Book Review

Corporate security in the 21st century: Theory and practice in international perspective

Kevin Walby and Randy K. Lippert

Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2014, 279 pp., US\$110.00, ISBN 978-1137346063

Security Journal (2017) **30**, 1201–1206. doi:10.1057/sj.2016.10;
published online 9 May 2016

This is a collection of originally crafted chapters. Fully read and digested, it is clear evidence that the advanced literature of security has turned a corner. It is no longer a literature reflecting only American, European, South African, or Australian perspectives, or insights or challenges tied only to security's day-to-day work. Authors and editors contributing to this volume remind this reviewer of a small army of machete-wielding soldiers hacking their way through a thick jungle of mundane security readings in search of a clearing in which they can engage in a cutting-edge dialog about globalization's impact on security and the many new ideas and applications that carry us well beyond regional narrowness or professional specializations. This volume, in fact, finds itself included in a new genre of literature no longer struggling for attention in business, the hard sciences and the social sciences, and one that is beholden only to the blessings of criminal justice scholars. It represents a stage in the evolution of a discipline in much the same way as history gave birth to sociology, as sociology gave birth to criminology, and as criminology's limitations gave birth to criminal justice. But, notwithstanding these accomplishments, this work (and others like it) faces significant challenges as it sets out to recalibrate the thinking of security professionals while it brings along a new generation of research-oriented students.

Corporate Security in the 21st Century: Theory and Practice in International Perspective breaks new ground in theorizing about a branch of the private sector that, so far, has quietly advanced its own professionalism while it has ever-so-carefully wormed its way into the public square. As the editors state, the aim of this collection '... is to explore corporate security from multiple disciplinary angles and in several countries to refine understanding of its distinctiveness' (p. 1). A second purpose is also made clear: to investigate by example how the methodologies of corporate security units have been adopted across the line that separates private from public interests. The corporate security branch of the private sector is a large, well-financed and sophisticated realm of private initiative, driven to engage in entrepreneurial experimentation in order to demonstrate freshness of appeal and internal growth. In the marketplace, its appearance and dealings are generally reclusive and secretive while sustaining its role as an important actor among social control functions mostly in democratic and developed nations. Generally, corporate security functions operate in medium to large companies and consultancies where they are principally focused on

securing property interests, investments, brand identification and integrity, and human and physical resources. Larger interests in social responsibility follow typically (although not always) far behind. In the Western world, many insiders and outsiders to the corporate world have come to believe (rightly or wrongly) that corporations outflank governments in service delivery based on alleged natural efficiencies of the private sector. By deduction, then, corporate security can ride this wave of largely untested assumptions while remaining in the background between the crises or scandals that ultimately force it from the foxhole.

The readings in this book provide windows into this reclusive corporate subculture. They inform the reader about innovations and implemented programs aimed at improving delivery of security services. They provide a wider lens through which we can assess the interactions and organizational contexts of private-to-private and private-to-public relationships. We are cautioned, of course, that the pieces in this collection are likely to apply only in democratic political systems in which governments and private organizations find ways to cooperate despite politico-legal principles institutionalizing and regulating separations of interests. This caution aside, we have an opportunity to examine how private profit motives interact with the public insistence upon improving delivery of public goods and services.

The authors have organized this collection in three necessarily broad sections: Part I, Making Sense of Corporate Security: Historical and Theoretical Perspectives; Part II, Empirical Case Studies of Corporate Security in International Perspective; and Part III, Corporate Security: Challenges and Dilemmas in the Field. Unquestionably, this collection (and a rapidly emerging international body of scholarship) arrives nearly 35 years after any serious attention was given to theoretical advancements in the security literature. Thus this volume cannot be expected to get both arms around all that requires thorough coverage, particularly with respect to the realm of corporate security – a function acknowledged only in passing references in earlier times. Moreover, in the future, expanded theoretical comprehensiveness will require corporate organizations to strengthen understanding of their connectedness with larger economic, political and social environments in which they operate and from which they profit. In doing so, and with expected offspring from this book, perhaps corporate organizations will recognize opportunities to invest in a new generation of graduate students with sharpened conceptual and research skills. While we await such developments, these authors have contributed a rich assemblage of thought-provoking pieces. And each chapter stimulates challenging research projects guaranteed to penetrate both the facades and realities of corporate security.

