

Policing Sofia

From centralisation to decentralisation

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ABSTRACT

In this article, which is embedded in the special issue of the *Journal* which focuses on the comparative research project 'Policing European Metropolises', the general aim is to provide an answer to the research question: 'Are underlying Anglo-American assumptions regarding trends towards plural policing recognisable in European local geographical settings?' Our underlying question in this article concerns whether or not the local empirical situation in Sofia differs from more general evolutions of policing in Europe. This article will inquire specifically about the (national) influence of a 'country in transition' (Bulgaria) on the territory of the city of Sofia. For reasons of feasibility the article is limited to an exploration of the organisation of Bulgarian police. The following main questions are answered in this article: (1) What is the nature of the division between the national police apparatus and local policing bodies?, (2) Are tendencies towards fragmentation and centralisation determined at the same time? and (3) Are tendencies towards private governance present within the public domain? Answering these questions requires an exploration of the historical and contextual background, so that insight into the related Bulgarian realities, particularly those of Sofia, might be gained. This article explores the official arrangements regarding the policing of crime and disorder in Sofia; it is based on desktop research, mostly internal research from the Ministry of the Interior. In the concluding section, the article summarises the different aspects of policing security in Sofia, framing the reality of this city within the article's theoretical starting points regarding security governance and plural policing.

Keywords: plural policing, governance of crime and disorder, public and private police



EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF POLICING STUDIES, 2(1), 30-60
© 2014 MAKLU | ISSN 2034-760X | SEPTEMBER 2014

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1. Introduction

This article is embedded in the special issue of the *Journal* which focuses on the comparative research project 'Policing European Metropolises'. The general aim

of this project is to provide an answer to the following central research question: *'Are underlying Anglo-American assumptions regarding trends towards plural policing recognisable in European local geographical settings'?* As a starting point in this comparative research, researchers within the project have been asked to provide an overview of the key issues and challenges related to policing European metropolises in the early twenty-first century and to place these in their broader institutional and historical contexts, particularly for a broad European readership that may be unfamiliar with the governing arrangements that structure policing in particular cities (Edwards & Prins, in this issue). The aim of the project, in analysing different cities, is neither to seek for universality nor for uniqueness, but rather for a *critical realist method of articulation* that recognises the contextual nature of governance and of its various objects of control (Edwards & Hughes, 2005, 347). The ambition is to deepen understanding of the 'geo-historical approach' (Edwards & Hughes, 2005) in the course of comparing safety-oriented governance in Europe with empirical research data. In spite of a huge amount of research focusing on comparisons among *countries* (Brodeur, 1995; Brogden & Nijhar, 2005; Jones & Newburn, 2006; Wisler & Onwudiwe, 2009; Lemieux, 2010; Nelken, 2011; Terpstra, Stokkom & Spreuwiers, 2013; Hoogenboom, 1991), comparing the governance of *cities* is an innovative research objective. In order to compare different approaches to policing in metropolises within Europe, an extensive standardised checklist was designed and submitted to the various authors, so that the empirical data could be collected in a structured way.

Our underlying question in this article concerns *whether or not the local empirical situation in Sofia differs from more general evolutions of policing in Europe*. Indeed, there exists a huge Anglo-Saxon body of literature on police and policing, but literature on policing in Eastern European countries is rather scarce. During the 1980s police authorities in Central and Eastern European Countries were shrouded in secrecy and very little information was published even on basic police apparatus features. Any interests from citizens in this issue could have resulted in being arrested (Meško, Fields, Lobnikar & Sotlar, 2013). Furthermore, according to Stenning (2009, 23), *'Accountability of policing has remained stubbornly polarized between research and writing on the governance of 'the police' on the one hand, and a largely separate (and much smaller) literature mainly bemoaning an alleged lack of adequate and effective governance and public accountability of 'private security' on the other'*. More importantly, Stenning (2009, 23) stipulates that *'The challenge of developing a holistic conception of governance and accountability that might be appropriate for the 'plural policing' environment of the 21st century has been largely ignored by policing scholars and policy makers alike'*. In order to contribute in a modest way to this body of knowledge, this article will inquire specifically about the (national) influence of a *'country in transition'* (Bulgaria) on the territory of the city of Sofia. The purpose of the project is to contribute to a *European multi-layered governance theory* on urban control of crime and social disorder. Issues exploring the nature of relationships within and between partner agencies, with a view to enhancing understanding of contemporary policing culture (O'Neill & Loftus, 2013), can be interesting and useful for constructing a network governance theory on urban control.

The Metropolises project aims to grasp the empirical reality of urban security governance. According to Edwards and Hughes (2013), this concept has been used to describe social and economic responses to certain problems of street crime, civil unrest and social cohesion. This article will not explore urban security in such a broad sense, and will, for reasons of feasibility¹, be limited to an exploration of the organisation of Bulgarian police. The following main questions are consequently answered in this article: (1) What is the nature of the division between the national police apparatus and local policing bodies?, (2) Are tendencies towards fragmentation and centralisation determined at the same time? (Edwards & Hughes, 2005; Prins, Cachet, Ponsaers & Hughes, 2012) and (3) Are tendencies towards private governance present within the public domain? (Jones & Newburn, 1999; Hope, 2000; Johnston & Shearing, 2003; Hope & Karstedt, 2003; Johnston & Stenning, 2010; Goold, Loader & Thumala, 2010). Answering these questions requires an exploration of their historical and contextual background, so that insight into the related Bulgarian realities, particularly those of Sofia, might be gained.

This article explores the official arrangements regarding the policing of crime and disorder in Sofia; it is based on desktop research, mostly internal research from the Ministry of the Interior. Its main sources of information are quantitative and qualitative data from governmental sources, (national and local) laws and regulations, and studies that were conducted by the Center for the Study of Democracy (CSD) in Bulgaria. Governmental sources of information are mainly formal and legal documents from the Ministry of the Interior, the regulations of which stipulate its activities and main tasks as well as the structures and bodies of governance within the internal administration. In addition to that, we have requested and obtained information from the Metropolitan Directorate of the Ministry of the Interior².

The article is structured as follows. In the *first* (theoretical) section, insight is provided into global governance tendencies within nations, as they are described in the broader context of public sector reform in Western Europe. Elements of the urban sociology theory of security governance are explored in order to provide a theoretical framework for understanding the situation in Sofia. In the *second* section, the authors provide an overview of the institutional and historical contexts of Bulgaria and Sofia, in order to achieve a greater understanding of the realities of policing security in Sofia. Bulgaria can be called 'a country in transition' (Ciobanu, 2010). The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 symbolised the beginning of the process of embracing democratic ideas and the initiation of a complex transition process (Mesko, Fields, Lobnikar & Sotlar, 2013). Special subsections are devoted to the substantial urbanisation processes Bulgaria underwent as well as the extremist attacks and disturbances that occurred simultaneously. In the *third* section, we discuss the Bulgarian constitutional framework of the national police system, the territorially

¹ Gathering the data was a very time-consuming process. Scholarly work on policing in Sofia is very scarce: most websites are not available in English and special permission to receive information has to be received from the Minister of the Interior. In particular, finding information related to policing on regional and local levels was very difficult.

² In order to obtain data, we needed to send official letters from the university. The information we requested was delivered in turn via personal letters.

organised regional police and the municipal police structure that operates in Sofia. In the *fourth* section, other actors who provide security are discussed, specifically the mayor and private actors who operate within the city. In the *concluding* section, the article summarises the different aspects of policing security in Sofia, framing the reality of this city within the article's theoretical starting points regarding security governance and plural policing.

