

Policing Paris : 'Out of' or 'still in' Napoleonic Time?

Christian Mouhanna¹ & Marleen Easton²

Abstract:

No scholar, policy-maker or practitioner of policing could be taken seriously who did not acknowledge and take into account the radical transformation which privatization and pluralisation has brought to the field of policing (Jones & Newburn, 2006). Nevertheless, this transformation is largely influenced by the nature of the policing tradition in each nation state. To illustrate this argument a descriptive analysis of plural policing in the metropolis Paris is presented. Being part of the Napoleonic policing tradition in France, Paris takes up a unique political and administrative position which affects its security architecture. It stands out as the most developed example of centralisation and the State's wish to control its citizens. Despite the observed pluralisation in terms of privatization; Paris is still a 'state' in the state. Its Napoleonic tradition largely 'suppresses' civil non-commercial initiatives and influences the development of municipal police forces and other public uniformed surveillance agencies in Paris.

Introduction on Plural Policing in Paris

Within this special issue on the local reality of policing in European metropolises, Paris cannot be overlooked. Its policing tradition, relying on a high level of State centralization, strongly influences the answer to the central question of this special issue: "To what extent is a local police still present in European metropolises and how is this reality linked with other actors in the security field"? Answering this question implies that we do not concentrate solely on the 'police apparatus' but that we need to address a broad 'policing' concept which includes formal forms of social control such as other public uniformed surveillance agencies, private commercial security agencies and civil non-commercial initiatives.

Our descriptive analysis of policing in Paris as a metropolis is inspired by two main concepts which are interrelated: plural policing and citizen participation. Plural policing refers to different actors (such as the army, private security companies, other regulatory authorities, volunteers and citizens) being involved in policing. Crucial in this process is the changing power balance between government, the public police and these other security actors (Bayley & Shearing, 1996; Crawford et al., 2005; Jones & Newburn, 2006). Although the modernity of the concept of plural policing has been relativized (Zedner, 2006), in relation to citizen participation it is a challenge for each nation state. It touches the power relation between citizens and the state, which is rooted in the national police traditions. It brings up the discussion about which role the state can play for citizens who want to take initiative or

¹ Prof. Dr. Christian Mouhanna is Directeur adjoint, Centre de recherches sociologiques sur le droit et les institutions pénales (CESDIP), CNRS (UMR 8183), Ministère de la Justice, Université Versailles Saint-Quentin, France.

² Prof. Dr. Marleen Easton is director of the research group 'Governing & Policing Security' (www.gaps-ugent.be) located at the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Ghent University, Belgium.

want to be responsible for their own security. As a result, the manifestations of citizen participation in this category are highly influenced by the legal context of each country.

The main argument of this article is that the nature of the security architecture in Paris these days (in terms of pluralisation and privatisation) is still strongly influenced by the true nature of the policing tradition in France and Paris in particular. The so-called Napoleonic tradition, relying on a strong history of an entrepreneurial state and an instrumental vision on policing, tattoos the current state of plural policing in Paris. Illustrating this does not only implies a geographical or morphological focus but also a historical approach to better understand the impact of the policing tradition on policing Paris today. As a consequence this article has a descriptive nature and relies heavily on documents and published work on policing in Paris. Nevertheless, it should be noted that one of the authors can rely on empirical research in the broad field of policing in the city of Paris (Monjardet & Mouhanna, 2005; Mouhanna, 2002).

We develop our arguments in five parts. In a first part we describe the context of Paris as it is the economic and political centre of France and reflects a diversity in territories, security issues and plural policing. In a second part we describe the political-administrative context of policing Paris and the almightiness of the Police Prefect. Thirdly, we describe the emergence or development of municipal police forces and other public uniformed surveillance agencies in Paris. In a fourth part we pay attention to the position of private commercial security agencies in Paris. Finally, we conclude in relation to our initial question and make some reflections in relation to plural policing and citizen participation in policing Paris.

Paris, a French city full of diversity.

Paris is a French commune (town) covering 105 km², with a population of 2.249 million inhabitants in 2011³, headed by a city Mayor and 20 district Mayors (districts, or arrondissements, vary considerably both in terms of area and population). The Mayor is elected by the council of Paris, which is elected by the citizens⁴. The greater Paris metropolitan area is much more of a 'mixed bag', comprising of 10.1 million inhabitants⁵, 396 towns of all sizes, each headed by their own mayor with their own authority and duties in matters of security. Socio-demographics differ greatly in Paris. For example, in terms of per capita income, Neuilly-sur-Seine (population of 61.200⁶) is a far cry from Clichy-sous-Bois (population of 30.000⁷), where the 2005 riots originated, with a net annual household income of 83 835€ versus 15 314€⁸ respectively. In fact, these 396 communes seem to have very little common ground in terms of wealth, size, or political beliefs. In terms of organisational structure, the city of Paris must be distinguished from the three adjacent, surrounding, 100% built-up 'départements' that comprise the so-called 'petite couronne',

³ Source : Insee <http://www.insee.fr/fr/ppp/bases-de-donnees/recensement/populations-legales/departement.asp?dep=75>

⁴ This applies for the District's mayor as well.

