

PRIVATE SECURITY COMPANIES AND SECURITY PROVISIONING IN NIGERIA: LESSONS FROM OTHER CLIMES

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Abstract

Insecurity in the form of terrorism, kidnapping for ransom, armed banditry, cattle rustling, armed robbery, murder, rape and other violent crimes are on the increase in Nigeria in spite of government efforts to contain them. There is no gainsaying that government forces are seemingly incapacitated to tackle the upsurge of insecurity across the country as terrorists, kidnapers and armed bandits specifically operate with impunity openly as if government security forces are non-existent. Although, insecurity is a global social problem, Nigerian situation is becoming overwhelming, thereby necessitating the proliferation of private security companies into the security arena to lend support to government security force efforts. Since their emergence into the security architecture, private security companies (PSCs) are creating great impact in security provisioning across the globe thereby complementing the efforts of government law enforcement agencies. In Nigeria, they have made great inroads in security provision such that their presence is felt in all nooks and crannies of the country. This paper examined PSCs and security provisioning in Nigeria with reference to lessons from other climes. The paper utilized exploratory analysis relying largely on qualitative content analysis from secondary sources of data collection through journal articles, books, periodicals, news prints and internet materials. The situational crime prevention and problem-oriented policing theories were used as theoretical framework. The paper showed that private security companies in Nigeria have contributed immensely to checkmating crimes in their areas of operations but lack global relevance as their activities are limited to Nigeria since they are not allowed to bear firearms. PSCs in Nigeria are overburdened with regulations that dwarf their operations cum lacking legislative recognition as components of the national security architecture. The paper underscored the global relevance of private security companies and their emergence and proliferation in Nigeria and concludes that PSCs in Nigeria, though very crucial in security provisioning need to be properly positioned for relevance in the global security market. The paper recommends among others, that relevant legislations should be enacted to allow PSCs in Nigeria bear firearms to enable them participate fully in security provisioning while intra-inter agency collaboration and networking is necessary to strengthen the private security sub sector. This is in addition to allowing PSCs to participate in private detection and prosecution in Nigeria.

Keywords: Armed bandits; Cattle rustling; Kidnapping for ransom; Private security companies; Security provisioning

Introduction

Provision of adequate security is one of the most basic needs of man. Security is a critical element in the survival and sustenance of man and society. There can be no meaningful development in human society without some level of safety and security for persons and property. In fact, human society emerged essentially out of the need for collective response to tackle security imperatives for man's mutual benefits. Hitherto, the life of man anywhere was poor, solitary, short, brutish and nasty in the views of Thomas Hobbs (1588-1679), because it was a period engulfed in self-vengeance, retaliation or 'do me I do you'. The blood feud of that period was not healthy for human survival as the strong takes it all. It was on this notion that society contracted its defensive thrust to the state for justice, equity and fairness in what is today known as the social contract as advanced by Thomas Hobbs in his state of nature enunciated in his book *Leviathan* published in 1651 (Curley, 1994). In this regard, individuals agreed to either explicitly or implicitly cede some of their rights to the authority of the state. Therefore, one of the basic responsibilities of responsible government globally is the provision of security to all citizens, irrespective of socio-demographic characteristics or socio-political or economic leanings.

However, this responsibility of government and its agencies to provide adequate security cum welfare for citizens seem to be whittled and jettisoned as criminality abounds across the globe. Globally, particularly Nigeria, available statistics show that crime rate and insecurity have been on the rise in the last ten years and the country is still witnessing a sharp rise in violent crimes of various dimensions and intensity. Alemika and Chukwuma (2005) and Salay (2005) are of the view that cases of high profile criminality and politically motivated killings, ethno-religious violence, kidnapping for ransom, Boko Haram terrorism, armed banditry and herdsmen militancy have gravely worsened the intricacy of the crime situation in Nigeria in recent times. The National Bureau of Statistics (2017) recorded a total of 125,790 crimes cases across the country in 2016. Most alarming with grave consequence is the report that Nigeria is ranked second in 2021 as the most terrorized country in the world (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2021). As if that was not enough, The World Poverty Clock in 2018 declared Nigeria as the poverty capital of the world with about 86.9 million people (50%) of the population living in penury (Yomi, 2018). In 2016, Nigeria's poverty rate was put at 71% (The Conversion, 2021). Global Peace Index (2019) ranked Nigeria 148th out of 163 peaceful countries in the world in 2019.

According to a 2020 Amnesty International report, 1,126 persons were killed in Nigeria between January and June, 2020 in areas that were considered abandoned and left at the mercy of armed bandits. On March 28, 2022, terrorists attacked an Abuja-Kaduna bound train, killing over 8 persons while 168 persons were abducted (Ayitogo, 2022). On July 5, 2022 terrorists attacked the Kuje Correctional Services, Abuja from where over 800 inmates escaped, including 65 Boko Haram members detained in the facility (Achi, 2022). Sadly, over 250 school children and women kidnapped from schools and communities across the country are still in the hand of their captors while many of them have been reportedly killed. In fact, Nigeria is ranked the 2nd in Africa on organized crime index 2023 with the most pervasive criminal network in Africa in terms of human trafficking coupled with the record of being the epicenter of cybercrimes (Ephraim, 2023). On January 23, 2024 25 persons were killed in Plateau state barely a month after more than 195 people were killed in the same state and over 10 persons were rendered homeless. On the same January 23, 2024, 33 persons were killed while 23 others were kidnapped in various communities of Benue state (Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre (2024). According to Global Peace Index 2024, Nigeria is the 17th least peace countries in the world (Statista Research Department, 2024). On daily basis, terrorists, kidnappers, armed bandits, unknown gunmen and other criminal elements hold the country to ransom, thereby creating the impression that government law enforcement agencies have gone into extinction. From the South to the North, the story is the same – general insecurity across the country. The implication of these narratives indicates a serious security provisioning situation in the country and the most likelihood that the formal police are overwhelmingly stretched in providing effective security service to citizens.

