

Politics and the London 2012 Olympics: the (in)security Games

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Concerns with security and risk have been prominent themes at the modern Olympic Games since at least the 1960s.¹ However, a heightened perception of insecurity and risk has emerged as the *leitmotiv* of the Olympic Games in recent years, especially since 2001. Insecurity became the dominant discourse of the 2012 Games when the announcement in July 2005 by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) that London had been selected as the host city was overshadowed by the '7/7' terrorist attacks on the London transport system the following day. The hosting by London of the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2012 brings into sharp relief two significant developments: first, the consolidation of the Olympic Games as a significant arena for national and global politics; and second, the extent to which cities have re-emerged as major targets for hostile attack.

Notwithstanding the protestations of successive presidents of the IOC,² with the support of some academics,³ regarding the non-political nature of the Olympic movement, it is clear not only that the Games have been a consistent arena for political activism, but that the IOC has also been an effective political actor, adjusting to geopolitical developments (for example, during the early and middle parts of the twentieth century, which were marked in turn by the rise of nationalism and processes of decolonization), and participating in global political issues such as the dispute between China and Taiwan and the challenges to apartheid.⁴ Such strong politicization should not be a surprise, given the references in the Olympic Charter to values such as 'social responsibility and respect for fundamental ethical principles'; sport as 'a human right'; 'good governance' in sport; the rejection of discrimination; and the commitment to 'place sport at the service

¹ On growing risk consciousness among publics in general, see Ulrich Beck, *Risk society* (London: Sage, 1992), p. 56.

² Alan Guttman, *The Games must go on: Avery Brundage and the Olympic movement* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984); Christopher R. Hill, *Olympic politics: Athens to Atlanta* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997).

³ M. Patrick Cottrell and Travis Nelson, 'Not just the Games? Power, protest and politics at the Olympics', *European Journal of International Relations* 17: 4, 2011, pp. 729–53; John Lucas, *The future of the Olympic Games* (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics Press, 1992).

⁴ Barrie Houlihan, *Sport and international politics* (London: Harvester-Wheatsheaf, 1994); Dikaia Chatziefstathiou, 'Paradoxes and contestations of Olympism in the history of the modern Olympic movement', *Sport in Society* 14: 3, 2001, pp. 332–44.

of humanity and thereby promote peace'.⁵ As an event-organizing body, the IOC is not unique in having political motives: other more explicit examples include the organizers of the Commonwealth Games, the Jeux de la Francophonie and, in former years, the Spartakiad.⁶

The Olympics as a political arena

With regard to the use of the Olympic Games as an arena for politics, Cottrell and Nelson note that there has been none since the Berlin Olympics of 1936 that has not been exploited for some political motive.⁷ It is hard to deny that the Olympic Games provide an increasingly distinct political opportunity structure; but what is arguably more significant is the ease with which such an opening can be utilized by the governments of participating and host countries as well as by a range of social movements. For much of the history of the modern Olympic Games the opportunity structure has been characterized by high visibility, low cost and low risk. As regards visibility, in 1960 21 countries televised the Games from Rome; by 1972 (Munich) the number had increased to 98, and by 2008 it had reached an estimated 220.⁸ Viewing figures have also risen sharply, with the Sydney Games amassing a total of over 34 billion viewing hours from 3.9 billion viewers. While the level of visibility is indisputable, the modesty of the cost is more debatable, especially if it is the host city/country that is attempting to generate political capital from the Games. For non-host political actors the financial cost can be very low when measured against the publicity obtained, as exemplified by the countries that boycotted the Moscow and Los Angeles Olympics during the Cold War and those that threatened to boycott the Montreal Games over the issue of apartheid in South Africa. The extent of risk was also generally low, particularly in relation to boycotts, although for domestic protesters the risks could be considerable, as illustrated by the massacre of student protesters at Tlatelolco ten days prior to the 1968 Games in Mexico City, or the persecution of Falun Gong members in the run-up to the 2008 Games in Beijing.⁹ The Olympic Games also provide an organizational structure and culture that facilitate political opportunism. The regular cycle of the Games, the bidding process, the public and geographically dispersed nature of the event, the regular inspection visits by the IOC (with the attendant publicity), and the global representation of countries not only through the Olympic movement (the IOC and its regional groupings of National Olympic Committees) but also through membership of international federations of sport that take part in the

⁵ International Olympic Committee, *Olympic Charter* (Lausanne, 2011), pp. 10–11, 14.

⁶ These events were respectively linked to British and French colonialism, and to Soviet-led international socialism.

⁷ Cottrell and Nelson, 'Not just the Games?'

⁸ IOC, *Olympic Marketing Fact File* (Lausanne, 2008), p. 23.

⁹ Richard Giulianotti and Francisco R. Klauser, 'Sport and "terrorism": a critical analysis', *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 47: 3, 2012, pp. 307–23; John Hoberman, *The Olympic crisis: sport, politics and the moral order* (New Rochelle, NY: Astride O. Caratzas Press, 1986); Elena Poniatowska, 'A massacre in Mexico', in J. Browdy de Hernandez, ed., *Women writing resistance* (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2007), pp. 139–45; Nishika Patel, 'Ahead of the Olympics: Beijing crackdown extends to Falun Gong', *World Politics Review*, 1 April 2008.

Olympic Games: all of these aspects of the modern Games combine to provide a relatively open organizational structure that offers multiple entry points and multiple opportunities for the airing of political issues.

Until recently, utilization of the political opportunities presented by the Olympic Games tended to fall into one of two categories of activity—state versus state, or social movements versus the state. Examples of both categories are still evident, but the peak intensity of the former was from the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s, whereas political action by social movements is still increasing in frequency. With regard to the use of the Olympics as an arena for interstate politics, the exclusion of the defeated nations after the Second World War, the boycott of the 1980 Moscow Games by the United States and many of its allies, the reciprocal boycott of the 1984 Los Angeles Games by the Soviet Union and most of its allies, and the pressure placed by China on the Canadian government to refuse visas to the Taiwanese team are all well-established examples. Actual and threatened boycotts have been far less common since the end of the Cold War and the collapse of apartheid, in part owing to the absence of such major global divisions, but also reflecting the acknowledgement that more political capital is to be gained by attending and being successful at the Games. Consequently, while there have been some recent threats of negative diplomatic action focused on the Olympic Games (for example, the threat by Presidents Bush and Sarkozy to boycott the Beijing opening ceremony in protest at a range of human rights issues), interstate diplomacy has generally become more subtle and more concerned with the promotion of a nation's brand image than with exerting leverage on specific issues or in relation to particular diplomatic rivals.

