and international security players. At the

International Conference on Security Cooperation in 2007, for example, the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol) confirmed its assistance to the securitization of the Beijing games. Consequently, a support team was sent to Beijing, armed with extensive databases, including the names, images, fingerprints and relevant DNA information of internationally known and suspected criminals. Interpol also created an online service with China, based on the nation's 15.7 million-strong database of stolen, fabricated and lost travel documentation. [28]

Third, in order to learn from the experiences of previous mega-events, Chinese security officials participated in 'best practices' training programmes with security stakeholders at earlier events, receiving training in violence prevention, policing management and information management in police colleges in Britain, Germany, Australia and other countries. [29] In addition, 39 Chinese officers were sent to Greece to learn from the Athens Olympic security model. [30] On the basis of these experiences, Chinese security departments compiled a manual for security problems that occurred in the Olympic Games since the riots in the football field in the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, studying their causes, effects and methods of control. Beijing also established a 'Memo of 2008 Olympic Games and Paralympics on Security Cooperation' with the Ministry of Hellenic Public Order in Greece. [31]

Private Companies in the Securitization of the Beijing Games

The growing international exchanges and interdependences in security governance of SMEs are intrinsically linked to the increasingly important role played by private providers of specialized technologies and services in security matters. Before the games, the 2008 Olympics security department insisted heavily on the slogans 'Technological Olympics' and 'Strengthening Police through Technology'. Consequently, security technologies and equipment were developed substantially through international exchange and cooperation, resulting in an elaborate high-tech security system, praised by the International Olympic Committee as 'very wise and farsighted, best ever seen'. [32] As Robin Huang, chief operating officer of China's Ministry of Public Security has put it, 'we have very good relationships with US companies like IBM, Cisco, HP, and Dell ... etc. All of these US companies are closely working with us to build our system together'. [33] Honeywell, for example, was reported to have set up a sophisticated computer monitoring system, enabling Chinese police to analyse CCTV images of public places near Olympic venues for 'suspicious' objects and behaviour. Other large-scale, high-tech surveillance systems were delivered by United Technologies, the European Aeronautic Defence and Space Company, [34] Panasonic, Philips, JVC and Siemens.

Besides international technology providers, national and local companies also played an active role. Tsinghua Tongfang, for example, was responsible for the Ditan Gymnasium Olympic security project, including CCTV surveillance, alarm systems, security access control, power supply systems, lightning protection systems and so on. [35] Golden Vision, another Tsinghua University-based technological company,

managed security projects such as the CCTV surveillance platform in the Tennis Centre of the Beijing Olympic Green; [36] Nine Vatech Technology Company equipped the Beijing Shooting Range Hall, the Basketball Gymnasium, the Water Cube and the Bird's Nest with remote intelligence management systems; and the China Shipbuilding Industry Corporation applied advanced technologies such as Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) in access control and the latest block-orientated motion-compensation-based video coding (MPEG4 and H264) in CCTV surveillance to the Olympic security system. [37]

In contrast to mega-events in Western democratic countries, Beijing's security strategies dwelled in a distinctive authoritarian political system, with the government asserting strong control over the involvement of international security players. On the one hand, the Olympics provided an opportunity for extended collaborations between domestic and global corporations, resulting in reinforced knowledge transfers in security/surveillance matters with the West. On the other, Western security companies could potentially compromise the Chinese state control of security.

Consequently, the Chinese government attempted to formally regulate and coordinate the relationships among state, public and private players in security matters, in order to mobilize and utilize effectively its own local and national resources and interests. A series of principles were set up by the Chinese security department, such as rational competition, fair play, non-monopoly, transparency and multi-management, to apply to the bidding-process, budgeting, assessment, management and construction of security systems. [38] Since 2002, the Beijing government had designated two newspapers (the *People's Daily* and *China Daily*) and two website portals (www.chinabidding.com.cn and www.bjinvest.gov.cn) as legal media to publish bidding information on security projects, [39] to buttress a system of government purchases and to open bidding according to the bidding law. [40]

