

The 'Private' Military Industry in Africa and Beyond

-The corporatization of force and the consequences

by

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BA, Bodø University College, 2008

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Abstract

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Based on a re-articulated definition of ‘public’ and ‘private’, this thesis challenge the common understanding of the state as a principally ‘public’ provider of force. Taking both a theoretical and empirical approach, this thesis argues that there has been a continuing conflation of state and non-state providers of force, and that the latter can be just as legitimate. Three cases are here analysed: Executive Outcomes in Sierra Leone, The Royal African Company in Guinea and King Leopold II in The Congo Free State. Current events in Iraq and New Orleans will also be addressed.

By analysing how force has been used for economic profit at the cost of the public, this thesis argues that the essential question is not *who* provides security, but *for whom* security is provided. It has thus taken a broader approach to the debate about the desirability and ramifications of the private military industry.

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Acknowledgments

Parts of this thesis explore events which took place in what is commonly referred to as the colonial era, where chartered companies like the Hudson Bay Company claimed vast areas including Vancouver Island. It is therefore only natural that I first would like to acknowledge that this thesis was written on Coast Salish land.

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Abbreviations

ABIR	Anglo- Belgian India Rubber Exploration Company
CCCI	Compagnie du Congo pour le commerce et l'industrie
CDF	(Sierra Leone) Civil Defence Forces
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
DHS	US Department of Homeland Security
ECOMOG	The Economic Community Cease Fire Monitoring Group
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EO	Executive Outcomes
ESS	Eurest Support Services
FARC	Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia/ Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces
FEMA	(US) Federal Emergency Management Agency
FP	Force Publique
GSG	Gurkha Security Group
IGO	International Governmental Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
KBR	Kellogg Brown & Root
LOGCAP	Logistics Civilian Augmentation Program
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCO	Non- Commissioned Officer
MNC	Multinational Corporation
MPRI	Military Professional Resources Incorporated
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPRC	(Sierra Leone) National Provisional Ruling Council
PMC	Private Military Company
PMF	Private Military Firm
PMI	Private Military Industry
PSC	Private Security Company
RAC	Royal African Company of England
RSLMF	Republic of Sierra Leone Military Forces
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
SIEROMCO	Sierra Leone Ore And Metal Co
SLA	Sierra Leone Army
SRC	Strategic Resource Corporation
UAV	Unmanned Arial Vehicle
UN	United Nations
UNITA	União Naçional para a Independência Total d'Angola/National Union for the Total Independence of Angola
WMD	Weapon of Mass Destruction

Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction

The hiring of companies such as MPRI and Blackwater in recent wars on the Balkan peninsula, in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the use of military companies such as Executive Outcomes (EO) and Sandline International in African conflicts has shown the growing importance of private military contractors in today's armed conflicts. A similar rise of the closely linked private security industry further accentuate this trend and signals not only a change in the way we conduct warfare, but also in the way we conceptualize war-making and the provision of security. The rise of this Private Military Industry (PMI) has gained attention not only from policymakers and military analysts, but also from a growing number of scholars. In their work, these academics have focused on the changing norms on mercenarism (Percy 2007), the commodification of security (Krahmann 2008), the need for regulation in the market of force (Chesterman and Lehnardt 2007; Avant 2005a) and the way this new class of security experts are using their power to influence our understanding of security (Leander 2005a), and as Brauer (2006) notes, many of these topics overlap.

It is evident that the emergence of the PMI raises real concerns over issues of transparency, regulation, efficiency, political control and adherence to international conventions of warfare, but as Abrahamsen and Williams (2009) note, most discussion of security privatization in international politics has focused only on the role of Private Military Companies (PMCs) and 'mercenaries'. This thesis will take a different approach when analysing the phenomenon of non-state force providers. It will explore how force in

a historical perspective has been applied and authorized by a range of local, national and international state- and non-state actors that have interacted, cooperated and at times competed in order to facilitate or create economic profit. Focusing on the African continent, this thesis will show how these practices have taken place at the cost of the provision of security for the population within the territory concerned.

Thesis statement

While the existing literature on the private military industry focus on the role of ‘mercenaries’, PMCs and the challenges of the ‘privatization’ of security, this thesis will show how both state and non-state providers of force have facilitated economic exploitation that has served private interests at the cost of the public. In this way this thesis will argue that the essential question is not *who* provides security, but *for whom* security is provided.¹

Purpose and significance

This thesis is essentially about the use of force for economic profit. The emergence of the PMI in recent years has actualized the debate about how to best serve public interests. This has especially been the case in ‘weak’ or ‘failed’ states where the government either is unable or unwilling to provide security to the people. This thesis will explore how a range of actors have formed complex assemblages where various

¹ In his seminal article, Baldwin (1997) states that security in a general sense can be defined by asking ‘security for whom, and for which values?’ taking a multidimensional approach that opens for that the individual (human security), the state and the international system can act as referent objects.

force providers have cooperated and at times merged. It will show that the common understanding of the state as a 'public' provider of force is faulty, as the state also can act in the interest of private interests at the cost of the public. Furthermore, by analysing three cases that are temporally dispersed, it will highlight the pervasiveness and complexity of these assemblages while also focus on the *consequences* of these practices. In this way, this thesis will be a contribution in an important debate about how force per se should be organized and controlled, and for whom it should be provided, taking a broader approach to the debate about the desirability and ramifications of the PMI.

Background

The provision of security has been recognised as one of the most important, if not the most important function of the state. The dominant understanding of the 'state' in western countries has for the last two centuries drawn upon Weber's definition that a political association "...can be called a 'state' if and in so far as its administrative staff successfully upholds a claim to the *monopoly* of the *legitimate* use of physical force in the enforcement of its order" (1947, 154). This Weberian definition of the state is being increasingly challenged by the rise of a 'private' or non-state military industry. While Weber acknowledged that smaller political entities such as guilds or federations historically claimed to provide legitimate force, he saw this claim of a monopoly as an indispensable feature of the state. This monopoly encompassed actors that provided internal legitimate force, like the police, and actors that provided external legitimate force, like the military. Tilly (1985, 172) argues that in order to consolidate their powers,

the European political leaders had to disarm rival groups and society as a whole. This consolidation of force that took place from the 12th century and through the peace of Westphalia also created the need for an administration that could raise and manage the financial resources that were needed to pay these state forces. There was as such an interaction between war-making, extraction and capital accumulation that shaped European state-making.

In the same period, medieval mercenaries such as the Great White Company and the Italian Condottieri fought for the European kings, popes and the city state magistrates, becoming transnational actors (Mockler 1969, 44; Saunders 2005). However, beginning around the French revolution, citizen armies have generally been seen as the most appropriate and effective way of providing security, but these state forces could also be rented out, and market allocation of security was never completely eliminated (Avant 2006a, 509). This shows that state monopoly over legitimate force is the exception in history rather than the rule, and in this context, the PMI is rather re-emerging than emerging.

Regular forces made up of citizen soldiers play today the main role in providing military services to most states, yet private companies providing similar services have in the last two decades increased both in number and size. These new 'corporate warriors' seem to be a new version of the old 'Dogs of war' or 'mercenaries' in that they are structured and registered as modern-day companies, and operate seemingly in a perfectly legal and legitimate way within the framework of national and international laws and conventions. The ratio in the first Gulf war between private contractors and regular soldiers was estimated to 1-60, it was 1-2 in the Kosovo war, and it is estimated that

there were forty- eight thousand foreign private contractors in Iraq alone in 2007 (Leander 2005a; Klein 2008, 486).² Revenues from the PMI are expected to rise from about \$55 billion in 1990 to over \$200 billion in 2010, and the closely related private security industry has seen a similar development (Avant 2005b; Abrahamsen and Williams 2009). Weber's definition of the state is further challenged as also individuals, corporations and international organizations can hire PMCs and Private Security companies (PSCs) in order to provide security, thus reinforcing or replacing state forces. In places like Iraq and in many African states, Multinational Companies (MNCs) have become dependent upon such security or military companies to guard their personnel and facilities against criminal groups, insurgents and local protesters. Advocates for the industry also see these companies as a perfect 'tool' for INGOs and NGOs such as the UN and CARE when they need peacekeeping forces or protection in order to provide humanitarian assistance.

This re-emergence is broadly explained by three main changes in the global political climate. First, the end of the cold war and the dissolution of USSR and the Warsaw pact subsequently led to large military cutbacks, which created a large number of unemployed soldiers and also a 'security vacuum' in certain areas of the world. Second, increasingly sophisticated military systems are now often reliant on civilian operators, and a proliferation of weapons means that a range of actors (including corporate entities) now can arm themselves. Finally, a general trend of outsourcing 'public' services to the 'private' commercial market in accordance with neo-liberal policies has also affected the way the military is organized and composed (Singer 2001, 193; Francis 1999).

² These numbers does not include the number of locals that are hired by these companies, and the numbers are also contested since there is little oversight provided. In 2004, Aegis Defence Services, another private firm was appointed to coordinate the various PMCs, not the local government (Walker and Whyte 2005, 654).

These changes have had great impact on the African political landscape. The end of the cold war meant that the great powers lost much of their interest in the continent, decreasing or ending their support to the various 'proxy wars'. The dissolution of the South African apartheid regime in 1990 further contributed to the increase in number of seemingly obsolete military personnel and equipment when the new government reformed its forces. While the African countries had tried to curb mercenarism throughout the cold war, the 1990s saw the emergence of a new industry where PMCs such as EO and Sandline International hired former soldiers to provide 'armies for rent' to those who could pay, filling the 'security vacuum' in Africa (Musah and Fayemi 2000, 4).³ These developments have also attracted scholarly attention, and scholars such as Mills and Stremlau (1999), Musah and Fayemi (2000) and Cilliers and Mason (1999) have specifically focused on the 'privatization' of security and the implications of the mercenary industry on African security.

In May 2004, a group of mercenaries conducted a coup attempt in Equatorial Guinea. It was led by Simon Mann and financed by British businessmen including Mark Thatcher, son of former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. The goal was to insert a new ruler who in turn would provide access to the newly discovered oil deposits (BBC News 2005).⁴ This event was a reminder of how various corporate actors are willing to employ force in order to create conditions where profit can be made, even if this means

³ These efforts were manifested by the African Convention on Mercenarism, signed in 1977. Mercenary forces often played a crucial role in the coups that haunted the continent throughout the cold war. See Francis (1999) and Nossal (1998) for an overview.

⁴ Simon Mann, a former SAS soldier and co-founder of Sandline International, was released from Equatorial Guinea, allegedly on medical grounds, on November 3 2009 and returned to his family in England (BBC News 2009b).

overthrowing a government.⁵ In this sense it seemed to follow a practice dating back to long before the colonial era, where corporate entities searched newly ‘discovered’ land for profit, using force if necessary. While Arabic traders had ventured to Africa for centuries, bringing slaves and other commodities home, the English, Spanish, Portuguese, French and Dutch were just some of the Europeans that started to use chartered companies, privateers and regular forces in order to gain access to or control over these territories, fighting both each other and the indigenous population. The willingness to use force, the introduction of new diseases a general military and technological advantage were some of the main factors that allowed small European states to claim vast areas in the Americas, Africa and Oceania in a time when imperial sentiments ran high.

EOs’ and similar companies’ involvement in the conflicts in Angola and Sierra Leone where natural resources played an important role, has led some scholars to claim that these force providers are the ‘new face’ of neo-colonialism, or as the UN special rapporteur put it: “The multinational neo-colonialism of the twenty first century” (Francis 1999; Howe 1998; O’Brien 2000; Singer 2003, 188). As Musah and Fayemi (2000) ask: Are mercenaries becoming the shock forces of corporate recolonisation as natural resources are exploited by transnational extraction companies, or are they a ‘necessary evil’ to manage post cold war conflicts? In their analysis of Sierra Leone and the role various PMCs played in the conflict in the late 1990s, Howe (1998) and Francis (1999) argue that the country was ‘re-colonised’ in that mining companies with close ties to the PMCs involved received highly advantageous concessions as payment for their services, giving a foreign company with economic and military resources a foothold in the country.

⁵ It should be noted that the government in place was not by any standards a democratic one. Secondly, the coup attempt itself is a controversial topic where there are various accounts of what really took place.

By allowing these ‘corporate mercenaries’ access to strategic minerals, Francis argues that they act as foreign policy proxies for western governments. He compares this to the late 19th century when large concession companies operated in the same manner, and states that this corporate neo- colonialism is manifested by how private corporations actively establish governments that will cater for their interests, replacing national leadership with the informal control of corporate shareholders. By showing how the ‘privatization’ of security in Sierra Leone has eroded political sovereignty, mortgaged mineral resources and failed to provide security to the people, these scholars have made important contributions in the debate about the desirability of the PMI, linking these practices to colonialism.

This thesis agrees with the analysis provided by Howe and Francis, in that the connections between these new corporate military entities and their ‘home states’, local militias and various extraction corporations has led to the undermining of the formal state structure in Sierra Leone.⁶ Acknowledging that these scholars also include other force providers in their analysis, such as the Kamajor Militia and ECOMOG, this thesis argues that the current literature in general have taken a too narrow approach when focusing on the PMI as a distinct phenomenon.⁷ As noted, this thesis will show how both state force providers and non-state force providers have cooperated for economic profit. However, it will not only focus on the force providers, but also on the consequences of these practices on the population within the territory concerned.

⁶ While the Sierra Leonean state clearly in many ways deviated from how one defines the state within a western democratic tradition, the state apparatus had arguably still some level of functionality.

⁷ The Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) was a West African multilateral armed force established by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and operated in Sierra Leone in the late 1990s.

Initial clarifications

The thesis will specifically focus on the *corporatization of force*, here defined as when force is employed, by state or non-state actors, for the purpose of creating or facilitating economic profit. The ‘cases’ here analysed also involve a ‘foreign’ authority or actor that has operated within an area where political entities similar to the Weberian western state have been weak or absent. In this sense, the historical focus on Africa connects the phenomenon under investigation to notions of colonialism. While the colonial era today is commonly referred to as the period from the 15th to the 19th century where European countries occupied ‘undiscovered’ territories, it is important to note that colonialism as a practice is not restricted to a specific era. Horvath (1972, 47) defines colonialism as *intergroup* domination -the control by individuals or groups over territory and/or behaviour of other groups, drawing a distinction between colonialism and imperialism in that the former also involves the permanent settlement of a substantial numbers of ‘foreigners’. Sartre provides the following definition: “...a [political, economic and social] system which was put in place around the middle of the nineteenth century, began to bear fruit in about 1880, started to decline after the First World War, and is today turning against the colonizing force” (2001, 31). Today neo-colonialism as concept is commonly used to describe how former colonial powers use remaining political, military and commercial arrangements to infringe on or undermine the former colonies’ independence.⁸

While the recent events in Sierra Leone can be defined as neo-colonialism in this context, (neo) colonialism is about the dominating practices by a foreign group or state,

⁸ See Horvath (1972) and Emmanuel (1972) for a more elaborate introduction to the concepts of colonialism and imperialism.

and not specifically about the use of force for economic profit, although economic profit clearly seems to be one of the reasons for these practices, as emphasised by Marxist-Leninist literature (Horvath 1972, 46; Vakhrushev 1973). When examining colonialism as a system or practice, the cultural aspect, questions of nationalism, racism, identity and religion; the social and political dimensions must also be taken into account (Brydon 2000). Furthermore, the corporatization of force as defined above does not require any notion of intergroup domination, and can also take place within (intragroup) a western society as seen below. Thus, where intergroup domination meets the use of force for economic profit, the concept of colonialism intersects with the concept of the corporatization of force, and it is at this junction this thesis is situated.

It is important to note that the corporatization of force not only is an African phenomenon. In the late nineteenth century, Pinkerton National Detective Agency spied on worker unions and supplied strike breakers to mining companies and other industries in the US (Morn 1982).⁹ Pinkerton is today a part of Securitas Security Services USA Inc.; the largest PSC in the world, providing services such as executive protection that enables CEOs and others to operate or travel to ‘hostile environments’ (Pinkerton 2009).¹⁰ However, this form of facilitation of economic profit is generally more attenuated, although not necessarily less significant than the recent events in many African states where natural resources have been extracted with one hand and competitors fought off with an AK-47 in the other.

⁹ In the Homestead steel strike in 1892, the factory manager bypassed local police authorities and employed Pinkerton, which upon arrival got into a fire fight with the strikers, resulting in the deaths of three guards and ten workers (Morn 1982, 102).

