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Crafting and reinforcing the state through security privatisation: territorialisation as a public–private state project in East Jerusalem

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ABSTRACT

A growing number of police and security functions, previously considered within the exclusive domain of the state, are being outsourced to private security actors. This article argues that the privatisation of security provision can reinforce, rather than erode, the state, by contributing to state actors' capacity to pursue the territorialisation of areas beyond the full grasp of the state. Exploring the outsourced security provision at Jewish-Israeli settlement compounds in East Jerusalem, I attend to a Public–Private security assemblage which performs Israeli sovereignty in an occupied territory. I suggest that by outsourcing security provision, in Israel/Palestine and elsewhere, state actors are able to differentially distribute (in)security while evading accountability and deflecting public and legal challenges to controversial state-led projects. In examining the relations formed between state and non-state security actors within an emerging local and urban assemblage, I argue that state authority and responsibility can be diffused into multiple nodes of private authority in the operation, performance and supervision of security and violence – while at the same time keeping the state monopoly over legitimate violence intact.

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In the Palestinian neighbourhoods around the Old City of Jerusalem, a few houses stand out from the rest. These are Jewish-Israeli settlement compounds – small clusters of houses from which Palestinian families have been evicted and replaced by Jewish-Israeli settlers. Large Israeli flags are hanging from the windows, security cameras are placed on each wall and a guardhouse is built on the roof, where armed private security guards are stationed at all times. Paid for by the Israeli government, these private guards conduct patrols around the neighbourhood, provide vehicular and pedestrian escort services to the settlers, and operate a network of hundreds of CCTV cameras. Their deployment at the heart of East Jerusalem's Palestinian neighbourhoods, in an area occupied and annexed by Israel in 1967, is ostensibly intended to protect the lives and property of the settlers. However, their presence also marks a departure from the state's claim to provide a universal protection to all its residents, evidencing instead the state's increased capacities to territorialise East Jerusalem through the introduction of state-sponsored private security actors.

In this article, I seek to extend our understanding of the state's changing role in policing and the enmeshing of state and non-state security actors through an exploration of the new public–private security configurations around East Jerusalem's settlement compounds. In arguing against a perception of outsourced security provision as eroding and diminishing state's sovereignty and authority, I propose that the privatisation of security can instead reinforce the state's capacities to pursue

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territorialisation, by producing a security provision which represents and performs the state in a delimited area while simultaneously reducing state actors' responsibility and accountability towards their urban residents. In attending to the relations between different security actors – police, government ministries and private security companies (PSCs) – I inquire how the state's territorialisation project is pursued by and with the security actors concerned, as part of an emerging public–private security assemblage. In this article, I suggest three modes through which state actors' capacities, particularly the police's, can be reinforced following the outsourcing of security provision: through evading personal and collective accountability to wrongdoings by security personnel, through the redistribution of (in)security as a matter of policy while deflecting legal scrutiny, and by averting local and international pressure through the distancing of the state from a politically controversial project.

This article is the result of an extensive 10-month fieldwork conducted in Jerusalem in 2015–2016, during which I focused on different processes of security privatisation and pluralisation in the city. I conducted extensive participant observation in the neighbourhoods where settlement compounds are located, as well as 36 interviews with residents (28 Palestinians and 8 Israeli settlers) residing in these same locales. The interviews with residents did not focus exclusively on private security, but instead provided data on different state and non-state security interventions in East Jerusalem and their implications to Palestinian and Jewish-Israeli residents. In addition, I interviewed six current and former private security guards, as well as three Israeli policymakers on the municipal level. Furthermore, this article is informed by secondary data analysis of a large set of documents presenting in detail the relations between the PSCs and Israel's policing, regulating and funding governmental bodies. This includes public tenders, contracts, protocols, media reports and court testimonies.

In the following section, I provide an account of the inception and growth of the Jewish-Israeli settlement compounds in East Jerusalem, situating the phenomenon within the larger history of the transformation of East Jerusalem under the Israeli administration. I continue to explore the public–private security provision at the settlement compounds, attending to the roles of each actor while critically assessing the mesh of relations formed between public and private security actors. I ask both *how*, as well as *why* the security assemblage emerged at these sites in this particular form. I suggest that the governmental policy of encompassing East Jerusalem into the state's fold, despite legal, diplomatic and public opinion limitations, was pursued through a solution found on the private market. In other words, state bodies authored a public–private policing mechanism that enables the state to maintain its 'democratic' image while engendering the strategically unequal protection of residents and evading legal and public accountability regarding its policies of displacement.

The state in flux: security privatisation and state-led projects

The transformation of the state in the era of structural adjustment, privatisation and increasing marketisation of social services remains an issue under intense scholarly discussion; the neoliberal state is often understood as eroded into incapacitation (Jessop 2002), as transformed into a part of the market (Hendrikse and Sidaway 2010) or as beholden to the prosperity of the financial market, on whose demands the state employs deregulation, property enclosure and at times the use of force on the expense of democratic majority rule (Harvey 2005). The implication for the state's claim to a monopoly over the legitimate use of violence is particularly an issue of continuous contestation. State security provision is not exempted from these waves of privatisation and deregulation. PSCs increasingly replace and complement the state, conducting security operations that were previously within the exclusive domain of the police and the military. Security privatisation denotes a wide spectrum of policies and practices, ranging from the sell-off of state agencies, or the growth of private companies competing with state security actors, through the regulatory mandated hiring of private companies, and through to the outsourcing of security operations, in which state security provision enlists private security actors in the security administrative, operational and logistical fields. Each case implies different state actors' roles and relevancy following privatisation.

