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Introduction

David Churchill, Dolores Janiewski & Pieter Leloup

This book concerns private security in modern societies and its relation to the nation state. The chapters collected here pose significant challenges to contemporary policing and security scholarship, including assumptions about the state's traditional monopoly on criminal justice and crime control, and the neglect of those enclaves of private governance that have persisted alongside the modern state, or even expanded beyond its bounds.¹ Against the tendency to analyse 'modern policing' simply through the activities of the public police – or, more subtly, through the social functions the public police fulfilled – the contributors look beyond those institutional ranks. In retrospect, Les Johnston and Clifford Shearing have labelled this perspective on policing – with its preoccupation with formal police institutions and the growth of state power – as the modern 'security paradigm'. On this view, security provision is identified with state responsibility, specialist agencies of enforcement, legitimate exercise of coercion and the formal judicial process.² This leads to a familiar but flawed narrative of the state monopolisation of policing functions – of norm-enforcement, crime control and public ordering – which dovetails neatly with canonical interpretations of the transition to modern society (in terms of the alienation and rationalisation of social functions), and (at least superficially) with Max Weber's seminal definition of the state in terms of the monopolisation of legitimate force within a given territory.³ By contrast, this volume provides a more nuanced understanding of ongoing historical processes that shape security regimes in several national contexts.

This introduction prepares the intellectual and scholarly context for the chapters that follow. First, we survey the wealth of scholarship on contemporary policing systems, private security and crime prevention, and critically evaluates the frequent claims of novelty in that literature. Second, we explore key themes from existing historical research in this area, to establish contexts for the studies collected here. Third, we analyse the public-private distinction in security, and outline a broad understanding of the term 'private security' which encompasses and informs the contents of the book. Finally, we briefly outline the structure and contents of the book itself. We return in the conclusion to detailed consideration to the chapters themselves,

their intersections and disjunctures, and what contribution the authors make (individually and collectively) to historical understandings of private security and the modern state.

A New World of Security?

Recent decades have witnessed burgeoning interest in private security amongst criminologists and policing scholars, driven by a constellation of related processes of change in contemporary policing and crime control. The number of private security personnel has grown such that they now frequently outnumber the ranks of public police agencies, and their presence in public and quasi-public spaces is often unmistakable.⁴ Situational means of prevention have become prominent in public policy responses to crime and insecurity, providing a framework for diffuse, everyday initiatives of prevention by private organisations and individuals.⁵ Recent decades have also seen moves towards increasingly formal partnerships between public agencies and external actors – civil society organisations, businesses, individuals and private security providers – to coordinate collective responses to crime and insecurity.⁶ Arising from these several developments is an apparent shift in the locus of responsibility for security from state agencies to private organisations and individuals, with the latter posited as active participants in the governance of security.⁷ Taken together, these processes are widely thought to have effected sweeping change in the landscape of policing, security and surveillance.⁸ As Rita Abrahamsen and Michael Williams have put it, private security is today a ‘pervasive part of everyday life’.⁹

Contemporary scholarship in this field has critically challenged the assumed centrality of the police and other state institutions in earlier work on policing, surveillance and social control. It has productively reoriented academic enquiry from a focus narrowly on ‘the police’ to broader conceptions of ‘policing’ and ‘security’, recognising that contemporary states do not possess a monopoly on law enforcement, order maintenance, regulation, surveillance or security provision. A wide range of terms – ‘fragmentation’, ‘plural policing’, ‘hybridity’, ‘pluralisation’, ‘responsibilisation’, ‘commodification’, ‘security networks’, ‘marketisation’, ‘corporatisation’ – recognise the co-existence of (and sometimes cooperation between) commercial entities, voluntary organisations, individual citizens, national and local regulatory bodies, and the police, intelligence and security agencies. As this literature has matured, some scholars have called specifically for further comparative research to avoid ethnocentric

assumptions that a particular national or regional regime may serve as a model for contemporary security, policing or surveillance in general.¹⁰ The present volume furthers many of these same goals, but it also seeks to extend the temporal scope of the present literature, and to challenge the claims to the novelty concerning many purportedly new developments in the security landscape. We seek to highlight antecedents, prototypes and precursors to complex contemporary manifestations of policing and security.

From an historical perspective, the major difficulty with much work on private security is the tendency – at least in Anglophone scholarship – to discuss recent developments in terms of a paradigm shift, or an epochal break with the past.¹¹ The literature is peppered with phrases denoting radical change (‘dramatic growth’, ‘fundamental shifts’), or even a new age (‘late-modern’, ‘postmodern’, ‘post-Fordist’, ‘neoliberal’), in security provision – phrases that draw a sharp distinction between contemporary security regimes and what is presumed to have gone before. Furthermore, scholars frequently deploy terminology – the ‘rise’ of private security, the ‘pluralisation’ of policing, the ‘growth’ of security networks, the ‘privatisation’ of policing, or threats to the ‘traditional domain’ of the police – evocative of an imagined past *before* private security, plural policing or hybrid security networks, which is rarely subjected to rigorous investigation. The widespread assumption that a pre-existing, state-centric model of security provides the historical backdrop for contemporary enquiry misinterprets the past and produces misleading assessments of recent changes in security regimes. This volume seeks to provide a richer historical perspective, mobilising well-chosen case studies which enable comparisons between security regimes in Britain, the United States, France, Belgium, and Germany.¹²

