Interacting forms of expertise and authority in mega-event security: the example of the 2010 Vancouver Olympic Games

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This paper explores the interests, forms of expertise and sources of authority in security governance at the 2010 Vancouver Olympic Games. To do so, the research approach pursued here focuses on the micro level, locating the various contributions to event security in the context of a particular range of projects and decisions relating to the planning and instauration of Olympic venue security. On this basis, the paper empirically explores how security governance at sport mega events, as the outcome of complex negotiations, permeates and shapes particular places and projects during the event. This investigation also brings to the fore a number of more fundamental insights with regard to the processes, relationships and interests underpinning security governance in the post-9/11 context.

KEY WORDS: sport mega events, security, surveillance, city, 2010 Vancouver Olympic Games, expertise

Introduction

This paper explores the interests, forms of expertise and sources of authority in security governance at the 2010 Vancouver Olympic Games. More specifically, drawing upon 11 in-depth interviews conducted with key stakeholders in the policing of the 2010 Vancouver Olympic Games, the paper locates the various contributions to event security in the context of a particular range of projects and decisions relating to the planning and instauration of Olympic venue security.

While this investigation focuses predominantly, albeit not exclusively, on the planning and establishment of venue security from the viewpoint of the Vancouver 2010 Integrated Security Unit (ISU), the unit responsible for security planning and operations at the Games, it also brings to the fore a number of more fundamental insights with regard to the processes, relationships and interests underpinning security governance in the post-9/11 context. Thus the approach pursued here matters because it exemplifies in empirical detail how security governance at sport mega events shapes particular places and projects during the event, which is of fundamental importance if we are to understand the actual logics behind and the implications of contemporary event security. Fur-

thermore, drawing upon the mega-event case study, the paper also provides a rare insight into the internal logics and driving forces underpinning some of the most salient developments in contemporary security matters, including current trends of privatisation and exemplification of specific security solutions and partnerships.

Interests and expertise in mega-event security

In recent years, a growing body of research has sought to explore the modalities and implications of mega-event security (Thompson 1999; Decker *et al*. 2007; Yu *et al*. 2009; Jennings and Lodge 2009; Fussey and Coaffee 2011; Fussey *et al*. 2011). There are many important issues emerging from these literatures, but two of these are of particular interest here: the imbrications of security and economic concerns in the staging of mega events, and the interactions of scale in the operation and organisation of mega-event security. These will be outlined briefly below.

Security issues and economic concerns

The first issue to highlight relates to the imbrications – that is, partly overlapping positions – of security issues and economic concerns in the staging of sport mega

events. Relevant literatures explore at least three complementary research directions. First, a growing range of scholars are now studying the economic relevance of mega-event security in terms of 'urban entrepreneurialism' and 'place selling' (Boyle 2005; Boyle and Haggerty 2011; Klauser 2012). This work substantiates the argument that threats of escalating crowd violence (violent protest, hooliganism, etc.) are seen not only to endanger the local population, visitors and athletes but also to threaten the carefully constructed marketing image of an enjoyable, colourful and secure event.

Second, existing literatures devote considerable attention to the role of private companies in providing technology solutions and labour forces for mega-event security. These literatures shed light not only on the importance of private expertise in event security, but also on the fierce competition between security providers (Samatas 2007) and on their role in boosting security expenditure (Busch 2006). Scholars also discuss the role of mega events as testing grounds for novel high-tech surveillance technologies (Molnar and Snider 2011).

Third, an increasingly sophisticated body of research emphasises the security-related interests and contributions of the event organisers themselves (FIFA, UEFA, IOC) (Eick 2011). Recent discussions have insisted, for example, on the fusing security and branding rationales associated with fan zones in event cities (Klauser 2012) and on the relationship between security governance and the commercialisation of sports more generally (Giulianotti 2011).

Interactions of scale in the operation and organisation of mega-event security

The second issue to emphasise turns around the complex interactions of scale in the operation and organisational structures of mega-event security. There are at least two complementary research directions here. On the one hand, an increasingly sophisticated body of theoretical and empirical research explores the transnational exchange and sharing of previously tested and subsequently exemplified 'security templates', which circulate from event city to event city (Samatas 2007 2011; Boyle 2011). Concerned with the mechanisms and actor networks through which expertise in the field of mega-event security 'travels', this research focuses on issues of policy learning, convergence and imitation.

On the other hand, there is a range of scholars who emphasise the locally anchored factors inhibiting and re-orienting such global policy circuits, from legal specificities to local organisational cultures (Klauser 2011a 2011b). Together, these studies portray sport mega events as highly visible and prestigious projects whose securitisation is firmly embedded in transnational circuits of imitation and exemplification, without, however, forgetting the role of local, regional and national motivation, expertise and traditions in security matters.

