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The Growth of Privatized Policing: Some Cross-national Data and Comparisons

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The policing services offered by private security companies have been embraced enthusiastically by public and private entities the world over. It is argued in this paper that the impact of the "privatization" trend is, however, underestimated and understudied. In order to understand the importance of the phenomenon, and to measure its impact, it is important for researchers to undertake international comparisons of both the reach of private security and the extent to which its industries shape and complement the policing task. In pursuit of that end, this paper is designed to provide a snapshot description of the coverage of private security industries worldwide (where current information is available), along with an analysis of their impact.

INTRODUCTION

Over the last two decades, a significant restructuring of policing, especially in North America and the European Union (EU), has led to private industries now occupying a major position in "police extended families" (Law Commission of Canada, 2002; Johnston, 2003; Crawford and Lister, 2004). Indeed, the commercial market for private policing generally and private security more specifically expands inexorably. As Clifford Shearing and colleagues signaled a quarter-century ago: "[p]rivate security has developed so rapidly and unobtrusively, that its presence represents nothing less than a quiet revolution in policing" (1980, p. 1). The trend continues. Those who were pioneers in developing and building private security industries are witnessing a lucrative return on their investments. One recent estimate suggests that world demand for private contractual security service will grow 7.7 per cent annually until at least 2008 (Freedonia, 2005).

All of this is not particularly surprising, given that the publicly funded agencies of order maintenance that evolved and grew during the nineteenth-century development of modern policing never really eradicated the private forms of policing that had preceded them (Johnston, 1992). The upshot of this resurgence is a modern mix of public and private options and roles. According to Lucia Zedner,

the publicly employed officers of state police have been generally regarded as synonymous with the criminal justice state. It now appears increasingly possible

that this model of the police may come to be seen as an historical blip in a more enduring schema of policing as an array of activities undertaken by multiple private and public agencies, and individual and communal endeavours. In the longer term, that archetypical modern state venture—the criminal justice system—may itself be regarded as historical anomaly (2006, p. 81).

Uniformed security guards are, by far, the most observable exponents of private security occupations. Their presence has considerably intensified alongside the police and police-like bodies (e.g. city wardens) safeguarding urban areas (Crawford et al., 2005). It is especially in mass private-property environments such as shopping malls, airport terminals, holiday resorts, industrial complexes and office parks that private guarding is on the rise (Sarre, 2005). Private personnel have thus become an integral part of overall policing strategies, or, as some would prefer to say, “governance of security” (Johnston and Shearing, 2003, p. 9).

In order to facilitate these developments, private security industries are now actively promoting an image of a sector that is able to distance itself from an unsavory reputation (O’Connor et al., 2004). Moreover, they are now offering a kaleidoscope of professional services and a greater variety of products than ever before, including manned guarding (both “in-house” and “contract”), alarm monitoring, security equipment production and installation, transportation of cash, investigation of white-collar crime and provision of advice on risk management (George and Button, 2000; Button, 2002).

Given the “silent rise” of private security, it is remarkable that the body of knowledge on the extent and powers of private security, although steadily evolving, is still rather limited. There is, to date, very little knowledge about the size and nature of the security industry worldwide. Clifford Shearing observes that

[w]hile private security is certainly no longer a subject that languishes on a forgotten scholarly back burner, it remains surprisingly under researched. Despite its obvious importance to the governance of security, scholars continue to focus far more attention on the police than they do the various other agents and agencies that provide for security (Shearing, 2003, p. xvii).

Researchers, but also politicians and policy-makers, often take the presence of private players simply for granted as “minor” players in the policing landscape. Their prominence is, however, overlooked at one’s peril. It is essential that researchers devote greater attention to the blossoming of private security companies in order to determine what they can and cannot offer society in terms of upholding social order.

In order to pursue that goal, this article will address five main issues. First, we underline that the mushrooming of commercial guarding agencies poses a challenge to the sovereignty of nation states. Policing is scattered away from ‘blue colored’ forces, thus challenging the traditional centralized methods of regulating society. Second, attention is paid to the barriers encountered when one attempts to measure the size of private security industries around the

globe, although some useful, albeit cautious, estimates can still be made. Third, a modest international comparison of private security companies and firms is presented. Fourth, after describing trends in private security, we use an analytical lens through which to identify and explain why private security will continue to dominate the policing “market” into the foreseeable future, and finally, the article concludes with a research agenda, which stresses the need for good data and well-informed debate.