While the delegation of violence to the private market is continuously morally and legally criticised by both citizens and the media (Löfstrand *et al.* 2017), the shift of security roles from the state to private actors is in full swing. Whether augmenting weak states' sovereignty (Hansen 2008), providing security to vulnerable communities in dispute with the authorities (Goldstein 2016), using tough measures deemed no longer acceptable for the police force or in providing securitised humanitarian solutions in foreign interventions (Spearin 2008), PSCs continuously grow in both number and scope.

In attending to a localised example of territorialisation through security outsourcing, this article suggests that in some cases the state's role following the privatisation of security can engender the unequal protection of citizens, dispossession and denial of political participation. Security outsourcing contributes to the emergence of a public–private security assemblage, whose multiplicity and heterogeneity can (re)produce a partial, biased, partisan security provision. The market relations between the assemblage's public and private actors can obfuscate the pursuing of a controversial state-led project of territorialisation – defined as a process in which the state 'claim authority over people and resources in a delimited area through cohesive enforcement and the mobility of policies, capital and discourse' (Vandergeest and Peluso 1995) – while allowing state actors to evade legal and public accountability.

The growth of private security does not denote the disappearance of public security actors. In many parts of the world, state security bodies are disassembled and reassembled according to a neoliberal logic in which the end result is an intertwined array of public and private security actors (Sassen 2006). Rather than witnessing ever-diminishing capacities and authorities, state security actors can be reinforced following their integration within the market; with their roles re-defined and their toolbox re-equipped, state actors are able to use private security to commit to projects they would otherwise be unable or unwilling to pursue. Following Ong's (2006) contention that the state's adoption of and integration within the global neoliberal market contributes to both the weakening and the strengthening of different activities of the state, this article explores the case of privatised security provision in settlement compounds in East Jerusalem. Focusing on these locales under Israeli occupation, this article analyses the emerging configurations of a public–private security assemblage, suggesting that these are inextricably tied to the strengthening of a colonial and exceptional (Shlomo 2016) state-led project of asserting territorial claims through the Judaization of large parts of occupied East Jerusalem.

The term assemblage is used here descriptively – not as denoting an ontological shift towards a 'flat' topography of social interactions, but rather as a mean to reflect on the rhizomatic relations formed between and through diverse material, human and technological elements. Thus, while assemblages are often regarded as ad-hoc groupings that are 'never structured around centripetal forces, organizing fields and boundaries' (Bigo 2014, p. 211), in this case study an assemblage approach is adopted in order to account for the temporal and relational properties of state security re-assembly with private actors, while not negating the continuous centrality of public security bodies. Abrahamsen and Williams (2009, p. 90) propose that the privatisation of security is part of a wider process of state disassembly and the emergence of global assemblages, wherein transnational structures and networks are formed, and in which 'a range of different actors and normativities interact, cooperate and compete to produce new institutions, practices, and forms of deterritorialized security governance'. While they presented the strengthening of the state through the emergence of a global, large-scale phenomenon, this article seeks to draw attention to its materialisation on a local, often national, scale. Scholarship thus far attended primarily to a global form of security assemblages, which operate across boundaries while mobilising transnational forms of capital (Loader and Walker 2007, Abrahamsen and Williams 2011, Gould 2017); this article proposes that security assemblages may also take a place-based form, as an adhesive that brings together different public and private nodes of power, which contribute to an effort to territorialise space, claiming authority over restive spaces and populations.

Rather than focusing on the de-territorialisation of security governance and its embedment within transnational market logics, I attend to a case of territorialisation of a city through privatisation – to the pursuing of a localised state-led project of performing sovereignty through the enmeshment of public and private security actors. Samara (2011) explored how state bodies cooperates with private security actors and business elites to ‘reclaim’ or ‘revitalise’ urban spaces in Cape Town, thus contributing to the permeation of the divided, apartheid city. His account aptly explores the distinctions and relations between the affluent central city and the disempowered townships. In East Jerusalem, unlike in the townships, Public and Private efforts to territorialise urban space are not pursued in direct relation to an ‘other’ metropolitan centre, but are rather aimed squarely at extending the grip of the state in and by itself. In Israel/Palestine, as elsewhere, the state’s involvement in security provision is reconfigured through its diffusion into a multitude of ‘nodes of power, authority, and agency’ (Berndtsson and Stern 2011, p. 411), in which the state is further attuning itself to provide the framework for a liberalised market – a market increasingly populated by private actors with a global reach. These security nodes interact through diffuse relations to enact, perform and construct security policy – thus encapsulating an assemblage that transcends vertical perception of governance and policymaking. Diphoorn (2015) suggests that often in such policing configurations there is no tangible state/non-state divide – that security actors are situated on a continuum between the public and the private, (re)positioning themselves in a manner which blurs the lines between public and private actors.