Yet whilst the multifold security collaborations at sport mega events have been acknowledged on various conceptually and empirically informed grounds, there is to date a pressing need to better understand the precise ways in which the various practices of, and interests in, security merge in particular sites, and to consider the ramifications of this. What is needed is a micro approach that allows an understanding of how exactly security governance at sport mega events permeates and shapes particular places and projects during the event. Focusing on the co-construction of venue security at the 2010 Vancouver Olympic Games, this paper addresses precisely this issue.

Venue security at the 2010 Vancouver Olympics and Paralympic Games

Stadia and other venues constitute focal points in mega-event security. At Vancouver 2010, venue security relied on three main principles (Vancouver Integrated Security Unit 2010, 193), distinguishing between 'secure perimeter' (for purposes of physical separation and intrusion detection), 'security sweep' (for purposes of internal cleaning and surveillance of enclosed perimeters) and 'access control' (for purposes of filtering and managing venue inflows). The following quote, taken from the interview with the venue security coordinator at the 2010 Vancouver Olympic Games, illustrates the complementarity and interrelation of the three principles:

> When we look at a venue, we look at physical barriers, fence, structure, perimeter control. Then we look at sweeping and cleaning to ensure that there is nothing in that venue, whether explosives or firearms. We do a complete clean of that venue, and then after that we put in a process of access control.
> Venue security coordinator, Vancouver 2010 ISU

In terms of technical operations, venue security for the 2010 Vancouver Games relied on two main portfolios, distinguishing between PIDS (Perimeter Intrusion Detection System) and SAP (Secure Access Program). The aims of these are outlined in more detail below, before moving to present the methodological approach pursued in this paper.

Perimeter Intrusion Detection System

The overall aim of PIDS was to detect and assess perimeter intrusions and disturbances in 18 sporting and non-sporting venues. The system comprised a total of more than 900 CCTV cameras, combined with automated assessment and detection software, divided between the venues and covering a total of 27 km across both urban and mountainous terrain.

The installation, maintenance and removal of the equipment was mandated to a private security consortium led by Honeywell Canada, in a service contract worth Can$30.5 million (Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) 2009). Honeywell worked together with a range of international, national and local partners, employing more than 200 people at peak (Honeywell 2009).

Secure Access Program

If PIDS aimed at hermetic enclosure, SAP responded to the need to allow swift yet controlled venue access for entrants. As one of the interviewed private collaborators of the Vancouver 2010 ISU put it:

> One of the projects I am working on is the Secure Access Program, so how we can speed entry and still maintain the trust that we have properly accredited people with a security background check done on them. You move people in and out and only do the more advanced screening in terms of going through their bags and putting them through the magnetometers when there is a recognised need that we need to do that, or on a random basis.
>
> President of J. Robert Leitch & Associates Project Management & IT Consulting

Before the Games, as we see from the quotation, SAP relied on systematic security background checks for accreditation purposes. Overall, approximately 200 000 security background checks were conducted, with people being checked on 17 characteristics through six RCMP and non-RCMP databases (Plecas *et al.* 2010, 23). During the event, access-control measures were set up at the venues' entrance gates, aimed at database-enabled identification and authentification controls of entrants, whilst also allowing for the screening of objects and belongings. For this purpose, 1,650 metal detectors were deployed in predefined vehicle and pedestrian screening areas (Garrett 2008). In total, access control and screening relied on 5500 private staff (provided by *Contemporary Security Canada*) and approximately one-third of the total police workforce deployed at the 2010 Vancouver Games (Plecas *et al.* 2010).

These figures highlight the importance of access management for venue security. The key issue was not merely that of demarcating particular security enclaves, but also of regulating inflows of people and objects. 'Bad' inflows were singled out already in the accreditation process and prevented from entering, whilst accredited inflows were further differentiated according to various threat factors, and treated and monitored accordingly. Venue security thus appears as a sophisticated analytics of filtering and control.

Approach

This paper is not interested in assessing the efficiency or technical details of venue security at the 2010 Vancouver Olympic Games, but in studying the actors, forms of expertise and interests involved in the planning and running of the security system. In this endeavour, particular emphasis will be placed on the expertise of, and relationships between, four main actors:

1. Vancouver 2010 ISU;
2. Technical Security Branch of the RCMP in Ottawa;
3. Department of Security Integration (DSI) of the Vancouver Organizing Committee for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games (VANOC);
4. Honeywell Canada, charged with providing PIDS for venue security.

I have chosen to concentrate on this particular set of actors in order to give a strong focus to my analysis, which is divided into four sections, discussing the contribution and sources of authority of each of these four actors in turn. However, I am well aware that the imperatives of mega-event security are in reality much more complex and cannot be explained comprehensively by such an intentionally limited approach. I am not implying here that venue security is shaped exclusively by the multiple connections and interactions between the four key actors identified above, but merely aspire to provide a symptomatic, if necessarily limited, illustration of the alliances, tensions and dilemmas in mega-event security. I hope thereby to show that the modalities and effects of security governance at sport mega events are inevitably complex and shaped by constant compromises and micro adjustments.

