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The link between the police and the private security guards toward enhancing community policing in Uasin-Gishu County, Kenya: A Criminological Perspective

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ABSTRACT

The rise of insecurity in the urban area, more so in rural areas has seen the gap created by the Kenya's police service in dealing with the increasing levels of insecurity. The inclusion of the private security agencies has seen this gap filled. However, the gaps created between the two agencies include; the lack of intelligence and information sharing, mistrust and misinformation, lack of resources and structures that affect community policing efforts. This paper recommends proper formulation of mechanisms and structures to counter crime.

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Introduction

The rise of insecurity in the urban area, more so in rural areas has seen the gap created by the Kenya's police service in dealing with the increasing levels of insecurity. Furthermore, a study by Nyaura and Ngugi (2014) indicates that the private security guards have filled in the gap where the police have failed. In addition, studies have indicated that effective and efficient partnership helps police and community supervision agencies intervene to interrupt criminogenic behaviors (Giacomazzi and Smithey, 2001; Stenning, 2000). Moreover, if issues of insecurity are not dealt with by both stakeholders (including the community members) and each stakeholder is left in isolation, may lead to serious criminal activity if left unchecked.

The police and private security have strengths and weaknesses that must be considered to form realistic expectations of what each can bring to partnerships. Private security is often criticized for absent or inadequate pre-employment screening, training, standards, certification, and regulation, and high turnover rates (Cunningham, 2003). However, recent study findings indicate that private security has made gains and thus have significant strengths. The increase in number of private security officers makes it a vital force in improving security in residential areas. It has the potential to protect small geographic areas with large numbers of officers or guards, that sometimes the police services cannot afford (BJA, 2005).

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protect small geographic areas with large numbers of officers or guards, that sometimes the police services cannot afford (BJA, 2005). The largest employer in the recent times has been the private security sector (Gill and Hart, 1999). The last 30 years has witnessed the emergence of private security especially in Europe and America, (Johnston, 1999) assisted by the fast growth and expansion of private and commercial properties with adjoining spaces.

The maintenance of security and good order in the community has been traditionally undertaken by 'police', although in the recent times an increasing trend towards the use of privately funded bodies, commonly referred to as 'private security' has been adopted due to increased demand for private security (Nalla and Newman, 1990). Accordingly, the world has gotten smaller due to globalization and civilisation, thus individual and collective security needs are bound to change resulting in changes in the security market thereby changing the way policing are usually undertaken by both the private security and public police, (Wakefield, 2006). Therefore, police and the private security sector must work together to cultivate more effective systems of information sharing (International Association of Chiefs of Police, 2004).

However, there are prevailing barriers to information sharing between law enforcement agencies and private security clearly exist. Starting with private security limitations, law enforcement staff should bear in mind the for-profit nature of businesses. Specifically, because the private sector is in the business of making money, companies often do not want to release, give away, or otherwise share privileged business information that could ultimately hurt profitability. For example, if company representatives speak candidly at a public meeting, business competitors could exploit this information, as it may become publicly available through. Law enforcement agencies, by the same token, have their own difficulties. This entails the fact that they may be reluctant to share information with companies owned by foreign enterprises and may also not be able to do so legally. When it comes to sharing information,

however, the two greatest barriers are a lack of trust and misinformation (BJA, 2005).

Moreover, researchers and practitioners cite several conditions crucial for partnership success including shared ownership and equal responsibility for decision making; carefully determined organizational structures; education or training about domestic violence; clearly defined roles and responsibilities; and mechanisms for effective information sharing (Giacomazzi and Smithey, 2001). Three major partnership models entail coalitions, coordinated community responses, and response partnerships between the police and the private security organizations. The essential aim of the partnership is so safeguard the community members.

Therefore, there is need for the community to reduce crime. Following from this there is the motivation for police to become involved with the private security industry. It would be similar to the police forming partnerships with Neighbourhood Watch Groups. Partnership arrangements with the private security industry would demonstrate a commonality of purpose to reduce crime by organizing groups to liaise with one another and provide assistance to the community by attempting to reduce crime (BJA, 2005; Giacomazzi and Smithey, 2001).

Further, Gill and Hart (1999) found that workplace crimes were not high in police priorities and often the police would unofficially advise complainants to seek the services of private investigators. Stenning (2000) describes this situation as inequality in treatment between the private police and public police, particularly due to the perceived reluctance. Therefore, this paper is aimed at understanding the link between the private security agencies and the Kenya police.

