

THE PROLIFERATION OF PRIVATE SECURITY COMPANIES (PSCS) IN NIGERIA: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECT

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Abstract

The study focused on the proliferation of Private Security Companies (PSCs) in Nigeria. It examines the recent private incursion into security sector business and these calls for concern and attention. The primary responsibility of the Government as stipulated by the constitution is the welfare and provision of security for its citizens, hence why is this responsibility shifted to private security companies? The study is a survey research, primary and secondary data were collected through, Key Informant Interviews (KII) and questionnaires. The study employed qualitative and quantitative techniques to analyze the data collected. Findings from the study showed that 92% of the respondents affirmed that security of life and properties was not effectively provided by the Government, hence the need for private participation into security provision in the Nigeria. Also 96.7% of the respondents agreed that the presence of PSCs in Nigeria has reduced crime rate. The need for protection and security of life and property amidst various security challenges and the clear inability of the State and its Public security forces to effectively arrest the situation is likely to give PSCs prospects and potentials in Nigeria as agreed on by all the respondents. The paper concludes that PSCs is an effective alternative security provider, which complements government efforts in the Nigeria considering the importance of security governance on economic and sustainable development.

Keywords: *Private Security Companies, Proliferation, Incursion, Safety.*

1.0 Background to the Study

One major responsibility of the state is provisioning of internal security and defense from external threats (Damian, 2000). According to John Stuart Mill, “security is the most vital of all interest and that security of a person and property are the first need of society” (cited in Acton Burrow, 1972, 55). The provision of security was viewed as the most fundamental obligation and task of the state as the “Weberian state” was perceived to enjoy the monopoly of the legitimate use of force, implying that security is the defining feature of the state and its provision at the heart of the state (Weber, 1919). However, the conception and practice of security has changed over time largely because of the manner in which the state has performed its task of providing security to the general public and the growing private concern (Mbadlanyana, 2011). Security from crime, fear and victimization at the state, local and personal levels is an important basis for economic and social development as noted in the United Nations Guidelines for the Prevention of Crime (Economic and Social Council resolution, 2002/13 Annex).

Hence, an effectively secured society is viewed as the basis for sustainable peace and development as security is a necessity in every human society. The implication being that, its absence threatens the survival of individuals and their properties (Inyang and Abraham, 2014). This is why governments worldwide invest huge resources to ensure that lives and properties of their citizens are secured (Ekhomu, 2004). Okereke (2014) also argued that, the security and safety of private and public life are sine qua non for human existence, survival and development. However, it is still argued that, no government has the wherewithal to supply one hundred percent

security for her people, and no matter how endowed and organized a country is, it can hardly be devoid of security challenges (Dasuki, 2013).

Since the 1990s, countries across the globe have seen an ever increasing number of private security companies (PSCs) operating within and across their borders. The proliferation of PSCs is a global phenomenon with far-reaching economic, political, and social implications. The private security industry is a relatively new, developing field of study that is seeing major contributions by academics, civil society, and governmental bodies (PSCs in Caribbean, 2013). However, as is the case in all countries, the citizens of Nigeria are highly concerned about their security and this concern has been expressed through the growth of Private Security Companies (PSCs).

2.0 Conceptual Clarification

The Private security services have been around since the beginning of civilization when human settlements began marking territories and introduced concepts of public and private properties. One of the earliest recorded examples of private security forces being utilized dates back to the 13th century B.C., when Egyptian pharaohs hired troops from foreign lands to complement Egypt's own military and security forces (Security Service Report, 2012; The History of Private Security | HubPages. <https://hubpages.com/business/The-History-of-Private-Security>). This established practice continued and evolved in ancient Rome, where the wealthy hired private security personnel to protect their families and property (Security Service Report, 2012). In ancient Greece, a system of protection was developed to protect the monarchy, as well as for the protection of highways leading into the cities. These practices have continued to evolve over the years as economic activity, technological development, and globalization produce more safety and security risks to both individuals and properties, necessitating increased safety and security measures (Security Service Report, 2012).