To analyse the roles of the four actors listed above, the paper draws upon 11 in-depth interviews conducted with key stakeholders in the policing of the 2010 Vancouver Olympic Games. All interviews were conducted in July/August 2009 in Vancouver; the interviewees are listed below[1]:

- Director of VANOC's DSI[2];
- Director of Integrated Public Safety & Emergency Management, British Columbia;
- Director of Public Affairs/Media Relations, Vancouver 2010 ISU;
- ISU Media Spokesperson, Vancouver 2010 ISU;
- Tactical and Accreditation Planning Officer, Vancouver 2010 ISU;
- Operations Officer, Vancouver 2010 ISU;
- Exercise Coordinator, Vancouver 2010 ISU;
- Representative from the Community Relations Group, Vancouver 2010 ISU;
- Presidents of J. Robert Leitch & Associates Project Management & IT Consulting (consultants, project management, after action reports, etc.);
- Venue Security Coordinator, Vancouver 2010 ISU;
- Technical Operations Coordinator (in charge of the Perimeter Detection System), Vancouver 2010 ISU.

The interviewees were chosen according to their roles and responsibilities in event security to generate a broad view of the operation and organisational structure of security governance at the 2010 Vancouver Games. All interviewees were selected in consultation with Assistant Commissioner Bud Mercer, Chief Operating Officer of the Vancouver 2010 ISU.

Whilst these interviews offer a unique insight into the functioning and making of event security at the Vancouver Olympic Games, it should be noted that they do not cover all the relevant actors involved in venue security. For example, no police on the ground have been interviewed in the conducted research. Furthermore, no representatives from Honeywell Canada, charged with providing PIDS for venue security, agreed to be interviewed. This not only raises a major analytical issue – Honeywell's contribution to venue security is here approached exclusively through the interviews with the ISU – but also highlights more fundamental problematics relating to the lack of research access to private sector actors involved in contemporary security governance.

Furthermore, this research also relied on the extensive study of official documents and reports from the ISU and VANOC, as well as on information gathered from local, national and international media articles. Conversations held in Vancouver in December 2009 with Canadian data protection authorities and local community groups also provided important information with regard to a range of issues and debates surrounding the policing of the Games. While these will not be explored in detail in this paper, they provided essential insight for the analysis that is outlined below.

The Vancouver 2010 ISU: legal authority and practical expertise in security matters

The Vancouver 2010 ISU was established in 2003 by the Covenant of the Government of Canada to provide security coordination, planning and operations for the 2010 Winter Games. Overall, the ISU mobilised a total workforce of more than 5600 police officers from across Canada (Plecas *et al.* 2010, 15). Areas of responsibility included venue security within and around all Olympic and Paralympic sites, marine and aviation security, transportation and traffic incident management, physical security, accreditation screening and verification, and protective policing (Government of Canada 2010). Naturally, this mission conferred central authority in event security to the ISU.

Yet to the ISU's legally and politically defined position in the securitisation of the Vancouver Olympics, another source of authority must be added, relating to the practical expertise and experience in security matters, conveyed by its internal and external collaborators. Led by the RCMP and in partnership with the Vancouver Police Department, the West Vancouver Police Department, the Canadian Forces, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service and many other personnel from the public and private sector, the ISU gathered multiple domains of expertise relating to policing and law enforcement, technical operations and strategic planning. This in itself provides a flavour of the interacting forms of expertise in the co-construction of event security. In addition, and as we will see below, further expertise required in the planning, implementation and operation of the Vancouver 2010 security system was provided by additional actors, bringing other interests and professional backgrounds to the securitisation of the Games.

Regarding venue security specifically, the ISU's role was not confined to law enforcement and policing, but also included technical and strategic planning. In its initial years, the ISU was built almost exclusively around planning. Until the Games started, the planning contingent comprised more than 500 policemen and women, civilian members and contracted employees (Plecas *et al.* 2010, 5). From January 2006, the ISU started elaborating security operation plans for nine competition and ten non-competition venues in Vancouver, West Vancouver and Whistler. In 18 of these 19 venues, PIDS was later to be deployed (Wiebe 2010; Honeywell 2009).

During the Games, the ISU assumed full responsibility for venue security, in terms of internal surveillance and organisation, enclosure and access management. Within this overall framework, specific measures and strategies were co-produced in collaboration with a wide range of other public and private, local, national and international actors. Thus the role and authority of the ISU cannot be explained fully without reference to its relations with, and co-constitution through, other players in event security. For this reason, I will now discuss the role of VANOC, the official event organiser and hence another key stakeholder in venue security for the Games.

VANOC's DSI: practical expertise and legal authority in event organisation

VANOC was established by the Government of Canada in 2003 as a private not-for-profit company. VANOC acted as the organising body of the 2010 Vancouver Olympics, thus assuming overall responsibility for all Olympic venues, structured into 53 functional areas ranging from logistics to public engagement and security integration.

