



By:  
Kenda Briken  
Volker Eick

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Interviewed by:  
Gulden Ozcan

**GO: The subtitle of your book “Policing the Neoliberal Crisis” refers to Stuart Hall’s influential work, “Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State and Law and Order” (1978). How do you think the crisis and policing “this time” is different than the crisis and policing in late 1970s? In other words, how have policing and perception of (in)security changed in neoliberal times; what is “neo” (new) in policing under neoliberalism**

KB and VE: Neoliberalism is not about something “new”, on the contrary, we see some continuity. The crisis of the early 1970s Hall et al. were dealing with was one they understood as a political one, a crisis at the level of the British state, a crisis of hegemony, as defined by Gramsci. One of the UK state’s solutions, according to Hall et al., was to mobilize a “moral panic” focusing on the idea of “mugging” as a crime problem to be racialized against minorities. Hall et al. claim that this move helped to divide the protesting and even uprising movements (students, black people, and working class) and helped to restore hegemony. Within the proposed framework, we were to see the fabrication of further moral panics in the years to come: Asylum seekers, in early 1990s Germany, became the respective “Folk devils” and suffered from white rioting, arsons,

murders, and the collusion with if not even the direct support of the state with neo-Fascist vigilante groups. Ten years later, Muslims are turned into the “Folk devils” all over the western world thanks to a particular reading of 9/11 and beyond – lead by the US state authorities. It resonates, of course, with the strengthening of state security and surveillance measures in France, Germany, the UK and beyond.

Each and every time, we see state policing (re)producing its racial foundation dating back latest to the slave hunts in the 17th and 18th century into what we are now familiar with as “racial profiling” and institutionalized racism, police harassment of minorities and even the constant killings of unarmed black people by police (as a continuation of lynching, one needs to say). Such police action is politically orchestrated as a necessary tool to protect “us” from “them”.

The aforementioned mechanism can also be applied to more recent forms of crisis. The nation state tries to re-establish a new consent. Just as “mugging” was introduced and has been taken up by the media in the UK of the 1970s, today the “lazy Greek” is the EU-wide buzzword to demonize democratic dissent and demand the intensification of austerity measures. It’s the lazy



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Greek against the hard-working German; it's the national white working class against the gazing migrant beneficiary; it's the leftovers of the Fordist middle class against the – even though well-educated but still precarious – “creative class”.

But this time, coercion (in the Gramscian notion the second important pillar to achieve hegemony) is to be displayed on a much more heterogeneous “class”. The recent attempts to create the refugee as a new “Folk devil”, so far failed in continental Europe and the UK. Today, social media (for now) are a medium to support public concerns about the treatment of and solidarity with asylum seekers and refugees – a counter-point to current political mainstream debates. More importantly, inspired by the square movements, people start to reclaim the streets and get together to stop deportations and evictions; or they take the streets to strike in solidarity with people elsewhere. Since the status of insecurity is a widespread experience in particular for the middle-classes within the (Western) European urban populace, the grounds for panic and insecurity are either directed towards abstract notions of financial collapse within other countries (and to austerity measures as so-called solutions) or to newly created borders as forward defense lines against unwanted aliens.

The trafficker – guiding people across borders, the public focus currently being the Mediterranean Sea – turns into the “Target of Interest” for the EU Commission, the European border police FRONTEX, and its military forces. While, again from a historical perspective, the deployment of the military against migrants might not be new, the internationalization of police forces is certainly a more recent development. The same holds true for the

massive deployment of private military and security corporations in the emerging field of migration management and border protection, comparatively unknown of in the 1970s.

Waging wars without declaring them (including targeted killings and signature strikes) together with what David Harvey has called “accumulation by dispossession” demand both, the militarization of the police and the policization of the military. Looking at remotely piloted aerial systems, or drones, the speed within which the *combat drone* transformed into a *border drone*, and from there into a *homeland drone* is a remarkable example for both, the technologization and militarization of policing.

