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Challenges Facing the Provision of Security Services by Private Security Firms; A Study of Juja Town, Kiambu County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Security is fundamental in all societies. It ensures that society thrives due to the assurance of the safety of lives and property. It is through security that people can invest in the community and develop the area. It is also worth noting that safety and security lie at the heart of the prosperity of any nation. Every citizen wants to feel secure and protected from any injury or risk. However, today security is faced with challenges in diverse aspects of people's daily lives, and trust lies in the institutions mandated to keep people safe. In this new reality, governments are overstretched by providing security to the details of their citizen's endeavours. That is why private securities are contracted to provide the needed security to fill the gaps. It is essential to underscore private security's role in society further. The analysis directs us to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, a theory that Abraham Maslow advanced in 1943. The theory opines that as people meet their basic needs, they tend to have an insatiable desire to ensure their satisfaction with higher needs concerning the hierarchy, as proposed by Maslow. Security is increasingly becoming a priority to many as time goes on. Private security has become popular today due to its flexibility and ability to cater to personalized demands. However, the sector faces many challenges, including mistrust from national law enforcement. The research considers the town of Juja in Kiambu County, Kenya, to highlight the challenges faced by private security apparatus in Kenya. The challenges discovered range from sectorial to societal. Proper reforms would be needed to improve the efficiency of private security in Kenya. Despite the challenges, years of operation have witnessed growth in the sector.

INTRODUCTION

Security is better defined as a predictable habitation whereby one or a group of people may achieve their dreams without fear of disruption or injury. From the perspective described above, security can be associated with the sense of being free from fear of deliberate activity that would disrupt people from achieving their goals. According to George and Kimber (2014), it is rather challenging to define the concept of private security based on variations in the definition of security where the notion of private security opines from. However, there have been several attempts by scholars to define the concept of private security. According to Mauti (2021), private security is the security provided by entities other than the government that is directed toward fighting crime. Kenya enjoys a rich history of private security, with the first private security companies being in existence since the early 60s. It, therefore, means that private security firms' operations are not new in Kenya. However, due to little or no industry catering to the private security market, it can well be claimed that the exact number of private firms operating in Kenya cannot be stated. The private security sector is often characterized by unprofessionalism and suspicion. The situation is further exacerbated by the lack of a clear framework that distinguishes private security roles from the police. This research investigates the challenges that private security firms face in Juja Kiambu County

and how the challenges affect the quality of service provided by the private security apparatus. The study claims that private security firms depend on quality training, adequate facilities, information communication technology, and proper relations between stakeholders and police to deliver quality and effective services for protecting property and people.

How Employee Training Hampers the Security Service Provision by Private Security Firms

The training of private security firms is at the centre of their performance. It is through training that the employees get the necessary skills to handle the tasks that befell them. Proper training plays a significant role in improving the credentials of officers and further gives the needed credibility to the individuals as professionals. The training assists employees in performing at a level in alignment with the objectives and goals of the organization and its operations regarding security. It is also worth noting that training incorporates aspects like morality and ethics, determination, leadership, behaviour and attitude (Stefaniuk, 2020). Only through training would the quality of service provided by the employees in the organization would be improved. The training of employees in the private security business takes place periodically to ensure that the employees do not forget the qualities needed. Further, it also takes place

periodically to better inform the employees of the new developments in the industry concerning security.

Among the significant reasons why training is needed in private security is that it reduces liability. It is rather apparent that security personnel that are better trained would prevent or minimize liability profiles in some settlements or lawsuits. Specialized training and proactive can save a company a considerable amount of funds. Further, personnel that is better trained has the potential to reduce the costs that would be associated with low morale, poor performance, and high turnover. A specialized industry-wide credential or training proves to be beneficial to the security officer as well as the employer. The main reason for training is to refresh or increase the officer's knowledge of industry trends, concepts, and technology. A well-trained security professional is much more effective and active than any other security personnel regarding productivity. The employees are trained to take the right actions and measures in case of any security breach and ensure they get the best services. The trained guards would identify risks, tackle violations in security, and manage evolving threats in the best manner. Through research, it has been proven that highly trained guards are more productive and thus also increase profitability for their clients. The job of a security guard demands exceptional leadership and apparent communication abilities. The employees are expected to act on the spot and make the right decisions, even in stressful conditions. Through the proper training, the person develops the right abilities and communication skills that assist in making strategic decisions during emergencies and further ensure that their client's safety is guaranteed under all circumstances.

