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Airport Surveillance between Public and Private Interests

CCTV at Geneva International Airport

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Among the large variety of public and private places affected by recent developments in closed circuit television (CCTV), the application of video surveillance in the context of airport risk management presents several specific issues. Given their privileged, symbolic, and practical position within processes of globalization as departure and arrival points for flows of people and goods, airports are particularly exposed to different types of risks and are thus subject to increased local, national, and international security concern. Within the airport context, security issues in general and the use and design of video surveillance systems in particular provide a symptomatic illustration for three broader tendencies of security politics, which together form the starting point of this chapter.

First, in the case of airport risk management, the challenge of numerous local, regional, national, and international actors is to deal with increasingly globalized social risks (such as organized crime, immigration issues, and

terrorism) on the basis of increasingly standardized international security standards. In this light, airport risk management exemplarily illustrates the growing interdependence of local, national, and international security issues within a climate of "globalized surveillance."[1] Second, airports are understood as both national ports-of-entry and areas of commercial interest. Therefore, airport security politics brings together a complex variety of public and private interests, partners, strategies, and instruments—thus highlighting broader trends of public–private partnerships in the framework of neoliberal governance. Third, as burgeoning sociotechnical universes in the state of constant transformation, airports are generally exposed to the challenges of new technologies, economic trends, and sociocultural dynamics. Following Pascoe's analysis of airport representations in literature and arts, "one might claim that throughout the century, airspace, an island of advanced development where familiar standards and definitions begin to seem uncertain, has provided a glimpse of how the world outside the terminal might look in [ten] years or so."[2] For example, airports can be found among the first places to test software-based sorting technologies in order to detect and to prevent at-risk persons, behaviors, or objects.

General Approach

Since the 9/11 terrorist attacks, surveillance technologies used to monitor border-crossing movements by building, sorting, and analyzing data sets of passengers have been widely discussed regarding their implications for both security and privacy issues.[3] At the same time, little research has been completed on surveillance operations aiming to control microscale movements and behaviors of passengers (as well as other airport customers) that occur *within* the airport area itself.[4] We crucially lack knowledge of how the airport space—understood as a differentiated and hierarchically organized national border-crossing zone—is monitored through everyday operations of surveillance.

Police CCTV Operations at Geneva International Airport

This chapter directly addresses this issue, by focusing on the daily surveillance practices of airport police at Geneva International Airport (*Police de Securité Internationale*). CCTV is considered here as a sociotechnical device that involves science and technology, cultural and legal aspects, as well as social representations. This amounts to envisaging CCTV not as a lifeless and inert object but rather as a dynamic sociotechnical system that is

constantly "in the making."[5] Furthermore, our approach is based on the hypothesis that the functioning of CCTV—its scope, its impact, and the risks it poses—cannot be understood without referring to the territories concerned with, and created by, the installation of the cameras and their performance.

Anchored within a microgeographical approach, the following analysis engages with sociospatial impacts and dimensions of video surveillance within the context of airport risk management. In fact, much effort has been expended on analyzing CCTV as a tool of social sorting, but there is a current lack of research regarding spatial characteristics of CCTV. The basic line of our argument is that surveillance tends not only to relate to specific categories of persons but also to focus on specific categories of space; we thus not only examine how CCTV focuses on particular social groups and individuals but also how and why CCTV focuses on particular spaces at the airport.[6]

Given this general approach, this chapter deals in particular with the negotiation of CCTV practices between public security politics and private business interests, regarding the publicly accessible airport sections (check-in, arrival, and departure zones of the airport; as well as the airport railway station that functions as a commercial shopping center). Our analysis thus concentrates on CCTV operations by means of the sixteen currently installed cameras within the publicly accessible premises of Geneva International Airport. We do not consider police cameras in access-restricted zones of the airport (such as on the tarmac), nor do we examine the use of private cameras in airport shops, in the freight sections, or within several multistory parking garages nearby the airport.

On a microgeographical level of analysis, referring to daily police CCTV operations, we underline convergences and tensions between private business interests to increase the airport's commercial appeal, on the one hand, and police concerns for the airport area as a national gateway of arriving and departing passengers and goods, on the other hand. On this basis, we point out both the inherent subjectivity of airport security politics (it seems that security does not always trump economy) and the limits of surveillance, which result from daily compromises between numerous actors, interests, and strategies.

Our investigation is empirically based on information gathered within a two-year research project (2004–5), funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation.[7] Regarding the broader conceptual understanding of video surveillance, this project specifically dealt with video surveillance as it is understood, perceived, and practiced by its suppliers (producers, distributors, designers) and its users (owner, technical managers, operators). Facilitated by strong, long-term relations with police forces in Geneva, interviews with

numerous types of actors who were involved in the planning, installation, use, and development of the airport CCTV system were conducted. In addition, observational research was done in the police control-room, by closely assisting one week of nightly and daily police operations by means of CCTV. Bringing together two research groups (one group of social scientists and one group of legal specialists[8]), this methodological approach provided deep insights into the complexity of the factors that contribute to the functioning and impact of CCTV systems as well as into the legal rules available to regulate the use of surveillance cameras, and their limits.