**GO: Policing is seen as a particular set of practices that changes according to time and space. Nevertheless, in your edited volume, we see a collection of case studies from diverse parts of the world from India to Australia to Lithuania. So much so you argue that “cities have become “incubators” ... for the related “innovative” experimentations with policing practices, surveillance strategies and coercive control mechanisms” (p. 14) and that after experimented in certain city-labs these tactics are then exported to other cities in other countries. How do you explain these similar, and to some extent homogenous, trends in policing in these seemingly diverse areas of the world.**

KB and VE: Policing has never been a national affair only. Already the early western European police forces were based on heterogeneous knowledge transfers. We know, for example, that the English Peel-model of policing with its origins in the private investigation sector was partly influenced by the French developments

and vice versa. It is here where path dependency comes into play. While the French state powers insisted on a close connection of the police to the military organization, the English nation state decided to separate their forces from the military; German, i.e. Prussian leaders, did not even consider such a differentiation as important. Research on colonial policing underlines that the colonies inspired respective strategies and tactics of the police at home as developed by the colonial masters. Colonial experiences with policing can be understood as yet another knowledge-base for policing today – Northern Ireland obviously being *the* example in Europe.

Today, police policy and police knowledge transfer can be identified on two levels. First, proactive transfer to allow for an “effective” policing of dissent: Organized via transnational security networks and coordinated by special police forces dominating the respective discourse (supported by transnational defense and commercial security corporations). Each and every Olympics or FIFA World Cup allow for a closer inspection. Secondly, transfer for the “effective” policing of everyday life: While this is by and large about controlling consumption those being unable or unwilling to participate are to be pacified. Wilson and Kelling’s “Broken Windows” and New York’s “Zero Tolerance” policing are probably the most well-known transfer products in this regard. German cities develop urban networks in order to coordinate their “SOS efforts”, safety, order and security. Working hand in hand are the respective state police forces and the Chambers of Commerce; city councils and commercial security providers are invited to participate.

As we point out in the volume, in times of glocal neoliberalization, the urban turned into an

important laboratory for neoliberal experimentation. Already with the deregulation and the dismantling of the welfare state beginning in the 1980s, distributive policies were increasingly replaced by measures to reinforce urban competitiveness. As a consequence, sociospatial polarization intensified, whereas wealth and economic opportunities became more unevenly distributed and in greater need to be policed. Roll-out neoliberalism established some flanking mechanisms and modes of crisis displacement such as local economic development policies and community-based programs to elevate increasing social exclusion. But still, the most important goal of today’s urban policy is to mobilize city space as an arena for market-oriented economic growth protected by policing mechanisms either in a state-led or a commercial form. Even though those processes might differ in detail, the “Eigenlogik” (intrinsic logic) of the state does not confront in any meaningful way the material politico-economic structures of neoliberalism. On the contrary, the “Eigenlogik” itself is commodified within city marketing and thus turned into an asset, while policing structures develop accordingly.

**GO: You published interesting work on rent-a-cop firms in Germany. In this volume, your chapter on “Protective Prosumerism” demonstrates a slight shift in your earlier argument of public-private partnership taking over the public spaces towards the case that the commercial and volunteer security organization in fact expands the reach of the state’s legitimate use of force. Can you explain this shift both in the argument and in the reality of commercial, non-state and non-commercial policing in the Western world?**

KB and VE: Let's start with clarifying what is meant by prosumerism. The expression "prosumer" denotes that the customer fits the dual role of producer and consumer. Co-production is not new, but we can see that there is a trend to formalize and proactively strengthen the ways within which knowledge co-production is integrated into the policing net. Within police-private partnerships, customers are transformed into co-value creators, endowing them with new competencies and benefaction opportunities. In other words, police-private partnerships are characterized by citizens and commercial security providers' subjugation under police standards, while self-policing tends to lack continuous interaction with other stakeholders such as the police. Further, prosumerist policing is concerned with a moralized "commodity", turning engagement with policing into a (paid-for) "duty" and "gift" that shares characteristics of neocommunitarianism.

As for the "expansion argument", mainstream understanding has it that the integration of commercial security providers into the western "Leviathan project" goes with limitations of direct state control over the state monopoly of the legitimate use of force. To our understanding this is a serious misreading – the current state monopoly in the western world is not threatened by but calibrated through the incorporation of commercial and so-called "civil society" security entrepreneurs. Germany, a brief example, recently outsourced the protection of its merchant fleet to commercial security corporations (thus keelhauling even the Constitution) – but keeping full control (and hiding from the public what's happening on the decks of one of the largest seafarers' nation). The UK recently outsourced parts of its policing

work to commercial security providers, again allowing for less control by the public.