Goddard (2001) opined, "a private security company as a registered civilian company that specializes in contracting commercial services to domestic and foreign entities with the intent to protect personnel and humanitarian and industrial assets within the rule of applicable domestic law". Abrahamsen and William (2011) refer to private security companies as the "companies whose aim is offering protection for protection of life and assets". According to Singer (2005), the general trend of globalization towards privatization and outsourcing of government functions has resulted in the privatization of security by government in order to further complement government effort in the protection of life and property of the citizens. Abrahamsen and Williams (2009) address the way in which a global trend to private security marks a shift in global structures of authority and governance. They argue that the existence of PSCs and their increasing authority should not necessarily lead to the conclusion that the state is under fundamental threat; rather, their presence is part of a broader global transformation in structures of governance and authority. Privatization demonstrate efficiency principles that can improve government performance as public social life increasingly falls within private controlled spouse, policed by security officers operating not in public interest but in the interests of their employers, or corporate clients, it becomes subject to a style of policing in its objectives, core functions and methods of operations. The effects of the reliance on the private security sector depend on the nature of the state or other non-state actors that contract private security companies and the strategic environment in which they are used. But on the other hand, privatization could have unintended costs as outsourcing may lead to corruption and abuse of human right (Hassen, 2010).

Abrahamsen and William (2005:1) argued that, "security is now the second largest money spinner in Nigeria, surpassed only by oil and gas". This statement by long standing observers of Nigeria politics is striking, especially given that Nigeria is African's largest oil producer. While inadequate statistic and information makes this claim impossible to verify, there is no doubt that the private security industry has grown rapidly in recent years (Abrahamsen and

William, 2009). Private security personnel are highly visible around the country, guarding private businesses, homes and neighborhoods, and advising transnational companies and embassies on risks and dangers to their assets and employees. Private security companies have thus become a major part of the Nigeria economy (Abrahamsen, and William, 2005). The perception of ineffective policing and rising crime gave impetus to the emergence of a plethora of non-state policing groups (Olaniyi, 2005). The state has shared its security responsibility with a variety of non-state actors including vigilante groups, religious vigilante, ethnic militias and private security guards.

If private security companies are to be constructively engaged in a broader system of security governance in Nigeria, there is need to assess the performance and effectiveness of their service delivery. To ensure the proper use of private security services, it is essential that Nigeria develop comprehensive legislative regulation, and enforcement on the activities of the private security industry. Government at Federal and State level must ensure that the private security sector is subject to democratic civilian control to ensure good security governance and the protection of human rights within the frame of its operation. Hence for them to be reliable security actors and to contribute to the overall security in Nigeria, they need to be well regulated, supervised, controlled and become more professional. If not, rather than improving the status of security in Nigeria, they could as well be a source of insecurity.

3.0 Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of the study is to examine the proliferation of Private Security Companies (PSCs) in Nigeria. However, the specific objective of the study is to:

- i. investigate the reason for establishment and proliferation of Private Security Companies (PSCs) in Nigeria;
- ii. examine the challenges of PSCs in Nigeria.
- iii. investigate the prospects of PSCs in Nigeria.

4.0 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical foundation of this study was derived from the theory of the State and Dennis P. Rosenbaum Partnership Theory of Crime Prevention (Rosenbaum, 2003). In the classical conception of the theory of State, the legitimate use of force is one of the fundamentals of the State. In the Weberian definition, the State is regarded as the community of human beings that claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of force within a given territory. Max Weber viewed the State as that entity with the monopoly over legitimate use of force implying that security is the defining feature of the State and its provision at the heart of the State (Mbadlanyana, 2011). In the Hobbesian tradition, the State represents the collective will of the people who give up their natural inclination to self-defense in exchange for protection from the State. In the Hegelian analysis, the State represents the culmination of God's will for humanity to purposely secure the life of man. Contemporarily, theorists of the State seldom depart from these classical perspectives, in which the State derives its essence from securing its people. To achieve this all important feat, the State creates institution and structures (Olaniyan, 2011).

