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Setting Standards: Major Events and the *European Code of Police Ethics*

Introduction

This article looks at the significance of security planning for ‘major events’ in relation to policing and the *European Code of Police Ethics*. The kind of events being spoken of when talking of ‘major event security’ are those such as large sporting tournaments, high profile political summits, international cultural festivals, etc., each of which have a venue and an organiser with whom the police and authorities cooperate over security planning. Some are regular and routine in nature others are exceptional and present new security challenges. But all have to be planned for in terms of the various security risks and threats they might pose. They should not be confused with ‘major incidents’, such as natural or man-made disasters, large scale criminal acts, terrorist attacks, mass murders, etc., although any of these could occur in relation to a major event as a security threat and would need to be planned for (and for this reason a major event can itself be logged as a ‘major incident’ in the command and control parlance of some police forces). First and foremost, though, this article seeks to stress the potential of major events to set new standards of security and in doing so, necessitates the maintenance of ethical standards for policing in Europe.

Social Values Past – The Great Exhibition of 1851

What of major events for policing in contemporary Europe? According to British police historian Clive Emsley (1996: 62) it was during the 1850s that the early English Police image was most significantly enhanced among the liberal establishment as protectors of mid 19th century Victorian values and social order. This was not only by their suppression of the previous decade’s Chartist movements with seemingly minimal force (whose then ‘radical’ claims for equality are now, conversely, legally protected mainstream values in democratic societies) but also by their service of stewarding and security provision in London at the Great Exhibition of 1851 – a major event of its time by anyone’s standards.

Elsewhere, in terms of articulating the dominant national sentiment and values of the time, a similar observation can be made about the Finnish Police and the 1952 Olympics in Helsinki. For as an important boost to the Finnish self-image (Valkonen 1991: 123), the police reportedly gained significant public respect through their well-received role in the policing of this defining national event and were thereby recognised as key players in the Game’s success: “Hardly ever before or after had Helsinki been so safe” records the Stadium museum’s catalogue. Indeed, not only were Finland’s police (and army) mobilised for an anticipated increase in robberies, assaults, alcohol violence and prostitution, they were said to be *galvanised* (my emphasis) nationally by the introduction of a new national police uniform.

Such can be the symbolic importance of security during major events in Europe. For it is the institutional embedding of desired norms and values articulated through the mundane routines and attitudes of its actors that can serve as the longer lasting legacy of major event security rather than the immediate substance of security provision itself. As a more contemporary example, Norway’s largest ever police operation at the time (one involving

every third officer), the *Lillehammer '94* Winter Olympics is said to be remembered more for its unifying police motto '*security with a smile*' associated with new uniform stocks, supplies of emergency and counter-terrorism equipment and a general lasting sense of good feeling among its police officers than its relative absence of any *actual* security incidents for the world media to report on during it (Anderson 1994).

Yet the Great Exhibition was undeniably *the* major event of its time, not just in London but in Europe. Of historical, political and social significance, it came to symbolise the entire Victorian age that stretched beyond the then British realm. As the first of a series of 19th Century World's Fairs it was the forerunner to today's 'Expos'. Its international display of the then Modern world's cultural and industrial achievements attracted large media coverage and saw it attended by the world's press. Its Wikipedia entry notes visits by dignitaries the world over, not to mention more than 6.2 million people, many of whom flocked from our European cities not only to see it but to be a *part* of it. In other words, to be *consumed* by it and what it represented as an expression of the values and very *zeitgeist* of the times.

And as with early 21st century major events in Europe and elsewhere that have attracted a contemporary amalgamation of anti-globalisation protestors over issues of world trade and consumption today (see Waddington 2007: 114), there were security fears then, as now, by the authorities over London's Great Exhibition. They feared that, in the face of an event that Karl Marx is said to have identified as 'an emblem of commodity fetishism within capitalism', such a mass attending of visitors might risk becoming a 'revolutionary mob' (cited Newth 1967: 97). The observation attributed to Marx is borne out by social legacy. For in as far as the high arched glass ceilings of some of Europe's contemporary shopping malls echo that of the Great Exhibition's famous glass arcade, the Chrystal Palace, they have been aptly described by some as 'cathedrals of consumption' (Gilling 2007: 227). This is not only in terms of their architectural provenance but as intense sites of dominant forms of socialisation and expressions of power within late capitalism and modernity. The central atrium of the *Itäkeskus* shopping centre in East Helsinki would be a good example on both counts. It echoes that of the Chrystal Palace perfectly, albeit in the more mundane context of mass consumption and everyday contemporary setting in which the private security guard has come to replace the police as the iconic figure of the postmodern city (Barker 2004: 244).