Rather than assume a secure state-based monopoly over the governance of crime, disorder, personal security and risk that preceded the contemporary era of plurality, commercialisation and securitisation, the volume contributes to rethinking that assumption and replacing it with a more historically-informed interpretation that recognises ‘diverse relations to multiple pasts’ and different pathways to the present.¹³ We aim to contribute to historicising private security, building on insights and suggestions from previous studies. For example, Lucia Zedner has argued that the patchwork structure of eighteenth-century English law-enforcement presents compelling parallels with contemporary crime control. Furthermore, by

emphasising the 'symbolic' quality of the police monopoly over the governance of crime, she questioned a key plank in the standard narrative of the rise and fall of the criminal justice state. Others have more boldly asserted that meaningful private initiative has been a continuous feature of policing history, which has been obscured from view through a predominant focus on formal institutions of policing and criminal justice.¹⁴

Histories of Private Security

In the early 1990s, Johnston called for a new approach to the history of modern policing, which would exhibit 'the interpenetration of private and public policing forms from the nineteenth century to the present day.'¹⁵ The body of historical research now available has gone some way to fulfilling Johnston's call. Research on popular judicial practices has documented customary rights and expectations of redress for wrongdoing through legal, extra-legal or combined forms. It suggests a participatory world of norm-enforcement and communal regulation which preceded – but also, at least for a time, coexisted with – the rise of formal apparatus of policing and criminal justice.¹⁶ Existing scholarship suggests distinct inflections of popular justice in different national contexts. In the case of Britain, eighteenth-century innovations – such as circulation of printed information on crime and the formation of private prosecution associations – helped to revitalise private and communal responses to crime.¹⁷ Equally, research on the era of the 'new' police has reasserted the significance of individual and communal self-policing, adding empirical weight to earlier claims about the persistence of autonomous modes of non-state policing practices.¹⁸ In the case of the United States, popular justice persisted most visibly in what is sometimes pejoratively described as vigilantism.¹⁹ In liberated France, Belgium and other formerly occupied countries, the postwar period witnessed popular retribution against perceived collaborators before legal processes took over prosecution and punishment as new governments took shape.²⁰ Whether reflecting the absence of legal institutions, distrust in public authorities, or popular outrage at what were seen as heinous actions, such examples suggest that the state has rarely taken sole charge of maintaining order or inflicting punishment.

Such a conclusion is supported by reinterpretations of the development of formal police forces over the modern period. Catherine Denys's survey of new police forces in eighteenth-century Europe uncovered diverse models of state and voluntary policing, adapted to local needs,

rather than a unilateral path towards professionalisation.²¹ Clive Emsley's comparative examination of methods for dealing with crime and disorder in Europe reveals a patchwork of personal and communal policing agents – gamekeepers, watchmen, private guards and others – involved in policing alongside the emerging bureaucratic police organisations. Disputing assertions of major differences between British and European policing systems, while acknowledging distinctive cultural and governmental influences, Emsley suggests a long history of plural or hybrid policing in which ideas and practices transcended national boundaries.²² Of course, against such interpretations, one must still place portraits of classic, state-centric security regime closely associated with European 'police' states. In his study of the German policing system of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Eric Johnson described a top-down, efficient, bureaucratic and repressive 'police state', directed by a conservative elite against 'real or imagined socialist and communist opposition', criminalised minorities, and press freedom. Despite the disruption of the First World War and the transformation from an imperial system to a republic, Johnson detected continuities between the Second and the Third Reich in hostility towards leftists, Jews, and Slavs, and in willingness to 'sacrifice liberty for order'.²³

The history of American policing demonstrates more vividly a persistent localism, resistance to governmental control, a civilian orientation and the influence of political patronage.²⁴ Likely to treat vice and crime as sources of additional revenue rather than as objects for strenuous enforcement, American police forces resisted professionalisation and other reforms that middle- and upper-class moralists sought to impose. During periods of ideological conflict, the police undertook 'high' or political policing as they subjected radicals and unions to surveillance, infiltration and raids, sometimes receiving payment from grateful employers.²⁵ Despite the earnest efforts of reformers and critics, the American policing system remained subject to accusations of corruption, discrimination, brutality and inefficiency, providing considerable space for private security firms promoting a more dependable, disciplined and professional service to their clientele.²⁶