The primary and constitutional role of governments across the globe is to guarantee the security of lives and property of their citizens and foreigners alike. In order to effectively execute this onerous task in Nigeria, a minimum amount of about 5 billion Naira annually or 400 million Naira monthly is allocated to each state governor as security votes for security provisioning in their states. In fact, in 2024 1.647 Trillion Naira (about 5.7%) of the entire 2024 budget was allocated to defense with the Police getting 969.6 Billion Naira. In addition, 50 Billion Naira was allocated to seven Northern states – Sokoto, Kebbi, Katsina, Bebe, Zamfara, Niger and Kaduna to fight insecurity in 2024 (Shaibu, 2024). In spite of all these, terrorism, kidnapping for ransom, insurgency, armed banditry, murder, armed robbery, cattle rustling and other violent crimes remain pervasive in terms of pattern,

intensity and dimension; thus suggesting that governments at all levels of governance have failed to provide the needed and expected security for the people. No wonder, Omotosho and Aderinto (2012) argue that no efforts of the Nigeria Police or government can checkmate crime in the society because of the inadequacies of the force especially in the area of manpower, technological advancement and other problems militating against their performance.

In most societies, the police is the government agency charged with the responsibility of internal security provisioning. However, the Nigeria police appears to be overwhelmed by the prevalence of insecurity in the country and their efforts, incapacitated. It is this weakened capacity of government, and particularly the police to combat crime and other vices in the country that led to the emergence and proliferation of private security companies (PSCs) across Nigeria. In fact, it is the declining faith and trust in the ability of all levels of government (Federal, state and local government) to assuage the increasing crime pandemic that provided one of the greatest impetuses for the emergence, proliferation and enhancement of PSCs in the society.

In its 2019 official report, the National Bureau of Statistics (2019) recorded that between 2013 and 2018 there were 1,110 registered private security companies with a workforce of 828,502 in Nigeria. As at 2021, the strength of the Nigeria Police was put at 371,800 but the present Inspector General of Police, Kayode Egbetokun stated at the National Institute of Policy and Strategic Studies in Jos, Plateau state that the current working personnel of the police is 370,000 at the ratio of 1 policeman to 600 citizens (Shehu, 2023) as against the United Nations recommendation of 1 policeman to 450 people (Akpede, 2019). This means that the number of private security guards in Nigeria out-number officers of the Nigeria police by 2:1. Note that this data is only for licensed PSCs. However, there exist a number of unlicensed PSCs in Nigeria. When the unlicensed PSCs, are included, it is most likely that both the number of private security companies and their personnel would have increased exponentially in comparison with increasing crime rate and demand for security provisioning by private individuals and organizations across the country. This is evidenced by the fact that private security guards are highly visible in all nooks and coners of major cities and towns in the country guarding homes, businesses and neighborhoods. It has also lent credence to the general acceptance of community policing. Globally, the importance, relevance and acceptance of PSCs are overwhelming. Hence, Van Steden and

Sarre (2011) averred that in the past two decades, PSCs have had global acceptance and radically on the increase in security provisioning across the nations of the world.

In fact, it is the clear proof of the growing demand for PSCs which consequently led to private security personnel outnumbering public police officers in various countries of the world (Asomah, 2017; Bamidele, Akinbolade & Nuhu, 2016). For instance, in Poland, Japan and Turkey, the number of private security personnel is estimated to be twice as high as that of the police force. In France and Germany, the personnel is projected to be about two third of the size of the state police officers (Manning, 2006; Yoshida & Lesihman, 2006). In Canada, India and Australia, it is observed that private security personnel out-number the public police by 2:1. In South Africa by 3:1 and in the United States of America by 8:1 (Asomah, 2017; Upadhyaya, 2011).

All these attest to the global trend and increasing importance and participation of private security companies in security provisioning across the globe. It is imperative for us to distinguish between registered/unregistered PSCs and licensed/unlicensed PSCs. Every private company that operates in Nigeria is expected to register the company with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC). However, for a PSC to operate legally in Nigeria, in addition to being registered at CAC, it must be licensed by the Ministry of Internal Affairs through its regulatory agency, the Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corps (NSCDC) in line with Private Guard Companies Act Cap P30 Laws of Federal Republic of Nigeria 2004. Any PSC that is not licensed by the Ministry through the NSCDC operates illegally even if duly registered with the CAC. As a result of the N15Million Naira cost of registration and licensing, some PSCs operate underground to avoid detection by the police and the NSCDC.

It is against this background that this paper x-rays PSCs and security provisioning in Nigeria drawing lessons from other countries. The paper is structured into four parts. After the introductory section which lays the foundation for the paper and statement of the problem among others, the second section is an overview of PSCs in other climes while the third segment examines the role of PSCs' regulatory agency and the challenges of PSCs. The fourth and last part deals with the conclusion and recommendations of the study.

Conceptual Clarification

Private Security and Private Security Companies

The hiring of private individuals for security protection by individuals, groups and organizations is as old as man itself. There is no agreement as to what constitutes private security. Because of the difficulty associated with the concept, Joh (2004) referred to it as a “paradoxical” concept. Private security refers to “all types of private organizations and individuals providing all types of security or related services, including investigation, guard, patrol, lie detection, alarm, and armored transportation” (Kakalik & Wildhorn, 1971, p.3). In contextualizing the concept of private security, private security can be seen as any security services provided by individual or group of individuals other than government agents for financial benefits or free volunteer service and include *Maiguards*, Bakassi Boys, *Amotekun*, Neighbourhood Watch, Vigilante groups and formal PSCs. According to Green (1981), private security involves those individuals and organizations other than formal policing agencies engaged in the prevention and control of crime, loss or harm against individuals and organizations especially for those who hired their services.

Private security also involves the manufacturing, distribution, and installation of security equipment and technological systems. The American Society for Industrial Security (ASIS Foundation, 2009) views private security as the informal sector which engages in protecting people, property, and information, conducting investigations, and safeguarding the assets of corporate organizations. Some of the principal functions that private security performs include physical security, personnel security, information system security, investigation, loss prevention, risk management, legal aspects, emergency and contingency planning, fire protection, crisis management, disaster management, counter-terrorism, competitive intelligence, executive protection, violence in the workplace, crime prevention, traffic and crowd control (Strom, Berzofsky, Shook-sa, Barrick, Daye, Horstmann, Kinsey, 2010).

