

Policing Berlin

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From separation by the 'iron curtain' to the new German capital and a globalised city

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ABSTRACT

Since the 1990s many authors observe a pluralisation of police functions in Europe. The paper shows that this trend is also recognisable in the city of Berlin. For example, private security companies have gained importance. Their presence may indicate an increasing intensity of formal social control. Prevention in a broad sense has become important for the Berlin State Police. However, policing in this city is also influenced by path-dependencies, going back to the specific situation of a divided city at the frontline of the east-west conflict before 1990 and to the transfer of federal government institutions to the city since the late 1990s. Specific patterns of the German administrative and legal system also influence policing at Berlin. Compared to the period before 1990 with the presence of the allied military forces and the powerful secret service (Staatssicherheit) in the Eastern part of the city, Berlin is probably less securitized today.

Keywords: Berlin Police, comparative research into policing, plural policing, policing globalised cities, path-dependency



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1. Introduction

A gradual pluralisation of police functions has been observed for several countries over the past 20 years, e.g., for the British and US-American context (Jones & Newburn, 2006; Stenning, 2009; Crawford, 2006). Against the backdrop of changing societies, policing is evolving rapidly and sometimes radically (Jones & Newburn, 2006). Security has developed from a public good delivered almost exclusively by state agencies to a diversified service with tasks distributed among public and private agencies. Since the 1990s, the neo-liberal turn in public management, that