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**Preventive Urban Discipline:
Rent-a-cops and Neoliberal Glocalization in Germany**

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Since the mid-1970s public policy in German cities has followed a trend from more socially inclusive to more exclusive measures. Under the pressures of global competition and in the context of growing neoliberalization, German municipalities and regions have experienced growing socio-spatial polarization within and among urban regions. In the last two decades, location competition and benchmarking between cities have become two of the main reference points for entrepreneurial city politics. As cities are today confronting a more competitive (global) environment, local governments and their supporting growth machines have taken to place-marketing, enterprise zones, tax abatements, public-private partnerships, and new forms of local boosterism – but also reached out for new strategies of social control and workfare policies. Prosperity enclaves emerged within the urban agglomerations surrounded by islands of poverty – both fuelled by microeconomic logics in urban management and the (re)commodification of public spaces. The mercantile reengineering of urban spaces and of its residents by urban elites has led to an intensified segregation and polarization of urban societies.

Re-regulating and restructuring the dysfunctional Fordist model in major cities has entailed new tasks not only for state-police but also for rent-a-cops and "civil society" policing entities, thus underpinning the new centrality of urban (in)security. Private security companies or rent-a-cops – even though private policing has been in operation since 1901 in Germany – play a special role in popularizing such a new centrality of (in)security as they do in re-organizing access rights to the city. Consequences of neoliberal restructuring such as unemployment and growing poverty are transformed into (in)security and (dis)order problems and are, therefore, integrated into the field of domestic security. In this reformulation of "social problems" commercial security companies have come to be understood as the missing link between "civil society" and state-police, as rent-a-cops are said to be able to fill security and safety gaps in contemporary societies of the global north. Re-adjusting state and municipal police tasks and offering security on a for-profit basis came to the fore in the early 1990s. In doing so, the state attempts to create and activate a "policing family" instead of relying on the *lonely* "Big Brother" alone.

Since the early 1990s the dominant trends in reorganizing state-police in Germany are pro-active community-oriented policing, a specialization on ethnic groups and city spaces, an intelligence service style of policing, and a more preventive orientation in general (Busch et al., 1988; Busch & Pütter, 1994). Throughout Germany, one of the most recent trends within "civil society" – the

mobilization of selected residents in an attempt to activate them for self-responsibility – has led to the installation of so-called security partnerships (BKA, 2005; Schreiber, 2005);¹ additionally, community policing and crime prevention councils (*Kommunale Präventionsräte*) have been set up (see Kury, 1997). This pluralization of policing (Crawford & Lister, 2004; see table 1) is at stake – as state-run, commercial and "civil society" security policies are growing in scale and scope, connect with each other more closely, and even merge.² Not surprisingly, such police-private-partnerships create additional disadvantages for so-called "undesirables".

Table 1: Selected State-run and Non-state Security Agencies
(pluralization of policing)

State	"civil society"	private/commercial
State-police, <i>Länder</i>	Nonprofits	Rent-a-cops
Federal state-police	Civil wardens	Detectives
Customs Authority	Vigilantes, militias	Bodyguards
Town clerk's office	Neighborhood Watch	Bouncers
Traffic wardens	Security partnerships	Plant security
Security and order partnerships	Voluntary police services	Mercenaries

Source: own collection and illustration.

This paper will concentrate on rent-a-cops in Germany. It will do so using three selected case studies of everyday private policing in (formerly) public spaces focusing on rent-a-cops in social housing complexes and "migration management" against asylum-seekers; it will also draw attention to protest and resistance by the respective "target groups". The paper sheds light on the neoliberalization of policing as the rolling-back of state-policing and the vanishing of state-police especially in neglected areas is constantly denied by German governmental bodies and scholars alike (see BMI, 2001; Kirsch, 2003; Stober & Olschok, 2004). The first section will conceptualize current rent-a-cop firms as an outcome of neoliberal globalization. The second section provides data on Germany's rent-a-cop industry and describes recent market trends. The final section presents case studies that illustrate that the accomplishment of the neoliberal project is not only the »rolling-back« (Peck & Tickell, 2002) of the Fordist compromise, but is the search for and prove of new forms of capitalist regulation (roll-out). Moreover, roll-back and roll-out neoliberalism intensifies the pressure against the already disadvantaged parts of the population. Where NIMBYism prevails civil rights are contested. Nevertheless, the neoliberal project as a *project* has to prevail in conflict-laden processes *in situ* to become a

¹ For an overview with English abstracts see also *Bürgerrechte & Polizei/Cilip* (2000), 66/2 and *Bürgerrechte & Polizei/Cilip* (2005), 81/2; <http://www.cilip.de>.

² »By the late 1990s a range of quangos, forums, and national and local agencies were involved in the criminal justice system alongside the police, the probation service, and others« (Jones & Newburn, 1998: 37).

real neoliberal *product*. Both, the *project* and the *product* remain contested terrain.