Schreier and Caparini (2005, p. 2) define Private Security Companies (PSCs) as “companies that specialize in providing security and protection of personnel and property including humanitarian and industrial assets”. The American Society of Industrial Security (ASIS Foundation, 2009, p.34) classified private security industry into two categories:

1. **Corporate Security or Proprietary Security:** - This refers to any organization or department of that organization that provides full time security officers solely for itself.

These are found mostly in Nigerian banks and some universities.

2. **Contract Security:** - This is the protective services provided by one company, specializing in such services, to another company or individual on a paid contractual basis. They include Private Military Companies (PMCs) and Private Security Companies (PSCs). Private security companies in Nigeria are classified under “Contract Security” and are basically divided into three categories: - equipment/installation, management consultants and manned guards (Oshanugor, 2012). In other climes, the PMCs and PSCs are integrated in their security architecture for a seamless result while Nigeria operates only at the level of PSCs (prohibited from bearing firearm in their operations).

In Nigeria, the only private security that has gained recognition and government approval for license are the PSCs that engage uniformed manned-guards. The other PSCs like those involved in equipment/installation, and management consultancy need only to register the company with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC). In most cases, the three components are integrated under one PSC since there is no structure and specialization. There are efforts in the professionalization of the private security industry in Nigeria. It is believed that there is an increasing professionalism in the private security industry because of the proliferation of the sector by ex-military and policemen. In fact, one of the conditions for licensing of private security companies in Nigeria is that one of the directors must be ex-servicemen of the rank of Colonel and above. Many of the PSCs are also generally moving into the use of advanced technology and equipment such as central alarms systems, radio alarms, and satellite tracking devices, panic buttons, armoured vehicles and detective devices. The increased professionalism is driven by a perceived need for a code of ethics and for credentials, including education and training, experience, and membership in professional bodies (Ekhomu, 2005). However, the industrial security sector is believed to be still driven by many unqualified persons who have no certification in industrial security while the private security guards still depends largely on persons with low level of education.

Literature Review

Emergence and Proliferation of Private Security Companies in Security Provisioning

Individuals who engage in the provision of security for individuals, families or businesses have always existed in all ages in the history of man. In early days, kings or chiefs or wealthy person have had the services of individuals who secure their lives and

property, though it may have been on *pro bono* basis. With the era of Industrial Revolution and increasing lawlessness in the society consequent upon the aftermath of the social upheavals of the period, man's need for personal protection increased. In fact, it is observed that the emergence of state-controlled law enforcement, particularly in England, grew out of private policing that were established to maintain public order, as well as to enhance private interests (Nalla, 2011). During the 1800s in London, a certain Jonathan Wild was one of the first private security agent to contribute to maintaining social order in the society. He was commonly branded "thief taker" in London and during this era, property crime was very rampant in London; and Wild, used to help recover stolen goods and assisted the police to solve many cases for a fee (Gilbert, 2004). The Bow Street Runners as it was tagged happened to be the first police-like establishment and it was funded by affluent merchants with business interests (Gunter & Hertig, 2005). Gilbert (2004) averred that Allen Pinkerton was the first private security in the United States of America. Gunter and Hertig (2005, p.7), noted that Allen Pinkerton was popularly known as the "the eye that never sleeps" because of the prompt way in which he handled criminal cases and solved many crimes for police. He was popularly referred to as the father of private security in the United States.

There has been the existence of private guards used by individuals to protect their homes and business premises long before the emergence of formal PSCs globally and particularly in Nigeria. But there was no formal recognition of these group of private security guards as they were not organized. However, the first organized PSC in Nigeria named Nigerian Security and Investigation Company (the first uniformed private security) was established in 1965 by Alhaji Mumuni. The PSCs in Nigeria have been expanding tremendously since that time, especially after the Nigeria-Biafra war (1967-1970), which heralded the proliferation of firearms and increase in armed robbery cases. PSCs in Nigeria are involved in the protection of private homes, industries and public facilities such as the National Stadium, Surulere, Murtala Mohammed International Airports, oil installations, shopping malls, churches, schools, bank facilities, embassies, and major entertainment or sporting facilities among others (Ekhomu, 2005; Oshanugor, 2012).

PSCs not only deal with core security duties, but also non-core security functions such as protocols (assisting clients to arrange or procure travelling documents, hotel reservations, tourism guides, executive meetings and other social engagements); customer service (serving as frontline desk receptionists, telephone attendants and attending to clients'

customers) and housekeeping services (ensuring the sanitary and safety conditions of the business environment), in addition to their security duties.

On August 26, 2022, the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPC) contracted the security surveillance of oil pipelines to a private security company owned by Ekpemupolo (former leader of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta). The contract is worth over N48 Billion Naira (Aro, 2022). This a clear recognition of the increasing relevance of PSCs in security provisioning in Nigeria. It is the first time such government contract with huge amount of money was given to private security sector. Though, this particular private security company use firearm in order to effectively execute their mandate of securing the oil pipelines, Nigerian law generally forbids PSCs from bearing firearms.

Abrahamsen and Williams (2005) identified some major private security companies in Nigeria to include: Prudential Security Company which is said to have a staff strength of about 9,000 guards nationwide. Halogen Security Company is said to have an estimated 4,000 guards countrywide. Mention was also made of Bemil Security, Vanni, and one non-indigenous PSC known as Group4Securicor in partnership with Outsourcing Services Limited. It operates under the name of Outsourcing Services Limited in Nigeria and has about 3,000 guards nationwide. Group4Securicor is believed to be the largest international private security company in the world with branches in 124 countries and an estimated guard employees of about 618,000. It ranks as one of London Stock Exchange's 100 largest corporations by capitalization (International Business Times Staff Reporter, 2012).

A study by Chinwokwu (2018), identified other PSCs in Nigeria as Trans-world Security Ltd., Technocrime Security Ltd, Arksego Security Ltd. Others include Kings Guard Security, Corporate Guard Security, Real Strikers Security Services Ltd, King David Security Ltd, Nigeria Investigation & Safety Co. Ltd., Cardinal Security Guard Ltd, Santana Security Agency Ltd, Champion Security & Safety, Nigid Security Ltd, Monaco Ventures Ltd, Morris Royal Security Ltd, Proton Security Services Ltd, Mega Guards Services Ltd, Octagon Guards Ltd, Mega Force Security Ltd, and many others. These private security companies are majorly located in Lagos, Abuja and other major cities in the country.