With regard to venue security, this organisational framework implied a close relationship between VANOC and the ISU. In its leading principles, this relationship was regulated in a memorandum of understanding (MoU), established in early 2008 (Plecas *et al.* 2010, 12). However, this memorandum did not specify the precise modalities and channels of

collaboration. Relationships had to be further adjusted and refined through negotiation between the two partners.

Relations between the ISU and VANOC were centralised through VANOC's DSI, which not only drove the harmonisation process between VANOC's functional areas and the ISU, but also played a pivotal role in the actual set up of the organisational structure underpinning event security. The following quote, taken from an email conversation with the director of DSI in early 2013, testifies thereof:

> I personally drafted the MoU with our VANOC lawyer. Each draft of the document was discussed and then approved by the ISU's Head. At the end, the final document was signed by the VANOC Executive Vice President and RCMP Deputy Commissioner Pacific Region. The MoU was a fundamental document that defined roles and responsibilities between VANOC and ISU, including the split cost allocation. This was the first time in the Games when a formal agreement was reached between an Organizing Committee and Police Forces. Just to give you another example for how VANOC played a key role for the definition of all the security strategies, we were also in the evaluation commission who appointed Bud Mercer as Head of ISU.
>
> Director of VANOC's DSI

In what follows, this initial account of the imbrications between the DSI and the ISU is further developed with a view to considering the actual working relationships and interacting forms of expertise between the two.

Working relations between the ISU and the DSI

Exchanges between the ISU and the DSI took place on all levels across the hierarchy of involved actors, relating to diverse issues and portfolios and relying on multiple forms and channels of collaboration, ranging from meetings and training sessions to the joint staffing of teams. The following account, taken from the interview with the coordinator of the ISU's Accreditation and Secure Access Program, provides a telling illustration of this.

> VANOC is a huge partner and it has taken some time to build that relationship . . . We have two people embedded within VANOC that work part of the week in the VANOC office and then here [i.e. ISU] as well. A number of issues have been resolved in this way. Being flexible enough to step outside our mandate a little bit, to assist VANOC, has been reciprocated. There's some give and take that has to occur. There's no black and white here.
>
> Tactical and Accreditation Planning Officer, Vancouver 2010 ISU

This quote demonstrates the importance of flexible and informal exchange and collaboration across the temporary 'issue networks' (Heclo 1978) underpinning the securitisation of the Games, giving rise to a complex patchwork of interaction and mutual interdependences. In the case of accreditation, for example, the ISU conducted the security background checks whilst VANOC owned the data provided in the accreditation forms and produced the Olympic Identity and Accreditation Cards (Vancouver Integrated Security Unit 2010, 81). Furthermore, the ISU took overall responsibility for pedestrian screening and access control, whilst VANOC drew in its partner (and sponsor) Garrett for the provision of the magnetometers used for this purpose.

The case of Garrett is indeed of particular interest to highlight the intertwined positions of VANOC and of the ISU, not only on the level of informal everyday exchanges, but also in terms of more formalised arrangements:

> There was an agreement made between the ISU and VANOC where, for example, the metal detectors would be one responsibility and X-rays would be another. A shared agreement was made for them to procure one piece and us to procure the other. Perhaps because of Garrett's expertise from doing so many Olympics, they were able to provide a better package than other companies.
>
> Venue Security Coordinator, Vancouver 2010 ISU

Intertwined positions of this kind highlight that mega-event security must be approached as the outcome of complex coalitions of authority, bringing together different positions and pre-established contacts. These imbrications also depend on different driving forces and interests, ranging from pragmatic considerations – VANOC provided the Garrett metal detectors at no cost for the ISU – to the need to draw on the particular forms of expertise and previous experience provided by the different 'partners'. In what follows, I further pursue this very issue in highlighting first the converging interests of the ISU and DSI in event security, and second moving to explore some of the tensions arising from the two actors' differing responsibilities in the Vancouver Olympic Games.

Coalitions of interest and expertise in event security

Cooperation between the DSI and the ISU resulted from the overall organisational structure established for the Olympics. Interviewees repeatedly underscored the strong coalition of interests linking the two partners in their endeavour to create a secure and attractive Olympic Games. Throughout the interviews conducted, this relationship was explained with particular reference to the perceived complementarity of the expertise conveyed by the ISU and the DSI. The account below, in which the director of VANOC's DSI refers to the planning and staging of security exercises, provides an illustration of this.

There are two different kinds of exercises. On the one hand, there are exercises led by law enforcement and Public Safety . . . These are led by the ISU, but VANOC plays a key role as the subject matter expert . . . On the other hand, we also have our own exercises, in which we involve the ISU, which are developed by VANOC with the support of an external company. These exercises are influenced directly by previous events, drawing on documentation from other Olympic Games.