An Airport for Travelers and Visitors

Most airport studies focus on famous mega-airports (such as Schiphol in Amsterdam, Charles de Gaulle in Paris, and John F. Kennedy in New York). These airports, situated far away from the city center, are mostly understood as detached universes within their own time-space logics. They are examined as "spaces of flows"[9] and as "zones of perpetual transit"[10] that provide specific services for travelers.[11] However, the study of Geneva International Airport highlights that airports are not always, and not only, detached worlds of transit functioning by their own logic but can also, more banally, become common places for local residents, tourists, and other passers-by.

Geneva International Airport is a relatively small and accessible airport near the city center. It is situated beside an important exhibition center and music venue. Because of its central location, it houses many shops aimed at the general public with convenient business hours. In the most commercially appealing section of the airport, which is mainly (but not exclusively) connected to the airport railway station, regular performances and events (such as flea markets, fashion shows, exhibitions, etc.) take place. Geneva International Airport must thus be considered as a functionally diverse space, providing not only services for passengers but also for people without any intention of traveling.

Regarding the conceptualization of airport space more generally, the Geneva case-study also challenges our basic understanding of the meaning and significance of airports. As we argue, airports cannot be reduced to "nonplaces" of consumption and mobility.[12] They must also, more generally, be understood as complex and diverse, yet particularly commercialized, spaces in various forms of public use, which are not only in many ways treated like shopping malls but also as spaces for social encounters for various actors.

The functional dichotomy of Geneva International Airport—to process arriving and departing flows of passengers and goods, on the one hand, and

to attract local customers as a destination in its own right, on the other hand—constitutes the basic structure of this chapter. In fact, as we will show, these two major airport functionalities give rise to different strategies of security politics, which are expressed in different CCTV operations.

First, we concentrate on police CCTV operations in capturing and controlling arriving passengers at fixed *points* between passenger-restricted zones and publicly accessible zones. Standing in for traditional police border-control operations, this type of CCTV operation (to control people and goods entering the national territory) constitutes the first reason for police security operations at the airport.

Second, we examine CCTV operations that help to create a safe, trouble-free, and pleasant airport *area* for arriving and departing passengers. Here our focus lies on the publicly accessible part of the airport in its entirety. However, we assert that CCTV operations do not monitor the whole airport area equally but rather focus on specific "places at risk." Referring to the examples of CCTV operations to combat luggage theft and control "problem" people at the airport, we point out that the higher the density of people and distractions there are at particular places, the more these places are understood to be at risk by the police.

Third, referring to the airport's efforts to further attract local customers for its shops, we explore tensions between business and police interests in the publicly accessible parts of the airport. While the former pushes for the increased commercialization of the airport (aiming to increase the density of people and distractions), the latter aims to create a trouble-free, safe, and presentable airport area for travelers without any "disturbing" people or objects. In this regard, we focus in particular on the "flea market" and Christmas dilemmas.

The Airport as Artificial Border-Control Site: CCTV for National Security Issues

Literally understood as "aerial port," the primary function and *raison d'être* of airports is mobility. Firstly, airports constitute points of arrival and departure from/to international destinations, connecting its local region with the outer world. The airport in its entirety is thus set up to process, organize, regulate, and control constant flows of people and goods. As Gillian Fuller explains,

> An airport processes traffic; it is a machine for capturing and controlling flows at the most literal and abstract levels. The movements of people,

> machines, and cargo are kept steady and separate. Moving in relay from point to point, each must connect at certain points and then continue along fixed paths and at fixed speeds. All movement is controlled, from the planes on the apron to the corralling of passengers in retail areas.[13]

For example, 9,411,105 passengers passed through Geneva International Airport in 2005, traveling to the 87 destinations (68 in Europe and 19 on other continents) that are served by direct scheduled flights from Geneva.[14]

This means, in turn, that airports also play an important role for national security issues in controlling and regulating border-crossing flows of persons and objects. Unlike checkpoints at the outer geographical border of each nation-state, security measures for the "virtual borders"[15] within airports do not have to deal with large *borderlines* that need to be monitored and safeguarded but are instead concentrated on specific *check*points, where passengers "naturally" arrive through corridors and moving walkways from their planes. Despite this punctual spatial logic, the airport as a national point of access still stands for the subdivision and differentiation of larger (national) *areas*, which is often carried to the point of segregation between indoor and outdoor space, exemplified by restrictive visa policies.

Since 9/11, depending on the country, border-control measures at airports have been more or less retooled and redesigned as part of a new and expanding "war on terror".[16] Enclosed operations reach from traditional passport checks, registrations of arriving and departing passengers, and luggage controls by customs authorities to the storage and analysis of increasingly detailed passenger data sets. Many of these measures of simulated surveillance aim to anticipate "persons of risk" who would later—once they have reached the larger national territory—be more difficult to monitor.[17] Referring to our empirically based example of Geneva International Airport, three main applications of CCTV can be distinguished within the broader issue of national-access control at airports.

