



Call for Paper

34. Colloquium on Police History 2025

Between Reform and Transformation. Police Change in Democratic Societies.

July 10-12, 2025

Police Academy of Lower Saxony

The [34th Colloquium on Police History](#) will take place this year at the [Police Academy](#) of Lower Saxony in Nienburg/Weser from July 10 to 12. This year's theme is "Between Reform and Transformation: Police Change in Democratic Societies." The Research Centre for Police and Democratic History at the Lower Saxony Police Academy invites researchers from police history and related fields to submit their papers by **April 14**.

The role and functions of the police are in a constant flux. Since the early modern period, not only have our ideas about the meaning and significance of police work changed over time, but the roles, self-image, tasks, and methods of police work have also been continuously adapted to meet new demands.

Therefore, the Colloquium will concentrate on the factors and actors that initiated, influenced, advanced, or inhibited changes in the police and its role in democratic societies.

On the one hand, it will focus on the internal factors driving change within the police force. Key questions are: What methods and opportunities exist for the police to initiate organizational change? How do individuals or groups within the police initiate change, and what motivates them? How did they establish networks, and what methods did they use to implement their ideas? What forms of agency or resistance to change emerged, and what impact did they have? The relationship between technological and organizational changes and deeply rooted cultural codes is particularly interesting.

On the other hand, it is important to consider the influence of external actors and factors on processes of change. In democratic societies, the relationship between the state, police, media, and citizens is continuously being renegotiated. Critical public, evolving norms, and moral concepts create ongoing pressure for change that the police cannot ignore. There is a close connection between external and internal factors affecting the police. However, exploring how

these factors interact and whether there have been phases where one aspect dominates is essential.

The nature of change can take various forms. These may include processes of democratization, such as the founding of the first police unions in 1919, but also developments, such as the radicalization of the police in the late Weimar Republic. Also worth mentioning are organizational changes through new departments such as the police academies, new units such as SWAT Teams, or the dissolution of the "vice squad." In addition, there are new technologies, methods, and practices in forensic science, changes in patrol duty, or communication (e.g., with the media). Changes in the social and gender composition of the police are significant processes of change too that have occurred not without tension. The question of how police work changed in colonial contexts and how that reflected on policing at home is also of interest. Finally, the relationship between the police and other security authorities or private security actors could also be examined.

The 34th Colloquium aims to provide an interdisciplinary overview of this broad and multifaceted field. It seeks to highlight the latest research projects and foster discussions on a topic that is central to police history. The framework outlined here is intentionally broad, allowing for diverse approaches from various specialist disciplines and geographical and temporal contexts regarding current developments.

It offers a wide range of questions related to institutional, cultural, and social history. In addition, there will also be an open section to present research projects with different thematic focuses. We also welcome contributions that provide insights into the transformation of policing in other countries and cultural contexts beyond the German-speaking world.

The contributions should be presented as a 20-minute talk at the Colloquium in Nienburg and then discussed. The use of PowerPoint and media examples is expressly encouraged. Subsequent publication of the contributions is planned. The conference languages are German and English.

Please submit your papers (up to 3,000 characters including spaces) in either German or English, along with a brief CV, to polizeimuseum@pa.polizei.niedersachsen.de by **April 14, 2025**, at the latest. The Lower Saxony Police Academy will cover travel and accommodation expenses for speakers.

Title:

Between Reform and Transformation. Police Change in Democratic Societies.



Polizeiakademie Niedersachsen
Bürgermeister-Stahn-Wall 9
31582 Nienburg

Date:

July 10-12, 2025
Deadline Proposals April 14, 2025

Place:

Police Academy of Lower Saxony
Bürgermeister-Stahn-Wall 9
31582 Nienburg, Germany

Organizer:

Research Centre for the History of Police and Democracy at the Police Academy of Lower Saxony, Germany

<https://www.pa.polizei-nds.de/startseite/>
<https://polizeigeschichte-kolloquium.eu/index.html>

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