Why Private Security is a Challenge for Societies

The provision of policing is rapidly being redesigned across the globe. Its private forms disperse in a number of ways. “Commercialized” or “paid” security is the most pervasive and challenging one. David Bayley and Clifford Shearing state that the augmentation of specialized security companies, along with other non-state bodies and agents, into the field of policing implies

a watershed in the evolutions of their systems of crime control and law enforcement. Future generations will look back on our era as a time when one system of policing ended and another took its place (1996, p. 588).

Their premise assumes that the “governance of security” is no longer, if it ever was, the sole monopoly of the constitutional state. Today the growth of “mass private property” such as shopping malls and airport terminals, in company with a growing complexity and social heterogeneity within urban societies, erodes the “steering” role of governments and their police forces. Policing is being restructured along the lines of markets, residential communities and cultural communities, a tendency which overthrows the “Hobbesian-Weberian framework where the public sphere is the sphere of the governors and the private sphere is the sphere of the governed” (Shearing, 2006, p. 31). Crime control has, in other words, become everybody’s business. Nowadays, security guards, community volunteers and other private policing providers regularly patrol the vast majority of spaces where people spend their daily lives.

Trevor Jones and Tim Newburn (2002, 2006) have warned that one must not generalize too widely in making these observations lest one lose sight of the different historical paths that “local political cultures” follow (2006, p. 9.). But despite disagreements about how to interpret what is evolving, scholars widely recognize the process of “pluralization” (more specifically, “privatization”) of policing and the unique challenge this phenomenon poses to modern order maintenance.

Determining the Breadth and Depth of the Private Security “Industry”

On an empirical level, private security is difficult to define. Indeed, Elizabeth Joh refers to it as a “paradoxical” term (2004). Although the law draws a

clear distinction between 'public' and 'private,' both sectors are increasingly difficult to tell apart. Today, the police and the private security industries perform many of the same tasks and have many of the same sorts of responsibilities. As Philip Stenning outlines,

it is now almost impossible to identify any function or responsibility of the public police which is not, somewhere and under some circumstances, assumed and performed by private police in democratic societies (2000, p. 328).

Additionally, and to make things more complicated, the private security "industry" is not some clearly defined homogenous group, but rather a multitude of sectors, large and small, all related to the provision of security and investigation services, crime prevention, systems planning, technical consulting and security design (George and Button, 2000, p. 15). Often these industries are very different from each other in structure, authority, purpose and method, and when one adds the sheer variety of private security occupations, trying to determine the size of the industry becomes an almost impossible task (Jones and Newburn, 1995, pp. 223-224).

Moreover, the quality of accessible data varies considerably from source to source. Indeed, "[w]hat has mostly been available are fragments of information, mixed with speculation and dramatic claims, especially when the media get involved" (Sarre and Prenzler, 2005, pp. 7-8). For example, registration systems do not always differentiate between full-time personnel and the sizeable group of part-time personnel. This lack of clarity about the number of staff employed probably leads to an over-estimation of the actual work forces of security industries. On the other hand, however, "in-house" staff are sometimes not counted, so it could also be argued that the numbers of private security are, in reality, *under*-estimated. Furthermore, most private firms do not like to advertise their earnings and personnel numbers. Because competition is fierce amongst companies, they are, quite understandably, not eager to disclose confidential and sensitive information about market share and revenues. Finally, private security tasks are now being undertaken by a variety of businesses. For example, accountancy firms have been known to set up forensic services for clients, and sometimes offer private detective work. Private security companies not uncommonly undertake related activities such as limousine hiring or facility management alongside their general policing activities. The private security industry thus flows into a range of markets, making counting a precarious undertaking.

Cross-national Comparisons

Despite the fact that any attempt to measure the scope of the industry should be hedged with caveats, there is consensus among observers about the mounting pervasiveness of private companies and personnel in many countries, referred to (collectively) below as "private security services" or

“PSSs.” The following snapshots from a variety of countries and regions have been drawn from the growing list of reports and reviews devoted to the subject of privatized provision of policing. Information on legislative authority and regulatory conditions is also included in the discussion below, where such information is available and of interest.

We begin with a comparative picture based upon information available from Northern and Southern America, Asia, Australia, the Middle East and Africa. Thereafter, the available data from the 27 EU member states is presented, followed by information gleaned from agencies in countries proximate to the EU. The information contained in each of the three tables is drawn from a number of sources.

Americas	Private security force
USA	+1,500,000
Canada	82,000
Mexico	+153,885
Brazil	400,000
Asia	
Japan	459,305
South Korea	115,845
Pacific	
Australia	+90,000
Middle East	
Saudi Arabia	16,000
Africa	
Nigeria	+100,000
Kenya	48,800
Sierra Leone	+3,000
South Africa	+250,000

Table 1: Private security services in selected international countries. Sources: Van Steden and Huberts (2005), Manning (2006), Law Commission of Canada (2002), Reames (2005), Wood and Cardia (2006), Yoshida and Leishman (2006), Sarre and Prenzler (2005), Abrahamsen and Williams (2005, a,b,c), Button et al (2006), Shearing and Berg (2006) and De Jong (2002).