Gaining Security: Neoliberal Spaces in the Glocalized City

The relationships of neoliberal globalization and urban space have been subject to a wide-ranging critique in recent years (Mitchell, 2001; Brenner & Theodore, 2002; Jessop, 2002; Larner, 2003). This literature has broadly observed that strengthening of market competition, the selling of the public infrastructure, the proliferation of market logic throughout the public sector, and "free" trade are international trends in urban economies. All of these trends clearly depend on the respective national context in which they occur, as well as historic traditions, developments paths and changing economic and political conjunctures. Bob Jessop (2002: 113), in particular, has identified different strategies to accomplish global neoliberalism which he describes as »neocorporatism, neostatism, and neocommunitarism.« Additionally, as Swyngedouw (1997) has shown, the global and the local scales are interlinked in a process of "glocalization" through which the simultaneous shifting of regulatory tasks (and the creation of respective institutions) from the national scale to the scale above (supra-national) and below (local) the nation-state occurs.

Finally, Peck and Tickell (2002) have differentiated between an initial phase of proto-neoliberalism, when cities became flashpoints for major economic dislocations and struggles particularly in the sphere of social reproduction (see also Hamel et al., 2000); the era of roll-back neoliberalism in the 1980s, when municipalities introduced a variety of cost-cutting measures, cutbacks in public services and the privatization of infrastructural facilities; and a phase of roll-out neoliberalism, which has responded, since the 1990s, to the contradictions of the earlier zero-sum form of entrepreneurialism. In Germany »the excesses of roll-back neoliberalism« (Peck & Tickell, 2002: 391) found their vivid expression when the real estate bubble – worth more than 2,5 billion Euro at the *Deutsche Bank* alone – burst (Frey, 1996) and in the *well-nigh* collapse of the *Berliner Bank* in Berlin (Rose, 2003). German railway transport has been privatized in 1992, public housing and power supply was privatized in the mid 1990s; and the transformation of the Keynesian welfare state to a workfare regime peaked with the Hartz IV labor laws that were initiated in 2004 (Eick et al., 2004). During the early phase of neoliberalism, urban zones of concentrated poverty and exclusion remained more or less unnoticed. But with its roll-out phase such areas have become penetrated by programs addressing crime, "welfare dependency", unemployment and the like (Mayer, 2006). At the same time, however, there remain urban areas that the state recently abandoned and handed over to private interests, as is the case with social housing. Out of the total German housing stock of approximately about 40 million apartments over 4.3 million apartments used to be social housing until 1995; currently only

1.42 million remain as public housing (Holm, 2006). In Berlin alone 200,000 out of a total of 480,000 social housing apartments have been sold to the private real estate market since 1993. The same is true for Berlin's energy sector as water supply was privatized in 1999, and electricity and gas in 2003 (Schneider & Tenbrücken, 2004). While such processes can be understood as the destructive moments of regulation under neoliberalization, Germany's neoliberalization also comprises creative moments of regulation and the respective creation of institutions. Space-based programs such as "Socially Integrative City" since 1999 (Löhr, 2003) on the local scale and re-regulation of the finance control (Eick, 2006b) on the national scale clearly show such creative moments as they establish new or reorganize already existing institutions and practices, which serve the reproduction of neoliberalism.

While the basic neoliberal imperative of mobilizing city space as an arena for growth and market discipline remains important in the dominant municipal project of many German cities, roll-out neoliberalism has established some flanking mechanisms and modes of crisis displacement such as community-based programs to alleviate social exclusion, and it has introduced new forms of coordination and interorganizational networking among previously distinct spheres of local state intervention such as local welfare systems (Eick et al., 2004: 56-91). In as much as the "entrepreneurialism" comes to the fore under global competition, it is especially public space that grabs the attention of the urban elites. Three processes operate simultaneously: private space is shrinking through commodification; semi-public spaces such as shopping malls (referred to as mass private property; Kempa et al., 2004) start to dominate central cities; and rent-a-cops achieve nearly unrestricted access to urban space, whether public, semi-public, or private. Thus, it appears that the dichotomy of public and private is of precarious status in as much as public and private spaces mingle and merge, and access rights in both spaces are denied or opened only to selected groups. Additionally, urban elites have inscribed their restrictive for-profit logics of cleanliness, order, security, and tolerable behavior into the positive connotations of the term "public space" (Belina, 2003).

»There will always be trash somewhere, due to our work only somewhere else«,³ the managing director of the rent-a-cop company *Berliner Wache* summarizes the effect of his work and, while using the term "trash", precisely articulates the change from the Fordist administration of poverty to the post-Fordist elimination of the urban poor – not least from exclusive urban spaces. Additionally, "trashing" or "dumping" (King & Dunn, 2004) so-called undesirables, as mentioned here, is not only rent-a-cops' everyday practice but a specific type of what Pierre Bourdieu calls achieving

³ In this way the executive secretary and former Special Forces police officer explained his view on "undesirables" in an interview.