Director of VANOC's DSI

For the context of this paper, this quote is of interest for at least three main reasons. First, it testifies to the importance of VANOC's practical expertise and experience, stemming from previous Games. Second, it underscores the weight of pre-established policy models transferred from event to event (here in the form of written documentation). Thirdly, in its reference to the 'support of an external company', the quote hints at the ever growing importance of advice, expertise, personnel and technology provided by private companies in event security. At a later stage of this paper, this issue will be further developed with regard to the involvement of Honeywell Canada in venue security.

Only if we recognise the overlapping and intertwined positions of different stakeholders, in terms of pragmatic needs rather than mere organisational structures and predefined objectives, can we understand the precise modalities and effects of mega-event security. Hence the importance of a micro approach that centres on the question of how exactly everyday security practices – and their underlying relationships – are responding to, and shaped by, specific interests and interacting forms of expertise.

Conflicting positions

Despite the close collaboration and intrinsic combination of interests shared by the ISU and VANOC, however, differences between them also gave rise to frictions and dissonances that required constant attention. Thus interviewees portrayed event security as a constant process of negotiations and adaptations, as shown for example in the account below, given by a planning officer of the ISU:

Internally, the relationship that we have and are able to establish with VANOC will certainly be of benefit to my organisation itself. Again, it's that understanding that we always foster culturally within the RCMP: 'we're here, we're taking control', which has sometimes got in the way of developing those relationships with private enterprises like VANOC. I think there has been a real learning process as regards this law enforcement mentality, because we're so used to taking control of situations . . . I'm responsible for the security of the venue, but I'm not in charge of the venue. We also have a venue manager

with VANOC, and so my role is an interesting one. I just refer to myself as the Chief of Police of the venue.

Tactical and Accreditation Planning Officer, Vancouver 2010 ISU

This account reveals the adaptation of the RCMP's mentality to the mega-event context of shared authority and collaboration. On a very general level, we find here an interesting expression of the balancing and harmonisation of positions required in the 'crafting' of the actor networks underpinning venue security. Yet to really understand and appreciate how the positions and interests of the ISU and VANOC were brought into dialogue and subsequently aligned, specific cases of tensions or struggles must be investigated. At this point, one particular example from my interviews must suffice, relating to the struggle for space in Olympic venues between the ISU and other event stakeholders:

When you look at VANOC's 53 functional areas, one of those functional areas being security, you see that we are one of 53 voices that are speaking to them about space at a venue. That really puts it into context, as to how difficult it can be to negotiate what we need. I realise that in most cases security holds the trump card, as it is very important. But we are also sensitive to other needs . . . How big the tents are; are you obscuring the view from something, or the spaces . . . Space is the biggest issue, because the venues are small in this city. In the inner city, when you look at GM and BC Place [General Motors Place and British Columbia Place], it is difficult to get space around there. So when we demand space, it just makes it harder on them to try to fit everything in. That's where we've come up with smaller technology, to work in a smaller space in some areas.

Technical Operations Coordinator, Vancouver 2010 ISU

I want to highlight three important points arising from this account. First, the quote reveals the inherent tensions and differing concerns and interests in relation to the limited resources (in this case, space) of the Olympic venues. Security is portrayed in competition with a number of other needs for space, both inside the venues (for technical or sponsors' installations, catering facilities, etc.) and outside (spatial claims of previously established businesses, space needed for maintaining urban flows or for easy venue access, etc.). Thus the example tells us something about the meanings, values and aspirations associated with the spatial reconfigurations of the Olympic city: venue perimeters (in size and internal design) are not merely to be understood as the outcome of a generalised fusion of interests but, rather, must be positioned within a complex field of agencies, driving forces, motivations and understandings. In the implied negotiations, security often, but not always, 'holds the trump card'.

Second, the quote is interesting in that it places centrally the role of technology in the search for solutions to the 'struggle for space' problematics. Here, I

merely want to flag up the implied principle of technology-induced problem solving. In the next parts of my analysis, this discussion shall be further refined with a view to the planning and implementation of PIDS, to which the previous quote implicitly refers.

Third, the reference to the density and lack of space that shaped the negotiations and arrangements relating to venue security in the Vancouver context is important because it testifies to the role of urban morphology in event security. This underlines the fact that the functioning and impact of particular security measures cannot be understood without referring to the spaces affected by their deployment. In addition, the challenges associated with Vancouver's urban density also exemplify that security measures cannot simply be reproduced and transferred from event to event, but must be adapted, through meticulous planning and negotiation, to the local specificities of each event city.