One possible exception to this conclusion is the analysis of the evolution of international politics proposed by Samuel Huntington, who argued that while 'nation states will remain the most powerful actors in world affairs ... the fault lines between civilisations are replacing the political and ideological boundaries of the Cold War as the flash points for crisis and bloodshed'.¹⁰ For Huntington, one major fault-line was that between western and Islamic civilizations. Since the end of the Cold War, the post-9/11 and 'war on terror' context has indicated the potential realization of Huntington's thesis, with militant or fundamentalist Islamist movements projected as the new global 'Other' to the Christianity-based West. For the 2012 Olympics, the UK security services believe that the most serious security threats—such as terrorist bomb attacks—emanate from militant Islamic individuals or groups. Two particular threats are understood to derive from, respectively, 'lone wolves' who have quietly undergone Islamic radicalization, and are thus unknown to the security services; and the Somalia-based Al-Shabaab separatist movement, which is reported to include British members.¹¹ The Somali group has recently demonstrated its interest in major sport-related attacks, first through the bombing in Kampala, Uganda, of football fans watching

¹⁰ Samuel P. Huntington, 'The clash of civilizations?', *Foreign Affairs* 72: 3, 1993, pp. 22–49; see also Samuel P. Huntington, *The clash of civilizations and the remaking of world order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996).

¹¹ *Guardian*, 9 March 2012.

the 2010 World Cup finals, which killed 74; and then through the April 2012 bomb in Mogadishu, which killed at least four, including the heads of the Somali Olympic Committee and the Somali Football Federation.¹²

Nevertheless, we should strive to avoid any crude categorization or homogenization of religious belief systems and civilizations. Muslim communities and nations hold a great diversity of interpretations of Islam, and have very varied historical responses and paths towards modernization. This diversity is reflected in the variety of approaches Islamic states have taken towards the Olympics and modern sport more widely, for example in enabling or preventing women's participation at the Olympics, establishing Islamic versions of women's sports, or pursuing leadership roles within the IOC.¹³ While the London Olympics might be a plausible target for Islamic terrorist groups, it is less likely that Islamic states will see the Olympic Games as an arena for hard diplomacy such as boycotts. Not only are many Islamic states enthusiastic members of the Olympic movement, their involvement in the Olympics is still relatively recent and the success of their athletes is extremely modest. It is only in a very small number of events that a boycott by Islamic states would be noticed, and these states have generally far more to gain diplomatically by staying within the Olympic movement and taking part.

Sport in general and the Olympic Games in particular have become significant soft power resources.¹⁴ For both Germany (Munich, 1972) and Japan (Tokyo, 1964), hosting the Olympic Games symbolized readmission into the international community after defeat in the Second World War; for South Korea (Seoul, 1988) and China (Beijing, 2008), hosting the Games symbolized their presence as modern industrialized economies; while the hosting of the 1992 Games in Barcelona was promoted as symbolizing Catalan identity as much as a democratic post-Franco Spain.¹⁵

The international symbolism of the London 2012 Games is also important. The ambition of the British government is, according to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), for the event to project an image of a 'modern Britain ... open (welcoming, diverse, tolerant), connected (through our involvement in the UN and G20, politically, geographically, in terms of trade and travel), creative and dynamic'.¹⁶ The FCO announced that an 'engagement strategy' had been devised around the Games, designed to achieve a number of objectives including 'using the Olympics to promote British culture at home and abroad. To cement Britain's reputation as a ... vibrant, open and modern society, a global hub in a networked world' and 'to enhance our security by harnessing the global appeal

¹² See <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/10602791>, accessed 23 May 2012; *Daily Telegraph*, 4 April 2012.

¹³ See Mahfoud Amara, *Sport, politics and society in the Arab world* (London: Palgrave, 2012). Moreover, migrant Muslim communities also harbour diverse interpretations of and approaches towards sport. See Mahfoud Amara and Ian P. Henry, 'Sport, Muslim identities and cultures in the UK', *European Sport Management Quarterly* 10: 4, 2010, pp. 419–43.

¹⁴ Jonathan Grix and Barrie Houlihan, 'Sports mega-events as part of a nation's soft power strategy: the cases of Germany (2006) and the UK (2012)', unpublished working paper, University of Birmingham, 2012.

¹⁵ John Hargreaves, *Freedom for Catalonia? Catalan nationalism, Spanish identity and the Barcelona Olympic Games* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

¹⁶ House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee, *FCO Public diplomacy: the Olympic and Paralympic Games 2012*, 2nd Report of Session 2010–11 (London: The Stationery Office, 2011), FCO written evidence para. 20.

of the Olympics, particularly among the young, to reinforce values of tolerance, moderation and openness'.¹⁷

Overlapping with, and becoming more common than, interstate politics have been numerous examples of social movements using the Olympics for protest activity. One of the better-known examples was the protest by the black American athletes John Carlos and Tommie Smith, who gave the black power salute while on the medal podium at the 1968 Games in support of the US civil rights movement. More recent examples include the Aboriginal civil rights protests during the Sydney Olympics, the anti-poverty campaigners (Heart Attack) at the 2010 Vancouver winter Olympics, and the Free Tibet protests in Beijing during the 2008 Games. Although some of these protests (such as Free Tibet) were international in character, most were domestic in both membership and objectives. Most have also been (relatively) peaceful, with little or no impact on the delivery of the Games themselves. However, there have been exceptions, of which the best known is the attack by members of the Palestinian group Black September in which members of the Israeli team at the Munich Olympic Games of 1972 were taken hostage, and which resulted in the deaths of eleven Israeli athletes and coaches. While there have been other examples of terrorist action associated with the Olympic Games, such as the bomb that exploded in Centennial Park during the 1996 Games in Atlanta, the number of actual attacks has been low. Moreover, Cottrell and Nelson conclude in their analysis of politics and the Olympic Games that although states demonstrate a capacity to utilize the Games for their political advantage and 'as a means of reproducing the state-centricity of the international system as a whole', the effectiveness of social movements in exploiting the opportunity that the Games present for furthering their various causes is questionable.¹⁸