»space profits«. Bourdieu (1991: 30) observes that the »domination of space [...] is one of the most privileged forms of executing power; therefore, the spatial distribution of social classes and the use of space can be seen as a result of social confrontations over »space profits« (ibid.: 31). One might read "space profits" as space/social control capacities for domination over space allowing for the keeping of people or environs at a (physical) distance that are said to disturb or bring discredit upon the ruling classes, for example. I am referring here to a concept of space as social relation – producing and being reproduced by the built environment.⁴ Sambale and Veith (1998) emphasized – concentrating on the homeless – that contestation does not necessarily lead to exclusion but might result in territorial compromises. Clifford Shearing (1997: 271) identifies »contractual communities« – extended archipelagos with private forms of governance in urban space. Such contractual communities »configure the concrete and particular expectations (rights) and responsibilities (duties) for the members of the very community«. To a large extent the urban poor, therefore, fall through the cracks of such contractual communities as they lack assets. Looking at the current activities deployed by municipalities, the national state and, first and foremost, urban elites, the territorial fixation of fragmentation, the hierarchization of social space, and segregation through inclusive and exclusive strategies seem to rank among the superior aims of the present urban control regimes (Smith, 1996; Flusty, 2004; Low & Smith, 2006). To summarize, different types of space are emerging in which different strategies and tactics are deployed to tackle what is characterized as incivility, disorder or crime; as diverse as strategies and tactics may be, the rent-a-cop industry is willing to enter this market segment in an attempt to gain control of public space.

Selling Security: The German Rent-a-cop Industry

What in the 18th and 19th century had been the night watch patrol gave birth to the first private security company founded in Germany in 1901. For the next 60 years, private security services were mainly used for factory security. By the 1970s, private security guards were being used to patrol public spaces. Known as *Schwarze Sheriffs*⁵ these rent-a-cop firms represent the beginning of the modern security industry (which accounted for a four billion Euro (4.87 \$) turnover in 2002 and employed about 200,000 employees). The market is an oligopoly as the 10 leading companies command 50 percent of the returns of the market and 12 percent of the 3,000 companies share 81 percent of the turnovers and are employing two-thirds of all (registered) employees (see Wackerhagen & Olschok, 1999; Olschok, 2004).

⁴ Thus, space is not a simple "container".

⁵ Black Sheriff is a nickname for rent-a-cops referring to their black uniform-like dress; especially the Munich subway guards are dreaded for their brutality.

Year	1970	1980	1990	1997	1998	2002	2005
Companies	325	542	835	2.065	2.100	3.000	3.000
Employees	47.400	61.700	105.000	121.329	260.000	145.000	200.000
Turnover , in Billion €	0,3	0,5	1,2	2,0	5,1	4,0	6,0

Sources: Wackerhagen & Olschok, 1999; Stober & Olschok, 2004; see also:
http://www.bdws.de/cms/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=28&Itemid=57&limit=1&limitstart=1.

In the mid 1990s the German security industry successfully started to conquer public space, thus profiting from the new strategies deployed by central city business districts and urban elites, what Neil Smith (1996) has described as »revanchist urbanism«. While it is useful to suggest that simplified notions of effective policing strategies are increasingly being transferred between North America and Europe through the dissemination of "best practices", it is also clear that the implementation of these ideas is strongly shaped by local norms and institutions. The result is a highly uneven experience between and within countries and even policy fields. Similar revanchist strategies are deployed in Germany as well, targeting "undesirables" such as the homeless, drug addicts, and, particularly in the German case, asylum-seekers and foreign youths. Whereas zero tolerance is not the "official" state-policing strategy in Germany, disadvantaged groups in particular experience an intensification of repressive policing due to such elitist strategies. Not surprisingly rent-a-cop firms have taken advantage of this shift as well and the assignment of private guards in public spaces has become more accepted. It is now estimated that between 7 and 13 percent of all security employees are currently patrolling public space.

But private policing of public space alone does not guarantee that corporate revenue targets will be met. Given annual sales growth of about 2 percent and a highly competitive market, the security industry is keen to take-over state-policing duties. While securing sporting events like the Football World Championship in June 2006 (entrance control/security management) are already part of their line of action, traffic control including the management of parking lots and duties such as bodily checks and identity control is still the exclusive realm of the state-police. Given the state monopoly on force that only allows state-police⁶ to executing state power as a Constitutional determination in Germany, there is nevertheless constant demand from rent-a-cop representatives to be allowed to take over criminal investigations, to secure embassies, control drivers' licenses, check residences, deport asylum seekers, and transport prisoners (Stober & Olschok, 2004). Most recently, to feed

⁶ Aside from some exceptions such as "designation" (*Beleihung*) or other forms of accreditation not to be mentioned here (Nitz, 2000; see also Wakefield, 2003: 40-41).

their demands for profit, private security representatives are taking the threat of terrorism as an argument for demanding further outsourcing and commodification of "less important" security and order tasks. And indeed, the security business takes advantage of the outsourcing and privatization strategies fuelled by neoliberalism. The police, as the argument goes, should concentrate on high crime whereas all other tasks should be left open to the market (Armin, 1999: 111). Such attempts, as the neoliberal turn does more generally, explain three dominant trends within the rent-a-cop industry:

First, the security industry will grow in scale and, particularly, scope as neoliberalism supports expansion of and diversification within security tasks (see table 2). For example, rent-a-cop firms are rightly known for very low wages but the industry also services high-wage niches such as (international) risk analysis; additionally, facility management and video surveillance are creating new markets – the former through outsourcing by private companies, the latter by the outsourcing of the state.