Part I contains four chapters beginning with Robert P. Weiss's return to summarizing the Ford Motor Company's historical experiences between World War I and the early Cold War. Adam White, University of York lecturer, discusses the evolution and limitations of government regulation in the United Kingdom. James W. Williams probes the rapidly expanding subfield of forensic accounting as applied to corporate investigations. Karen Lund Petersen's chapter observes complex intersections between corporate and national security. In the case of Weiss's chapter, much has been written to account for the harshness of the Henry Ford-Harry Bennett labor-management era. Weiss has published several articles about that particularly intimidating atmosphere in corporate manufacturing in America in the first half of the twentieth century, a period of brutal anti-labor violence induced by many corporate executives concerned only with maximum productivity at the lowest labor costs, suppression of union organizing, and protection of economic power among similarly situated competitors. There are good reasons here to begin with a few lessons from the dark side of

corporate security's heritage. In those times, the security function was little more than enforcer-of-first-resort. Until public outrage, government intervention, redefinition of the enemy and a new self-consciousness of status tamed the truncheons of corporate power, corporate security seemed incapable of changing its ways (Calder, 2010). We are reminded that those conditions ultimately led to passage of the National Labor Relations Act of 1935 (Weiss, 1987, 2007–2008) – a landmark piece of legislation that took years to change attitudes among corporate security functionaries as they encountered the political and legal realities in an 'era of transformation' (Calder, 2014, pp. 459–460). The battle lines between management and worker rights, although more subtle, remain in modern times, and corporate security functions remain in the middle of them (Calder, 1987).

In Chapter two, Professor White invites consideration of postwar British experiences with legislatively imposed regulations on the contract security industry, a topic that has commanded considerable space in the security literature. Regulatory trends arising in the United Kingdom in the 1970s were similar in many respects to the American experience. At the time (and currently) contract security services were considered viable solutions especially in the fear-driven urban centers that had experienced significant surges in property and violent crimes. Embattled police departments, historically hostile toward 'private police', invited a more cooperative relationship intended to introduce, theoretically, complementary protective measures mainly for private property protection. Some even argued that they served as force multipliers for resource-strapped local police departments. Research, however, never effectively validated this assertion (then or since).

In the third chapter, James Williams outlines the work of forensic accountants, and in doing so he offers a pleasant respite from the literature's persistent emphasis on private guards as the dominant face of private security. Elite members of this corporate security niche demonstrate the dogged persistence of the detective and the orderliness of accountancy to expose the nefarious activities of internal corruptors who occasionally are responsible for the significant losses in corporate profits, compromise of integrity practices, and destroyed company reputations. What is the value of gates, guards and guns, security accountants might ask, if the internal operating practices are rotten, particularly when the stench results from corporate executives who have sacrificed shareholder and employee trust?

In the final chapter in Part I, Karen Lund Petersen discusses mandates imposed on companies working in the national security realm. Recalling the decade after World War II, many of the security executives for major weapons suppliers – mainly in the United States – provided the leadership and initiatives that set the standards for a new level of professionalism in the field. Of course, this was not an unexpected outcome since many of them had been called upon during the war and thereafter to participate in setting new regulations driven by new national security problems. Wartime security practices, particularly arising from close relationships between big weapons suppliers and the society at large, easily adapted to national defense priorities in a new world of computers and nukes – a world requiring so much more security-consciousness than ever before. Petersen, however, focuses her concerns on an overpowering dominance of national security presence in guiding security thinking and how such dominance may prove counterproductive in the long run to market economies and political systems in free nations. This reviewer would add to her concerns that such conditions may also serve as problematic role models in developing nations in such regions as Latin America.