In Jerusalem, the security provision at the settlement compounds evidences the wide public–private spectrum, with a strong public involvement in the deployment, regulation and instruction of private security provision, and simultaneously the promotion of private companies to represent state actors. Braithwaite (2008) noted that blurred lines between the public and the private leads to the interdependency of public and private actors: the police is increasingly dependent on private actors for their operations and projects, while private companies require the regulatory framework and financing of the state to continue and prosper. The embedded proposition within this argument is that state actors are increasingly attuned to the needs of private, often for-profit actors rather than to those of their citizens – that the emergence of a public–private security assemblage leads to the (re)allocation of security and resources on an unequal basis.

The enmeshment of public and private security actors in providing citizens with day-to-day security ‘has made the public private and the private public’ (Leander 2008, p. 160). Leander suggests that in obscuring the outsourcing of sovereign rule into private hands, the enmeshment of public and private security contributes to a diminishment of the state’s obligation for equal security provision. Huysmans (2006) inquires the state ‘logic of protection’ – of who can make a legitimate claim to the state for protection, from which dangers, and who is responsabilized to provide said security. These questions are political – and Huysmans call for their answers to be informed by an agency-focused analysis, which accounts for the transformative capacity of security agencies (and individual agents) to shift the scale ‘between emancipatory and conservative visions of protection’ (Huysmans 2006, p. 6).

In Jerusalem, the outsourced security provision replaces a nominally universal protection logic committed to the protection of all citizens, with an explicitly partisan protection logic aimed at performing Jewish-Israeli sovereignty in East Jerusalem. Outside Israel/Palestine, other examples come to mind. From the mutual dependency of state power and PSCs as part of the prison-industrial complex in the United States (Doty and Wheatly 2013) to the partial outsourcing of the controversial and violent deportation regime of the UK (Athwal 2015) or the privately run detention centres operated on behalf of the Australian government in Nauru and Papua New Guinea, an ever-increasing number of ‘western democracies’ employ private security contractors to carry out punitive actions against marginalised, unwanted populations in the name of the state, both at home and abroad. In attending to the case of the settlement compounds in East Jerusalem, I explore the multiple facets of the public–private security assemblage which enable and promote the collusion of different security actors in pursuing a state-led project.

Jerusalem – between (in)security and dispossession

'East Jerusalem is neither here [Israel] nor there [the West Bank]', an Israeli former policymaker told me in a conversation discussing municipal policies in East Jerusalem, 'it's stuck in our throat but we refuse to swallow', he added. His views mirrored the conundrum which defines the Israeli approach to East Jerusalem. Jerusalem was envisaged as a part of an international corpus separatum in the UN partition resolution of 1947, but was since divided between Israel and Jordan (1948–1967) followed by East Jerusalem's occupation and subsequent annexation in 1967. When the Israeli army rolled into the West Bank in 1967, an area of 70 km² surrounding the Old City of Jerusalem was separated from the rest of the West Bank and declared a part of 'united Jerusalem'. However, it never became an integral part of Israel: with separate education systems, public transport systems, electricity providers, cultural institutions, religious courts and public health institutions, Palestinian East Jerusalem remains largely divided from its Western, Jewish-dominated counterpart. Israeli attempts to fully incorporate East Jerusalem into the Israeli administrative fold have never succeeded; with a majority of both Palestinian residents and international actors refusing to recognise Israeli sovereignty over East Jerusalem, a large part of the city's political, social and economic spheres remain outside the full grasp of the state.

As in other parts of the Occupied Palestinian territories, the Israeli administration in Jerusalem is torn between the application of brute military force and a rule through bureaucratic and legal machinations (Azoulay and Ophir 2012). Palestinian Jerusalemites lack none of the latter: they might reside in an Israeli-annexed city but are deemed stateless by the Israeli authorities. Issued with Israeli residency ID cards, they are legally considered foreigners with a permanent residency permit, whom the Israeli authorities seek to make 'disappear', while simultaneously rendering them 'subjects of the state's bureaucratic machine' (Tawil-Souri 2011, p. 90). Contrary to Israeli claims that Jerusalem's Palestinian community is entitled to equal services with equal rights, one can cast little doubt as to the discrimination and marginalisation of the city's Palestinians, which are involved in a continuous process of negotiating the most fundamental rights and services. Palestinian Jerusalemites regularly face violence by Israeli security agents, as well as by an increasing amount of attacks by Israeli settlers – with no protection or possible redress afforded by the Israeli police or judiciary (Human Rights Watch 2016). The Israeli authorities, at times, faced stiff opposition to their policies from Palestinian residents and international actors alike. The Israeli response has been a continuous attempt to reduce the economic and diplomatic burden of the city's occupation while preserving a façade of 'business as usual' to domestic and international audiences (Shlomo 2016).