¹⁰ Abrahamsen and Williams (2009) argue that Group4Securicor is the world’s largest PSC, currently operating in 115 countries, employing over 530,000 people, and places Securitas on a second place.

While most European states went through a process of mutual bargaining between the ruler and the ruled where the population was taxed and force became regularized, eliminating 'private' or non-state providers of force within their borders, African states as they today are constituted were in large constructed by colonial powers. The nature of the African state has therefore been contested from its very conception (Tilly 1985, Thomson 1994; Small 2006). The colonial states were in general focused around urban centres, leaving the majority of the population without services such as the provision of security (Herbst 1997, 122). This underline that the norm where the state army is seen as preferred mode of organizing force only has been valid within a confined space centred around the western states and only for the last two centuries.

Many of these African countries are today defined as 'weak', 'failed', 'predatory' or 'rentier' states, where patron-client networks have created informal markets and power structures; so-called 'shadow states' that operate behind the formal states. These networks have undermined the formal state apparatus, including the state military that has increasingly been replaced by more privately controlled forces (Avant 2006a, 516; Reno 1995).¹¹ In some countries, the state army or police may in fact be the biggest threat to the people, and some of these regimes have turned to 'mercenaries' or PMCs and foreign companies in order to secure their survival (Leander 2005b, 606; Reno 1997). The historical evidence of a general lack of accountability in the application of (extraterritorial) force by these colonizing states and other actors, shows that the impact of the corporatization of force arguably have been more severe in these African states,

¹¹ The term 'shadow state' is also used to describe how the voluntary sector takes responsibility for services performed by the public sector in democratic regimes (Trudeau 2008).

especially compared the euro-Atlantic countries, and this is the main reason for the focus on Africa, although similar practices in other parts of the world also will be addressed.

Lastly, this thesis analyses how a range of actors have exploited various commodities including natural resources for economic profit, and is in this sense connected to the literature on conflicts and natural resources, and some of the terms and concepts here applied is borrowed from this literature. However, this thesis is mainly concerned with the role of force providers and the consequences of their practices, and will not present the broader themes such as natural resource governance, the geopolitics of natural resources, or how the ‘resource curse’ has affected African societies more generally (Alao 2007; Le Billon 2005a; Bannon and Collier 2003). Furthermore, this thesis does not concern itself with natural resources specifically, but *economic* resources in general as the actors do not care what they trade, as long as it is profitable. Finally, economic exploitation executed with the use of force is not dependent upon conflict or war to take place, although it seem to thrive within a ‘durable disorder’ (Duffield 2000).

Methodology

This thesis explores and analyses the phenomenon here defined as the corporatization of force, the role of the main actors that form the complex assemblages that engage in these practices and the consequences. It is a qualitative study, exploring a small number of cases in Africa, while also pointing to similar practices in countries like Iraq.¹² Africa is the main focus as the continent has been the focus of similar scholarly

¹² ‘Case’ is a contested concept and is here used only to describe a specific event that is limited in time and space.

attention, and, as noted, since these practices arguably have had more severe consequences here. Furthermore, these historical cases from Africa will show what this thesis argues are strong parallels between today and the colonial period.

The thesis will apply a theoretical framework when analysing selected cases in order to better describe the phenomenon at hand. It will thus be a valuable contribution, following the line of arguments presented by scholars such as Francis and Howe about the way certain actors use force to facilitate economic profit. By focusing on a small number of cases, it can also provide detailed information that reveals the complexity of these assemblages. Since it is a qualitative study, the scope is not to give a full account of such practices in Africa, or globally for that matter. In this sense, there is a danger of ‘selecting on the dependent variable’; creating a selection bias by choosing cases that strongly resemble or fit into the theoretical framework, that in turn affects the end result. Although these methodological challenges are certainly more pressing in a quantitative analysis where the aim is to make causal inference, and the very nature of a qualitative analysis makes this unavoidable to some extent, it is important to bear in mind if one wishes to generalize the findings. This thesis will therefore not attempt to say anything about any rise, decline or extent of these practices in Africa, but merely describe what seems to be their continuing existence and the consequences. The topic under examination is still contentious for some of the actors and scholars, additionally, there are in some instances a limited number of sources available. This introduces the problem of reliability, here defined as the level of quality or trustworthiness of the data applied.¹³ However, the use of well-known and highly regarded scholars and sources will minimize this problem.

¹³ Brady and Collier (2004: 303) provide a more ‘quantitative’ definition of reliability.

Three cases will be analysed: the conflict in Sierra Leone in the end of the 20th century, The Royal African Company's operations in the 17th century, and King Leopold II and his acquisition of Congo in the end of the 19th century. These cases have been selected on four main criteria: Firstly, they are all geographically restricted to Africa. Secondly, they have been chosen since they display what initially seems to be a variation in types of force providers, although the final analysis will show if this holds true. Thirdly, they are temporally dispersed in order to illuminate the continuity of these practices. Acknowledging that these cases create large intervals that are left unattended, including the cold war/post independence period, they are to represent practices that were common in these periods. This is the last criterion. While there will be no elaborate discussion of what constitutes an 'ideal' case, other similar ventures will be mentioned in the analysis of the three cases.¹⁴

The first case analysed is the rule of a weak military government in Sierra Leone in the late 1990s. It hired three different PMCs over a period of time to provide military capabilities and defeat RUF; a rebel movement. One of the companies, EO, used in turn a local militia for additional support, and had strong connections to mining companies. Current practices in the country will also briefly be addressed, as local military and police today cooperate with PSCs and internal company guards in order to protect mining operations (Abrahamsen and Williams 2009).

The second case analysed is a chartered company: The Royal African Company was created in 1672 and operated mainly on the west coast of Africa, from Cape Sallee to

14 The order of the cases presented is chosen as it will connect current events as addressed by scholars like Francis in this chapter with their historical parallels, sacrificing historical linearity.

Cape of Good Hope. The company relied on internal hired gunners and English naval forces at sea, they hired foreign soldiers and ‘human driftwood’ to defend their forts, used indigenous tribes to fight other tribes and Europeans, and employed also local natives in their service (Davies 1957).

The third case is King Leopold II’s rule of the Congo Free State between 1885 and 1908. The King used company forces and ‘mercenaries’ in the initial stage before he established a standing army consisting of Belgian and other European officers, adventurers and indigenous (slave) soldiers. The rubber companies also had an elaborate system of sentries, and there were close ties between the two forces (Drohan 2004).¹⁵

These cases aim to show how both state and non-state authorities and providers of force have cooperated, and how both ‘public’ (state) and ‘private’ (non-state) actors have applied force for the main purpose of economic profit, benefiting a small elite at the direct or indirect cost of the provision of security for the people within the territory concerned.¹⁶ In this way these cases will show that the state can act as a ‘private’ actor, serving the interests of a few, while non-state providers of force at times have provided services that have been more ‘public’. These cases also show how a range of actors from various countries historically have cooperated and interacted, forming complex assemblages that have blurred the traditional national/transnational dichotomy in addition to the public/private distinction. Lastly, these cases also clearly show the negative

¹⁵ Drohan (2004) provides a more complete list of cases in her book. See also Musah and Fayemi (2000) for similar examples.

¹⁶ See the discussion of the concepts of ‘public’ and ‘private’ in chapter 3.

consequences of these practices, underlining the statement that it is not so much about *who* is providing security, as *for whom* security is provided.¹⁷

The thesis is divided into three parts. The first part is a theoretical chapter that will serve as an introduction to the literature on the ‘privatization’ of force, and where the key concepts of the thesis will be elaborated and defined. The second part of the thesis is the analysis of the three cases listed above, where the theoretical framework will be applied before a concluding chapter briefly explores how similar practices have played out in countries like Iraq, and also within western states.

¹⁷ There is no attempt to fully explore the connection between the concepts of security and force here, but it suffices to state that security per se does not require the presence of force for protection, although (physical) human security clearly can be threatened by a force provider. This thesis will therefore focus on the provision of force, within a broader context of human security.

Chapter 2: A theoretical framework

Introduction

This thesis will analyse how both state and non-state providers of force have facilitated economic exploitation that has served a small elite at the cost of the population. These force providers and other actors have formed complex assemblages that challenge the public/private and the national/transnational distinctions. How are these assemblages operating? Who authorizes the use of force? In what way is force applied, and are there also alternate or conflicting motives besides economic profit? While these questions will be addressed, this thesis will also focus on the consequences of the corporatization of force upon the population. In this way it will argue that the essential question is not *who* provides security, but *for whom* security is provided.

This chapter will serve as a theoretical framework when analysing the following cases. It will clarify and define the main concepts applied in the thesis, but also serve as an introduction to the PMI literature. The chapter is therefore divided into two main sections. The first section will focus on force providers, most notably the distinction between ‘immoral private mercenaries’ and ‘legitimate public soldiers’. It will argue that there is no principal distinction between the state soldier and the private contractor on the individual level, and that this distinction also is blurred on a structural level. In this way, this section will give a useful overview of some of the challenges within the field, and serve as a backdrop when addressing the various force providers in the following chapters. The claim that the state acts as a principally ‘public’ or accountable provider of force will also be challenged.

The last section will focus on the issue of ‘for whom force is provided.’ It will give a brief account of the ‘privatization’ of security, arguing that the common understanding of the ‘public’ and ‘private’ dichotomy is faulty, while also providing a rearticulated definition. It will define the concept of the ‘corporatization of force’, and show that both the state forces and non-state forces can be corporatized when economic profit is the goal, serving an elite at the cost of the public.

As many of the scholars addressed employ the term security, and not force specifically, it is worth noting that while this thesis focuses on force providers, there is a clear connection between the use of force and the concept of security. Within a broadened understanding of the concept of security, military and the allegedly more mundane ‘security services’ constitute only one dimension. While this dimension will be addressed, the following chapters will also focus on the people within the territory concerned. In this way this thesis will argue that also humans can act as referent objects for security, connecting it to the human security discourse.¹⁸

The force providers categorized

One of the challenges facing scholars and policymakers when addressing the re-emerging PMI and the lack of regulation, transparency and legality, is how to define the industry. The lack of a viable taxonomy makes it difficult to create laws and regulations, as the concepts at hand are highly contested. This section will not provide any solution to this challenge, but present some of the main problems that scholars face in the quest for a

¹⁸ For an introduction to the discussion of the concept of security, see the aforementioned article by Baldwin (1997) and also Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde (1998) Walt (1991) and C.A.S.E Collective (2006).

coherent taxonomy. The first part will address attempts to categorize various non-state providers of force, while the second part will address the challenges in distinguishing between state and non-state providers of force. It will thus serve as a brief introduction to the PMI literature, while showing the conflating nature of these force providers, providing a theoretical backdrop when analysing the interaction between the various actors in the following chapters. A simplistic definition of a force provider will here be applied. Acknowledging that force is not restricted to physical violence, and that ‘unarmed’ personnel also can project force as seen below, this thesis defines a force provider as an actor that provides military *and* security services.

The taxonomy of the non-state force providers – an introduction

The soldier and the policeman symbolize the legitimate use of force by the state. The common understanding of the policeman’s role is to provide security against internal threats, as the soldier is expected to provide security against external threats. However, this separation has never been clear-cut: Military forces have conducted traditional policing services within and outside the state, and also policemen have operated outside their state borders.¹⁹ For the non-state actor, the question of legality and legitimacy is closely connected to the taxonomy; or how they are defined. An armed group of non-state warriors can be defined as an allied and legitimate militia or as illegitimate and illegal

¹⁹ An important part of the ongoing state-building project in Iraq is to establish a well-functioning police force, and state police forces from a number of countries partake in this work. The line between military and policing services is also blurred within the PMI: Avant (2005a, 17) defines Blackwater’s operations in Iraq as policing services.

rebels or insurgents, as the Kamajor militia in Sierra Leone exemplify.²⁰ Furthermore, notions of legitimacy are based on normative arguments; the actor has to be given authority by other authorities in order to gain legitimacy (Thomson 1994, 8). The basic challenge for non-state providers of force is that they are often not under (direct) control of the sovereign state, and the government will not provide legitimacy to an actor when it can be seen as a threat to state or regime security (Percy 2007, 57).²¹ Thomson (1994, 10) uses three dimensions to answer to what degree the state controls extraterritorial force: The decision-making authority, allocation and ownership. Within this framework, she provides six categories of extraterritorial force providers: Modern state armies, international brigades, privateers, ‘soldiers of fortune’, filibusters and pirates, thereby illuminating that the state’s control over force is both multidimensional and highly variable. Acknowledging that in this context, the various force providers will always be seen as illegitimate by some, the focus here is on actors that operate within some notion of legality and legitimacy ‘home’ and ‘abroad’, excluding extraterritorial actors like pirates and ‘internal’ or territorial actors such as organised criminal groups like the mafia.²²

Non-state warriors that live by providing military services have been called everything from ‘dogs of war’, ‘whores of war’, ‘hired guns’ and ‘contract warriors.’ Scholars such as Musah and Fayemi (2000) argue that PMCs are only a euphemism for mercenaries and that they are driven by profit now as before. It is clear that the word

²⁰ By defining the force provider here as a militia, this thesis has as such already given the Kamajors some level of legitimacy.

²¹ This is one of the reasons why PMCs like MPRI (Military Professional Resources Inc) emphasise their close connection to the U.S. government and defence agencies (MPRI 2009).

²² That is not to say that such groups do not operate abroad as well, and the internal/external dimension has increasingly become artificial and antique (Singer 2003, 90).

'mercenary' today has an immoral connotation. The Oxford Dictionary of English defines a mercenary as a *person "primarily concerned with making money at the expense of ethics"* (Soanes and Stevenson 2005). Both Article 47 of Protocol I of the Geneva Convention and The African Convention on Mercenarism provide definitions of mercenarism and states that mercenaries lose the status as combatants or prisoners of war, and the latter also condemn such practices as immoral and illegal (Diplomatic Conference... 1977; Organization of African Union 1977).²³ A problem is that these definitions have so many loopholes that they in legal practice seem almost irrelevant (Percy 2007, 169).²⁴ One of the reasons for the difficulties in providing a coherent definition of mercenarism is the diversity of services provided by the growing PMI. These companies handle cooking and perform maintenance on weapon systems, they provide intelligence and personal protection, host and develop education programs, assist in democracy transition, train state soldiers and sometimes also fight alongside with them.

Scholars such as Abrahamsen and Williams (2009) separate between commercial private security and PMCs. Companies providing more 'peaceful' or mundane services are often defined as PSCs. This distinction is problematic, as these companies might not be armed, but their impact on the conflict may often surpass that of an armed infantryman, depending on the services they provide (Singer 2003, 90). The civilian

²³ There are also other conventions on mercenarism, most notably the UN International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing, and Training of Mercenaries.

²⁴ For example, section 2C in article 47 in the Geneva convention states that the person must be motivated to take part in the hostilities by the desire for private gain, and must be promised material compensation substantially in excess of that promised or paid to combatants of similar ranks and functions in the armed forces of that party in order to be defined as a mercenary (Diplomatic Conference... 1977).

operator of an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) can provide vital real time information that can change the course of the conflict and severely obstruct the enemy's operations.²⁵ There are also attempts to classify the industry into companies that are involved in 'passive' and 'active' operations, building on the defensive/offensive distinction. The objection is that such 'passive' firms that only guard facilities for instance, can have a direct impact on the outcome of the conflict by providing vital support that gives one side a critical advantage (Singer 2003, 89). This distinction seems also to be used for political gain: By separating between 'good passive' companies and 'bad offensive' ones, such as now dissolved Executive Outcomes (EO) or Sandline International, these companies can further legitimize their existence.

Perhaps the most important distinction is that while the 'mercenary' today risks prosecution, the private military contractor's work is generally perfectly legal. States are arguably the political entity that has the most power in defining if force is legitimate or illegitimate, and state forces are also generally seen as the most legitimate providers of force. However, while state forces commonly are seen as principally different from non-state forces, this can be questioned.

The state soldier and the non-state warrior

Today it is common to draw a distinction between the soldier, an official figure employed by the state, and other non-state actors that provide force. One key distinction is that the state soldier seems to be endowed with instant legitimacy. As Kluge states:

²⁵ As Avant (2004, 154) notes, these UAVs are increasingly becoming armed, providing a formidable military capability that often is operated by contractors.