2. Theoretical insights on governance evolutions in Western Europe

'Policing' in the title of this article refers to police work in the broadest sense, including that which is done by agencies other than the regular police force (Terpstra; Stokkom & Spreeuwiers, 2013). 'Policing' can be defined as '*Intentional action involving the conscious exercise of power or authority (by an individual or organisation) that is directed towards rule enforcement, the promotion of order or assurances of safety*' (Crawford, Lister, Blackburn & Burnett, 2005, 4). As Loader (2000, 324) states, '*We are living in the midst of a potentially far-reaching transformation in the means by which order and security are maintained in liberal democratic societies, one that is giving rise to the fragmentation and diversification of policing provision, and ushering in a plethora of agencies and agents, each with particular kinds of responsibility for the delivery of policing and security services and technologies. What we might call a shift from police to policing has seen the sovereign state – hitherto considered focal to both provision and accountability in this field – reconfigured as but one node of a broader, more diverse 'network of power'*'. Steering mechanisms appearing within late modernity that were designed to shift 'government' to 'governance' have been described by many scholars (Osborne & Gaebler, 1993; Rhodes, 1996; Kooiman, 1999; Newman, 2001; Garland, 2001; Crawford, 2002; 2004; Crawford, Lister & Wall, 2003; Ostrom, 2005; Crawford & Lister, 2006; 2007). Liberal democratic polities became increasingly differentiated as public administration systems expanded to encompass more competencies and as they simultaneously responded to pressures calling for greater intervention in civil society (Rhodes, 1997, in Edwards & Hughes, 2005, 351). Emphasis lay on active citizenship, a concept that redefines citizenship as being about rights and responsibilities (Brannan, John & Stoker, 2006). It insists on the need for local communities and local actors to take up greater shares in and responsibility for the regulation and enforcement of local community life (Lippens, 2008). The dominant idea in this regard was to '*break away from old bureaucratic modes of integral service provision and [to replace] these by more flexible market and customer-oriented methods of public service delivery*' (van der Meer, 2009, 174). As well: '*Governance is also regarded as a means of restoring the authority of government agencies by empowering private citizens to participate more directly in their own government*' (Edwards & Hughes, 2009, 354).

As well as promoting citizen participation, the neoliberal approach and the New Public Management led to 'reinventing government' (Osborne & Gaebler, 1993), meaning that 'governance [was] no longer monopolised by states', or characterised by '*rule-at-a-distance*' (Johnston & Shearing, 2003) or '*hollowing out of the state*' (Rhodes, 1994). The classic model of authority was replaced by horizontal forms of

governance in which private (Kempa, Stenning & Wood, 2004; Hope & Sparks, 2000) and public actors seek to co-produce policy (Prins & Cachet, 2011). New concepts, such as risk control, commercial arrangements, cost and benefit analyses, efficiency, effectiveness, customer-oriented practices and output targeting, accompanied this trend (Crawford et al., 2003; Crawford & Lister, 2006; Downes & Van Swaaningen, 2007). The traditional Weberian model of the interfering welfare state no longer provided a solution for the increasingly diverse, complex and dynamic circumstances of late modern society (Devroe, 2013).

The centralised state, with its bureaucratic power mechanisms, lost its ruling position in favour of decentralisation, which distributes authority among lower levels. Public sector reforms pertained to changes in the distribution of power and to the division of central, territorial and functional authority among various decentralised forms of government (Meer, 2009). *'Forms of control are increasingly inscribed into the fabric of local territorial and spatial interactions'* (Robert, 2002, in Crawford, 2002, 27). Local security policy strove for partnerships and for local preventative strategies (Johnston & Shearing, 2003) developed by networks among police, private security, military and secret intelligence agencies (Reiner, 2000). These networks include *'all those interactive arrangements in which public as well as private actors participate aimed at solving societal problems, or creating societal opportunities, and attending to the institutions within which these governing activities take place'* (Kooiman, 1999, 70).

The concept of 'governance of security' includes responses to criminal events that have already taken place: *'anticipating and seeking to prevent threats that might occur'* (Johnston & Shearing, 2003, 32). Different actors enter the public space in order to keep public order. More precisely, attention paid to policy regarding a stringent *'politics of behaviour'* (Field, 2003) and *'defining deviance down'* (Garland, 2001) was a result of a shifting of the authority of national law enforcement agencies to local partners and citizens, called *'relocalisation'* (Crawford, 2002) or *'plural policing'* (Loader, 2000; Crawford, Lister, Blackburn & Burnett, 2005; Jones & Newburn, 2006; Row, 2014). Other concepts used in Anglo-Saxon literature are *'local multi-agency partnerships'* (Crawford, 1997; MacLaughlin, 2002), *'multi-agency approach'*, *'community safety policy'* (Crawford, 1999; Brannan et al., 2007), *'networked governance'*, *'urban governance'* and *'multi-layered or multilevel governance'* (Loader, 2000).

Local security issues have local expressions, especially in the densely populated urban centres of Europe, but their origins often lie far beyond these cities. Threats to urban security are also associated with the austere economic environment confronting urban populations in Europe as a consequence of the financial crisis of 2008 and of the related sovereign debt problems encountered by many EU member states (Edwards & Hughes, 2013). In times of crisis, there would seem to be a risk that police services will be pressured to adopt a very narrow idea of policing (Millie & Bullock, 2013), and that they will as a result try to outsource additional police tasks to private companies. Indeed, since the early 1990s patrolling, guardianship and the enforcement of law and order have no longer been seen as the exclusive tasks of the police (Terpstra et al., 2013). As an alternative to a 'monopoly of control by the police', Loader (2000) mentions a complex future in which alliances of public,

parochial and private agencies and interests coexist, sometimes drawn together in intricate networks of policing that seek to provide public reassurance. Local policing is becoming increasingly organised and is being delivered through a multiplicity of purchaser and provider arrangements. New forms of additional policing, referred to as the *'extended police family'* (Johnston, 2003) have emerged. Though there has been no single police 'position' on the governance of plural policing in Britain, an influential model ('the police extended family') (Home Office, 2001) has arisen *'because of concern in some places that municipal governments might opt to set up their own police forces, thereby posing a threat of 'Balkanization'* (Blair, 2002, in Johnston, 2003, 185). This 'family' includes subcontracted police and community support officers, municipal guards, neighbourhood and street wardens, estate rangers, caretakers and concierges, as well as private security guards and citizen patrols (Zedner, 2003; Crawford & Lister, 2006).

3. Historical evolutions and contexts within Bulgaria

3.1. Bulgaria

Bulgaria is located in the south-eastern portion of Europe; it is the 14th largest country in the entire continent. It is currently home to a total of 7.3 million residents, the majority of these being Christians. *'Despite certain hesitations and distrust, the period between national independence and the end of the First World War (1878-1918) was generally marked by a strong pro-European orientation of the Bulgarian state'* (Daskalov, 2004, 46). This drastically changed in 1918. As a member of the losing side in the first World War, Bulgaria had to concede to humiliating peace treaties, which were perceived in the country as a national catastrophe (Zhelyazkova, Kosseva & Toleran, 2010). Henceforth, Europe was no longer an attractive and desired role model for the Bulgarian nation. Bulgarian nationalism has been largely a hybrid, containing elements of both German cultural and ethnic nationalism and French civic nationalism. After World War II, Bulgaria became a Communist country and a loyal member of the Soviet bloc. In sharp contrast to its post-independence period (late 19th century), when Bulgaria was struggling to 'return to Europe' and when its European identity and heritage were strongly emphasised, the political discourse, literature and social sciences of the post-WWII Bulgaria completely lacked any reference to European identity or European orientation (Zhelyazkova, Kosseva & Toleran, 2010). Instead, Slavic identity was emphasised, highlighting the closeness of Bulgaria and the Soviet/Russian nation in terms of origin and culture. In February 1990 the Communist Party, forced by street protests, gave up its claim on power, and in June 1990 the first free elections since 1931 were held; these were won by the Bulgarian Socialist Party (the new name of the Communist Party). In July 1991 a new constitution was adopted, stipulating a representative elected President as well as a Prime Minister and a Cabinet.

On 1 January 2007, Bulgaria joined the European Union, becoming one of its newest members. Despite being an EU member, Bulgaria's position in the Union

is still not equal to those of older member states. Bulgaria (along with Romania) is subject to strict monitoring and control exercised by the European Commission over issues of corruption and organised crime (Zhelyazkova, Kosseva & Toleran, 2010). The situation in Bulgaria — one of the least corrupt countries in 2007 — has deteriorated dramatically: in 2010 there was more corruption in the country than there had been before (Ganev, 2013).

