

BOOK REVIEW/COMPTE RENDU

Bajc, Vida (ed.). *Surveilling and Securing the Olympics: From Tokyo 1964 to London 2012 and Beyond.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan. 2016, 420 pp.

S*urveilling and Securing the Olympics* contributes to the growing body of scholarly literature exploring how surveillance and security are engaged as means to manage the uncertainty of uncertain futures. As noted in the prologue, the volume is the first attempt to trace the socio-historical conditions by which practices of security and surveillance take shape and transform in the Olympic Games. While not discounting the expected contributions from sociology, criminology, and legal studies for a volume of this type, Bajc's multi-disciplinary collection coalesces scholarly work from relatively disparate academic areas, including geography, sports science, kinesiology and physical education, history, and journalism. The diversity presented in the book is perhaps its biggest strength and highlights how influential the Olympic Games, and practices of social control therein, have become in contemporary society. Deploying case-study approaches which place each Olympic event in its particular sociohistorical context, the volume traces important and timely issues such as the formation and reformation of cultural identities, policing so-called radical movements, collective mobilization and social movements, local and municipal governance, and the public-private policing nexus.

The eighteen-chapter volume is puzzlingly divided into three parts – an introduction, case studies, and conclusion – if only due to the relative dearth of introductory and concluding chapters. The collection could have been more effectively organized thematically or chronologically. The book begins with introductions to notions of surveillance, security, and securitization which have become relatively commonplace in the social sciences. Don Handelman's prologue draws attention to the bureaucratic ethos on which modern Olympics were founded and highlights how techniques of surveillance are fundamental to the legitimization of core Olympic values. Following this is an overview of the notion of security meta-ritual for which the book is conceptually and theoretically based. The book's editor, Vida Bajc, conceptualizes security meta-ritual as a "new form of social control of global planned events such as the Olympics...to encapsulate, encircle, and envelop such global planned

events to ensure control over their process” (Bajc 2016: 22). The purpose of security meta-ritual, according to Bajc, is instrumental insofar as it aims to construct “sterile zones of safety” by transforming spaces into efficiently controlled environments for which the Olympics can operate and fulfill its goals.

Bajc’s chapter also attempts to articulate how comparative historical methods and ethnography can inform understandings of how new modes of social control are enacted in contemporaneous large-scale events and how they reconfigure surveillance technologies and techniques of security. This chapter is followed by an account of how perceptions of surveillance and security have shaped the decision-making of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), which is the governing body charged with overseeing the Olympic Games. As a former vice-president of the IOC, Richard Pound is able to offer fascinating insights into how notions of security come to be understood by the governing committee, and in turn how modern practices of surveillance are “an essential component of any Olympic Games...which must be regularly exercised in order for the system to function properly” (74). The introductory essays quite effectively lay the theoretical and conceptual foundations for which the rest of the volume is based.

Interestingly, Bajc adopts a very specific meaning of the prefix “meta” to denote a hierarchical relationship in which the performance of a planned event such as the Olympic Games is subordinate to the transformation of unsafe social and physical spaces into sterile zones. While this view of security meta-ritual is unsurprising given the editor’s connection to the renowned Surveillance Studies Centre at Queen’s University, it does highlight the *raison d’être* of the entire volume. The authors in the collection tend to adopt an explicitly critical view of surveillance practices as dominating, totalitarian, and deeply invasive. Much less developed within the volume is a research program which explores possible positive contributions of surveillance in ensuring the security of the Olympic Games and athletes, officials, and observers who attend them. Aside from cursory glimpses into such positive contributions – most notably in the chapter by Richard Pound – the edited volume tends to neglect, or at least underestimate, the role of surveillance practices in ensuring security, particularly in times of increased vulnerability (e.g., major global events). That is not to suggest critical analyses of practices of surveillance are not illuminating and necessary, but the volume might have been strengthened by including alternative perspectives and empirical research exploring how practices of surveillance work to protect Olympic participants and spectators.

The book then considers fifteen case studies highlighting security practices deployed in various Olympic events, presented chronologically from the 1964 Tokyo Summer Games to the 2012 London Summer Games. While an in-depth review of each chapter would be impossible here, each author provides interesting empirical explorations of how security and surveillance are envisioned by Olympic organizers and how they crystallize, transform, and (re)configure social and physical space. Among the most interesting contributions are Christian Tagsold's findings that the organizers of the 1964 Tokyo Games paid relatively little attention to security concerns but rather focused on positive representations of Japanese culture to the rest of the World. Following the Tokyo Games, both Kevin Witherspoon and Kiyoshi Abe suggest in the contexts of Mexico City 1968 and Sapporo 1972 respectively, security rapidly moved from the periphery to a central concern for Olympic planners. Several authors focused on the theme of countering so-called radical social movements and protests and found that organizers often employed implicit and indirect networks of surveillance to repress popular discontent (chapters by Witherspoon, Abe, and Kidd). Researchers also highlighted the increasing role of the military (Kidd) and international intelligence community (Ok and Ho Park) in the securitization of Olympic events, while others focused on legal frameworks through which the Games come to be understood as exceptional circumstances justifying increased security measures (Varano, Burruss, and Decker). Contributors also illustrated how modern technological developments have transformed planning of the Games vis-à-vis practices of surveillance and geospatial arrangements of physical and social control (Vanolo and Tsoukala). Finally, in one of the most interesting chapters of the volume, Jacqueline Kennelly details how municipal bylaws and city "guidelines" implemented in Vancouver during the 2010 Olympics worked to discipline residents based on notions of good manners and patriotism. Those who did not represent the planners' image of civility, such as vulnerable and marginalized groups in the city, were targeted for a wide array of minor offenses, removed from the city, or educated in "good" behavior.

Each case study pays particularly close attention to relevant social, political, cultural, historical, and geographical circumstances embodied in the planning and deployment of security practices in one of the world's most influential events. As a result, the book fulfils its objective of being the first collection of systematic analyses of the nexus between bureaucracy, institutional logic, technologies, and security configurations which manifest in the Olympic Games. Yet, each study transcends the world of sports and can be effectively applied to the analysis of social and physical surveillance in other global contexts. In this respect,

Bajc and contributing authors have produced a text capable of laying the conceptual and theoretical foundations necessary for the exploration of security apparatuses deployed in other meta-rituals such as global political summits, festivals and other cultural events. Yet notable is the lack of attention paid to the internal and external surveillance of athletes themselves within the IOC and other governing bodies as well as in the public sphere. While this is not necessarily a critique of the collection, as drawing attention to a blind spot is not a particularly robust criticism, it is simply an observation for which future research in this area might be developed.

This book offers very interesting, diverse, and empirically grounded insights into the emergence and transformation of modern practices of surveillance deployed in Olympic Games. Furthermore, it develops an innovative theoretical and conceptual framework for exploring the bureaucratic and institutional conditions which enable the diffusion of surveillance measures within the Olympics as well as in contexts outside of the world of sport. In this way, Bajc's notion of security meta-ritual might be useful for organizational sociologists, surveillance scholars, social control researchers, or any of those interested in exploring questions of how large-scale global events reconstruct social and physical space to mitigate uncertainty. This volume would also make a great addition to increasingly popular undergraduate courses such as sociology of sport, sport and recreation management, and surveillance studies. *Surveilling and Securing the Olympics* would hold a rightful place in any library.

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