“There is a fundamental difference between an ordinary soldier and a mercenary if I may use that term. An ordinary soldier who fights under a flag for a particular country has a legitimate use of force [that] allows that individual to engage in activities which normally would be considered either criminal or strict as being murderous, whereas the mercenary lacks that immediate social justification” (Bicanic and Bourque 2006). This arrangement is based upon an underlying assumption that the state soldier is accountable to the state, and the state’s politics. As the famous Prussian military theorist Clausewitz wrote: “When whole communities go to war-whole peoples, and especially *civilized* peoples-the reason always lies in some political situation, and the occasion is always due to some political object. War therefore, is an act of policy.” (Howard and Paret 1984, 87).²⁶

In a Western tradition this implies that the state soldier is accountable to the government, which in turn is accountable to the people; the *demos* in democracy.²⁷ The state soldier is thus performing the will of the people. However, this claim of accountability is only valid in specific states, namely well-functioning democratic regimes. Furthermore, there is a continuing debate within these states concerning the legitimacy of the use of force against protesters and other groups. Even in the most authoritarian state, the state soldier is still accountable the government, but this does not mean that he or she in any way is accountable to the people. In other words, there is not necessarily any democracy in Clausewitz’ community. Generally, when the state has

²⁶ To do Clausewitz justice, he also states: “If we keep in mind that the prime cause of war springs from some political purpose, it is natural that the prime cause of its existence will remain the supreme consideration in conducting it. This however, does not imply that the political aim is a tyrant. It must adapt itself to its chosen means, a process which can radically change it; yet the political aim remains the first consideration.” (Howard and Paret, 1984, 87).

²⁷ As Singer states: “Public military forces have all manner of traditional controls over their activities, ranging from internal checks and balances, domestic laws regulating the activities of the military forces and its personnel, parliamentary scrutiny, public opinion and numerous aspects of international law. PMFs, however are only subject to the laws of the market.” (2003: 220).

gained a near-monopoly on the provision of force, this also makes it both the guarantor and the biggest threat to the security of the population (Loader and Walker 2007). Secondly, state soldiers have historically never been accountable to the country in which they are operating, only to their home state, although various international bodies such as UN and the International Criminal Court today try to balance this.²⁸ This was arguably even more evident in the colonial period where these states relied on ‘indigenous mercenaries’, local troops and imperial soldiers in order to hold their territories, as the following chapters will show.

The question of motive is often addressed, but this is a slippery slope. On a individual level, it might seem clear that the private contractor is driven by personal gains, but similar claims can also be made about the state soldier. It would be naïve to think that all state soldiers are fighting for ‘God and country’ while private contractors only fight for money (Percy 2007, 177; Lynch and Walsh 2000, 138). State soldiers may see the army as a way to accomplish their own aspirations such as a successful career and/or money, and it would be a mistake to categorically deprive the non-state warrior of any national, ideological or religious motives. There is as such no principal distinction between the state soldier and the non-state warrior at the individual level.

On a more structural level, it can be argued that the PMCs are dependent on economic profit. While the state forces in principle are accountable to the political leadership and generally do not operate on a logic of profit, a company is in principle accountable only to its shareholders. However, while profit clearly is a motive for the military company, this does not exclude other ideological, religious or political motives,

²⁸ Furthermore, there is also within most states a juridical separation, as these soldiers generally are subject to military and not civilian courts.

nor does it imply that state forces never operate in the interests of money. MPRI is closely linked to the US government and operate generally in accordance with official US policy, while it is clear that the Sierra Leone army was also driven by profit as seen in chapter 3.

Perhaps the sharpest distinction between the state soldier and the non-state warrior lies in that while the state soldier is an internal part of the state apparatus, the non-state warrior is by definition not. The state soldier seems to be endowed with an instant legitimacy provided by the authority invested in the state. However, this legitimacy is also based on notions of accountability, and depends therefore on the specific context. This is also a highly state centric perspective, where the state is given precedence over other forms of political entities as discussed below. The notion of accountability is also central when the distinction between ‘public’ and ‘private’ force is addressed.

The privatization of security and the corporatization of force

The first part of this section will explore the common understanding of ‘public’ and ‘private’, arguing that also the state can act in a private way by serving the interests of the few at the cost of the people within the territory concerned, thus shifting the focus from the force providers and towards *for whom* force is provided. However, this is not to say that security is seen as a zero sum game, where the increase of security for one actor means the proportional decrease in security for another. Using the state as preferred ontological reference when the internal/external distinction is drawn, the last part will argue that when force is applied in an accountable way, it can both provide economic profit and security to the people. However, when force is corporatized, there is no such

accountability, as economic profit and not human or military security is the main goal. Lastly, as illustrated below, the corporatization of force often take place within complex assemblages that cooperate for mutual beneficence.

The public/private dichotomy rearticulated

“There is something the civil servants have that the private sector doesn’t. And that is the duty of loyalty to the greater good- the duty of loyalty to the collective best interest of all rather than the interest of the few. Companies have duties of loyalty to their shareholders, not to the country.”

David M. Walker, comptroller General of the United States, 2007²⁹

This quote summarizes the common conception of the distinction between public and private, but as noted above, it is hard to argue that individuals’ motives are the most important distinction between public and private providers of force. ‘Public’ is here associated with the pursuit of collective ends, the provision of public force is meant to serve ‘the interest of all’, or as in the quote above, the notion of the ‘greater good’. In common language ‘private’ denotes a non-state actor, while ‘public’ denotes a state actor. Scholars such as Singer (2003), Musah (2002) and Avant (2004) also use these terms to separate between non-state and state actors, stating that there is an ongoing *privatization* of military services, where the state outsources its services in general to private/non-state actors. However, as Avant also later acknowledges, this understanding of the privatization of military services does not address the more fundamental questions of how

²⁹ (Klein 2008, 370).

these changes affect the dominant understanding of security. Rather than seeing privatization as merely a shift in the actors providing military services, scholars such as Small (2009) and Avant (2007) emphasise that this must be seen as a *process*, where the privatization or commodification of security also de-politicizes the use of force. The privatization of security impact as such not only what issues are attached to security but what security means (Avant 2007, 157). Leander (2005a,) argues that the new class of security experts manifested in the rise of the PMCs are using their ‘epistemic power’ to influence our understanding of security, as security is not so much privatized as *re-militarized*. As Krahmman (2008) argues, the way we perceive security also affects how it is provided. If security is defined as a public good, it must be non-rival and non-excludable. The ongoing ‘privatization’ of security thus re-orientate security away from notions of a collective good and towards services that are excludable and rival, such as protection, turning security into a profitable commodity.

Acknowledging the close connection between force and security, this thesis is specifically concerned with the *nature* of force provided. Public force is in this context not an end in itself but a means to an end, as public is associated with the pursuit of collective ends (Owens 2008, 981). Perhaps a definition of the ‘common good’ can be that the collective itself is allowed to define what is the common good. This in turn points back to the idea that public (state) institutions are accountable to the people *as a whole* while ‘private’ actors serve the interests of the few. While an analysis of what constitutes the ‘common good’ is beyond the scope of this thesis, it would be hard to argue that the practices analysed in the following cases could be seen as serving such a purpose.³⁰

³⁰ The classical problem of the ‘tyranny of the majority’ is worth noting in this context. - Should certain issues be excluded from majority rule, and does the majority always know what is in its best interest?

However, it is important to note that one of the services that is defined as public in a modern capitalist state is to ensure the ‘private’ individual’s right to property and accumulation of wealth (Owens 2008, 981).

The evolution of the western conception of the state and the regular (regularized) army has provided the state with authority to claim that the state army equals a ‘public army’, thus implicitly justifying the state army’s actions as in service of the ‘common good’. The state gained, or perhaps more accurately; created a monopoly of legitimate force (Owens 2008; Tilly 1985). Firstly; this monopoly of force restricted to a ‘public state army’ is at best an idealization: As noted, in many authoritarian or ‘predatory’ states, the state forces can be the biggest threat to the people. Furthermore, in the European colonial era these states relied upon various colonial or imperial troops to enforce their goals, serving both ‘private’ (non-state) and ‘public’ (state) interests. As Owens states: “Clearly, the imperial charter companies, most famously the English East India Company, totally disrupted the modern distinction between public and private, economics and politics, state and non-state” (2008, 985). By including the word ‘modern’, Owens underlines the changing nature of the state: The common understanding of a division between the ‘public’ (state) and the ‘private’ (non-state) sphere and between politics and economics in modern western states, is not a permanent attribute of the state. As such, there is always a danger of interpreting past events in terms of modern values and concepts, comparing the state as it was defined and understood in previous eras with the concept of the modern (western) state.³¹ While the term ‘state’ is used to describe both past and present political entities in the following cases, the main point here is

³¹ As discussed below, it is also problematic to use the term state uncritically when addressing both western democratic states and states like Sierra Leone.

precisely to show how changes in the organization of force specifically have affected our understanding of the state.

Returning to Clausewitz, war is not necessarily ‘public’ as such, war is political; warfare is organized violence carried out by *political* entities, not public entities, and some states can organize force in a ‘private’ or ‘foreign’ way to avoid political scrutiny (Owens 2008, 989). Owens’ aim is to distinguish between what commonly is seen as private actors operating in a public realm of force, and what she sees as a more accurate description, namely various actors operating in the political and social realm of war, focusing on the distinctions between war, violence and politics. “Some forms of violence are *made* public and others are *made* private through historically varying ways of organizing and justifying force. There is no such thing as public violence or private violence. There is only violence that is made public or private through political struggle and definition” (Owens 2008, 990).

Force is in this thesis *made* public when it serves the ‘common good’, while private force serves the interests of the few. Recognising the difficulties in separating between intentions and consequences, authoritarian or ‘predatory’ states can therefore be seen as private actors, serving the interests of the few, just as non-state actors like PMCs in principal can provide military services that can be seen as ‘public’ in that they serve the ‘common good’. While most leaders and actors *claim* to serve the common good, there is clearly a discrepancy as shown in the following chapters. Below is Clapman’s definition of public security rephrased:

The provision of force is public to the extent that it protects without discrimination the whole population of the territory concerned, and to the extent also that those who are responsible for furnishing this service are ultimately accountable to the people on whose behalf it is maintained.³² To the extent that these requirements are not achieved, the provision of force is ‘privatized’ in that it is exercised in the interest of particular groups or individuals (Clapman 1999, 25).

However, some states are better at providing wealth and security for more people. Euro-Atlantic states have generally provided a different level of ‘public’ services not seen in many African states. As Owens argues, this is however a quantitative difference, not a qualitative (Owens 2008, 987). Perhaps it is enough to define a service public if it is intentionally and principally non-discriminatory and accountable? Furthermore, if private force is defined as a service that only serves the few, ‘private force’ as a concept has arguably gained an immoral connotation. However, the aim of this argument is to distinguish between what is seen as private actors, commonly defined as non-state actors, and the private nature of the force that is being provided. To rephrase Owens, there are no private or public providers of force, there are only actors that are *made* ‘public’ or ‘private’ by the way they are providing force, based on whether force is serving the ‘common good’ or not.

The corporatization of force within transnational security assemblages

While there are many actors that can be private in that they provide force that

³² This definition is itself discriminatory, and as seen below, the state will be it is used here to draw the line between ‘the population of the territory concerned’ and the others.

only serves an exclusive few, and not the ‘common good’, this does not require the notion of economic profit. A group of people can decide to provide services that protect the group from conceived threats, excluding others. A cooperative enterprise does not require a market as such. A tribe, collective or community can all agree to cooperate for mutual beneficence, and in this inclusion there is also exclusion. Such a mode of organization could extend to the size of the state, or even supra- state structures like alliances. While mutual gain is the bearing principle, profit as such is still an alien in the provision of private force. For example, few would argue that NATO is driven by economic motives. When force is employed, by state or non-state actors, for the purpose of creating or facilitating profit for states, corporations, or other actors, this is the corporatization of force.

As noted, there is also in neo-liberal western democratic states a continuing discourse concerning the application of force within the state to ensure security and prosperity, and there seems today to be an understanding that economic development and security are mutually dependent. Many see free market capitalism as the best way to achieve the common good, and advocates for neo-liberal policies may see such economic ‘development’ as the best way to ensure human security. The threat of, or the use of force by the police or the military against protesters, ‘securitized’ homeless and other groups to protect commercial entities against both physical harm and indirect loss of profit can be seen as corporatization of force in its perhaps most attenuated form. However, this form of corporatization is beyond the scope of this thesis and will only be briefly addressed in the last chapter.³³

³³ An opening question could be: ‘Are the policeman and the security guard guarding the local shopping mall manifestations of the privatization and the corporatization of state and non-state force providers, and to

While the question of motivation is closely linked to the concept of the corporatization of force, the focus in the thesis will be more on the effects rather than the reasons behind these practices. This is not to say that motivations are unimportant, but merely to acknowledge the problem of intentionality, as various actors often have multiple and at times conflicting motives. When Pinkerton was hired by the Carnegie Steel Company to provide strike breakers to the Homestead factories in 1892, it seems clear that economic profit was the mining company's main motivation (Morn 1982, 102). However, the reasons for the authorization and legitimation of Pinkerton's operations by the US state arguably goes beyond purely economic motives. This shows that different actors may have an inclination towards different end goals. While a MNC can see economic profit as an end goal, a state can see economic profit as one form of capital that can be exchanged into political power and/or regime security.³⁴ In this context, it is useful to separate between various forms of capital.

In his analysis of security networks, Dupont (2004) identifies five different forms of capital: Economic capital refers to traditional financial resources, political capital is achieved by the ability to influence governments, cultural capital refers to knowledge and expertise that have accumulated within the specific actor, social capital describes how social relations can be used to influence networks, while symbolic capital refers to the legitimacy the actor has that in turn provides authority over other actors. There is as such an uneven distribution of various forms of capital that is shaping the structure of the assemblage; there are dominating and dominated actors that will try to influence the

what degree is the shopping mall accountable to the country in which it is operating?' Are the operations of the shopping mall only quantitatively and not principally qualitatively different from the operations of Branch Energy in Sierra Leone? This introduces a scale; a *level or degree of* corporatization.

³⁴ A valid question is whether economic profit *ever* is an end goal as such?

assemblage to achieve their goals.³⁵ While Dupont applies the various forms of capital to analyse how the various security actors interact *within* a network or assemblage, these concepts are here also applied to better describe how the actors within these complex assemblages influence both internal and external actors such as other governments or corporations.

While the focus here will be on economic motives, it is important to note that this is not seen as principally more ‘immoral’ than religious, ideological or other motives. As the economic motive is an innate feature of the PMC, this connects the PMI directly to the use of force for economic profit. By acting as ‘investment enablers’ or ‘business enablers’ when they are hired by other corporations, these force providers are creating ‘commercial enclaves’ (Singer 2003). In this sense, the concept of the corporatization of force strongly resembles Ballentine and Sherman’s (2008) concept of the ‘commercialization of security’, where a small part of an area containing economic resources is secured in order to extract these resources, using the profit made to pay the force provider. When a corporate force provider is used by another company to facilitate economic exploitation, there is as such a ‘double corporatization’ of force as both actors gain from these practices. PMCs can in this sense act as both force multipliers and profit multipliers. However, it is important to note that state forces also can be corporatized.

This notion of ‘commercial enclaves’ raises the question of whether the corporation also can be seen as a community that may legitimately claim a need for protection. These commercial enclaves are excluding others, but so is the state as a

³⁵ As shown in the following chapter, EO’s involvement in Sierra Leone was clearly motivated by the prospects of economic capital, EO also possessed political capital by its strong position vis à vis the weak military government. The government provided in turn some level of symbolic capital to EO, while also converting economic capital into political and symbolic capital in order to secure its survival.

territorial entity. Why is this practice here defined as illegitimate? If the corporation is accountable to the locals, is not the use of force for profit a public service, and thus normatively acceptable? While this scenario extends the commercial enclave to also encompass a larger local perimeter, it is still excluding parts of the population within the *state*. While the state as mode of organization might be highly imperfect, it is used here to draw the line between ‘the population of the territory concerned’ as given in the definition of public force, and the others. There is as such no ontological commitment to the state as a preferred mode of political organization; this state- centric perspective is employed for more pragmatic reasons. It is easy to extend the perimeters of the commercial enclave until they correlate with the state’s territorial borders, and define all the state forces as ‘private’ in that they exclude people within the ‘global territory’. However, while a cosmopolitan notion of security might be seen as the ultimate goal, fulfilling the dream of a truly ‘common good’, such a level of analysis is beyond the scope of this project.³⁶

The main point is that economic profit has to be made in a *responsible way*.³⁷ There has to be a notion of accountability, not only to the government directly, but to the people that are affected by the ventures that generate profit and the population as a whole within the state. While *extraction* defines a practice where profit is made in a responsible fashion, *exploitation* denotes the lack of such accountability. However, it must be noted that the line between extraction and exploitation is socially constructed and is affected by dominating norms and events.