According to Singer (2005), the general trend of globalization towards privatization and outsourcing of government functions has resulted in the privatization of security by government in order to further complement the government effort in the protection of life and properties of the citizens both private and public. Privatization of security to him has become a global reality (Singer, 2005). Berndtson (2009) argued that "the fact that state control of security is changing does not always imply deterioration, rather what is observable is that the privatization of security has under certain circumstances led to increased flexibility and functionality for the state such as United States and the United Kingdom". The transfer of ownership and responsibility for service delivery from the public to the private is a relatively new development in the history of Nigeria.

Privatization is a Western construct, closely linked to the 1980's shift in the economics of the developed World (Mbadlanyana, 2011:44). It implies formal and institutionalized arrangement between the state and private actors, in this case security companies. These companies are in effect, service providers on behalf of the state and intermediaries for the state. The beneficiaries are the citizens of the State, private and public corporations, multinational companies, financial institutions i.e. banks, non-governmental organizations (NGO's) offices, state embassies and other private individuals who can afford their services. The reality of the above theory of state makes room for the adoption of Dennis P. Rosenbaum Partnership theory of Crime Prevention (Rosenbaum, 2003), in complementing government effort to safeguard its citizen life and property. The theory noted that government (the criminal justice system) cannot, by itself; solve the complex problems of crime and disorder in our society, that resources from outside the system are desperately needed, as well as new ways of thinking about diverse problems from the inside. To achieve this, the theory advocates for the creation of 'partnerships' and delegation of authority to a group of organizations (i.e. Private Security Companies) that can bring distinctive but complementary skills, efforts and resources to the table and can produce coordinated and targeted responses to public safety and security problems (Rosenbaum, 2003)

5.0 Proliferation of Private Security Companies in Nigeria

Private security companies are registered civilian companies that specialize in providing contract security services and protection of personnel and property, including humanitarian and industrial assets (Holmqvist, 2006). Implying that, these companies offer defensive services intended mainly to protect individuals and property to domestic and foreign clients. These companies are in effect service provider on behalf of the state and intermediaries for the state. A variety of both demand- and supply-side factors have been associated with the rise of the current corporate security sphere, although three factors are most often cited: (*a*) the dominance of post-cold war free market models of the state, propelling a strong trend towards the outsourcing of traditional government functions; (*b*) the global downsizing of national militaries, providing a vast pool of trained former military personnel for recruitment by private companies; and (*c*) the gradual disengagement of the major powers from many parts of the developing World (Spearin, 2001). However, according to Richard and (Smith, 2007), there are some factors that can, at least partially explain the trend. These are;

- i. Growth in and fear of crime, which drives individuals and organizations to enhance their security in order to protect themselves more effectively.
- ii. The inability of the public police to provide the services that people and organizations demand
- iii. Privatization programme that expand private-sector involvement
- iv. The growth of mass private property, such as shopping malls, football stadiums, etc.
- v. The growing risk of terrorism, which means that greater protection, is required at places at risk from such attacks.

For example, the largest private security company employs over 620,000 staff in over 120 countries and had a turnover of around \$12 billion in 2011(www.g4s.com, facts and figures). Worldwide, the Private Security Industry was estimated to be worth \$165 billion in 2009, and is likely to be worth \$244 billion by 2016, with annual growth in the region of 7 per cent. The fastest growing markets are likely to be in developing countries (Abrahamson and Williams, 2009). The growth in size of Private Security Companies has been matched in many States by an expansion of its role. Indeed, many of the functions traditionally assumed by the public police are now undertaken by civilian private security companies, such as patrolling of public areas, investigation of crimes, the exercise of powers such as search and arrest and the provision of armed guard services, to name a few (Abrahamson and Williams, 2009).

