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## Securitization Dysfunction

*Security Sector Reform in the Occupied Palestinian Territories*

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**ABSTRACT** This article contributes to the critical discourse on security sector reform (SSR) by explicitly acknowledging its political dimensions and implications. Through a consideration of the role of SSR in international processes of securitization and state-building, it highlights the paradoxes implicit in this model, and the subsequent consequences of its implementation on the ground using the case of occupied Palestinian territories where SSR has significantly altered the local security landscape.

**KEYWORDS:** securitization, biopolitics, governmentality, security sector reform, Palestine

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### INTRODUCTION

A European brainchild, security sector reform (SSR) and its derivative packaging of demobilized, demilitarized, reintegrated, rehabilitated, and restructured security programming, illustrates the phenomenon of aid securitization in development. Practitioners argue that the rationale of SSR is to motivate donors to go beyond mere capacity-building of security forces and move towards entrenching principles of democratic governance and the rule of law (Schnabel and Ehrhart 2005, 45). However, SSR's operational success has been limited (Schroeder, Chappuis, and Kocak 2014), and analysis seeking to improve the operational capability of SSR programs has largely focused on the discrepancy between concept and implementation. Yet, while current discourse on SSR acknowledges its political dimension, it has ignored its mutually constitutive and relational power implications.

This article, therefore, offers a more comprehensive understanding of the preoccupation of SSR analysts and practitioners pertaining to the paradigm's discrepancy between its stated policy objectives and the flawed outcomes,

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which are actualized through its implementation on the ground. It does this by reorienting analysis within the realm of politics and away from its policy-oriented technocratic focus by situating SSR within the international relations (IR) subfield of security studies from which it has been negated and instead largely relegated to that of peace and conflict studies. This is significant as SSR has been instrumental in securitizing the international development processes and its liberal state-building endeavors.

This shift in the framework of analysis that removes SSR from its technocratic and policy-orientated mainstay and into the realm of critical scholarly engagement conceives of SSR as something more than just a mere political instrument to shape and implement specific policies or a rhetorical tool to justify their adoption.

While SSR is intended to create certain modes of transformation, when operationalized, it instead has a tendency to disfigure social and political landscapes. The outcome has been one of dysfunctional securitization. Rather than the production of its envisioned Weberian state, SSR through its flawed processes of securitization has instead produced and perpetuated the production of a plurality of hegemonies and their oligopolies of violence. In other words, instead of creating a monopoly and hierarchy of violence, it creates oligopolies of violence that have often intensified societal fragmentation and the creation of new elites dependent upon outside actors. This occurs when objects of SSR interventions engage and seek to appropriate securitized development aid. New securitization configurations then emerge.

This fracturing of securitization creates numerous local, regional, and international groups and actors. As these actors emerge, their identification, modes of agency, and power depend upon their positionality within an interconnected chain of interaction that significantly shapes the interests and agency of each of its interlocutors.

This article, therefore, focuses on the ways in which SSR becomes a pivotal programmatic process in the political (re)construction of space, creating actors, structures, and processes. The myriad ways in which its benefactors internalize and respond to these processes within the different spheres of socioeconomic, political, and geographic locales in which SSR is applied produces the outcomes that run contrary to the paradigm's stated objectives.

The case of the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt) provides for an apt case study as the state-building project there has become synonymous with SSR and where the implementation of liberal rule is predicated on the reform of the security sector. SSR in the oPt has failed to achieve stability for the

Palestinian people. It has instead catalyzed the further polarization of Palestinian politics and the division of the oPt into two separate political entities, one of which has been denied international recognition. SSR has created a paradox on the ground in the oPt, whereby the Palestinian Authority (PA) and, to a certain extent, the de facto government of Hamas, is in control of a territory, but not a territorial entity resembling a state in the Weberian sense. Both polities are products of SSR's flawed processes of securitization, at the opposite ends of the security spectrum, which have produced and perpetuated the production of a plurality of lesser hegemonies and their oligopolies of violence in both the West Bank and Gaza.

The article is structured as follows. It begins by decrypting the rationale underlying SSR. It then discusses the conceptual tools and theoretical assumptions that best capture the dynamics within SSR's application using the oPt as a practical illustration of how these dynamics manifest themselves into an operational reality that differs significantly from the official discourse employed by SSR policy.