Perhaps a relatively neglected aspect of police development concerns explicitly political policing and surveillance, which blurs into the work of intelligence agencies and national security services. Jean-Paul Brodeur theorised such police functions as 'high policing', in

contrast to the 'low' policing of crime and mundane disorder. Tracing 'high policing' back to the reign of Louis XIV, Brodeur's definition encompassed intelligence gathering, preserving the established order and use of undercover agents and informers.²⁷ Despite its obvious connection with the *haute police* of European autocracies, scholarship on the English new police also reflects popular and radical concerns with 'police spies' and political infiltration.²⁸ Concerned about police abuses in aftermath of Watergate, the Church Committee investigations and the discovery of intrusive FBI surveillance, Brodeur did not discuss the role of private organisations in 'high policing'. He might have reflected more fully, perhaps, on the sources of information on state 'high policing' compiled by activists – for example, intelligence gathered on FBI surveillance or the Pentagon through break-ins and leaks of classified information.²⁹ Yet recent contemporary scholarship has documented the substantial contribution of private agencies to high policing, especially in transnational contexts.³⁰ As this book will indicate, private parties have historically collected intelligence and made use of informers variously to support or subvert the intelligence agencies of the modern state.

Recent research has shed valuable new light on the historical development of private security firms. Though often understood as a post-war phenomenon, companies providing dedicated security products and services have a much longer history. Philip Stenning, Clifford Shearing and Nigel South claimed that private security stemmed ultimately from the right of owners to protect their property, which developed into the use of private detectives, private guards, voluntary associations, vigilance committees, factory police and moral reform associations in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.³¹ In mid-nineteenth-century Britain, a security industry emerged with leading lock and safe manufacturers at its core, and subsequently extended into new sectors, notably safe deposits, burglary insurance and alarms.³² Alongside this were industrial policing bodies, such as the Worsted Inspectorate, which investigated workplace theft in the West Yorkshire worsted textile industry (and arguably stunted the growth of public police resources in the region's factory towns),³³ or the Dutch Mining Police, which policed the provincial coalmining industry in the first half of the twentieth century.³⁴ The post-Second World War era witnessed further growth in new sectors of security enterprise, notably in contract watching and guarding services and secure transit operations, video surveillance, monitoring devices and internet security systems.³⁵

Locks and safes aside, the development of security enterprise proceeded more quickly in the United States. In the 1820s the postal service deployed special agents to prevent theft in the mail transportation system, establishing a prototype for railway inspectors and detective agencies.³⁶ The manufacture of firearms flourished in the early nineteenth century, spurred by concerns about theft, efforts to keep slaves under control, and conflicts with indigenous peoples, Britain and Mexico.³⁷ The availability of guns, in turn, resulted in efforts to regulate their possession to protect public safety.³⁸ The development of the American security industry accelerated in the second half of the century through the establishment of investigative agencies such as the Pinkerton National Detective Agency, which engaged in anti-counterfeit work, guarding, strike-breaking personal investigations, industrial espionage, burglar alarms and transit security. It became a national operation that pre-existed, shaped, and then cooperated with federal and local policing, security and intelligence operations.³⁹ According to Michael Cohen, the American security regime comprised a decentralised and hybrid system of private security firms, vigilante groups (like the American Legion), federal, state and local policing agencies which adopted processes and recruited personnel from private security operations.⁴⁰

Co-existence of communal, state and commercial security providers resulted not simply in a patchwork mix of policing agencies, and forms of provision which defy straightforward categorisation as 'public' or 'private'. John Beattie's study of London's Bow Street Runners positions them as an early example of a public-private security partnership: paid by government stipends, the Runners were 'quasi-official thief-takers' who could be hired by victims or dispatched to arrest offenders when officials deemed it necessary to serve the ends of public justice.⁴¹ In France, Eugène-François Vidocq's career similarly blurred the boundaries of public and private: formerly a public official in charge of the *Sûreté Nationale* (National Security) under Napoleon, Vidocq established a commercial agency in 1832, *Le bureau des renseignements dans l'Intérêt du Commerce* (Office of Commercial Information), which served as inspiration for Allan Pinkerton, whose agency emulated Vidocq's methods of novelistic self-promotion, undercover exploits and bureaucratic record-keeping.⁴² Based on a close examination of Belgian security developments over a longer timeframe, Pieter Leloup has sketched a history replete with multiple policing providers, security markets and ongoing interaction between public and private services and organisations.⁴³

There is further evidence of the intermingling of public and private security in the case of the United States. Wilbur Miller emphasises the enduring role of private initiative – including vigilantism, self-defence, private guarding and investigation, industrial espionage and strikebreaking – in a nation state riven by multiple jurisdictions, within a system of ‘diffused state power’, in contrast to European state formations.⁴⁴ Similarly, from research on Chicago, Jonathan Obert has argued that the breakdown of a republican system of delegated local policing responsibilities in the mid-nineteenth century forged new, pluralised security networks, locking in a role for both private and public agencies in law enforcement.⁴⁵ In developing her concept of policing as ‘violence work’, and in contesting the claim that policing underpins public security, Micol Seigel has recognised mixed and hybrid forms of policing, in which the boundaries of public and private are socially and historically constructed.⁴⁶ Furthermore, analysing the American trend toward personal ‘securitisation’, Elaine Tyler May detects a ‘bunker, vigilante mentality’ which she attributes to the legacies of the Cold War, but which others might suggest has much deeper historical roots.⁴⁷ Our volume will contribute to these efforts to construct a more historically-informed and comparative understanding of private security and policing that recognises both hybrids forms and their variability across regimes and regions.

