

Securing the City: Private Security Companies and Non-State Authority in Global Governance

Rita Abrahamsen¹

¹University of Ottawa, School of International Development and Global Studies, Ottawa, Canada

rita.abrahamsen@uottawa.ca

The last decade has seen a phenomenal expansion and globalisation of private security. Increasingly, transnational security companies see Africa and other ‘emerging economies’ as lucrative markets, with important implications for the domestic politics of protection. This paper argues that the privatisation and globalisation of security must be understood in the context of broader transformations in global governance, and that private security companies are increasingly emerging as important agents of non-state authority. Using the city of Cape Town as a case study, the paper illustrates how global private security is part of reconfigured structures of agency and authority in the international system and how public/private, global/local security networks play increasingly important roles in African politics.