#### **SSR: RESITUATING THE PRACTICE**

Over the past few decades, the foci of analysis of peace and conflict research, and also of security studies, has been on the relationships between large-scale violent conflict, the performance of states, and global security (Fischer and Schmelzle 2009).

There was a widely shared conviction that political and economic liberalism offered a key to solving a broad range of social, political, and economic problems from underdevelopment and famine, to disease, environmental degradation, and violent conflict (Paris and Sisk 2008). This inaugurated what Paris and Sisk call a global experiment in post-conflict peace-building that reflected the liberal triumphalism of the period, epitomized by Francis Fukuyama's treatise claiming that humankind had reached the (liberal) endpoint in its ideological evolution (Fukuyama 1992). The key tenet of the liberal peace thesis was that rapid liberalization would create conditions for stable and lasting peace in countries emerging from civil conflict and that democratization and marketization were mutually reinforcing (Paris and Sisk 2008). New liberal policy constructions, such as human security and the responsibility to protect, emerged as concrete manifestations and policy facilitators of the liberal peace project. Liberal peace theory represented a radical developmental agenda for social transformation that embodied a new or

political humanitarianism that lays an emphasis on things such as conflict resolution and prevention, reconstructing social networks, strengthening civil and representative institutions, promoting the rule of law, and SSR in the context of a functioning economy.

The fundamental aim of the liberal peace project is to transform the dysfunctional and war-affected societies that it encounters on its borders into cooperative, representative, and, especially, stable entities. This “fetishization of state and institution-building” (MacGinty 2008, 159) became a dominant feature of the liberal peace. In this context, the Weberian state is seen as the principal guarantor and delivery system for the liberal peace, hence giving rise to the deep and symbiotic interconnections between the liberal peace-building and state-building agendas that are referred to almost interchangeably in policy and academic literature.

The concepts of peace-building and state-building, however, are qualitatively different. Oliver Richmond explains that peace-building has always, until its liberal co-option, been viewed as a grassroots, bottom-up activity, involving engaging with societies, cultures, and identities, going far beyond the institutions of statehood (Richmond 2010, 330). By contrast, state-building involves the creation of a government that has a monopoly of legitimate power and that is capable of enforcing rules throughout the state’s territory (Fukuyama 2005, 88). It is a top-down process of institutionalization, often judged by its ability to concentrate the means of coercion—in practical terms, armies and police—under the control of a central political authority (Fukuyama 2007, 11). According to Theda Skocpol, a stable and effective state must possess sheer sovereign integrity and the stable administrative–military control of a given territory as well as loyal and skilled officials and plentiful financial resources (Skocpol 1985).

Despite their clear conceptual differences, peace-building and state-building have been viewed as mutually dependent. Fukuyama lays out the interconnections between the two processes under the umbrella of the liberal peace with a particular take on sequencing: “Before you can have a democracy, you must have a state, but to have a legitimate and therefore durable state you eventually must have democracy” (Fukuyama 2005, 88). Given that state-building in the post-Cold War era has come to be understood as the *sine qua non* of liberal peace-building, the two processes can be conceived as halves of the liberal peace formula.

This post-Cold War liberal security problematic has been exemplified in the construction of programmatic policies such as SSR. This assumption is

further supported by Madhav Joshi, Sung Yong Lee, and Roger MacGinty who identify five policy areas that are found repeatedly in seminal peace-building documents: promotion of democracy; a focus on the rule of law; an emphasis on human rights; SSR; and good governance promotion (Joshi, Lee, and MacGinty 2014, 369). In the survey of the content of peace agreements, using the Peace Accord Matrix data set, it concludes that these five policy areas are presented as a package in over 50 percent of peace accords, with SSR particularly highly represented (Joshi et al. 2014). As this shows, SSR has become an indivisible component of the liberal peace-building agenda.