⁵ Source : Insee http://www.insee.fr/fr/themes/document.asp?reg_id=20&ref_id=20667

⁶ Source Insee 2012 <http://www.insee.fr/fr/ppp/bases-de-donnees/recensement/populations-legales/pages2011/pdf/dep92.pdf>

⁷ Source Insee 2012 <http://www.insee.fr/fr/ppp/bases-de-donnees/recensement/populations-legales/pages2013/pdf/dep93.pdf>

⁸ Source Insee <http://www.insee.fr/fr/bases-de-donnees/esl/comparateur.asp?codegeo=com-93014>

and the four, larger 'départements' dubbed 'grande couronne', which are undergoing a fast urbanisation process. This whole group makes up the 'Ile-de-France région' with a population of 11.74 million and a geographical size of 12 000 km².

Nowadays, besides security people are worried about economics. A recent survey (2013) shows that the main concerns of people living in Paris are unemployment (56,5%), poverty (26,0%) and crime (13,7%)⁹. 15,2% of them (in comparison to 18,5% living in the banlieues) feel that "crime is a priority for the government". Victimization surveys show that people living inside Paris feel more secure although they are more victim of crime than the inhabitants of the banlieues or the limits of the urban area¹⁰. In 2011, 7,2% of the Parisians, 5,7% of the population living in the banlieues and 3,6% of the population living in the limits of the urban area; declared that they had been "victim of aggression (theft with violence)". The figures for "theft without violences" are respectively 15,2%, 7,7% and 5,0%. Nevertheless, 90,9% of the Parisians have found their district "safe" in comparison to 88,3% of the inhabitants of the banlieues. The finding that security is not the only priority in Paris is also reflected in the low votes for the Front National, an extreme right political party which main concern is insecurity and immigration.

Different 'territories'

An important classical subdivision structuring the Paris metropolitan area has to do with the separation between the periphery and downtown. This line separating the city itself from the suburbs used to be in the form of actual walls. Today the physical separation is in the shape of the 'boulevard périphérique', a six-lane freeway which surrounds the capital. Furthermore, administrative borders exist in Paris. The city of Paris, enjoying an extremely peculiar status, is itself a 'département', distinct from the surrounding 'petite couronne' ones (Hauts-de-Seine, Val-de-Marne and Seine-Saint-Denis). Traditionally, suburbs used to be where unwanted populations were relegated (Chevallier, 1958; Merriman, 1994). Throughout the 19th century, new industries built their facilities in the so-called 'banlieues' and workers naturally settled there. It gave birth to what would later be dubbed the 'Red Belt' as thanks to the working class votes, Socialists and Communists gradually rose to power in the city councils around Paris (Noiriel, 1986). Later on, another type of manpower came from the French colonies to work and settle in the banlieues.

Today, rightly or wrongly, the children and grand-children of these immigrants (of north-African and sub-Saharan extraction mainly) lay at the centre of modern fears (Mucchielli, 2002). To be more precise, the Parisians' vision is still shaped around the idea of two conflicting worlds : the civilised, pacified city world versus the 'banlieue', an unruly place of disorder and confrontation with police forces, filled with idle youths 'holding up the walls'. In colloquial French, this phase – tenir les murs – refers to young people hanging out unproductively and typically leaning up against the walls and making a living out of trafficking drugs, stolen goods, stripped-down or even burned-out cars (Kokoreff, 2007). The October-November 2005 riots have but reinforced this view. Beyond the 'périphérique' is

⁹ IAU Ile de France, *Août 2013 : Victimation et sentiment d'insécurité en Île-de-France*, Rapport final de l'enquête de 2011 .

¹⁰ Id ibid.

generally perceived as a 'ghetto' (Lapeyronnie, 2008) whose mirror image is Paris as a 'rich man's ghetto' (Pinçon & Pinçon-Charlot, 2008).