'In the aftermath of Bulgaria's entry in the EU, competitive rent seeking was supplanted by cronyism. This shift constitutes a turning point in a peculiar evolutionary cycle that began after the collapse of one-party regimes in 1989. During the first decade of post-communism, cronyism was prevalent. One of the arguments that encounter no dissent is that in Bulgaria and Romania assets previously owned by the state were distributed among strategically located members of the communist nomenklatura. In both countries, the former communists retained power and reinvented themselves as capitalists — while successfully keeping local and foreign competitors at bay' (Ganev, 2013, 29).

With a 12% unemployment rate and a mainly elderly population, Bulgaria holds the tenth place on the list of the top ten 'most poverty-ridden countries'³ in Europe. This list is based on each country's per capita gross domestic product⁴ (GDP), as determined in 2012 by the Central Intelligence Agency fact book⁵. The current minimum wage in Bulgaria is 174 euros per month⁶. The economic changes after 1989 have had serious consequences on the standard of living of the vast majority of the Bulgarian population (Ivanov, 1998). The deep economic crisis faced by the country is more severe in the regions with ethnically mixed communities. The socialist economy created small firms to offer employment to the population, but the industries were new and not well established (Falaris, 2004). The years of transition have led to the failure of these firms as they were not competitive and faced many difficulties in supply of resources (Pickles & Berg, 2000).

Bulgaria is a multicultural country, containing over 15 ethnic communities. The largest group is native Bulgarians (84,8% according to the 2011 census), followed by Turks (8,8%) and Roma (4,9%)⁷. A prevailing perception of the country as a mono-national state has resulted in correspondingly prejudicial policies towards the minority groups. They have been accepted as part of Bulgarian society, but at the same time in practice have been highly marginalised (Zhelyazkova, Kosseva &

³ <http://www.therichest.com/rich-list/poorest-list/the-10-most-poverty-ridden-countries-in-europe/> last consulted on May, 30 2014.

⁴ These numbers were determined by dividing the country's GDP by the population of the country, thus providing a rough estimate of the income of an individual person within that country.

⁵ <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2221.html>, last consulted on May, 30 2014.

⁶ Compare to a minimum wage of 1921 euros per month in the richest EU country, Luxembourg: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Minimum_wage_statistics, last consulted on May, 30 2014.

⁷ 2011 Census conducted by National Institute for Statistics: <http://www.nsi.bg/sites/default/files/files/pressreleases/Census2011final.pdf>

Toleran, 2010). Roma live mostly in segregated settlements at the edges of cities and towns, while the majority of Turks and Pomaks (another minority ethnic group) reside in peripheral rural regions. In this way, they remain largely invisible in the everyday lives of the majority of the population.

State socialist nationalization policies in the 1980s severely impacted the ethnic Turkish and Muslim regions of Bulgaria, while neo-liberal economic strategies have subsequently further deepened their economic crisis. Unemployment among Roma is the highest of all minorities, between 60 and 65 per cent (Gallie, Kostova, Kuchar & Thomlinson, 1996, 63-78). This tendency is confirmed by recent research. The empirical data from a survey on a representative sample of 2,066 people in March 2000 shows that 55 per cent of the Roma and 48 per cent of the Turks are not employed (Kolev, 2000, 10). According to the Roma themselves, unemployment is the basic economic problem for their community. They explain the high rate of unemployment with their low education. There are also a significant number of Roma who tend to think that unemployment is due to ethnic discrimination (Gallie et al. 1996). In Central and Eastern Europe and especially in Southeastern Europe, the vacuum created by the collapse of the communist ideology has often been filled by a nationalist ideology. As a counter reaction, the minorities are demanding greater recognition of their rights. This has led to numerous conflicts in the region. Ethnic groups are officially recognised in the Bulgarian constitution, with official policy aiming at integration.

Bulgaria has an extremely low crime rate compared to other EU countries⁸. According to Nikolay Radulov (2012), the low crime rate registered is a result of the loss of public trust in Bulgarian police. While a 6% decrease is registered yearly (in the period of 2010-2012), the latent crime rate has increased with the same percentage. This could also be due to inadequacies in the system for crime registration (Radulov, 2012). Central and Eastern European countries are characterised by low crime rates, the results of the artificially maintained employment created by policymakers during the rule of Communism. By focusing on maintaining full employment and low prices for basic foods, these reforms tended to reveal the inadequacies of the system instead of helping to develop it. As early as 1982, however, it became clear that the depoliticisation of socialist economies and the partial abandonment of central planning, whether involving minimal or more extensive rationalisations of the managerial apparatuses of state enterprises, would lead to a serious weakening of the legitimacy of states (Ciobanu, 2010).

3.2. Sofia

The largest city in Bulgaria is Sofia, its capital; it is the 15th largest city in the European Union, with a 2013 population of 1,301,683 citizens. Sofia is geographically

⁸ The total number of crimes in Bulgaria from 2008 to 2012 was 206,483. This translates to 2,803 crimes per 100,000 inhabitants. See the latest version of the European Sourcebook, covering the years 2003–2007: <https://english.wodc.nl/onderzoeksdatabase/european-sourcebook-4e-editie.aspx>, and Killias and Rau (2000), to compare these rates with those of other EU countries.

situated in western Bulgaria, at the northern foot of Vitosha Mountain, in the 'Sofia Valley', which is surrounded by mountains on all sides. The city covers an area of 1344 km. Sofia can be described as a 'city in transition': it has expanded culturally, economically, demographically and physically at a very fast pace (Staddon & Mollov, 2000). In 1880, Sofia counted only 19,000 citizens. From that time until 1997, the population in Sofia increased 54 times. This trend has continued during the past ten years⁹, due to migrations from smaller cities and villages all over the country¹⁰. Crime rates in Sofia are - as in Bulgaria overall - quite marginal¹¹, and are not comparable to rates in other big cities in Europe. The total number of crimes reported by the police in Sofia from 2008 to 2012 was 12,640¹². The crime rate was 974.84 crimes per 100,000 inhabitants.

3.2.1. *Towards a substantial urbanisation*

While during the decades preceding 1950 Sofia experienced the most dramatic increases in population in all of Bulgaria, it has long been a symbol of urbanisation in Bulgarian history. Before the liberation, Sofia's territory expanded by only 2.8 square kilometres, with 75% of its total area covered with building structures and surrounded by security dikes (Vassilev, 2001). The city expanded and gradually urbanised its vicinities in all directions, resulting in a 4.2 square kilometre increase by 1887¹³. In the period between 1900 and 1946, migration to Sofia reached its peak, triggering an expansion that increased the city's population from 68,000 inhabitants in 1900 to half a million inhabitants in 1946. This evolution led to increasing urbanisation. This systematic beginning suffered a setback as a result of the demographic crisis after World War I, which was caused by an unprecedented wave of migrations from Macedonia, Thrace, Dobrudsha and Morava. A key factor in the urbanisation process was the creation of an important railway juncture at the end of the 20th century, which made travel from Western Europe to Istanbul (via Belgrade and Sofia) possible. The building of factories and inns was another important urbanising factor. In 1930, urbanisation expanded towards some of the outlying villages, and Sofia's territory reached 45 square kilometres. In the late 1970s, an inner city displacement took place, where those who could afford it moved from the centre of the city towards the outskirts (Doytchinov, 2004). The downtown area became less populated, and it gradually shifted into a seat for

⁹ From a population of 1,237,891 in 2006, the number of residents in Sofia has steadily risen to 1,240,788 in 2007, 1,247,059 in 2008, 1,249,798 in 2009, 1,259,446 in 2010 and 1,296,615 in 2011 (<http://www.sofia.bg/osnovni%20pokazатели.asp>). Only in 2012 do we notice a decrease in population, which was due to the negative birth rate (-1.2).

¹⁰ The largest numbers of migrants have come from the provinces of Pleven, Blagoevgrad, Vratsa, Veliko, Turnovo and Plovdiv (<http://sofia-da.eu/bg/about-sofia/demographic-profile-of-sofia>).

¹¹ <http://www.nsi.bg/otrasal.php?otr=25&a1=839&a2=883&a3=923#cont>, last consulted on May, 30 2014.

¹² <http://www.nsi.bg/otrasal.php?otr=25&a1=839&a2=883&a3=923#cont>, last consulted on May, 30 2014.