The Americas

Security industries are so diverse in North America that their data, while not difficult to find, are difficult to compare. Early estimates indicate that 429,000 private staff, compared to 694,000 public law enforcement personnel, were employed in the **United States** in 1972 (Kakalik and Wildhorn, 1977, p.

18). According to the so-called Hallcrest report, this number had grown to almost 1 million private employees by 1990 (Cunningham et al., 1990, p. 196-197). One-and-a-half decades later the USA boasts some 60,000 security companies, and private industries employ approximately 1.5 to 2 million guards (Manning, 2006, p. 110). One estimate puts the number of security workers in **Canada** at around 82,000 compared to just over 59,000 police (Law Commission of Canada, 2002, p. 9-10). In **Mexico**, approximately 10,000 private security firms operate within the country. Yet fewer than half of these firms have employees who possess an official permit. In December 2000, there were 153,885 registered employees, but their actual number is probably significantly higher (Reames, 2005, p. 1192). In South America, the data are very difficult to find. Only **Brazil** provides some information for our purposes. A case study suggests that 1,200 private security companies with a total workforce of 400,000 were available for hire in 1998 (Wood and Cardia, 2006, p. 154). Indeed, the federal police contract with private guards to protect persons, property and assets, especially in metropolitan areas such as Sao Paulo. Since 1983, the Brazilian security industry has been covered by specialist legislation.

Asia

According to some reports, the security industry in **Japan** has grown from 775 companies employing 41,146 guards in 1972 to 8,669 companies employing 377,140 (full-time and part-time) guards in 1996. The security industry significantly outnumbers the Japanese police force, comprising, on 1996 figures, over 225,000 officers (Yoshida, 1999). The latest data from Japan indicate that this number has continued to grow since then, to 459,305 security guards and approximately 240,000 police officers in 2003 (Yoshida and Leishman, 2006). Government authorities hold powers to sanction security firms that violate the rules, by the imposition of strict penalties, imprisonment or the suspension and even termination of business. Even in the centralized market economy that is **China**, approximately 250,000 security service companies had been brought into existence by 1999 as free market competitors to the internal security system (Guo, 1999). In the **Republic of South Korea**, the rate of change has been rapid. From 1978 to 2005, the number of security personnel rose to well over 115,000 (compared with 93,271 police officers), a growth rate of 2,320 per cent (Button et al., 2006).

Australia

It is difficult to obtain an accurate picture of the size of the private policing and security markets in **Australia**. In 1998-99, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS, 2000) recorded 1,714 businesses in security services industries, employing over 31,700 persons (Prenzler, 2005). This list included those firms that identified themselves as such, typically private detectives and inquiry

agents, but did not include government security agencies, locksmith services, alarm wholesaling, and security equipment installation. Licensed security agents, on figures supplied by state licensing agencies in 2003, numbered approximately 140,000, but this figure includes individuals who hold multiple licenses. One should compare the number (approximately 48,000 on 2003 figures) of sworn police officers in Australia. Census data show that between 1996 and 2001 the Australian population increased by 6.0 per cent, police numbers increased by 6.5 per cent and security providers by a staggering 31.1 per cent (Prenzler and Sarre, 2006).

The Middle East

It is difficult to obtain accurate data about private security in the Middle East. Countries are mostly governed by strict Islamic regimes which exercise strong control over information on “sensitive” topics such as crime and safety. Nonetheless, De Jong (2002, p. 36) has conducted explorative research on the situation in **Saudi Arabia** and reports that four large security (guarding) companies employ approximately 3,500 staff throughout the country. They are part of a larger industry covering some 40 companies and 16,000 staff. Special legislation dates back to 1992 when the Ministry of the Interior issued *Rules of Private Civil Security*. Strikingly, this law obliges owners of, for instance, banks, jewellery shops and residential compounds to hire commercial guards, boosting the industry’s growth throughout the 1990s. There is, however, no evidence that the industry has expanded since then.