The rationale and justification of SSR programs is underwritten by the state fragility discourse. State fragility is seen to engender violent conflict, which leads to state failure or even collapse. As states have a dual role, namely, providing security and order for their citizens (internal role) and serving as the building blocks of the international system (external role), state fragility affects not only the citizens of the state and society in question but also neighboring regional states and the international community at large. The implications of state fragility and its subsequent effect on international insecurity has been articulated by authors such as Ashraf Ghani, Clare Lockhart, and Fukuyama, who argue, particularly against the backdrop of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, that regions of state fragility are perceived as providing breeding grounds and safe havens for transnational terrorism, weapons proliferation, and organized crime (Fukuyama 2004; Ghani and Lockhart 2008). The issue of fragile states is thus seen as being at the core of a variety of today's most pressing security problems (Richmond 2010). This interpretation of the relationship between state (in) security and global crises, which continues to pervade the discipline of IR, has been fundamental in underwriting SSR's own understanding of what a state should be. The issue then is not one of conceptual clarity, as numerous SSR operational manuals produced by the United Nations, Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) and Department for International Development (DFID)—to name but a few of its proponents—are clear on the conceptual understanding of what a state is and should look like. Their understanding is modeled on the western Weberian state. However, SSR has failed to implement in practice this vision of statehood as outlined in its definition and discourse.

This discrepancy, it is argued here, goes beyond the issue of a technical policy remedy, as policy is just one aspect in SSR's domestic function of monopolizing force for the host state. In a broader sense, SSR is inherently about

the creation of order and so instead the argument comes down to one of the underlying politics underwritten and practiced through programs such as SSR, and local responses to these politics.

The assumption pertaining to SSR's broader function in the creation and perpetuation of civic order is buttressed by the critical literature defining global policing which is more explicit in pointing to the significant misperception of modern police, which, while commonsensically associated with the rule of law, has always been about maintaining political and social order more broadly (Laffey and Nadarajah 2016, 115). Mark Laffey and Suthahatan Nadarajah argue that the conception of the police as an institution of the state narrowly concerned with crime prevention and law enforcement as opposed to the reproduction of order was itself a late eighteenth-century product of increasingly hegemonic liberalism.

This misperception is reflected in the disciplinary balkanization between security studies and peace and conflict studies that has prevented SSR analysts from capturing the fundamental element in the projection of power through programs such as SSR. This omission is largely remedied by applying the basic premise of securitization theory to the application of SSR programs.

Developed in response to the need to expand the range of security studies after the Cold War, one of the most significant innovations to emanate against the backdrop of these developments was the Copenhagen School of securitization. Seeking to widen the agenda of earlier state military-centric theorizations of security, securitization theory established itself as one of the most influential alternatives to traditional narrow security theory within international relations (Holbraad and Pedersen 2012, 165).

To study securitization then is to explore the power politics of a concept. Based on a clear idea of the nature of security, securitization theory aims to gain an increasingly precise understanding of who securitizes, on what issues (threats), for whom (referent objects), why, with what results, and, not least, under what conditions (i.e., what explains when securitization is successful) (Buzan, Ole, and de Wilde 1998, 32).

More significantly and in spite of certain shortcomings, securitization theory offers a conceptually cogent method for studying security as the product of sociopolitical discourses and practice (McDonald 2008). It aims to provide an open-ended method for investigating concrete political discourses and practices rather than a metaphysical treatise on the "nature of security" (Holbraad and Pedersen 2012, 165).

When scrutinized within this framework, SSR's internal conceptual composition begins to unravel, capturing the more nuanced formations and dynamics of its internal components and the often-ignored tensions and contradictions between them. Incoherencies are inherited from its liberal peace progenitor whose rationale is centered on a distinct notion of humanity serviced by a security apparatus. In this sense security is defined in human terms as the "humanization of security" (Evans 2010, 416). The consequences of this have been profound as depoliticization is said to occur when life is being primed for its own betterment. This largely explains why SSR had been taken out of the purview of politics and relegated instead to technocratic scrutiny.