Adding to this, one more key issue should be underscored at this point, namely the mediating role of predefined standards and stipulations, as conveyed by the actors involved in venue security:

> There are some issues which are difficult to resolve because our security will impact their [VANOC's] operations, or their operations do not meet our security standards. For their operational needs for example, they want to drop the Olympic family off at a certain location. We are saying that nobody can be dropped off in that close proximity without going through a screening process for their vehicle. So now we have an issue. How do we get that vehicle screened or ensure that it is clean to get to that point? So we have to work together. They have certain IOC standards with distances and drop offs, certain client groups can only walk so far to get to their venue. We [ISU] have certain standards that we don't want vehicles getting closer to a venue without going through a screening process.
>
>   Venue Security Coordinator, Vancouver 2010 ISU

As we see, the intertwined positions held by the ISU and VANOC also implied the need to negotiate and to reconcile a wide range of pre-established standards and stipulations conveyed by the two partners. In sum, the 'struggle for space' problematics exemplifies the case-by-case arrangements in event security, from the size of tents and the development of technical solutions, to considerations of local specificities and the alignment of predefined standards and stipulations. The example reiterates the need to see mega-event security as being permanently 'in the making' (Latour 1987), as the subject of constant research, development and negotiation.

RCMP Technical Security Branch: technological expertise and testing facilities

To further develop this discussion, the role and expertise of two other key players, contributing to the technological side of venue security, should be explored. First, I focus on the contribution of the RCMP's 'Technical Security Branch' in Ottawa (TSB), before moving to investigate the role, interests and expertise of Honeywell Canada, the supplier of PIDS.

As mentioned before, technical operations for venue security comprised two main systems, PIDS and SAP. In both cases, contract authority and management resided with the ISU, who also defined the general system requirements, such as coverage areas for each venue. However, regarding the technical expertise required for the planning, implementation and operation of the two systems, the ISU relied on many other actors, amongst which, notably, we find the TSB[3]. By identifying and discussing the specific role and contribution of the TSB, I wish to bring to the foreground another set of competences required in the co-construction of venue security. To do so, I focus in particular on the TSB's role in the making of PIDS.

The making of PIDS

TSB personnel contributed to all relevant stages in the planning, implementation and operation of PIDS. Collaborations between the ISU and the TSB started in early 2006, consisting of a series of initial meetings and perimeter visits, in order to define technology requirements for each venue. From these initial exchanges developed a more formalised collaboration, through the integration of TSB personnel into the ISU and the establishment of an agreement between the ISU and the TSB for the provision of consulting services in physical security matters (Vancouver Integrated Security Unit 2010, 75).

According to the interviews conducted, by mid-2007 a business case for the provision of physical venue security had been developed, in which several options for the supply of technical equipment were identified and studied. The following quote reveals the TSB's central role in this 1.5-year-long process, rooted in its technical expertise, but also based on its existing facilities in Ottawa, which allowed the testing and development of novel measures and approaches. The quote also connects neatly with my previous discussion relating to the search for technology solutions to the 'struggle for space' problematics:

> [Space], that's the big issue, the challenge all along. Of course there are some areas where you just can't have any space, so you come up with alternate technologies . . . So the alternate technology had to be tested, which happened in Ottawa. We have a test facility of eighty acres out there. We set up a perimeter just as we would at a venue, and we set up all of our equipment and went through the testing to ensure that we had a system that was identified for the RFP [request for proposal].
>
>   Technical Operations Coordinator, Vancouver 2010 ISU

If the TSB's expertise and testing facilities were of central importance to the initial technical options analysis, its overall role in PIDS also comprised later

contributions to the evaluation of the bidders for the contract, performance monitoring and technical assistance. In all these tasks, the TSB's position was not merely defined by its expertise and facilities, but also relied on its external networks with technology suppliers and on its understanding of the surveillance technology market in general. In short, the TSB knew what could be bought and what could be asked from external companies.

> I have the right knowledge of who should be doing what systems . . . When something new comes out, you have to know how it works, so you are going to go out and get the information on it. Sometimes it leads to evaluation, so they [TSB subject matter experts] are continually evaluating equipment and new technologies . . . And they use it as well, which is the other good thing. When we talk about the G8 or the Sommet de la Francophonie, things like that, they use the technology that they are evaluating. I think it is wise to have the implementers and the evaluators be the same people. You end up with real solutions.
> Technical Operations Coordinator, Vancouver 2010 ISU

This quote offers an additional viewpoint to my discussion so far, in that it reveals the multifaceted activities of the TSB in buying, evaluating, implementing and using available security and surveillance technologies. Thus the TSB contributed to venue security from an intermediary position, held between the ISU's demands (born from negotiations with other actors, such as VANOC), and the security market. In sum, the TSB translated pragmatic needs into technical performance specifications. It then tested and developed specific approaches and measures, and reviewed and selected incoming offers from supply companies, before following the implementation and operation phases of the chosen system. In this sense, the TSB must be understood as both the product and the producer of knowledge and practices related to the technical side of venue security at the Vancouver Olympic Games.

Initially, in the planning and project definition phases of PIDS, exchanges occurred mainly between the ISU and the TSB. To this initial collaboration, a third pole of competence was added in 2009, with the selection of Honeywell Canada as the supplier of PIDS. It is to this particular actor that I now turn my attention. With this extended focus, I also hope to exemplify another critical issue in contemporary security governance, relating to the increasingly important role played by companies specialising in security and surveillance technologies.