One of the major factors for the emergence and growth of private security globally, particularly Nigeria, is worsening general human insecurity, increased terrorism and fear of crime coupled with government's incapacity to provide security for the people to meet their daily needs. Recent events relating to insecurity of lives and property have threatened the

well-being of people and prompted the need for people to seek self-help, necessitating the emergence and proliferation of PSCs across the country. On March 31, 2022 the Cate Institute, a Washington DC Public Policy Research Organization ranked Nigeria as the second most unsafe country in the world (Adebajo, 2022). The Institute for Economic and Peace (2021) in its 2021 global peace index report ranked Nigeria 146th out of 163 countries as the most terrorized country in the world. Nigeria is disputably considered a weak and failed state which has provided the needed catalyst for non-state actors to perpetuate heinous crimes across the country.

Destructive decisions by individual leaders in government have paved the way to state failure. These are aptly shown in Nigeria and countries like Angola and Sierra Leone whereby private military forces are paid heavily to protect the state and conduct diplomacy with other states. The use of private security forces by rulers of weak states forms what Reno (1998, p.9) terms “regime innovations for managing” internal threats. We have seen in Nigeria how a private security is contracted to secure a national asset like the NNPC pipelines and the use of civilian forces in the North East Nigeria to assist the military to combat Boko Haram insurgency due to the incapacity and inadequacy of public forces..

Another reason for the emergence of PSCs in security provisioning is the increase in the development of enclosed residential estates in most cities like Lagos, Enugu, Port Harcourt and Abuja. Enclosed Residential Estates (EREs) are specifically designed by real estate developers as master planned residential neighbourhoods that have been constructed with a boundary fence or wall, which separates them from their environs. In most cases, there are only one entrance and exit gates which are normally controlled by private security officers. Ajibola, Oloke and Ogungbemi (2012), Ilesanmi (2012) and Chinwokwu’s (2020) studies highlighted the critical role of private security companies in such enclosed residential estates.

Furthermore, “globalization” (Abrahamsen & Williams, 2009, p.30) is a very critical phenomenon that has given rise to the emergence of PSCs across the globe. According to them, what we are witnessing “is the rise in new global security assemblage in which a range of different security agents and normativity interact, cooperate and compete, to provide new institutions, practices and forms of security governance”. There is increasing proliferation of PSCs with rise of insecurity across countries of the world especially where the police is inadequate and inability of public forces to perform effectively in preventing crime. Security provisioning also has been privatized and commercialized in most countries.

The economic system in which most African countries especially Nigeria operate is one of concern. In Nigeria as in most advanced countries of the world, capitalist mode of economic production which hinges on maximization of profit and exploitation; set the stage for private security companies. It is the very rich political elites in the society that can afford the demand of the market as they struggle to maintain their control and keep the poor in check.

Cash in transit (CIT) and cash present another reason for the emergence and proliferation of PSCs. In Nigeria as with several countries, cash is often moved in bullet-resistant armoured vehicles, as well as advanced satellite tracking systems to ensure safer transportation of cash and values for major banks and commercial clients. The armoured vehicles are further guided by drones to ensure safe delivery of service. In the United States of America there are over 150 armoured transport companies which are operated by PSCs (Gale Group, 2010). Most importantly, the procurement, provision and supply of hard ware are done by PSCs. Corporate organizations and government rely heavily on the PSCs for these services and this has further deepened the demand and growth of PSCs.

In Nigeria, Bemil and Vanni security companies are the country's foremost security companies in the industry. It is anticipated that this will become an increasingly important part of the market for the larger security companies because of the huge amount of money required to procure and maintain it. Other reasons include but not limited to inadequate resources to equip state organs, inadequate personnel of public security forces, increasing market demand for private security guards, professionalization of the military and other security forces, privatization and commercialization of security, and increasing need for capitalism and profit maximization. All the foregoing have culminated in the increasing proliferation of private security in security provisioning across the globe.

Methodology

The paper is a qualitative study based majorly on secondary sources (journals, books, internet, periodicals etc.). The study was carried out through meta-analysis of extant reports on private security companies, policy guidelines, and stakeholder's involvement in crime prevention in Nigeria for a secured environment. Relevant extant literatures on private and public police, security operational manuals cum stakeholder management were adequately reviewed leading to insight and stimulating research.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical frameworks used for this work are the situational crime prevention and problem-oriented policing (POP) theories. These theories are used bearing in mind that the main idea of private security company's participation in security provisioning is to ensure adequate protection of lives and property and reduce cost by the absence of crime in their area of operation. The two theories espoused in this section aptly capture the main objective of PSCs in security provisioning.

The situational crime prevention theory was first proposed by Newman (1972) in what he coined "defensible space" but it was Clarke (1980) who gave the theory a new focus and compiled the best known strategies and tactics to reduce criminal incidents (Siegel, 2007). The theory focuses on reducing crime opportunities rather than on the characteristics of criminal or potential criminals. It seeks to forestall the occurrence of crime, rather than to detect and sanction offenders (Clarke, 1997). Situational crime prevention involves the manipulation of the environment in such a way that opportunity for crime is completely denied to any potential criminal (Geason & Wilson, 1988). Situational crime prevention thus, aims to remove the opportunity, and make the costs of a crime greater than the benefits. Siegel (2007) contends that crime prevention can be achieved by reducing the opportunities people have to commit particular crimes. It is therefore, the responsibility of private security officers to ensure that crime opportunities are blocked to prevent acts of criminal violations which is the main arm of PSCs venturing in security provisioning across the world. Situational crime prevention is basically proactive prevention policing.