**GO: You make the case of the expansion of the reach of policing through private, voluntary, rent-a-cop security forces. Can we also speak of the expansion of urban condition in neoliberal times? Considering how the space of let's say Olympic games or World Cup stadiums and surrounding area and G8 summit in Rostock-Heiligendamm, Germany turned those seemingly non-urban (at least in classical urban centre terms) spaces into urban spaces, can we say in neoliberal times the borders of urban spaces are expanded towards the "dangerous" crowd to conduct policing practices?**

KB and VE: In our understanding the expansion of the urban condition is twofold and again follows the logic of policing of consumption and the policing of dissent. Policing sport events, to take up this example again, shows how sport events create a laboratory for experimenting with pacifying strategies in order to allow for the highest profits for FIFA, IOC and respective sponsors (merchandise, tickets, food, and accommodation). According to the organizers, the Games need to be protected from the "dangerous" non-consumer and the even more dangerous guerilla marketing competitors. Political protest during the events needs to be eliminated or, at least, made invisible. The police shootings of striking security workers during the FIFA World Cup in South Africa are just one example, the attacks against protesters in Brazil are another one.

As for the G8/7 summits, the most recent one in the rural Bavarian area of Elmau, Germany has shown how a potential threat is made up by the

police – a fact Luiz and Chris have been describing in full detail in our edited volume. Numbers of protesters given by the police were constantly much higher than the ones given by the protesters themselves – once a threat needs to be created. The moment protest receives support from the local populace and international visibility the opposite applies: “Almost nobody there”, the police media officers will tell. The G8/7 summits increasingly turned into a “modern” battleground where new transnational policing practices and technological gadgets are tested (drones, logistics, IT, transnational policing cooperations). Inasmuch as G8/7 summits tend to avoid the urban realm – and protesters still go after them even in remote areas – the urban expands.

**GO: You argue in the book that “the most important goal of today’s urban policy is to mobilize city space as an arena of market-oriented economic growth protected by policing mechanisms either in a state-led or a private form” (p. 13). You seem to argue for the commodification of urban spaces and police in these spaces is not merely to protect the private property, but also and more importantly to maintain a safe and sound environment in which people’s manners and conducts can be acted upon. Why is this more important in neoliberal times than let’s say in social welfare state times? Is it because of the loosening social ties among urban dwellers?**

KB and VE: We don’t think that the policing of people’s manners and conduct is more important today than it was in social welfare state times. We would argue that the protection of private property within the Fordist model was closely connected to securing the means of

production, i.e. warehouses, stock, and to discipline the factory worker. Today, with the post-Fordist shift to interactive, person-based service work (i.e. care, cleaning, catering), securing profits for the capitalist is more closely connected to securing safe and sound environments, policing the means of reproduction, if you will, in a factory called “the urban”. It is also connected to securing logistics, to handle the process of deliverance of goods in ways within which the retail companies can make their profit as well. The loosening of social ties in our view is more a cultural pessimistic argument. Cities became factories in their own respect.

**GO: You touch upon an important aspect of the privatization of security. It has been a well-known fact that the poor were being policed by the poor. Yet, you make the case that the private security industry workers are particularly suffering from neoliberal precarious work conditions. Is there a difference between private security forces and the public police when it comes to organizing workers’ demands around a trade union? How so?**

KB and VE: We are talking about two completely different workforces, and this is reflected on three levels: (a) employment status, (b) employment relations, (c) job satisfaction and recognition. The public police forces – at least in most of the western European countries – are employed within the specific terms and conditions of the public employment regime. While large parts of the public workforce experienced the alignment of their working conditions to the private sector, recent research shows that the police remain largely protected and still profits from high job security and social

benefits. Only the UK saw a more drastic “reform” with job cuts and the decline of social security for the police forces.