Finally, existing scholarship hints at transnational influence and diffusion of models with respect to public and private security. English prejudice against an imagined French ‘police state’ led Sir Robert Peel strictly to differentiate London's Metropolitan Police from the French example, dedicating them resolutely to the prevention of crime.⁴⁸ Americans selectively borrowed from the Metropolitan Police, but with more overt political influence over force leadership, and with untrained patrolmen engaging in ‘delegated vigilantism’, using violence against strikers and other targets.⁴⁹ Allan Pinkerton initially emulated Vidocq in publicising his detective triumphs and the Pinkerton’s successes, yet by the 1880s, influence ran the other way. Subjected to harassment by police and the courts, the French investigative profession sought to gain legitimacy through association with celebrated Pinkerton exploits, as terms like ‘private detective’ and ‘private police’ entered the vernacular, forming part of the institutional fabric of security that crossed borders within and between societies.⁵⁰ Similarly, the first commercial night watch service founded in Germany in 1901, the *Hannoversches Wach- und Schließinstitut*, was modelled on the Protective Police Patrol, a sub-department of Pinkerton's.⁵¹ In the following decade, the internationalisation and commercialisation of security provision

resulted in the rapid foundation of similar, German-like private security firms in the Netherlands, France and Belgium.⁵² Such examples suggest the mutual constitution of security regimes in different national contexts is as much a historical as a contemporary phenomenon.

This book will contribute to the growth of knowledge about the history of private security in multiple jurisdictions, and to analysing its relationships – fractious, complementary, constitutive and competitive – with state-based policing institutions. Lacking the regular series of accessible records bequeathed by most state institutions, historians of private security must grapple with much more fragmentary documentation. The greater accessibility of public security agencies' records at least partly explains the emphasis in existing historiography on state-based policing and surveillance. Recognising those issues, our contributors have made creative use of what is available to probe into what has occurred often invisibly under the guise of 'private' security.

Despite the fragmentation of the current literature, a wider, more variegated landscape of policing and security history is now coming into view. It is therefore an opportune moment to present a substantial body of historical research on private initiative and public-private networks in security, and to start thinking comparatively, across time and place, revisiting and revising familiar interpretations of private security, public policing and the state across the modern era. That is the basic purpose of the present book. As a prelude to that task, it is necessary next to delve into the tangle of conceptual issues inevitably raised in taking on such an enterprise. Specifically, we explore next the paired concepts of 'private security' and 'modern state', which underpin and inform the contents and organisation of the book as a whole.

Private Security and Modern State

As Zedner has acutely observed, the development of meanings associated with 'security' is 'not so much sequential as cumulative'.⁵³ Security conjures multiple connotations – assurance in the face of risk, safeguarding of persons or property, protection of whole communities, nations, states or forms of social order. The concept is perhaps stretched furthest through the discourse of 'human security' in international relations, which encompasses governmental

activities, proactive as well as reactive, deployed to avert a range of apparent threats to citizens.⁵⁴ For some, the ambiguities of the term 'security' present insuperable difficulties. Some prefer to adopt a nominalist position, investigating governmental projects and initiatives commissioned in the name of 'security'.⁵⁵ Yet the term 'security' figures marginally, if at all, in the discursive contexts surveyed by several of this book's contributors. Hence, we have adopted a different approach, deploying the concept of 'private security' in distinct historical contexts in connection with a second central concept, that of the 'modern state'.

A major difficulty for scholars seeking to elucidate the essential nature of private security is the complexity and precariousness of the public-private security dichotomy. As previous scholarship has noted continually reiterated, the dividing line between 'public policing' and 'private security' is inherently ambiguous and often blurred.⁵⁶ This makes it difficult to delineate where the dividing line between the two should be drawn. Trevor Jones and Tim Newburn helpfully outlined four principal axes of differentiation, distinguishing between: types of security provider (public or private sector); forms of security provision (state-based or market-based); the quality of security provision (as a general, public good or a select, private good); and the space of security provision (in public, quasi-public or private space).⁵⁷ Yet the key limitation of frameworks such as this for classifying private security is that specific security practices may be 'public' in from one respect and 'private' in another. Private sector security managers and operatives, for example, sometimes use 'public good' rationalities to justify their work.⁵⁸ Equally, private sector security staff sometimes operate with the official status and formal powers of public police officers.⁵⁹ This suggests that the 'public' or 'private' nature of a particular security venture cannot be ascertained a priori, with reference to its general form, but might better be interrogated more closely, in its specific social and historical context.