Every incidence or breach in security is different and demands actions that differ from the security personnel. Only through proper training would the security guards be able to be at the top of a situation. The guards must be well-trained and have the best responses when facing each situation. Further, the guards must be aware that all security standards are maintained under different circumstances. Through proper training, the employees of a private company imbibe the correct manners, behaviour, and etiquette that maintain professional interactions with the public. Effective grooming allows seamless interaction between the public and guards. The best part about practical training is that it instils great confidence in the guards. Several personnel can be new to the job and have no idea about dealing with particular situations (Stefaniuk, 2020). It is then advisable to make the guards undergo professional training. The training instils enormous confidence in the guards and helps them handle what they may face. An excellent private security company understands the needs of the client. Therefore, the training that the guards would undergo would be aimed at handling the specific needs that suit the client's needs. Security needs cannot be compromised due to their sensitive nature. Hence the critical role that training takes in the employees.

The above discussion shows the need for training among security personnel. The lack of training or inadequate training is therefore bound to affect the quality of service by the guards. Lack of training would not only hamper the security provision of the guards but will also affect the relations that the guards would have with the people they interact with. By the virtue that most guards are among the first people an individual would find in a building or a residential, their responses may affect how individuals would consider the corporations. In Kenya, most companies provide adequate training for their guard force; however, some private security companies place guards with little or no knowledge of introductory security provisions. At the same time, others provide extensive courses. The unevenness of the training raises concerns about the integrity and quality of security staff. Some further allege that some guards collude with local criminals (Allan. R, 2004). A majority of companies claim that they undertake recruitment vetting and thus need potential employees for

certification that they have no criminal record (Ochieng, 2022). They freely acknowledge that the reliability of the information has high levels of doubt. The allegations regarding the collusion between guards and criminal gangs called for the need to have checks in the system. The Kenya Security Industry Association (KSIA) requires all its members to subscribe to Staff Check. The Staff Check is a database with information that includes guards previously employed by PSCs or laid off due to misconduct. This contrasts with members of the Protective Security Industry Association (PSIA), who are not required to check employee background checks (Diphoorn, 2019). It is also worth noting that higher authorities have taken the matter upon themselves due to the rise in cases of criminals working with security guards in Kenya to ensure sanity in the sector. A broad partnership is encouraged to be built between security agencies and the government in a bid to end rampant insecurity.

How Facilities Affect the Provision of Security by Private Security Firms

The provision of security requires the use of critical facilities. Identity is among the essential factors to consider while discussing facilities. The provision of uniforms for security officers lowers the risk of criminal activities. The uniform acts as a crime deterrent as the officers would then act as a warning sign to potential thieves and criminals. It, therefore, means that criminals would pick places with minor obstacles to committing the crime. It can be argued that uniforms prevent tactics that would cause opportunistic criminals to think twice. In Kiambu County in Kenya, there are over 10 PSCs, with the most reputable companies being Damil Security, Kenya Securicor, and the G4S (Opanga, 2019). Other minor security groups operate in the county; some minor private security companies and individual security do not wear uniforms or are not keen on their employees' wearing uniforms. It is worth pointing out that civilians interpret someone in a uniform to be more credible and productive compared to an individual not in uniform. Part of a successful security company ensures that the brand image is linked with the professionalism and expertise they represent. Uniforms ensure that the brand image is achieved simply and cost-effectively. In addition, with a company providing maintenance and upkeep of all uniforms, they can maintain the highest level of themselves and the uniforms. Hiring a guard that does not take pride in their equipment or clothing will likely lead to early termination for reasons that align with personality types.

Simple facilities like uniforms are essential in cultivating a sense of pride among the employees. They foster a team mentality and thus boost organizational pride, morale, and productivity. The uniforms assist officers in feeling like integral and appreciated representatives of their security companies (Hoogwout, 2010). The sense of pride in the uniforms also helps the officers feel like they have an essential role in the organization. It, therefore, means that the quality of service by the officers would be improved if they had proper and well-kept uniforms.