However, while Cottrell and Nelson are broadly correct in so far as it is difficult to demonstrate that protest (whether actual or threatened) at an Olympic Games has led to significant progress in achieving the political objectives of non-state social movements, the threat of protest has had a substantial impact on the approach to hosting the Games—in particular, an increased securitization of the host city and other Olympic event locations which has the potential to leave a lasting legacy. Indeed, we argue here that the first two phases of Olympic-focused politics (state-versus-state confrontations, and conflicts between social movements and the state) have been superseded by a third phase which came to prominence in the early part of this century and which can best be described as one of *hyper-insecurity*.

The Games in an environment of hyper-insecurity

Hyper-insecurity is characterized by the development of a culture of intense risk aversion, and the more specific allocation of resources to provide security on the basis not of probability (that is, the rational or cost–benefit analysis of risk), but

¹⁷ House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee, *FCO public diplomacy*, FCO written evidence, para. 19.

¹⁸ Cottrell and Nelson, 'Not just the Games?', p. 731.

of possibility and the intense aversion to risk.¹⁹ Evidence of the acceleration in hyper-insecurity is reflected in the rapid growth in expenditure on the provision of security since the Atlanta Games of 1996 (see table 1). Investment in security as measured by the cost per athlete was broadly stable from 1984 to 1996, after which it accelerated rapidly. Two events were particularly important in contributing to this rise in security expenditure: first, the bomb that exploded in Centennial Park during the 1996 Atlanta Games;²⁰ and second, the attacks on the United States of 11 September 2001. Following the 9/11 attacks, the Olympics entered a new era of security consciousness, insecurity anxieties and risk management; indeed, at times, sport mega-events have been in the vanguard of this new risk framework. Thus the London 2012 Olympics have been regularly presented by leading politicians and security chiefs as constituting the UK's biggest ever peacetime policing operation and security challenge.²¹

With the 1996 Centennial Park bombing still relatively fresh in their minds, the organizers of the 2000 Sydney Games developed a security strategy which was both extensive and costly, including—in addition to state and federal police—4,000 military personnel, all of Australia's Special Forces, and 30,000 private security guards. While the Defence Minister, John Moore, concluded that there was 'no specific threat of terrorism against the Sydney 2000 Games', the New South Wales Chief of Police argued that the Olympics was 'an almost irresistible magnet to terrorist groups'.²² The deployment of police and armed forces was underpinned by a set of legislative changes that greatly extended police powers and provision, should the need have arisen, for 'large-scale peacetime use of the military against civilians in a domestic environment'.²³

The escalation in securitization continued at the 2004 Athens Olympics, where security expenditure reached approximately US\$1.5 billion. A significant proportion of this was allocated to the purchase of an elaborate high-technology surveillance system, C3I (Command, Control, Communications and Integration), which left Athens with a legacy of 1,200 CCTV cameras capable of gathering both visual and speech data. Some 70,000 police and military personnel were also deployed to work alongside the many foreign security staff linked with individual national teams. In addition, the Greek government introduced a number of changes to existing legislation which 'encourage[d] spying on citizens and provide[d] pecuniary motives for police informers. It also introduced non-jury criminal trials, initiated limited right of appeal, DNA testing without consent, expanding

¹⁹ Mark Stewart, Bruce Ellingwood and John Mueller, 'Homeland security: a case study in risk aversion for public decision-making', *International Journal of Risk Assessment and Management* 15: 5–6, 2011, pp. 367–86; Jon Coaffee, *Terrorism, risk and the city: the making of a contemporary urban landscape* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003).

²⁰ Centennial Park was the central public area of the 1996 Olympic Games. Two people died and 111 were injured as a result of the explosion.

²¹ These claims have been made by UK Security Minister Alan West (<http://uk.reuters.com/article/2009/11/13/uk-britain-olympics-security-idUKTRE5AC2VQ20091113>, accessed 23 May 2012), and the Home Secretary Theresa May (<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/media-centre/speeches/Home-sec-olympic-speech>, accessed 23 May 2012).

²² Quoted in Michael Head, 'Olympic security: police and military plans for the Sydney Olympics', *Alternative Law Journal* 25: 3, 2000, pp. 131–40.

²³ Head, 'Olympic security', p. 132.

Table 1: Security expenditure for the Olympic Games, 1984–2012

<i>Games</i>	<i>Expenditure (US\$m)</i>	<i>Cost per athlete (US\$)</i>
1984 Los Angeles	79.4	11,627
1988 Seoul	111.7	13,312
1992 Barcelona	66.2	7,072
1996 Atlanta	108.2	10,486
2000 Sydney	179.6	16,062
2004 Athens	1,500.0	142,897
2008 Beijing	6,500.0	607,022
2012 London	1,997.0 ^a	181,545 ^a

^a Estimate.

Source: See Philip Boyle and Kevin D. Haggerty, ‘Spectacular security: mega-events and the security complex’, *International Political Sociology* 3, 2009, pp. 257–74; BBC Sports News, http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/davidbond/2011/11/the_final_bill_for_security.html, accessed 23 May 2012.

police powers of infiltration and surveillance of groups and individuals.²⁴ Owing to the location of a number of venues outside the capital (as will be the case for the 2012 Games), one Olympic security adviser was reported to have commented that ‘the whole country will be considered as a theater of operations’.²⁵

Obtaining accurate estimates of the extent and cost of security at the Beijing Games is difficult, but it is clear that the operation was extensive and expensive. One account reported that a 100,000-strong security force of armed police, commandos and other troops were stationed around the city, that 300,000 surveillance cameras had been installed and that anti-aircraft missiles had been located next to the Bird’s Nest stadium.²⁶ There were three concentric rings of checkpoints around the city, and four regional commands of the People’s Liberation Army were put on alert. As regards the London Games, some reports indicate that total security costs could eventually reach £2 billion (US\$3.1 billion) when counterterrorism and police expenditures are included.²⁷ In terms of personnel, London 2012 will use the services of 23,700 security guards, including 13,500 members of the armed forces mobilized for the Games and up to 12,000 police officers on duty each day.²⁸

²⁴ Adam Molnar, ‘Warning to London 2012 Olympic hosts as Greece struggles with economy and security: an interview with political sociologist Minas Samatas’, Security Games, <http://www.security-games.com/news/warning-to-london-2012-olympic-hosts-as-greece-struggles-with-economy-and-security>, accessed 23 May 2012.