Sub-Saharan Africa

Data on **Nigeria, Kenya and Sierra Leone** have been gathered recently by Abrahamsen and Williams (2005 a,b,c).³ In Nigeria, private security is the second largest income earner for the nation after oil and gas. Numbers in the security guard sector may be as high as 100,000. Virtually any business, embassy, non-governmental organization (NGO) and residential compound will have contracts with (armed) private security personnel. Given the huge socio-economic inequalities that exist throughout Kenya, private security is a major industry, generating as many as 48,800 jobs. Regardless of the risks they run, security guards are not permitted to carry firearms. Because of a brutal civil war which raged across Sierra Leone from 1991 to 2002, security remains a top political priority, hastening a rapid expansion of commercial guarding services. Although numbers may be much higher, there may be as many as 30 security companies operating, employing approximately 3,000 persons.

South Africa

The security sector in **South Africa** may be expanding by as much as 30 per cent per year. 1999 figures indicate that, apart from 60,000 “in-house”

personnel, the industry employs 350,000 guards. When only counting the number of “in-house” and “contract” security guards, the police/private security ratio would be 1:3.1, or it could be as high as 1:4 (Minnaar and Ngoveni, 2004, p. 45). However, Shearing and Berg (2006) are more moderate in their estimates. They assume the size of registered security officers was 250,000 in 2004, representing a doubling since 1997. Since the fall of the apartheid regime a number of multinational firms have become established in South Africa. These massive corporate players absorbed a vast number of local security businesses, whose numbers dropped from 5,185 in 2001 to 4,271 in 2003.

The European Union

Previous comparative research has indicated the significant contribution of security companies to internal security within the EU (Ottens et al., 1999; Van Outrive, 1999; Van Steden and Huberts, 2005; De Waard, 1999), although the information has been somewhat fragmented. Given the absence of firm and comparable data, Jaap de Waard, a Dutch civil servant working for the Ministry of Justice, published a comprehensive international study of private security, covering 27 countries including all the countries of the EU at the time plus 12 others. His study was based upon reports from the European Commission Directorate-General for Employment, Industrial Relations and Social Affairs in 1996. De Waard estimated that there were 592,050 security personnel in Europe in a population of 369 million. That meant that there were 160 security personnel per 100,000 people, compared to 375 police per 100,000. He further estimated that 75 per cent of security personnel worked for contract firms, with the remainder “in-house.” De Waard found very large variations in personnel numbers between countries. Great Britain and Germany had the most security personnel, with 275 and 217 respectively per 100,000. Finland and Greece had the lowest proportions with 69 and 19 respectively. Overall, these 1999 data suggest that, in indicative terms only, police outnumbered security personnel in the EU by a very rough estimate of 2:1.

On 1 May 2004, 10 new member states successfully joined the existing 15 member states, and then on 1 January 2007 Bulgaria and Romania were added to the EU bringing the total number to 27. These events had considerable implications for the number of police officers and commercial security personnel previously counted by De Waard. His estimates are now well and truly in need of revision. The statistical snapshot presented below in Table 2 provides a timely update of the best available employment figures in the public and private policing sectors in the EU. The data are gleaned mainly from a report published by Morr  (2004) and draw on figures collected by the Confederation of European Security Services (CoESS), the European umbrella association for private security industries.⁴ Other data are drawn from SEESAC (2005).

Table 2 summarizes the latest estimates of private security industries in the 27 EU member states.

Country	Total Police	Total Private Security	Private Security/ Population Ratio	Private Security/ Police Ratio
Austria	30,000	6,790	1/1,208	0.23
Belgium	39,000	18,320	1/562	0.47
Bulgaria	28,000	130,000	1/58	4.6
Cyprus	3,000	1,500	1/517	0.50
Czech Republic	47,400	28,100	1/363	0.59
Denmark	14,000	5,250	1/1,010	0.38
Estonia	3,600	4,900	1/286	1.36
Finland	7,500	6,000	1/867	0.80
France	145,000	117,000	1/516	0.81
Germany	250,000	170,000	1/485	0.68
Greece	49,900	25,000	1/428	0.50
Hungary	40,000	80,000	1/125	2.00
Ireland	12,000	20,000	1/195	1.67
Italy	280,000*	55,000	1/1,056	0.20
Latvia	10,600	5,000	1/460	0.47
Lithuania	20,000	10,000	1/360	0.50
Luxembourg	1,573	2,200	1/210	1.40
Malta	1,800	700	1/572	0.39
The Netherlands	49,000	30,000	1/543	0.61
Poland	103,309	200,000	1/193	1.94
Portugal	46,000	28,000	1/375	0.61
Romania	45,830	37,291	1/597	0.81
Slovakia	21,500	20,840	1/259	0.97
Slovenia	7,500	4,500	1/444	0.60
Spain	193,450	89,450	1/450	0.46
Sweden	18,000	10,000	1/530	0.56
United Kingdom	141,398	150,000	1/401	1.06
Total	1,609,360	1,255,841	1/395	0.78

Table 2: Police forces and private security services in 27 EU-Member States. Sources: Morr , 2004 and SEESAC, 2005. Complements and updates data from van Steden and Sarre, 2006.