Given the difficulties of classifying private security, it is unsurprising that uses of the term in contemporary scholarship have shifted over time.⁶⁰ Where most early work focused narrowly on security guards (particularly contract security guards), more recent research embraces a much wider range of 'private' actors and modes of security provision. These include the security practices of private individuals, voluntary associations and civil society organisations, as well as situational controls and (commodified) security technologies. Yet this broadening scope of 'private security' has perhaps been accompanied by the loss of a measure of conceptual clarity. Indeed, research in this broad area increasingly proceeds without central reference to the public-private dichotomy at all. Nowadays, the semantics of 'public' and 'private' seem too

unwieldy to probe the more nuanced points which concern contemporary scholarship. Researchers are turning to alternative frameworks and more finely parsed concepts which evoke more specific concerns, including security networks and ‘nodal governance’,⁶¹ the security ‘field’,⁶² ‘plural policing’,⁶³ security commodification and consumption,⁶⁴ and the corporate form of security provider.⁶⁵

Why, then, does this collection return to focus upon ‘private security’? Despite its shortcomings as a classificatory concept (that is, in distinguishing between security providers or forms of provision), we consider the public-private distinction retains a heuristic value as a *relational* concept. For us private security is best seen as something which arises alongside and in relation to the enlarged protective pretensions of public agencies and institutions in the modern era. It derives its significance, in modern historical contexts, from its relation to the promise and delivery of ‘public security’ as a core function of the ‘modern state’. In this sense, the conceptual value of ‘private security’ comes not from classifying a certain sub-set of modes of delivering security - given the contingent history (and ideological purposes) of the public-private distinction itself, it is inevitably a precarious basis upon which to classify distinct forms of security across times.⁶⁶ Instead, it is fruitful in highlighting a certain relation between more-or-less autonomous modes of policing, and a more general, ‘public’ claim to deliver security, identified with the state. The pairing of ‘private security’ and ‘modern state’ points suggestively to a set of issues arising at the conjunction of public and private security, where particular projects and general assurances of security overlap, connect or conflict.

Our conception of private security therefore accords with the work of several scholars who have stressed – in diverse national contexts – how state agencies and their claims to provide security are integral to the structure of modern security governance, including in contexts where such claims are highly qualified or in practice unfulfilled.⁶⁷ It also takes seriously the idea that the world of security is constituted as much by promises, pretensions and imaginaries as by concrete interventions on the ground.⁶⁸ Hence, for the purpose of this book, ‘private’ can refer to widely varied forms of security provision – from market services, to self-defence, to communal norm-enforcement, informal justice and beyond. What unites these phenomena is not some common, elusive quality that they supposedly share, but that they all operate as independent initiatives, distinct from the state's claim to provide public security, and that they operate necessarily in the context of that claim.

In keeping with this conception of private security, the contributions delve, across national contexts, into security projects and activities which assumed a 'private' character by juxtaposition with the security apparatus and aims of local or national states. Thus, in our view, 'private security' necessarily co-exists with public or state-based security provision. This helps distinguish the contribution of this book from several works which trace the history of 'private security' over the long term, demonstrating that autonomous initiatives to safeguard, protect crime and minimise harm long preceded the formation of state-based policing power.⁶⁹ 'Private security' in our sense of the term has not been around forever; rather, it is a specifically modern phenomenon, tied inextricably from the enlarged claims of modern states to provide security within their bounds.⁷⁰ This collection is not concerned to illustrate the general forms taken by private security over the modern era, but to elucidate a set of dynamic relations between autonomous actors or actions and the various protective claims made by modern states. Hence, the studies which make up this book situate private initiatives within wider security regimes, each distinct in its national context, illuminating the place of private interests in prevailing security cultures and especially the dynamic relations between private initiatives and state security operations.

The result is a very broad conception of who or what might qualify as 'private security'. Most of the studies set out below revolve around private persons or enterprises in pursuit of security for their private interests, either individual or collective. These include detective agencies searching for profit by selling security against crime or invasions of privacy; individuals seeking to protect themselves against violence or other threats to personal safety; and victims of defamation theft or violence seeking alternative resolution to the formal civil or criminal justice process. Other contributors discuss elite networks engaged in surveillance and ideological policing coupled with defending employers against insubordinate lower classes in the case of the final two. Still others discuss the perspective of state entities seeking to constrain private security rivals. Taken together these contributions illuminate the wide-ranging meanings of security, the variety of strategies, the disparate social forces and the different kinds of interactions with the modern state that occurred across periods and in various national and regional contexts.

Outline of the Collection

The editorial motivation behind this volume aims to challenge the limited historical perspective that treats self-protection, private investigations and surveillance, private guarding of workplaces and ‘mass private property’ and the blurring of boundaries between public and private security as novel or emergent phenomena. Contemporary scholars have recognised that cultural contexts and political institutions have shaped the formation of policing and security regimes, but so too has history. In the case of the United States, distinct regional histories bearing the imprint of slavery and the frontier still influence relations between public policing, private security and cultures of self-protection, as several chapters below highlight. Revolutionary upheaval has shaped French, German and Belgian concerns about private and public security. Security cultures in the United Kingdom are shaped by collective memory of a police monopoly over crime control and public orderliness that perhaps never existed. Hence, we have compiled an international body of work, ranging across varied social, political and historical contexts to investigate the intersection of private security with distinct incarnations of ‘the modern state’, highlighting important differentials in governing aspirations and capacities across temporal and national contexts. They highlight wide disparities in the claims of specific states to maintain a monopoly of legitimate force, the dynamics of cooperation, competition and conflict between state policing systems and private security provision, the development of public-private security partnerships and in the recognition of individual rights and responsibilities to protect themselves.⁷¹