So neither should the symbolic power of a major event itself be overlooked – both in terms of what counter forces it can *attract* as a security threat as well as what social values and political ideologies it can be used to *express*. In relation to a quite different era, a mid 90s catalogue for an exhibition in London on the relationship between Art and politics in the 1930s reminds us that while a modern Olympic Games had been re-established in 1896, it was not until Hitler's exploitation of the 1936 Berlin Olympics that their 'potent potential as a propaganda vehicle' was first seized upon by the building of grand stadiums to house them and the carefully mediated choreography of their opening ceremonies (Whitford 1995: 27). What messages might major events of various sorts be used to convey today?

One could consider the observation that the tradition of relaying the Olympic flame from Greece via various cities to the venue of Games was one originally introduced at the Berlin

Olympics with Hitler's support as a means to promote Nazi ideology and ideas of Aryan supremacy in the countries through which it passed (Perrottet 2004 cited in New York Times 2004). Though the contemporary performance of this symbolic ritual has been wrested from its ideological origins to a more positive communication of life, it is an observation that came back to haunt the beleaguered Beijing 2008 Olympic torch relay as it struggled to make its way through London and Paris amid protest over China's political relationship with Tibet (Nizze 2008). Such can be the symbolic value and power of major events and the global nature of political protest they can attract. Meanwhile, in the same dark times of a quite different Europe, Mussolini's 1932 *Exhibition of the Fascist Revolution* is noted to have been as similarly as exploitive of the heady mix of symbolism and theatre to powerful effect that can be deployed at a major event (Whitford 1995: 15). So it is worth noting that a uniformed security presence surrounding the security of a major event is embroiled in and plays a profound and significant part of such state run public theatre. This can be said of major events today and tomorrow, just as those of yesterday and the day before, albeit to different symbolic and socio-political values and ends.

And perhaps, as a World's Fair following in the tradition of the 1851 Great Exhibition, it is the 1937 Paris International Exhibition of Arts and Technology that might be a major event more deeply etched on a collective cultural and political memory of that utterly black period in European history. For it was here that the ideological conflicts between the powers of Fascism and Communism in the face of a then struggling Liberalism and the democratic means of its containment were so manifestly exposed through silent symbolic gesturing between states. Across the Eiffel Tower's line of sight to the Fair's 'Tower of Peace', Albert Speer's tall monument to Nazi Germany ominously stood square on to Soviet Russia's monument to the industrial and agrarian workers. Meanwhile, at the Spanish pavilion, Picasso's masterpiece, the anti-war painting *Guernica*, drew public attention to Spain's civil war as a prelude to outright war in Europe (Whitford 1995: 32). Such was the symbolic content of some major events during the 1930s: But what of their significance to policing in contemporary Europe and our 21st century age of security and counter-terrorism?

Social Values Present – The European Code of Police Ethics

Post-war, major event security in contemporary Europe can be examined in the context of the *European Code of Police Ethics*. In doing so it must be recognised that organised major events are not only high-risk sites for new forms of security threats that must be assessed and catered for but also sites which provide opportunities for new standards of security to be tested and set and from which, as the brief historical review suggests, new systems of policing can and do emerge and develop in conjunction with. They are sites of political expression that intertwine the event itself with its security provision. And in this it is worth being mindful of some observations within urban social theory that as social sites and expressions of power, spaces occupied by major event venues and their security preparations are at the same time constituted as points of resistance within capital (Tonkiss: 2005: 60). In this sense, they still echo the mid 19th century concerns expressed over the Great Exhibition, albeit there has been much development of democratic society since that era.