²⁵ Brock N. Meeks, ‘Record expense, security plans set for Olympics’, msnbc.com, http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/5490540/ns/business-business_of_the_olympics/t/record-expense-security-plans-set-olympics/, accessed 23 May 2012.

²⁶ *Guardian*, 28 July 2008.

²⁷ *Daily Telegraph*, 23 Nov. 2011; House of Commons Public Accounts Committee, *Preparations for the London Olympic and Paralympic Games*, 74th Report (London: The Stationery Office, March 2012), <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect/cmpubacc/1716/171602.htm>, accessed 23 May 2012.

²⁸ See <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-16195861>; <http://www.acpo.police.uk/ACPOBusinessAreas/OLYMPICS/Policing%20the%202012%20Olympic%20Games.aspx>, both accessed 23 May 2012.

According to the Home Secretary, ‘we know that we face a real and enduring threat from terrorism and we know that the games—as an iconic event—will represent a target for terrorist groups’.²⁹ To coordinate the security operation for the Games, an Olympic Security Directorate (OSD) has been established within the Home Office’s Office for Security and Counter Terrorism and has prepared an Olympic Safety and Security Strategic Risk Assessment (OSSSRA). This assessment identifies five sources of risk, from terrorism; serious crime and organized crime; domestic extremism; public disorder; and major accidents and natural events. In relation to terrorist threats the report notes that: ‘The UK faces a sustained threat from terrorism. Beyond traditional methods of attack, terrorists may have aspirations to conduct cyber attacks or use non-conventional methods such as chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear substances. As a high profile event, the Games are likely to present an appealing target to individuals or terrorist groups.’³⁰ By early 2011 the OSD and its partners (which include the police and the UK Border Agency) had identified 27 risk scenarios for which planning was under way in order to ensure that ‘the most comprehensive mitigation possible would be delivered’.³¹ The preparations by the UK government and by recent host governments underline the nation-state’s centrality since 9/11 in planning, coordinating and resourcing these vast ‘security assemblages’—and also highlight the limits of the neo-liberal state or ‘small’ government when faced with these perceived risks.³²

With regard to how the effectiveness of the UK government’s security arrangements will be evaluated, the key reference document is the Home Office’s *London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Safety and Security Strategy*, initially produced in 2009 and updated in 2011. The overall aim of the strategy is ‘to deliver a safe and secure Games, in keeping with the Olympic culture and spirit’.³³ Success will be measured against four criteria:

- disrupting terrorists or organized criminals who target Games locations and infrastructure;
- ‘immediate and effective management’ of incidents that significantly threaten safety and security;
- providing a ‘safe and orderly experience’ for Games participants, spectators, workers and officials;
- ‘the enhancement of the UK’s international reputation for safety and security’.

Terrorism is firmly understood as representing the most serious threat to Olympic security.³⁴ At the same time, the UK government has been keen to emphasize that

²⁹ Home Secretary, Theresa May, speech to RUSI conference, 25 Jan. 2012, <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/media-centre/speeches/Home-sec-olympic-speech>, accessed 23 May 2012.

³⁰ Home Office, *London 2012 Olympic safety and security strategic risk assessment (OSSSRA) and risk mitigation process* (London, Jan. 2011), p. 4.

³¹ Home Office, *London 2012 Olympic safety and security*, p. 8.

³² See Kevin Haggerty and Richard Ericson, ‘The surveillant assemblage’, *British Journal of Sociology* 51: 4, 2000, pp. 605–22; Ulrich Beck, ‘The silence of words: on war and terror’, *Security Dialogue* 34: 3, 2003, p. 262.

³³ Home Office, *London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Safety and Security Strategy* (London, 2011), p. 7.

³⁴ Home Office, *London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Safety and Security Strategy*, pp. 9, 12.

the balance between sport and security will be appropriate. The Prime Minister, David Cameron, stated that it was the UK government's 'first priority' to ensure safety, but security measures 'will be done in a way that is sensitive to the spirit of the Games. These will feel like a sporting event with a serious security operation attached, rather than a security operation with a serious sporting event.'³⁵

State responsibility for security at the Olympic Games is reinforced by the IOC. As noted in the United States congressional report after the Athens Games, 'one of the International Olympic Committee requirements for countries bidding to host the games is to ensure the security of the participating athletes and spectators'.³⁶ The IOC's expectations regarding security are reinforced in its evaluation of bids to host the Games. In the bid evaluation report, security is identified as one of the central criteria on which a bid will be assessed. In the evaluation of bids to host the 2012 Games, the report noted: 'The UK government guarantees that it would take the overall responsibility for security during the preparation and staging of the Olympic and Paralympic Games. It has also guaranteed to cover all security costs ... with the exception of in-venue security which would be borne by the OCOG [Organising Committee for the Olympic Games]'.³⁷ The report also stated that the United Kingdom, along with six other countries including the United States and France, had been a member of the Athens Security Advisory Group which provided training and support to the Greek government in advance of the 2004 Games. Apart from ensuring that the host country government accepts responsibility for security, the IOC's investment seems to be limited to taking out insurance against partial or full cancellation of the Games owing to terrorism, which it did for the first time in 2004 at a cost of £93 million.³⁸

As should be apparent from this summary, since 1996 there has been a steady blurring of the boundary between external and internal threat, between military defence and civilian policing, and between war and peacetime security. As Boyle and Haggerty note, during the Cold War 'national borders were the primary "fronts" to be secured ... The end of the Cold War contributed to a re-calibration of security due to perceived changes in the nature of national and international threats ... Conceptions of security have consequently become increasingly sub-national, regional and urban in scale'.³⁹ Of particular significance is the extent to which cities, especially world cities, have (re-)emerged as primary targets for attack. Among military strategists and security specialists there has been a rapid realization that greater attention has to be paid to conflict in urban rather than open environments, especially in the context of ideas about 'the long war' and

³⁵ *Daily Telegraph*, 28 March 2012.