The early 1990s marked a turning point in Israeli intervention in the Palestinian urban fabric of East Jerusalem, with a substantial growth in the number of Jewish-Israeli settlers moving into Palestinian neighbourhoods, evicting Palestinian residents from their houses and creating small, but expandable, segregated Jewish-only settlement compounds within residential East Jerusalem. These compounds are explicitly intended to strengthen Israel's hold on Jerusalem and its environs. Over 2000 settlers now reside in evicted Palestinian houses in East Jerusalem (Peace Now 2014), causing a 'mixture of exclusion, neighborhood abandonment and warehousing of Palestinian residents' (Dumper and Pullan 2010). These settlements are nominally established by private religious-nationalist NGOs, which finance the acquisition and locate suitable settlers to populate the evicted houses. Yet these organisations could not operate without the strong support of Israeli governmental actors. Palestinians are usually evicted following court proceedings in which the settlers' organisations demand expropriation and/or eviction, with claims that may include the establishment of an archaeological site, the relocation of previous Palestinian owners outside the borders of Israel, a claim of prior ownership by Jewish residents, or the contested and secret purchase of the property by a shady corporation registered offshore (ACRI 2010).

Security and territorialisation: emerging configurations

The public security provision in East Jerusalem is within the prerogative of the Israel Police force, as the area was officially annexed to the territory of the State of Israel; the Israeli army is officially

prohibited (with few rare exceptions) to operate in the city. The most prominent public security actor in East Jerusalem is the Israeli Border Police, a gendarmerie corps which is composed largely of military conscripts; the Border Police is deployed throughout East Jerusalem (and the West Bank) in lieu of the soldiers who populate the administration of other parts of the West Bank.

The Israeli security provision in East Jerusalem reflects a two-faced administration, whose practices are firmly embedded in the (settler) colonial governance of the city (Zureik 2011), while its legal and regulatory framework nominally establish a 'western' democratic rule. In this context, Israeli security actors sought a way to balance these contradictions. Police forces were further militarised – heavily armed border police units, delegated with the role of maintaining security within the Palestinian neighbourhoods of East Jerusalem (Dumper 2013), were provided with additional (lethal and 'non-lethal') weapons and equipment. At the same time, security provision was (and increasingly is) privatised, with private actors taking upon themselves security roles previously within the domain of the police and the armed forces. Their deployment reflects public security actors' inability and unwillingness to devote extensive labour resources to the maintenance of public security in an area deemed a high risk to security agents' lives, morale and public legitimacy. Aharon Franko, the former head of the Jerusalem district police explained that 'The Israeli Police is not a security company. If you demand the Israeli police to safeguard [individual] houses, to safeguard persons, it would mean to become a security company, which we are not' (Knesset Internal Affairs committee 2010). As in the rest of Israel, public and private bodies in Jerusalem hire security guards, which are stationed at the entry of every Israeli institution, school, ministry, shopping mall or museum, as part of an ever-encompassing 'culture of security' (Ochs 2011). Armed with automatic firearms, they guard the tram stops and patrol the tram tracks. The Old City, particularly, is the site of a sophisticated operation of both public and private security actors aimed at intimidating some residents while reassuring others (Grassiani and Volinz 2016).

Weizman (2007) explored how different forms of Israeli rule inscribe themselves in space, positing that the Israeli architecture in Jerusalem simultaneously embodied and rejected the old Palestinian cityscape (2007, p. 43–44). Likewise, the sight of Jewish-Israeli settlement compounds – Palestinian houses transformed into urban fortresses and topped by towering flags – mirrors the ambivalence towards the indigenous Palestinian design and its competition with the thrust towards modernity and distinguishability. All Jewish-only settlement compounds in East Jerusalem's Palestinian neighbourhoods are protected by PSCs, which are hired and paid for by the Israeli Ministry of Housing. In total there are over 350 full-time security guards (one for every 5 settlers), which provide static on-site security, dynamic security (escorting settlers whenever they enter or exit the neighbourhood) and transport services (Peace Now 2014). In 1987, during the initial stages of the First Intifada, former Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon rented an apartment in the Wittenberg settlement compound in the Muslim quarter of the Old City. When he was appointed Minister of Housing and Construction in 1990, a security detail from the Ministry was assigned to protect his residency. Following demands from other settlers, the Ministry began providing security to other settlement compounds as well (Or 2006). Soon thereafter, a public tender was published, awarding the contract to a well-established PSC, 'Modi'in Ezrachi', which hitherto continues to provide security to most settlement compounds as well as to other sensitive locations in East Jerusalem.

In the following pages, I aim to unpack the relations and tensions between the different public and private actors involved in the settlement compounds security assemblage, focusing on the policy-making, funding flows, management, supervision and daily practices of security at the sites in question. As Loader and Walker (2007) argue, state security actors remain relevant even after privatisation – in cases where private security fills a void in the protection of lives and property by public police forces, as well as in situations where state actors remain actively involved in the operation, regulation, and provision of private security. Jewish-Israeli settlement compounds in East Jerusalem provide an example for these interactivities. The government foots the bill for private security guards at these sites, rather than deploying regular police forces. A governmental ministry maintains overall authority

over the private contractors, while simultaneously distancing itself from responsibility to its actions. The state authority and responsibility is diffused into multiple nodes of private authority in the operation, performance and supervision of security and violence – while keeping the state claim for monopoly over legitimate violence intact.