Statement of the Problem

Recently, there have been a lot of insecurity cases in the parts of the country, from various parts of the country and thus the rise of insecurity has put question on whether there is government commitment to safeguard the interests its citizens. According to the recent media reports no doubts have raised an alarm as to whether everyone is at risk due to the increasing levels of insecurity. For instance the residents are exposed to different forms and levels of victimization. Furthermore, residents from slum areas experience much higher rates of insecurity and crime than middle to high-income areas of the city. Thus areas such as Langas have the highest level of crime victimization.

Community policing is aimed at ensuring the security measures are taken into account by all the stakeholders. In addition, it promotes problem-solving techniques, to proactively address the immediate conditions that give rise to public safety issues such as crime, social disorder, and fear of crime. However, the increasing levels of insecurity have undermined the effort of the private security guards in undertaking the principles of community policing. The questions therefore being asked here include: Is there a link between the police and the private security guards? Are there efforts to establish this link? And what are the challenges encountered between the Kenya police service and the private security agencies in Uasin-Gishu County.

Objective of the study

To examine the link and challenges faced within the established link between the Kenya police and the various private security guards in Uasin-Gishu County, Kenya.

Significance of the Study

Community policing is crucial towards safeguarding the community members by reducing insecurity. The collaborative efforts between the police and the private security guards can be

seen to benefit the overall public. However, utmost benefits can be obtained only if this link is strengthened so as to achieve the overall objective of securing community members and safeguarding businesses. The study will be beneficial to the Kenya police in that it will make them realize that community policing efforts entails joint efforts that promote security in the country. The government will also benefit from the study findings and recommendations by formulating policies that reflect on the already Nyumba Kumi policy that complements the existing community policing efforts by the Kenya police. Scholars and researchers will also benefit from the study as it will inform them on the role of community policing towards sustained growth be it socially, economically and politically thus, acting as a point of reference to other studies.

Study Framework

The study used the Problem Analysis Triangle by Clarke and Eck (2005), which illustrates how offender, place, and target/victim interact to result in crime. The relationships of the inner elements of the Problem Analysis Triangle to potential crimes are moderated by the "controllers" in the outer layer of the triangle (handler, manager, and guardian). Police are among the key guardians, and probation and parole are important managers and handlers of potential offenders. Ideally, partnership allows each to play those roles more effectively (Cullen *et al.*, 2002).



Figure 1: Problem Analysis Triangle by Clarke and Eck (2005)

The Problem Analysis Triangle aims to make all stakeholders proactive by ensuring that community policing is targeted towards problem solving. Furthermore, the overall theme is to enable the police, community members and the private security agencies working together thus contributing to a more effective and efficient way of controlling crime thus prevention activities.

Methods and Material used (Methodology)

Area of the study

The study was conducted in Uasin-Gishu County in January 2014. Uasin Gishu County is in the North Rift Region of Rift Valley province. The County share common borders with Trans Nzoia County to the North, Elgeyo-Marakwet County to the East, Baringo County to the South East, Kericho County to the South, Nandi County to the South West and Kakamega County to the North West the County has a total area of 3,327.8km²

Study Design

The study was qualitative in nature where exploratory design was used to obtain an in-depth understanding the link between the police and the private security guards. The study was conducted in the various areas including West Indies, Eldoret Town area, parts of Langas (Kisumu Ndogo), Roady area and Seniors area which constitute the areas in the county. The rise of insecurity in the county which is fast growing very fast and therefore security of people and properties is

paramount. The town area also has an increasingly large number of private security firms which offer security services to the environs thereby complementing the roles performed by the police.

Sample selection procedure

The paper used private security guards who had the experience of five years and more commonly referred to as 'watchmen'. Purposive sampling was used to select those guards from the various security companies. A total of 80 interviewees were selected as adopted from the formulae by Krejcie and Daryle (1970). **Table 1** shows how the sample was obtained.

$$s = \frac{X^2 NP(1-P) + d^2(N-1) + X^2 P(1-P)}{X^2 NP(1-P) + d^2(N-1) + X^2 P(1-P)}$$

s = required sample size.

X^2 = the table value of chi-square for 1 degree of freedom at the desired confidence level (3.841).

N = the population size.

P = the population proportion (assumed to be .50 since this would provide the maximum sample size).

d = the degree of accuracy expressed as a proportion (.05).