³⁶ US Government Accountability Office, *Olympic security: US support to Athens Games provides lessons for future Olympics* (Washington DC, May 2005), p. 4.

³⁷ IOC, *Report of the IOC evaluation commission for the Games of the XXX Olympiad in 2012* (Lausanne, 22 March 2005), p. 75.

³⁸ BBC, 'Q&A: Olympic security', 5 May 2004, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/3686379.stm>, accessed 23 May 2012.

³⁹ Philip Boyle and Kevin D. Haggerty, 'Spectacular security: mega-events and the security complex', *International Political Sociology* 3: 3, 2009, pp. 257–74.

asymmetrical conflicts which characterize contemporary debates about terrorism.⁴⁰ In the past, the fortified city was often the focus for military action as capturing or disabling the city was equivalent to capturing the state. More recently, although military action generally moved from city sieges to battlefield confrontations, the city still held powerful symbolic value (as witnessed, for example, by the entry of French troops into Paris after the Normandy landings in 1944 and the entry of North Vietnamese forces into Saigon in 1975). In the post-9/11 context cities, especially those with a global profile, have taken on a heightened political and strategic significance. Savitch reminds us that cities have long been a target for, as well as an incubator of, terrorism. In the eight years up to 2000 64 per cent of terror attacks were on cities,⁴¹ and between 1993 and 2001 250 cities were attacked worldwide.⁴² The differences since the turn of the century lie in (a) the ambition and success of terrorists (as illustrated by the attacks on New York, London and Madrid) and (b) the disproportionate response to the perceived risk of attack. For Tsoukala, the promotion of the idea of an 'omnipresent, unpredictable, enduring and infinite ... threat' is in large part the outcome of a 'fear-fuelling strategy [designed] to justify the present counterterrorism policy'.⁴³

The de-localization of Olympic security

Olympic-related security in recent years reflects, and has added momentum to, the wider processes by which risk consciousness and risk management have become increasingly transnational and 'de-localized'.⁴⁴ One outcome of the rise in global insecurity has been the realignment of the defence and internal security sectors. For Bigo, this represents the emergence of a new field of expertise around the 'management of unease'.⁴⁵ Extensive forms of transnational security connectivity have developed between host cities, security professionals and corporations. Security-focused knowledge transfer occurs between different cities and nations which successively host these mega-events, as security professionals market and share their expertise.⁴⁶ Perhaps more significantly, the emergence of a transna-

⁴⁰ Lisa Benton-Short, 'Bollards, bunkers, and barriers: securing the national mall in Washington, DC', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 25: 3, 2007, pp. 424–46; Martin Coward, 'Network-centric violence, critical infrastructure and the urbanization of security', *Security Dialogue* 40: 4–5, 2009, pp. 399–418; Robert Leonhard, 'Urban warfare in the information age', *Army*, April 2003, pp. 39–44; Jon Coaffee and David Murakami Wood, 'Security is coming home: rethinking the scale and constructing resilience in the global urban response to terrorist risk', *International Relations* 20: 4, 2006, pp. 503–17.

⁴¹ Hank V. Savitch, 'Does 9–11 portend a new paradigm for cities?', *Urban Affairs Review* 39: 1, 2003, pp. 103–27.

⁴² US State Department, *Patterns of global terrorism, 1993–2001* (Washington DC: Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, 2002).

⁴³ Anastasia Tsoukala, 'Defining the terrorist threat in the post-September 11th era', in Didier Bigo, ed., *Illiberal practices of liberal regimes: the (in)security games* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2006).

⁴⁴ See Ulrich Beck, 'Living in the world risk society', *Economy and Society* 35: 3, 2006, pp. 333–4.

⁴⁵ Didier Bigo, 'Globalized (in)security: the field and the Ban-opticon', in Bigo, ed., *Illiberal practices of liberal regimes*.

⁴⁶ Francisco Klauser, 'FIFA Land 2006™: alliances between security politics and business interests for Germany's city network', in CCCB, ed., *Architectures of fear* (Barcelona: Centre of Contemporary Culture, 2008); Francisco Klauser, 'Spatial articulations of surveillance at the FIFA World Cup 2006™ in Germany', in Katia Franco Aas, Helene Oppen Gundus and Heidi Mork Lomell, eds, *Technologies of insecurity* (London: Routledge, 2008).

tional 'security-industrial complex' is reflected in the establishment of leading corporations as key players in the global Olympic security bazaar, wherein state-of-the-art surveillance and control technologies are marketed, sold and installed across host cities and nations. For the 2008 Games in Beijing, almost 90 per cent of expenditure on security technologies went on business with foreign companies, including GE, Honeywell, IBM, LG, Panasonic, Siemens and United Technologies.⁴⁷ Advanced security technologies—such as CCTV and other surveillance systems that analyse and catalogue behaviour, or trigger cameras to monitor unusual public movements—were installed to function long after the Olympic fortnight. At the same time, the Olympics have provided these transnational corporations with high-profile piloting and marketing opportunities, business footholds in new and booming security markets and opportunities to extend these systems from sport into wider public settings.⁴⁸

Further de-localization is reflected in the extension of Olympic security beyond the host city and even the host nation-state. Like other contemporary sport mega-events, 'London 2012' is in part a deterritorialized festival, with Olympic sports such as football, cycling and canoeing being staged outside the capital. Also, competing nations have chosen to establish themselves in different pre-Olympic training bases across the UK and beyond.⁴⁹ Thus the direct securitization of Olympic teams and events spreads beyond London and the UK.