Elucidating the underlying discourses of power and struggle that underwrite the logics of social ordering in processes of state-building, a global governmentality approach draws our attention to how order and rule are produced, maintained, and transformed. One can provide an understanding of the interplay between what Michel Foucault termed the microphysics and macrophysics of power by analyzing the complex assemblages of power captured at those sites where it operates, and where these concepts are "performatively" produced at the capillary level (De Larrinaga and Doucet 2011, 10; Foucault 1980). These frameworks significantly contribute to the interpretation of the incipient relational mechanics between international state-building practices and localized objects of these interventions. Importantly they highlight how international governing practices rely on rationalities and technologies of power that are broader in their reach, while remaining more subtle in how they produce order than what can be apprehended by studying formally recognized governing authorities norms and processes (Joseph 2009, 421). Instead, global governmentality draws our attention to how order and rule are produced maintained and transformed. It therefore allows us to comprehend the complexity of social order and political rule. At its core, SSR is an emergent phenomena of these current trajectories of power projected through its processes of securitization and subsequent implementation. However, what this implementation ends up creating and perpetuating through the processes and mechanics of interaction between international, regional, and local actors and subjects has been far more dysfunctional, nonlinear, and complex than most accounts of existing analysis have portrayed. The case of the oPt is revealing.

In its implementation and practice, SSR is the organization of the potential for state violence to ensure the hegemony of a certain social order. As a result, SSR has been fundamental in altering the security landscape in the oPt

through the creation of this civic order which coalesces with broader Western international state-building programmatic orientations. In this sense, in the context of a neocolonial state-building project, the political disposition it secures will, in all likelihood, reflect the interests, perceptions, and values of the foreign powers that impose/support/fund/organize it rather than being aligned to any indigenous domestic constellation—the interests of the state elite presumably being or becoming more closely aligned with those of the foreign powers than with the local population. This civil order is embodied in the legal/bureaucratic channels of the state; the regulations and laws that define a certain social order and economic dispensation; the forms and purposes of association and political activity that are deemed legitimate and those that are not; the punishments for transgressing these prescribed limits; and, on an abstract level, values and a certain conception of the social order.

Therein lies the hegemonic power of the international community: the forms of social order in the states of the global colonizing center are reproduced by their direct intervention in the colonized periphery in such a way that, while the form is maintained, the substance is qualitatively different.

This process in turn requires the creation of players/actors within this system that, as in any other, aid in the recursive production and perpetuation of this civic order. These interventions are therefore designed with complicit locals as part of a “*mission civilatrice*” to tame and civilize the problematic object of interventions (MacGinty 2008, 2014; Richmond 2010). In this context, the implementation of SSR requires complicit locals who can act as agents between the colonizing power and the colonized entity. Therefore, the human body becomes central to this process of ordering.

## RECONFIGURING THE LOCAL SECURITY LANDSCAPE

In conventional cases, sovereignty frames and clouds the power dynamics behind the SSR intervention. In contrast, the oPt is an exceptional and rather extreme example of SSR, given that it is not an internationally recognized sovereign state. It is precisely because the oPt is such an extreme and atypical example of SSR that it lays bare the underlying discourse of power, on both the micro-level of Israeli colonialism and the wider macro-level of the interaction between the colonial center and the colonized periphery whereby the outcome has been one of dysfunctional securitization.

Rather than the production of its envisioned Weberian state, SSR through its flawed processes of securitization has instead produced and



perpetuated the production of a plurality of hegemonies and their oligopolies of violence. As objects of SSR interventions engage and seek to appropriate securitized development aid, new securitization configurations emerge. These new securitization configurations are often networked or outsourced extensions of existing and entrenched organizations. Hence, fractured securitization is an implication of the introduction of securitized development aid through SSR programming.

This fracturing of securitization creates numerous local, regional, and international groups and actors. As these actors emerge, their identification, modes of agency, and power depend upon their positionality within an interconnected chain of interaction that significantly shapes the interests and agency of each of its interlocutors.

As a result of these processes, SSR in the oPt has failed to achieve stability for the Palestinian people. It has instead catalyzed the further polarization of Palestinian politics and the division of the oPt into two separate political entities, one of which has been denied international recognition. SSR has created a paradox on the ground in the oPt whereby the PA and to a certain extent the de facto government of Hamas are in control of a territory, but not a territorial entity resembling a state in the Weberian sense, and where the principles of democratic governance and the rule of law have been undermined, not entrenched (Schnabel and Ehrhart 2005, 67).