Nevertheless, local security companies had expressed repeated concerns about hidden, unwritten rules behind these regulations and procedures. And governmental purchases of security technologies seemed to have been far less transparent than they claimed to be. Commonly distorted phenomena ranged from invited bids to informal negotiations between companies and government departments. [41]

Three Security Strategies: Preventive, Engaging, Repressive

The media-reported domestic and international security threats at the Beijing Olympics, described earlier as a general 'climate of insecurity', helped to legitimize a substantial increase of surveillance and tightened control and other 'precautionary' security measures. In the following sub-sections, we shall provide a reading of some of the security approaches, based on the distinction between *preventive*, *engaging* and *repressive* security strategies. On this basis, we shall then raise a series of critical questions regarding the wider social implications of the massive security efforts, in terms of privacy, human-rights and minority issues.

Preventive Security Strategies

The securitization of the Beijing games relied on a wide range of preventive security measures. Before the event, as mentioned above, surveillance and control had increased substantially, based not only on the wide use of security technologies in Beijing itself but also on international exchanges of databases of criminal and terrorist suspects. Furthermore, thousands of additional security personnel had been recruited and trained through specific exercises and training programmes.

The expert conferences and 'best practices' programmes discussed earlier not only served to institutionalize the practices and relationships underlying the securitization of the event itself; they also provided a space of experimentation to adjust and rehearse the uses of the newly installed high-tech security systems. The 'Good Luck Beijing' test-event, for example, brought together actors from every level of the games' securitization, from Chinese police forces to civilian volunteers, from international anti-terrorism experts to local military forces, from relevant government departments to representatives of security companies.

Engaging Security Strategies

An important feature of the games' preventive security plan lies in its all-inclusiveness at the population level. Aimed at mobilizing a huge security network throughout Beijing, Chinese authorities sought to embody four actor networks in their security planning: a patrol network; a public security network; a state institution network; and a community network. [42] In the local community network, a command department was established, led by the Politics and Law Committee of the municipal party committee, to engage all units and institutions to work on their locality. [43] Beijing deepened grassroots security operations by promoting education on public safety and crime prevention, inciting social groups and the general public to watch their neighbourhoods, care for their home and do everything they could to participate in the Olympic Games security work. [44]

According to government rhetoric, to prevent major crime and potential terrorist attacks a harmonious social environment had to be created, in which no criminals could thrive. Based on a 'zero tolerance' strategy, the objective was to create a 'clean' urban environment in order to ensure a secure and terrorist-free Olympic event. [45] The Chinese security ministry characterized this approach as a 'sand-pile effect', meaning that the fight against petty crimes and minor problems of disorder, as the basis of the sand pile, would help to reduce major threats of criminal and terrorist activities, i.e. the peak of the pile. [46] Consequently, the Olympic security work was framed in a way as to deal with crime prevention and control in Beijing at the grassroots level. [47]

Repressive Security Strategies

The preventive and engaging aspects of Beijing's security approach were clearly linked to the repression of unwanted 'elements' considered to threaten Beijing's harmonious

urban environment and to endanger the games' smooth running. At this level, critically questioning the wider social implications of the massive security efforts is in order.

Before the games, important efforts were made to remove people and to ban activities that did not tie in with the desired harmonious image of the Chinese capital. [48] Chinese security agencies stepped up detentions of political dissidents and the surveillance of political activists. Human Rights Watch has extensively documented the abuses and detention of human-rights lawyers and a pattern of interference and political control of dissidents, especially in cases viewed as 'politically sensitive' by the authorities. [49] Moreover, the authorities had tightened up media access to social and labour activists and other considered 'troublemakers'. [50] The central government put pressure on local officials by assessing their job performance on the basis of the number of petitioners who were allowed to make their way to Beijing. Thus the holding up of petitioners by local governments was not uncommon. [51] Such repressive strategy was also applied to normal criminal cases in the ongoing 'strike hard' campaign against crimes, as programmed in the so-called 'Action for a Safe Olympics'. [52] From January to May 2008, Beijing police forces beefed up security for the Olympics by cracking down on organized crimes, robbery, murder and other severe criminal offences, confiscating illegally held explosives, guns and ammunition, and strengthening control over knives, bows and crossbows. They also stepped up surveillance on entertainment venues to fight pornography and gambling. [53]