Nor is this security work confined to the host nation. Security entourages are brought in by participating nations to safeguard their competing teams, as well as to protect the thousands of heads of state, political leaders, business figures, oligarchs, and other dignitaries and potentates in attendance. To pick one example, some reports estimate that 1,000 US security personnel, including 500 FBI agents, will be active at London 2012, amid American concerns over UK security preparations for the Games.⁵⁰

In addition, Olympic security includes cooperation between UK police and other national forces, particularly to transfer intelligence on terrorism and organized crime. Interpol, for example, has warned that international crime syndicates will seek to corrupt London 2012 by fixing results in collusion with competitors.⁵¹ However, the Olympics tend not to feature certain types of security preparations that occur at football's World Cup finals, such as knowledge exchange

⁴⁷ See <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/12/28/business/worldbusiness/28security.html?pagewanted=all>; http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/08_33/b4096646844911.htm, both accessed 23 May 2012.

⁴⁸ Arguably, the UK has led the world in this process, as CCTV systems were effectively piloted in football stadiums in the late 1980s before being installed across many urban centres and thoroughfares. See Richard Giulianotti and Gary Armstrong, 'From another angle: police surveillance and football supporters', in Clive Norris, Gary Armstrong and Jay Moran, eds, *Surveillance, CCTV and social control* (Aldershot: Gower/Ashgate, 1998). See also Stephen Graham, 'Olympics 2012 security: welcome to lockdown London', *Guardian*, 12 March 2012.

⁴⁹ For example, at least twelve national Olympic teams will be based in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland; and five Olympic teams will have bases in Ireland.

⁵⁰ See Nick Hopkins and Richard Gordon-Taylor, 'US officials worried about security at London 2012 Olympics', *Guardian*, 13 Nov. 2011, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/sport/2011/nov/13/us-worried-london-olympics-security-2012>, accessed 23 May 2012.

⁵¹ See Michael Holden, 'Interpol head warns of London Olympic cheats', <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/01/19/us-olympics-cheats-idUSTRE80I11620120119>, accessed 25 May 2012.

between police forces on 'risk' spectators (particularly hooligan groups), and even the authorization of foreign police officers, wearing their national uniforms, to police spectators at these events.⁵²

The 'glocalization' of Olympic security

We would argue that processes of 'glocalization' are at work in the securing of sport mega-events. 'Glocalization' refers to the complex interdependencies and interrelationships that arise between the 'local' and the 'global'.⁵³ Here, we may explore how global events and issues (in this case, the Olympics and mega-event security) undergo particular kinds of adaptation and differentiation with reference to the local context. Four such 'glocal' processes are identified in respect of London 2012.

First, security at sport mega-events is typically orientated towards anticipating or 'planning for the worst', while also recognizing that certain possible events, such as a terrorist bombing attack, may have incalculable human impacts.⁵⁴ The London context affords some distinctive reference points for this heightened level of preparedness. Terrorism has been constantly in the background to London 2012 since the 7/7 bomb attacks, which led to 56 deaths (including those of four bombers) and over 700 injured a single day after the Games were awarded to London. Since then, the UK's official terrorist attack 'threat level' has oscillated between 'severe' and 'substantial', with the London Olympics set to be classified as 'severe' at least, meaning an attack is understood as 'highly likely'.⁵⁵

Second, we need to account for the specific local crime and security context in the area where the global mega-event and its transnational entourage will land. The borough of Newham in London, where most Olympic venues and events are situated, has disproportionately high levels of crime, notably in regard to weapons (gun and knife crime), gang-related activity and robbery from vehicles. In the broader London context, during the summer of 2011 the most extensive rioting for three decades took hold across the capital, leading one police chief to state that the UK police force would not be able to cope if similar disorder occurred during the Olympics.⁵⁶ Thus, security and policing concerns centre on potential crime risks for visiting Olympic media representatives, VIPs and spectators, and the protection and promotion of London and the UK's international images, as well as the effective showcasing of what one police chief called 'British Policing

⁵² See Ray Furlong, 'Berlin welcomes World Cup police', <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/5053138.stm>; <http://www.southafrica.co.za/about-south-africa/at-a-glance/safety-security-and-defence/>, both accessed 23 May 2012.

⁵³ On the definition of 'glocalization' in social science, see Roland Robertson, *Globalization: social theory and global culture* (London: Sage, 1992), pp. 173–4.

⁵⁴ Philip Boyle and Kevin Haggerty, 'Planning for the worst: risk, uncertainty, and the Olympic Games', *British Journal of Sociology* 63: 2, 2012, pp. 241–59; Beck, 'Living in the world risk society', pp. 334–5.

⁵⁵ See Rajvir Rai, 'London 2012 Olympics: Britain preparing for "severe" terror threat during Games', <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/sport/olympics/8632750/London-2012-Olympics-Britain-preparing-for-severe-terror-threat-during-Games.html>, accessed 23 May 2012.

⁵⁶ See Press Association, 'Police warning over Games riots', <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/feedarticle/9843021>, accessed 23 May 2012.

PLC' before a world audience.⁵⁷ At the same time, police strategies for securing public order will also be in a state of transformation, courtesy of the signature 'Total Policing' policy of Bernard Hogan-Howe, the new Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, appointed in late 2011.

Third, there are wider issues over how security and policing risk management strategies and methods will be negotiated and experienced by local publics, visiting spectators and tourists. For example, the planned Olympic Route Network—which reserves many road lanes in London for the exclusive use of authorized Olympic vehicles—has been roundly condemned for restricting public mobility, parking, the delivery of stock and staff to local businesses, and the movements of the emergency services. Moreover, new legislation specifically for London 2012, which empowers police to 'enter land or premises' in order to tear down advertisements, announcements or notices 'of any kind', has also been widely criticized for jeopardizing civil liberties, thereby inciting unfavourable comparisons between the UK and China over the potential maltreatment of anti-Olympic protesters.⁵⁸