This conflict, however, only partially reflects the actual situation, and overlaps with another chasm, just as deep-rooted in history, called social segregation. Social segregation used to be vertical when poorer people had to live in harder-to-access upper floors, turned into horizontal space segregation from 19th century onwards, owing to technical advances such as elevators (Pinol, 2003). Neighbourhoods within Paris then tended to 'specialise' socially. Western Paris, more upper class and wealthier, differs from the eastern part of the city, which is traditionally more working class and poorer. While gentrification is undeniably at work in eastern Paris these days, low-income households remain, especially in north-eastern arrondissements where cheap social housing is still available (Pinçon & Pinçon Charlot, 2004). An administrative euphemism to designate rough urban areas within Paris are the so-called 'zones urbaines sensibles' [ZUS]. These zones display similar characteristics as suburban areas such as social housing with a high proportion of immigrants, high unemployment and poverty rates, and various forms of trafficking. The gentrification process stumbles against one major issue. Wealthier families will not send their children to the same schools as 'such people' because they are concerned about security and the quality of education (Van Zanten, 2009).

Nevertheless, considering Paris' banlieues under the prism of poverty alone would be extremely simplistic. Again, drawing an East-West dividing line is a relevant simplification. The northeastern 'département' of Seine Saint Denis can be contrasted to the Hauts de Seine department. The former being the cradle of the 2005 riots while the latter is home to some of the richest communes in France as well as the headquarters of many national and multinational companies.

Inherent to these different 'territories' are the movements and large-scale population flows generated by this situation. On a daily basis Paris attracts numerous workers from all adjacent regions. As a European metropolis it is swarming with tourists. Furthermore Paris is home to 5,200 celebrations, sports events, inaugurations, and ceremonies yearly¹¹. The dense public transportation network, added to the relative proximity of central Paris from rough suburban areas, leads young people from the latter ('les jeunes des quartiers' as they are called) to go to Paris in order to party, or to take advantage of the many events happening there. The central area of Les Halles, a transportation hub where many subway and train lines converge, is particularly spectacular in this respect, but other places are just as crowded on occasion. Demonstrations of all kinds (industrial workers, farmers, civil servants etc.) are frequent in Paris.

These kind of flows are one of the main security challenges for the police. One characterization of the public demand, at least its understanding by the police forces, is to preserve the invisible borders between the different areas (Donzelot, 2008). A "small" riot with people from ethnic minorities in a rich area in the western part of the city (like for example on the 14th of May 2013 in the Trocadero, in front of the Tour Eiffel) is unbearable for the inhabitants and for the police authorities. Groups of youngsters leaning up are tolerated only in "their" areas but under the pressure of police forces if they enter rich preserved zones (Mouhanna, 2002). It reinforces the idea that the main concern of the

¹¹ Source: Paris Prefecture of Police <http://www.prefecturedepolice.interieur.gouv.fr>

police is managing the movement of people instead of developing their relationships with people actually living in Paris (which comprises only a small percentage in these flows).

Different security issues

In terms of security the Paris metropolitan area can be described as comprising three types of territories, essentially distributed along the East-West and centre-periphery axes described above, each with its own security issues. The first type are relatively quiet residential areas, where residents mostly fear burglaries and imported crime from neighbouring places. The second type are tourist areas where shopkeepers (who often live elsewhere), foreign travellers and underprivileged suburban dwellers 'on the town' mingle – much to the delight of pickpockets, crooks and bag snatchers, not to mention traffickers. The third type are rough social housing areas called 'les quartiers sensibles'. In this area there is a vital underground economy to sustain a marginally decent way of life. The figure of the 'young' male immigrant seems to crystallise all fears. A fourth type could be added. These are changing areas due to gentrification. Their status is rapidly shifting from underprivileged neighbourhood with rather old buildings, to that of a 'hype' area, before ultimately becoming yet another residential or tourist district.

Obviously, security and feelings of insecurity vary considerably according to the area mentioned above. 'Rough areas' tend to be those with the most problems as far as security, poverty and unemployment are concerned. They also suffer from bad relationships between police officers and the local population. They are an extreme example of the systemic difficulties encountered in French police propensity to act. In other words, while they are plagued with the most hardships, yet they do not enjoy an adequate policing response. 42,5% of people living in the banlieues (in comparison to 32,4% of the Parisians) indicate that there are not enough police forces in their district¹². This lack of appropriate answer from police forces can also be felt, in a more mitigated way, in other types of areas. Unfortunately there are no detailed, comparable figures available in relation to these different areas.

Figures on the level of the City of Paris as a whole indicate that crime against property (66,8 to 35,16/1000 inhabitants), crime against persons (17,5 to 7,52/1000 inhabitants) and financial crime (10,9 to 5,71/1000 inhabitants) are higher than the average in France¹³. Furthermore, crime rates varies from one place to another. In St Denis (north of Paris) the crime ratio for 1000 inhabitants was 166,50 in 2008 and 44,77 in St Cloud (west of Paris)¹⁴. We must be careful with this kind of figures. It is recognized, even by official services, that these figures are subject to many manipulations in order to persuade people that politicians and police chiefs control crime in their area (Matelly & Mouhanna, 2007 ; Robert & Zaubermann, 2011; Gagneron, 2014).