Honeywell Canada: technical expertise and organisational experience

On 13 March 2009, the RCMP signed a contract with Honeywell Canada for the installation, maintenance and removal of PIDS at 18 Olympic venues (RCMP

2009). In what follows, my aim is to explore in more detail the expertise and contribution of Honeywell Canada to Olympic venue security. For this study, as mentioned previously, it was not possible to interview any representatives of Honeywell itself, and thus my analysis relies exclusively on secondary sources, in addition to the interviews conducted with ISU personnel. This enables us to see how Honeywell's contribution was perceived by the ISU, rather than how Honeywell itself understood its role and position in venue security. The following account, of the Technical Operations Coordinator of the ISU, provides a good starting point for this study:

> As far as the partnership goes, we meet with them [Honeywell] every week . . . We're of course ensuring that the testing [of the system] is happening and that the results are good . . . The specification was mostly a technical specification where we gave them the design, but some of it was a performance specification. On some issues, because we hadn't done something of this magnitude, we had to put in that 'you will supply us with these parameters, which work under these conditions'.
> Technical Operations Coordinator, Vancouver 2010 ISU

This quote is of interest not only in that it highlights the close working relationship between the ISU and Honeywell, but also in its account of the distribution of authority in venue security: whilst the ISU assumed overall responsibility in event security and the TSB defined the technical specifications and performance requirements for PIDS, Honeywell, in turn, supplied, installed and removed the system. In this respect, Honeywell's core expertise was seen on at least two levels. First, emphasis was placed on Honeywell's role and factual authority in the micro adjustments required for the optimisation and actual deployment of PIDS:

> [Honeywell] are producing it [the system], but they're tweaking it as well. That's where we depend on them. When there are small changes that can increase the efficiency, or where there are unforeseen difficulties that we run into. Then it turns into a partnership where we offer them our expertise from our subject matter experts, and they bring in theirs as well.
> Technical Operations Coordinator, Vancouver 2010 ISU

This quote testifies powerfully to Honeywell's central position in the 'fine tuning' and actual practices underpinning and developing from the use of PIDS. This account is also of exemplary value in that it highlights the weight of technical expertise needed in the contemporary 'techno politics' of security (Mitchell 2002). If we are to understand how different public and private actors connect in the co-construction of surveillance in particular locales, special attention must be paid to the providers and designers of the actual technologies deployed.

Second, the role of Honeywell was related to its ability to deal with the very scale – and hence the logistics and timing issues – of venue security at the Olympics. As we see from the following quote, this is perhaps the key difference between Honeywell and the TSB:

> The challenge of PIDS is not necessarily technology, it's more of a deployment issue, because of the timing you have for the Olympics. We've got nine hundred cameras to install in a couple of weeks. That just wouldn't happen normally. . . . That's why we hired an outside company.
> Technical Operations Coordinator, Vancouver 2010 ISU

Private interests and expertise in the current dynamics of policy convergence in security matters

Throughout the interviews conducted, Honeywell's practical experience – as a company with prior Olympic involvement and as a supplier of 'proven technology' – was described as a key requirement in handling the scale and timing issues of Olympic security:

> We have used technology that was proven in past Olympics. In the perimeter of our venues we have a Perimeter Intrusion Detection System . . . proven technology that was used for other major events in Canada, but also for previous Olympics. It is also a new industry standard for airports. For example, the Beijing airport has this system around the entire airport.
> Venue Security Coordinator, Vancouver 2010 ISU

This stance also reiterates the existing policy mobilities in security matters at sport mega events, as well as the current dynamics of policy convergence and exemplification in security governance more generally. I have elsewhere identified two main trends of 'exemplification' in contemporary security matters, distinguishing between 'horizontal exemplification' ('exemplars' circulating between places of similar functions) and 'vertical exemplification' ('exemplars' transferred to functionally different places and fields) (Klauser 2009). At this place, it cannot be my aim to reconduct this discussion, nor can I provide a detailed account of the specific modalities of policy learning and imitation at the Vancouver Olympic Games. In what follows, I merely want to insist on one key issue, arising from my interviews and related to the role of private companies and business interests in the transnational circuits of imitation and exemplification that increasingly characterise the production of urban, infrastructural and national security systems.

Throughout this paper, I have argued that coordination and overall command in event security at the Vancouver Olympics resided with the ISU. Yet I have also underlined the fundamental importance of technical expertise provided by highly specialised technology experts, which is likely to open up novel business opportunities and to give increased authority to private technology suppliers and designers.

In the interviews conducted, as seen above, the 'proven technology' and expertise provided by private companies such as Honeywell were indeed recognised and valued highly. Yet from a more general and critical perspective, the role of private companies in event security was also questioned with regard to the commercial motivations underpinning the current dynamics and cost developments in security matters in the context of sport mega events.