First, not yet used at Geneva International Airport but applied in Switzerland's largest airport in Zurich since 2002, biometrical face recognition through CCTV constitutes one of the purest examples of camera-based access control. While this technology is used in other border zones, [18] airports commonly figure among the privileged places for its use, serving as test beds for further societal applications and developments of preprogrammed control technologies.[19]

At Zurich Airport, the scan of passengers' faces is intended for computer-based identification of asylum seekers without identification papers.[20] In this case, access control is subject to the camera's capacity to confirm a person's identity whose facial characteristics have already been scanned and recorded (perhaps even at places other than at the airport). Knowing that

all passengers naturally arrive at the same strategic points of the airport, these high-tech cameras are installed near the immigration desks in order to take high-resolution pictures of the arriving passengers' faces.

Faces consequently become the new territories to monitor. In other cases, at Heathrow Airport in London and Schiphol Airport in Amsterdam, for example, biometrical face recognition is not used to restrict access for unwanted individuals but rather to allow faster border passages for business travelers.[21] In Geneva, a similar system is expected to be installed in the near future, which underlines the broader tendency of airport security devices to become international-standards solutions, which are commonly applied not only in other airports but also in other categories of space.

Second, at Geneva International Airport cameras are used to monitor the microscale behavior of previously identified, arriving "passengers of risk" within the publicly accessible arrival zone of the airport. In our interviews, examples of closely monitored "individuals of risk" ranged from members of the Hell's Angels and religious sects to supposed members of human trafficking rings, criminals, and terrorists. Here, the aim is not only to take high-resolution pictures of arriving passengers of risk, but through active manipulations of the cameras' positions and zoom, to understand his or her behavior within the first parameters of the national territory. Is he/she waiting for someone? Will he/she phone someone? Which type of transport will he/she use?

The spatiality of this second type of CCTV for access control is thus more flexible than the first and refers to a larger geographical *area*.

> For example, the criminal investigation department might know that one specific individual will arrive by airplane. Perhaps, they might even be sure that this . . . individual does indeed carry drugs, but they might not know with whom he will be in contact. We will then be asked to take large-scale photos by surveillance cameras, in order to see how the person is dressed, for example. When he drives out of the airport, we will try to register the number plate of his car and we will also try to see with whom he might speak and if somebody's looking for him, etc.[22]

Regarding this second type of camera operation for access control, the relative advantage of CCTV, compared to on-the-spot police agents, lies in the resulting discretion offered to police operations. Arriving individuals might actually believe that they are neither expected nor monitored by the police at their destination, which makes them behave more naturally and display information that would not have been revealed under the pressure of obvious police presence. Furthermore, cameras make it possible to take pictures

in order to document monitored scenes or to reconstruct and further communicate the order of events to other police departments a posteriori.

> Wanted criminals, arriving at the airport, generally are very tense. . . . The cameras make it possible for them to come, because they see no . . . police officers on the spot. . . . Cameras make it possible to be discreet. . . . For example, I personally filmed somebody who was suspected of working for X. For half an hour, this person just stayed on the spot. . . . When he arrived, he was still anxious, looking all around. Then, step by step, he got more confident. You clearly saw that he became calmer because he saw nobody to suspect him. Still, he took another ten minutes to join the person who waited for him.[23]

The third form of access control–related CCTV operations does not specifically deal with persons who might represent particular risks but rather intends to protect arriving individuals who are supposed to be particularly exposed to risks. An example of this would be the arrival of state presidents for political events in Geneva, such as for the 2003 G8 summit in nearby Evian. Special circumstances at that time even led to the installation of additional high-tech cameras.

> We've never before encountered such a high concentration of state and government heads arriving in Geneva. I would say, the installation of CCTV already presents a financial investment. The fact that we had an open budget in order to secure the airport allowed us to obtain these additional four cameras, which we wouldn't have been able to do normally. So, it is true that we did benefit from the circumstances in order to install these cameras, which we were able to keep afterward.[24]

The Airport as a Safe Refuge of Passengers: CCTV for Combined Public and Private Interests

We now move beyond our discussion of police CCTV operations for national security issues through the monitoring of flows of people and goods. From a business point of view, the airport has much more to offer than arrivals and departures. It also constitutes a commercially attractive space with bars, restaurants, car rental desks, newsagents, cash machines, and various shops to accommodate passengers or local clients. In 2005 nonaeronautical income accounted for 52.3 percent of the total turnover of Geneva International Airport.[25] In this light, private attempts to benefit from airport police services in general and from police CCTV operations in particular are not surprising.