On the other hand, the problem-oriented policing theory (POP) was first developed by Goldstein (1979) as a critique against the reactive policing method which was the traditional method used by the police in crime control. The theory is premised on the need for security officers to be more vigilant and proactive in identifying core problems that could be targeted to alleviate crime and disorder at their root. The theory emphasized that security officers have to deal with a range of social problems in the community, which are not only crimes, but also social and physical in nature (Weisburd, Telep, Hinkle, & Eck, 2010). In this respect, private security companies in Nigeria deal not only with core security issues but also with non-core security issues in line with the mandate of POP objective.

However, the theory is not without criticism. Maguire and Nettleton (2003) reported in their study that the application of problem-oriented policing actually resulted in increased crime rather than reducing crime. This is because in applying POP, efforts are focused in a

particular or small geographical area rather than a large area. More so, it is argued that security officers lack the skill required for successful problem solving (Newburn & Reiner, 2007). On the other hand, it is observed that POP is one of the most significant and commonly applied police crime prevention methods or innovations in recent times (Weisburd et al., 2010). When POP was tested in an experimental studies which involved increased security patrol in locations with specific kind of problem it was found to have considerable positive impact on the levels of crime and disorder in the society (Sherman & Weiburn, 1995). The main objective of PSCs is to ensure opportunity for crime commission is prevented in their area of operational jurisdiction and the application of POP in their beat operations have effectively complemented police efforts as it has reduced crime incidences in the society. Notwithstanding its criticisms, the theory, in our opinion, is relevant because it brought into sharp focus the fact that security protection is best fitted when it is carried out within a specific jurisdiction in order to have effective result. Integration of both theories in crime prevention brings out the best in security officers.

Discussion

Understanding the Role of Private Security Companies in Security Provisioning

Statutorily, government institutions at all levels of governance (Federal, State and LGAs) are expected to ensure the protection of lives and property of citizens, but they have technically failed to a large extent in providing the desired security for the people. Thus, this role is being complemented by the presence of PSCs. It is no gainsaying that PSCs are established to fill a vacuum in the security provisioning across the globe particularly in Nigeria due to inherent inadequacies associated with the performance of public police. As in other climes, increasing insecurity and government is below par attitude towards efficient security delivery to citizens necessitated the emergence and proliferations of PSCs. PSCs are not only patronized by individuals, businesses or corporations but also by governments across the globe. PSCs have been found to perform effectively in tasks assigned to them, thereby enhancing their acceptance and high demand by individuals, organizations and governments. They provide protection services for all levels of people on payment basis; though their services are based on ability to pay; that means only those who have the financial means can access their services.

PSCs do not replace the police though they perform similar functions especially in the area of prevention of crime and crime reduction. They are not equal to the police in

power and authority; their exercise of authority ends when police steps into the arena. In studies conducted by Cunningham, Strauchs, Van Meter, and Hallcrest (1985) and Igbo and Chinwokwu (2020), it was found that private security was not perceived as an equal partner in crime prevention and control, but rather as a junior or silent partner with police. In other words, PSCs are not competitors with the police in the business of security provisioning in society, they are not replacement for police in the formal security sector, rather, they are partners. PSCs are empowered under Section 12 of Criminal Procedure Act 1990 to arrest any person who commits any offence in their view while Section 14 of the same Act requires that such individuals arrested by them should be handed over to the police within a reasonable time frame. Although, sometimes criminals arrested by non-state security outfits like neighbourhood watch, vigilante groups, etcetera are punished summarily without recourse to the police which may not be common in other climes. This is one of the criticisms and lapses of private security in Nigeria.

As in other climes, PSCs are involved in various services which include stationary/static guarding, joint police/PSC patrol especially in multi-national corporations, escort, airport transit, alarm system emergency response, very important personality protection, alarm system installation, management consultancy, protocol services, and crime analysis, due diligence, forensic services and others. They are consistently and effectively contributing meaningfully to the overall economic development of countries across the world. Individuals expect that PSCs will play critical part in Nigeria's socio-economic arrangement with great potentials to impact in national security policy decisions.

PSCs not only provide core security roles but also play a great role in non-core security functions. It's imperative to mention that private security professional and security companies engage in the manufacturing, procurement, distribution, installation, maintenance and servicing of security software and hardware such as radio communication, closed circuit television (CCTV) technology, drones, detection metal scanners, geospatial information systems, security accoutrements and other sophisticated security gadgets. These have become fundamental to the successful governance of specific small or large geographical territories, enabling a proactive approach to security in contrast with the reactive style of state police agencies.

Recently in Ondo state, Nigeria, after the bombing of a Catholic Church in Owo Local Government Area by terrorists; the governor of the state Mr. Rotimi Akederolu in June 2022, ordered for the installation of CCTV cameras in public places and private

institutions in the state (Dada, 2022) to checkmate incessant security breaches experienced in the state in recent times. The installation of those facilities are done by PSCs. Ondo state is one of the South West states in Nigeria that created a private security organization known as *Amotekun* to help provide internal security following failure of federal police force to effectively ensure the needed security in the state.

In Nigeria, the application of advance technology in crime control has helped in minimizing the rate of criminal incidences but has not enabled them to achieve effective performance. PSCs involvement in security provisioning can effectively serve general deterrence purpose against potential criminals. In other climes, for example in the United States of America; the security professional known as American Society for Industrial Security (ASIS) is a key player in American security architectural designs, manufacturing and technological development and provides formidable security frameworks for American security network and they are highly patronized by the government and its agencies. In Nigeria, lack of government recognition of the private security sector dwarfs the advancement of the sector and its impact in Nigeria's security architecture framework.

Private security companies play important roles in preventing and detecting crimes at all levels of their duties. Singer (2003), argued that the effectiveness of private security companies could be observed in the roles played as undercover agents outside the formal authorities especially among industrialized countries. The menace of Boko Haram would have been dealt with headlong if government had deployed PSCs to infiltrate their ranks as undercover agents for intelligence gathering.

Private security companies have responded to the fear of crime and contributed effectively towards the reduction of crime rate in the society. The effectiveness of PSCs in most campuses of higher institutions and schools in curbing and controlling the excess of cult members have not gone unnoticed. In the same way PSCs contribute unarguably in crowd control in social gatherings or riotous students' protest activities. This has helped in checkmating illegal gatherings or rioting in various locations or arenas. In Nigeria, it is a known fact that there is no public function that is organized without the presence of private security personnel to maintain effective security governance of the venue.