³⁶ While Loader and Walker (2007) argue that the democratic state today is best suited in ‘civilizing security’, before security eventually might become a global public good, there is no such claims here.

³⁷ Some would argue that the notion of profit (Capital) is contradictory to the notion of accountability; that profit never can be made in a responsible manner since the capitalist system itself is based upon notions of exploitation.

Such economic ventures described above often involves a range of actors in addition to the force providers. In their analysis of current security practices in Sierra Leone and Nigeria, Abrahamsen and Williams show how various security agents; “consolidate productive enclaves whose economic benefits escape the local populations” (2009, 15). They apply the term ‘global security assemblages’ to describe what they identify as: “...settings where a range of different global and local, public and private security agents and normativities interact, cooperate and compete to produce new institutions, practices and forms of security governance.” (2009, 3).

Drawing on the work of Saskia Sassen, they point to the fact that states themselves have not passively stood by and witnessed the erosion of their authority, rather they have actively taken part in this restructuring and reconfiguration that has provided new frameworks in which the state can operate, strengthening the position of the state’s economic and security capacities, but not necessarily the state in a broader sense, 2009.³⁸ They see a significant change in the current development where these private commercial security actors interact to such an extent that the ‘public/private’ (state/non-state) and global/local distinctions are becoming meaningless.

There is always a risk that in adopting existing conceptualizations, one is prone to ‘conceptual stretching’ –to broaden the meaning and range of these conceptualizations (Sartori 1970, 1034). Is the phenomenon under investigation more correctly identified as

³⁸ However, as Lock (1999, 31) notes, new alliances are being formed during ongoing conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa between sub-state, international and supranational actors, at times bypassing the formal state in the quest to develop competitive production, using force to control economic viable territories. While actors like local warlords clearly benefit from these ‘commercial enclaves’, they will also strive to gain control over the formal state, as this provides a legal cover for the economic exploitation.

a ‘dominant cartel’, or a ‘power elite’ (Musah and Fayemi 2000, 25), or is it a ‘joint venture’ (Pech 1999, 102)? Acknowledging that some of the actors might be ‘global’ in that they operate in most of the world, this is not the focus here. It suffice to state that these networks consist of local, national and international actors. Furthermore, while Abrahamsen and Williams use the term ‘security agents’, this thesis will focus on the force providers *and* the authorizing actors within these assemblages. This thesis will therefore employ the concept of ‘transnational security assemblage’ in order to describe practices where a range of local, national and international state- and non-state actors interact, cooperate and at times compete, producing and authorising new institutions, practices and forms of military and security provision.

The nature of networks or assemblages provides difficulties in drawing a clear line between those within or outside these constructs, and the following cases aim only to show the operation of what is defined as the *main* actors within these assemblages. Furthermore, while these transnational security assemblages contribute to highlight the complex interaction between various force providers and those who benefit from and/or authorize these practices, the following analysis will also focus on the consequences of these practices, as the corporation of force at times have had catastrophic impact on the people within the territory concerned.

Chapter conclusion

This chapter has served as an introduction to the PMI literature. It has shown both the difficulties in providing a valid taxonomy in relation to the non-state military and security industry, and also the difficulties in separating between the state and non-state

force provider on an individual and structural level. It has thus provided a deeper understanding of the topic at hand that will be useful in the following analysis.

By arguing for a specific understanding of ‘public’ and ‘private’, this thesis has taken a different approach to the question of the desirability of the non-state military and security industry. Building on notions of accountability, it argues that non- state force providers per se can be just as admissible as state force providers.

When force is used to exploit economic resources, it is not just performed in an excludable way, thus becoming ‘privatized’ but force has become *corporatized*, where the main goal is economic profit, and not security as such. Acknowledging that various actors have various motives, this chapter has shown how economic exploitation by actors operating within what here is defined as transnational security assemblages, has taken place at the cost of the people within the territory concerned. As such, it has widened the scope from just focusing on the force providers, to also focus on *for whom* force is provided, whether it is the government, the corporation, other institutions or the people within the state.

Chapter 3: Executive Outcomes in Sierra Leone

“It has to come down to whether you want security or not. If you don’t have security, you don’t attract foreign investment, your economy and infrastructure doesn’t develop and therefore you can’t progress”

Lt. Col Tim Spicer, Sandline International³⁹

Introduction

Executive Outcomes’ operations in Sierra Leone between 1995 and 1997 is the first of three cases where the theoretical framework set up in the previous chapter will be applied. The other two are The Royal African Company of England’s operations in the late 17th century on the African West Coast, and the Belgian King Leopold II’s rule over the Congo Free State from 1885 to 1908. These cases will explore how a range of actors from various countries have cooperated, forming transnational security assemblages that have blurred the national/transnational and the public/private distinctions, illuminating the complexity of these practices. These cases will demonstrate that the state can act as a private force provider, while the non-state force provider at times can provide public services. Furthermore, these cases will aim to show that force not only was privatized but also corporatized, creating economic profit for a small elite at the cost of the population within the territory concerned. and while it might seem extreme to compare EO’s operations to King Leopold’s ventures in Congo or RAC in West Africa, this thesis argues that there are strong parallels, although there will be no directly comparative

³⁹ (Francis 1999, 328). Sandline International was closely affiliated with EO.

analysis within the cases. Each case will be structured similarly: After a short introduction, the phenomenon of the corporatization of force will be analysed, identifying the main actors within the specific assemblage and show how they cooperated for economic profit. The second part of the case will then focus on the consequences, before a chapter conclusion brings the analysis to an end.

The history of Sierra Leone is a long and complex one, but a common feature of the colonial and post- independence years is the political instability that have haunted the country.⁴⁰ Most recently, the spread of the civil war in Liberia into Sierra Leone in 1991 led to a prolonged military conflict that has further taken its toll on the country. The international community's involvement in the recent conflict, the role natural resources like diamonds have played, and the link between mining corporations and PMCs have also resulted in widespread scholarly attention, turning Sierra Leone into a much-used test case.⁴¹ While the causes and explanations for the current situation can be traced back to the pre-colonial period, the focus here will be the recent years. The purpose of this case is to demonstrate how the government and the state forces, represented by SLA, were both privatized and corporatized, while a foreign PMC in many ways seemed to provide more public services, even if this arguably was a side effect of their main objective. This chapter will as such follow the line of argument already presented by scholars such as Howe and Francis, but also focus on the de-privileged actors, underlining that the main concern for the people was not if security was provided by the state or a corporation, but that security was provided.

⁴⁰ See Reno (1995) and Fyle (2006) for an introduction to the colonial history of Sierra Leone.

⁴¹ Sierra Leone has recently been used for examining the connection between violence and natural resources (Alao 2007; Le Billon 2005a), the concept of 'weak' or 'failed' states and corruption (Reno 1995; Bates 2008) cultures of youth violence (Richards 1996; Peters and Richards 1998; Rosen 2005; Singer 2006) and as noted the 'privatization' of force and neo-colonial practices (Howe 1998; Francis 1999).

When EO was hired in 1995, it arguably replaced the state forces rather than supported them, and in this aspect Sierra Leone can be seen as an extreme case. However, the practice of hiring PMCs go further back in the history of Sierra Leone, and also countries like Angola, Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) have had similar experiences.⁴² EO played a key role in the conflict in Angola, and this case will therefore also be briefly addressed here. Also the current situation in Sierra Leone will briefly be explored, drawing on the work of Abrahamsen and Williams.

The corporatization of force within a transnational security assemblage

In 1992, only a year after the invasion by the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), Momoh's regime in Sierra Leone was crumbling. The state military forces were demoralized, underpaid and corrupted after years of negligence under Stevens regime, thus giving the enemy an advantage (Keen 1998, 27). A small group of soldiers travelled to Freetown to protest against the mismanagement, but the protest transformed into a coup, and Capt. Valentine Strasser formed a military Junta; the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC) (Pratt 1999, 7). In the following years fighting continued and was especially fierce in mining areas like Kono, where both the Republic of Sierra Leone Military Forces (RSLMF), in effect the Sierra Leone Army (SLA) and the RUF looted the mines (Kachikwu 2004, 176). Initially, the Sierra Leoneans saw the NPRC as the beginning of the end of the country's history of political mismanagement, believing in the promised reforms and democratization. However, the junta's policy of enlisting child

⁴² See Drohan (2004) and Abrahamsen and Williams (2009) for an introduction to the Branch Group involvement in DRC and Shell's operations in Nigeria.

soldiers for the SLA, and the use of the SLA to extract and smuggle diamonds crushed these hopes (Pratt 1999). The SLA soldiers became known as ‘sobels’; ‘soldier rebels’; soldiers by day and rebel bandits by night, and some also cooperated with RUF and even fought each other (Cilliers and Mason 1999; Zack-Williams 1997, 375; Howe 1998, 314). These men looted not only the country for diamonds, but also the people, further delegitimizing the SLA as a ‘public’ force provider. They were joined by the ‘pobers’; the police robbers, and these forces were often just as brutal as the RUF (Cilliers and Mason 1999, 23). Strasser also ordered the SLA to work in the Kono mines in order to create economic profit, and these practices show that the Sierra Leone state forces were focused on providing economic profit for themselves and the junta, often at the cost of the public. The Sierra Leone state forces were therefore not only privatized, but also corporatized.

In 1995 the situation went from bad to worse when RUF took over the Kangari Hills diamond area and closed down Sierra Rutile; a diamond company jointly owned by Consolidated Rutile based in Brisbane, and Nord Resources from the US. RUF also closed down Sierra Leone Ore And Metal Co (SIEROMCO); a Swiss-owned bauxite mine, and these two operations accounted for no less than 57% of Sierra Leone's export earnings (Nossal 1998, 28; Francis 1999, 325). RUF forces were now close to the capital Freetown, and the government's calculations that about 20% of the SLA forces were disloyal or directly criminal, led the government into hiring Gurkha Security Group (GSG); a Channel Islands based PMC consisting of mainly ex-Gurkha soldiers (Pratt 1999, 8; Singer 2003, 112).⁴³ This company became thus the first corporate force

⁴³ GSG also operated in Angola. In 1991, it was contracted by Oderbrecht Mining Services Inc. to provide a fully integrated security team in order to prevent the theft of diamonds (Vines 1999, 129).

provider within this specific transnational security assemblage. The other main actors were the NPRC junta, the SLA, and the mining companies. GSG was hired through an English company; J & S Franklin, and the mission was to protect Sierra Rutile's assets and train the Sierra Leone Special Forces and military cadets. The company sent fifty-eight men, headed by Robert Mackenzie; an American veteran from Vietnam, Rhodesia and Croatia. However, before the company had made any real progress, a unit was caught in a RUF ambush and seven men, including MacKenzie, were killed. The episode contributed to the withdrawal of the company in April, and Strasser then turned to EO (Alao 2007, 139; Singer 2003, 112). While it is unclear how GSG was financed, and how close the ties between the company and the mining industry was, this is well-documented in the case of EO.

Executive Outcomes in Sierra Leone

Strasser used Tony Buckingham, one of the leading businessmen within the Branch/Heritage group, as contact person when hiring EO. EO originated from the South African Defence Forces and had risen to fame shortly before when it conducted successful operations against the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) in 1994. By securing Soyo, an important industrial area for Sonagal; the Angolan national oil company, and Heritage Oil; a company controlled by the same Buckingham, EO had proven its military capabilities (Howe 1998, 312). Although Soyo later fell into the control of UNITA, the operation contributed to the signing of a contract between EO and the Angolan government to train the state army. The contract was allegedly brokered by Buckingham and Simon Mann, and EO was to receive payment by

state revenues that in turn were originating from Ranger Oil; a company controlled by Buckingham, in the exchange for oil and mineral concessions (Singer 2003, 109). Ranger Oil was a part of the Plaza 107 Group consisting of over fifteen companies that all shared the same phone, while EO was part of a similar cornucopia of companies controlled by Strategic Resource Corporation (SRC) located in the UK (Pech 1999, 90).⁴⁴ These corporate actors formed, together with the military junta, a transnational security assemblage that created economic profit for both EO, the extraction companies and the Angolan government. It therefore also contributed in securing the Angolan regime. While it is clear that force was provided to specific corporations in order to make profit, it is unclear to what degree this economic profit also was redistributed to the population. The Lusaka peace accord between UNITA and the Angolan government can also be seen as an indicator that the country as a whole benefited from EO's operations. However, for the company and its mining affiliates, it can still be argued that economic profit, and not peace as such was the main motivation. Furthermore, the strong political capital that these mining corporations had in relation to the government increased the danger of exploitation; that these corporations operated under special (tax) conditions where little or nothing of the profit was used to improve the environment of the people directly concerned or the population as a whole.⁴⁵

In Sierra Leone, the junta was unable to pay up front, but Buckingham agreed to bankroll the operation in exchange for diamond concessions in the Kono district, which

⁴⁴ See Appendix A, B and C. While EO and Sandline International now is defunct, the number of affiliated companies which still operate is uncertain.

⁴⁵ The killing of four employees of Sociedade de Desenvolvimento Mineiro de Angola (SDM), in Angola, and the use of about five hundred guards to protect about two hundred workers, also illustrate the extreme lengths these mining companies are willing to go in terms of exposing their people to risk and also in terms of willingness to pay for the security in order to be able to operate (Cilliers and Mason 1999, 6).

was still controlled by the RUF. The first contract was for the hiring of 160 men at a cost of \$15 million, but additional contracts raised the cost to a total of \$35 million (Singer 2003, 112). The main goal was to secure the government by clearing the capital and taking control over the economically productive parts of the country. Within just weeks, EO managed to drive RUF back, using helicopters and new tactics, and by January 1996, the Kono district and Sierra Rutile and the Kangari Hills diamond area were conquered. These areas were not only important for the Junta: EO was as noted reliant upon the income from the Kono mining operations in order to get paid. An EO subsidiary named Lifeguard was therefore deployed in order to provide security to the Sierra Rutile mine (Nossal 1998, 28).

EO cooperated with and trained the Kamajor militia, the largest actor within the governmental Civil Defence Forces (CDF), and this force acted in many places as a welcome replacement for SLA (Zach-Williams 1997, 375; Pratt 1999, 7).⁴⁶ While EO contributed with expertise in tactics such as night raids and new weapons, the Kamajors contributed with their cultural capital including knowledge of the terrain in which they operated and skills as trackers and scouts, and together these force providers were able to secure the regime (Howe 2004, 204; Francis 1999, 330; Douglas 1999, 183). In this sense, EO did not only replace GSG as a corporate force provider within an existing transnational security assemblage, it also arguable replaced the inefficient SLA.

The combined forces of EO and the Kamajors forced RUF into the periphery, and democratic elections were held in March 1996. EO finally withdrew in January 1997 after

⁴⁶ The Kamajors had connections to the SLA, personified in Deputy Minister of Defence Samuel Hinga Norman, who also was the leader of the Kamajors. Within a short period of time, the stature of the Kamajors rose from 'ethnic hunters' to quasi-national army. But the Kamajors also fought against the unruly SLA. Later, the Kamajors have been accused of several atrocities, and Hinga Norman was arrested after the war. The Kamajors are still operating in Sierra Leone (Zack-Williams 1997, 375; Fyle 2006, 85).

pressure from the IMF (Nossal 1998; Alao 2007; Howe 2004).⁴⁷ With the elections there was again a hope of achieving democracy and stability in the country, but only ninety-five days after EO was forced to leave, Kabbah; the newly elected president, was toppled in another coup (Singer 2003, 114). The Kabbah government turned to Sandline International, a PMC affiliated with the Plaza 107 group, in order to get back in power. Sandline was headed by the now infamous Simon Mann; who was still involved with EO. The operation was meant to be financed by Rakesh Saxena; a 'creative' Thai businessman, who was promised diamond concessions for his Vancouver based company; Diamond Works (Francis 1999, 328).⁴⁸ While Kabbah finally was reinstalled in 1998 with the help of the Kamajors and ECOMOG, a regional peace keeping force, the role Sandline International played was minimal.

In their analysis of the security situation of Sierra Leone today, Abrahamsen and Williams (2009) use the operations of Koidu Holdings; a subsidiary company of Diamond Works and Branch Energy, to demonstrate the assembled character of the actors involved. The Koidu mine area is guarded by a transnational PSC named Group4Securitor. Furthermore, a special police force provides armed security, and this unit is partly financed by the mining company. Both the police force and the guards from Group4Securitor are under operational control of seven security experts employed by Koidu Holdings, and patrols are made with a mix of personnel from Koidu Holdings and the police. This shows the conflation between state and non-state force providers and the horizontal nature of the assemblage, where various actors have different levels of power and authority. Abrahamsen and Williams argue that these 'private' practices are more

⁴⁷ By this time, Strasser had already been toppled in coup within the NPRC.