6.0 The Essential Roles and Responsibilities of Private Security Guards

According to Bababusuyi, (2016), in her opinion on Damog Guards, drawing from her 19 years security industry experience, identified the six core functions of private security guards in ensuring the protection of lives and properties in Nigeria. She argued that Security guards are crime, threat and risk prevention officers assigned to protect specific people and property. So fundamentally, the job duties and responsibilities of a security guard are not the same as a peace officer or police officer. Instead, security guards are in the prevention business. It is the job of a security guard to act as a deterrent to crime, to watch for impending danger and to report crimes they may encounter. Security guards are paid to only protect specific people and property while the Police (peace officers) are paid to protect all people state (citizens of a State) and all property and enforce laws and order (Bababusuyi, 2016). The basic essential function, roles and responsibilities of trained private security guards in Nigeria according to Bababusuyi, 2016 is as follows:

1. **Prevention:** A Private security guard's role is to "PROTECT" people and property of his employer or contracted clients. The major responsibility of a private security guard is prevention "BEFORE" an incident/offense occurs. The absence of incidents or offenses (crimes) is one sign that a security guard is doing a good job.
2. **Visibility:** Private security guards should remain visible as a deterrent to criminals. Thefts, damage and injuries can be thwarted when the perpetrators see a security guard. A security guard should be highly visible. By being seen, the guard may discourage anyone who might be considering theft, damage, or personal injury.
3. **Vigilance:** Private security guards must remain alert to watch for abnormal activity or hear any unusual sounds. A security guard's job is "PREVENTION". To do the job well, the security guard must, be alert, listen and watch. In fact, security guards should be suspicious of any activity that may draw them away from their post. It could be a plan to draw their attention away from their duties.
4. **Observe and Report:** Private security guard's responsibility "DURING" or "AFTER" an incident/offense has occurred is to "OBSERVE" and "REPORT". If an offense occurs, a guard does not charge in. Instead, the security guard should: stay calm, observe and remember events and report to the police/or the security guard's supervisor (follow employer policy).
5. **Getting Help:** During dangerous situations, such as robbery, burglary, or assault with a deadly weapon, the security guard will need help to apprehend the suspect. This involves calling the police immediately. Even the police who are trained to apprehend criminals are encouraged to call for help in dangerous situations.
6. **Team Player:** Private Security guards sometime assume a team player role when he/she is responsible for maintaining certain miscellaneous rules and policies established by the client (company/individual). These could include:
 - Requiring employees to show their badges when entering the property; or
 - Inspecting lunch pails as employees leave the plant; or
 - Monitoring safety standards and reporting hazards; blocked exits, fire safety, slippery floors, etc. A guard's supervisor or the client (company/individual) will give him instructions on carrying out other miscellaneous rules and policies.

7.0 Research Design

The study adopt field survey research method, primary and secondary sources were used for data collection. Primary data was used /collected from key informant interview (KII), and questionnaires. The secondary data on the other hand was drawn on an extensive reading of

academic literature, publications on Private Security Companies (PSCs) locally and globally, daily media, and experiences from members of the industry, the public security bodies and official records from government agencies, within the southwestern Nigeria such as the Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corps, and Nigeria Police Force. The researcher applied both qualitative and quantitative analyses to present the various data gathered.

8.0 Data Presentation and Analysis

The study presents the result and discussion from the field survey. The analysis is based on the One Hundred and fifty Questionnaires representing 100 percent of the quantitative analysis while the qualitative data analysis is based on three Key Informants Interviews carried out on the senior personnel of selected regulating Agencies of PSCs and clients/users in Nigeria. Those interviewed were:

- i. The representative of the State Commandant of NSCDC in southwestern Nigeria,
- ii. The President of Association of Licensed Private Security Practitioners of Nigeria(ALPSPN),
Southwestern Chapter representing PSCs,
- iii. The Nigeria Police representative in the State in southwest.