> Before, the UBS office[26] used to be in the arrival zone. Every morning, we assisted the opening of this office. First, two police agents were present; then, we thought about the cameras. So, we did use them for this as well. We didn't have to lose two agents on the spot, but one person could watch from the control room to scan the place and check if there were any suspect individuals nearby. . . . Finally, the bank's employee opened the office, and we, during all this time, we used the cameras to make sure there were no problems.[27]

The increasingly blurred division between traditional police services and particular services for business interests also finds expression in the financing of the airport police's infrastructure (such as its office space and the CCTV control room), which is placed at the police's disposal by the airport management. Among all of the surveillance cameras within the publicly accessible sections of the airport, none has been paid for by the police. For specific services, the police are even directly remunerated by the airport management.

> The airport management—and I think it is absolutely necessary—does want a permanent police presence at the airport. The infrastructure is therefore placed at the police's disposal. Office space is made available for police use and specific police services are even directly paid for by the airport management. This is a specific service for the police by the building's owner, which is a public building. The airport management does not interfere in the use of funds that are made available. It only pays them. . . . The airport did finance the complete installation of the cameras.[28]

In particular, as regards the planning, financing, and installation of the airport CCTV system, our research emphasizes the myriad microdecisions and micronegotiations within a complex network of relationships between numerous public and private actors that have strongly influenced the processes of both bringing the CCTV system into service and searching for constant improvements. In this, the important role of private actors can be seen on at least two levels. First, the technical competencies required to manage the CCTV system give certain (private) parties more weight. Thus, it appears that there has been a general transfer of competencies from the users of the system (the police) via the owner of the system (the airport administration) to the technical managers of the system (the airport's technical service). Second, the role of independently operating private enterprises, boosting, presenting and selling new technical solutions (to both the police and the airport management) or supplying technical services to improve the system's performance is crucial. Given this heavy involvement

of private companies in designing and managing high-tech forms of surveillance, these developments clearly put traditional forms of public governance at stake as they rule out police regulations that were traditionally exclusively put under the responsibility of the nation-state.

Keeping in mind the heavy involvement of private actors in the financing and managing of the airport CCTV system, we now take a more in-depth look at the police's motivations for close public–private security partnerships in this context. In fact, the police's particular interest in the close collaboration with the airport management originates not only from the resulting financial and practical advantages but also from the intrinsic combination of interests in the airport as both a safe and attractive national port-of-entry and a commercially appealing shopping mall. The following discussion of police CCTV operations stresses the strategic combination of interests, simultaneously aiming to clear up and prevent luggage theft on the one hand and to manage and exclude commercially unattractive people from the airport area on the other hand. This illustrates more generally the joint production of airport security between public and private actors. Yet again, our analysis focuses especially on the spatial dimensions of CCTV operations for these matters.

Spatial Logics of Police CCTV Operations against Luggage Theft

Thus far, we have suggested that police CCTV operations to monitor arriving passengers either concentrate on specific access points or on particular airport sections, justifying, for example, the increased density of cameras on the arrival level compared to the departure zone. The spatial logic of CCTV operations to clear up and prevent luggage theft is fundamentally different, because in this case, the security of the airport area and its reputation as a whole are at stake. Nevertheless, police CCTV operations for this purpose follow specific spatial logics, which contributes to the differentiation of the airport area in terms of surveillance. In this respect, the spatiality of CCTV operations can be seen on three levels.

First, in the interviews with police representatives, an explicit link was established between the camera installation points themselves and spatial concentrations of luggage theft at specific "places at risk." For example, no surveillance cameras were installed in the transit zone, which is restricted to passengers, because of the low percentage of luggage theft within the secure area. On the contrary, cameras were exclusively spread over publicly accessible spaces of the airport (with concentrations in the arrival zone, the check-in zone, and the airport railway station), without being put into specific shops (which normally have their own cameras).

> Of course, [the specific placement of cameras] had to be decided. We could have put cameras everywhere. However, given the insignificance of offences within the transit area—which nonetheless does not mean that we can neglect them—we also had to think about the cost of installation. . . . The installation was quite expensive. Therefore, we did put the cameras at places where the prevention [of theft] was most necessary.[29]

Hence, as we see by looking at the spatial distribution of police surveillance cameras within the publicly accessible parts of the airport, the cameras' points of installation disproportionately value the surveillance of particular places or zones at the airport, which are presented to be "at risk" in that they constitute locations where luggage theft was predicted to be more likely to occur. This emphasizes that the airport is not homogeneously under surveillance but rather selectively monitored, dividing its surface into hierarchically-organized areas of control.

Second, we cannot only discern the spatial logic of airport CCTV operations through the installation points of the cameras, we must also analyze how cameras are effectively used by the police. Following from our observational research, *real time* CCTV operations to reduce luggage theft are indeed first based on the selection of particularly risky airport sections (where robberies can be committed more easily than elsewhere). Micro-operations with cameras (changing their positions and zooming) rely on each operator's personal experiences, knowledge, and assumptions, which are fundamentally related to space. For example, places with many distractions that attract the victim's attention and thus facilitate luggage theft were described as at risk. Given examples include travel agencies, car rental desks, check-in desks, and so on.