Diversity in public policing

¹² IAU Ile de France, *Août 2013 : Victimation et sentiment d'insécurité en Île-de-France*, Rapport final de l'enquête de 2011

¹³ Source : Direction Centrale de la Police Judiciaire-2009

¹⁴ Source : DCPJ-Le Monde,

http://medias.lemonde.fr/mmpub/edt/doc/20090831/1233615_29b3_tauxdecriminaliteparville.pdf

Within Paris¹⁵ the official police to population ratio is 201 persons per police officer, compounded by the fact that many law enforcement units are based in Paris. These units add up to about 13,000 Riot Control Forces (CRS, Compagnies Républicaines de Sécurité),¹⁶ and 17,000 *gendarmes*¹⁷ which are stationed all over the French territory but never intervene in their own district. According to a long-established principle these forces deal only with geographically distant problems in order to avoid any issues stemming from potential closeness with demonstrators. Hence, many of these *gendarmes* and public security police often stay in Paris, spending a few weeks there before coming back to their unit. They supplement the permanent staff of police stations. Their presence illustrates the main priority of the police forces: to preserve order, to fight against demonstrators and rioters. It has to be noticed that not only these specialists are embedded in this issue. All police forces in Paris, including the local police stations, are involved in this fight. They spend most of their time on supervising any kind of crowd movement. The districts chiefs ('les commissaires') are in charge of the supervision of all police forces in their area (Monjardet & Mouhanna, 2005).

Tourists visiting Paris will notice that in the Airports and in the main railway stations, military officers are patrolling. They are participating to the big surveillance system used to answer the perceived threat of terrorist attacks. Because Paris is the head of the French centralized political administration, all governments are very careful of any event that could affect the city, official buildings and its inhabitants. The concentration of economic, political, and symbolic power in one place makes Paris very sensitive to any kind of 'attack' (ranging from political demonstrations to terrorist attacks) directed towards those in power.

Behind this picture lies the idea that the considerable police staffing of inner Paris is justified by the need to protect the city from the threats that lay close at hand. Paris police forces, and for that matter French police forces in general, are a control tool directed against mobs and potential uprisings rather than a public service. In this system, policing levers are pulled and strategic decisions are made at bureaucratic level. In Paris, police bureaucracy is both powerful and omnipresent. In what follows the political-administrative context of Paris is described in order to better understand this current state of policing in this metropolis.

The political-administrative context of policing Paris: the almightiness of the Police Prefect

It should be remembered that the Paris uprisings, before the French Revolution in 1358, 1382, 1413 and 1648 against the great Louis XIV, and in 1789, 1830, 1848, and 1871, each of which led to an overthrow of the ruling regime, made a long-lasting impact on both the local and national French political landscape. Since then most governments have considered the control of the Paris population as a priority in their security policies, in order not to allow the capital city's leadership to become a stronghold of power. Accordingly, they reached several conclusions. Firstly, Paris did not have a mayor at all from 1794 to February 1848, from

¹⁵ Source : Paris Prefecture of Police- <http://www.prefecturedepolice.interieur.gouv.fr>

¹⁶ Source: *Min. Interior*

¹⁷ Source: *Gendarmerie nationale*. The National Gendarmerie is a military institution in charge of public safety with police duties among the civilian population.

August 1848 to 1870, and between 1871 and 1977. The State simply assumed direct control during these periods. Secondly, public order was a priority including the protection of public buildings, ministries and congress halls in particular, or the supervision of state visits and the control of demonstrations. This prompted most experts (Monjardet, 1996) to believe that public order policing benefiting the State had ended up replacing policing serving the citizens. Although this is not exclusive to the greater Paris area; it is more explicit given the number of national administrations with headquarters in the capital city.

In terms of security management, Paris is both an exception in the French environment and a paradigmatic example of the issues the French police has to cope with. It is the capital city of a state that remains extremely centralised especially in its policing and security policies. Given its political, economic and demographic prominence, the Paris metropolitan area stands quite apart in the country. Paradoxes can be found all over the city. The greatest concentration of wealth lies right next to the largest underprivileged population. Upscale neighbourhoods are but minutes of public transportation away from the poorest areas plagued with hardships, which infamously attracted global media attention during the riots of November-December 2005. The road surrounding Paris along the line of the former city walls, called the 'boulevard périphérique' seems to act as a border between the city and the suburbs. Nonetheless, some working class areas remain within Paris itself and not all suburbia is populated by angry workers and immigrants on the verge of revolt. Indeed, some of these banlieues do concentrate a significant part of French wealth.