Fourth, contemporary sport mega-event security intermeshes with broader policies of risk distribution, urban entrepreneurialism and regeneration. The 2012 Olympics have some distinctive features in being the first such summer event since 9/11 to be hosted within a 'First World' global city, and the first in decades to be staged within a post-industrial inner-city location. Newham is one of England's youngest and most culturally diverse boroughs, with concentrations of poverty and deprivation among the highest in London.⁵⁹ On the one hand, as Olympic venues spring up across the borough, we may be witnessing another manifestation of Beck's *aperçu* on the greatest risks or catastrophes tending to follow or 'haunt' the poor.⁶⁰ On the other, Olympic building projects also point towards the Olympian-scale post-industrial reinvention of Newham, as registered by the openings of Westfield (Europe's largest urban shopping mall) and Stratford International railway station, adjacent to the Olympic Park site, and the planned post-Olympic settlement of new communities within the Athletes' Village which, given the legacy of surveillance technology, will be virtual gated communities. Similar forms of urban entrepreneurialism—intended in part to 'neo-liberalize' neighbourhoods and cities—have occurred at earlier mega-events.⁶¹ For some researchers, London 2012 regeneration policies serve both to secure and to purify post-industrial urban spaces, in order to attract wealthier consumers and residents.⁶²

⁵⁷ See <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/2d4643be-b07f-11e0-a5a7-00144feab49a.html#axzz1w9a0jHXg>, accessed 23 May 2012.

⁵⁸ See Vikram Dodd, 'Police powers for 2012 Olympics alarm critics', <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2009/jul/21/olympics2012-civil-liberties>, accessed 23 May 2012.

⁵⁹ See Newham Council, *Newham London: local economic assessment 2010–2027* (Newham: Regeneration Planning and Property Directorate, Newham Council, 2010).

⁶⁰ See Ulrich Beck, *World at risk* (Cambridge: Polity, 2009), p. 58; Beck, 'Living in the world risk society', p. 339.

⁶¹ K. A. Owen, 'The Sydney 2000 Olympics and urban entrepreneurialism: local variations in urban governance', *Australian Geographical Studies* 40: 3, 2002, pp. 323–36; C. Michael Hall, 'Urban entrepreneurship, corporate interests and sports mega-events', *Sociological Review* 54: 2, 2006, pp. 59–70.

⁶² See Gary Armstrong, Dick Hobbs and Ian Lindsay, 'Calling the shots: the pre-2012 London Olympic contest', *Urban Studies* 48: 15, 2011, pp. 3169–84; Peter Fussey, Jon Coaffee, Gary Armstrong and Dick Hobbs, *Securing and sustaining the Olympic city* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2011).

Olympic urban regeneration in recent years has also involved substantial population displacement through the clearing of some housing estates, businesses and green areas to provide land for new sport and commercial facilities. The scale of such transformations (or, from the perspective of some analysts, such 'urbicide') has been far lower in London than in other twenty-first-century mega-event locations, such as Beijing, Delhi and Johannesburg.⁶³ Stephen Graham argues that cities are increasingly moving towards forms of 'military urbanism', wherein there is an 'ever-broadening landscape of "security" blending commercial, military and security practices with increasingly fearful cultures of civilian mobility, citizenship and consumption'.⁶⁴ The securing of sport mega-events, like political summits, might be seen in part as exemplifying this trend, providing platforms upon which 'low-intensity', militarized, 'irregular warfare' can be played out within urban settings.⁶⁵ The Olympic Games and other mega-sport events become opportunities not only to test and refine security technology and strategies, but also to assess the level of public acceptance of increased levels of surveillance.

Olympic ideologies and security

These observations lead to some reflections on the extent to which such far-reaching securitization undermines or contradicts Olympic principles and values. As mentioned above, the IOC's Olympic Charter includes commitments to promoting ethics, education, fair play, peace, gender equality, athlete health, environmental benefits, and positive legacies for host cities and nations; and opposition to discrimination, violence and the political and commercial abuse of sport.⁶⁶ Of course, many critics have already explored the disjunctures or contradictions between these official principles and actual practices or tendencies in the Olympics, for example with regard to militarized nationalism, commercialism, doping and the damaging physical and social effects of intensive training.⁶⁷ Our comments above on risk management, securitization and urban regeneration indicate that a clear tension arises between the Olympic ideology and the potential experiences and legacies of the event. However, we would return to our earlier point on security: namely, that the Olympics are caught between what might be termed two risk frameworks, divided historically by 9/11 and its consequences. The main principles of the Olympic movement were institutionalized before 9/11, while the pervasive securitization of the Olympics, though intensified significantly following the 1996 Atlanta bombing, has occurred within the

⁶³ Martin Coward, *Urbicide: the politics of urban destruction* (London: Routledge, 2008); <http://www.gamesmonitor.org.uk/node/451>, accessed 23 May 2012.

⁶⁴ See Stephen Graham, 'When life itself is war: on the urbanization of military and security doctrine', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 36: 1, 2012, p. 145.

⁶⁵ Graham, 'When life itself is war', p. 139.

⁶⁶ See <http://www.olympic.org/about-ioc-institution>, accessed 23 May 2012.

⁶⁷ See e.g. Jean-Marie Brohm, *Sport: a prison of measured time* (London: Pluto, 1981); John M. Hoberman, *The Olympic crisis* (New York: Aristide Caratzas, 1986); Helen J. Lenskyj, *Inside the Olympic industry* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2000); Thomas M. Hunt, *Drug games: the International Olympic Committee and the politics of doping, 1960–2008* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011).

post-9/11 context. Tensions and contradictions inevitably arise when the two frameworks are juxtaposed and pre-9/11 Olympic ideology is contrasted with post-9/11 security strategy.

One aspect of risk management at London 2012 and other such mega-events is the quest to ensure that securitization is not oppressively visible, and that the security blanket does not smother Olympic ideology or the ambient reconfiguring and sanitization of public spaces in London. Thus, one police chief for London 2012 was moved to echo the sentiments of the Prime Minister in insisting that the balance between security and sport would be appropriate.⁶⁸

And yet we might point towards two potential ruptures between Olympic ideology and securitization that are not easily smoothed over. First, references in the Olympic Charter to peace and the condemnation of violence will echo awkwardly in the encounter of local publics, spectators and media with an exceptional peacetime security assemblage which includes drone aircraft, surface-to-air missiles, thousands of army officers on mainland civilian duty, heavily armed police officers, and the most advanced surveillance systems ever to be operated in the UK.