> It's [risky at] banks, where clients will change money, which takes all their attention. It's also [risky] at car rental desks because people are asked questions and they have to fill out documents and don't think about what is going on behind their backs. On the upper floor, it is at the check-in desks, because people are anxious to leave by plane. . . . These are the points where we most often have thefts. That's why these places are at risk. It is not that we would have determined these places ourselves, but it is where robberies are most frequently committed.[30]

More generally, highly frequented zones at the airport were also subject to increased risk, which—as we will discuss in the later part of this chapter—strongly divides business and police interests in the airport. A high number of people walking or standing at particular places (e.g., near check-in desks or within the railway station zone) not only facilitates luggage theft

but also renders video surveillance more difficult: "What will make us look at specific places? It is the places with a high number of people."[31]

Third, looking at the spatiality of CCTV operations to combat luggage theft, we finally refer to the cameras' positions while not being actively used by police agents. Although it is most gratifying for CCTV operators to catch thieves in the act, cameras often remain unnoticed when in strategic positions. Here again, the operator's knowledge and assumptions regarding places at risk is crucial. In the first stage, places are indeed targeted depending on the operator's mental map of the spatial distribution of risks at the airport.

> We know that there are strategic points where more luggage robberies will occur than elsewhere. In the evening, I will focus the cameras especially on these points. Afterward, if we have to visualize the images, I know that the cameras were already watching these points. We also try to have wide camera angles, in order to see the maximum. Furthermore, even if it is not always possible, we try to arrange the cameras in rows.[32]

Only of secondary importance, on the basis of the preselection of particular places at risk, CCTV operators use representations of specific social groups at risk. Regarding other spatial contexts and applications of CCTV, important research has been completed about the discriminatory social judgments and representations within daily CCTV practices, regarding specific "social groups of risk."[33] As regards the real-time monitoring of suspect individuals at Geneva International Airport, according to the qualitative data of our observational research and interviews, camera operators were hardly ever looking for the "usual suspects," such as marginalized social groups and young men with specific ethnic origins. On the contrary, they were more likely to focus on well-dressed, middle-aged gentlemen (often with female companions) hanging around the airport without any clear intention to leave by airplane.

> One often hears about criminals wearing rapper style clothes with baseball cap. . . . However, given our experiences here at the airport, thieves are not necessarily "badly" dressed. They're mainly normally dressed people, to whom you would not especially pay attention. They're generally well dressed, hardly ever young. Some, you would describe as nice daddies. Their look is "bon chic, bon genre": suit, tie. It's really people who go through without being especially noticed.[34]

CCTV to Exclude Disturbing Individuals from the Airport

Many analysts underline the correspondence between business interests and security politics in general and between the commercialization of city centers

and CCTV in particular.[35] For example, it has been argued that CCTV aims to increase the commercial value of monitored areas by helping to exclude "disturbing" individuals. The same tendency can be seen at the airport. Aside from fighting against luggage thieves and other criminals, the police's daily CCTV operations also focus on individuals who might threaten the consumer-oriented airport environment.

As a result, CCTV operations are not only aiming at the reduction of criminal behavior in order to create a safe airport but also at the exclusion of individuals whose behavior is considered to be inappropriate in the finely polished marble landscape of the airport. The *repressive* functionality of CCTV (i.e., to neutralize, control, and avoid specific individuals and behaviors) and the *creative* functionality of CCTV (i.e., to produce a commercially appealing environment) are thus intrinsically related. CCTV is not only of strategic importance to combat different types of risks, it also facilitates the airport's commercial usefulness. CCTV thus serves a clearly defined economic purpose and rationality, understood by Michel Foucault as, "the functional inversion of the disciplines."[36]

Despite the airport's function to receive and accommodate the general public, its publicly accessible parts cannot be understood as "public" in the sense of open, democratically shared, public space.[37] On the contrary, within the picture of a safe, trouble-free, and presentable airport, not every social group has its place. Publicly accessible airport sections are thus restricted to clearly defined social groups, which are only accommodated as long as they are not classified to be "undesirable."

To provide a symptomatic example of this ambivalence, it is worth looking at two examples, including skateboarding youth, on the one hand, and homeless people, on the other hand. In fact, camera operators did not describe these social groups to be of risk, in that they would need to be especially monitored to prevent luggage theft, for example. They were on the contrary exclusively seen as disturbing elements to the airport's reputation as both a prestigious national port-of-entry and as a nice place to go shopping.

> Within the railway station sector, one might easily find juveniles arriving with their music and dancing. In this case we will intervene. Often, it is via telephone [to private security agents], but sometimes, we send our own patrol.[38]
>
> Recently, there was a woman pissing everywhere, smelling badly, and talking to herself. Here as well, we were obliged to gently ask her to leave.[39]

The airport management and the more than sixty shops and services at Geneva International Airport strongly agree with the police's strategy to expel young skateboarders and homeless people from the airport.

The Airport as Shopping Mall: CCTV between Antagonist Public and Private Interests

Unlike the police, however, the busy shops, cafés, and restaurants do not consider arriving or departing passengers as border-crossing individuals but rather as potential customers. They even actively seek to attract additional clients to the airport who do not have any intentions of leaving by plane.