Table 1: Krejcie & Daryle (1970) Table for determining Sample Size from a given population

N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S
10	10	100	80	280	162	800	260	2800	338
15	14	110	86	290	165	850	265	3000	341
20	19	120	92	300	169	900	269	3500	246
25	24	130	97	320	175	950	274	4000	351
30	28	140	103	340	181	1000	278	4500	351
35	32	150	108	360	186	1100	285	5000	357
40	36	160	113	380	181	1200	291	6000	361
45	40	180	118	400	196	1300	297	7000	364
50	44	190	123	420	201	1400	302	8000	367
55	48	200	127	440	205	1500	306	9000	368
60	52	210	132	460	210	1600	310	10000	373
65	56	220	136	480	214	1700	313	15000	375
70	59	230	140	500	217	1800	317	20000	377
75	63	240	144	550	225	1900	320	30000	379
80	66	250	148	600	234	2000	322	40000	380
85	70	260	152	650	242	2200	327	50000	381
90	73	270	155	700	248	2400	331	75000	382
95	76	270	159	750	256	2600	335	100000	384

Qualitative data analysis was adopted where the information gathered was selectively coded put into categories according to the theme and objective of the study. Direct quotations were also used in the process of interpreting the findings.

Data collection materials

The nature of this study allowed for the use of qualitative methods for data collection. Moreover, the qualitative research methods allow the researcher to go into the depth of the participant's experience, social processes and discourses (Mason, 2002). The study used interview schedule/guides to gather information from the interviewees. Interviews were used in the study conversational interview is a two way process where the interviewer interacts with the interviewee in a conversation. In this interaction, the interviewee shares his/her life experiences thus informing the study more on the encounters and challenges faced.

Furthermore, the paper used focused group discussions in some cases where the security agents were in groups of five (5). In order to make the discussions more meaningful the researcher used probes. These were meant to seek further clarification on the respondent's responses regarding what they felt about the police and their efforts towards community policing.

Findings and Discussions

Level of cooperation with the police agencies

In relation to the level of cooperation between the police and the security agencies, the study established that the police were not effectively cooperating with the private security guards. It was noted the police were neglecting the security guards and saw them as their junior peers. It should be noted that the introduction of new technologies, which gives numerous opportunities for social control and which are most likely to be initiated in private rather than in state sectors have changed priorities of the police in securing semi-public spaces such as parking areas, safeguarding shopping malls, public events and gatherings, including protecting commercial installations. This has increased prosperity of the private guards.

The paper also established that the police in most cases discriminate the private security guards because of the level of training and knowledge regarding security. They are seen to be inferior and lack the capabilities in crime fighting. In an interview with one of the security guards guarding a commercial building in Eldoret town area said the following:

"...Hawa maaskari wa polisi hutuona sisi kama watu ambao hatutawasaidia. Hao hukataa kutaa kutuhusisha kwa mambo ya usalama. Hao hutudharau sana na kila wanapotuona hua wana sema kazi yetu ni ya kulinda parking ili tupate shilling kumi..." that the police officers see us (private security guards) as people who cannot help them. They do not engage us in instances where issues are security related. They look down upon us and that every time they see us they tell us that our job is to safeguard parking lots in order to get ten shillings.

The interview above reveals how the police perceive the security guards despite them agents of community policing

Level of information sharing thus trust

The paper established that one obstacle to creating effective partnerships may be a lack of trust between the police and private security. Despite considerable discussion about partnerships between the two groups, overlapping missions, the need to work together and the level of trust is reported to be quite low. The two sectors often view each other as having separate goals and have even viewed each other as competitors. For instance, in an interview with one of the watchmen it was established that there was lack of trust between them and the police.

"... the police seem to think that we want to show off our might... they think that we are in competition... when there is a problem regarding security in the area they tend to make information as confidential as possible yet we know what took place..." ; said one of the security guards in a reputable company in Kenya.

If trust does exist, it is often based on the former working relationship of the top brass of the police seeking to establish former partnerships with the private security agencies. In many cases, some of the senior security agents have worked together in the past because many security managers and directors may have served in the police service prior to joining private industry.

Level of resources and machinery used

The study also established that in most cases the police had perceived the security guards as not having superior weapons towards fighting crime. A Study by Nyaura and Ngugi (2014) found that the private guards had inferior weapons as compared to their attackers therefore exposing themselves to danger. As a result the guards need the police to complement them in their efforts to counter crime. The established lack of resources

clearly impedes the efforts by the private security agencies in fighting crime. Therefore there is need for technological advancement to counter criminal activities. During a focused group discussion it was revealed that the private security agencies required the commitment of the police in protecting them and at the same time combining their efforts towards safeguarding the interests of the general public.

Misinformation and Misunderstanding

The paper further established that the lack of trust was a major cause of misinformation and misunderstanding. Often, neither police nor the private security has an accurate understanding of what the other does or can do. This can be problematic with regard to crime and disorder, but in the area of homeland security and terrorism it can be perilous and critical. Even smaller time criminal acts can cause considerable physical, psychological, and economic damage. For instance, in an interview with one of the private security guards indicated that:

"... I do not understand the functions of the police because no one has told me what to do... my role is just to guard my boss's house.... I do not even have a hotline number to contact the police when there are cases of criminal activities in the area..."