Those various economic and geographic paradoxes entail very complex political and administrative organisational issues. As a result, the Mayor of Paris (the largest city in France) is the least empowered in the whole country when it comes to security policy-making. In Paris, more than anywhere else in France, the State plays an instrumental role in security management policies, through one dedicated organisation: the Paris Prefecture of Police. Created by Napoleon I on February 17, 1800, this organisation is the sole depository of prerogatives that in other cities belong to the mayor, such as security, road safety and maintenance, street sweeping, or peace and quiet. It also somewhat eats into the competencies of the Prefect of Paris who is the official representative of the State (each 'département' has one) who is in charge of public order. Police forces as well as fire fighters and hygiene departments report to the Prefect of Police. The Police Prefect is a high-ranking civil servant endowed with enough power to impose his own security policy upon the Paris metropolitan area.

However, the Mayor of Paris (along with his colleagues of the neighbouring towns) cannot help but get thoroughly involved in security issues. This has been an ongoing concern in French politics for the last thirty years at least, both locally and nationally. While the various security bills enacted these last few years did increase their policing prerogatives, mayors haven't been able to take the 'upper hand' in this field, least of all in Paris. In this area local and national authorities are engaged in an ongoing struggle. Mayors are balancing between the will to exact more power in matters of security and the temptation to withdraw entirely, washing their hands in favour of the central State. In Paris, the problem is compounded by the presence of nearly all central state institutions having their headquarters in the area. This makes the structural conflict, pitching the local versus the national, particularly acute.

Some observers note that the Paris Prefecture of Police has become to a large extent a 'state within the State', insofar as its leadership has considerable means and staff at its disposal (Renaudie, 2008). Historically, this is explained by the fact that the Prefecture of Police is heir to the most ancient national police force in the country, that of Paris. Until 1941 most French cities had a municipal police force, Paris being an exception (Vogel, 1993). The first state owned police force in Paris was created in 1667, prefiguring the Napoleonic Prefecture de Police, which was the model for the national police force in July 1941. Until 1966, the Paris police department enjoyed special status within the national police as it had for instance in-house staff management rules. While this is not the case anymore, the Prefect of Police undeniably remains an autonomous and powerful character, in practice largely independent from the Ministry of Interior.

Headquartered in the *Ile de la Cité*, at the heart of Paris, a traditional place of power, the prefect operates autonomously. With in-house departments such as criminal police (Direction de la Police Judiciaire), intelligence (Direction du renseignement) and public order & traffic control (Direction de l'ordre public et de la circulation) its organisational structure is almost the same as that of their counterparts at the Ministry. The Paris Prefect of Police is being comfortably staffed and endowed. For example the criminal police for the Paris metropolitan area does reflect its special status as it includes 84 (out of 303) superintendents (Commissaires de Police Judiciaire), 1,142 (out of 2,956) officers (Officiers de Police Judiciaire) and 717 (out of 1,769¹⁸) rank and file (Gardiens de Police Judiciaire). The Paris Prefect of Police can stand his ground even against the Minister of Interior or the Mayor of Paris.

Hence, the Mayor of Paris would stand unfavourably if pitted in a power struggle against the Prefect of Police. Although the city takes a significant part in the funding of the Paris Police Prefect, it lacks significant influence on the process of policy making. For example the Mayor has to negotiate street planning issues, such as one-way streets, car-free zones, or anti-car policies with the Prefect. As a result, his position is lopsided. The Mayor of Paris, whose population is quite sensitive to matters of security, city planning, or traffic, has to actually negotiate with the Prefect of Paris, whose operations are funded by the city council.

On the metropolitan level, the competencies of the Prefecture of Police vary as a function of distance from Paris. Within the city itself, the Prefect of Police concurrently holds important prerogatives. All police forces report directly to him, including parking wardens. Until 2009, in the surrounding 'petite couronne' départements, only the Criminal Police Force (Police Judiciaire, part of the National Police) and fire fighters report to him. The public security police, i.e. uniformed police stations with several detectives at most, report to the Ministry of Interior and its local representatives. Additional prerogatives pertaining to public roads are completely out of his remit. In the next circle, the 'grande couronne' départements, he has no influence since all security matters are dealt with by the ministry's police agencies.