The new security forces created after the Oslo Accords attempted to draw on the symbolic power of the *Fidayee*, the freedom fighters who personified the ultimate form of sacrifice in the name of liberation and were considered the protectors of Palestinian society before the creation of the PA. However, the discrepancies between the rhetoric and symbolism they used and the everyday reality Palestinians in the oPt continued to find themselves under rendered such discursive practices obsolete, despite the PA's continuous attempt to frame its current policies and practices as one of continued resistance via non-violent means to establish a state. This growing discrepancy between what PA forces sought to symbolize themselves as and what they actually were led to resistance from Palestinian society to this new framework while Israel's military occupation continued to expand. This partially explains why the SSR project in Palestine continued to revert to more coercive mechanisms not only to subdue society but also to ensure the discourse, financial incentives, and training given to security forces targeted actors within society that were capable of enforcing this paradigm.

The existing literature on SSR and broader Palestinian sociopolitical and economic development projects since Oslo make these processes seem violent, oppressive, and highly volatile. While true, there is also an element that tends to be downplayed: that of social (re)engineering which is what this thesis attempts to address.

Existing analyses of SSR in the oPt has virtually ignored Palestinian agency, which is precisely the focal point of these international processes of localized societal (re)engineering, and how SSR has attempted, via its various mechanisms, to create and structure this agency. Analysts such as Tartir, Turner, and Sayigh correctly highlight how the PA, and the Palestinian Authority Security Forces (PASF), act as subcontractors of the occupation—but they do not provide a compelling analysis on how a significant subset of Palestinian society has been enmeshed in this system, how that process has evolved, the role of SSR throughout this process of societal transformation, and the inherent contradictions that continue to exist internally as well as externally (Sayigh 2011; Tartir 2016; Tartir and Amrov 2014; Turner 2006, 2011). Nor does the existing analysis consider the broader aspects of SSR, which, as a result, go beyond technocratic and bureaucratic processes and policies at a macro-level. Instead, they are inherently geared toward the creation of a civic order that coalesces with broader international state-building paradigms encapsulated within a biopolitical logic. The latter, in this case, finds harmony with that of the Israeli colonial project in the oPt, which seeks to retain control over the territory, but not the inhabitants within it (Parsons 2010).

The outcomes of SSR clearly do not prioritize the security of the broader population but end up protecting the powerful, resulting in dysfunctional securitization and the implementation of a perverse security that violates the tenets of SSR. In essence, the process is primarily targeted at domesticating the population by setting in place a clear discourse which is coercively enforced, whereby domestication—that is, an acceptance of the need to enforce a state of no resistance—is the only path to security. Accepting this discourse, for a subsector of Palestinian elites, opens the door to both financial support as well as international legitimacy. Hence, the initiation of the process of securitization is intrinsically tied not to achieving what the concept of SSR promises in terms of security, good governance, and the rule of law for the local population, but to the production and perpetuation of a plurality of hegemonies that accept this discourse, and their oligopolies of violence in the oPt that enforce its corollaries.

The creation of these hegemonies is the central underlying dynamics that further expand the space between concept and practice. As objects of SSR interventions engage and seek to appropriate securitized development aid, new configurations emerge, creating numerous local, regional, and international groups and actors. In the oPt, this is seen through the lack of hierarchy, multiple allegiances, and the low-level of seriousness invested in ensuring not only effective police training for recruits but also the lack of a unified security sector. Moreover, as power dynamics are transformed and these new actors emerge, their identification, modes of agency, and power depend upon their position within an interplay of organizations that significantly shapes the interests and agency of each of its interlocutors. The plurality of hegemonies that arise, and the clash of interests within the interconnected actors that constitute them, is what gives way to the other secondary factors that further expand the discrepancy between theory and practice.

More specifically, although adopted by the elite and coerced into society by different means, the imposition of this new discourse clashes with the local discourses, societal experience, and the political ecosystem into which it is being introduced. This friction, of which international donors and practitioners are often aware, becomes the target of those implementing SSR and the conceptual results SSR is designed to achieve are sidelined. International donors are deeply aware that the normative aspect of SSR is meaningless because it is not truly the goal. Thus, the discrepancy between concept and practice begins long before the technical glitches, corruption, lack of resources, or other policy-oriented challenges arise—it occurs the moment SSR is twinned with a political discourse that seeks domestication in local discourses and goals as a precondition. This is not to say that these technical or policy-related obstacles are not present, or that there does not exist the incessant problem of unintended consequences that have thus far also plagued wider policies and practices orientated at internationally led local institution-building or development projects—but efficiently managing such technical glitches is typically sidelined in favor of more politically orientated interests.