At the same time, as for (b), organizing workers’ demands in this sector is restricted. In most European countries, police are not allowed to go on strike or to call for other forms of industrial action. In some countries, even collectivism is restricted and only trade union-like organizations for specific ranks are allowed. In sum, police trade unionism is more likely to be co-management and corporatism. Last not least, police forces in Western Europe hold a relatively high public reputation. They are what Max Weber called the executors of the monopoly on the right to use legitimate force, and their uniform is more than just a symbol.

This said, the extensive use of tear gas during mass protests, or the use of Tasers might be contested by some, and it is widely known that the police are a racist institution. However, the police can get along with this without any further consequences and still high acceptance. “It’s them, not us”, is by and large the take of the majority looking at the victims.

This is not to say police forces would not complain about unsatisfying working conditions, or lack of adequate material, of “tools and toys”. They do. But since most police officers still have a high intrinsic motivation to do the job, the uniform and police culture offer the rewards needed. Trade unions are part and parcel of this culture.

For private or, as we prefer to say, commercial security staff, the situation is completely different. The majority of their jobs is seen as low-skilled work and thus is poorly paid; working conditions are often precarious. Trade

unions try to organize within the sector, but still struggle to get members. This is partly due to the fact that workers in this sector tend to act as wannabe heroes – and don’t want any union or collectivism. Furthermore, recognition is as low as pay, and the majority of the security guards did not even want to become security guards in the first place. Most of them failed to enter the police and are now in search of adventure or, more often, trying to cope with boredom. A strong occupational culture – like that we can identify within the police – does not exist. And neither does a strong union mobilization.

**GO: Policing in urban settings, you argue, “aims at securing the competitiveness of cities and at safeguarding their profitable management” (p. 16). In a sense, this part of the book (focusing on the glocal movements, order-building, walls around the cities) makes the argument that the cities themselves have become the actors of neoliberal competitiveness, which also turns the cities into the battleground both for the property and business owners (concerning the distribution of most profitable parts of the city), for the government policies (concerning how to make and enforce new regulations prioritizing the profit and also how to get more funding from the federal/central governments) and for the dissent (concerning how to protect and maintain publicness of the public spaces). Accordingly, where do you think this neoliberal battleground confronting us as cities will take us?**

KB and VE: The moment we are talking to you, house prices in London, Paris, Tokyo, Berlin, you name it, are skyrocketing. A recently published city map shows the AirBnB density in Paris. A Berlin map already exists. Evictions are

taking place, either with the help of the state (Istanbul, Beijing, London... whole city areas are taken down), or in more subtle ways by just buying people out of their houses. Migrants such as Roma people in Berlin are exploited through fantasy rents deployed on them by greedy landlords. That's just one battle ground – housing.

**GO: The edited volume besides being a theoretical and academic contribution to the urban security studies also seems to have an aim of challenging neoliberal restructuring of security fetish. What are the possible ways of this challenge? You define urban setting as a battleground. What are the conditions of reversing this battle against the kind of policing we confront in neoliberal times?**

KB and VE: Admittedly, the “urban frontier” is just one contestation on a global scale. This is why we need to keep in mind that Lefebvre’s phrase of “the right to the city” reaches beyond the urban environment and is concerned not only with particular urban demands or rights. At the very same time, however, all over the world, from Athens to Zurich, local movements emerge demanding better living conditions, healthcare and welfare provision, jobs, decent housing or just shelter, an end to evictions, and the right to be treated as a human being. To challenge the current neoliberal urban setting, it is thus necessary to “make connections” not only between the global and local engines of exploitation, commodification and injustice but also to connect with those grassroots initiatives, groups, movements and individuals that are fighting against the neoliberal agenda on different scales. One European example is the Blockupy movement. It started as a Frankfurt-based platform for the radical left, and turned

into a strong coalition of anti-neoliberal activists over the last years, including left parties, environmental groups, autonomous movements, including the “black block”. The challenge is to remain flexible within diverse spatial contestations without running the risk of being incorporated or – probably worse – being neutralized. But as the example of the Greek referendum shows, people still have the power, and people are beginning to fight back. Probably we will see more police violence on the streets (and in the backyards) in order to safe the status quo and to extent austerity. The good news though, given that neoliberalism is the walking dead – we will win.