Second, and unlike in North America where the take over a variety of state-police duties by rent-a-cops is more developed (Rigakos, 2002; Winton & Pierson, 2006), such a takeover is not very likely in Germany. Instead, the German security industry will only grow through private-public-partnerships. A plethora of city management concepts especially in city centers is mushrooming – concepts developed by and executed with close participation of the urban business community. More specifically, Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), originating from North America in the 1960s, are now starting to prevail in Germany (Hoyt, 2004; Wiezorek, 2004).

Table 3: Rent-a-cop Firms and their Current Fields of Activity in Germany (selection)		
Old fields of activity (assortment in alphabetic order):		
Alarm persecution	Escort services	Reception services
Bouncer	Fair/museum services	Risk/security analysis
Building site guards	Holiday protection	Security counseling
Cordoning services	Mercenaries	Security transport
Data security	Military support	Special custody
Dooropening services	Money management	Training
Doormen service	Money transport	Technical reports
Elevator control	Property protection	Vehicle protection
Emergency call centers	Railway protection	Workplace security
New fields of activity (assortment in alphabetic order):		
CCTV	Facility management	Ranger, pollution control
City patrols	Parking lots	Security points
Criminal investigation	Psychiatric clinics	Subsidized labor market
Deportation camps	Prisons	Traffic, radar control
District management	Public transport	Workfare
Source: adapted from Eick, 2003b; see Stober & Olschok, 2004.		

Third, and as a superimposing trend, advanced technologies are pulled together with social control devices such as Closed-circuit television (CCTV). It is also through technological innovations that the security industry controls public spaces – and beyond (Lyon &

Zureik, 1996). At the same time, studies expect high potential for rationalization through automated identification, adjustment, transmission, and storage procedures (Surette, 2005). As a relatively new trend, German housing companies started hiring rent-a-cop companies and installing CCTV technology especially on the outskirts of major cities.⁷

Related to the above-mentioned trends are current tendencies in urban development and urban management – opening up new opportunities for rent-a-cops. Best known are the central city spaces of high consumption. Most recently, space regimes such as BIDs link consumption with privatized security and order. It is here where state-police, rent-a-cops and the business community work together in public-private-partnerships, thus establishing an even more sophisticated division of labor compared to the already 80 commercial city-patrols in operation in Germany's pedestrian zones, shopping malls, and shopping centers (Eick, 2005). Keeping state-police and rent-a-cop cooperation in perspective, they represent neocorporatist public-private partnerships (see Jessop, 2002). Such partnerships are meanwhile fixed in (loosely verbalized) contracts also including federal and municipal police along with rent-a-cops' representing organization, the BDWS (*Bundesvereinigung des Deutschen Wach- und Sicherheitsgewerbes* – Federal Confederation of the German Private Security Business).⁸ Partnership contracts have been signed in Berlin, Cologne, Frankfurt on the Main, Wiesbaden, Düsseldorf, and most recently in Essen;⁹ the first federal contract was signed between the Ministry of the Interior and the privatized *Deutsche Bahn* (German Railway Company) in 2000 (Eick, 2005a).

Railway stations in particular elaborated and even spearheaded the neoliberal turns in the urban management of inner-cities. Before the BerlinWall came down, the central governments used to be the decisive authorities of the railway system in both parts of Germany. Before 1992 both the Eastern and the Western railway companies were state-owned and run by governmental bodies – including a sophisticated system of state-policing. Shortly after reunification the railway companies merged (in effect the Eastern one was taken over) and were privatized (Eick, 1998). Railway stations' premises are private space (though publicly accessible) but advertised as the "better" subset of public urban space including its respective commercialized management.¹⁰ Thus, policing became a task of the company's management which established its own security

⁷ There are even CCTV facilities on playgrounds, Liebermann, 1999: 27.

⁸ Out of the 3,000 (2000: 2,500) rent-a-cop companies 650 (420) are organized in the BDWS. BDWS claims to cover 80 percent of the whole turnaround in Germany while representing about 30 percent of rent-a-cops nationwide, see:

http://www.bdws.de/cms/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=28&Itemid=57&limit=1&limitstart=4 (retrieved March 15, 2006).

⁹ Press release of Securitas Ltd., April 30, 2005: 1.