Another yet important factor that comes to play in private security is communication. Communication is enabled by critical facilities, for example, radios that help in responding to emergencies. It is through communication that quality service is guaranteed by private security. The firms depend on sufficient situational reports to each other and command centres so that reinforcement can be sent whenever there is an impending risk or continued crime. Portable two-way radios count as critical tools and great allies for security work. Physical training is often not enough to deter criminals from accessing guarded areas as the criminals might plan a surprise attack in numbers that overpower the security officers on the ground. Therefore, the security staff depends on radio communication to raise security alerts. The security team needs to share concerns and identify threats immediately after they become apparent (Ekwenye, Theuri, & Mwenda, 2018).

According to the discussion, the availability of a two-way radio facilitates communication to ensure that the security personnel is not alone. Not having a communication tool would mean that the security officer would face the situation alone. Facing the challenges alone raises the risk of failure as the criminals would have done prior assessments before an offensive. The fact that radios do not depend on other coverage makes them indispensable items for everyone who works in the security business.

Accessibility of the PSCs also affects their general abilities to fulfil their objectives. It is only proper for the PSCs to be available in areas easily accessible to the customer. It should be noted that the research conducted identified the accessibility challenges of the PSC, as some were found in places that were somewhat difficult to reach (Opanga, 2019). The companies should be in places where the public can easily access them. While the main reason for the accessibility would be to easily guarantee a shorter response time, it is also essential to be in public places to create strong bonds with society.

Effects of Information Communication Technology on Security Provision by Private Security Firms

Introducing new technical developments has affected almost every company; sometimes, that effect can be extremely considerable. There is not a single exception to this rule in the security industry. In addition to utilizing new technology, forward-thinking security companies must also train and equip their security guard staff to be able to install, use, monitor, and decipher the burgeoning data generated by the adoption of innovative hardware and software systems for customers who require confirmation and documentation of services (Visnov, 2018).

The expansion and adoption of electronic commerce and electronic business replicas in the private segment and the development of the internet and digital connections are also placing pressure on the hierarchical and bureaucratic organizational paradigms prevalent in the public sectors. In response to this pressure, the public sector is rethinking its organizational paradigms (Kerandi, 2015). Furthermore, the pressure on the bureaucracy to respond promptly can be attributed to increased citizen expectations and gains made by the private sector regarding service delivery. As a result, according to Osborne and Gaebler (1992), the role of the government has been reinterpreted over the past few decades to place more of an emphasis on empowering individuals as opposed to meeting the needs of the public; to shift away from hierarchical structures and toward collaboration and involvement; to be mission-driven and client-oriented, as well as to place more of an emphasis on prevention as opposed to treatment.

Developed and developing countries faced challenges in the 1980s regarding the necessity for bureaucratic reform and rebuilding administrative processes and management systems (Tapscott, 1996). According to Lan Barbour, historically, computers made it possible for headquarters to exercise centralized governance over a company. However, technological advancements, particularly since the 1980s, have led to increased use of laptops and tablets in business. This can lessen the workload of head offices by allowing management to be performed by several tiny workstations, which in turn can reduce the amount of time spent on administrative tasks (Barbour, 1997, p. 169). In this sense, ICT is seen as a resource that may help government agencies and other organizations better serve the public by facilitating the delivery of needed services and information in a way that is both efficient and accessible to ordinary citizens. To put it another way, advancements in ICT promise to enhance the capabilities of public services in terms of efficacy, cost-effectiveness, accessibility, inclusivity, and adaptability.

ICT has been implemented across several different departments of Kenya's government to enhance the

effectiveness and timeliness of service delivery, much as it has been in many other developing countries. In the early 1970s, the nation made its first steps toward the information and communications technology (ICT) field. Ever since numerous initiatives have been made within the public and private sectors to modernize their administration and technology to advance the eminence of the services provided, the offices need to be able to deliver services promptly that can be accessible for a low cost and at a reasonable price to accomplish their tasks effectively. Because of its pre-eminence in mobile banking, financial technology services, value-added services (VAS), broadband connectivity, and general information and communication technology infrastructure, Kenya has emerged as the ICT powerhouse of the East African area. It is projected that the country's information and communications technology sector will contribute up to 7% of its gross domestic product via IT-enabled services (International Trade Administration, 2021). The idea that information and communication technology (ICT) can promote fundamental reforms in the public sector has been gaining traction among academics in recent years. The authors Dunleavy, Margetts, Bastow, and Tinkler (2005) and Osborne (2006) introduced the idea of Digital-Era Governance as a post-NPM regime. They placed a particular emphasis on the technological aspects of New Public Management. The progressive embrace of extensive and needs-oriented frameworks, the digitization of formalities, and the reintegration of operations within the realm of government are the defining characteristics of this post-NPM system.