Part II provides a collection of case studies. Clarissa Meerts' chapter addresses intersections and differences in principles operable in private and public law as they are invoked in controlling crimes committed in the private sector. This discussion returns us to essential earlier studies of social location and crime. Nearly 60 years ago, social science thinkers were challenged to explain the structural limitations of social spaces faced by police as they responded to rapidly rising crime after World War II and through the 1980s. It was structural-functionalist sociologist Stinchcombe (1963) who called attention to the two social structures in democratic societies that coalesce and interact as they are challenged to respond to social conditions such as crime. The private sector, Stinchcombe observed, was conceived as a politico-legal and social space that demanded and secured privacy protections from public controls and legal mandates. In manner, in America most of the first 10 Amendments to the US Constitution were implemented by the Framers as protections *from* government. The public sector, by contrast, is a space in which, theoretically and practically, public law and its policing authorities provide controls for the community's common good. Stinchcombe's analysis sharpened the thinking of criminologists about significant limitations imposed on public police in the identification and investigation of all types of crimes occurring in private and public spaces. Social structures, Stinchcombe argued, significantly restricted access and effectiveness of police, particularly with respect to economic crimes (for example, burglary, theft, embezzlement and so on) committed in the private space while private sector actors were largely barred from involvement in addressing violent crimes (murder, rape, assault and robbery) committed in the public or private spaces. Meerts' work continues this discussion and it is useful in orienting new scholars to these important aspects of legal limits of authority in democratic societies.

Collection editors Kevin Walby and Randy Lippert join Alex Luscombe in a study of private sector expertise and professionalization that has been determined to add value to studies of municipal governments in several Canadian cities. This is a truly cutting-edge development, a focus on how 'municipal corporate security' units have evolved professionally as they have interacted with public police and federal security officials in addressing low-order criminal, behavioral and regulatory situations more efficiently dealt with by private persons than public authorities. No doubt that in the future this study will be subjected to a range of independent evaluation research to tease out what long-term added value has been delivered to the public good. In addition, as the authors question there could be significant negative implications for 'democratic conceptions of municipal governance' (Walby and Lippert, p. 131). American experiences, for example gated communities that impose behavioral and regulatory controls on private property owners, have yielded mixed results in this regard and have further extended the litigiousness of Americans over the sanctity of private property rights.

Three additional chapters round out Part II. Conor O'Reilly's piece on militarization of corporate security in Iraq offers a new look at the many accounts (mostly negative) of state-sanctioned privatization of services including security, in the activities directly or indirectly linked to war fighting missions. He argues that transnational security consultancies (TSCs) have been largely ignored in the accounts of privatizing military functions. It is somewhat unclear to this reviewer, however, how it will be possible to determine in retrospect the value-added by TSCs to risk reduction in Iraq, a challenging matter of proving the negative that will rely on historical data sources often very difficult to validate. Next, Blair Wilkinson's discussion of university corporate security networks once again reminded this

reviewer of somewhat heretical distinctions that were needed a few decades ago between 'policing' and 'security' functions on college campuses (Calder, 1974). At the time, many American campuses were places of intense and sometimes deadly violent demonstrations (that is, Kent State University), challenging administrators to consider the gross inadequacies of traditional watchman-style campus security provisions. The new challenges at the time imposed concerns for the negative potentialities of transitioning to a mixed system of order maintenance requiring that as much attention should be given to such matters as nighttime laboratory break-ins, dormitories protection and monitoring of storage facilities as to walking crime prevention beats and making necessary arrests.