¹⁰ The *Deutsche Bahn*, for example, advertises its railway stations even as »business cards of the inner-city« (BDA, 1997).

company called *Bahn SicherheitsGesellschaft* (BSG, Railway Security Company) with about 4,000 employees, thus displacing the two former state-run railway police authorities of the Keynesian era. Soon after, the BSG was supplemented with 6,000 federal police officers who today patrol German railway stations. As public transport remains a public task fixed in the Constitution (§ 87e Abs. 4 GG), the border police was transformed into a new federal transport police (for railways, railway stations, and airports). The immediate establishment of a police private partnership readjusts the responsibilities of the state-police in immediately (re)introducing the federal police. Thus, the state appears in a neostatist way and rolls out a special railway neoliberalism.

As the most important goal of urban policy has become to mobilize city space as an arena for market-oriented economic growth, urban forms of governance have become entrepreneurialized as well. Such forms of governance do not only target pro-growth strategies but include projects aimed at the participation of residents to enhance what is seen as security and order. Cleanliness and order are among the most popular topics of local government officials and the media. This is especially true in so-called disadvantaged areas which recently have become targets of several urban rehabilitation programs such as »New Deal for Communities« in the UK and »Socially Integrative City« (*Soziale Stadt*, SIC) in Germany. The SIC program – called »district management« (*Quartiersmanagement*) on the local level – reconceptualizes economically poor urban neighborhoods as deprived and mainly migrant, their residents being seen as unemployable and dependent on welfare (Eick, 2005). Currently about 300 neighborhoods have been identified across Germany and cover about two million residents (Löhr, 2003).¹¹ Projects like SIC and state-led initiatives such as community crime prevention schemes are aimed at so-called disadvantaged areas and linking federal, state (*Länder*) and municipal governments with private¹² and public stakeholders (and their respective financial resources). Borrowing again from Jessop (2002) they represent neocommunitarian urban projects.

A comparatively new phenomenon is the selling off of the social housing estates in Germany. The neoliberal project has turned public housing from a typical Keynesian social policy into a symbol of social dysfunctionality. Since the sale started, large swathes of newly commodified areas on the outskirts of cities are being created. In an attempt to stave off fiscal crisis, local governments are more than willing not only to sell the housing stock, but also make streets, pedestrian zones, parking lots, and even public lawns available to private investors, thus accepting the total takeover of

¹¹ For the SIC program an amount of 300 million Euros is spent per year; on a per capita basis one third of the amount the UK government spends (Eick, 2003a: 15).

¹² The BDWS, for example, is financing the Federal Crime Prevention Council, and rent-a-cops are leading community crime prevention initiatives in a couple of cities (cf. Lehne, 1998).

public and semi-public space by commercial interests. Unlike in the US or the UK, Germany lacks laws such as "three strikes" or "anti-social behavior" laws (Hackworth, 2004; Burney, 2005). What happens instead is the para-policing of residents on the individual judgements of rent-a-cop firms and their respective for-profit contractors (Eick, 2004).

To summarize, the respective forms of neoliberalism (proto-, roll-back-, and roll-out) and neoliberalization (neostatism, neocorporatism, neocommunitarism) at the urban scale lead to differentiated types of (public) space. In such spaces, different security strategies and tactics are deployed. The for-profit desire of the *company in the city* mirrors the political-administrative ambition of running the *city as a company*.

Urban Battlefields: Rent-a-cop Policing of the (Urban) Poor

The entrepreneurial logic and the respective policing techniques used to be especially sophisticated in the inner-city, meanwhile the neoliberal agenda spreads all over the city – and beyond. Restricted access rights underpinned by identification and surveillance systems, architectures of control (Flusty, 2004: 69-92; Lockton, 2006), and the plethora of policing entities – federal, state, municipal, commercial, nonprofit – are no longer the exclusive realm of the inner-city. Yet, roll-out neoliberalism seems to be further developed in inner-city areas whereas the outskirts and rural areas are still struggling with roll-back neoliberalism and the constant NIMBYism intensified by vanishing state-oversight and public investment. While the urban elites, both private and governmental, try to detain the downturn of downtown – namely Berlin's four city centers in the West (Kurfürstendamm) and the East (Alexanderplatz, Friedrichstraße, Potsdamer Platz) – neoliberal devastation rent-a-cop style has reached the outskirts and the rural areas alike. Nevertheless, residents contest the neoliberal roll-back as the following case studies show.

The phaseout of social housing in Germany – fuelled by the emigration of more than 20 percent of the East-German (better educated) population to the West (Kil, 2002), leaving behind dramatically shrinking cities – came with a plethora of challenges and opportunities for the new proprietors, especially North American real estate companies and funds (Eick, 2004; Schönball, 2005). While taking over former public housing estates, the new owners take measures to (re)sort and – if need be – discipline the remaining tenants in an attempt to attract new renters. Concierges und doormen to a growing extent are present in the housing estates on the city's outskirts. However, not all doormen are working on a for-profit basis, as subsidized employment programs for welfare recipients are a popular workfare scheme in order to re-integrate the unemployed into the labor market (Eick, 2003b). Nevertheless, the management of former social housing estates has become an important market segment for rent-a-cop firms. Due to growing polarization, ghetto discourses gain prominence (Sambale & Eick,