Still, even though the power of the Prefect of Police tends to wane far from Paris — which is not the case of the Minister of Interior, whose authority extends to the whole country — he remains an autonomous player to be reckoned with. In 2009¹⁹ his prerogatives were further

¹⁸ Source: Ministry of Interior-effectifs de police 2011

¹⁹ 14th of March, 2009

extended, since each and every national police officer within the 'petite couronne' now reports to him, a sum total of 26,000 police officers.²⁰ This decision was taken without the consultation of any mayor, neither in Paris nor in towns included into the new system. It was an agreement between the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Prefect of Police. The new organisation was adopted five years before a law passed to organize the new Paris metropolis political council with 124 towns around the capital city on January 27, 2014. The new police organization includes the police officers working in Paris and in these 124 towns from the banlieues. It does not include the Riot Control Forces (CRS) and mobile gendarmes (the crowd control units of the *gendarmerie*), which may however occasionally report to him. Several CCTV networks, whose control rooms are centralised at the Prefecture, reinforce this feeling of omnipresence and almightiness.

Important to notice is that since 2003, president Sarkozy has put an end to all attempts to implement a community policing strategy within the French National Police Force (Mouhanna, 2011). This decision has been taken without any local debate. Like the implementation of community policing in Paris in 1999, the change was decided amongst high level civil servants (Monjardet et Mouhanna, 2005). This strategy has a huge influence on the implementation of the philosophy of community oriented policing in France & Paris. It means that for example the police officers working for the French National Police Force are focussed on law and order or zero tolerance strategies and are not at all involved in any kind of prevention. They abandon what they call "inconvenient" missions such as being present at schools' doors or participating in sports meetings with teenagers. As a result, the local authorities in Paris (and other French cities), experiment with 'new' forms of policing. It stimulates the idea of Municipal police forces and all kinds of new services in charge of prevention. A process that leads to a pluralisation in security provision in Paris, called plural policing.

The emergence or development of municipal police forces and other public uniformed surveillance agencies in Paris

While today's budget cuts lead to downsizing national police forces; the question of the emergence or development of municipal police forces, whose staff would report to and be paid by mayors, is being raised throughout the country (Malochet, 2007). As far as the Paris metropolitan area is concerned, the incredibly diverse and dispersed municipal strategies do converge on this particular topic. Rich towns such as Levallois-Perret, where insecurity is not a pressing issue but feelings of insecurity are very high, have long since opted for strong police staffing. New recruits came as an addition to existing national police forces. Hence, 377 municipal police forces, with huge discrepancies in size, cover 407 out of 1,280 communes in the Ile-de-France region, and 75% of the population (Le Goff, 2009). Nevertheless, 200 of them comprise less than 5 police officers. Weaponry and assignments vary from one place to another. Other city councils, however, some of them among the most impacted by insecurity or affected by the riots of 2005, refuse such policies, arguing that they cannot afford them²¹ or that they will not take responsibility for what is essentially a

²⁰ Source: Prefecture of Police-2010. Today, the number of police officers depending from the PP is 30 000.

²¹ The average estimated cost of a municipal police force is € 25 per capita (Source: Le GOFF-IAU)

mission of the State, on grounds of republican fairness. Some mayors don't want to be accountable on the issue of safety, even if this position gets less support today. In other words, they will not act as a substitute for the State. Indeed, the build-up of municipal police often entails a withdrawal of State forces in the medium term.

Partisanship seems to have little influence these days on whether a given town will opt in or out of municipal police. While radical left-wing city councils, especially those still held by the Communist party, tend to be less committed in this trend, in the greater Paris area as in many others, the right-left chasm does not mean much when it comes to security (Ferret & Mouhanna, 2005). Thus, the decision of opting for municipal police is based on several factors, ranging from whether or not the commune has a national police station (*commissariat*) to financial considerations, through political opportunism or insecurity – real or perceived by residents. If some cities like Levallois Perret have developed a consequent police force, with a clear involvement of the mayor in security issues, many others limit their investment in this field.

Up till now, the Socialist mayors²² of Paris rejected the idea of a municipal police force. They do not challenge the authority of the Prefect of Police, except marginally (street planning). This topic, however, failed to draw consensus for quite a while, as evidenced by the 2001 city council election campaign debates. The then mayor, fearing defeat (indeed he lost against the left), was actively promoting the idea of such a force. This strategy was consistent with the security themes that were being pushed to the fore at national level during this campaign. Although this campaign for a municipal police force ultimately failed, the city council developed its own operation, which supplemented the Prefecture's rather than competing with them. The city council campaign of 2014 showed no real differences between left and right parties as far as a local police force is concerned.