* This number is based on De Waard's (1999) estimate of the Italian police force numbers, because of missing data in the CoESS report.

Western Europe

Germany, the **United Kingdom** and **France** are indisputably the leaders in Western Europe in providing PSSs. As seen in Table 2, in sheer numbers, Germany takes the first position with approximately 170,000 personnel, although informed estimates place the number of employees in the United Kingdom much higher than the 150,000 reported by the sources available to Morr . For example, Button (2002, p. 99) arrives at a figure of 217,000 private security staff, whereas Jones and Newburn (1995, p. 229) counted over 300,000 people engaged in private “policing” occupations. Even with the lower number, police officers are outnumbered by private security in the UK by a ratio of 1 to 1.06. In France, the ratio is 1 to 0.81, and Germany is slightly lower again at 1 to 0.68.

Germany has implemented trade regulation laws that apply to security enterprises, but legal standards are also embedded in other acts. Training and education are provided by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and by professional organizations. Operational staff undertake mandatory instruction (theory) of 40 hours. Managerial staff must attend 80 hours of theory. Specialized private security personnel (for example, guards at military installations) are allowed to carry guns.

In France, commercial security institutions hold a strong position. CoESS probably underestimates the French public policing system (145,000), for previous studies show a police strength of at least 227,000 officers (De Waard, 1999, p. 155; Ottens et al., 1999, p. 81). Ocqueteau (2006) maintains that private security does not challenge the sovereign role of police and the *gendarmerie*. Rather, the industry complements the state’s security resources. Nevertheless, he concludes that commercial security is an irreversible phenomenon, which will continue to grow in the future.

Legislation for the private security sector in the United Kingdom did not exist until relatively recently. Private guards, investigators and door supervisors relied upon voluntary self-regulation (Button, 2002). In 2001, however, the parliament passed the *Private Security Industry Act*. It was the first attempt to regulate contract and “in-house” security guards, the CIT sector, private investigators, wheel clampers, security consultants, and bodyguards. Its main contributions were the introduction of a licensing system and the creation of a Security Industry Authority (SIA) to monitor the quality and legitimacy of security industry services.

The **Republic of Ireland** has a huge private security presence (approximately 20,000 strong) and its ratio of police to private security indicates that the former are well outnumbered by the latter (1 to 1.67). The number of private personnel per head of population (1 per 195) is one of the highest in Europe. Yet Ireland was one of the later countries to set out detailed legal standards for the industry. The parliament finally passed its *Private Security Services Act* in 2004.

In the **Grand Duchy of Luxembourg** there are more private security personnel (the overwhelming majority in full-time roles) than police officers (a ratio of 1 police officer to 1.4 security officers). Possible explanations for this are the fairly large banking sector and the fact that some central EU institutions are based in Luxembourg. With regard to the private security/population ratio, **Austria** has a rate that is the lowest in Europe at 1 private officer per 1,208 population. Nevertheless, there are 200 companies (on 2003 figures) active in Austria, employing 6,790 people. The annual turnover of €200 million (2001) is steadily increasing by 2 per cent to 3 per cent per year. While there is no specific law for the Austrian security market, there are a few commercial laws with relevance to specialized (guarding) companies.

Belgium and **The Netherlands** have moderately-sized private security industries, with a similar ratio of population to private security. The ratio of police to private security personnel (1 to 0.47 and 1 to 0.57, respectively) is similar, too. Both countries have laws that regulate the industry beyond manned guarding, and include private detectives, alarm monitoring systems, the cash-in-transit (CIT) sector and “in-house” security workers in their purview. The key points of Belgian and Dutch laws are similar too, and include strict regulation of uniforms, training, and criminal background checks. Contrary to the situation in The Netherlands, however, some Belgian guards are permitted to carry firearms. The Dutch division of Group 4 Securicor has been granted permission to provide custodial services to detention centers, which puts the company in a unique business position (Van Steden and Huberts, 2006).

Central and Eastern Europe

The collapse of socialist bureaucracies and the consequent sale of state assets have presumably contributed to the spectacular growth of private security industries in former Soviet bloc or Warsaw Pact countries (Brodeur et al., 2003, p. 6). Moreover, Central and Eastern EU member countries have reportedly suffered from waves of criminal activities within their own borders, thus providing an incentive for those who can afford it to seek supplementary policing (Caparini and Marenin, 2005).