Therefore, the data from the survey were analyzed together as follows:

Table 1. Age Distribution of Respondents

<i>Age in Years</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
18-20	2	1.3
21-30	57	38.0
31-40	80	53.3
41 and above	11	7.3
Total	150	100.0

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2017

Table 1 Shows that, 80 respondents representing (53.3%) were within the age range 31-40years, 57 respondents representing 38% were aged 21-30years, 2(1.3%) were aged 18-20years while 11 respondents representing (7.3%) were 41years and above.

Table 2. Distribution of Respondents by Academic Qualification.

<i>Educational Qualification</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
SSCE	41	27.3
Diploma/NCE/HND	68	45.3
Graduate and above	41	27.3
Total	150	100.0

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2016

The result in the above table 2 reveals that the bulk of the sample; 68(45.3%) were holders of Diploma/NCE/HND certificates, 41 Respondents representing 27.3% has School Certificate while 41(27.3%) were Graduate and above.

Table 3: Do you think we need Private Security Companies in Nigeria?

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Yes	149	99.3
No	1	0.7
Total	150	100.0

Source: Researcher’s Field Survey, 2017

Table 3. reveals that 149 respondents representing 99.3% of the total sample indicated the need for private security companies in Nigeria while 1 respondent representing (0.7%) disagreed. From the qualitative data, all the key informants affirmed that The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as provided in section 14 (1) (b) that “the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government”. According to the constitution, “the Government is responsible for security of life and properties of her citizens but it was stressed that government alone cannot effectively provide security hence individuals; groups and private sector are responsible too”. In their opinion, “security is everybody’s business”. The interviewees agreed unanimously that Government alone cannot provide effective security for her citizens as affirmed in Dasuki (2013) “No government has the wherewithal to supply one hundred percent security for her people, and no matter how endowed and organized a country is, it can hardly be devoid of security challenges”.

Table 4: Why do you think Private Security Companies are established in Nigeria?

<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
To make money	6	4.0
To provide security	110	73.3
To Provide employment	32	21.3
Others	2	1.3
Total	150	100.0

Source: Researcher’s Field Survey, 2017

The result in Table 4 clearly shows that Provision of Security; 110 respondents representing (73.3%) was the most important reason for the establishment of Private Security Companies, closely followed by provision of employment; 32 respondents representing (21.3%), income generation; 6 respondents representing (4%) and others; 2 respondents representing (1.3%). From the qualitative data, the key informants were of diverse opinion on the reasons for Private incursion into security sector but all agreed to the fact that it was for security of life and property of the citizens and that it has help the authority to reduce crime rate in Nigeria.

Table 5: What are the challenges facing PSCs in Nigeria

Items	Yes		No	
	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
Are PSCs licensed and regulated in Nigeria?	142	94.7	8	5.3
Do PSCs carry arms and ammunition	6	4.0	144	96
Wear uniform	148	98.7	2	1.3
Carry visible Identity Card (I.D).	150	100	-	-
Carry Baton or Metal Detector	150	100	-	-
Do PSCs guards undergo training when they are employed?	147	98.0	3	2.0
Do PSCs guard well remunerated in Nigeria.	39	26.0	111	74.0
Are they well equipped?	36	24.0	114	76.0

Source: Researcher’s Field Survey, 2017

Table 5. The result reveals that 142 respondents representing (94.7%) of the total sample reported that Private Security Companies in Nigeria were licensed and regulated while 8 respondents representing (5.3%) disagreed. It was further revealed that majority of the PSCs, 96% are not armed while 98.7 wears uniform. Notwithstanding, all the respondents 150, agreed that PSCs guard go about with Identity Card and Baton or Metal detector when on duty. About 98% of the PSCs in the State undergo training when they are employed. While majority of the respondents 111 representing 74% affirmed that PSCs guards are not well remunerated while 39(26%) of the representative sample agreed that PSCs guard are well remunerated in Nigeria. The Table equally showed that 36 respondents representing 24% of the total sample agreed that Private Security Companies guards are well equipped and motivated while 114 respondents representing (76%) disagreed. As part of the challenges of PSCs in Nigeria, from the qualitative data, the entire interviewees posited and identify the following as the major constraints of PSCs.