> Using the RCMP name, using the Olympics to build their résumé for the next event, these companies go from Games to Games and grow their portfolio and catalogue of products. That is where you get the risk or the opportunity for that risk to be inflated.
> Operations Officer, Vancouver 2010 ISU

This dynamic was approached with particular reference to the intense marketing and promotional activities of private technology companies, competing fiercely to establish themselves as key players within the standardised networks of expertise surrounding the securitisation of high visibility events.

> Naturally the Olympics brings an international focus and venue, so there is much more interest from a lot of agencies around the world. Companies look at the fact that it is going to move on. If your company is interested in providing things to the Olympics, you have to be in that forefront and be involved.
> President of J. Robert Leitch & Associates Project Management & IT Consulting

Thus interviewees did indeed recognise and question the commercial interests and dynamics at play in the current exemplification processes in mega-event security. In response, emphasis was placed not only on the importance of the ISU assuming full overall coordination in event security, but also on the need to maintain close control of the planning processes, the installation and the micro adjustments of the deployed surveillance systems, which reminds us of the aforementioned role of the TSB in defining and monitoring the technology and performance specifications for PIDS. As the RCMP's own technical service, the TSB indeed played the important role of 'gate keeper' in filtering and selecting incoming offers and in actively searching for and further developing proven technology solutions, in response to specific practical needs of the ISU. Analytically speaking, it is at this level that it becomes apparent just how necessary it is to critically investigate on a case-by-case basis the exact distribution of authority in contemporary security governance, not only in legal but also in practical terms, if we are to understand the logics and implications of the systems deployed.

Conclusion

This paper has provided a set of micro illustrations with regard to the interests, forms of expertise and sources of authority in security governance at the 2010 Vancouver Olympic Games. Mega-event security has been positioned within a complex field of public and private stakeholders as well as diverse national, regional and local predispositions (for example, the particularities of urban morphology in Vancouver). More specifically, in its focus on four key stakeholders in venue security at the Vancouver Olympics – the ISU, VANOC (in its DSI), the RCMP's Technical Branch in Ottawa, and Honeywell Canada – the paper has highlighted not only the legally defined and pragmatically motivated alliances and coalitions of authority resulting from converging and overlapping interests and positions, but also the tensions arising from the stakeholders' own agendas, organisational structures and points of view.

These insights are of exemplary value in answering the question of how exactly security governance permeates particular places and moments. We need to recognise not only the blurring and overlapping concerns in contemporary security matters, but also the multiple frictions and dilemmas arising from the ways in which specific problems are framed, approached and exploited for particular needs. It becomes clear, therefore, that risk and security issues are not pre-given or value free, but shaped by complex relationships and interactions bringing together various actors and interests. Thus implementing specific security and surveillance measures is not so much a question of universal principles than of everyday negotiations and micro adjustments between different actors, interests and stipulations.

This discussion was taken further in the last section of this paper, with regard to the current trends of privatisation and exemplification in contemporary security governance. Both trends challenge conventional notions of how the state exercises authority in an age of neoliberalism and globalisation, highlighting the fragmentation and distribution of authority between different public and private, local, national and international actors and forms of expertise.

It would be possible to use this discussion as a starting point for a more sustained enquiry into the opportunities and risks associated with today's increasingly standardised and privatised approach to risk. A range of key questions thus emerge for future research.

Regarding the issue of exemplification, how do particular forms of expertise, associated with previously tested and subsequently exemplified security solutions, become authorised to act in specific places and at specific moments? How do specific places and moments act as laboratories in the production of novel exemplars in security matters? What mechanisms are mediating these exemplification processes in contemporary security governance? What are the resonances and dissonances between globally established exemplars and locally anchored traditions and practices as they are negotiated in situ? How do globalised security exemplars impact on the scope of local decision making and public debate?

Regarding the issue of privatisation, what types of commercially motivated interests, practices and relationships lie behind the current global recalibrations and exemplifications in security matters? How do the increasing weight and scale of private authority in matters of public safety change the way in which security issues are addressed? How do commercial goals, particularly when they intersect with state security interests, situate themselves in relation to considerations of proportionality and accountability?

In light of these questions, it is certainly regrettable that in both scholarly research and public debate focusing on current developments in security matters, there is almost a complete silence on the question of how – and to what effect – specific security measures are becoming expert exemplars for more normalised use. Future research on sport mega events could offer an important contribution to this lacuna, given the events' quality as a privileged nexus in the global circulation of security players, plans and designs.

Notes

1 The present research relied on a non-disclosure agreement established with the Vancouver 2010 Integrated Security Unit. Interviews were transcribed and submitted for approval to each interviewee. The present paper was approved for publication by the ISU hierarchy and by the head of VANOC's Department of Security Integration.
2 This interview was completed via an email conversation in early 2013.
3 In principle, it is not possible to distinguish clearly between the ISU and the TSB: the ISU was itself led by the RCMP, of which the TSB is an integral part. Furthermore, some TSB personnel were indeed formally integrated within the ISU.

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