Hence the significance of holding the security planning for major events in Europe to a common set of ethical standards pertinent to the democratic values of European member states that a democratic society would seek not only to preserve but to actively promote. Those adopted by the Council of Europe in 2001 would seem to present themselves most appropriately, if not only constitutionally, for such purpose. For they are common standards developed to ensure police activity among the Council's 47 member states is oriented toward the protection of liberty and citizen's rights in democratic societies governed by the rule of law. And so it is against these standards of democratic policing and accountability that developments of security in Europe are to be set. Yet to do so, they need to be actively considered, promoted and applied to the often exceptional but unifying international policing challenges of major event security provision in contemporary Europe.

The European Code of Police Ethics was developed by the Council of Europe and adopted by its Committee of Ministers upon recommendation made to it on 19th September 2001. This fell just days after the terrorist attacks on the World Trade centre in New York that has driven contemporary society into a new era defined ever more by the language of 'security' over 'liberty' in the so-called 'war on terror'. The Council of Europe itself was founded in 1949 with a post-war mandate for working toward European integration premised on the rule of law, protection of human rights, democratic development and cultural cooperation. Recognised in international law as a legal entity representing some 800 million Europeans in its 47 member states (as of 2009) it includes, of course all 27 European Union members. It sets internationally recognised standards for policing in Europe and other parts of the world seeking to adopt them. Most recently, its code of police ethics has been included in its 2009 'toolkit' for security sector legislation for Arabic legislators working in the Arab Region toward democratic policing based on Human Rights (CoE 2009: 6). It is therefore a globally unifying influence for policing and any individual nation's police forces.

Following its general mandate, the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly adopted its *Declaration on the Police* on 8th May 1979, since which there has been a long standing tradition in Europe of trying to promote human rights within policing (CoE 1979; 2000). In this tradition, the period 1997 to 2000 marks the Council of Europe's first programme of development for policing and human rights, which resulted in the said *Code* and its sixty-six articles being formally adopted in September 2001, and further promoted worldwide in 2009, some thirty years since the initial *Declaration* from which it grew.

The Council's *Declaration* echoes the broader promotion of international protocols and guidance on human rights for policing through the United Nations during the latter half of the 20th century. Yet it has been previously noted by senior and leading UK police officers that within police organisations and institutions themselves the *Declaration* did not have a major impact and had, in fact, been met by police in the UK at least with a 'so what' element of indifference in as much as it was unclear to the police as to how to apply or use its principles in practice other than as an 'oath of office' like declaratory statement (Neyroud & Beckley 2001: 61).

Other academics, who would at least concur with the above, might put it in yet more critical terms for Europe more generally. For independent studies of policing during the 1990s warn of ambivalence within a general police culture toward supranational levels of governance in Europe. They note that police officers, administrators and politicians sometimes regard questions of accountability mechanisms as a ‘tiresome and marginal matter’ (Anderson 1995: 287). Yet they point out that while accountability lies at the very core of co-operative police development as a pre-requisite rather than impediment to policing, they wait to see if any extension of a European policing capacity will be matched by an enhancement of accountability arrangements (Anderson *et al* 1995: 277-8).

As observers from that decade, Anderson *et al* (1995: 289) saw two possible visions for Europe in the 21st century we now live in and the concomitant direction of its policing effort. One was federalised, with policing as an affirmation of democratic values. This would be an environment conducive to promoting the ensuing code of police ethics. The other was fragmented, with policing tipping toward repression and authoritarianism. This would be an environment in which police ethics are more readily trampled on and against which the greater and more urgent is the effort required not only for their promotion but for their protection. In a comprehensive review of critical issues facing policing in western societies a decade on, criminologist Eugene McLaughlin (2007) seems to endorse the concerns of the latter vision from before the new age of global terrorism and millennium turn of ‘security’.

Discussion of police accountability in the twenty-first century must also attempt to comprehend the implications of policing that are connected to an emergent global security field. Particular concern has been expressed about the consequences of a dominant central government that defines democratic scrutiny as a hindrance to effective policing and law enforcement as well as the interests of the post 9/11 and 7/7 security state. (McLaughlin 2007: 173).