Hence, in Central and Eastern Europe, private security companies have been mushrooming in an array of locations since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. Countries like the **Czech Republic**, **Latvia**, **Lithuania**, and **Slovenia** are now witnessing strong growth in private security markets. Other Central and Eastern European EU members have also seen a significant rise in the number of private security and protection agencies in a growing market. In **Slovakia**, **Estonia**, **Hungary**, and **Poland** private security personnel now match or exceed their corresponding police numbers. In the cases of Poland and Hungary they are double the police numbers. According to CoESS, the yearly financial turnover is massive, for example, €40 million in Estonia (2001 figures) and €933 million in Poland.

The monitoring of private security in these regions is best described as a “work in progress.” Two of the Baltic states, Estonia and Latvia, regulate manned guarding services and related areas by their respective security acts. Lithuania has implemented a law on individuals and property safety. The same trends are observed in most of the newly admitted EU member states. Except for the Czech Republic, all governments have instigated specific legal guidelines addressing private security. Requirements such as criminal background checks, identifications cards and special permission to carry handguns are standard and, in some cases, mandatory (for example, Czech guards). The Czech Republic and Slovenia offer university training for both public policing and private policing. Police practitioners and students seeking a career in an assortment of (governmental) security agencies are taught at the Police Academy in Prague and the College of Police and Security Studies in Ljubljana.

In **Romania**, along with **Bulgaria**, the privatization of security has expanded significantly over the last decade. These countries host the most developed and professional security industries in the region. Given that up-to-date numbers on police for these two nations are available from SEESAC (2005, p. 109), it is possible to make a rough estimate of the ratio of police to private security. In Romania the ratio (0.81) is around the average for the EU, assuming, that is, that one can rely upon the data. This may be problematic, as many guards work without permission and are paid “under the table” (Gounev, 2006, p 117). The Bulgarian ratio (28,000 police to 130,000 private security) is 4.6, or the highest for the EU, again assuming the data are accurate. A 2005 business survey indicated that 54,000 of these are contract guards paid by PSSs, while the other 70,000 to 80,000 are in-house guards. According to SEESAC, issues such as the absence of democratic oversight, ineffective implementation of legislation and rivalry between police forces and security companies are of major concern to observers (SEESAC, 2005).⁵

Southern Europe

There is a relatively low private security/police ratio in Southern European countries. In **Greece**, for example, a security market barely existed until 1997 (Rigakos and Papanicolaou, 2003, 298). At present, however, there may be as many as 25,000 to 30,000 private security personnel, which is about half the number of police officers (Papanicolaou, 2006, p. 86). Legislation was introduced in 1997 to mandate a number of requirements covering security licensing, uniforms, training and dogs. The license-holder’s criminal record must be checked and he or she is obliged to have joined the Greek army.

Police in **Italy** employ 280,000 officers, five times the estimated number of people employed by private security agencies. Likewise, **Cyprus**, **Malta**, **Portugal**, and **Spain** make more use of police officers than security guards. Nevertheless, with the exception of Cyprus, these governments have provided comprehensive governing frameworks to achieve some form of regulation.

Even taking into account the problems of accurately measuring private security personnel numbers, we can safely assume that there are over one million people employed in private security industries in the EU following its expansion in 2004. Given De Waard's figure of almost 600,000 employees based upon 1996 figures, this amounts to an increase of perhaps 500,000 employees across EU member states in less than a decade. The police/private security ratio, too, has moved up to 1 to 0.71 overall in 2004 compared to the EU average of 1 to 0.43 in 1999 (De Waard, 1999, p. 156). Although these findings are very tentative, and must be treated with caution, it is impossible not to conclude that there has been a significant growth in private security in the EU. One can assume that there are a number of factors for this rise, not only "natural growth" by virtue of the addition of new member states, but also the belief that PSSs are an appropriate means by which to deal with perceptions of growing lawlessness generally, as well as the move to market economies following the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Scandinavia

Reliable estimates of private security personnel are available in the three Scandinavian countries that are members of the EU: **Denmark, Finland, and Sweden**. In each country, the private security industry is, in absolute and relative terms, small. A plausible explanation for this might be the traditionally low crime rates officially reported in Scandinavian countries. Furthermore, as De Waard (1999, p. 167) notes, the Danish police, historically, do not enter into so-called commercial public-private partnerships. The government is thus reluctant to cooperate with security services. Nevertheless, the latest figures indicate that there may be over 5,000 private security personnel in Denmark (for a ratio of 1 to 0.38, police to private security) and double that number in Sweden, for a not dissimilar ratio of 1 to 0.56.