⁴⁸ See Ch. 8 in Drohan (2004) '*Making a Killing*' for an introduction to the 'Sandline affair.'

seen as a re-articulation of security where the state has an important legal and integrating role. However, by facilitating foreign investment by providing such tailored security solutions to mining companies, there is a danger that these companies can use their political capital vis á vis the government to impose agreements that are in the interest of the company and not the country as such. Furthermore, a valid question is if the provision of security to these commercial enclaves affect the provision of security to the population as a whole, or if security is provided in the same manner outside these commercial enclaves.

The consequences – for whom was force provided?

The war in Sierra Leone had devastated the country by 1995. One and a half million of a population of only four million had become refugees, and about fifteen thousand had been killed (Howe 1998, 313). The SLA was officially fighting RUF, but both sides seemed to be more concerned with the looting of the country's resources than actually defeating the enemy. The SLA was no public force provider, as it was more seen as a threat to the civilians, and it was often hard to distinguish between SLA and the much-feared RUF (Pratt 1999, 7). The corruption and mismanagement within SLA meant that the state army had become not only criminalized but also corporatized; serving an economic agenda at the cost of the people. Also the Kamajors took occasionally part in the looting of abandoned houses (Human Rights Watch 1999).⁴⁹ RUF had no clear ideology, and was seen more as a brutal criminal group than a political militia.⁵⁰ The

⁴⁹ The Human Rights Watch report focuses on events taking place in the attack of Freetown in 1999, but similar incidents have been reported from the time EO operated in the country as well.

⁵⁰ RUF did not proclaim any ideological program until 1995, and this program was allegedly

group became famous for its notoriously ruthless treatment of their enemies and civilians, decapitating and displaying heads, and cutting of limbs such as hands, ears, feet or genitals of the living (Pratt 1999). There were even units that made various forms of murder and torture into their trademark, like the Burn House Unit, the Cut Hands Commando, the Blood Shed Squad, and the Kill Man No Blood unit, whose method was to beat people to death without shedding blood, or the Born Naked Squad, who stripped their victims before killing them (Human Rights Watch 1999).

Within this context, the arrival of EO can be said to be the best thing that had happened to Sierra Leone in a long time. Here was a highly professional force provider who effectively drew RUF back, retook the country's commercial enclaves, and also contributed to a situation where democratic elections could be held. EO also treated the civilians in accordance with international conventions, and many Sierra Leoneans saw EO as saints (Singer 2003, 101).⁵¹ Although EO's role in the process leading up the elections is contested, EO acted within this context as a public force provider, providing an increased level of security to the population where it operated, and Sierra Leone can in this context be seen as a 'successful' case, demonstrating the legitimacy and accountability of a non-state force provider (O'Brien 1998, 89). EO also flew SLA child soldiers to Freetown, where they were taken care of by the Nahims project, bolstering the company's chivalrous image (Harding 1997, 92). Such behaviour and the company's official policy of only working for internationally recognized governments also provided EO with some international support (O'Brien 1998, 87; Howe 1998, 316). While Musah

drafted by an employee of International Alert (Pratt 1999, 7).

⁵¹ Some felt so indebted to the EO personnel, who they believed had come in a gesture of pan- African generosity, that they prayed for them at the mosque (Rubin 1997, 3). But as Francis notes, there were also instances where both GSG and EO were involved in episodes where also civilians were killed and rebels were tortured (Francis 1999, 332).

and Fayemi (2000, 235) argue that the price of the operation had to be paid by the Sierra Leone people, one can argue as Singer (2003, 114) that \$35 million, or about one third of the state's military budget, was a reasonable price to pay for the end of a devastating civil war. Furthermore, Sierra Leone did not experience any long-term stability, but this can not be blamed on EO alone, as the company left the country before the following coup.

The main problem of the operations of EO was not that it was paid, but that it was primarily accountable to the military junta and the mining industry, in which it also had economic interests.⁵² In Sierra Leone, Branch Energy was given the rights to mine in the Kono district only three months after EO started its operations.⁵³ It is unclear how much the Branch Group made in this period, or how these revenues were distributed by the newly elected government, but it is estimated that EO's operations facilitated the granting of diamond concessions at a value of \$3 billion (Howe 2004, 206). Acknowledging that the line between extraction and exploitation is socially constructed, it can be argued within this context that EO as a force provider was corporatized. The company facilitated the exploitation of the country's resources that benefited the mining companies, the government and EO itself, while the population remained poor.⁵⁴ The 'public' nature of EO's operations have also been questioned with regard to the provision of security: As Montauge states: "those civilians unfortunate enough to be living outside of [mineral rich

⁵² EO owned 60% of the shares in Branch Mining (Reno 1997, 181). This alludes to that EO, Sandline International and GSG had a stronger commitment to their respective parent MNCs than the African authorities (Howe 1998, 317).

⁵³ Branch Energy was to pay \$250 000 annually to the government in rent, of which \$50 000 was to a prominent politician. The government also took 5% of the value of the diamonds extracted, and 37,5% of the net profits (Francis 1999, 331).

⁵⁴ In 2008, Sierra Leone was last of 179 countries on the UN's human development index for the second year in a row. Although it is clear that the war is the main cause for this, it also shows that the country has not been able to distribute the income created by its natural resources to a wider population (IRIN 2008).

enclaves of Kono and the Kangari Hills] would have been foolish to count on Executive Outcomes protection” (2002, 233).

The military superiority of EO when acting as a force multiplier for the Kamajor militia meant that these forces were vastly more effective in securing the regime and the mining areas, and this had as noted clearly positive effects on the overall security. However, this can be seen as a side-effect, as the main interest was the economic resources in the commercial mining enclaves, and not the security of the whole country (Francis 1999, 333).⁵⁵ In this sense EO can be compared to SLA, where the goal was essentially the same, but where EO was more effective and was able to achieve its goal without directly exploiting the people. While EO clearly treated the population better and should be praised for this, it also took advantage of a desperate military junta which was forced to mortgage its mineral resources in exchange for regime security. The consortium of force providers and foreign extraction companies were given lucrative agreements that in many respects installed these as informal sovereigns, controlling both the income and the provision of force (Francis 1999, 332). Such elite accommodations threatens to transform the government into a shadow or ‘rentier’ state that undermines the formal state and excludes the population from political participation and the country’s resources (Reno 1995, 187). This is also the case in today’s Sierra Leone, although these practices today seem to be more attenuated. Furthermore, as Francis (1999, 334) notes, these PMCs can act as foreign policy proxies, providing force in places where an external state

⁵⁵ The child soldiers transported to Freetown were all from the Kono diamond district (Harding 1997, 93).

has political, economic and/or military interests, but does not want to deploy its own state forces.⁵⁶

Chapter conclusion

By analysing EO's operations in Sierra Leone, this chapter has demonstrated that the common understanding of the state as a principally 'public' provider of force is faulty. Furthermore, it has shown how a non-state actor can provide force in a more public way. While the SLA, the police and RUF looted the diamond mines and the population, EO was able to create some level of security where it operated, and contributed to the following democratic elections. This analysis has also demonstrated the conflation of state and non-state providers of force as EO also coopered with the Kamajor militia, and that GSG was cooperating with the SLA. It has also shown the blurring of the national/transnational distinction as the actors forming the assemblage were both international, national and local.

While it can be argued that EO proved the effectiveness of a PMC in providing security and stability in low intensity conflicts, this chapter argues that EO and the mining companies took advantage of the military junta, which mortgaged its natural resources for regime security. EO was as such not accountable to the people, but to the government, and directly linked to the mining industry. While the security situation was improved under EO's operations, this is therefore seen as a positive side-effect that also further legitimized its operations. In this way, also EO and its affiliates looted the

⁵⁶ Acknowledging the role of other actors such as the IMF, The world bank or the UK government, these actors involvement in Sierra Leone will not be addressed here. This argument is summarized in chapter 1. See Howe (1998), Francis (1999) and Hirsch (2001) for further elaboration.

diamond mines, but this took place within a legal framework provided by an authoritarian military government. Such arrangements also principally undermine prospects of a democratic state as the government can continue to operate without public support. In this sense, there was and arguably still is a 'double' corporatization of force where both the corporate force providers and the mining corporations make economic profit at the cost of the people, thus denoting exploitative practices.

Chapter 4: The Royal African Company of England

“The Necessity of Forts to carry on the Trade is *publicly owned*; that Necessity is apparent: For the Country is Barbarous, Perfidious, Bloody and Cruel.”

The Royal African Company, 1712

Introduction

The Royal African Company of England (RAC) is here chosen to represent practices that were common in the pre-colonial era: the time before the European powers officially claimed the majority of Africa as colonies. As with the case of Sierra Leone, the purpose of this case is to show the conflation of state and non-state force providers. It will demonstrate how a public/private entity like the RAC was able to operate with the aid of a range of actors that came together in order to create or facilitate economic profit without concern for public security. The analysis will show the importance of the provision of force in the operations of a specific chartered company, highlighting not only the pervasiveness and complexity of these practices, but also the consequences. This will further illustrate that the main question is not who provides force, but for whom force is provided.

Ventures to Africa driven by economic ambitions had been going on for centuries, involving both European and other nations trading in goods such as ivory, silver, gold, timber and slaves. However, the cultivation of sugar, tobacco and cotton in the ‘New World’ that developed in the end of the 17th century created a new market for the existing slave trade that seemed insatiable (Davies 1957, 15). While the Portuguese had

dominated West Africa since the early 15th century, the 17th century saw the proliferation of actors from different nations, and RAC is therefore chosen to represent practices that were widely supported in Europe. While the company endured for many years, the period between inception in 1672 to 1712 will be the focus here. That year an act was passed that settled the formalities between the company and its creditors, the company now for all purposes insolvent.⁵⁷ Cape Coast Castle will here be used as illustration throughout the chapter, but similar practices were common at the other forts and factories as well. As in the case of Sierra Leone, the first section will identify the various force providers and other actors that constituted this transnational security assemblage, while the last part will further explore for whom force was provided.

The corporatization of force within a transnational security assemblage

While competition over trading privileges in Africa was fierce among the European nations, a full- scale conquest of the West African territories was regarded as at least impracticable and uneconomic, if not impossible for often already strained European governments. Many European nations established therefore privileged companies which also possessed military capabilities (Davies 1957, 16). A charter was seen as essential for several reasons: it gave the company political support and official licence, enabled the company to legally seize extraterritorial property and land, provided protection against other countries in that impediments or attacks could result in retaliation from their home states, and last but not least; larger companies were better protected against ‘rampaging

⁵⁷ RAC was dissolved in 1752, but only in order to re-emerge as the ‘Company of Merchants Trading to Africa’, which continued to operate until slave trade was abolished in 1833 (Cawston and Keane 1896, 235).

natives', other Europeans and pirates.⁵⁸ According to Thomson; "Mercantile companies were, as a rule, granted full sovereign powers. In addition to their economic privileges of a monopoly on trade with a given region or in a particular commodity and the right to export bullion, they could raise an army or a navy, build forts, make treaties, make war, govern their fellow nationals, and coin their own money" (1994, 35).

The purpose of RAC was to establish a national monopoly of trade to West Africa, representing England's commercial and political ambitions in the region much like the more famous East India Company, or the Hudson Bay Company which operated in today's Canada and United States. The company had to protect its ships against pirates, privateers and enemy navies, and it seized interlopers whenever possible.⁵⁹ When establishing official relations with the natives it made new allies, but often also new enemies. The charter states: "[The Company]... shall and may have the ordering rule and government of all such forts factories and plantations as now are or shall be at any time hereafter settled by or under the said Company within the parts of Africa aforementioned, and also full power to make and declare peace and war with any of the heathen nations that are or shall be natives of any countries within the said territories [Guinea]" (Carr 1913, 191).

The company needed military capabilities in order to effectively take advantage of these extensive privileges and also in order to defend itself. These capabilities were provided by a range of state and non-state providers of force. The main supporter of the company was the English crown, providing not only military capabilities both also

⁵⁸ The Dutch West India Company was '*established for doing Spain as much damage as possible*' and required thus necessary offensive military capabilities (Thomson 1994, 36).

⁵⁹ Interlopers were here generally ship- based smugglers, mainly trading in slaves.

economic and political capital. The other main ‘actor’ within this transnational security assemblage was the various native kings and ‘merchant princes’ that cooperated with RAC in West Africa. In addition, RAC itself also hired foreign soldiers and various other individuals to perform military and commercial duties. Acknowledging that the plantation owners in the West Indies and Americas were the main customers of the slave trade and made profits from this trade, they did not provide any force to facilitate RAC’s operations apart from that necessary to contain the slaves upon arrival, and is therefore here defined as an external actor.⁶⁰

The role of James the Duke of York and English authorities

The support from English authorities was crucial for RAC operations and went beyond just granting the company a charter: Both King Charles II and his brother, James the Duke of York and several ministers and courtiers had interests in the company (Davies 1957, 60). James also acted as patronage and governor for the company from its inception and until 1685 when he became King James II (Robert 1969, 138; Turner 1948, 234). The Duke never took any active part in the daily affairs of RAC, but his position provided both symbolic and social capital that further legitimized the company domestically and abroad.⁶¹

While some of these notable shareholders might have joined the company in order to align themselves with the Court or for other socio-political reasons, the main

⁶⁰ It should be noted in this context that these plantations formed similar ‘commercial enclaves’ where humans were exploited in order to make profit. RAC did have local agents in the West Indies in places such as Barbados, but their main focus was to sell the slaves as quickly as possible (Law 1997, ix; Davies 1957, 294).

⁶¹ The Duke was also the largest shareholder with his investment of £3000.

motivation for the majority of the shareholders was the prospect of economic profit like that created by the East India Company.⁶² The Court used the economic profit created by RAC to gain independence from the parliament since this income was not allocated by the parliament as most of the Court's revenues.⁶³ The Duke acted both in an official and in a personal role, where both his political and economic capital became closely connected to the success of RAC's ventures, thus further conflating the distinction between non-state and state actors.

The English authorities also provided military capabilities to RAC. The Navy sent five ships to the African west coast between 1672 and 1688, capturing seven interlopers in total (Carlos and Kruse 1996, 305).⁶⁴ In this sense, the Navy, a state force provider, was corporatized by ensuring RAC's profitability as it protected its trading monopoly. These practices directly harmed the English merchants which were denied access to these areas, and many complained to Parliament. Although it can be argued that this trade was vital for England as a nation in order to maintain its position as one of the dominant global nations, it was also economic motives behind these practices, and RAC as a company benefited clearly from these practices. The Admiralty also arranged convoys to escort English merchant ships in the nine-year war in 1689-97 and the following war in

⁶² See Davies (1957, 47-96) for a full account of the investors involved in the company in the early years. See also the charter for a list of the original underwriters that includes John Locke (Carr 1913, 188).

⁶³ The close relationship between RAC and the Court is also reflected in the company's motto: 'regio floret patricinio commercium, commercium regnum' or 'commerce flourishes with royal protection, and the kingdom with commerce' (Hoxby 1999, 616).

⁶⁴ In 1679, an episode where the King had lent a man-o-war to the company caused a political scandal when it was used as an argument for denying James succession to the throne. The *Hunter* had seized two interlopers and subsequently sold the prize, dividing the income between the King and the company (Davies 1957, 106).

1702-13, but these efforts proved of little aid.⁶⁵ The various wars also meant that the company had to spend more money on arming their ships: Guns were mounted, gunners employed and firearms were procured to the crew, thus increasing the military capabilities significantly. These forces were internal to the company, making it into a force provider itself.⁶⁶

This short summary of the English navy's support of RAC shows that although the military aid given to RAC at times was limited and inadequate, the navy as a state force provider was still corporatized, as the main goal of these operations was to ensure that RAC made money, not only protecting it against foreign enemies, but also from English merchants who were excluded from trading in this region. In addition to the excluded English merchants, the principal losers of these monopolistic practices were the poor and inarticulate in England; those who had to bear the costs when a few commercial actors controlled prices (Davies 1957, 104).