Little by little, the *Direction de la Prévention et de la Protection* [DPP], depending on the mayor, increasingly appeared as an entity which, however embryonic, might eventually replace the Prefecture, should the mayor change track. For now, in addition to headquarters exploiting growing numbers of CCTV cameras, the DPP employs 1,313 surveillance and protection agents,²³ mainly entrusted with the protection of municipal facilities and patrolling capacities. These are low figures indeed if compared to the staffing of national police, however other city staff do perform security-related assignments. Some of these officers are to be found outside schools, acting as crossing-guards, a task that used to be carried out by national police. Another 573 agents are involved in surveillance in City parks and gardens.

Furthermore, while the city council of Paris substantially foots the bill for the Prefecture de Police, it also directly pays the salaries of the 2,000 Paris *Agents de Surveillance* [ASP], a unique body in France, which is in charge of traffic and parking policing in the capital city. These officers are under the supervision of the national police stations (police *commissariats*). However, it is entirely conceivable that they will be transferred to a municipal force, even though the limitations of training do not enable them to substitute for

²² It is expected that the new Socialist Mayor Anne Hidalgo, who took over from Bertrand Delanoë in April 2014, will build on his main ideas in relation to security policy.

²³ Source: Paris city council-2012

national police. Up till April 2014, the socialist mayor Delanoë has always refused to build a Parisian police force. He defends a “national republican vision of policing” which implies that the State has to run the police forces and that there should be equal forces all around the territory. An aspiration that does not totally reflect reality.

It is clear that within the city of Paris security matters are driven by politics and not by economic considerations. There are three important players. The State, which remains eager to keep the upper hand on security and public order in the capital. Secondly, the prefect, who remains extremely autonomous, even towards the Ministry of Interior. Thirdly the mayor who prefers to sidestep direct management of security issues for the time being. A balance that brings Paris into a status quo.

Up till now (2014), the local police forces have limited judicial power. They can arrest people committing crime but they are not allowed to do investigations, to execute a ‘stop & search’ operation or to put somebody into custody. In Paris, this is not perceived to be a problem by the Mayor as he wants the municipal police force to be oriented towards prevention. In fact, more and more new units are created to do mediation and prevention. For example, in some very sensitive areas in Paris, the so called “correspondants de nuit” are working between four p.m. and midnight (de Maillard, 2013). These units were created in 2002 and 120 agents are now deployed in 11 areas. They are in charge of the homeless, control of public equipment (lights, road, etc...), prevention of damages and mediation between people in conflict. They insist on their status of not belonging to the police corps as the National Police Officers have a bad image amongst youngsters from ethnic minorities. As they are not using force, these units tends to lack authority in the field however.

Private commercial security agencies : supplements or substitutes?

All over the world, a wave of privatisations has swept the field of security (Shearing & Stenning, 1987). Paris is no exception to this rule. Big retailers and department stores, banks, and even ministries resort to private security companies to regulate access to their premises and protect their property. The respective share of the public and private sectors are difficult to assess in matters of security. There is no doubt the state is largely withdrawing from the field, especially from such functions as people and property protection. This trend, initiated long ago, is currently intensified (Ocqueteau, 1997).

The specificity of Paris makes it harder to determine whether private providers tend to substitute for public forces or the development of private security is merely supplementing the current police forces. Indeed, the presence of the national police force remains massive and quite visible. Still its main focus is on public order. Hence, any withdrawal – from school crossing supervision, mall patrols, etc. – will be offset by an increasing demand on the private sector, while the national police force will tend to focus on its core mission while still maintaining a high level of staffing in Paris.

One of the major emerging players in terms of volume these last few years is the ‘Groupement parisien inter-bailleurs de surveillance’²⁴ (GPIS). This 45 patrol, 115 man force,

²⁴ Paris inter-lessors surveillance group

created in 2004 upon the initiative of 9 social housing lessors, carries out night patrols in the rough areas of northern Paris, an allegedly risky task.²⁵ As far as GPIS is concerned, it is legitimate to call upon security privatisation since these patrols substitute for police patrols. They make arrests and intervene when groups of young people threaten peace and quiet. National police unions complain about the competition introduced by this situation. At the same time, they are quite happy to take delivery of GPIS' arrestees, which improve their success statistics without exposing them to street hazards. However, the public versus private sector clash remains quite limited in this instance, since half the budget of GPIS is funded by the Paris city council, while the other half is provided by social housing lessors, many of which belong to the public sector. Hence, it is less a matter of privatisation than creeping municipalisation of public security.