Hoogwout (2010) presented a new wave of information and communication technology (ICT)-related public reforms as the paradigm of Client-Oriented Government (COG). COG outlines changes made to how Neo-Weberian government agencies provide individual services (as opposed to collective services) to the individuals and enterprises that serve as their customers. Compared to the many different automation projects that have been carried out in the past with the help of ICT, these ICT-related reforms often have a significantly more profound and revolutionary impact. Integrating the front and back offices appears to be one of the defining elements of these reforms.

According to Dunleavy et al., the extensive adoption of the internet, e-mail, and the online, as well as the ubiquity of IT systems, have altered the nature of hitherto administrative-only exchanges between governments and their citizens. By looking at the life cycles of e-government projects, we can observe that the crucial phases of both vertical and horizontal integrations are being implemented (Layne & Lee, 2001). E-government networks, inter-governmental data allotment projects, and network; joined-up ICT innovations are the primary focus of research into the inter-organizational vertical integration associated with these reforms (Dawes, 1996; Wolken & Landsbergen, 1998; Snijkers, 2007; Yang & Maxwell, 2011).

In the past, residents who required a specific service had to find their way through many departments, each of which carried out a distinct but connected function (Bekkers, 2005). When providing public services, a fragmented approach drives up the administrative expenses for private companies and individuals. It lowers the efficiency of many government departments (Yang & Maxwell, 2011). As a consequence of this, governments are exerting efforts to construct reform trajectories, which require taking into consideration the internal as well as the external dynamics of organizations. One of the essential parts of providing public services is ensuring that the various organizations contributing to service delivery are well-coordinated and integrated (Provan & Milward, 2001). Contracting work to organizations with only partial autonomy and private parties is another factor that supports and encourages the expansion of such networks (Baldwin, Irani & Love, 2001).

When multiple tiers of government collaborate to construct networks that supply public services, information is the primary resource that drives this process forward. If government agencies' computer networks are not well-connected, network-based service delivery could quickly fail (Janssen, ibid.). Therefore, inter-organizational data sources are required to either improve the flow of information between various public and private organizations or simplify the business operations carried out across several organizations. This is because networking relies heavily on information and communication technologies (ICT) that were jointly created, and inter-organizational information systems are thus required (Wolken & Landsbergen, ibid).

The complex change trajectories within organizations were the subject of this research. Integrating individual services toward customers and governmental agencies required adopting modern information and communication technologies (ICTs) and other organizational innovations. The pursuit of back-office integration is emblematic of such developments; this integration links the typically decentralized informational streams of several departments or divisions within a single organization. The integration of back offices ultimately results in interactions between customers and businesses that are less clumsy, more productive, and more organized at the front end (Bekkers, 2005; Rhodes, 1998). According to Hoogwout (ibid.), these reforms are a part of a more considerable effort to transform public institutions into client-focused enterprises, of which improvements in ICT are but one component. The transformation of governmental organizations into for-profit businesses is the objective of this project. Client-oriented governance is a brand-new paradigm that, according to Hoogwout, requires all of its representatives to adhere to the same set of rules in order to function well. This concept emphasizes the most fundamental part of the shift in how governments operate.

How Stakeholder Relationships with the Police Affect the Provision of Security by Private Security Firms.

As discussed in this paper, private security does not have superior jurisdiction. They are limited in resources and actions that they can take against a criminal. According to the Private Security Law in Kenya, private security can only arrest an individual within the premises they guard. If an individual is not within the premise, they can only report it to the higher authority, the nation's law enforcers. It, therefore, means that if an individual commits a crime and escapes, private security would not have permission to go after the suspect. Hence, the provision of private security by security firms is heavily dependent on national law enforcement. Research on the security guard and police relations in Kiambu quickly shows some loopholes in the coordination between the two security apparatuses (Nambanga, 2021). There is a lack of adequate education on roles among the police. Despite the regulations set, law enforcement agents were found to be poorly informed regarding the service of private securities. Evidence showed that there was limited knowledge regarding the roles that ought to be taken by private securities. It, therefore, means that from time to time, law enforcers under-appreciate the work that private guards do. Evidence also shows that some law enforcers overstep the roles that private securities would otherwise take up.