¹³ National Institute for Statistics: <http://www.nsi.bg/otrasal.php?otr=19&a1=376&a2=377&a3=381#cont> last consulted on May, 30 2014.

numerous public and private institutions, including the ones dealing with security. In Communist Bulgaria, as in other Communist countries, urban planning was centralised, technocratic and subordinated to national economic objectives (Hirt, 2005). *'It proceeded within the institutional and ideological framework of a single-party system; limited local autonomy, which implied that local governments simply channeled down state decisions to the local level; and almost full state ownership of land, property and means of production. The latter meant that the state, through its agencies, was the sole developer of any land beyond the size of a single residential lot'* (Hirt, 2005, 222). Over the next four decades, Communist leaders developed Sofia into the political, economic and cultural capital of a rapidly industrialising nation. Communist-era plans show quite distinctly the vast areas of planned suburbs that were built to house the rapid influx of factory workers and government officials who answered the siren call of developing socialism (Staddon & Mollov, 2000).

After the Communist period, as Bulgaria became a democratic country, modern building construction started in the 'transitional' zone of the capital. This period was marked by widespread changes in social status and increasing differentiation among the poor, middle class and rich, which in turn resulted in building structures differentiated by class¹⁴. The city is practically surrounded by slums that have sprung up on undeveloped territory. Although the local authorities are now belatedly regulating some of these territories, they are hardly able to get the situation under control (Gigova, 2011). Last, but not least, national conditions and factors assist in providing an understanding of the city's development. In its entire period as Bulgaria's capital, Sofia has always been the location boasting the most dynamic development in the country. This fact has an economic, political and social explanation. The extremely important influence of the city on the country's economic growth is the reason why the regional planning act defines it as a 'growth area' (Doytchinov, 2004). Sofia is now clearly entering a brave new phase in its development, a phase signalled by several high-profile consultation and strategic planning exercises. In 1997 the city's popular mayor, Stefan Sofianski, commissioned the United Nations Development Programme to produce a 'Human Development Report' for Sofia, to serve as a marker of Sofia's strengths, weaknesses, challenges and prospects for the decades to come (Staddon & Mollov, 2000).

3.2.2. *Terrorist attacks, protests and Syrian refugees*

In this section we describe chronologically the main events that have occurred in Sofia that have had possible implications for its security policy. The terrorist attack at 'Saint Nedelya' Church in 1925, the bombardment of the city by the Allied Forces in 1943 and the terrorist attack at the Burgas Airport in 2012 shook Sofia upside down.

On 16th of April, 1925 Sofia becomes a scene of one of the worst terrorist attacks in Bulgarian history and, at that time, in the World. Twenty-five kilograms of explosive were smuggled, thanks to a bribed church employee, in the St. Nedelya Church where the burial of the prominent Bulgarian general Konstantin Georgiev

¹⁴ <http://www.sofia.bg/history.asp?lines=316&nxt=1&update=all> last consulted on May, 30 2014.

was to take place, attended by many prominent government guests. The explosion resulted in the killing of 213 people and nearly 500 were wounded, among them 12 prominent military generals. The 'Bloody Thursday' had profound implications for the security in Sofia at that time. It resulted in the announcement of martial law, but the terrorist attack did not achieve its' goal to bring down the Government.

In December 1941, Bulgaria declared war on the United Kingdom and the United States. The following series of Allied bombing raids on Sofia, which began on the 14th of November 1943 and ended on 17 April 1944, can be called another important event with profound implications for the city's security (Gigova, 2011). This so-called operation 'Point Blank' included 11 sequences of indiscriminate shelling and bombardment of the civilian population of Sofia¹⁵. Another incident occurred decades later, in January 1997, when, due to economic hyperinflation, angry protestors started gathering in the square in front of the Bulgarian Parliament¹⁶. The situation got out of control when they angrily stormed the Parliament building. After these protests, peaceful protests involving only minor scuffles followed.

We must at least mention a very recent terrorist attack, which had, although the bombing did not take place in Sofia, significant implications and consequences for security at Sofia Airport. On 18 July 2012 a bus transporting Israeli tourists exploded, killing 7 people and injuring 35 at Burgas Airport. A later investigation conducted by the Bulgarian Ministry of the Interior and Europol linked Hezbollah to the bombings, naming the incident as 'the group's first successful terror attack in Europe since the mid-1980s'¹⁷. With the exception of this incident, the recent history of Sofia has not been marked by typical modern-day terrorist attacks. Protests, however, have continued to take place. As a result of high electricity bills, at the end of January 2013, Sofia, among other large Bulgarian cities, again became the site of protests¹⁸. An attempt to transport politicians out of the Parliament building by driving a bus through the crowd of protestors resulted in rocks being thrown and clashes with police; at least seven protestors and two officers were injured¹⁹. When the government resigned in February 2013, new legislative elections held in May 2013 were supported by 240 European observers. Despite the resignation of the government and the coming to power of a new coalition, in May 2013 protests against the new and allegedly corrupt government became even more intense. What followed were 281 days of protests, along with two occupations of Parliament as well as an occupation of Sofia University²⁰.

¹⁵ Nearly 45,265 bombs were dropped, resulting in the deaths of 2,477 people (99% civilians) and the destruction of 12,500 buildings (with damages costing approximately 12 billion euros).

¹⁶ <http://www.euronews.com/2013/07/24/bulgaria-protesters-foes-of-barricades-and-police-violence->, last consulted on May, 30 2014.

¹⁷ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-21342192>, last consulted on May, 30 2014.

¹⁸ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-21516658>, last consulted on May, 30 2014.

¹⁹ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-23430121>, last consulted on May, 30 2014.

²⁰ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-23430121> and <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-25014732>, last consulted on May, 30 2014.

Finally, in order to explore recent developments, we must mention the situation of Syrian refugees in Bulgaria. As a result of the Syrian war (started in 2011), more than 10,000 Syrian refugees have entered Bulgaria since June 2013. Human rights organisations predict that tens of thousands more will enter the country in the coming months²¹. The refugee influx has sparked security concerns and backlash from the nationalist party 'Ataka' and the Bulgarian Socialist Party, opposition of the former government of Boyko Borisov, demanding more effective border control. As a result, on the 16th of October 2013 the government approved the building of a 30 km security fence along the Bulgarian-Turkish border in an area where it had been difficult to detect immigrants entering the country²². Grippled by protests and internal problems, Bulgaria was unable to adequately address the refugee problem, which boosted nationalist sentiment in the country. A Nationalist Party of Bulgaria, including neo-Nazi and skinhead elements, was formed, with a mission of cleansing 'Bulgaria from the foreign and alien immigrants'. This party established 'civil patrols' which very much resemble the patrols of the 'Golden Dawn' in Greece²³. These 'civil patrols' are charged with the task of conducting 'stop and search' techniques on migrants. Some activists claim that the government has been complicit in establishing these patrols, which would represent an abdication of the institution in favour of its right-wing faction. After the establishment of the Nationalist Party, a 17-year-old Syrian refugee was stabbed in Sofia near a refugee camp. This was followed in January 2014 by a wave of attacks in Sofia, during which an Iraqi-Bulgarian was attacked in a shopping mall, a Cameroonian mother and child were assaulted by a neo-Nazi group and a Malian boy was beaten by a mob²⁴.

In the following section we explore the police system in Bulgaria, and more specifically the police who operate in Sofia.

4. The national police apparatus

The national police apparatus can be regarded as a heritage from the Communist party. In September 1944, Todor Zhivkov²⁵ became head of the 'Sofia police force', which was, as an instrument of the Communist party, restyled as the '*Narodna Milit-siya*' ('People's Militia'). The Ministry of the Interior²⁶ had always been a centralised institution during Communist rule, which ended on 3 April 1990²⁷. The Ministry of the Interior is a hierarchical and centralised institution charged with protecting national security, public order and the rights and freedoms of citizens, as well as

²¹ <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/bulgarian-golden-dawn-nationalists-launch-attacks-against-syrian-refugees-1431550>

²² <http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2013/oct/24/syrian-refugees-bulgaria-asylum>

²³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golden_Dawn_%28political_party%29

²⁴ <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/bulgarian-golden-dawn-nationalists-launch-attacks-against-syrian-refugees-1431550>

²⁵ Until 1988.