Hence, SSR goes beyond just mere policy but is, more broadly speaking, about the creation of civic order within a broader international system. This last point tends to be often overlooked in the existing literature because SSR has been compartmentalized into the field of conflict resolution and peace studies. Consequently, this policy-orientated technocratic approach has often missed the more nuanced but crucial underpinnings of the internal political dynamics at work in international security governance programs, namely, the

processes of securitization offset through their implementation. This process, as previously elaborated on, entails the creation of agency, identity, and interests, which in contexts such as the oPt has a variety of unintended consequences. What then happens is that the SSR processes that create these administrations becomes central to defining the very structural composition of these states through social reconstruction. Although this social reconstruction does not perfectly mirror the idealized image of Western Weberian state institutions, the resulting power distribution ensures that the vital interests of SSR's stakeholders are fulfilled.

A further illustration of this process has been the dispersed security cooperation spearheaded by the Israelis. What Israel has sought to do with security coordination is push to have security coordination between themselves and the PASF extend to the latter's lower ranks. Under the Presidency of Yasir Arafat, only four to five senior-level PASF personnel could coordinate with the Israelis. Currently, hundreds of second- and third-tier PASF officers potentially perform this coordination based on information gleaned from members of the security forces in Palestine. Former members of the Palestinian security sector, such as the former head of the general intelligence, Tawfiq Tarawi, have been outwardly vocal about what they see as "a great danger" of security cooperation becoming so dispersed within the PASF ranks. In the process, Israel is aiding this creation of more oligarchs—only this time extended all the way down to a local level rather than simply relegated to the top tier. More significantly, what this achieves is a greater number of stakeholders in the current system who now also have an interest in preserving the current status quo.

Again, behind these patronage networks and personal gratification amongst its stakeholders, there lies an inherent political rationale behind much of these SSR practices, specifically that of population control. These processes and objectives are best captured through the conceptual utility of the Foucauldian terms of "governmentality" and "biopolitics." Both concepts provide for a clear-eyed view of how SSR operationalizes these processes on the ground, creating and perpetuating power control. Thus, similar to the rationale underlying the practices of liberal governance in Western states, power is implicitly diffused to certain actors through practices and discourses. It is in this sense why Foucault's governmentality and biopolitics have become so relevant to providing an alternative reading of SSR and the way it is embedded in hegemonic legitimation and the social construction of

reality. The security sector has been significant in providing both the hard and softer sides of these trajectories.

The best example of the rise of the oligopolies of violence established by SSR interventions in Palestine is provided by looking at the four likely nominees to replace Mahmoud Abbas. The leading three are all former or current security sector leaders, namely: Jibril Rjoub, former head of preventative security forces; Majed Farajj, current head of the general intelligence; Mohammad Dahlan, former head of the preventative security forces branch in Gaza; and finally, Marwan Barghouthi, the former head of Fateh's youth and militant wing. Barghouthi is a popular political figure, but is the only one who has never held a security sector role, and he is currently held in an Israeli prison.

These candidates illustrate how well Israel and the international community is regulating the PA political system. More importantly, many of the "kingmakers" within Palestinian society today are leaders within the security sector or economic figures deeply connected with the PA security infrastructure. In short, one can argue that the presidential successors with the biggest or most likely chance of taking control of the PA (or defining who does) have risen through and been vetted by the SSR infrastructure. Unsurprisingly, the old elite of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) not connected to or supported by the PA security forces have mostly been sidelined. In short, no person or persons can assume leadership of Palestine's current Oslo-based civic order without going through the leaders of the security sector and its interlocutors.

It is important to note that these oligopolies of violence also mean that any attempts to build grassroots movements and leadership become a target not just of the security forces but also of those seeking their acceptance. One recent example of this was during protests held in the West Bank in Ramallah in support of the deteriorating sociopolitical situation in Gaza on June 14, 2018. The organizers of the protests became targets of smear campaigns and many were detained. However, one of the interesting aspects of the protests was the presence of Mahmoud Al-Aloul, the Vice-President of Fateh, with the security forces before they attacked the protesters. Al-Aloul's position is strictly political with Fateh, but he is also seeking to place himself as a successor to President Abbas, even though he does not possess substantial backing within the security forces.