The interview is further supported by other responses from the focused group discussions that further point out that the police have not even opted to share the hotline numbers in the study area thus when criminal activities take place the chances for timely response are minimal, thus this is an opportunity for the criminals to take an advantage of the current gap.

Inadequacy of structures

The paper also established that there is a gap created due to lack of structures that link the police with the private security guards. Structures are important in ensuring the flow of command addresses both stakeholders in fighting crime. Clearly articulated structures indicate who is supposed to do what under what circumstances, thus creating adequate response time when criminal activities take place. This paper acknowledges that the Westgate terrorist activities in Nairobi took place as a result of lack of clear structures by the police and other security agencies. For instance one of the senior security guards indicated that:

"...our aim is not making profits....our aim is to protect the public...we require a clear structure that clearly indicates where we are suppose to do when there is crime.... there is need for us to be integrated in the police structures with regard to crime..."(Male respondent: Security guard).

"...In most cases when the police conduct patrols we are not part and parcel of what they do... we have our patrol car here idle waiting for nothing... they should engage us in some of these patrols..."(Male respondent).

Level of intelligence gathering

The paper also established that other than information sharing, there is lack of intelligence sharing between the police and the private security guards. This is due to the fact that the level of trust is still lacking as established earlier. The police seem to know that crime persists in a particular area, while the private security guards know who the criminal are since it is they that are on the ground. In recent times the private security guards have been linked to collaborate with the same criminals who in turn propagating the criminal acts. In an interview with the security guards they revealed that:

"...we know that in the recent times there are those that have tarnished our name.... for instance those who stole money on transit... it is not all of us...although all this has happened we need to establish this trust.... We are still

relevant in security matters..." (A senior security guard: Male respondent).

"... We are the one who know these thieves and we are the ones who can help the police to arrest these criminals..." (Female guard: Female respondent).

More so, the police need to provide platforms for sharing information and intelligence since the security guards are the ones who are most likely to be on the ground.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Intelligence and Information Sharing

The study concludes that there is lack of intelligence and information sharing between the police and the private security guards yet one complements the other and vice versa. The paper recommends regular communication and information exchange are both fundamental for any partnership. Furthermore, there is need for routine information exchanged as a regular procedure, often automatically, through data system interaction or integration. For instance, routine information includes criminal histories for criminal suspects, including information regarding expected levels of criminal activities.

The paper further recommended for proper intelligence includes timely, on-the-ground information on suspects and criminal activity, such as a specific area becoming a hot spot for criminal activities or areas that are more likely to become crime active. Information exchange for intelligence purposes is more dependent on informal and interpersonal mechanisms.

Conducting regular patrols together

The paper concludes that the police when conducting regular patrols do not often include the private security guards. The paper therefore acknowledges that police officers have a number of skills from which the private security guards can benefit from. This relate to other study findings which indicate that developed patrol strategies can be useful for improving surveillance and monitoring supervisees (Parent and Snyder, 1999). Patrolling, particularly when conducted in smaller, neighborhood-based areas, results in contact between the police and the private security guards, therefore important to also the members of their social networks in the area (La Vigne *et al.*, 2006).

Reinforced partnership between the police and the private security guards

The paper concludes that there are no established partnerships, therefore one does not know about the other. Being involved in reentry partnerships improve relations between police, supervision agencies, and the community groups involved in these partnerships, thus enhancing the visibility and perceived legitimacy of both agencies in the community (McGarrell *et al.*, 2004). Furthermore, established partnerships require defined roles and responsibilities also involve choosing the appropriate staff to participate in police/supervision partnerships. Patrol officers can work with the security guards to identify behavior among community members that could lead them to commit crimes, and with this knowledge the partnership can intervene before any criminal activities take place. Various authors have indicated that in doing so, the police can prevent crime and other violations from occurring (Murphy and Lutze, 2009). They may also be able to contribute valuable information about criminal behavior based on their experience with working in the community (La Vigne *et al.*, 2006; COPS Office, 2009).

Reduced friction towards community policing efforts

Friction can occur in a partnership, either because of lack of mutual understanding or differences in orientation. Police and private security guards may be faced with conflicting agency goals. Therefore, the need for established structures can

propagate mutual understanding between the police and private security agents

Proper planning

The paper also established that there is lack of proper planning between the police and the private security guards. This further impedes the efforts aimed at ensuring the community policing is targeted at ensuring that community members are safe. Therefore, proper planning is crucial to the success of partnerships between police and community supervision agencies (Cushman, 2002). Without laying out a specific strategy and set of goals for the partnership, the agencies can succumb to a number of challenges and ultimately create a partnership that does not improve public safety.

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