Finland has a higher level of private security in comparison with its police force, although, per head of population, it has fewer security personnel (1 per 867) than Sweden (with 1 per 530). Finland's *Act on Private Security Services* (along with supplementary decrees) governs several "guarding" and "protection" sectors. We find the same kind of regulatory systems in Denmark. Sweden's regulatory regime covers most private security areas except alarm stations, in-house security and cash-in-transit (CIT). In Sweden and Finland, but not in Denmark, firearms carriage is permitted with special authorization. All Scandinavian EU countries require basic training for private security employees.

Southeastern Europe, Russia, Ukraine, and Georgia

The renaissance of private security in the EU is not exceptional to the region. The following information, as set out in Table 3, offers a useful insight into PSSs in the regions and nations proximate to the EU, and allows some preliminary comparisons to be made.

Eastern Europe (non-EU), Russia and Ukraine	Private security force
Albania	4,100
Bosnia and Herzegovina	12,000
Croatia	115,000
Kosovo	2,580
Macedonia	3,000
Moldova	+3,000
Montenegro	+1,900
Serbia	130,000
Russia	+850,000
Ukraine	+33,000

Table 3: Private security services in selected non-EU countries or entities. Sources: Van Steden and Huberts (2005), SEESAC (2005), Volkov (2002), Hiscock (2006).

The growth of private security companies in Southeastern Europe is probably a direct result of perceptions of a growing “market of violence” in the region (Eppler, 2002). Hence, private security companies have emerged in the former Yugoslavian countries, such as **Serbia, Croatia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina**. However, in these countries (if not **Albania**), concerns have been raised relating to the (mis)use of weapons, including automatic weapons, by private security (SEESAC, 2005). Moreover, they have been linked with armed ethnic minorities in **Kosovo**.

The collapse of the Soviet Union and a “hidden” private security legacy prior to the break-up both contributed to the spectacular growth of the private security industry in **Russia** (Favarel-Garrigues and Le Hu  rou, 2004). The protection market is, by and large, divided between detective agencies, PSSs and private protection companies (PPCs). In 1999, statistics indicated that almost 200,000 licensed employees (that is, those who are entitled to carry a firearm) are working for security services and protection companies, but their total number probably exceeds 850,000 (Volkov, 2002, p. 137). Not unlike the position in Southeastern Europe, regulatory structures for the private security industry are weak in Russia. Despite a 1992 federal law on private detective and protective activity which gave legal status to the commercial provision of security, business relations are still highly informal. This informality has had a negative impact on the transparency and accountability of the industry.

Ukraine, according to 2006 figures, has 33,000 people licensed to undertake protection work in over 3,000 enterprises, a number that is expanding rapidly. PSSs in the Ukraine, according to Hiscock, have been known to engage in illegitimate cooperation with the state (Hiscock, 2006, p. 136). There is little known about the employment scale of the private security

market in Georgia, although estimates suggest that there may be as many as 250 to 300 PSSs (Hiscock, 2006, p. 141). There are very few rules that regulate PSSs and their staff.

Transnational Developments

Allied to the explosive growth of private security is the ascendancy of transnational security conglomerates mentioned above. Giant multi-nationals such as the Securitas Group, Group 4 Securicor, Tyco International, Secom, The Brink's Company, Sohgo Security Services, Chubb, Corrections Corporation of America and Prosegur have allowed a "globalization" of commercialized security provision to develop (Johnston, 2000, 2006; Walker, 2003; Wood and Kempa, 2005). Group 4 Securicor employs an astonishing 405,000 staff, working in over 100 countries and generating a yearly turnover of €6.1 billion.⁶

Moreover, a diversity of commercial security activities is penetrating into national and sub-national institutions such as fire departments, ambulance services, car assistance services, custodial services and even military operations (Group 4 Securicor, 2004; Singer, 2003). One can thus safely predict that transnational contract security will increasingly expand their functions in securing local (urban) and national domains across every continent.

Factors Driving Private Security: Discussion, Analysis, and a Research Agenda

How can we explain such a remarkable renaissance and durability of non-state forms of order maintenance? It is hard to answer this question unequivocally as pluralization and privatization affect policing "in different ways and at different speeds depending on the nature of the social, political and cultural circumstances in which they are taking place" (Jones and Newburn, 2006, p. 5). Nevertheless, the policing, sociological and criminological literature offer valuable analytical tools for explaining the growth of private security internationally. The first explanation is that the quest for guards and additional private supervisors can be situated within the context of *spatial changes* (Shearing and Stenning, 1981). Particularly in urban areas, the hegemony of consumerism stimulates the emergence of "quasi-public" spaces, such as shopping malls, sports stadiums and leisure facilities (Wakefield, 2003). Because of risks related to deviant behaviour disturbing the ambience of such sites, a "mixed economy" of security staff is routinely active here. These are predominantly security guards, but other agents such as crowd controllers and stewards are often present.