Observers believe his presence at the protests, on the side of the security forces, giving them support, was designed to show these forces where his loyalties lay, as he had in the past been relatively critical of some of the PA's policies before rising to this position.

However, Vice-President Al-Aloul's cozying up to the security forces is one of many examples now unraveling itself on the ground in Palestine as President Abbas's health appears to be failing. Key actors understand that the security forces and their paradigm will be key in deciding who comes next. This also partially explains why US President Donald Trump has maintained the US\$60 million of funding to the security forces, even as his administration has cut US\$200 million of US aid to the PA, and approximately US\$300 million of aid to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). Similarly, although the PA has cut all ties with the United States, and the United States has shut down the PLO's office in Washington, DC, the head of Palestinian General Intelligence, Majid Faraj, met as recently as September 2018 with his counterparts in the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and security relations between both sides continue.

Hamas offers an interesting contrast as a case of local as opposed to imposed security sector development. Although much has been written about Hamas's contentious politics, this article seeks only to provide a more nuanced examination of the dynamics of security and political governance under Hamas in Gaza. An Islamist organization, Hamas has initially refused to recognize Israel and the Oslo Agreement or renounce the right to armed struggle, but now seems to be willing to negotiate more openly on mutually agreed-upon terminology in return for the lifting of sanctions and the siege on Gaza. Many observers have argued that Hamas's refusal to recognize Israel is the result less of religious or political dogma than learning from Fatah's experience about the cost of giving up popular discourse without tangible results first (Zureik, Lyon, and Abu-Laban 2010, 93).

In many ways, Hamas has become to many an embodiment of the resistance to power that power itself generates, and the form this resistance has taken reflects the structural vulnerabilities the forms of power themselves manifest. Hamas's methods of enforcing order in Gaza illustrate the types of order through violence that SSR underwrites and protects, and those it suppresses or marginalizes. SSR does this by presenting itself as not only a technology of power but also a regime of truth. Hamas's actions and rise to power in Gaza can be seen as a form of insurgency, a reaction to the PA and its state-building endeavor tailored to serve foreign interests, and Hamas has used its opposing discourse to that of the PA's as part of a struggle for legitimacy and hegemony against the PA and its foreign supporters.

Insurgency is defined here as a struggle between a non-ruling group and the ruling authorities in which the non-ruling group consciously uses political

resources (e.g., organizational expertise, propaganda, and demonstrations) and violence to destroy, reformulate, or sustain the basis of legitimacy of one or more aspects of politics. Insurgency is not a form of war but an integrated strategy that uses armed violence to a greater or lesser degree. Insurgency is always asymmetric, and for an insurgency to take root the state's legitimacy must be both fragile and challenged (Haug and Maa 2011, 114).

To understand the challenge Hamas poses as a form of insurgency is even more telling when factoring SSR's introduction and development timeline. Contrary to existing assumptions, SSR only came into full fruition as a concept and practice in the oPt in 2008 following Hamas's takeover, before which there existed foreign financial support but no substantial political or technical investment until after the PA's loss of the Gaza Strip followed by significant financial, political, and technical Western foreign investment and an attempt outwardly to reformulate the definition of the recipients society's perception of "security" and "threat" which had already been externally stipulated within the Oslo Accords.

Yet, despite the fact that Hamas and the PA are two different organizations, they are essentially implementing the same types of security order founded on civil peace, the routinization of daily life, and have both been coerced into this project by the same hegemonic power. Hamas's coercion of order in society has now come as a result of seeking to maintain quiet in the Gaza strip after truces signed with Israel, under Egyptian mediation. Moreover, until early 2018, international donors working with the PA, Israel, the United Nations and the United States had worked to allow partially key rebuilding materials into Gaza in return for Hamas maintaining order inside Gaza and cooperating with the process. Before the wars on Gaza, Hamas had employed key positive SSR methods to ensure public satisfaction with its rule, while also using tactics it had learned from the PA's presence to shut down dissent. In short, it appears that what has prevented Hamas from becoming an ally or partner in this process has been more connected to its discourse of resistance to power and its representation of an alternative way of both thinking about and operationalizing Palestinian ambitions of statehood via security governance, and less about its de facto policies on the ground.