While security privatisation and outsourcing denotes the distancing of state actors from security provision, it does not necessarily mark the removal of the state from its core function of protecting its citizens. Instead, state security actors can outsource parts of their work to private actors while maintaining a backstage position from which to direct the use of permissible violence. Such an outsourcing is not merely a neoliberal attuning of the state to the global demands and norms of the market but is instead a political shift towards the territorialisation of urban space through the performance of state sovereignty by contracted private security actors.

The public and the private: new nodes of authority in Jerusalem¹

Aharon Franko, the former head of the Jerusalem district police, argued in a parliamentary session that

I treat all residents equally. This is the difference between us and you [the Private Security Companies]. You are political and I am not. I should provide equal protection for a Jew who resides in Sheiqh' Jarrah or a Palestinian in East Jerusalem. That's the job we were tasked with. (Knesset Internal Affairs committee 2010)

Unlike policemen, PSCs are instructed to attend solely to the security of the Jewish-Israeli settlers. As one former security guard recalled in an interview: 'our main concern is the safety of the Jewish residents. No matter what is told to the media, that we are here to keep the order [...] It is always us against them [the Palestinians]'. While police forces are instructed, at least formally, to attend to the security concerns of all residents of Jerusalem, private security guards – paid for by the state – are concerned only with the safety of the Jewish-Israeli settlers. Their deployment replaces a nominally universal protection towards all residents by public security agents with an outsourced provision of partisan security that engenders security to some and dispossession to others. In attending to the relations between the Israeli Ministry of Housing, the Police, and the PSCs in the following pages, I aim to show how a project of territorialisation takes place in a contested area outside the full reach of the state.

While a preliminary observation of the security provision at the Jewish-Israeli settlement compounds in East Jerusalem might seem straightforward, a myriad of new nodes of authority – state and non-state actors enlisted to effectuate, finance, support and supervise these operations. The Ministry of Housing publishes the public tenders, allocates the funds, and chooses the private companies involved. One executive within the ministry is singlehandedly responsible for setting the terms of the public tenders, checking whether the companies fulfil their contractual obligations (and in case of breaches issuing fines), serving as an 'ombudsman' for the employees' labour rights and heading investigations into minor violent incidents (Ministry of Housing 2012).

In 2012, the Ministry came under court pressure to extend its supervisory role (ACRI 2010) and has since enlisted an additional node – an external PSC – with the daily administration, supervision and training necessary for the outsourced security operations at the compounds. This was nominally done in order to end the conflict of interests in which the PSC operating at the field was also in charge of supervising and reporting on their own staff (Ministry of Housing 2012); the Ministry has thus further distanced itself from the controversial security provision, by interposing an additional layer between the governmental body and the PSCs themselves. The PSCs provide static (on-site), vehicular and pedestrian security escort services to the Jewish-Israeli settlers and their guests – safeguarding settlers' houses and institutions, transporting settlers' families around East Jerusalem with a security vehicle, or driving settlers' children to school, to visit friends around the neighbourhood or to the nearby Israeli transport terminal (Figure 1).

The relations between the PSCs and the Israeli police force (including border policemen) developed over time. Daniel, a former security guard who worked at the settlement compounds for five years following his military service, recalled:

In the early days, the relations we had with the police were very different. If we needed their help responding to an event, for example some Arab youth throwing rocks on a resident's house, we had to call one-zero-zero [the regular police hotline] on our mobile phones and hope that they would take us seriously.

That, he recounted, started changing during the Israeli attack on Gaza in 2009:

During operation "Cast Lead" we had *balagan* [mess, chaos] in the Silwan neighborhood every day, and we received a lot of support from the policemen and the border policemen. They would sit in our guardhouses and have a coffee, sometimes when the commander didn't mind they would join us when we were patrolling the place [...] it wasn't official, there was no change of orders from the top, but they started taking our calls directly, coming over with the jeep whenever we asked them to.

The developed operational and ideological proximity of the police with the PSCs was further reflected in the experience of Tal, a 32-year-old former security guard who worked in the neighbourhood of Silwan:

At first, them [the police] didn't care much unless something significant was happening, like if a new [Jewish] family moved in or there was a war or something of that sort, [in which case] they were bringing in the big police commanders to review our mission files, to make sure everything is in order.

Yet these relations changed during the four years of Tal's work:

they started feeling comfortable commanding us directly – when a border-police jeep would arrive to the street, we would become their subordinates, we would do whatever they say. [...] Usually they told us to take a step back, and document events with our cameras while they handled things themselves.