²⁶ <http://www.lex.bg/bg/laws/ldoc/2132580865>

²⁷ <http://www.lse.ac.uk/internationalRelations/centresandunits/EFPU/EFPUpdfs/EFPUchallengep4.pdf>

fighting against crime. The Ministry of the Interior is headed by the Minister of the Interior, who is the sole and central executive authority within the Ministry. The 'Law on the Ministry of the Interior' gives overwhelming supervisory powers over all police components to the Ministry of the Interior. In order to understand plural policing in Sofia, it is necessary to explore the organisational structure of this Ministry, which houses the national police who operate in the city. The Ministry of the Interior finances local police presence.

The following section is based on research of the websites of the Ministry of Interior and legislation related to it, correspondence with the Ministry and a visit to this institution in Sofia.

4.1. The Ministry of the Interior and its centralised police system

All components of the Ministry of the Interior carry out common as well as unique preventative activities with respect to transgressions of the law, and when necessary they issue notices or orders to national agencies, organisations and juridical persons in order to dictate sanctions²⁸. The Ministry of the Interior is a central body as well as a decentralised one (as it operates and maintains a presence in each of the different regions of the country). We will describe the different sections of the Ministry shortly, as they are relevant to important security issues in Sofia.

The Ministry of the Interior is divided into three separate administrations: (1) the *General Directorate*, (2) the *Regional Directorates* and (3) the *Specialised Directorates*²⁹. The regional directorates are situated in the various regions of Bulgaria, while the General Directorates and the Specialized directorates are situated in Sofia. Very recently (in 2013), major changes were made to this organisational structure. First of all, officers from the General Directorate's '*Fight against Organised Crimes*' division began working as part of the recently established *National Security Agency*. In addition, the *Specialised Directorate for Operative and Technical Operations* was restructured and renamed the *National Agency for Technical Operations*³⁰. It became the national specialised directorate for *secret operational* and technical activities that are conducted for the purpose of protecting national and public security as well as the rights and freedoms of citizens. This unit can be regarded as an *intelligence service*, as it carries out the provision, development and application of special *intelligence* instruments³¹. The most important consequence of these changes is the fact that both of the above-mentioned directorates are no longer part of the Ministry of the Interior, but belong (since 2013) to the National Security Agency, an *intelligence*

²⁸ Article 149 of the Law of the Ministry of the Interior.

²⁹ http://www.mvr.bg/Za_MVR/struktura.htm

³⁰ This National Agency for Technical Operations consists of the following Directorates: Internal Security, Migration, Bulgarian Identity Documents, International Projects, Property Control and Social Activities, National System, and Coordination of the Fight against Infringements Affecting the Financial Interests of the European Union.

See http://www.mvr.bg/Za_MVR/struktura.htm and <http://lex.bg/laws/ldoc/2135516991>.

³¹ Article 137a, paragraph 1, and further. The agency's legal competencies can be found under Article 137b; see <http://lex.bg/laws/ldoc/2135516991>.

department that deals with threats to internal security. Reforms to this structure will be effected along with changes to the current Law on the Ministry of the Interior (and the statute for its application); a new bill regarding these matters is scheduled to be voted on in Parliament in September 2014. This bill will restructure the directorates and units within the Ministry of the Interior and will assign new competencies and functions to some of the directorates. The division between the national police who are governed by the Ministry of the Interior and the police officers who operate within the new intelligence services is not clear today, nor are the identities of the agencies or oversight bodies in control of this new National Security Agency. The organisation of this *new framework of control* and the resulting consequences for democracy are extensively important to any follow-up research that is conducted. Drawing conclusions from these new arrangements, *we notice a shift of state police functions towards the intelligence services*, so that these functions are no longer operating under the authority of the Ministry of the Interior, nor being controlled by this institution.

Last, but not least, the Ministry of the Interior has not lost its grip on the big city. One of the 28 Regional Directorates (named the ‘Metropolitan Directorate’) is centralised (and financed) by the Ministry of the Interior but operates within the city of Sofia. Let us first describe the directorate that steers and organises the national police, namely, the National Police General Directorate (NPGD).

4.2. The National Police General Directorate (NPGD)

The National Police Directorate is located within the first General Directorate. The directors of this administration execute orders that are issued by the Minister of the Interior or by his or her deputy ministers, and are accountable to them³². This directorate is a national specialised structure that focuses on information analysis and operational, investigative, preventative, and organisational activity related to the prevention, detection and investigation of criminal offenses, except in the area of organised crime.

4.2.1. The Specialised Police Forces

Regional offices of this department are called ‘Specialised police departments’ or ‘Specialised Police Forces’, the latter of which is a new name for the (former) ‘Gendarmerie’³³. These locally and regionally embedded forces exist to protect public order, provide security for mass events, protect critical facilities and strategic and diplomatic buildings, conduct special operations and assist in emergency situations. They are present in the following cities: Sofia, Montana, Pleven, Plovdiv, Burgas, Varna and Kardzali.

³² Article 20 of the Law of the Ministry of the Interior.

³³ http://gdnp.mvr.bg/Pravomoshtia_GDNP/default.htm

4.2.2. *The Border Police General Directorate (BPGD)*

This Directorate maintains a local presence in all airports as well as in the following cities: Burgas, Dragoman, Elhovo, Kyustendil, Ruse and Smolyan. The BPGD guards the air borders of the Republic of Bulgaria, including those of Sofia's airspace. It also coordinates border crossing activity within the two terminals of Sofia International Airport³⁴.

4.2.3. *The Fire Safety and Protection of the Population Metropolitan Directorate (FSPPMD)*

Thirdly, the Fire Safety and Protection of the Population Metropolitan Directorate (FSPPMD) is locally present in all main regional cities in Bulgaria. The FSPPMD protects the population of Sofia from fire hazards and, in the absence of such disasters, concentrates on prevention via training and information campaigns³⁵.

5. The regional directorates

Besides the national directorates, the Ministry of the Interior maintains regional directorates in all (28) main regional cities in Bulgaria. Regional directorates are led by directors who are subordinate to the Minister and the Chief Secretary of the Ministry of the Interior³⁶. As the *Metropolitan Directorate of the Ministry of the Interior* is one of the 28 regional directorates that explicitly operates in Sofia, we will focus in depth on this policing department.

6. The local police apparatus: The Metropolitan Directorate (MDMI)

Mainly safeguarding the population of Sofia, this directorate oversees the territory of Sofia, including three additional cities and 34 villages that are located in the city's vicinity. The directorate conducts operational, investigative and security activities within the city. The MDMI has a centralised structure; it is governed by the Director General, who is directly subordinate to the Chief Secretary of the Ministry of the Interior. The Metropolitan Directorate consists of multiple departments, units and groups, as well as nine city district offices³⁷. It includes two main sub-directorates: one that is in charge of the *Criminal Police* (focusing on criminal investigations) and one that is in charge of the *Security Police* (focusing on public order and crime prevention). Officers are divided among different units and the total number of officers (on payroll³⁸) in the MDMI is 5,463. Police density in Sofia is 350 public police officers per 100,000 people. The MDMI also integrates *public civil servants* into

³⁴ http://www.nsgp.mvr.bg/History/third_period.htm

³⁵ <http://sofia-fire.bg/content.php?cat=2&subcat=2&id=5&m=0>

³⁶ Article 29a of the Law of the Ministry of the Interior (<http://lex.bg/laws/ldoc/2135516991>).

³⁷ Article 12 from the regulations for application of the Law of the Ministry of the Interior.

³⁸ The real number of officers currently working is less than the number who are on the payroll.

its staff. Security activity within the MDMI takes place within several specific units, such as the ‘Centre for City Mobility’ department, the *Centre for Alcohol Abusers and for Temporary Accommodation of Adults*, the *Municipal Police* and the ‘Metropolitan’ unit. Parts of these units are outsourced, with the following parties playing the roles of providers: the metropolitan municipality of Sofia, Metropolitan Inc. and Sofia Water. In the following subsections, we describe these different units, paying particular attention to the police.

6.1. The ‘Centre for City Mobility’ department

Officers from the ‘Centre for City Mobility’ department can react to infringements of the law perpetrated by road traffic, or they can act according to specific orders from the mayor of Sofia. In both of these cases, they also have the authority to initiate *administrative sanctions* or to forcefully remove motor vehicles that are hindering traffic or snow removal during events.