In Part II's final chapter, Ian Warren's and Darren Palmer's discussion of corporate security's involvement in the Australian night-time economy is a stimulating piece that should introduce new graduate students to many new lines of research. Essentially, the security role referenced here includes various types of personnel deployed to reduce violence at venues that dispense alcohol. The results of increased use of corporate security in this type of activity appear problematic (although necessary) at this time but more study is needed particularly of the effectiveness of technological supplements to human security provisions. In a post-9/11 era, also, it will be important to consider the various political jurisdictions that have imposed ordinances obligating levels of security provisions based on the density of people admitted to venues such as dance halls, clubs, bars, street areas and so on.

As might be expected in a collection of this type, Part III addresses itself to trends and dilemmas in corporate security. Authors Rick Sarre and Tim Prenzler offer a chapter on the challenges posed to corporate security executives in the Asian-Pacific arena. Next, David Brooks and Jeffrey Corkill address a long-standing problem of how corporate security functions confront the challenges of gaining prominence in the upper echelons of management for the purpose of adding (and inculcating) the 'security voice' (my term) in key decision-making venues. Here we are reminded of management theorist Fayol (1916, 1949) and his century-old positioning of 'security' as one of the five major management functions. Alison Wakefield then provides an excellent summary of a relatively new area of expected expertise among security executives: enterprise risk management. Finally, Dennis Savard and Daniel Kennedy supply non-American readers, in particular, with an education in the rigors of premises security liabilities associated with American shopping centers and malls. From the perspective of someone living outside the United States, America's litigiousness may appear to deliver all sorts of odd segmentations in how risk and risk management are conceptualized and operationalized. As shopping centers and malls decline in popularity, however, crime conditions and risks will also decline, while criminal and other types of risks will continue to shift to the Internet.

This book is an eye-opening, mind-expanding and challenging contribution to the literature. It is not a book for undergraduates or even for security professionals looking for tips to get them through the next crisis. This is a book for serious graduate students and advanced professionals who seek readings that will challenge imagination and broaden horizons of understanding particularly in nations with similar legal and political traditions. The breadth of coverage makes it relatively easy to supplement with other scholarly readings from the United States and international journals. Cost: well, it's a bit pricey for US graduate students but not out of range for library purchases. And some of it will require several readings since the prose is unnecessarily thick in spots. This condition, however, will allow professors plenty of opportunities to expand and to explain. It's all good stuff, just not

reading for those who must remain awake late at night. Series editor, Dr Martin Gill, is commended for his leadership in drawing together a first-class group of scholars and professionals who are leading the way to even more advanced literature in security.

References

- Calder, J.D. (1974) Policing and securing the campus: The need for complementary organizations. *Police Chief* XLI(11): 60–64.
- Calder, J.D. (1987) New corporate security: The autumn of crime control and the spring of fairness and due process. *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice* 3(4): 1–34.
- Calder, J.D. (2010) Law, politics, and occupational consciousness: Industrial guard unions in the United States, 1933–1945. *Journal of Applied Security Research* 5(1): 64–106.
- Calder, J.D. (2014) Influences of investigations and scholarly studies on the evolution of American private policing: Healthy distrust, watchful eyes. In: M. Gill (ed.) *The Handbook of Security*. 2nd edn. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Fayol, H. (1916, 1949) *General and Industrial Management*. Translated by Constance Storrs. London: Pitman and Sons, Ltd.
- Stinchcombe, A.L. (1963) Institutions of privacy in the determination of police administrative practice. *American Journal of Sociology* 69(2): 150–160.
- Weiss, R.P. (1987) From ‘slugging detectives’ to ‘labor relations’: Policing labor at ford, 1930–1947. In: C.D. Shearing and P.C. Stenning (eds.) *Private Policing*. Newbury Park, CA: SAGE, pp. 110–130.
- Weiss, R.P. (2007–2008) From cowboy detectives to soldiers of fortune: Private security contracting and the contradictions on the new frontiers of capitalist expansion. *Social Justice* 34(3–4): 1–19.

James D Calder

Department of Political Science and Geography, The University of Texas at San Antonio,
San Antonio, TX, USA.