The Royal African Company of England in West Africa

In West Africa, the company cooperated closely with various native kings, chiefs and 'merchant princes' in order to facilitate its operations. It is here worth noting that the

⁶⁵ The enemy was often French privateers operating from such various places as St. Mao, Senegal, Martinique and Guadeloupe, making it impossible to provide effective protection. RAC lost 45 of a total of 183 ships in the period of 1689-97 and 1702-08 to the French (Davies 1957, 206). Even before the wars, RAC ships had been captured by pirates, as in 1683 when the *Lisbon Merchant* was plundered, but the escalation of pirate activity during the later years in the 1689-97 war led the Navy to send a man-of-war to the African coast (Davies 1957, 211).

⁶⁶ It is natural to assume that the company also were supported by ground troops in Africa, especially during the European wars. However, it is unclear if the 'soldiers' and 'officers' located at the various forts in this period were regular English soldiers, or part of a 'company army' What is clear is that many of the prominent Englishmen sent to Africa had military backgrounds, as they often upheld their titles (Davies 1957, 245).

charter mentions ‘heathen nations’ and ‘natives of any countries’. Although the English in this era often explored ‘unchartered land’, using expressions like ‘terra incognita’, or ‘terra nullius’; ‘unknown land’, or ‘land without sovereign’, they identified and to a certain degree recognised the political landscape of West Africa. This is manifested by a Dutch map from 1629 that also were used by the English, listing forty-three different states or ‘landschappen’ on the Gold Coast divided by geography as well as political rule (Daaku 1970, 145; Kea 1982, 28).⁶⁷ While RAC’s operations within this political heterogeneous region challenges the state-centric perspective that forms the basis for the definition of the corporatization of force, this area known as Guinea at the time will here be used to draw the line between the *population within the territory concerned* and those outside.

RAC was in the possession of sixteen forts and factories on the Gold Coast between 1673 and 1713 (Davies 1957, 248). Cape Coast Castle was after the Dutch Elmina Castle the strongest fortification and served therefore as headquarter.⁶⁸ These forts and factories provided the company with protection against natives and hostile Europeans, acting as commercial enclaves where trade in slaves and other commodities could be carried out. At Cape Coast, there was also an underground prison that could house about a thousand slaves, and this reduced the danger of any uprising while they were in transit. To safeguard against the locals, there was a small garrison of four to six

⁶⁷ See map Appendix D. While the map was in many ways inaccurate, it provided a useful description of the area, also listing the states rich on gold, and if the people were ‘simple’, ‘delicate’ ‘rascal’ or ‘thievish’ (Daaku 1970, 199; Kea 1982, 27).

⁶⁸ The other forts were Charles Fort at Anomabu, James Fort at Accra, Dixcove, Sekondi, Komenda and Winnebah, while Fredrixborg (Fort Royal) was bought from the Danish in 1688 (Davies 1957 241-247; Lawrence 1963, 186). See Davies (1957, 246-48) for a complete list of RAC forts and personnel in these early years. While most forts were of a commercial nature, the purchase of Fredrixborg was based on its military importance (Law 2001, 141).

guns and as many men as needed to "...keep the Blacks in the town in better awe, as well as to defend them from all other Blacks their enemies" (Lawrence 1963, 189).

The number of soldiers stationed at Cape Coast fluctuated heavily as a result of a high mortality rate, desertions and irregular reinforcements.⁶⁹ This forced RAC to hire Dutch, Irish, French and Portuguese men to serve as soldiers, artisans and traders (Davies 1957, 242). These actors contributed thus to the transnational character of this security assemblage. The hiring procedures are unclear, but it seems that there was no formal agreements with the other European states in the employment of these soldiers. As such, these men were hired on an individual level, and there was no known corporate entity providing force as in the case of Sierra Leone apart from RAC itself.

The company also employed a number of 'gromettoes'; castle slaves that differed from the hired African artisans in that they received no salary. The gromettoes were generally not sold, but worked for the company their whole life, conducting various duties such as guarding the other slaves brought in for shipment, trading in gold and slaves with merchants in the interior and serving as soldiers to defend the forts. New gromettoes arrived at Cape Coast Castle, where they were trained and then if needed transferred to the smaller forts.⁷⁰ As the RAC factor in Gambia wrote in 1716: "I must needs Confess I have always had ye good fortune to prevent their [the slaves' rebellious] design, the Slaves informing the Inhabitant Gromiettoes of their Designs, who have So

⁶⁹ The life expectancy for Europeans was between four and five years and it remained low: Of two companies of regular British soldiers arriving in 1823, only one man was alive at the end of the next year (Lawrence 1963, 63). As Davies (1957, 257) states: "For most men, West Africa was a place to get away from or to die in."

⁷⁰ It is not clear whether the gromettoes providing for the security were armed or not, but Lawrence's translation of gromettoes as 'African mercenaries', organized with their own officers and in the pay of RAC, together with the statement by RAC to use "the most fitt persons you can, such as understand armes if to be gott" makes this likely (Lawrence 1963, 185; Eltis 2000, 227).

much Affection for you Hon's Interest, that they always discover that their Designs to me, Whether out of fear, Love or interest I cannot say" (Eltis 2000, 227).

Slaves were also used by the Europeans to exercise control on their ships. Some slaves were appointed as 'guardians', given "a cat or nine tails as a badge of his office" and enjoyed certain privileges on the voyage. In return, they slept among the other slaves, spying and reporting any plans of uprising and maintained general order (Eltis 2000, 229).⁷¹ The crucial point here is that some of the force providers that constituted this security assemblage were themselves forced to partake by a more powerful actor within the assemblage; there were dominating and dominated actors. Also powerful Africans such as the 'merchant princes' described below used slaves in their personal armies.

The Europeans quickly realized that there was a need for additional forces to maintain control over the various town populations and to defend them against external enemies, and they adopted policies of detribalization in order to further strengthen the relationship between fort and town (Daaku 1970, 53).⁷² These town militias consisted of young men of lower class and acted also as a police and construction force in peacetime. They seem to have had an integrating effect in these cities, cooperating with the castle slaves at the forts, and at Cape Coast they were also paid in gunpowder and spirits by RAC (Kea 1982, 132). In this sense, the company acted as a public force provider for the people within these commercial enclaves, reinforcing or replacing existing local institutions. Normally there was a separation between these town militias of commoners and the administrative force which consisted of the native rulers' personal gendarmes,

⁷¹ The guardians are not known to have had firearms, but it is still a mystery that out of 383 recorded uprisings on slave ships, none were started by the guardians, especially when one considers that they were sold as the rest upon arrival (Eltis 2000, 229).

⁷² It is believed that the town of Cape Coast in 1690 could raise a force of around four hundred native men (Davies 1957, 279; Kea 1982, 38).

slave soldiers and hired African mercenaries.⁷³ However, sometimes these forces merged into so-called ‘bendefoes’, thus conflating the company’s forces with local authorities’ forces. In this way the company tried to mitigate risk by allying with local authorities and adopting strategies that focused narrowly on protecting their property and personnel—putting in physical security systems and engaging or establishing local forces (Avant and Haufler 2009, 26).

Included in this security assemblage were the ‘merchant princes’; nobles who traded with chartered companies, natives and interlopers. This elite of about a hundred merchants and brokers made their fortunes while the others in these ‘central places’ normally remained poor (Kea 1982). At Cape Coast, a mulatto named Edward Barter was at the height of his career the unofficial ruler, controlling all trade in the area. He was educated in England and employed by RAC, using his experience for the best of the company. He also had a miniature fort with cannons, and a personal army of free men and slaves, which he used in the service of the English (Daaku 1970, 99).⁷⁴

The number of force providers and other actors involved in this security assemblage meant that authority was disaggregated. This overview also demonstrates that these chartered companies disrupted the modern distinction between public and private, and state and non-state: The English state provided force that facilitated RAC’s operations, RAC itself hired foreign soldiers and Africans, and used slaves. While it is clear that some of the actors also had political and other motives, the main goal of many seems to have been economic profit, and the slave trade clearly shows that these practices

⁷³ The use of ‘mercenaries’ were common practice in African society, and in 1614, the ruler of Accra even hired Dutch sailors to fight. In Cape Coast there was only a town militia consisting of two companies of commoner soldiers, the ‘yellow coats’ and ‘red coats’ (Kea 1982).

⁷⁴ At Komenda, the English had similar arrangements with John Kabes, a merchant prince who in 1711 also assisted in the Anglo-Dutch attack on John Konny; another merchant prince (Daaku 1970).

directly harmed the population in Africa, and served an elite both in Africa and England. In this sense force was arguably not only privatized but also corporatized.

The consequences – for whom was force provided?

A new market for slaves, gold and other commodities, the introduction of firearms and European competition changed West African society profoundly. Friendship with the Europeans granted some native actors privileges over their rivals. Weaker states or ‘landschappen’ were conquered by the more powerful, and new powers arose, catalysed by the procurement of firearms (Daaku 1970, 5; Kea 1982, 324). It was also paramount that the companies had good relations with the natives, or there could be no trade.⁷⁵ The combined military strength of the natives were at all times sufficient to drive the Europeans out, and they had to rely on diplomacy, bribery, alliances and inter-African disputes in order to maintain their presence.

With one exception, the normal procedure in the erection of a fort was that the European company received an invitation from the local authority.⁷⁶ In return, the companies became a source of income and they promised to provide protection against the native’s enemies. A letter written 25 April 1683 by Parris, RAC’s head factor at Sekondi, reads: “I was by the natives welcom’d on shoare and have gotten free possession of the Royall Companys factory, but the Dutch [are] shamefully turn’d out

⁷⁵ While Sir John Hawkins, an English buccaneer, made good profit by raiding the Gold Coast and capturing slaves himself, such practices ruined the relations to the natives and were therefore the exception (Robert 1969, 132).

⁷⁶ The exception was the erection of a fort at Keta by a Danish Officer, justifying the act, which was intended to ensure a Danish trading monopoly, by stating that the fort also could serve as refuge for the natives in case of war. The area could be given as a gift, be bought, or more commonly; be leased for an annual rent (Lawrence 1963, 66; Davies 1957, 282).

doores, being not lookt upon, all the Blacks promising to be true and honest to the English, hoping they will build a fort with a few gunns and [saying] that wee shall not want trade” (Law 1997, 3). These obligations were also fulfilled in practice: Extra outworks were often built on the forts to accommodate the natives in case of war. Also, when the English fort in Dixcove was attacked in 1750, the governor sent the native civilians by ship to another fort in order to take refuge. However, where no forts existed, no such guarantees could be provided. The fort became therefore the manifestation of the contractual agreement between the natives and the European company, where the company sought to gain monopoly in trade in that area.⁷⁷ As such, the fort increased the company’s symbolic and social capital in addition to its military capabilities; in principle giving the specific company an advantage over other traders and interlopers. In this context, the arrival of European trading companies like RAC actually increased the level of security for some native actors.

Once the outposts were established, RAC used the high costs of maintaining and manning the forts as an argument in support of its monopoly of trade (Thomson 1994, 37). It operated as such as both the investor and the ‘investment enabler’, providing security for its traders and associates in cooperation with other force providers. Many natives also saw the forts as a place to make their fortune, and cities grew up or expanded outside the walls. These towns became parts of urban economic networks, acting as ‘central places’; where the collection, concentration and distribution of goods took place (Kea 1982, 51). While only a limited number of natives were hired on a full time basis,

⁷⁷ The agreement between the Brandenburg company and the chiefs of Eastern Nzima states: “You bound yourselves by oath to trade with no one whomsoever except Our ships and people, also to bring the neighbouring places in with you into such an arrangement, and to indicate to Our officers a site whereon to build a fort, and to accept us as your protector” (Lawrence 1963, 66).

canoe men, business agents, negotiators, interpreters and traders all benefited in various ways by the European presence (Lawrence 1963, 67-69; Daaku 1970, 96). In this respect, West African society became divided in two, where some natives increased their political and economic capital by collaborating with European chartered companies like RAC. The other part was the periphery; those who had no connections to the Europeans and who in worst case became the target for more powerful natives and turned into a commodity as slaves.

The slaves were generally prisoners of African wars, criminals or debtors, and were brought down to the river deltas from the interior. While many natives were engaged in trade with the Europeans, only kings and nobles were entitled to slaves. This arrangement provided further wealth and prestige for this elite (Daaku 1970, 32; Kea 1982, 101).⁷⁸ Other nobles administrated the gold production from fortified settlements, controlling a labour force of slaves, bonded men and commoners (Kea 1982, 202). The brutal way natural resources like gold was extracted and the trading of slaves clearly shows that force was used to facilitate economic profit at the cost of the unprivileged within this region. As noted, also the company slave soldiers were without any form of security themselves. It is important to note that slave trade had existed long before the Europeans came to Africa, and companies like RAC can not be blamed for the existence of such arrangements. However, their presence further enforced such practices, as competition over the same resources grew. It is estimated that RAC delivered about one hundred thousand slaves to the various plantations in the West Indies and Americas between 1672 and 1711. Since the mortality rate is estimated to be have been around

⁷⁸ Others, like the merchant princes also had slaves, and it was common to give slaves to brave warriors and other prominent figures, but the slave trade was still in large controlled by this elite.

20%, this means that about 120 000 slaves actually were shipped from West Africa by this company alone (Davies 1957, 299). This number does not say anything about the impact RAC ventures had on families and whole societies within this region, but it is clear that they were profound.

Chapter conclusion

RAC's operations at Cape Coast Castle is here chosen to illustrate how the European chartered companies in the pre-colonial era became the centres of transnational security assemblages that contributed to a profound change in West African society. These mercantile entities clearly disrupted the modern distinction between public and private, and state and non-state as it is commonly understood. This case demonstrates that state and non-state providers of force can cooperate to the extent that they become indistinguishable. The hiring of Navy ships to serve RAC, the state soldiers that took part as company employees and the hiring of foreign state soldiers created a powerful military force that was used to facilitate economic exploitation in West Africa. Here, the company mitigated risk by including a range of native actors and force providers, establishing a comprehensive security arrangement that divided West African society in two: Some natives benefited from the presence of the company as the forts provided security against enemies and trade arrangements ensured income. Especially the nobles and merchant princes profited from these ventures, as they could use their symbolic and social capital to further ensure economic capital.

The use of gromettoes and the slave soldiers also demonstrate how some actors within this assemblage were forced to participate, and these actors were themselves

without any security. RAC and its affiliates did provide some security, but only as long as it benefited their operations. The establishment of commercial enclaves provided the company with the means to exploit the area and the people, as natural resources were extracted in a brutal manner, and the de-privileged were turned into a commodity and sold for economic profit. Force was not only privatized, serving the interests of the few within the territory, but also corporatized. As such, this case clearly illustrates that the main question is not who provides security, but for whom security is provided.

Chapter 5: King Leopold II and the Congo Free State

“In dealing with a race composed of cannibals for thousands of years it is necessary to use methods which will best shake their idleness and make them realize the sanctity of work”

King Leopold II⁷⁹

Introduction

King Leopold’s establishment of the Congo Free State is here chosen to represent practises that were common at the height of the colonial era in Africa. As with the previous cases, the purpose is to analyse how state and non-state providers of force were conflated. Furthermore, this case will illustrate how one person by using his symbolic and social capital and with the help of a range of actors was able to take control over a vast territory and install institutions which were solely aimed at creating economic profit, with no notion of accountability towards the population. In this way, it will further illuminate the pervasiveness and also the consequences of what here is defined as the corporatization of force. It might seem extreme to compare this case to the case of EO, as the company had some positive effects, even if these were subordinate, but the common notion is that all these ventures were driven by profit and facilitated by the use of force at the cost of the people. There is as such only a quantitative and not a qualitative difference. Furthermore, while the number of deaths under Leopold’s rule is disputed, it

⁷⁹ (Hochschild 1998, 118).

is counted in millions, and in this context it seems to represent an extreme case also within the colonial era. However, the French regime of forced labour was so brutal that many that had fled from the atrocities in the Congo Free State eventually returned. Similar practises were also normal in Germany-ruled Cameroon and Portuguese-ruled Angola (Hochschild 1998, 280).⁸⁰ A range of force providers were often also used to enforce these regimes, often organized through large companies, as in the neighbouring Rhodesia (Drohan 2004).⁸¹ The operations of Anglo- Belgian India Rubber Exploration company (ABIR) will here be used to illustrate how the large concession companies operated. As in the previous cases, the first section will identify the various force providers and other actors that constituted this transnational security assemblage and how they interacted, while the last part will further explore for whom force was provided.