6.2. The Centre for Alcohol Abusers and for Temporary Accommodation of Adults

This centre has a purely preventative task: it executes humanitarian activities, especially during the winter season, which are aimed at locating homeless individuals, beggars and individuals who are drunk or in a helpless condition and providing them with shelter in temporary housing centres.

6.3. The Municipal Police and the ‘Metropolitan’ unit

The Municipal Police and the ‘Metropolitan’ unit perform the classical police task of ‘keeping the peace’ (Brodeur, 1998) and can be compared to the administrative public order police of most European countries (Ponsaers, 2001). These local police perform activities related to *safeguarding public order*, maintaining the security of sites and of municipality properties, ensuring the safety of traffic and assisting with the control and administrative activities of local and self-governing bodies within the metropolitan municipality. Officers also act as *security agents* for cultural and sporting events, as well as guaranteeing the safety of graveyards, recreation centres for citizens, and other crowded public sites. During the winter season they coordinate snow removal from streets and the removal of ice formations from municipality and national buildings.

This unit is organised across the nine police *districts*. A total of 84 teams are operational on behalf of all inhabitants of Sofia. Their tasks consist mainly of surveillance and control within the city. Police cars and foot patrols (beat officers) patrol on a daily basis in Sofia. Their numbers vary depending on the operational situation. Therefore, the perimeters of the territories in which these foot and car patrols function, as well as their numbers, vary with each police district. Car patrols vary between 34 and 38 on a daily basis, and foot patrols vary between 8 and 16 pairs of officers who patrol each day.

The Security Police within this unit can provide up to seven additional pairs of patrol officers for complicated operational situations and crisis situations, and in cases where mass riots occur. The Municipal Police possess four units of mounted police (on horses), as well as police officers accompanied by dogs, who are tasked with providing security in parks and during sporting events. Five additional pairs of motorcycle patrols and 14 car patrols are tasked with supplementarily safeguarding sites (residential buildings, trade properties, offices, banks, etc.). *Prevention* is their main task. Their duties also include safeguarding the metropolitan metro, which is of strategic importance. Security of the metro includes surveillance of the stations and the equipment in them, preventing terrorist attacks and violations of public order, and assisting in cases of civilian accidents. The security police division also performs analogous activities with respect to malicious violations or epidemic outbreaks in the lakes that supply water to Sofia and in the areas around district water treatment stations.

7. Other actors providing security

7.1. The role of the mayor: the local story

In order to explore tendencies towards plural policing in Sofia, we first analyse the legal powers the mayor has to recruit (local) actors other than the (nationally governed) police to provide security in the city. The mayor in Sofia is *directly* elected by the population for a period of four years³⁹. At this moment, Jordanka Asenova Fandakova is the mayor of Sofia; she was elected on 15 November 2009, and again re-elected in 2011. She is the first woman to hold this position. As is the case in most cities within EU countries, the mayor is responsible, on the city level, for executing the security tasks that stem from the Acts of the President of the country and from the Council of the Ministry of the Interior⁴⁰. After Bulgaria became a democracy, different political parties have influenced policymaking in the security domain via the National Parliament⁴¹. The mayor has executive power over the Acts that are voted on in Parliament⁴², which can be regarded as an *indirect* instrument of executing security-related policies. The mayor also has access to *direct* policymaking instruments concerning security, as established in the *Law for local self-governance and local administration*⁴³. The mayor is responsible for organising governance in

³⁹ Article 38, subparagraph 2 (Law for local self-governance and local administration).

⁴⁰ Article 44, paragraph 8 (Law for local self-governance and local administration).

⁴¹ Each party influences the agenda of its respective member of Parliament who decides to run in elections for the position of mayor of Sofia.

⁴² Article 38 (Law for local self-governance and local administration).

⁴³ Provisions for *direct* policymaking instruments can be found in article 44, subparagraph 4, of the Law for local self-governance and local administration, which was installed on 17.09.1991, and very recently amended on 05.03.2014 (<http://www.lex.bg/bg/laws/ldoc/2132580865>).

times of crisis⁴⁴, and for keeping the peace, health, propriety and security of the city; these objectives are maintained via (written) communal orders.

Overall, Article 20 from the Law of the Ministry of Interior postulates that the directors of the general directorates fulfill orders issued by the Minister of Interior or his or her Deputy Ministers and are accountable to them. Article 29a states that regional directorates are being led by directors subordinate to the Minister of Interior and his or her Main Secretary (Bulgarian Ministry of Interior, 2013). This law gives supervisory authority to the Ministry of Interior of all police components. In contrast, according to Article 44, subparagraph 4 from the Law for Local Self-Governance and Administration ‘the Mayor is responsible for the safeguarding of public peace and security, and for the purpose of it issues written orders, which are compulsory for heads of police bodies to abide by’ (Bulgarian Council of Ministers, 2005). This, however, does not give the Mayor any supervisory powers. According to Article 21, paragraph 5, the Minister of Interior ‘drafts a proposal for the budget for the Ministry of Interior’ (Bulgarian Ministry of Interior, 2013, p. 7) and paragraph 6 states that he ‘allocates the budget of the Ministry of Interior, manages financial and logistical support, and exercises control over the activity of persons responsible for the budget in the structures of the Ministry’ (Bulgarian Ministry of Interior, 2013, p. 7). In addition to that, according to Article 18 paragraph 3, directors of regional and local police offices can appeal the orders from the Mayor in front of the Regional governor, who, in consultation with the Minister of Interior, may revoke the order (Bulgarian Ministry of Interior, 2013). He or she does not, however, decide on the budgets to be spent on security issues within the city. The implementation costs of state functions, such as the municipal police, are financed by the state budget⁴⁵, which is based on local sources of revenue that are independent of the municipal budget⁴⁶. The mayor him/herself is responsible for the organisation and implementation of the independent municipal budget⁴⁷. In this sense, the mayor has no authority over the budget of national police operations within the city⁴⁸.

These facts — that the mayor is unable to control the budgets of police operations within the city, and that he or she is completely dependent on the coordination and governing activities of the Ministry of the Interior — could create tension between local and national priorities (Devroe, 2012). Therefore, here we detail the options the mayor has for setting local priorities for the control of crime and social disorder within the city.

In the policy plan developed by Mayor Fandakova in 2009, the theme of ‘*better public order and security*’ appeared as a fourth level priority, after ‘*transformation of Sofia into one of the European Union’s cultural centres*’ (number one), ‘*development and modernisation of engineering and transportation infrastructure*’ (number two) and ‘*efficient, active and transparent financing of municipal projects and better management of commercial companies with municipal property and municipal participation*’ (number

⁴⁴ Article 44, subparagraph 11, of the Law for local self-governance and local administration.

⁴⁵ Article 54, paragraph 2 (Law for local self-governance and local administration).

⁴⁶ Article 52, paragraph 1 (Law for local self-governance and local administration).

⁴⁷ Article 44, paragraph 5 (Law for local self-governance and local administration).

⁴⁸ <http://www.kubrat.bg/bg/localgov/zmsma.pdf>

three)⁴⁹. We notice that a Bulgarian political document⁵⁰ states that the mayor renewed her priority list in 2011. The theme *'for a secure city'* fell to the tenth and last priority, superseded by these themes: a *'competitive and innovative city'* (number 1), a *'well-planned and organised city'* (number two), a *'city with modern transport infrastructure'* (number three), a *'city with new and convenient public transport'* (number four), a *'clean and green city'* (number five), *'sport, healthy and active life in the city'* (number six), a *'friendly city for kids and young people'* (number seven), the *'European capital of culture'* (number eight) and a *'city with efficient and high-quality services for citizens and businesses'* (number nine). However, further study of this document reveals that, although security holds the last place on the mayor's top ten priority list, it is actually interwoven with other issues that are mentioned. The mayor includes plans to *'increase police patrols and effective surveillance infrastructure in the city'* in priorities two and three. As we were not able to conduct interviews in Sofia, we can't give the exact reason for this 'undervaluation' of security issues in the local policy plan. A rational explanation could be the lack of power, competence and budget wielded by the mayor regarding police matters; why promise a safe city if you are dependent on the goodwill of the Ministry of the Interior to allow police to prioritise safety in the city? Another explanation could lie in the political changes that Mayor Fandakova would like to accomplish, which would stand in contrast to the policies of the former mayor of Sofia, Boyko Borisov, a former policeman who overemphasised security during his time in office.