In the Chinese media, the repression of unwanted individuals and social groups remained largely unquestioned in terms of its efficiency, proportionality and problematic human-rights implications. According to the Xinhua News Agency, Beijing police had markedly improved their ability to fight crimes because of the intensive and comprehensive Olympic security plan. [54]

Conclusion and Implications

In this paper, we have drawn on a wide range of media reports and documents to discuss the risks and security partnerships as well as the security and surveillance strategies at the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. We have emphasized the importance of public-private, multinational security collaborations and high-tech security measures, as the basis of the games' securitization. The paper thus provides a powerful picture of the processes at work within local, national and international exchanges and interdependences in the co-production of security governance, which connects neatly with the growing interdisciplinary literature about the shifting modes of governance and authority in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

Our analysis suggests a series of further investigations into the roles and wider social implications of sports mega-events, as key moments and as key locations, in the global production and circulation of security- and surveillance-related practices and expertise. First, there is a crucial need to further investigate the increasing importance of private actors and commercial goals within current developments of security

governance, a process that is powerfully reiterated by the example of sports mega-events' securitization. In the current context of the war on terror, private responsibilities in surveillance matters have become all the more important, since Western companies play an increasingly important role worldwide in providing standardized, technologically-based solutions in matters of public safety and counter-terrorism policies, which have traditionally been the exclusive domain of state actors. This process has been intensified by the ever-increasing employment of various more or less disconnected, semi-coordinated and heterogeneous forms and technologies of surveillance within contemporary security strategies. [55]

Implications of this development are related to the question of how the increasing weight and scale of private authority in matters of public safety – i.e. the growing functional fragmentation of authority in contemporary security governance – might in fact change the very ways of dealing with contemporary security issues. In particular, we have in mind the technical competences required to manage the growing complexity of high-tech surveillance systems, which are likely to give specialized private companies more weight.

There is a general need to critically discuss the role and responsibility of private companies in dealing with current security issues not only in 'extreme' cases (such as mega-events like the Beijing games) but on a more general basis. It behoves private business companies to guarantee ethical standards in the use of security/surveillance technology and to avoid specific events being used as a catalyst for the repression of peaceful dissent in the name of stability. The current growth of advanced surveillance technology not only paves the way to a better future but also leads to unprecedented and nearly limitless possibilities of surveillance, whose original, positive intentions can easily be twisted to serve other purposes, especially in a context of major human-rights concerns. [56]

Second, our study of the securitization of the Beijing Olympics – as the locus for local-national-global security collaborations – points towards a series of important 'issues of scale', which might guide future empirical investigations into the interactions and interdependences between global, regional and local security partnerships. While the given examples provide ample evidence of the significance of the national and transnational public-private networks of competences and responsibility in security governance at the 2008 Beijing Olympics, there is a pressing need to better understand the precise manner in which the globally calibrated knowledge and practices of security merge (in consensus and conflict) within a particular milieu, and the ramifications this might have. Or, to put it as a question: What can mega-events tell us about the interactions between security issues on different – local, regional and global – scales? How do global security partnerships relate to and intervene in particular local circumstances?

Third, there is a pressing need for further empirical investigations into the long-term effects of the massive security efforts surrounding the organization and staging of mega-events. In this respect, a major issue will be whether, and how, the engaged security measures will continue to impose themselves within the host cities

of mega-events. In regard to the Beijing Olympics, it will be of particular importance to critically investigate the long-term effects of the increased possibilities of knowing, tracking, data-mining and profiling of specific individuals and social groups. How will the security technologies employed at the Olympics be used after the event? In what ways will these technologies (positively and negatively) affect the everyday life of the residents, ethnic and religious minorities, and political dissidents in Beijing? When the emotions evoked by the event itself have subsided, these questions should be addressed calmly, by considering the wide range of social costs and benefits associated with the trends of security politics shown above.

In view of the approaching 2012 London Olympics, it will be crucially important to undertake detailed empirical investigations into these issues, in order to assess the causes, modalities and long-term consequences of security and surveillance operations for high-risk mega-events.

Notes

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