The first part of the book, ‘Security Regimes in National Context’, showcases diversity in national security regimes. The chapters here most directly expose the particular characteristics and distinctive forms of private security public power in modern Europe and the United States. In the first chapter, Jacqueline Ross compares surveillance and undercover techniques in France and the United States in the nineteenth century. She contrasts the approaches taken by of these regimes toward private surveillance operations: the French state sought to develop a more powerful and intensive apparatus of political surveillance and curbed private security rivals while the American governments at the local, state and federal levels allowed private actors to conduct undercover operations. She attributes this contrast to different histories of state formation with the French state rocked by successive revolutions compared to the relatively stable American state for which only the Civil War presented a major threat in the nineteenth century.

The remaining three chapters here broadly endorse Ross's contrast between a more state-centred European regime and a thoroughly pluralised American regime – grounded in modern history and with powerful contemporary legacies. Miller's study of firearms ownership and self-defence strongly accents the cultural distinctiveness of American private security. Ascribing American gun cultures to the 'revolutionary and frontier ideology' of the nineteenth century, Miller links the diffusion of firearms and legal change (notably in so-called 'stand your ground' laws) to longstanding cultural norms of masculine honour and (self-)protection in specific regions. This contrasts strongly with Leloup's analysis of the discursive construction of private security sector in twentieth-century Belgium. He shows that official attitudes towards the sector shifted from a fairly neutral position in the interwar era, to an increasingly critical stance from the 1960s onward, which centred on (and sometimes exaggerated) the size of the sector and security guard abuses of power. Politicians, senior police officers and others mobilised such concerns to reinforce the differential status of private security and public police, and to insist that the security sector remain the 'junior partner' of the public police.⁷² A broadly similar picture of official attitudes towards private security in mid-twentieth-century Britain arises from Adam White's account. Re-assessing claims that this era marked a fundamental transition from public policing to private security, he finds a more complex picture: while the Home Office sought to withhold official approval of the security guarding sector, it maintained more cordial working relations with alarm companies, centred on putatively 'technical' matters. White concludes that mid-twentieth-century Britain represents neither the state monopoly over policing which contemporary scholars often assume nor a fully pluralised landscape, but a complex mix of monopoly and plurality, with different patterns of provision (and distinct dynamics of pluralisation) manifested in different aspects of policing practice.

The second part, 'Techniques and Cultures of Private Security', focuses more directly on the modalities, rationalities and emotional repertoires of private security initiatives and projects. The first two chapters concern the role of information and communications in private security operations. David Cox and Yasmin Devi-McGleish explore how private individuals in nineteenth-century England utilised the newspaper press to resolve diverse conflicts beyond the formal criminal justice process. Focusing on printed apologies published in the *Derby Mercury*, they argue that press-circulated apologies provided victims of crime and defamation

with an attractive and inexpensive alternative to the courts and an effective means of securing against themselves against the reputational hazard. In the next chapter, Stephen Robertson delves into the systems of paperwork and information management instituted at the Pinkerton National Detective Agency in the later nineteenth- and earlier twentieth-century United States. He links the prominence of private investigation in American history to state formation, arguing that slow development in the federal administrative infrastructure presented an opportunity for entrepreneurs like Pinkerton to undertake complex and wide-ranging investigations which exceeded the administrative capacity of the central state. Furthermore, Robertson shows that Pinkerton paperwork served a dual purpose: it was used to circulate intelligence within the company, while its personnel purposively constructed client reports to represent the professionalism of its investigators legitimate its work.

The cultural legitimation of private security is still more central to studies by Chad Pearson and Francis Dodsworth. Pearson examines the American author Owen Wister, who used his writings to justify violence by wealthy cattlemen, industrial associations and white supremacists in late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Pearson analyses Wister's valorisation of the subjectivity of 'frontier individualism' as depicted in ruggedly masculine heroes to legitimise violence in defence of powerful interest groups. He dwells in particular on Wister's use of the term 'popular justice' to appeal to populist sentiments justifying the need to take action outside of the formal legal process to achieve 'true' justice. Similarly, Dodsworth frames his essay on self-defence cultures in twentieth-century Britain and the United States around the discursive constitution of security subjects and subjectivities. He analyses how self-defence entrepreneurs used their writings to style themselves as experts in the security field, and to legitimate their claims to instruct others in autonomous responses to violence and insecurity. Charting a late twentieth-century shift in self-defence cultures from emphasis on martial arts techniques and traditions to the psychic confrontation with real violence, Dodsworth situates these changes within broader processes of civilisation and de-civilisation in the cultural history of violence.