Other organisations too have decided to create their own security forces, which exist next to the units of the National police doing the same job. For example, the two transportation services, the Régie Autonome des Transports Parisiens (RATP) for the metro and busses and the Société Nationale des Chemins de fer Français (SNCF) for the trains, have developed units in order to fight against crime and fear of crime inside their buildings and vehicles. Although a special branch of the Police Nationale-préfecture de police de Paris is dedicated to this mission, with more or less 1600 officers, transportation authorities are persuaded that it is not enough as many Parisians, whether they use the metro or not, find it the most dangerous place in the city. That explains why the RATP has created its own police force in 1994 called 'Groupe de protection et de sécurisation des réseaux' (GPSR). GPSR consists of 1000 agents who are carrying non-lethal weapons (including gaz and Taser) although some are wearing lethal arms. Since the nineties the National Rail company, la SNCF has decided to transform its guards, who were plain clothes agents, in an uniformed force called Surveillance générale (Suge). Suge consists of 2800 agents, among them 1400 in the Paris metropolitan area. Like the municipal police forces, the members of GPSR and Suge have limited powers. They can arrest people doing a crime or refusing to pay their travelling ticket, but they have to refer as soon as possible to a National Police officer, who is the only one who has the right to build a criminal case and to send it to the prosecutor's office.

In Paris (and France) the privatisation of security appears to be mainstream. Almost all commercial centres have their security service. Their agents are mostly oriented towards the prevention of shoplifting. When they arrest a thief, they are authorized by the prosecutor to impose a fine. In the biggest commercial centres, the private companies agents are patrolling in the alleys, looking for pickpockets but also paying attention to every kind of "trouble". They focus especially on group of youngsters, who are perceived to frighten "honest citizens". Many of these private agents belong to ethnic minorities and/or live in poor areas but they contribute to the protection of "the temple of consumption". Not very well paid, these agents tend to replace the police officers in many places. At the national level, it is said that the number of private agents is around 200 000, an equivalent to the number of public officers in the field of security.

This in no way rules out the possibility of seeing other forms of private security gather momentum. However, this would have more to do with hybridisation than competition, given the numerous links between the public and the private sector. For example, at night,

²⁵ Source: Paris city council-2012

more and more bars prefer self-regulation and provide their own guards in order to prevent drunk or “bad” people to come in. They are aware of the fact that the intervention of the national police force in case of problems increases the chance of a profound control in their bar on criteria related to noise, maximum numbers allowed in the bar and the age of their customers. Providing their own guards prevents the chance of police forces being around or in their bars, which generates a negative image.

Conclusion and reflections

As the capital city of a state that remains extremely centralised – especially in its policing and security policies – and given its political, economic, and demographic prominence, the Paris metropolitan area stands out as the most developed example of centralisation and the State’s wish to control its citizens. The political-administrative context of policing Paris generated a Police Prefect that can be considered as the almighty in the field of security. A strong National Police Force suppresses the development of municipal police forces. Nevertheless, other public uniformed surveillance agencies are present in this metropolis. Together with the private commercial security agents they are contributing to the pluralisation of security provision in Paris.

Despite the observed pluralisation described above, Paris is still a ‘state’ in the state. It is a city in which police forces are mainly built to protect the state. It creates a context in which less space is open for other initiatives. It rather confirms the Napoleonic nature of the police system in which civil non-commercial initiatives are ‘suppressed’ or do simply not ‘survive’. In Paris, organized neighbourhood watch seems not to be welcomed. The self-organized Neighbourhood watch operations that were built in some area –for example in Stalingrad place at the beginning of 2000- were not sustained neither by the Prefecture nor by the city council. All this kind of initiatives in France have to be built under the supervision of the Police Nationale and the ‘watchers’ have to be informants for the police forces. Otherwise, these groups are compromised. They are told to be the defender of selfish interests while the National Police forces represent the public interest. As a consequence, vigilante or self defense initiatives are rare in France, and especially in Paris, where citizens often associate this kind of initiatives with “fascism”.

From this Napoleonic non-democratic tradition, citizen participation can only be perceived from an instrumental point of view (Easton & Van Ryckeghem, 2012). It means that citizens can be no more than ‘informants’ for the police or victims that must be protected. Some police officers call the Parisians “welfare recipients” or potentially dangerous people who have to be controlled and managed. They are never considered as partners in building a security strategy for Paris.

On the other hand citizens in Paris tend to feel very comfortable with this situation. They are not claiming any power in the definition of police priorities. The majority of the citizens accept the heavy presence of public police officers whose image is the protection of the State and the Nation (Mouhanna, 2011). It is an example of what has been called the professionalization paradox. This is a process in which the solution of societal problems is

assigned to professionals which generates an inability of citizens to address these problems themselves (Arnstein, 1969; Vos & Van Doorn, 2004).

It is clear that despite the fact that Paris, like many other European cities, has gone through a process of pluralisation; the nature of the outcome is still influenced by its Napoleonic tradition.

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