So if any police authority is to demand some level of concrete expression from its police as to the Council of Europe’s *European Code of Police Ethics* when it comes to the planning of security for major events, what parts of the code – given the combined symbolic nature of major events and security provision and scepticism as to an operational policing commitment to ethics over the practicalities of security – would be most salient and how might they be expressed in a statement of explicit compliance to ensure a common ethical standard is being set and maintained for policing in European society through major event security provision?

The sixty-six articles of the *European Code of Police Ethics* fall under seven basic headings:

1. The objectives of the police (article 1);
2. The legal basis of the police (articles 2-5);
3. The police and criminal justice system (articles 6-11);
4. The organisational structures of the police (articles 12-34);
5. Guidelines for police action and intervention (articles 35-58);
6. Accountability and control of the police (articles 59-63);
7. Research and international co-operation on police ethics (articles 64-66).

Whilst all articles have their pertinence to policing in general, some may have more resonance than others to particular operational areas of policing. With specific regard to the policing of major events, attention can be drawn to at least fourteen of them in Table 1.

| No. | Article. |
|-----|--|
| 1 | The overall purpose of the police in a democratic society governed by the rule of law are: to maintain public tranquillity and law and order in society; to protect and respect the individual's fundamental rights and freedoms as enshrined, in particular, in the European Convention on Human Rights; to prevent and combat crime; to detect crime; to provide assistance and service functions to the public. |
| 3 | Police operations must always be conducted in accordance with the national law and international standards accepted by the country. |
| 13 | The police, when performing police duties in civil society, shall be under the responsibility of civilian authorities. |
| 15 | The police shall enjoy sufficient operational independence from other state bodies in carrying out its given police tasks, for which it should be fully accountable |
| 17 | The police organisation shall provide for a clear chain of command within the police. It should always be possible to determine which superior is ultimately responsible for the acts or omissions of police personnel. |
| 19 | Police organisations shall be ready to give objective information on their activities to the public, without disclosing confidential information. Professional guidelines for media contact shall be established. |
| 36 | The police shall not inflict, instigate or tolerate, any act of torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment under any circumstances. |
| 37 | The police may use force only when strictly necessary and only to the extent required to obtain a legitimate objective. |
| 38 | Police must always verify the lawfulness of their intended actions. |
| 43 | The police, in carrying out their activities shall always bear in mind everyone's fundamental rights, such as freedom of thought, conscience, religion, expression, peaceful assembly, movement and peaceful enjoyment of possessions. |
| 45 | Police personnel shall, during intervention, normally be in a position to give evidence of their police status and professional identity. |
| 59 | The police shall be accountable to the state, the citizens and their representatives. They shall be subject to efficient external control. |
| 61 | Public authorities shall ensure effective and impartial procedures for complaints against the police. |
| 64 | Member states shall promote and encourage research on the police, both by the police themselves and external institutions. |

Table 1: Articles of the *European Code of Police Ethics* pertinent to major event security planning.

Can these articles be promoted in the policies of Europe's police authorities and the policing services they govern for the purpose of major event security planning? Table 2 distils from them six broad policy standards for consideration against operational compliance:

| | Suggested Policy Standard for Major Event Security Plans | Articles |
|---|--|--|
| 1 | <i>Human Rights Protection:</i> Security plans contain a statement verifying the lawfulness of all intended actions within them and their overall compliance with the European Convention on Human Rights, in particular those concerning life, use of force and right to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. | 1 (purpose) 3 (law) 36 (torture) 37 (force) 38 (verification) 43 (rights) |
| 2 | <i>Ethical Security Products:</i> In requesting threat assessments and developing new security tools for major events, intelligence or other knowledge obtained through unethical means (in particular torture, inhumane or degrading treatment) is neither sought nor knowingly accepted and planners seek assurances from agencies providing such services that their products have not been so obtained. | 36 (torture) |
| 3 | <i>Public Accountability:</i> The planning, provision and evaluation of security for a major event is the responsibility of an operationally independent and dedicated police command position, accountable to a specified civil authority. | 13 (authority) 15 (operations) 17 (command) 59 (governed) |
| 4 | <i>Personnel Identification:</i> All security personnel during a major event wear openly displayed and easily readable personal identity numbers (rather than names) at all times. This includes, in particular, police officers in public order situations as well as private security guards and stewards engaged with duties under the plan. | 45 (identity) |
| 5 | <i>Public Complaints:</i> A dedicated public complaints system is set up in respect of a major event's security operation and evaluative research includes ready analysis and publication of the nature and number of complaints made regarding the management of its security and conduct of individual security personnel during it. | 19 (information) 61 (complaints) |
| 6 | <i>Independent Research:</i> Recognising that security for major events can set new policing precedents as well as test ethical boundaries in response to new security threats, independent scientific research on the policing of the event is commissioned from external institutions from the outset of the planning process. | 19 (information) 64 (research) |