Consequently, SSR in the oPt has created a sociopolitical paradox on the ground that diverges substantially from conventional notions of statehood and security. Instead, it has led to the creation of a warped governing authority, societal fragmentation, and a weakened sense of agency amongst its populace. However, it has not managed to do away with this agency completely, and this

is exemplified through the continuing struggle Israel, the PA, and other actors on the ground find themselves in as they consistently try to find new mechanisms, both persuasive and coercive, to clamp down on any dissonance that could potentially threaten the existing sociopolitical dispensation.

What is more, SSR as a trajectory of power has created its own resistance through the creation of a field of discursive struggle between those that have internalized, normalized, and legitimated its discourse and those who continue to find alternative ways of being. Moreover, those in the Palestinian context continue to pursue alternative avenues toward self-determination that are not necessarily in keeping with the liberal peace narrative underwriting the existing political dispensation.

SSR, as seen from the Palestinian example and as current research indicates about other examples, is not a benign policy tool. It has effectively hobbled challenges to the hegemony of the current political order by being employed as a system of control based on violence. SSR is largely hidden from scrutiny by virtue of its depoliticization. It has continuously been proven to be fundamentally flawed in the operationalization of the holistic, human-centric aspects of its stated justification. Yet, it has been generally effective in mobilizing and monopolizing the potential for violence. Interestingly, this hierarchy has failed in imposing a defining discourse which can present itself as a regime of truth. This owes largely to a structure that has been derived from a liberal system of government, but does not operate liberally in these contexts—instead taking a directly disciplinary and coercive form, and as such has not been met with the expected complacency the liberal state-building project promises to deliver, either from the security interlocutors or from the social formations over which it governs. The synergy between the latter two derive from the situational reality to these coercive mechanisms of domination, which has in turn provoked, in various forms, its own resistance both within the international elite, the PASF itself and broader society over whom the former are tasked with regulating over.

Consequently, SSR has created a multifarious network of engagement between the PASF and the Israelis, the broader Palestinian society, and the international donor community that shape these outcome expectations, and continuously create and recreate multiple levels of hegemony in the oPt. The creation of these multiple levels of hegemony have significantly influenced the current security landscape within the oPt, to which SSR has been instrumental in bringing to full fruition and can therefore account for the outcome and consequent discrepancy between official SSR policy and practice.



## CONCLUSIONS

As a highly intrusive localized practice of occidental liberal state-building, SSR has increasingly become the dominant framework for Western powers' intervention in and regulation of non-Western societies (Mustafa 2015, 2). In conventional cases sovereignty frames and clouds the power dynamics behind SSR intervention. In contrast the oPt is an exceptional and rather extreme example of SSR, given that it is not an internationally recognized sovereign state. It is precisely because the oPt is such an extreme and atypical example of SSR that it lays bare the underlying discourse of power, on both the micro-level of Israeli colonialism and on the wider macro-level of the interaction between the colonial center and the colonized periphery.

To bridge the gap of understanding between why policy and practice of SSR differ significantly, this article has presented an alternative reading of SSR policy, one that is founded on using the conceptual tools of securitization, governmentality, and biopolitics. These conceptual tools provide a precise understanding of power, and of the techniques and mechanisms by which forms of rule and subjectivities are produced, maintained, and transformed. This understanding thus offers a nuanced insight into how modern power through specific and collective practices governs space, things, populations, and individuals.

Through the interpretation of modes of identification, agency, and power deployment by localized social and political actors the paradox of SSR emerges. In the oPt, the outcome of SSR's application has been one of dysfunctional securitization. Rather than the production of its envisioned Weberian state, SSR through its flawed processes of securitization has instead produced and perpetuated the production of a plurality of hegemonies and their oligopolies of violence. This has been coupled with attempts to define local discourses and constrain resistance and societal cohesion. As a result, the situation on the ground is fragile, democratic institutions are faltering, and different actors supported through SSR are preparing for the worst scenarios while targeting civil society actors.

Thus, far from being timeless and neutral as its emancipating and technocratic discursive framework would imply, as with many critical conceptual building blocks of IR discourse, SSR is situated within and seeks continuously to re-invent a specific historical context and hegemonic paradigm. Accordingly, we must be alert to the purposes and interests it serves, the specific

groups it dispossesses and empowers, and the acts of epistemic and physical violence it sets in motion. ■

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