The third part, 'Between Public and Private Security' centres on relations, interconnections and networks between public and private security in specific historical episodes. David Churchill provides a case study of the aftermath of the Cornhill burglary, in the City of London in 1865,

an event which prompted intensive debate over the allocation of responsibility for security between private proprietors, the police and security hardware companies. Situating this episode in a long-term shift in from personal surveillance and superintendence to impersonal and technical security measures, Churchill demonstrates that failures in security systems provide valuable opportunities to discover views on the respective roles of public and private agents in providing security in the context of social and technological change.

The remaining three chapters, by contrast, focus on 'high policing' and the public-private divide in surveillance activities. Florian Altenhöner examines the fragmentation of security and political surveillance in Germany in the violent, revolutionary aftermath of the First World War, detailing the mix of civil, military, paramilitary and private agencies that investigated labour activism and political unrest in these years. In particular, he explores two cases of covert networks linking military and private agencies to undertake surveillance of leftist groups and trade unionists. Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones narrates how growing central state control over the apparatus of surveillance during the First World War in both Britain and the United States was followed by the diminution of state security and a shift back towards private communications and intelligence services. He emphasises how the private sector profited from the language of 'privacy' and by styling private control of communications as a bulwark against state intrusion, and highlights the long-term legacy of this shift in exposing citizens to the ever-greater powers of surveillance wielded by corporate bodies. Overlapping with Jeffreys-Jones's account is Dolores Janiewski and Simon Judkins's analysis of a Californian private-public security and surveillance network in the first half of the twentieth century that has parallels in its anti-Bolshevik origins with Altenhöner's networks. Janiewski and Judkins trace in fine detail the formation and operation of the network – which pooled intelligence on trade unionists, civil libertarians, and political radicals from police departments, military and naval intelligence, voluntary associations, employer and agricultural associations, veterans groups and private individuals – and assess its effects in stunting the growth of the labour movement and shaping the broader ideological climate of the era ultimately leading into the Red Scare following the Second World War.

Taken together, the chapters offer important insights into the relationship between private security and the modern state in diverse contexts. They open up valuable comparative

perspectives on this emerging field of historical research, and expose key points of similarity and difference between the security regimes in five nation states across the last two centuries. We return to these comparative insights in the conclusion, and explore emerging issues from the collection that might inform future historical research on private security.

¹ Clifford D. Shearing and Philip C. Stenning, 'Private Security: Implications for Social Control', *Social Problems*, 30(5), 1983, 494; Clifford Shearing, 'Reflections on the Refusal to Acknowledge Private Governments' in *Democracy, Society and the Governance of Security*, ed. Jennifer Wood and Benoît Dupont (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 12-13.

² Les Johnston and Clifford Shearing, *Governing Security: Explorations of Policing and Justice* (London: Routledge, 2003), 13-14.

³ Though note that Weber explicitly defined the state in terms of its means (use of legitimate force), rather than its ends (crime control, enforcement of order, and so on): Max Weber, 'Politics as a Vocation' in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, ed. H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1948), 77-8.

⁴ Shearing and Stenning, 'Social Control', 493-506; David H. Bayley and Clifford D. Shearing, 'The Future of Policing', *Law & Society Review*, 30(3), 1996, 585-606; cf. Trevor Jones and Tim Newburn, 'The Transformation of Policing? Understanding Current Trends in Policing Systems', *The British Journal of Criminology*, 42(1), 2002, 129-46; Ronald van Steden and Rick Sarre, 'The Growth of Private Security: Trends in the European Union', *Security Journal*, 20(4), 2007, 222-35.

⁵ See for example Marcus Felson, *Crime and Everyday Life: Insights and Implications for Society* (Thousand Oaks: Pine Forge Press, 1994). For critical assessments, see Pat O'Malley, 'Risk, Power and Crime Prevention', *Economy and Society*, 21(3), 1992, 252-75; David Garland, 'Ideas, Institutions and Situational Crime Prevention' in *Ethical and Social Perspectives on Situational Crime Prevention*, ed. Andrew von Hirsch, David Garland and Alison Wakefield (Oxford: Hart, 2000), 1-16; Lucia Zedner, 'Opportunity makes the Thief-Taker: The Influence of Economic Analysis on Crime Control' in *The Politics of Crime Control: Essays in Honour of David Downes*, ed. Tim Newburn and Paul Rock (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 147-72.

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⁷ O'Malley, 'Crime Prevention', 266-7; David Garland, 'The Limits of the Sovereign State: Strategies of Crime Control in Contemporary Society', *The British Journal of Criminology*, 36(4), 1996, 452-5; Nikolas Rose, 'Government and Control', *The British Journal of Criminology*, 40(2), 2000, 327-37.

⁸ Important general accounts include David Garland, *The Culture of Control: Crime and Social Order in Contemporary Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Johnston and Shearing, *Governing Security*; Rita Abrahamsen and Michael C. Williams, *Security Beyond the State: Private Security in International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

⁹ Abrahamsen and Williams, *Security beyond the State*, 1.

¹⁰ *Plural Policing: A Comparative Perspective*, ed. Trevor Jones and Tim Newburn (London: Routledge, 2006).