As Daniel's and Tal's account suggest, the PSCs relations with the police were established slowly on the ground, in the streets and yards of East Jerusalem. These close hierarchical relations were not initially prescribed from above, but were rather the result of interpersonal encounters and camaraderie on-the-ground, coupled with the necessity of allocating labour, equipment and responsibility in times of war. Only at a later point in time, following political and legal pressure, were these relations formulated legally through ministerial guidelines and contractual obligations. Recent (2014–2017) escalations in East Jerusalem have brought each time a temporary increase in police presence within Palestinian neighbourhoods, and closer operational ties with the PSCs; However, while Israeli (border) policemen are quick to come and go, Israeli private security guards remain, and



Figure 1. Private security guards providing transport services for Jewish-Israeli settlers, Silwan (Jerusalem), May 2015. Photo: Author.

become a permanent feature of Palestinian neighbourhoods, commonly described by Palestinian residents as a dangerous nuisance affecting their daily lives in countless ways.

The PSCs' relations with the police today are stronger than ever. The PSCs are required to consult the police when equipping and arming their employees (security guards are provided with handguns, automatic rifles, pepper spray and shock grenades); they must also abide by police orders to extend the scope of their security provision, to re-deploy or re-schedule the security guards around the settlement compounds (Ministry of Housing 2012). The security guards are provided with a police-frequency radio communication device; private security guards use the police frequency to contact the local police, either to call for back-up or for sharing intelligence. While the police (and in extension, the Israeli Security Agency, the Shin Bet) share some of their local intelligence with the PSCs, the flow of information between the public and private actors is, in practice, bi-directional, since the police relies on the footage recorded by the privately operated CCTV cameras to arrest, indict and punish Palestinian 'troublemakers' in East Jerusalem. As the interviews with Daniel and Tal reveal, the close relations between the police and the PSCs allows the police to maintain a backstage position from which to remotely deploy and instruct additional private actors, in a bid to territorialise restive urban areas beyond the full grasp of the state.

Challenges and tensions in an emerging security provision

Why did the public–private security assemblage at the settlement compounds emerge in its particular form, in which public and private security actors are enmeshed in a state project aimed at territorialising East Jerusalem into the folds of the occupying state? This article I suggests that the outsourcing of security provision can be a mean to reinforce the state's capacities to pursue a state-led project. State bodies, despite a nominal claim for a universal security provision, may continue to 'author' the urban security responses to a perceived threat in a manner which distinguishes between different residents of the city (Coaffee *et al.* 2009), while obfuscating the role of public security actors by positioning private actors at the forefront.

The outsourcing of security provision at the settlement compounds did not go unchallenged – it drew opposition from different and often contradictory directions. Palestinian residents, in addition to their day-to-day opposition to the settlements' presence, filed a legal appeal to the Israeli supreme court demanding an end to the presence of private guards in their neighbourhood (J. Siam and others vs. State of Israel 2011). The petition of the Palestinian residents, represented by an Israeli civil rights organization, argued that the outsourcing of security harms the constitutional rights of the Palestinian residents, including their right to life, right for equality before of the law and their right to privacy. During the court appeal, a settlers' representative opposed the motion, arguing that 'it's not privatization, it's a bad answer to the worse situation' (J. Siam and others vs. State of Israel 2011). The Palestinians' petition was ultimately rejected by the courts without a full ruling.

In 2012, the recently founded labour union representing the private security guards themselves asked the Israeli regional labour court, as part of a labour dispute with the PSC and the state, to recognise the security provision at the settlement compounds as a 'core function of the state [...] which is impossible to privatize'. The union representatives further argued that the security guards should be recognised as full state employees, since the state contract with the PSC is a 'fictitious registry [...] aimed at allowing the state to evade its responsibility as an employer' (National Workers Union vs. State of Israel 2012).

How can such a privatisation process, a 'bad answer' or a 'fictitious registry', be understood? The outsourcing of state functions is often explained by the rise of neoliberalism, associated with the demand to de-regulate, scale-down the scope of the state's activities and allow the cost-efficient opening of public services provision to benefit from the competition of private actors in the free market. Seidman (2014) explains the partial privatisation of Israeli military and public security functions primarily as managerial, cost-cutting decisions in line with the larger process of privatisation in Israel. Yet the increasing governmental expenditure on the private security provision at the

settlement compounds in East Jerusalem, which peaked at over \$21,700,000 per annum in 2014 and 2015 (Hasson 2015), suggests that the outsourcing may not be explained solely in terms of economic efficiency. To reduce costs, the Israeli authorities could have preferred to deploy border policemen, the majority of whom are military recruits who receive no wage during their mandatory military service, to guard the compounds. Havkin (2014) suggests a different explanation. She attends to the privatisation of Israeli checkpoints in the West Bank as ideologically motivated, dispelling misconceptions on its alleged profitability and efficiency. She proposes that privatisation was intended to 'professionalize' and 'depoliticize' the checkpoints, to contribute to the permeation of a violent status-quo while obfuscating the state's role within it.

I extend on Havkin (2014) suggestion and posit that the process of security outsourcing is aimed at strengthening the state-led project in East Jerusalem by depoliticising, normalising and enabling the growth of Jewish-Israeli settlements in East Jerusalem. I suggest that the Israeli government's choice to employ non-state security actors at the settlement compounds reinforced, rather than diminished, state actors' capacities by enabling them to pursue a political project of territorialising Palestinian East Jerusalem through violent dispossession, which they would have been unable or unwilling to pursue otherwise. The outsourcing of security provision denotes an attempt at distancing, or interposing by means of a mediating layer, the state authorities from the securitised project they have undertaken.