Further, the lack of adequate understanding between the police and private security providers also breeds mistrust on the part of the agents of law enforcement. Most police officers have the erroneous assumption that the security guards do not have sufficient education, lack the needed expertise, and have poor training to help them counter criminals (Otte, 2019). As a result, police officers fail to trust guards with profiled cases and information. The lack of trust and overstepping primarily by police officers hinders the efficiency at which private securities dispense security services.

The collaboration between law enforcers and private security officers is needed to provide security fully. It is worth pointing out that security matters can only be tackled through close coordination and cooperation between all agencies, private security included. Some of the threats prevented by private security are far greater than simply protecting private property. In Kiambu, private security guards ensure the security of places of worship, hospitals, and other public buildings (Anicent, 2014). With terrorism worldwide, private guards do more than work simply for their immediate bosses. Security guards also control surveillance cameras that they share with law enforcers should they need them. The collaboration goes far ahead to protect society from harm as potential criminals are taken out of the community (Nambanga, 2021). In some jurisdictions, private security goes beyond its stipulated roles to investigate and respond to terrorism, natural disasters, and violence. Successful partnerships between private securities and law enforcement include active facilitators and leaders that are strong ongoing communication, training, and regular meetings. It is also essential for law enforcement and private security groups to be participating in activities in person before a crisis forces the collaboration to take place.

CONCLUSION

The research establishes several challenges facing the provision of security services by private security firms in Juja town, Kiambu County, Kenya. The study also highlights the critical role of private security firms and why they are necessary even in the future. According to the research findings, Kenya has a long history of private security. While the long history plays a significant role in the autonomy and some level of efficiency witnessed in the private security sector, the research finds that much has to be done to realize the full potential of private security. Among the challenges, as noted in the research, is the need for employee training. The research underscores the critical role that employee training plays in security services and the service industry at large. With guards interacting with people daily, ensuring adequate training to represent their firms and employers is essential. It was found that the training that many guards in Juja received was not sufficient. Private security firms need appropriate training on how to counter criminals and interpersonal skills when interacting with the public. According to the findings and comparison to jurisdictions with better private securities services, it is necessary to factor in the training of private securities and equip the individuals with the best education to deliver the best services. The research found clear evidence that employee training affects service provision by private security firms.

The research also discovered that another challenge facing security guards in Juja town was the lack of adequate facilities. According to the research, private security guards depend on facilities to deliver the needed services efficiently. It was noted that the guards face challenges of inadequate uniforms and facilities like two-way radios. Uniforms not only help in identifying a security guard and linking them to a particular company. The uniforms also lead to discipline and pride in the person wearing them. Radios are equally important as they facilitate communication between guards, which also help in faster response and better execution of services. The private security firms in Juja ought to step up in providing their members with the necessary facilities to carry out their required duties. A law is necessary for private security firms that should compel the firms to provide the facilities as a matter of regulation while starting a security firm. The paper demonstrates that facilities affect the provision of security by private security firms.

However, another challenge discussed in the paper was the availability of information communication technology in providing security by private security firms. It was discovered that the security firms operating in Juja are not well furnished with ICT technology to help them in security. The role that

ICT plays in modern human operations cannot be contested. Security in the modern era depends on ICT facilities to offer extensive coverage. There is a need for firms providing private security to increase their investments in ICT equipment in all sectors to keep better property and people secured. The research also shows that ICT affects security provision by private security. Lastly, the research delved into investigating stakeholder relations with the police and how they affect the provision of security by private security firms. The research discovered that the relationship between the police and private security firms affects the services rendered by guards. The provision of security is general and often cuts across agencies and jurisdictions. Collaboration between the police is necessary for both parties to actualize their mandates. It was found that the relationship between private security in Juja and the police is not as strong. There are challenges of misinformation regarding private securities' education and training. Police officers perceive superiority over all guards, making it challenging to forge better cooperation between the agencies involved. To have better relations, there is a need for frequent meetings between police officers and private security. Community policing needs all stakeholders' input and seamless cooperation for it all to work.

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