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High and Low Policing in Post-9/11 Times

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Abstract

The distinction between high and low policing is increasingly relevant in the wake of the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001. The paper reviews the content of the high policing paradigm and addresses recent criticism. Its first part provides an update of the defining features of high policing:

absorbent policing, power conflation, protection of the state and use of covert informants. It is, thereafter, argued that the high and low distinction is considered to run deeper than anticipated by the various bodies reporting on the policing and intelligence failure to prevent 9/11. In part three, the place of private security agencies in high policing is assessed. Private high policing must be taken into account, but it only shares in some of the defining features of high policing and is lacking in others. Finally, the contrast between high and low policing is examined in relation to symbolic significance.

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