Second, Olympic principles on ethics and opposition towards political or commercial abuse appear to come under significant pressure over security and risk management issues. We pointed earlier towards UK Olympic legislation that may, at least in principle, undermine human rights to political protest or self-expression and potentially undermine the government's ambition to use the Olympic Games to enhance the country's reputation for 'values of tolerance, moderation and openness'.⁶⁹ Moreover, the modern Olympics are now deeply embedded within the global security-industrial complex, and amid the enormous array of agencies and institutions that are acquiring huge material and political gain from heightened societal fears of terror.⁷⁰

Conclusion

The history of the modern Olympics is intimately intertwined with developments in international and domestic politics. Over the years the Olympics have been an arena for interstate diplomacy and have accrued substantial political symbolism, reflected in the decline of boycotts and the intensification of competition between states to host the event. However, the enhanced symbolism has also made the Games more attractive to a range of social movements and has, since the Centennial Park bombing of 1996 and the attacks on New York and Washington in 2001, magnified the problem of ensuring security at the event. This new political context of the Olympic Games poses a number of challenges to the IOC and to aspiring host cities, with significant potential consequences for

⁶⁸ See Alan Travis, 'London 2012 will not be dominated by security, police promise', <http://www.guardian.co.uk/sport/2012/jan/24/london-2012-security-police-promise>, accessed 23 May 2012.

⁶⁹ House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee, *FCO public diplomacy*, 6 February 2011, p. 19.

⁷⁰ On this point, see Roland Robertson, 'Open societies, closed minds? Exploring the ubiquity of suspicion and voyeurism', *Globalization* 4: 3, 2007, pp. 406–407.

the Olympic movement. Just at the time when the IOC is exhibiting a greater awareness of, and concern with, the legacy of the Games, it is becoming apparent that the most significant legacy will have less to do with environmental improvement and increased participation in sport and more to do with security, increased surveillance and the erosion (even if only temporarily) of civil liberties. London 2012 provides a powerful illustration of the issues.

Much has been written about the legacy expected from the London Olympic Games. The primary focus of this attention has tended to be on the impact of the Games on sport participation among the young, on the physical regeneration of the Lower Lea Valley area and on the image of the UK. Rather less attention has been focused on the event's 'security legacies', which are typically underplayed by host cities and nations, especially during the bidding process, but which nevertheless have significant long-term social impacts.⁷¹

The security legacies from recent Games include *inter alia* the installation of new surveillance technologies, data-analysing and criminal-profiling systems that remain permanently in place post-event; they may also include the further use in the future of heavily armed police, the armed forces and military weaponry to secure major public events, following successful piloting of these methods at the Olympics. Closer relationships are also forged between the state and the rapidly growing private security industries at a time of economic and social austerity. The Games provide not only a trade fair for security industry products and services, but also a well-funded context for product and service development. In more generalized terms, the securitization of the Games may also register a further milestone in the 'security creep' that is occurring in wider society, in step with the normalization of public unease over security and the growing prevalence of 'military urbanism' within everyday social settings.⁷² Overall, security legacies such as these highlight the ways in which the Olympics and other sports mega-events contribute to the intensified securitization of public life at civic, national and international levels.

A further point on the expansion of state power and restrictions on civil liberties may be made. Measures of these types are usually presented as 'temporary' and justified by exceptional circumstances, such as the hosting of the Olympics. However, 'temporary' restrictions often prove long-lasting, justified either by new threats or by continuing existing threats, leading to a permanent state of exception in which citizens are complicit in the erosion of their civil liberties. Former UK Home Secretary Roy Jenkins provides a salutary reminder of the problems with temporary measures. Jenkins reflected that, during his time in office, the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act, which he introduced in 1974, was indeed intended to be 'temporary' and to remain in force for only two years (during a period of exceptional threat from the Irish Republican Army), but it was still in force 15 years later and was eventually replaced with more

⁷¹ On security legacies at sport mega-events, see Richard Giulianotti and Francisco Klauser, 'Security governance and sport mega-events: towards an interdisciplinary research agenda', *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* 34: 1, 2010, pp. 49–61.

⁷² Boyle and Haggerty, 'Spectacular security'.

permanent anti-terrorism legislation in the early part of the twenty-first century. In broad terms, while they may produce 'glocalized' responses or strategies according to different contexts, the host cities and nations for the Olympics and other sports mega-events do tend to see themselves as facing similar security issues and problems, in relation to spending, the selection and deployment of particular security technologies, and the linking of their security aims with urban regeneration and commercial objectives.

One important consequence of this trend for the IOC is the risk that the range of potential host countries/cities becomes even more distorted than it already is. Much has already been made of the impact of the increased scale of the Games over the past 40 years or so on the number of viable host cities. It is not just the venue requirements that have become more demanding, but also the accommodation requirements for athletes and their entourages, and for spectators, and the infrastructure requirements associated with transport. The significant increase in security requirements since 1996 has added a further demand on the resources of host cities and governments. It is likely that the security costs for London will account for between 15 and 20 per cent of the total costs. Between 1960 and the 2000 Games there had been a broadly steady increase in the number of cities bidding to host the event, but since 2004 there has been a noticeable decline. In 2004, eleven cities made an initial bid, of which five were selected to proceed to the candidate stage; the 2008 numbers were ten and five, those for 2012 were nine and five and those for 2016 were even lower at seven and four. While this putative trend needs to be treated with some caution, as the recent European and North American economic crisis is likely to have had an impact, there is a clear risk that the pool of realistic potential hosts will decline further. In future, perceived feasible host cities may be limited to those that have the wealth to meet the escalating security expectations; authoritarian cities with much of the surveillance infrastructure already in place and with little domestic opposition to further restrictions on civil liberties; or those that see the display of their technological security capacity as a refinement on what Oakley and Green call the 'sporting arms race'.⁷³

⁷³ Ben Oakley and Mick Green, 'The production of Olympic champions: international perspectives on elite sport development systems', *European Journal of Sport Management* 8, 2001, pp. 83–102.