In spite of the positive roles associated with private security companies, they have also been criticized for some negative drawbacks inherent in their operations. PSCs have been alleged to have some lapses which are detrimental to their image and performance. Guards deployed by private security companies have been accused of engaging in criminal

activities, some lack skills and experiences coupled with low education to cope with their job descriptions. Studies by Chinwokwu (2018) and Anyanwu (2012) revealed that security guards were found negligent on duty, lack professionalism, abandon duty post without excuse, lack discipline, and connive with criminals in pilfering products. These are serious allegations because when a person hired to secure a home or business premises or property turns out to be the man to fear; it becomes very dangerous to society. It was also found that private security guards compromise household security by permitting criminals to infiltrate their neighbourhood thereby worsening crime incidences of their area. Notwithstanding these problems of criminal behaviour and professional misconduct associated with the operations of PSCs; society still has an increasing demand for them.

Operations of Private Security Companies in other Countries and Lessons for Nigeria

Private security companies' involvement in security provisioning has become a global phenomenon. India has over 5 Million private security personnel which is more than the total strength of their military forces and the police, Russia has private security personnel well over the size of the police at a ratio of 3:1; Honduras, is 5:1 and the United Kingdom is 2:1 while in Bulgaria 9% of all males are employed by PSCs; an indication of the proliferation, acceptance and growth of PSCs worldwide. Nigeria has joined the league of countries that parade PSCs in security provisioning, although within a limited space. In order to properly and adequately situate the narrative in the context of this study, the following few subheadings among others will serve to aid better understanding and appreciation of the enormous responsibilities of private security governance across the globe:

- i. **Privatization of Security:** Most countries in the world – USA, UK, China, Japan, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Canada, South Africa, Switzerland, among others, have comprehensive privatized private security governance providing opportunity for PSCs involved in man-guarding, private military companies (PMCs), risk managers, security manufacturers and security professionals to participate in global security market. Aside from that PSCs are also involved in the provision of detention facilities, criminal investigation and prosecution, and in national security policy design. In fact, Police have consigned or shared certain of their functions with PSCs. For instance, the largest detention facility in America, Corrections Corporation of America Incorporated is administered by private security; America, Germany, Japan, UK and France allow for

private detective/investigator and prosecutor (Abrahamsen & Williams, 2009). In Nigeria, private security is not comprehensively privatized rather it is commercialized in which PSCs are allocated limited space to operate and PSCs are not essentially integrated into the mainstream of national security programme and policy design. In fact, inputs of resources from PSCs in national security design and strategy remain abysmally absent in government security programmes.

- ii. **Use of Firearms:** In countries such as America, South Africa, Canada, France, and others where security privatization operates, PSCs are allowed to perform their jobs using firearms. This authorization provides PSCs great opportunities to freely participate in the international economic security market which has great economic benefits for PSCs and their countries. It also enhances their capability in crime prevention and security provisioning. In Nigeria, PSCs are completely prohibited from bearing firearms which not only exposes private guards to great danger but also limits their potentials and economic benefits.
- iii. **International Missions:** PSCs such as Black water, Triple Canopy and Eriny, took part in military operations in Sierra Leone and Simon Man's attempted coup of 2004 in Equatorial Guinea. In South Africa, Uganda, Angola, United States and Europe, PSCs and PMCs bear firearms and have been involved in international military operations, for example, in Iraq, over 100,000 PMCs participated under the United States Defense, in Afghanistan over 65,000 PMCs were contracted, in Liberia, Angola, Sierra Leone etc., unnumbered PMCs were involved (Berg, 2007; Abrahamsen & Williams, 2005). In the booming global security architecture, Chinese PSCs are seen in Mali, Djibouti, Egypt, South Africa, Tanzania, Somalia, and Abidjan on international missions (Arduino, 2020). PSCs in Nigeria are not engaged by the Nigerian government in any international mission and are rarely involved in national security strategic design. Although, locally private security especially in Northern Nigeria have been involved in joint operations with government security forces to combat Boko Haram insurgency. More so, most states in Nigeria are establishing state armed vigilante groups to combat insecurity within their geographical territory.
- iv. **PSC Regulation and Supervision:** In most countries (USA, Europe, South Africa, Canada etc.) where security privatization is in place, both the operators of private security companies and security guards are required to attain certain level of security training in an institute, after which they are awarded security certificates authorizing them to

practice private investigation/detection or private guarding or both, with a license. Most especially training and certification is based on specialized areas of security provisioning to encourage diversification of knowledge and the professionalism required to operate competent and efficient private security outfits that will assist in driving socioeconomic development and growth in the country. This should be the basis of private security practice in Nigeria and not the other way round where every Tom, Dick and Harry, profess to be a security professional or private guard without basic industrial security certification and training. PSCs in Nigeria are under regulated or not regulated at all in terms of specific entry qualification/certification and there is no standardized security institute established for that purpose. In most countries, private security participation in security provisioning is effectively regulated, monitored and regimented based on specialized training, skill and certification. This is not so in Nigeria where there is not even a single security association to regulate members in the operations of private security practice.

- v. **Employment and Contribution to Gross Domestic Product:** Private security has enormous potentials to alleviate the problem of youth employment and enhance the gross domestic product of nations. For example, countries where security privatization is effective, PSCs not only engage in massive employment of youths but also export their services to other countries where foreign exchange is earned for their companies and countries. South Africa has the largest and fastest growing security industry and market in Africa and their PSCs can be found in Nigeria (Outsourcing Services Limited (OSL) part of Gray Group PSC of South Africa started operation in Nigeria since 2002) and across Africa. The Group4Securicor is America's largest PSC with branches in more than 124 countries. The American Society for Industrial Security (ASIS) has gained strong operational base in African countries particularly in Nigeria in the area of operational standardization in security guidelines for improved quality services, security facilities/equipment, training and consultancy. It offers one of the most highly security professional certifications – the Certified Protection Professional (CPP) in the world (Ekanem, 2022; Liu, 2020). ASIS net huge sums of money into the United States' economy yearly through their security institutes established across the world for security professionals. China's involvement in massive investment in Africa increased since 2013 it launched its Belt and Road Initiative. PSCs are used to guard their executives and investments in African countries which save lots of money for their country (Arduino,

2022). As for Nigeria, PSCs operational limitation prevents the country from harvesting any foreign exchange earnings from the private security sector.