Reinforcement through interposition: seeking indemnification, differentiation and depoliticisation

In the following section, I present three modes through which state actors' capacities are reinforced following security privatisation. First, the security provision at the settlement compounds in East Jerusalem poses a risk to the Israeli authorities in terms of personal and collective accountability to damages and wrongdoings. Security personnel might get injured and sue the ministry responsible; Palestinian residents who were maimed, or the relatives of those who were killed by security agents might sue the state or bring about a criminal investigation against either the security guards or their governmental bosses. Even the settlers might find a cause to seek compensation in case their security providers did not respond adequately in case of threats to their lives or property. Yet by outsourcing the security provision at the settlement compounds and diffusing their responsibility to a plurality of private actors, the Israeli authorities are able to shift themselves away from any wrongdoings committed by the private actors employed. Instead of maintaining accountability to the public, as per their obligation by law,² the public officials responsible are utilising the outsourcing of security provision as a mean to evade accountability and shift their responsibility to an excessive number of interdependent private security actors. A semi-retired former municipal politician elaborated on this logic in an interview:

This option, to recruit private security companies instead of relying on the police force, can save us a lot of headache. It means that the authorities don't take full responsibility [...] it means that accountability is scattered into so many different bodies so that in the end no one takes charge. [...] it allows us to be bold in our projects, in our ambitions. I can see it growing.

His words are mirrored in the legal contract between the ministry and the PSCs operating at the settlement compounds; the contract stipulates that the private companies assume all responsibility to any damages resulting from their security operations. The PSCs are obliged to take an insurance policy, which would indemnify the state from any claim or lawsuit brought forward as a result actions of the PSCs and their employees (Ministry of Housing 2012); the PSCs are further obliged to pay for the legal costs of defending security guards in criminal trials arising from their conduct in the field, including cases of manslaughter. Such was the case in September 2010, when a security guard shot and killed Samar Sarhan, a resident of Silwan and a father of five, during confrontations in the neighbourhood. The ensuing investigation took place at the regular police regional unit, and not at the Police Internal Investigations Unit, since the security guard was not considered a public officer.

While the killer of Samar Sarhan was not charged (after a mysterious loss of crucial evidence), neither the Ministry of Housing nor the Police could be held accountable to Sarhan's death by his family, not in terms of criminal charges nor in terms of compensation. The distancing – through privatisation – of state actors from a controversial security provision allowed for the indemnification of state actors from possible wrongdoings. While coordinating, financing and directing the security provision at the settlement compounds, the state actors involved seek not to be held accountable, or to be indemnified from, the deeds committed on their behalf.

The second mode of reinforcement of state actors' capacities is that of legally enabling state actors to pursue a policy, which would have been unlawful, or subject to intense legal scrutiny if carried out directly by public officials. East Jerusalem was annexed by the Israeli authorities, and as such 'regular' Israeli law applies in all issues relating to policing, law enforcement and property rights. Unlike other parts of the Occupied Palestinian territories, where two different legal systems apply to Israeli settlers and Palestinian subjects, East Jerusalem should, in theory, be ruled through a single legal system applicable to all its urban residents. Yet in practice, the public-private security assemblage which emerged at East Jerusalem's settlement compounds marks the transposition of security and policing elements from the Occupied West Bank, administered by the Israeli army, into East Jerusalem, an area annexed into sovereign Israel. Such a mobility follows a well-established pattern of transplanting military strategies and technologies from the 'periphery' into militarised metropolitan areas (Coaffee 2003).

While Israeli law stipulates the obligation of the state to provide equal protection to all its residents, the outsourcing of security provision allows state security authorities to adopt a logic of protection which prescribes as legitimate only claims for protection by some (Jewish-Israelis) residents from others (Palestinians). With public security bodies limited by their official designation as protecting all residents, the transformative capacity of protection logic (Huysmans 2006) is shifted from the public to the private, where PSCs can pursue a security provision that provides some residents with privileged protection services while other residents face discrimination, intrusion and violence. While the police remains largely out of sight at the settlement compounds, their central role is continuously maintained: the Israeli police 'hidden' administration of the scope and type of security provision at these sites, coupled with the daily close cooperation of its administrative and operational units with the PSCs, exemplifies the multihued public-private spectrum upon which the capacity of the state to pursue controversial projects rests.

The outsourced security provision allows the Israeli authorities to deflect legal challenges to their partisan security provision by maintaining a façade of equal security provision – in the form of a 'neutral' police force – while in practice employing non-state actors to do the 'dirty work' required to maintain the controversial settlement compounds in an occupied territory. The state has sufficiently distanced itself legally, through the outsourcing of both the security provision and its management and supervision functions, from the controversial political project.