From a Place of Transit to a Destination in its Own Right

These efforts are facilitated by the airport's geographical proximity to the city center of Geneva, its excellent integration in the city network of public transit (accessible by train and three bus lines less than ten minutes from downtown) and by the exceptionally long business hours—7 days a week, 365 days a year "in theory"—of both the specialized, luxury shops and the more general shops for the local population.[40] Furthermore, various kinds of special events are organized by the airport management—whose responsibility for the events is intensely advertised throughout the airport on large information boards—ranging from popular events such as displays of model cars, boats, or helicopters to fashion shows, arts exhibitions, and flea markets. The airport thus becomes a destination in its own right.

> I would say that the wish to organize playful events originates from the airport's intention to animate its commercial spaces. One has to know that shops generate a huge income for the airport. Therefore, the airport needs them. And because shops need to make a profit as well, one has to attract a huge amount of people.[41]

Though some of these entertainments concern all public zones at the airport, the most "chaotic" and "uncontrollable" occurrences (such as the monthly flea markets, most model exhibitions, fashion shows, and Christmas markets) are exclusively held within the airport's railway station. In this light, the organization of well-attended events for business interests at the airport raises important issues about the increasing spatial differentiation of the airport into different levels of more-or-less commercialized zones, which our interviewees often described as public sections. In addition, a central challenge for further empirical research would involve questions about the ways in which the airport in general and these events in particular are perceived by customers, passengers, and visitors, in order to better understand the effect of such events on the perception of the airport as a mixture of shopping mall and commercialized leisure park.

These developments originate from business interests, but they clearly counteract the modernist ideal of the airport, which Le Corbusier expresses when he proclaims, "the beauty of an airport lies in the splendor of its space!"[42] By further reducing purely passenger-destined space, airport events might even lead to increased tension between different types of airport user groups, as the following two posts about Geneva International Airport, found on an internet forum about airport quality, point out:[43]

> Another issue is the lack of seating in an overcrowded . . . airport, which results in people sitting wherever they can, blocking the narrow gangways between high-end shops selling overpriced goods ranging from Rolex watches to caviar—but there are no seats to be had at the cramped self-service restaurant![44]
>
> The main problem is that they have so many shops that there isn't enough space for passengers to sit, and there were over a hundred passengers sitting on the floor. I would have thought providing seats for passengers would be a minimum basic service for an airport. Overall, traveling through GVA was a pretty nasty experience.[45]

Another set of difficulties resulting from the increasing commercialization of Geneva International Airport goes back to the fundamental tension between movement and immobility, or in other words, to the tension between commercial efforts to transform the airport into a space of events in its own right and the police's quest for a safe, ordered, clean, and presentable airport for passenger flows. This tension is further examined in two cases.

The Christmas Dilemma

The police agents we interviewed did not openly disagree with the airport management's efforts to increase the commercial appeal of the airport. However, tension between public interests in the airport as a trouble-free, safe, and easily controllable national entrance gate, on the one hand, and business interests for commercial entertainment, on the other hand, is evident. In this respect, the police's role regarding the authorization of events is exemplary. In fact, to organize events at the airport, in general, no authorization is needed, but particular events could be prohibited by the airport police department if the risks entailed are considered to be excessive. The staging of events thus becomes the norm, while the cancellation remains the exception.

> We are informed of any special event. There is also a police delegate who participates in the competent airport working group. But generally, there is no formal permission to be asked. However, we could prohibit specific

> events. There is a general police clause, which would allow us—depending on the circumstances—to prohibit any event if the risk would be too high. . . . Still, there is no 100 percent security. Automatically, we have to assess the situation and decide whether an event could be held or not.[46]

Special events rarely present acute risks, however, they do entail difficulties and complications for police security operations. Regarding CCTV operations in particular, a series of difficulties is linked to commercial events at the airport. These challenges arise because of associated changes of the airport's materiality, such as the specific arrangement of objects, placards, and decorations, which accompanies every event. This problem is particularly obvious at Christmas.

> Information placards—toilets, etc.—are found more or less everywhere at the airport. Sometimes, we will ask [the management] to change the locations and positions of placards, because they do limit the view of the cameras. Anyway, we do not have a very good view of the departure level. Recently, the airport workers even put another placard in the middle of the hall, which was not really a good solution for us. We also have to pay attention to Christmas decorations. It's very simple; with all these Christmas decorations, we lose a big part of our vision.[47]

The police's worry about Christmas decorations perfectly illustrates the fundamental need to conceptualize airport-security politics as permanently "in the making."[48] Airport surveillance must indeed be studied as the subject of constant research and development, as a result of convergent and divergent interests and requirements. This is particularly clear during the installation and implementation process, a whole series of microdecisions and of micronegotiations are in play. This exemplary microscale issue strongly underlines that airports cannot simply be described as spaces of complete control, as the omnipresent rhetoric of security politics currently suggests. On the contrary, we have to understand surveillance and security issues at airports to be co-produced compromises between numerous private and public actors. The next case illustrates that security does not always trump economy.