7.2. Private Security Companies (PSC)

Bulgaria is catching up with other Eastern European countries in terms of privatising police functions⁵¹. We notice a steady growth since 1990 of private security agencies that operate in public space⁵². For the city of Sofia, national data⁵³ show an increasing trend towards privatisation. It was impossible to obtain any data on the amount of contracts that have been granted to PSC in Sofia, but as 68% of all PSC in the country are present in Sofia, we believe that many contracts have been provided by the mayor and by citizens⁵⁴. Although the use of legal force remains in the hands of the public police, this privatisation trend provides an answer to our third research question, and has important implications for the study of security-related governance in Sofia. In this section we explore the history, private police densities and tasks of the private security companies.

⁴⁹ <http://sofia-da.eu/about-sofia/priorities-for-development>

⁵⁰ http://www.gerb.bg/uf/pages/PROGRAMA_GERB_Final_sofiq_2011.pdf

⁵¹ National Institute of Justice (NIJ): <http://www.csd.bg/fileSrc.php?id=1800>.

⁵² In 2005, for example, public contracts were awarded to private security agencies, which led to 5,816 private security officers (personnel) that protected national and municipal entities in Bulgaria. In 2009, 258 public contracts related to security were announced; in 2010, this number was 284, while in 2011 it was 246 and in 2012 it was 113.

⁵³ Source: the Ministry of the Interior.

⁵⁴ <http://www.mvr.bg/NR/rdonlyres/BB205E93-73C7-4709-811D-F687981E8662/0/ZCHOD.pdf>

7.2.1. History and legislation

Initially, Bulgarian *private security companies* (PSC) were closely related to organised crime. Since 2008, the Ministry of the Interior claims to have instituted regulations that have significantly decreased the influence of organised crime on these agencies, prevented corruption, and contributed towards their professionalisation⁵⁵. This professionalisation has led to the commercial export of PSC services internationally, including to Iraq and other international companies operating in Bulgaria. The first legal provisions regulating the activities of PSC were introduced by the Ministry of the Interior in 1993. A specific article (81) that briefly defined the possible activities of PSC was included in the Law for the Ministry of the Interior. Between 1993 and 2000 several non-licensed commercial companies popped up. In 2000, the Ministry of the Interior introduced the '*Private Security Act*'⁵⁶. In 2004, the companies as well as the Ministry of the Interior proclaimed the Act outdated, and a new section was added⁵⁷, stipulating mandatory licenses for all PSC; these licenses give them the ability to provide contract services. The Ministry of the Interior is responsible for providing these licenses. The *National Police Directorate* and the *regional directorates of the Ministry of the Interior* are responsible for supervising the enactment of the Law on Private Security Activity. Private security companies operating in Sofia are supervised by the *Metropolitan Directorate* of the Ministry of the Interior⁵⁸. This control is exercised by means of an 'Integrated Centre' for licensing PSC activities⁵⁹. As there are no legal requirements for the background checks of employees hired by PSC, there are still concerns that many PSC operate in the private security market without licenses⁶⁰. From 2004 on, the Act has not been renewed. The domain of private policing in Bulgaria is not transparent, and relevant information and dates are hard to find.

7.2.2. Private security density

In 2013, there were 2,432 registered PSC in Bulgaria with a license to operate⁶¹. These data only include 'licensed' PSC, and so we believe the number to be an underestimation, supposing that a number of non-licensed companies are operating in a grey area of legality. If we explore other geographical levels, we obtain the information that 832 PSC operate on the territory of Bulgaria (including Sofia),

⁵⁵ Source: documents of the Ministry of the Interior.

⁵⁶ Law on Private Security Activity 2000 (Decree 1-79), instituted by the Ministry of the Interior.

⁵⁷ In 2004, section 1-14 was added to the Law on Private Security Activity 2000.

⁵⁸ Chapter 5, Article 41 of the Law on Private Security Activity.

⁵⁹ This Centre maintains data on the number of licensed PSC and their activities, guarded sites and the number of security personnel guarding them, and the means/resources that are used to guard the sites (guns, cars, etc.).

⁶⁰ http://psm.du.edu/media/documents/reports_and_stats/think_tanks/seesac_salw_and_private_security_companies_in_south_eastern_europe.pdf

⁶¹ After several official written demands sent to the Ministry of the Interior, we finally obtained this information from the National Police General Directorate, or, more precisely, the 'Integrated Centre for Licensing PSC', in a letter. These data are not public.

and that 50 additional PSC operate within the regional territory of Sofia (including Sofia). Most importantly, 281 private security companies operate *exclusively* within the city of Sofia. This means that out of the 2,432 licensed PSC in Bulgaria, 68.42% (1,644 PSCs) of them are operating in the city (at least, this is what is officially stated by the Ministry). We assume that a broader amount of PSC are working in Sofia without being registered by the Ministry. This amounts to a private security density of 133.97 PSC per 100,000 citizens in Sofia. However, when it comes to the ratio of PSC personnel to police officers, Bulgaria holds second place in all of Europe (after Hungary), with a ratio of 2 PSC members for each police officer⁶².

7.2.3. *Collaboration with public police*

In order to keep a watch on the *collaboration* between private and public police, the Law on Private Security Activity⁶³ defines an official body whose purpose is to guarantee this collaboration. This ‘*Advisory Body for Cooperation on Private Security Activity*’ is called, in brief, the ‘*Council*’, and was installed next to the National Police Directorate. The Council is chaired by the deputy director of the National Police Directorate. Three representatives of PSC and three officers from the National Police Directorate can have a seat in this official body. The Council can outline and propose specific forms of collaboration between police officers and citizens who provide private security services, and it can also report the results of these collaborations⁶⁴.

7.2.4. *Tasks*

The tasks of PSC are similar to those of public police, and are oriented mostly towards crime prevention. These private firms obtain their contracts from private citizens as well as from the mayor. Most PSC have commercial websites and contact information and are responsive to citizens’ enquiries and demands. The law stipulates that ‘*Private security services shall be fulfilled in accordance with preventative activity based on the circumstances and conditions for transgression of the law in guarded objects*’⁶⁵. If a crime is committed, private security officers are obliged to report it to the prosecutor’s office and to the public police⁶⁶.

The tasks of PSC cover the following types of services⁶⁷:

⁶² Confederation of European Security Services, Vitosha Research, National Institute of Justice (NIJ): <http://www.csd.bg/fileSrc.php?id=1800>

⁶³ Chapter 4 of the Law on Private Security Activity.

⁶⁴ Article 37, subparagraph 2, of the Law on Private Security Activity. See <http://www.mvr.bg/NR/rdonlyres/BB205E93-73C7-4709-811D-F687981E8662/0/ZCHOD.pdf>.

⁶⁵ Article 3, paragraph 4, of the Law on Private Security Activity (<http://www.mvr.bg/NR/rdonlyres/BB205E93-73C7-4709-811D-F687981E8662/0/ZCHOD.pdf>).

⁶⁶ Article 31, paragraph 2, of the Law on Private Security Activity.

⁶⁷ Article 5 of the Law on Private Security Activity (<http://www.lex.bg/bg/laws/ldoc/2135479817>). These services shall be conducted via technological security systems and via other auxiliary resources: <http://www.lex.bg/bg/laws/ldoc/2135479817>.

- Private security for individuals;
- Security for property belonging to individuals or to corporate bodies;
- Security for events;
- Security for precious consignments and freights;
- Self-defence of property belonging to companies or judicial persons.