The corporatization of force within a transnational security assemblage

King Leopold II was fascinated by early European colonial history and became convinced that Belgium's future was dependent on the acquisition of a colony, and that colonies by definition were profitable enterprises (Ewans 2003, 167).⁸² In 1885 he managed to obtain the Upper Kongo Basin area by cunningly playing the other colonial nations against each other. He used humanitarian arguments to form the Congo Free State

⁸⁰ Castelein, a Belgian professor of natural law, wrote in defence of the King: "Do these faults and abuses, judged in relation to the exceptional circumstances under which the State was organized and in *Comparison with the administration of other colonies*, present an abnormal character...?" (1907, 192).

⁸¹ See also Vail (1976) for an account of the formation of Portuguese concession companies in Mozambique and their use of forced labour in the same period.

⁸² The King was especially fascinated by the book '*Java, or How to Manage a Colony*', describing how the Dutch gave a 'private' (non- state) company concession to run the plantations using forced labour. The profit was in turn used to pay for projects in Holland, and the Dutch King was himself one of the major shareholders. The plantation owners paid their supervisors bonuses to give incentives to raise production. The book must have made a lasting impression, for it was such a system that was put in place in Congo (Hochschild 1998, 37).

(État indépendant du Congo) where ‘hospitable scientific and pacification bases’ were to be established to promote civilization, abolish slavery and ensure free trade for all nations (Hochschild 1998, 42). By the indispensable aid from Stanley and other key supporters, the King was able to turn this area into a personal estate about 80 times larger than Belgium (Hochschild 1998, 87). The export of commodities such as palm oil, ivory and rubber was made possible by the institutionalization of forced labour where both the administration and large Belgian concession companies ensured that the King could make the profit he always had dreamed of. However, the King was forced to sell the estate after only 23 years, and it became annexed as a Belgian colony in 1908.

The acquisition of the Congo Free State took place in a time coloured with ideas of white supremacy, imperial conquest and the spread of the Christian gospel, and these and other factors contributed arguably to the realization of the practices that were to unfold.⁸³ However, the focus here will be on the authorities and force providers that together formed a transnational security assemblage that was seen as necessary in order to produce the desired economic profit. The main actors within this assemblage are here defined as King Leopold himself, the Belgian political leadership, the various actors that constituted the state army named Force Publique (FP), the concession companies, Henry Morton Stanley and the Arab-African tradesman Tippu Tip. All these actors contributed in various ways with the provision of force.

While Stanley arguably is most famous for locating the missing Dr. Livingstone, it was his exploration of the Congo river that attracted Leopold’s attention, and the King was able to hire Stanley upon return. As a famous explorer and international ‘American’

⁸³ It was for example a common belief throughout Europe that Africans by nature was lazy and did not respond to economic incentives, and thus had to be forced to work (Gann and Duignan 1979, 124).

celebrity, Stanley provided the King with social, symbolic and political capital that was vital in the process leading up to the establishment of the Congo Free State.⁸⁴ Stanley also went back to Congo, where he established the first infrastructure and a personal army (Brode 1907, 166; Hochschild 1998, 72). Stanley and Leopold had close connections to Tippu Tip who had become powerful by his wealth much like the ‘merchant princes’ that RAC cooperated with.⁸⁵ Stanley offered Tippu Tip the position as governor over eastern Congo, and in return Tippu Tip provided FP with free-bought slaves that were ‘enlisted’ for seven years (Ward 1891, 216; Hochschild 1998, 131). The involvement of these men further underline the complexity and the multitude of actors from across the world that were engaged in this security assemblage, but while they clearly were important, their role will not be further addressed. Instead, the focus here will be limited to the establishment of new institutions, and the effects on the people within the territory.

Also native tribes cooperated with the new regime, but these actors can be seen more as allies, and became arguably never an integral part of the assemblage.⁸⁶ It is also clear that the rubber factories, the ivory and palm oil industry and other businesses receiving cheap commodities from the Congo Free State profited from these ventures. However, acknowledging the difficulties in defining the boundaries of a complex network, these actors are like the plantation owners in the case of RAC defined as external since they did not contribute directly to the enforcement of this regime.

⁸⁴ Stanley was born in Wales as John Rowlands.

⁸⁵ His full name was Hamad bin Muhammed el Murjebi.

⁸⁶ Sometimes whole tribes like the Zappo Zaps were used to force others into collecting rubber, using guns provided by the administration (Morel 1906, 7). FP also used allied tribes to fight enemy tribes, but these alliances were often fragile, and many tribes changed side a number of times (Gann and Duignan 1979).

The main military threat to the regime was ironically former FP soldiers that had mutinied, but also various native tribes fought against the new ‘state’ throughout its existence. When the fragile relations with the African –Arab slave traders deteriorated, there were also several military campaigns that finally drove these out of the area.

The role of King Leopold II and Belgian authorities

“To open up to civilization the only part of our globe which it has not yet penetrated, to pierce the darkness in which entire populations is enveloped, is, I venture to say, a crusade worthy of this age of progress, and I am happy to perceive how much the public feeling is in favour of its accomplishments...”: These are the first lines in Leopold’s opening speech held at the International Geographical Conference in Brussels in 1876, a conference he himself hosted (Dunn 2003, 21). While the quest for a colony was disguised as a philanthropic project, the only thing that interested the King was how much profit he could make.⁸⁷ This was hoped to ensure a further strong position of the Belgian monarchy in a time when the political powers of the European Courts were increasingly transferred to more democratic institutions like the parliament. The economic capital from a colony would ensure further financial independence, and he also used it to increase his popularity by building and donating large monuments and other projects, thus transforming it into symbolic and social capital. While James, the Duke of York, had had a more symbolic role in the daily operations of RAC, the Belgian King was not only the driving force behind the establishment of the Congo Free State, but also

⁸⁷ See Hochschild (1998, 65) for a further elaboration of the process of acquiring the Congo and the arguments Leopold used.

actively controlled every aspect of the management of his new estate.⁸⁸ The King was greatly aided by a small number of Belgian businessmen who provided the economic capital that was needed in order to finance the new institutions and infrastructure in Africa. As such, they constituted together with Belgian authorities the financial body that paid the force providers operating in the Congo Free State, as addressed below. These men were in turn rewarded with concessions over parts of the area and formed investments companies like CCCI, and eight main concession companies in collaboration with the King (Gann and Duignan 1979; Morel 1906, 141).⁸⁹ This Belgian corporate elite with the King on top profited directly from the sale of the commodities exported, but also from the astronomic rise in share- value. How much the King in total profited is disputed, but a moderate estimate is that he made about 220 million francs, equivalent of 1.1 billion 1998 US dollars (Hochschild 1998).⁹⁰

The King was also able to influence the parliament and the premier and gain support for his ventures.⁹¹ However, they had no legal rights or any form of control over the King's new estate, not even a right to know what the money they lent him was used for.⁹² There was as such no notion of public accountability towards the elected authority or the people of Belgium. The Belgian government also approved the use of Belgian

⁸⁸ The headquarter of the new 'state' was located next to the King's palace, and from here the King's policies were communicated to executive officials in Congo, who in turn relied on district officials, state forces and the company officials (Hochschild 1998, 160; Morel 1906, 135; Gann and Duignan 1979, 91).

⁸⁹ For a full account of the companies, see Morel (1906, 141).

⁹⁰ When the Belgian government bought the area, they also took over the debt amounting to 110 million francs, including about 32 million francs the King owned to the government itself. He was also paid 4,5 million francs to complete his construction projects and additional 55 million francs for his 'philanthropic service' to Congo (Hochschild 1998, 259).

⁹¹ Premier De Smet de Nayer was in office under the whole period when Congo was under Leopold's rule, and was favourable to the Kings ventures. As the only premier at the time, he was in return ennobled, ensuring his political and social status, and the ties between the cabinet and the King was also close (Morel 1906, 166).

⁹² The Belgian government provided the King with several loans, including 25 million francs borrowed for the construction of the railroad in 1890, and 5 million francs in 1895 (Hochschild 1979).

officers and soldiers as volunteers for service in the Congo Free State. These men kept their ranks and served for a specific number of years before they returned, if still alive (Gann and Duignan 1979, 59). The Belgian government thus institutionalized a practice that was crucial in allowing the King to effectively exercise authority over this vast territory. The use of Belgian state forces clearly blurred the distinctions between state and non- state force providers. These men were allocated by the Belgian government, but were controlled by the King's Commandant in Congo. This conflation was further escalated as some of the money used to pay these men came from the loans granted by the Belgian government, and in this way Belgian taxpayers financed the King's personal forces (Morel 1906, 117).

Acknowledging the problem of intentionality, the main motive for supporting the King may have been his close ties to some of the prominent leaders, and also the fact that he was the formal head of state. The soldiers motives could also vary and could include the drive for adventure, better career options and more independent service. However, as they served within institutions which were specifically directed at creating economic profit for one man, these forces where not only privatized but also corporatized.

Force Publique

Force Publique was formally established in 1886 in the Congo Free State. Unlike most armies, the main focus was internal security. It was a counter guerrilla force, an army of occupation and a corporate labour police force all in one.⁹³ As such, it was instrumental in providing regime security and facilitate the companies' operations, but

⁹³ This army was also used in construction projects and in the establishment of new trading posts, and these duties remained an official part of FP until 1904 (Gann and Duignan 1979, 65).

was less concerned with the security of the population as seen below. As noted, many Belgian officers volunteered, but more were needed and these came mainly from Italy and the Scandinavian countries.⁹⁴ Scandinavian sailors also played an important part as they operated many of the steamboats that were so crucial in the conquest of the interior (Gann and Duignan 1979, 60). The transnational character of FP was further strengthened by the hiring of African ‘mercenaries’ from the British West African Coast, Zanzibar, Somalia, Egypt, Ethiopia, and Natal. Some of these men had been hired by King Leopold already in 1879 to assist Stanley, and they became an important part of FP. However, ‘mercenaries’ is a misleading description as it seems that the majority of these men were forced into service. Hired as labourers, they were forced into military service upon arrival at Boma.⁹⁵ The local soldiers were mainly taken from the Bantu tribes in a similar manner (Morel 1904, 107).

In order to compensate for the lack of European officers, two military schools were established in Congo. Here natives could get a three year education and become NCOs or serve in the administration. These men received payment and shelter and their families were given food, thus constituting a new class within the Congo Free State (Gann and Duignan 1979, 83). Another method of recruitment was to put native ‘orphans’ in ‘children colonies’ run by Belgian Catholic missionaries. Those who survived the treatment and diseases became soldiers in FP, and the missionaries were in

⁹⁴ Between 1885 and 1922, 112 commissioned and 120 non-commissioned Italian officers did service in Congo, mainly in the civilian administration. However, in the Lado enclave, Italian officers also led a large force stationed at several newly erected forts (Morel 1906, 124). Between 1878 and 1914, 53 Danish, 47 Swedish and 26 Norwegian Officers and 4 Danish, 18 Swedish and 3 Norwegian NCOs volunteered. This is compared to the 648 commissioned and 1612 non-commissioned Belgian officers that volunteered between 1878 and 1908 (Gann and Duignan 1979, 60).

⁹⁵ When one shipload of men from Barbados refused to go on shore after having learned that they were to become soldiers, they were fired upon and several died (Morel 1904, 109).

turn financially supported by the King (Hochschild 1998, 134).⁹⁶ Other soldiers were ‘enlisted’ by agents who received a bonus according to the number of men they provided. Many were kidnapped, becoming slave soldiers known as *libérés*, and these practices were institutionalized as “recruitment operations... distinct from voluntary enlistment” (Hochschild 1998, 130; Morel 1906, 26).⁹⁷ This shows that some of the force providers that constituted this security assemblage were themselves forced to partake by a more powerful actor.

A small number of Belgian or European officers controlled a large number of African soldiers, and problems of discipline haunted the force. In order to maintain control over the native forces, only a maximum of 25% of a certain ethnic group was posted together. In addition, the natives were as a rule stationed far away from their homes, so they became more dependent on the army since they had little in common with the locals (Hochschild 1998, 127; Gann and Duignan 1979, 76). Policies of assimilation (children colonies and military schools) were in this sense matched by policies of alienation and detribalization as mechanisms of control over the dominated actors within FP.

There was also extensive interaction between the native soldiers and the white officers, and military tactics were exchanged. The officers taught the natives basic infantry drills, military discipline, and how to use firearms, while the natives taught the officers how to build Arab- style stockades, how to avoid traps, and how to advance more

⁹⁶ The support for the king is clear in this letter from a missionary to a state official in 1895: “Several of the little girls were so sickly on their arrival that...our good sisters couldn’t save them, but all had the happiness of receiving holy baptism; they are now little angels in Heaven who are preying for our great king” (Hochschild 1998, 135). Various missionaries from both Europe and The United States played an important role in both supporting the regime and also uncovering the atrocities committed.

⁹⁷ The state paid 90 francs for men over 1 m 55 cm, 65 francs for those over 1m 35 cm and 15 francs per male child (Morel 1906, 25).

effectively through the vegetation. In this sense there was a more horizontal relation in terms of exchange of cultural capital, where the combined knowledge and skills increased FP's effectiveness (Gann and Duignan 1979). FP constituted thus both state-forces and non state forces that were conflated into a single institution that served the personal economic interests of the king.

The concession companies

The concession companies were also controlled by the King, as he was the main investor and the one who granted them the concessions. In this way they acted more as an extension of his administration, carrying out the task of exploiting the vast area.⁹⁸ The company managers relied on native employees in order to enforce the production of rubber and other commodities. Sentries acted as company soldiers and were led by *capitales* or 'supervisors'. These men were often former slaves or soldiers and had everything to gain from their new position and became the companies' and the Congo Free State's loyal supporters, forming a new class within the Congolese society (Gann and Duignan 1979, 138). Many of the managers and other employees came from places such as Britain, Germany, Sweden and even America, leaving the Belgians as a minority in the early years (Edgerton 2002, 105).⁹⁹ This further strengthened the transnational nature of this security assemblage.

⁹⁸ See map Appendix E.

⁹⁹ Later also Dutch, Portuguese, Danish, Luxembourgers, and a small number of Austrians, Australians Spanish, Greeks Turks, Argentineans, Brazilians and Romanians travelled to the Congo Free State. Some joined FP, some served in the administration, but most were tradesmen (Gann and Duignan 1979, 100; Edgerton 2002 96-105).

The company forces also cooperated closely with FP. It was FP soldiers who protected the workers while ABIR constructed the company's eight first posts (Drohan 2004, 52).¹⁰⁰ FP was used to fight villages that rioted over the 'rubber taxes', and they also helped with the provision of firewood for the steamers that served the companies (Gann and Duignan 1979, 79).¹⁰¹ Sometimes FP and company forces also fought side by side, but it is unclear how these attacks were commanded, and if there was an established hierarchy between FP and the company forces (Hochschild, 1998: 163).

There were also close connections between the companies and the Congo Free State administration. The ABIR concession stated that the administration was to supply the company with guns and ammunition and help building the first posts, while ABIR was to assist the administration in recruiting workers and soldiers for the new state (Harms 1975, 78).¹⁰²

The creation of FP and the concession companies and the close ties between the two and Belgian authorities clearly illustrate how these institutions were authorized, financed and empowered by a range of actors from across the world that formed a complex security assemblage. FP and the concession companies constituted the main force providers that enabled the King and his administration to effectively turn this territory into a personal estate where economic profit was the driving force. The number of European state forces taking part in this venture meant that these forces arguably became part of a personal army, thus blurring the distinction between state and non-state

¹⁰⁰ As noted FP was not officially constituted until 1886.

¹⁰¹). In case a large uprising, FP also had a large force stationed at Basankusu which could reach any part of ABIR's territory by steamboat within a few days and reinforce the company soldiers (Harms 1975, 79).

¹⁰² ABIR also used the railway and boats provided by the administration, and continued to use the administration's licence for purchasing guns and ammunition (Doyle 1909. 71).

force providers. The practices of these forces are further described below, but it is clear that they took place at the cost of the population within the territory. Acknowledging that the actors within this assemblage had various motives, force was not only privatized, but also corporatized as the Congo Free State was exploited for economic profit.

The consequences – for whom was force provided?

The ‘Free State’ did not mean any form of freedom for the native population. In 1887 the King published an act that made all vacant land (*Terres Vacante*) the property of the state, thus effectively appropriating the country and all its resources. This conquest was enabled by three main technological advancements; the steamboat and railway, modern firearms and new medical knowledge that reduced European mortality rates (Hochschild 1998, 90). However, the main feature that enabled the King to rule this vast area, was the willingness to use force.