The Flea Market Dilemma

Genuine tensions of airport security become even more evident regarding a second micro-issue of police CCTV operations—the "flea market dilemma." As mentioned earlier, monthly flea markets are organized by the airport

management to invite customers who have more time than passengers have to enjoy the airport facilities, to engage differently with the airport space, and—most importantly—to spend money. It is remarkable that, due to advance scheduling, this flea market was even held two weeks after the alleged terrorist strikes on several airplanes between London and the United States in August 2006, which dramatically increased security conditions for passengers. Even in normal circumstances, however, the organization of flea markets at the airport raises some fundamental issues.

First, the increased number of people generally presents an important challenge for airport CCTV operations, regardless of their activities. Huge amounts of people and distractions in particular places are not only more difficult to monitor by surveillance cameras, but they also present ideal conditions for pickpockets and luggage theft within the crowd.

> Every special event—I mean whenever there are many people here, bringing money to the airport—is a moment at risk. Increased departures on public holidays, charter flights on Saturdays. . . . Then, pickpockets will be here.[49]

Second, compared to passengers, flea market visitors are not passing *through* the airport but remain *inside* the building for whole afternoons, which further heightens the challenge they pose for security operations. Unlike normal passengers, they can no longer be subject to clearly prescribed patterns of movement—filtered and controlled through check-in, ticketing, security checks, and so on. On the contrary, flea market visitors follow their own spatial logics, adding complex and opposing micromovements to the general flow of travelers.

Third, flea markets are particularly hard to reconcile with increased security precautions against terrorist threats for airports. Rubbish bins have long ago been removed at Geneva International Airport, as elsewhere. In addition, unattended luggage is routinely detected through CCTV and exploded by specialized police forces. In this regard, CCTV's integrated systems of unattended luggage detection have been tested by the airport police department in Geneva. With all of this in mind, flea markets present the very antithesis of the ideally controllable airport environment. As relatively chaotic events, they lead to fundamentally unforeseeable social relationships and spatial behaviors, which makes it nearly impossible to look for abandoned luggage.

Conclusions

The special magic of airports as symbolic spaces of progress and national pride is often expressed through massive, ostentatious security measures.

We also know about powerful surveillance techniques aiming to closely monitor and profile people and goods passing through airports. In this sense, airports indeed act as powerful filters to international mobility. However, the picture of the airport as a homogeneous world of complete control and surveillance must be differentiated, as our empirically detailed insights in daily police CCTV operations at Geneva International Airport have revealed.

Concerned with the dual functionalities of Geneva International Airport as both a national entrance gate and as a destination in its own right for local clients, the study of CCTV practices by the airport police provided a powerful example of broader surveillance trends in the context of airport-security politics. Our question, in essence, has been: how are everyday practices of CCTV embedded within the complex network of public and private actors, strategies, and interests at Geneva International Airport, and how are CCTV practices actually related to the spaces concerned with the installation of the cameras? Based on interviews with airport police representatives and observational research of daily CCTV operations, our analysis thereby was divided into three parts.

First, the chapter explored both the role of CCTV to "capture" and to "understand" arriving passengers at risk, on the one hand, and to "protect" persons who are particularly exposed to risks, on the other hand. Focused either on specific access points or on the entire airport arrival zone, this type of CCTV operations was compared with traditional border-control measures —that is, monitoring international mobility in order to improve the security of the wider national territory.

Second, our analysis was extended to police CCTV operations, following the general quest for a safe, ordered, clean, and pleasant airport environment without any "disturbing" objects or persons. Exemplified by CCTV operations to combat luggage theft and to reduce damage to the airport's image, we pointed out strategic coalitions of interests to purify the airport space. The study of CCTV, thus, exemplarily expressed the close collaboration between numerous public and private parties (encompassing different types of competencies, strategies, interests, and work philosophies) for the organization and daily carrying out of security operations at the airport. In addition, our concern about the different spatial logics of CCTV operations also helped to point out to what degree airport security politics is actually based on conscious and unconscious prioritizations of certain objects (spaces and persons) and the logics of surveillance.

Despite the combined pursuit of a smart and trouble-free airport, the third part of this paper suggested that police interests and commercial interests in the airport area do not always coincide. Here, the example of CCTV operations at Geneva International Airport suggested that airport-security

politics both converges *and* diverges with private business interests. While the resulting challenges and tensions can be small in scale in relation to the overwhelming surveillance machine at the airport, they are not to be ignored. Just consider the example of the "flea market dilemma" which emphasized that airport risk management constantly articulates antagonistic issues and interests. Thus, despite being an important priority, especially after 9/11, security issues do not constitute the sole preoccupation airports. In practice, constant tensions are arising between security issues and commercial interests, which today seem to provide the last obstacles to restrain current trends toward ever-increasing surveillance.