Regulating Private Security Companies in Security Provisioning in Nigeria

The law to regulate and provide for the licensing of private security guards (Private Security Companies) was created in December 15, 1986 known as Private Security Guards Act No. 23 and amended under the Private Security Guards Act (PGC Act) Cap 30, 2004 Laws of the Federation of Nigeria. Section 1 (1) of CAP 367 lists some of the functions of the PSCs to include watching, guarding, patrolling, cash-in-transit protection and crime prevention.

The Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) (otherwise known as Civil Defence) emerged out of the International Civil Defence Organization (ICDO) in May 23, 1968 during the Biafra – Nigeria war (1967-1970). It was conceived originally to be the enlightenment organ for the Lagos populace regarding the war and how to take safety precautions to avoid victimization. It was named Lagos Civil Defence Committee. The NSCDC is under the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The Charter of 1968 was amended in 2003 and later re-amended in June 4, 2007 under Act No. 6 of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (Abdulqadir, 2016; Thom-Otuya, 2009).

The NSCDC was established amongst other functions, to recommend to the Minister of Internal Affairs, the licensing of Private Guard Companies (PGCs) or Private Security Companies (PSCs) after due background vetting of the directors; inspect the premises of PSCs, their training facilities and approve, if it is up to acceptable standard; to supervise and monitor the activities of all PSCs and keep register for that purpose; to periodically organize workshops and training courses for PSCs; and to seal up any PSCs which operate without a valid license (Federal Republic of Nigeria Official Gazette, 2007; Onwe, Nwagbaga & Nwuzor, 2015).

The licensing of PSCs is in two categories. Categories A are PSCs with 3,000 personnel and above while Category B are those with less than 3,000. It is only PSCs that are under the regulation and supervision of the NSCDC as established under the law that operate uniform man-guard. This means that other categories of PSCs that provide other services like security consultants, equipment and installation etc. are excluded from licensing but must be registered with the CAC. Although, in Nigeria, most PSCs combine services other than uniform man-guard.

By the NSCDC Act, the PSCs became subject to their supervision and monitoring to ensure they maintain ethical and professional standards. It was also aimed at ensuring effective service delivery to their clients. In addition to supervision and monitoring of PSCs, the NSCDC also addresses complaints brought against PSCs and punish defaulting companies (Chinwokwu, 2018; Nkanga, 2009). As part of its mandate, the NSCDC sealed five private security companies in Akure for illegal operation, i.e., they are not registered or licensed with the command (Abdulqadir, 2016). This was in line with its constitutional role to rid the security sector of criminal elements. It is required that “all security firms be registered with the NSCDC which also has the power to regulate their activities to prevent infiltration of criminal elements with the private security set up” (Onwe, Nwagbaga, & Nwuzor, (2015, p. 96). In furtherance of its mandate, the NSCDC sealed about 195 private security companies in 2013 nationwide found to be operating without valid licenses. It also realized the sum of two hundred and seventy five million Naira (₦275,000.000) from licensing of new PSCs and renewal of licenses. More so, it offered free training to about 2,190 private security personnel within the same period as part of its mandate (Premium Times, 2014).

It is important to note that in carrying out its functions, the NSCDC has been confronted with a myriad of challenges, among them, inadequacy of manpower, corruption, inadequacy of resources, logistics and facilities, lack of commitment, lack of regular training and discontent (Chinwokwu, 2018; Abdulqadir, 2016; Onwe et al., 2015). This may generally affect the Corps’ supervisory and monitoring responsibility of PSCs and thereby create loopholes for illegal proliferation of PSCs. It was found in a study that the NSCDC is not properly regulating and supervising the PSCs, its only interest most times is the financial benefits accruing from the licensing and renewal of license. This necessitated the call for the removal of the supervisory power of PSCs from the NSCDC to a neutral body for effective monitoring and supervision (Chinwokwu, 2018). It seems that the NSCDC has not been discharging its constitutional mandate in respect of the operations of PSCs in Nigeria.

Challenges of Private Security Companies in Security Provisioning in Nigeria

One of the major factors militating against the performance and effectiveness of PSCs in Nigeria is comprehensive privatization of security. In this respect, PSCs are limited in their operations and the type of services rendered. This is especially with regard to the

inability of their operatives to use firearms for self-defense and defense of their clients. Under CAP 367 LFN 1990 (the Private Guard Companies Act), PSCs cannot be armed. As a result of this, the lives of many of their staff are usually at risk. They are also subjected to limited security market economy of providing only non-combatant security and localization.

The law regulating the requirements for the establishment for PSCs stipulates that foreigners are not allowed to participate in the operation of PSCs in Nigeria, perhaps, for internal security reasons. But there is proliferation of foreign security companies in the Nigerian security market such as Group4Securicor/Outsourcing Services Ltd, which has offices across Nigeria. Group4Securicor/OSL first started operation as Gray Security Ltd. in 2002 and has grown to over 3,000 staff in Nigeria (Abrahamsen & Williams, 2005). More importantly, the foreign private security companies carry firearms, even when the laws in Nigeria prohibit PSCs from carrying firearms. They occupy most of the multinational oil companies in terms of security provisioning. The implication is that the law that prohibits private security companies from bearing firearms is discriminatory and unevenly applied to all participants in the security market. While Nigerian government allows foreigners to carry firearms, they outlaw their own citizens the same opportunity. However, it is imperative to note that most of these foreign security outfits are also spies and may engage in espionage activities detrimental to Nigerian socio-political and economic interests. They may also engage in illicit activities local security personnel may not likely involve themselves because of existing laws and patriotism for fatherland. In other words, Nigeria is exposed to severe espionage, illicit and insecurity by their wittingly permitting these foreign private security companies to bear firearms.