- (i) The section 17 of PGC Act which prohibits guards from possessing firearms and ammunition.
- (ii) Poor training and retraining of guards.
- (iii) Poor Staff salary/wages.
- (iv) Poor state of materials and equipment made available for effective service delivery such as batons, lack of stationeries, etc.

Table 6: Do you think PSCs are capable of protecting public/private life and properties?

Items	Yes		No	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Do you think PSCs are capable of protecting Public/Private life and properties?	124	82.7	26	17.3
Do you feel more secured with PSCs services?	120	80.0	30	20.0
Do you think that the presence of these Private Security Companies has reduced criminal activities in Nigeria	135	90	15	10
Do you think PSCs have potentials in Nigeria?	147	98.0	3	2.0

Source: Researcher’s Field Survey, 2017

Table 6 reveals that 124 respondents representing 82.7% of the total sample agreed that PSC’s are capable of protecting public/private life and properties while 26 (17.3%) disagreed. item two on the table also showed that 120 respondents representing 80% of the samples felt secured with the services of Private Security Companies while (20%) disagree with that assertion. Also out of the total sample of 150 respondents, 90% is of the opinion that the presence of PSCs in Nigeria has actually reduced criminal activities in the state while 10% disagreed order wise. This justified their assertion in Dambazau (2006), that the presence of private security guard is effective to extent that it is capable of retarding criminal activities. Moreover, considering the fourth item only 2% of the 150 respondents believed that PSCs have no potential while the remaining 98% affirmed that PSCs indeed have potential in Nigeria. From the qualitative data, the interviewees affirmed that the service of PSCs in Nigeria is satisfactory and that they are effective in discharging their duties. Though there are challenges but in all they are viable tools for crime prevention and safety in the Nigeria. And as for their potential, PSCs has come to stay and their roles and services cannot be overemphasized as they assist government in securing life and properties. It was unanimously affirmed by all respondents, that the services rendered by PSCs in protecting life and properties in Nigeria has reduce crime, theft, burglary, trespasses and robbery.

9.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

The Private Security Sector/ Industry in Nigeria is an important sector, which contribute to the maintenance of law and order, and protection of life and properties of both Private and public clients. The operation and services of PSCs complement government effort in provision of security to her citizen though PSCs are responsible to their various clients. They contribute to economic growth and development as an employer of labour in Nigeria. The important role and functions of PSCs in the State cannot be over emphasized, hence the study investigate the proliferation of PSCs in Nigeria. The increase in crime rate and the need for the protection of citizens' life and properties and ineffective nature of security provision by the government inform the establishment of PSCs in Nigeria through night watch, guards, vigilante and eventually the Private Security Companies.

The study shows that the scope and functions of PSCs in Nigeria are: crime prevention, control and safety, maintenance of law and order, safeguard public and private properties. Above all, PSCs complement public security forces effort in provision of security, according to the needs of the clients. Basically the main challenges of the PSCs in the Nigeria are: lack of regulated duration of duties, poor remuneration and condition of service, PSCs are not well motivated and adequately supervised.

Findings from the study shows that there is a positive relationship between the growth of PSCs and reduction of crime in Nigeria; also PSCs beneficiaries/clients/users feel more secured and satisfied with the operation and services rendered in the State, and that a good and improved condition of service for guards is likely to make them more motivated and effective on the job. The need for protection and security of life and property amidst various security challenges and the clear inability of the State and its Public security forces to effectively arrest the situation is likely to give PSCs more roles, functions and potentials in the Nigeria.

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