The third mode is that of reinforcing the state's capacities through depoliticisation and normalisation of controversial state-led projects, in a manner which curtails domestic and international public debate. Privatisation and outsourcing mark a shift in the relations between capital and the state – and a consensus between political factions. The employment of private security actors contributes to the transformation of a public issue into a private one, in which the role of the state, committed to its contractual obligations, is maintained regardless of the political parties in power. Daniel, the former security guard, compared his labour as a soldier with his work as a security guard. Being a security guard, he said, is a 'boring, atrophying kind of job'. 'In the army', he recounted, 'I had a "big mouth", but here [working for a PSC] ... here you get used to the high pay so you don't complain, you don't speak about it at home'. For the Israeli public, to be a security guard is often considered as just another student-job, with little of the prestige, appreciation and political role given to military or policing professionals. While the 'dirty work' performed by soldiers and border guards may cause concern among soldiers' relatives or friends, and sway public opinion, the employment of private

actors transforms the security provision from a national duty to a professional, depoliticised and lucrative labour.

The ties between the state and non-state actors within the security assemblage at the settlement compounds can thus remain largely hidden from view for local and international audiences, many of whom subscribe to the Israeli prescription of the settlements compounds as private ventures detached from governmental policymaking. Instead of applying pressure on the Israeli authorities, concerned diplomats³ and activists might vent their anger towards the PSCs employed by the state (see the case of G4S contracts with the Israeli prison service; Diakonia 2013). In presenting the settlement compounds as a private initiative, which should be removed from the wider public scrutiny towards the Israeli policies, the Israeli authorities distance themselves from the PSCs' activities in legal correspondence, media talking-points and diplomatic communications, attempting to obfuscate their financial, operational and administrative role in the partisan security provision which enables the presence and growth of the settlement compounds in East Jerusalem.

The introduction of private security to 'maintain order', and to safeguard the lives and properties of those whom the state deems worthy of additional protection, can be understood as the collapse – in practice but not in rhetoric – of the normative conceptualisation of security as a public good. The multiple actors within East Jerusalem's public–private security assemblage collude to implement and safeguard a state-led project of Jewish-Israeli settlements in East Jerusalem, one which is dependent upon a partisan security provision. The outsourced urban security provision can be traced back to the state itself – to the variety of ways in which a state-led project of territorialisation in a contested territory is affected and legitimised through the enmeshment of state and non-state security actors.

Conclusions

In this article, I attended to the myriad ways in which state actors' capacities might be reinforced following the privatisation and outsourcing of security provision, hereby seeking to complicate the analyses of the growing global phenomenon in which privatised security provision diminishes or side-tracks public policing services. I argued that the privatisation of security can reinforce state actors' capacities to pursue territorialisation, by authoring – or assembling – a security provision which advances state's policy while simultaneously reducing state actors' responsibility and accountability towards their urban residents. I posited that the re-assembly of the state with elements of private market should not be understood only in normative terms of strengthening/diminishing the state, but rather as a transformative re-arranging of the nodes of public authority and power relations, often deliberately towards the accomplishment of certain, localised projects. The reinforcement of the state's actors capacities following privatisation is inherently embedded in an unequal redistribution of rights, privileges, public goods and services – including security provision.

The security provision at the settlement compounds in East Jerusalem provides a single, albeit significant, example, of how state actors may seek to depoliticise policies which are legally unsound and politically controversial by outsourcing security provision to private actors. From the Australian migrant, detention facilities in the Pacific Ocean to the Blackwater contractors deployed in Iraq, from the UK deportation regime to the private state prison in the US, the privatisation and outsourcing of security provision enables the implementation of controversial state-led projects in a manner that evades accountability and deflects local, international and legal challenges, both 'at home' and abroad.

In East Jerusalem, the current public–private model of security provision, with its excess of actors and lack of accountability, continues to serve the interests of the public funders, the commercial providers and the privileged addresses of security provision at Jewish-Israeli settlement compounds. Tracing the emergence of the security assemblage within this particular form sheds light on the collusion of private and public actors in territorialising East Jerusalem into the firm grip of the state. The emergence of the Public–Private security assemblage in East Jerusalem attests to both the

reinforcement of the state's capacity to pursue political project through privatisation, as to the demise of the liberal 'universalist' security provision that the Israeli authorities still claim to uphold.

The enmeshment of public and private security actors allows state authorities to place a private company at the front of a controversial project while maintaining a backstage position from which to administer, guide and supervise its operations. Private agents take upon themselves, in exchange for a wage, the repercussions to the violent nature of the state's project of territorialisation and dispossession; facing the prospects of both violent resistance and legal challenges to their actions, the deployment of private security guards allows state actors to outsource the burdens of an occupation. Within an assemblage undergoing continuous reconfiguration, the public and private security actors involved are re-defining through their formal and informal relations, in law and in practice, the state's territorial reach, and the differentiated relations with its own citizens.

Notes

1. This section draws on interviews conducted with current and former security guards, as well as local community organizers in East Jerusalem in March–July 2015.
2. Israeli law defines state liability quite widely; public authorities, including the police, can be held accountable to civil damages in case of perceived wrongdoing. See also Torts Law (State Liability) 5712–1952.
3. The roles and opinions of foreign diplomats are of particular importance to the daily practices of resistance to Israeli rule in East Jerusalem; see Bicchi (2016).

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