2005) and repressive policing is no longer focussed on "undesirable" citizens in public spaces but on (declining) residential areas in general. In the city of Dresden, the municipal housing society *Südost Woba* (sold to a private investor in early 2006) selected so-called "nasty neighbors" and concentrated them within one hundred apartments »with the plainest standard« (Eick, 2006). The Berlin housing society *GesoBau* posted rejections to potential renters stating »on behalf of our current renters we want to ensure one's harmony in relation with age, social structure, cultural and accepted customs« (Haase, 1998: 26). To enforce "one's harmony" migrants are not accepted as renters and private security companies such as *Securitas* are deployed to patrol residential areas with dogs and cell phones, while in- and outdoor cameras are surveilling the neighborhood. The employees, therefore, »know about everything and everybody« and, by *Securitas*' own account, »take up particulars from rowdies and graffiti sprayers« (Hix & Kröck, 1998: 3). Even in the better-off city of Munich, the housing society *Baywobau* fights the opening of a youth center close to its upscale condos arguing that problems might arise because the youth center's occupants »are of different social levels« (Vögele, 2000). It seems that the state monopoly of force is devolved to oligopolistic islands of power and powerlessness – no longer supervised by a continuous space of rights and law.

First we take Manhattan – then we take Marzahn

One of the well-known stereotypes is when you hear or read about youngsters being verbally harrassed, maltreated, choked and vituperated – and you expect disputes among youngsters or even gang violence, shake your head, think about anti-social behavior, and how to tackle it. But this is not necessarily always the case that youngsters are to blame. Behavior patterns exhibited here by rent-a-cop employees tell a different story about the outcomes of neoliberalism – such as in Berlin-Hellersdorf. As stated above, exclusion through rent-a-cops is not alone an inner-city phenomenon. Furthermore, there is evidence that a growing number of housing companies increasingly aim at generating more profit out of their »overstrained neighborhoods« (GdW, 1997). Essentially, such housing companies sort those residents creating problems (nasty neighbors) through rent-a-cops who regulate, refuse, allow, and coordinate access (Burney, 2005). The "evaporation" of state-police presence is particularly true for public housing estates sold almost exclusively to US realtors such as the Texas-based *Lone Star Fund*. It is here where rent-a-cops replace tasks of former welfare workers, public housing authorities, and even the police. Given that not only the buildings are sold but public space like parks, playgrounds and pedestrian zones as well, rent-a-cop firms are legally authorized to replace state-police.

Since December 2000, the 5,300 dwellings are under the control of *Lone Star* which handed over responsibility to the commercial housing company *WVB Wohnpark* to manage the estate; *WVB* itself

hired the rent-a-cop company *Flash Security* to patrol the privatized apartments. *Flash Security* denied access to the privatized playgrounds for the neighboring youngsters of the remaining public housing developments, expelled them from the nearby privatized pedestrian zone, and illegally confiscated soccer balls and bikes. Even deprivations of liberty and bodily attacks are reported (Eick, 2004: 150). The whole area has been gated, CCTV systems have been installed and bounties against graffiti sprayers have been offered (now 250 Euro). These new norms are (even violently) enforced to garner profit, while denying much of the community access to formerly public space. Mainly youth from poor and often divorced families supervised and supported by the church-run nonprofit *Youth Club Rhizome*¹³ have been the main targets of the rent-a-cops. The private security company maintains a data-base of »nasty neighbors« and displays it openly in an attempt to intimidate social workers, neighbors, and parents (Eick, 2004: 151). Since the attacks became public and the nonprofit was searching for help from human rights groups and lawyers' associations, *Flash Security* started to advertise itself as a simple but effective »noise police« (Buntrock, 2005: 16).

Additionally, the company changed its homepage that until recently stated that *Flash Security* personnel – trained combatant sportsmen – »do not stand aside when there are confrontations«. This has been replaced by the statement that the company serves its clients »with unconventional ideas«. ¹⁴ The security company has been able to take over responsibility for a total of 23,000 dwellings with almost 60,000 renters.¹⁵ Even some publicity and more than ten affidavits from parents, social workers, and victims did not stop the maltreatment but helped to contain the worst excesses by the time a judicial hearing was held in June 2004. At the same time the rent-a-cop company expands its business; a newly founded subsidiary just recently took over responsibility for the management arrears of rent.¹⁶

In interviews conducted with the responsible housing commissioner (*Baustadtrat*) and a staff member of the Center of Competence for Housing Estates (*Kompetenzzentrum Großsiedlungen*) both mentioned growing problems with private security but insisted that the privatization of the public housing stock is without alternatives as the Berlin Senate wants to solve the fiscal crisis by any means; to attract international investors the additional selling of streets, parks and gardens especially in the outskirts is mandatory.¹⁷ This clearly

¹³ Name has been changed to protect social workers as well as children and youngsters.

¹⁴ <http://www.flash-security.de/index.php?link=grundsatz> [February 23, 2006].