Table 2: Six suggested policy standards for major event security planning, aimed at reflecting and promoting the *European Code of Police Ethics* through operational policing practices.

Active operational consideration and compliance with these broad policy statements would amount to the preservation and promotion all fourteen articles collectively and the European code of police ethics in general. Space prohibits their fuller elaboration but without too much explanation it should be possible to see how each connect to the various articles in Table 1 they are intended to reflect. In any democratic society governed by the rule of law, senior police officers and police authorities responsible for major event security planning should be able to answer in the affirmative to each of these six statements without too much difficulty. In so doing, they would be going some way to preserve and promote the democratic values of our society through the policing of major events, despite their operational security challenges.

Social Values Future – The Shape of Things to Come?

So what of policing major events for the future? Chiming more with Eugene McLaughlin's quoted pronouncements, it is said of the 7 July 2005 London terrorist bombings that the UK entered a 'new normality' after which things would never be the same as far as the public's need to accept more intrusive and innovative security was concerned:

We had already coined a new phrase: the 'new normality'. Already we knew things would never be the same – there had to be new means of security, such as concrete barriers around buildings, now that we faced the reality of suicide bombers in the UK. We would all have to put up with more intrusive security and more inconvenience. (Hayman, 2009: 57).

This is how the most senior police officer at the helm of the Metropolitan Police's response to the terrorist attacks at the time recalled discussion a top level briefing in the Cabinet Room at 10 Downing Street with the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, and heads of the security services (GCHQ, MI5 and MI6) the day after London had been shaken to a standstill.

The joy of winning the 2012 Olympics bid for London the day before the attack was being eclipsed, as Tony Blair is said (*ibid*) to have commented at the start of the briefing, by the sheer horror of what followed the next day. That is, four UK born and bred suicide bombers from the north of England had travelled down to London and detonated, without warning, their back-packs of lethal explosives during the morning rush hour on three separate Underground trains within a minute of each other and a crowded bus less than an hour later. They killed 56 people (including themselves) and injured over seven hundred others. Other Al-Qaida style terrorist attacks have followed over the few years since, though mercifully either failed or have been prevented by good intelligence and the sheer hard work of the security services and police. The 'new normality', though, includes recognition that the UK is the target of terrorism from within itself. And so the state's eye of suspicion looks inwards.

Under this shadow, one which arguably falls over the rest of Europe in various guises, what new normalities will the policing of the London 2012 Olympics herald in terms of the further intrusive security measures that a public might be expected to have to accept? How well will the Council of Europe's carefully nurtured principles of ethical policing and democratic accountability stand up to the new normality and rigours of the new security challenges now being faced in contemporary Europe?

As a major event, the importance of the 1851 Great Exhibition to the establishment of the Victorian police in London should not be forgotten. In the same way it is said to have helped secure a new policing model for its time as protectors of the values of its era, the legacy of the London 2012 Olympics may serve to further secure a model of policing as protectors of the values of our present era. But if that cannot be done as the promotion of the ethical police standards alluded to in this article, then what have those values become? The significance of major events to the emergence of new policing and security models in contemporary Europe should not be underestimated. Nor should the importance of using them to preserve and

promote the democratic values we seek to provide security in the name of. Otherwise we would have secured nothing of any value at all.

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