Only 15 out of 1,664 PSC operating on the territory of Sofia, work in the domains of private security for *individuals* (including security for property and belongings and security for precious consignments)⁶⁸. An overwhelming 660 PSC are licensed to operate only in the domain of security for *property*⁶⁹. Only 37 PSC are licensed to function in all domains (excluding self-defence)⁷⁰. The Law on Private Security Activity stipulates that private security guards have the right to use physical force and auxiliary tools such as plastic and rubber truncheons and handcuffs⁷¹. We notice a strange note on the use of violence in the Law, where it stipulates that ‘*In cases where guards detain individuals, use force, auxiliary tools or guns, they have to hand in a written report to their supervisor, who in turn is obliged to hand it in to the appropriate police agency*’⁷². Is this a legal contradiction? The Law stipulates that the public police have a monopoly on violence, but, on the other hand, violence (in the form of handcuffs, guns and arrests) can and will be used by private security agencies in public spaces. Do these PSC provide security? A study on crime trends in Bulgaria, conducted by the Centre for the Study of Democracy, shows a positive correlation between decreases in crime against businesses and the presence of PSC⁷³. This can be explained by the number of businesses that bought alarm systems from PSC between 1999 and 2005. The public police also provided alarm systems, but with lesser success: the study reports that only 18% of businesses in Sofia bought their alarm systems from the police⁷⁴.

8. Conclusion

In this article, we contributed to the debate on ‘plural policing’ in Europe, focusing particularly on Bulgaria, a country in transition. Bulgaria, having only very

⁶⁸ Defined by Article 5, paragraph 1, subparagraphs 1, 2 and 4, of the Law on Private Security Activity.

⁶⁹ Defined by Article 5, paragraph 1, subparagraph 2, of the Law on Private Security Activity.

⁷⁰ According to the official reply from the Ministry of the Interior, only *one* PSC based in Sofia and functioning within the territory of Bulgaria is licensed to perform in all domains, including self-defence.

⁷¹ In the course of using the above-mentioned tools, guards are obliged to protect the health and life of the individuals against whom such tools are used. Guards can use auxiliary tools only after giving a warning (except in cases where they are attacked suddenly). The Law prohibits the use of handcuffs or truncheons on juveniles and pregnant women (Law on Private Security Activity, Article 34, paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 5).

⁷² Article 35 of the Law on Private Security Activity.

⁷³ *Crime Trends in Bulgaria (2000–2005)*, Centre for the Study of Democracy.

⁷⁴ <http://www.csd.bg/fileSrc.php?id=1800> and <http://www.mvr.bg/NR/rdonlyres/BB205E93-73C7-4709-811D-F687981E8662/0/ZCHOD.pdf>

recently become a member of the EU Commission, and possessing a very new democratic government, is still a country in evolution. Based on an extensive search for information and data on policing in Sofia, we conclude that Bulgaria is characterised by a lack of available scholarly and societal (policy-based) information on police and security issues. The contrast between the accessibility of sources focusing on demographical, political, historical and societal topics and the lack of accessibility of information on the (functioning) of the police couldn't be greater. After several attempts at accessing this information, it was provided to us by the Ministry of the Interior and by the National Police Directorate itself. However, the fact that these official institutions were our main sources of information leads us to question whether distortions or overly narrow views of situational realities were present in the data. This leads us in turn to desire a more in-depth study, conducted within the city itself, which would include the possibility of visiting the relevant agencies and interviewing key experts. Anyhow, this article has its merits, in that it reveals some first insights into policing security in Sofia, and offers some potentially challenging debate topics. We will *first* discuss our conclusions regarding the national police force, and then continue with our conclusions regarding local issues.

8.1. National police force

In Bulgaria, in contrast to other EU countries, security issues have never been very high on the political agenda. Bulgaria has yet, in 2013, to face mass protests of dissatisfaction and anger with the governmental system and its corrupt practices. The national police force is used to quell these manifestations and to keep the public order. The nature of this police force, stemming as it does from a centralised, hierarchical, militarised national police force, has, at first glance, not evolved dramatically. Further in-depth research is needed to analyse this statement. For the national police force, which originated historically from a 'military-bureaucratic police model' (Ponsaers, 2001) called the '*People's Militia*', and which operated under the dominion of a Communist regime for 35 years, taking any steps towards a community-oriented police model (a model that is present in almost all Western countries) is tremendous. The police system in Bulgaria is still centralised and was, until very recently (2013), governed and financed by the Ministry of the Interior. The national force (the National Police General Directorate) operates on the national level as well as being territorially divided into 28 different regional departments. One of these regional departments is the *Municipal Police* unit which operates in Sofia and continues to execute the regulations and priorities that are established by the Ministry of the Interior.

We discussed in this article a very important recent trend. While the *Law of the Ministry of the Interior* provides this Ministry with overwhelming supervisory powers over all police components, the Ministry has recently lost these powers to intelligence services. The above-mentioned directorates are no longer part of

the Ministry of the Interior, but will be supervised and financed from 2014 on⁷⁵ by the *National Security Agency*, an *intelligence department* charged with protecting the country's borders and dealing with threats to internal security. These are very challenging evolutions that need to be accompanied by scientific research and transparency in publications. The division between the national police which continue to be governed by the Ministry of the Interior and the police officers who operate within the new intelligence services is not clear, nor are the identities of the controlling agencies or oversight bodies that will have authority over this new *National Security Agency*. Drawing conclusions from these new arrangements, we notice a shift of state police functions towards an intelligence agency; they are no longer operating under the authority of the Ministry of the Interior nor being controlled by it.

On the other hand, in the course of attempting to answer our research questions, we have noticed a simultaneous evolution towards *decentralisation* and *privatisation*, which is more evident at the local level in Sofia.

8.2. Plural policing on the local level

Although we noticed some trends towards decentralisation within regional governments (trends towards greater autonomy of the police forces), the regions are not well organised yet, and we did not notice any visible effects stemming from these trends. On the local level, however, we did notice more marked tendencies towards 'plural policing', and in particular towards privatisation. We could offer criticisms of the overlap among public order tasks that are assigned to different units, as well as the overlap between the '*Metropolitan*' department and the *Municipal Police* unit, both of which operate within the territory of the city. Although the mayor, who is responsible for peace, order and security in Sofia, can count on the national public police to execute municipal tasks, we also see tensions within this police system. As long as police management, control and budget are determined at the national level, we can't label this public police force as '*deconcentrated*'. As we have described, the mayor can co-operate and be consulted by public police, but has no hierarchical power to impose police priorities, tasks or activities, abilities which are necessary for good city governance. She has to rely on additional municipal budgets, drawn from revenues provided by the citizens of Sofia, in order to execute his or her own priorities on the city level. Article 18, paragraph 3 from the Law of the Ministry of the Interior also shows that the mayor's orders with regards to security can be revoked if directors of Regional Police Directorates do not agree with them.

We notice a legal and practical tension here, as the *Law for local self-governance and local administration*⁷⁶ postulates that directors of local law enforcement must abide by the mayor's orders. Although legally in authority, in practice the

⁷⁵ Reforms in this structure will be accompanied by changes to the current Law on the Ministry of the Interior (and to the statute for its application); these will be effected via a new bill which has yet to be voted on in Parliament (a vote is foreseen for September 2014).

⁷⁶ Article 44 of the Law for local self-governance and local administration.

mayor does not have any supervisory powers over the public police, nor does she decide on the budgets that are to be spent on security issues within the city. Tensions between decision making based on the implementation costs of state functions (such as public police in the city who are financed by the state⁷⁷) and decision making based on the municipal budget (drawn from local sources of revenue⁷⁸) can arise. The mayor him/herself is responsible for the organisation and implementation of the independent municipal budget⁷⁹. In this sense, the mayor has no authority over the budgets of local law enforcement agencies⁸⁰, and he or she must rely on their voluntary compliance in order to complete necessary security tasks.

We assume that due to these conflicts of authority, security privatisation emerged in Sofia, manifested by an increasing number of contracts made between the mayor and private security companies on safety issues. Although minimal legislation overseeing these PSC was installed in 2000, without regular controls on licenses and background checks of employees hired by PSC, possible problems of legitimacy can arise. In particular, regarding this last trend, we need more in-depth research, and much more scholarly work, in order to evaluate the plural policing processes within Sofia.

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⁷⁷ Article 54, paragraph 2, of the Law for local self-governance and local administration.

⁷⁸ Article 52, paragraph 1, of the Law for local self-governance and local administration.

⁷⁹ Article 44, paragraph 5, of the Law for local self-governance and local administration.

⁸⁰ <http://www.kubrat.bg/bg/localgov/zmsma.pdf>

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