Welfare is one of the major issues bedeviling the operations of PSCs in Nigeria. Though, the National Bureau of statistics (2019) report showed that holders of OND and Senior Secondary School Certificate earn N25,000 as monthly salary, that is far from the reality as most PSCs in this category receive less than N18,000 (Chinwokwu, 2018). Personnel of PSCs are still under the basic minimum monthly salary which affects them negatively in their discharge of duties. Most pathetically, there is no approved basic salary payment structure in the private security sector. As a result of market competition; some still accept N10, 000 payment as basic salary in order to remain in business. The wages and working conditions of security guards appear to be one of the leading factors militating against their efficiency. Following the passing into law in 2024 of the national minimum wage of #70,000, it is most likely that some private security companies who may not be able

to pay reasonable salary to their security personnel may fold up basically because the security market may become more competitive for players of private security providers.

Poor education and inadequate training are considered great challenge to the efficiency and effectiveness of PSCs in security provisioning. Most PSCs indiscriminately recruit operatives with or without basic educational qualifications in order to fill their space in clients' premises. Chinwokwu (2018) found that 76.6% of private guards were holders of Diploma certificates and below, 68.5% had no training before deployment to their clients, of those who had training before deployment to their clients, 77.6% were trained within 4 weeks and 46.0% had no previous security training before being employed by PSCs. At most, many of the PSCs only certify the physical fitness of their guards as prerequisite for their recruitment without providing them with any kind of training. In cases where trainings are given, it is ad hoc and perhaps inadequate to expose the guard to the actual job rudiments.

Funding is one of the major challenges of PSCs; the registration and licensing of PSCs is about N15 Million. After paying this amount, most of them are faced with financial problem. This is one of the reasons some of them go underground and sabotage licensed ones by under quoting and accepting any security contract just to sustain their existence and operation. PSCs are also required for PSCs to indemnify their guards in case of professional misconduct. Some contracts may require over N100 Million indemnity for PSCs to obtain and secure contracts from government and big companies. The implication is that a healthy competition and rivalry exist within the private security sector for financial strength and stability. PSCs whose financial muscle is weak, find it difficult to pay their staff and help in reducing the quality and standard of the profession.

Conclusion

Unlike in other climes where security has been fully privatized and PSCs are expanding beyond their countries of origin, private security is still at the rudimentary level in Nigeria despite the enormous contribution it has made to security provisioning in the country. The private security sector is an untapped oil mill for solutions of some of the many security problems in the country and like other climes could be harnessed for better and improved security provisioning and national development. The government is yet to fully unlock the inherent potentials associated with PSCs for effective crime prevention and security provisioning in Nigeria. The impact of the benefits of a privatized security in Nigeria can only be imagined rather than expressed. The impact of PSCs in national security

policy is conspicuously abysmal or absent unlike in the United States, South Africa, China, Germany and other climes where it has gained much support and integrated into their national security policy designs.

The roles which PSCs perform have made them very relevant and imperative in the global security architecture, In fact, some individuals and businesses may not survive without the contribution of PSCs in the security provisioning in some countries. It is a fact that the boom and growth of PSCs is being driven by the ever-increasing insecurity, increased population growth, inadequate police presence coupled with the lethargic attitude of some governments in safeguarding their countries, including Nigeria. Globally, PSCs are becoming part and parcel of the global security network and some are also used in international engagements by their countries like United States of America, South Africa, and China etc. In other words, PSCs have assumed a very critical role in the security provisioning across the globe. There is general perception from various studies (Chinwokwu, 2018; Anyanwu, 2012; Cozens, 2011), that PSCs have contributed positively and effectively towards crime reduction and security provisioning worldwide.

The participation of PSCs in security provisioning brings out the fluidity required for effective reduction in crime incidences and increased safety of citizens across the world. There is need for a paradigm shift in the way government perceive PSCs to a more positive outlook and inclusivity of the sector into the national security agenda for a robust security provisioning in Nigeria. PSCs have great potentials to be the preferred choice of people for security protection with increasing insecurity across nations of the world.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are provided for the improvement of the performance and effectiveness of private security companies in security provisioning in Nigeria, taking cognizance of the role of PSCs in other climes.

- i. Nigeria should have a rethink in the privatization process of security in the country and allow PSCs access to participate in the global security economic market. As in other climes, it is necessary to establish a standard industrial security institute for training, re-training, certification and re-certification of security operators and private security personnel based on approved international minimum training standard to make the sector more economically viable, competitive, and more relevant in the global security

market and national security discourse. Specialization and professionalism should be emphasized as bench mark for private security practice in Nigeria.

- ii. It is necessary to improve intra and inter- agency collaborations and network, strengthen the synergy amongst PSCs and between PSCs and government agencies like the NSCDC and the police so that they can pool their resources (especially technical expertise) towards fighting crime in Nigeria as obtained in other climes. This can be strengthened through concerted enlightenment workshops aimed at educating each other of their responsibilities and limitations
- iii. The NSCDC seems to be overly burdened with national duties to the neglect of effective monitoring and control of PSCs. There is need to show more commitment in the affairs of PSCs to ensure professionalism and ethical conduct towards enhancing their growth. There is need for a neutral agency or body to regulate and supervise PSCs' operations and all other aspects of private security professionalization.
- iv. There is need for NSCDC and government to review downward the huge amount paid for registration and licensing by private security practitioners to enable more professionals into the sector as it will reduce the unemployment level in the country. PSC is an oil boom yet to be explored for national development; the reduction of the registration and licensing fees of PSCs will enable young talented professionals into the sector especially now that most Nigerian Univesities have established the Department of Criminology and Security Studies
- v. The huge amount spent on criminals awaiting trials in the criminal justice system could be assuaged by incorporating PSCs into the criminal justice system. The singular legislative approval of private detection in Nigeria may be the needed impetus to drive the economy in terms of massive youth employment and solution to the unemployment problem confronting youth graduates.
- vi. Government should reconsider the law prohibiting PSCs from bearing firearms especially in the light that foreign PSCs that operate in Nigeria bear firearms. PSCs authorized to bear firearms should be adequately trained and lincensed and made accountable for any misuse of such weapons. This is good for the operational efficiency of PSCs and enhanced security in the country.

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