In this, a central issue at stake is to conceptualize the current development of security politics more generally, rather than as pure responses to security threats or as exclusive measures to address heightened fears of vulnerability. The study of security politics in the aviation sector indeed presents highly favorable conditions to provide empirical insight into the complexity of factors that contribute to the implementation, functioning, and impact of surveillance. In particular, understanding the interdependencies between public and private actors, interests, and strategies is of crucial importance in order to consider the potential of legal regulations to restrict and manage the ever-increasing deployment of surveillance measures.

In this, the question at stake is not simply whether to choose between security or privacy. The question, in fact, comes from a different direction. It is deeply embedded in the process of global security politics recalibration, which reveals itself as having put in place a series of mechanisms that reorder security politics toward economic goals: How are security strategies embedded within and coproduced through a complex network of local; national; international; and public and private actors, interests, and domains of expertise? How are these networks developing and circulating across diverse private and public spheres, resulting in the production of security models as expert "exemplars" for more general use, which are increasingly influencing local decisions? In which ways, and to what degree, are trends of commercialization subtly pushed forward beneath these developments, associated with specific discourses and measures of security politics?

Regarding the conceptualization of airports more generally, the study of CCTV operations at Geneva International Airport also contributed to the further discussion of the nature of airports in terms of Marc Augé's conceptualization of "nonplaces," which provides a common point of reference for airport studies. The Geneva case study presented an interesting example to explore the airport environment not only as a transit space but also as a commercially-appealing space, intrinsically connected with its surroundings and presenting a strong wish to draw on the broader urban and regional visitor

market. Thus, the airport environment is not only populated by travelers but also by local customers, passers-by, and visitors. In this light, Geneva International Airport not only constitutes a place of transit and movement, resulting in a certain detachment between its users and the spaces they traverse, but also a much richer and more diverse space, which brings together myriad spatial practices, emotional engagements, and social microrelations.

Of course, many particularities from the Geneva case-study might strongly differ in other airports and in other national contexts. Also, our analysis in this chapter was restricted to police CCTV operations, without considering the full extent of security operations, instruments, and techniques at hand in the airport.[50] Therefore, our analysis raises important further questions and issues about airport surveillance. For example, there is scope for much-needed empirical research about the role of other types of private actors interfering on local police strategies of airport security politics, such as airplane companies asking for international security standards, and security companies trying to sell and provide new technical surveillance solutions. Without the exact knowledge of the complex relationships between numerous parties, it is indeed very difficult to know through which procedures, operations, and practices international mobility through airports is managed, filtered, and screened within these sites.[51]

In addition, we crucially lack empirically based knowledge regarding the efficiency of different measures of (airport) surveillance. Based on the assumption that the end justifies the means, the generalization of surveillance technology, not only at airports but in nearly every aspect of social life, remains largely unquestioned in terms of efficiency and proportionality. There is, thus, a desperate need to move beyond generalized and deterministic discourses about the role of surveillance in order to pave the way for a better future and to look, in rich empirical detail, at the complex ways in which different surveillance measures are being used in real ways, in real places, in the real world. Even if the lack of enquiry in the research field is somewhat understandable, given the confidentiality of information about security operations in general and at airports in particular, questioning these issues is long overdue.

Notes

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"Airports as Data Filters: Converging Surveillance Systems after September 11th," *Information, Communication and Ethics in Society* 1, no. 1 (2003): 13–20.

4. Peter Adey, "Surveillance at the Airport: Surveilling Mobility / Mobilizing Surveillance," *Environment and Planning A* 36, no. 8 (2004): 1365–80.
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6. See David Lyon, ed., *Surveillance as Social Sorting* (London: Routledge, 2003); Gary T. Marx, *Undercover: Police Surveillance in America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).
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18. Irma Van der Ploeg, "The Illegal Body: 'Eurodac' and the Politics of Biometric Identification," *Ethics and Information Technology* 1, no. 4 (1999): 295–302.
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21. Adey, "Surveillance at the Airport," 1370; see also Benjamin J. Muller, chapter 6 in this volume.
22. Police agent and CCTV operator I, Geneva International Airport Police. All quotations are translated from French to English by the authors.
23. Police agent and camera operator II, Geneva International Airport Police.
24. Head, Geneva International Airport Police.
25. Geneva International Airport, *Annual Report 2005*.
26. UBS is a European bank.

27. Police agent and camera operator I, Geneva International Airport Police.
28. Ex-head of the Geneva International Airport Police and initiator of the airport CCTV system.
29. Ex-head of the Geneva International Airport Police and initiator of the airport CCTV system.
30. Police agent and camera operator II, Geneva International Airport Police.
31. Head of CCTV control room Geneva International Airport Police.
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47. Head of CCTV control room, Geneva International Airport Police.
48. Latour, *Science in Action*.
49. Police agent and camera operator I, Geneva International Airport Police.
50. For a wider discussion, see Ruegg et al. *Vidéosurveillance et risques*.
51. Adey, "Surveillance at the Airport," 1365.