¹⁵ Berliner Morgenpost, January 30, 2005: 26.

¹⁶ <http://www.delpro.de/index.php?link=profil> [March 26, 2006].

¹⁷ Interviews were conducted in March and April 2004, but publication was denied in the latter case »to avoid problems with housing companies and the Senate« both financing the Center.

proves the global-local link Swyngedouw (1997) and other scholars are mentioning under neoliberalism.

Second to none: Violence in the absence of the state monopoly of force – the Karow case

Within former social housing estates in the eastern outskirts of Berlin (and beyond in East Germany) neo-Fascist mobilization is strong even though the number of migrants is very low; and it is for this reason that youth cultures like punks or immigrants from Russia with German passports (*Russlanddeutsche*) are the Fascists' main targets. Moreover, rent-a-cops instructed by the real estate owners have become a decisive force in private as well as public space. Sometimes the affiliation with a rent-a-cop company and neo-Fascist membership or racist behavior coincides. One, in particular, outstanding perfidity is the territorial compromise mentioned in Benno Kirsch's book about private policing in Berlin (Kirsch, 2003); he describes how the rent-a-cop company *CM*, already known in the mid-1990s for its brutality (Eick, 1995), is now deployed by a housing association in the peripheral district Berlin-Karow. While public transport is commonly not affordable for unemployed youngsters and housing situation for *Russlanddeutsche* and their families is cramped they use to hang out all day. As mentioned above, police presence in such areas is scarce; in this case, it regularly takes the police 20 minutes to respond to disturbances. In addition, burglaries and theft were reported in the area and have been ascribed to the Russian-Germans. For that reason, the housing association developing the area hired »young, sportive, and bald men originating from the district« who »in a wild west manner forcibly ousted "normal" youngsters berating and attacking them« (Kirsch 2003: 38-39, emphasis in the original) but did not substantiate breaches of law against the youngsters. Apparently, the private housing society as well as district management would have agreed with the brutal practice of *CM*, but, as Kirsch reports, »the Russian-German youngsters have been beefier and stronger and resisted the rent-a-cops' attempt to chase them away« (ibid.: 39). The district management thereupon »hired a "typical Eastern security service" which employed former members of the GDR intelligence apparatus«. As those »elder gentlemen were dismissed, a third company was hired which again referred to employees of the initially deployed rent-a-cop company« (ibid., emphasis in the original). State-police did not interfere at all, Kirsch states, but could give no account how the whole conflict came to an end.¹⁸ Nevertheless, the story reported is not an isolated case and, therefore, can hardly be interpreted as state's failure in oversight as it is precisely the state that emphasizes the

¹⁸ Additional interviews conducted with managers of housing estates in Berlin – not all of them in favor of rent-a-cops – during March and April 2004 brought their "demographic attitude" to the fore: as the youngsters grow up, they will stop to hang around outside and most probably will calm down.

"activation" of residents, business communities and housing companies; unlike the district Berlin-Hellersorf the district Karow is even public space.

Third time is a charm: Right-wing rent-a-cops for a new Third Reich

Rent-a-cop firms sometimes do not just only look like, but really are, neo-Nazis (Blankenagel, 2004; Kröger & Veit, 2004). According to several sources, commercial security companies employ acknowledged right-wing extremists, especially in the eastern parts of Germany. In 2003 the intelligence service in Saxony-Anhalt warns against attempts of militant neo-Nazis such as the *SelbstSchutz Sachsen-Anhalt* (Self-defense Saxony-Anhalt, SS-SA) to conquer the security market.¹⁹ In their 2002 Annual Report, the intelligence agency *Landesamt für Verfassungsschutz Sachsen-Anhalt* (Office for the Protection of the Constitution)²⁰ reports that the right-wing group strives for security contracts via the Internet. According to their web page the SS-SA calls itself a »non commercial association of skilled persons, who in their spare time execute security and order services«. The SS-SA offers services such as »securing persons and meetings [...], hall meetings and demonstrations [...], as well as any other activity related to order«. ²¹ SS-SA duties include bouncer business in front of discotheques. Members of the association *Miteinander – Netzwerk für Demokratie und Weltoffenheit* (All together – network for democracy and an open world) not only complained bitterly about intimidation by SS-SA members but also reported about »refused entrance even to public meetings by the right-wing people« (cited in Lorscheid & Röpke, 2003). In the meantime *SelbstSchutz* (self defense) troops are to be developed in Saxonia as well. As one of the responsibilities that rent-a-cop companies hold is to guard and protect refugee and asylum seekers' camps, it is not surprising that there are also neo-Nazis employed. During the last several years, racist behavior of rent-a-cops has been reported frequently by the media but rarely has been taken very seriously by the state.