The *fear of crime* explanation is a useful one too. Crime rates have risen sharply over recent decades. Garland (2001) even portrays Western societies as "high crime cultures." The terrorist acts of (and since) September 11, 2001, have posed new dangers to national security and have enhanced citizens'

“search for security” (Law Commission of Canada, 2002), which has become a “normal” fact of life. Moreover, governments have attempted to “responsibilize” civil society for its own risk management (Garland, 2001). For example, the Dutch police openly assert that

security is not a matter exclusively for the police. The police need partners and are therefore looking for ways of establishing worthwhile collaboration ... by which many police forces aim to establish closer ties with local people. (Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, 2004, p. 8)

Closely related to this point, Button argues a lack of government performance and the financial weakness of states has contributed to the shift in emphasis (Button, 2002). Police are simply not capable of reassuring everybody. As governments try to reduce their spending by restricting the funding of public services such as the police, society is left with a “security vacuum,” which is filled by private agents and agencies. In circumstances where private security is unregulated or under-regulated (George and Button, 2000), entrepreneurs may start businesses without being hindered by legal red-tape, with sometimes adverse public-image consequences (Livingstone and Hart, 2003).

Finally, in the context of a *liquid modernity* (Bauman, 2000) where extraordinary dynamism and agility find their counterparts in (ontological) feelings of uncertainty and insecurity, people are collectively yearning for *safe freedom* (Boutellier, 2004). The vitality of contemporary western life goes hand in hand with an obsessive desire for protection. This paradoxical situation creates the optimal circumstances for private security systems to proliferate.

As the security industry has grown worldwide, so has debate over the “quality of life impact” of this development (Prenzler, 2004, p. 283). According to some commentators, private security has the potential to disregard democratic rights, particularly the equality, privacy, and personal freedoms that citizens should be able to enjoy (Sarre and Prenzler, 2005, p. 202), given “that they must *sell* security” (Rigakos, 2002, p. 13; italics in the original). Their overarching interest, thus, is to “pursue their client’s objectives” (Joh, 2004, p. 61) and make profitable business deals (South, 1988). Private security personnel generally work under an assumption that victims, especially their fee-paying institutional victims, should be given priority over all other concerns within civil society (Shearing and Stenning, 1983, p. 9). Thus there are many issues around private security, its purposes and accountabilities that remain unresolved.

In an attempt to address these questions, observers must continue to turn their gaze to four key research agendas (Sarre, 2005). Researchers should, first of all, map out generic patterns of privatized policing internationally and highlight the differences and similarities between countries. Only through this exercise can patterns and trends be observed and analyzed.

Researchers should also continue to explore and compare preferred forms (and forums) of accountability for private security and other auxiliary police

options and come up with “what works best” in given situations. In doing so, they are better equipped to advise policy-makers to develop “law and justice” criteria to judge the quality of private accountability systems in various national and international settings. The research task must also include a discussion of the competing principles that public police and private security espouse, and the precise relationships both sectors should develop with each other, for despite decades of the development of private/public partnership models, the relationships between police and their private security counterparts remain guarded and tentative.

Finally, researchers should continue to examine the principles, interests, powers, mentalities, technologies and working methods of private security businesses (both national and transnational) in order to determine the effects of private policing on civil liberties, privacy, access to information, human rights and personnel safety.

CONCLUSION

Commercial security providers, at the very least, in terms of numbers of personnel and annual expenditures, now dominate the policing landscapes in many nations of the world (Sarre and Prenzler, 2005, p. 9). The current shifts towards private options in policing are likely to continue apace. Commercial integration and the freedom to move goods, capital and services are becoming progressively more common in a number of regions of the world, and there is little reason to suspect that there will not be a similar integration of security services.

The appropriate call is for governments to serve as central anchor points to facilitate and direct private policing activities and to fund research into them. Governments cannot shirk their responsibility to coordinate security (facilitated by public and private funding) to ensure that not only are their citizens enjoying a satisfactory level of protection at an appropriate cost, but that they are being protected by a blend of public and private policing that does not compromise fundamental accountabilities, rights and freedoms.

NOTES

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3. For the on-line publications see <http://users.aber.ac.uk/rbh/privatesecurity/publications.html>.

4. See www.coess.org for the full report.

5. For more information on the security situation in former Yugoslavia and elsewhere in the Balkans, see the Balkan site within www.seesac.org, the official website of the South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons.

6. For more information see www.G4S.com.

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