¹¹ See David Churchill, 'History, Periodization and the Character of Contemporary Crime Control', *Criminology & Criminal Justice*, 19(4), 2019, 475-92.

¹² Garland, 'Sovereign State', 448-9.

¹³ Churchill, 'History, Periodization', 485, See also Adam White, *The Politics of Private Security: Regulation, Reform and Re-Legitimation* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); Bob Hoogenboom, *The Governance of Policing and Security: Ironies, Myths and Paradoxes* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

¹⁴ Steven Spitzer and Andrew T. Scull, 'Privatization and Capitalist Development: The Case of the Private Police', *Social Problems*, 25(1), 1977, 18-29; Nigel South, 'Law, Profit and "Private Persons": Private and Public Policing in English History' in *Private Policing*, ed. Clifford D. Shearing and Philip C. Stenning (London: Sage, 1987), 72-109; Les Johnston, *The Rebirth of Private Policing* (London: Routledge, 1992), ch. 1 and 10.

¹⁵ Johnston, *Private Policing*, 210. See also, more recently, David C. Churchill, 'Rethinking the State Monopolisation Thesis: The Historiography of Policing and Criminal Justice in Nineteenth-Century England', *Crime, histoire & sociétés/Crime, History & Societies*, 18(1), 2014, 131-52.

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¹⁷ See David G. Barrie, 'Policing before the Police in the Eighteenth Century' in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Crime and Criminal Justice*, ed. Paul Knepper and Anja Johansen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 443-8.

¹⁸ Victor Bailey, *Charles Booth's Policemen: Crime, Police and Community in Jack-the-Ripper's London* (London: Breviary Stuff, 2014); David Churchill, *Crime Control and Everyday Life in the Victorian City: The Police and the Public* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

¹⁹ See Samuel Walker, *Popular Justice: A History of American Criminal Justice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 12, 27-8, 31-3, 45-6, 57, 119, 122-3, 160, 193, 238-9, 253; Christopher Capozzolla, 'The Only Badge You Need Is Your Patriotic Fervor: Vigilance, Coercion, and the Law in World War I America', *The Journal of American History*, 88(4), 2002, 1354-82; Michael Ayers Trotti, 'What Counts: Trends in Racial Violence in the Postbellum South', *Journal of American History*, 100(2), 2013, 375-400; Richard Maxwell Brown, *Strain of Violence: Historical Studies of American Violence and Vigilantism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975); Dominic J. Capeci, Jr., 'The Lynching of Cleo Wright: Federal Protection of Constitutional Rights during World War II', *Journal of American History*, 72(4), 1986, 859-87.

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²³ Eric A. Johnson, *Urbanization and Crime: Germany, 1871-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

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²⁷ Jean-Paul Brodeur, 'High Policing and Low Policing: Remarks about the Policing of Political Activities', *Social Problems*, 30(5), 1983, 507-20; Jean-Paul Brodeur, *The Policing Web* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 223-54. See also Gary Marx, 'High Policing' in *Encyclopedia of Criminology and Criminal Justice*, ed. Gerben Bruinsma and David Weisburd (New York: Springer, 2013), 2062-73.

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- ⁴⁹ Walker, *Popular Justice*, 55-65.
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⁶⁷ See for example David Garland, "'Governmentality" and the Problem of Crime: Foucault, Criminology, Sociology', *Theoretical Criminology*, 1(2), 1997, 173-214; Crawford, 'Networked Governance', 449-79; Francesco Colona and Tessa Diphoorn, "'Eyes, Ears, and Wheels": Policing Partnerships in Nairobi, Kenya', *Conflict and Society* 3, 2017, 8-23.

⁶⁸ Wood and Shearing, *Imagining Security*, 4-6.

⁶⁹ See for example South, 'Private and Public Policing', 72-109; Johnston, *Private Policing*, ch. 1.

⁷⁰ Cf. Joh, 'Private Police', 585.

⁷¹ Of course, further such disparities would be illuminated through wider comparisons with other modern state forms, most notably in colonial and post-colonial settings, where existing literature demonstrates the widespread delegation of authority and the tremendous scope of corporate and communal security initiatives. See for example David Killingray, 'The Maintenance of Law and Order in British Colonial Africa', *African Affairs*, 85(340), 1986, 411-37; Sheilah E. Hamilton, *Watching over Hong Kong: Private Policing 1841-1941* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2008); Benoît Henriët, 'Ordering the Wetlands: Policing and Legitimate Violence in the Leverville Concession (Belgian Congo, 1911-1920)' in

Policing in Colonial Empires: Cases, Connections, Boundaries (ca. 1850-1970), ed. Emmanuel Blanchard, Marieke Bloembergen and Amandine Lauro (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2017), 41-61; Abrahamsen and Williams, *Security Beyond the State*. Unfortunately, we were unable to secure contributions to the present book focused on such cases.

⁷² Cf. Clifford D. Shearing and Philip C. Stenning, 'Modern Private Security: Its Growth and Implications', *Crime and Justice*, 3, 1981, 220.