One rare exception occurred when the weekly magazine *Focus* published an abridged version of an intelligence report about Fascists in the *Land* Brandenburg mentioning the rent-a-cop *Zarnikow Security* and its connection with the right-wing group *Kameradschaft Hauptvolk*. *Zarnikow's* right-wing employees were around when official festivals were celebrated, and they guarded political leaders such as the Bavarian party leader Edmund Stoiber and Jörg Schönbohm, Brandenburg's Minister of the Interior, while

¹⁹ The SS-SA consists of 15 local right-wing groups, see: http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nationales_und_Soziales_Aktionsb%C3%BCndnis_Mitteldeutschland [March 17, 2006]

²⁰ In 2003 the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution started an inquiry about right-wing extremist in security services but did not give any details.

²¹ <http://www.selbstschutz-deutschland.de.vu/> [March 17, 2006].

visiting the Rathenow area. One employee was hired directly after he was released from a five-year prison term for almost killing a Bosnian migrant; another has been convicted for weapon abuse and criminal assault. Even more, one of the most violent members of the local right-wing militia worked in the refugee camp (Lorscheid & Roepke, 2003). Refugees and asylum-seekers, therefore, felt more intimidated than protected by *Zarnikow*. Repeatedly, refugees reported bullying and attacks, in particular during the evenings, and many of them asked for transfer from Rathenow to other camps.

Zarnikow is considered locally influential as it is rooted in the area (AAK, 2000), holds contracts with the municipality and nonprofits such as the charitable *Arbeiterwohlfahrt* (AWO, Workers' Welfare Association) closely related to the Social Democrats. *Zarnikow* (together with its competitor *SAFE*) dominated the region as they constituted an influential security oligopoly securing jobs in an area with an unemployment rate as high as 35 percent. Consequently, protests from the refugees, mainly asylum seekers from West Africa, have been unsuccessful as have attempts from the Berlin-based *Anti-Fascist Collective* that tried to shed light on the case beginning in 1999.²² Consequently, the mostly tattooed, close-cropped muscle men still operated the refugee camp. In July 2002 the inmates of the refugee center published their third memorandum explicitly mentioning the security agency *Zarnikow*; they criticized the lack of privacy (rooms were scanned constantly, special needs were ignored) and complained about right-wing extremists "protecting" the center. All asylum-seekers are not allowed to work, have to stay in the area, and are highly discriminated by most of the German neighbors. Both the ruling Social Democrats and the nonprofit AWO refused to accept the allegations; efforts to force the Ministry of the Interior to recheck *Zarnikow* failed. Only when the public outcry did not stop, obtained support from churches, and progressive media intervened the Social Minister of Brandenburg (SPD) took the decision to reexamine the contract with *Security Zarnikow* and the nonprofit finally hired a new security company in December 2002 (Lorscheid & Roepke, 2003).

Conclusion

The cleansing of public spaces is on the neoliberal agenda as are the twin goals of social and racial containment. Mobilizing city space as the arena for growth and market discipline remains the dominant municipal project following the basic neoliberal imperative. Additionally, roll-out neoliberalism has established some flanking mechanisms and modes of crisis displacement – including new cooperative policing strategies and institutions to sustain neoliberalism. This is true for urban agglomerations. In the city

²² *Zarnikow* even tried to prohibit the publication of its activities in the Internet; cf. http://infort.de/news.php?article_id=1422 (retrieved: March 25, 2006).

outskirts, however, a rather pure form of roll-back neoliberalism still seems to prevail: targeting the urban poor displaced from the city centers, and refugees and asylum-seekers concentrated in camps, thus following classical NIMBYism but radicalizing it through private management. While it is no surprise that »both regulated civil policing initiatives and vigilante activity often work against the interests of the weakest members of the community« (Kempa et al., 2004: 565) it seems that high-rise suburbia East-German style and its rural fringes are the place where the vanishing of state-police multiplies authoritarian policing solely through rent-a-cop firms. It is rent-a-cops who achieved hegemony in the periphery and who decide what kind of social behavior and what degree of visibility of the "undesirables" in public spaces remains "tolerable". From a Constitutional standpoint what evolves is at first glance a paradoxical development. With the withdrawal of the state, unlike neoliberal ideology suggests, spaces of freedom are shrinking. Even more, while private policing replaces public *security* the public *order* of the 18th century, abolished in the 1970s, experiences a renaissance. Additionally, rent-a-cop companies *in praxi* embody much of the power and privileges of the state yet bear none of the responsibilities and limitations of democratic government. The already precarious constitutional bonds to the administrative sovereign force – its legal restrictions through public law and public service law – are discarded and do not apply to rent-a-cop firms. To the extent state policing failed to fulfil its collective pretensions (as ideological as they might be), its failing could be measured, criticized and sanctioned. Rent-a-cops make no such claim but avowedly protect the particular interests of those who pay for security services. It is from this perspective that the police-public partnerships in urban agglomerations look like the roll-out version of neoliberal policing still missing in the periphery. While such treatment of the most disadvantaged groups seems to support neoliberal interests, it may well be, as the Fascist mobilization suggests, that this hiatus in the periphery can also terminate the neoliberal project – whether roll-back or roll-out – as a whole.

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