The King was only interested in the areas that could create income, much like the French in Chad, who had divided it into *Chad utile* and *Chad inutile*; useful and useless Chad (Mills and Stremlau 1999, 34). The Congo Free State was divided into three categories: 1) *Domain Privé* which was the state property 2) Company stewardship made available by concessions and 3) *Domaine de la Couronne* –The King’s personal property (Morel 1906, 136).¹⁰³ This division meant that there were great variations in how much the country and the people were affected by the new rule. Areas close to the new stations and areas rich on ivory and wild rubber were naturally deeply affected, while some

¹⁰³ See map Appendix E. This division may seem artificial, as the King as noted was in effect controlling both the Congo Free State administration and the concession companies.

natives never realized that they were under a Belgian King's rule (Gann and Duignan 1979, 133).

While ivory had been the main commodity in the early years, the rising value of rubber meant that the collection of wild rubber became the main focus for the concession companies. The rubber collection system was based on bonus arrangements inherited from the ivory trade (Gann and Duignan 1979, 122).¹⁰⁴ The managers and supervisors in the rubber industry were paid small annual salaries and were therefore dependent on the bonuses in order to make their fortunes. There was also a continuous pressure on the agents from the administration that led to cuts in prices paid or that the natives were not paid at all and that 'rubber taxes' or quotas were raised. The combination of incentives and bonuses on one hand and pressure to increase profitability on the other created an environment that encouraged the use of force in order to facilitate these operations and make the natives work (Anstey 1971, 67). The use of forced labour was also legalized and said to be restricted to forty hours a month and sixty days a year. However, these restrictions were not followed in practice, and the administration itself made it clear that the main concern was the profit made (Morel 1906, 158). It is important to note that the Belgians did not 'invent' forced labour; also indigenous chiefs attacked other tribes in order to get slaves and rubber. What was novel about the Belgian rule was the mechanisms within the system which institutionalized atrocities (Gann and Duignan 1979, 136).

Normally, villages close to the rubber stations were forced to provide food and other commodities, while more remote villages were used as rubber producers (Gann, and

¹⁰⁴ An agent received 6% of the value of ivory bought at 8 francs per kilo, and 10% for ivory bought for 4 francs per kilo, thus giving him a powerful motive to collect ivory as cheaply as possible (Hochschild 1998, 118).

Duignan, 1979, 131). As noted, the companies used native sentries and capitaes that acted as the companies' soldiers. Usually the capita made himself the chief of the village, stealing the food and forcing women into sex slavery. These practices were approved by the company managers as long as the soldiers fulfilled the rubber quotas.¹⁰⁵ However, 'inefficient' sentries could be replaced, fined, flogged or imprisoned, and sometimes even the capitaes were punished personally by the manager (Harms 1983, 133; Morel 1906, 50; Doyle 1909, 108). This further brutalized the labour regime, and it was normal to kill those villagers who could not meet the rubber quota. This *raubwirtschaft* or 'ruinous exploitation' also meant that the natives had to go further away every day to find new vines to tap, and many men died on these expeditions (Gann and Duignan, 1979). The practice of raiding villages, taking prisoners and then forcing the men to work was established already when ivory was the main commodity. All rubber stations had also special hostage houses, where a number of women and children were kept until the men from the village were able to fill the quota. The food was scarce, the women were regularly raped by the sentries and many succumbed while imprisoned (Hochschild 1998, 162; Morel 1906, 97).¹⁰⁶ The sentries relied on the company managers for ammunition, and they were required to bring back the right hand of the victims in order to prove that they had killed men and not game (Ewans 2002, 164). Smoked hands became a second currency in some areas, and hands were also cut off living people, often children, to save the bullet (Morel 1906, 54; Hochschild 1998, 227).¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ The capitaes had often a personal army, and occasionally even established small fortified posts where these soldiers were stationed (Gann and Duignan 1979, 132).

¹⁰⁶ This practice was so institutionalized that ABIR even had printed forms for '*contrainte par corps*' or 'bodily detention', where details of the prisoners were entered (Doyle 1909, 90).

¹⁰⁷ This practise was also so common among FP personnel that some units had a position called 'keeper of the hands', whose job was to smoke the hands for preservation (Hochschild 1998, 165). A missionary reported the following episode when a man failed to meet his quota, and the sentry had agreed to wait to

It is estimated that ABIR alone ‘employed’ about forty-seven thousand rubber gatherers in 1906, and that the concession companies in total employed between ten and fifteen thousand ‘non-regular’ troops’ (Harms 1983, 135; Hochschild 1998, 163; Morel 1904, 103).¹⁰⁸ These rubber stations were commercial and fortified enclaves in its most extreme form, where exploitation of the land’s commodities was enabled by the killing and torture of the natives in order to maximise short- term economic profit.¹⁰⁹ These numbers also illuminate the scale of the forced labour that took place, and the gravity and extent of these practices is further accentuated as also FP took part in similar ventures.

As noted, FP used a range of methods in order to increase its manpower, and these practices did not only affect Congolese societies but also other parts of Africa where these men originated. While the use of ‘children colonies’ ruined families, the establishment of military schools gave these men and also those employed by the companies privileges which further widened existing cleavages within African society (Gann and Duignan 1979).

The new army had also more direct effects upon Congolese society: Lack of discipline in the early years meant that the white officers had to tread carefully in order to avoid mutiny. The soldiers were therefore often allowed to rape and plunder. These practices did not only destroy African families and traumatized the population, but also

kill him until next morning: “But a few minutes afterwards the sentinel came in a rage to the man and shot him right before my eyes...He told a little boy, eight or nine years of age, to go and cut off the right hand of the man who had been shot. The man was not quite dead, and when he felt the knife he tried to drag his hand away. The boy, after some labour, cut the hand off and laid it by a fallen tree. A little later this hand was put on a fire to smoke before being sent to the Commissary” (Doyle 1909, 25).

¹⁰⁸ The militarization of the commercial activity can be illustrated with the following numbers: One of ABIR’s 35 rubber stations received in 1903 17600 Albini cartridges, 22755 loads for cap guns, 29255 caps, 33 Albini rifles, and 126 cap guns alone.

¹⁰⁹ Perhaps the word ‘commercial’ is misleading, since there was no trade as wild rubber was produced for nothing or little in return (Morel 1904, 62).

spread sexually transmitted diseases as the army operated over vast areas (Morel 1906, 49). Discipline did improve, but the practice of living off the surrounding villages continued throughout FP's existence (Morel 1906, 208; Gann and Duignan 1979, 79). Similarly to the companies, FP soldiers also attacked and looted villages, keeping the captured as hostages until the native men were able to deliver the stated rubber quota (Hochschild 1998, 161).

As noted, FP and the concession companies cooperated closely and had also close ties to the administration. The combined effect of these institutions upon Congolese society was that any long term prospects for prosperity was destroyed as the population became 'a nation of customers' (Gann and Duignan, 1979, 137). Furthermore, this short review of atrocities committed on a individual and structural level clearly shows that there was no accountability towards the new 'subjects': Only economic profit mattered in what became the complete commodification of the upper Congo territory and its population (Doyle 1909, 10; Morel 1906, 134).

Chapter conclusion

The Congo Free State was no state as it was proposed in the conferences leading up to the declaration in 1885, it was an absolute corporate autocracy where the means and the willingness to use force was enforced by the King directly through various policies and became an essential element of the regime. It is not surprising to find that the main motive was economic profit, however this profit could have been made in an accountable way and the institutionalization of forced labour and the extent and effects of the atrocities committed within this regime is almost incomprehensible.

Belgian, Italian, Scandinavian and other state forces partook in the creation and operation of FP, the administration and the concession companies, thus blurring the national/transnational distinction and also the distinction between state and non-state providers of force. As in the case of RAC, there were also dominated actors within this transnational security assemblage, represented by ‘enlisted’ slave soldier, those recruited from ‘children colonies’, and also to a certain degree the companies’ sentries and capitaes. The ‘mercenaries’ within this assemblage seemed to be enlisted in a similar manner, although there is little information on this group.

Both FP and the concession companies established posts that acted as ‘commercial’ or productive and fortified enclaves where the most brutal practices were carried out in order to maximize short-term economic profit. Force ‘Publique’ and the administration were as such not public at all; there was no accountability towards the population within the territory concerned, and millions died of starvation, exhaustion, diseases or by the gun. Force became a prerequisite in order to provide regime security and security for the economic industries, but not the population. The Congo Free State became thus the manifestation of one of the most extreme examples of the corporatization of force.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

“...We are not... skull-crushing mercenaries. We don't believe we will make a profit here. We ran to the fire because it was burning.”

Bill Mathews, Blackwater¹¹⁰

Introduction

There has as noted always been a market for force where both state and non-state providers of force are paid to perform military and security services. Today this is represented by the re-emerging PMI, while also states rent their armies out to IGOs like UN as peacekeepers (Bures 2005, 546).¹¹¹ Also, in the most recent war in Iraq, Japan sponsored US forces and the US also pays other countries who participate in the ‘coalition of the willing’ (Avant 2005a, 29). While it is clear that force providers are paid for their services, this first part will focus specifically on how force have been used to create or facilitate economic profit for a few at the cost of the people within the territory. However, it will show that this is not specifically an African phenomenon. Similar allegations of profit have been made about the reasons for going to war in Iraq, and the first section of this chapter will therefore briefly explore if force has been corporatized here, and the consequences. According to the definition of imperialism provided in

¹¹⁰ (Scahill 2007, 325). The Executive vice president of Blackwater commenting on the Katrina operation.

¹¹¹ States who contribute with soldiers are reimbursed by the UN at a flat rate of about \$1000 per soldier per month. Member states are free to decide how much of this is paid to their troops, and it is well-known that many governments from ‘developing’ countries pay their peacekeepers much less (Bures 2005, 546). The four largest contributors to UN peacekeeping missions were in 2009 Pakistan, Bangladesh, India and Nigeria, while the US was number sixty-seven on the list (Aljazeera 2009).

chapter one, it can be argued that the war falls within this category, and it would perhaps have been more useful to select a case where there was no (armed) invasion to distance the concept of intergroup domination from the concept of the corporatization of force. Such a case could be Colombia, where the FARC guerrilla's attacks means that the oil companies must provide 'private' protection and pay extortion money (Suarez 2000, 589). A similar 'hostile environment' can be found in Saudi Arabia where the US and others have a strategic interest in the country's oil reserves, but are threatened by Muslim insurgents, thus creating a demand for similar protection (Singer 2003).¹¹² These companies might operate in an accountable way, denoting extraction rather than exploitation, but the question will here be left unanswered. The reason for choosing Iraq is that a 'parallel exploitation' seems to take place within what can be identified as a transnational security assemblage, as further explored below. The focus will be on Halliburton and Blackwater, although various companies from the US and other countries also take part.¹¹³

The last section will briefly explore the corporatization of force within a western state where there are no armed conflict. It will focus on Blackwater's operations the US after the hurricane Katrina, and connects thus the two sections together. It can be argued that an examination of for example the coal strike in the UK in 1984 or the ongoing outsourcing of the prison system in many industrialized countries would have provided a more 'complete' overview of the concept of the corporatization of force where also more

¹¹² These examples could also be argued to be a more 'attenuated' form of imperialism.

¹¹³ Another PMC that has faced criticism is the aforementioned UK based Aegis Defence Services. It was contracted to provide security at prisons and oil installations and the opened ended contract with the US government could earn the company \$293 million. The company is headed by the same infamous Lt. Col Tim Spicer who headed Sandline International (Caparini 2005, 23; Singer 2006, 108). Other similar construction companies operating in Iraq are Bechtel, ICI Oregon and PA&E (Avant 2005b 121).

‘mundane’ practices were included.¹¹⁴ However, by focusing on US actors operating in Iraq and New Orleans, these sections aim to show how an ‘extraterritorial’ non-state force provider which provided military and policing services in close collaboration with state forces in Iraq has started to operate within the ‘home state.’ This illuminates the blurring of the internal/external and the PMC/PSC distinctions and the conflation of (US) state and non-state force providers, while it also provides indications of an ongoing corporatization of force outside the African continent. The chapter will end by a concluding section that will connect the findings from pre-colonial Africa together with recent events that have unfolded within western states, bringing the thesis to an end.

The corporatization of force beyond Africa

The killing of four Blackwater employees in Fallujah in 2004 and the use of PMCs in the Abu Ghraib prison revealed to the public the extent of PMC involvement in Iraq and the US military in general (Committee on Oversight and Government Reform 2007; Schreier and Caparini 2005).¹¹⁵ The motivation for the current invasion was contested from the very beginning, and when it became clear that there were no Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs), this further increased speculations about the role of oil in the war (Le Billon 2005b).¹¹⁶ However, this section will first explore how non-

¹¹⁴ See for example Gran and Henry (2007) for an introduction to the ongoing outsourcing of the prison system, and Fine and Millar (1985) for an introduction to the use of police forces against the strikers in 1984.

¹¹⁵ Blackwater was rebranded in 2009, officially to reflect the shift in focus, but it is clear that the ‘episode’ in Fallujah and the following trials was a part of the reason. Blackwater is now known as ‘Xe’ (Raleigh 2009).

¹¹⁶ The official goal was first to disarm Saddam Hussein of his WMDs, to end the support for terrorism, and to free the Iraqi people (The White House 2003).

state force providers operating in Iraq facilitated economic profit in a more attenuated way.

While the close ties between prominent US politicians like former US vice president Cheney and companies like Halliburton was widely known, the relationship attracted more attention in 2004 as it became clear that Halliburton had been overbilling the US government (Krahmann 2005, 260).¹¹⁷ Halliburton is what Singer defines as a military support firm, providing services such as logistics, intelligence and transportation. The company doubled the price of gas compared to what the Pentagon's own Defence Energy Support Centre would have charged, they overcharged the delivery of meals to the military by 40%, and the use of so-called 'unlimited services/open ended services' contracts enabled the company to inflate prices. Furthermore, the standing LOGCAP agreement meant that the company was guaranteed profit (Singer, 2003: 91,142; Schreier and Caparini 2005).¹¹⁸ However, this only shows that companies are driven by a logic of profit, and that military functions have been outsourced to non-state actors in the US and Iraq, where problems of transparency have been uncovered. So what about the corporatization of force? A practice of awarding contracts without a bidding process by institutions where some of the leaders have personal economic interests in the same

¹¹⁷ The relation between Halliburton and its subsidiary Kellogg Brown & Root (KBR) and the White House was represented first and foremost with Dick Cheney, who became CEO of Halliburton in 1995. Cheney resigned in 2000, but as the Halliburton's vice president noted: "Clearly Dick gave Halliburton some advantages. There's a lot of respect for Dick Cheney, both in the U.S. and abroad. From that perspective, doors would open" (Singer 2003, 140). The connection between military contractors and the government and US military was further strengthened as Cheney appointed a former vice president of Northrop Grumman as the secretary of the US Air Force, a former executive in General Dynamics as secretary of the navy and a former ENRON executive as secretary of the US Army. A similar connection is found between the Carlyle Group and the Bush family (Schreier and Caparini 2005, 70).

¹¹⁸ The US Department of Defense has almost doubled the money that it awarded to private firms without competitive bidding on contracts – from \$47.2 billion in 1997 to \$71.6 billion in 2002 (Schreier and Caparini 2005, 53).

companies, where there is a lack of oversight and where there seem to be a systematic large-scale overbilling: These are indications of war-profiteering where a small group is getting rich at the cost of those who pay for these ventures.¹¹⁹ As state and non-state force providers are controlled by these political and military leaders and are used as investment enablers for companies like Halliburton, allowing them to operate in ‘hostile environments’ and use the ‘fog of war’ to overcharge the US government and other contributors, this indicates that force is corporatized.

It could be argued that the economic and human costs of the invasion would have been the same had the military carried out the tasks themselves, that it is necessary to have agreements where the companies are promised profit in order to make them operate in a ‘hostile area’, and that since these companies now are an integrated part of the US military, they will also receive the same protection. Also, economic motives are not necessarily the main goal for the operation, as (internal) security for the US and its allies clearly are important. The use of non-state force providers can also be explained by the US government’s unwillingness to lose political capital when regular soldiers are killed, and also ideological motives play a part (Avant 2006b, 332; Rosén 2008, 80). Nevertheless, Iraq today show that war is big business, and that some actors profit greatly, and for those politicians with economic interests in the war industry, it’s a win-win situation where they also increase their economic capital.¹²⁰

The role of PMCs in this form of a more attenuated exploitation can be exemplified with the connection between Blackwater and Halliburton. When the four

¹¹⁹ Out of 3061 contracts the Pentagon signed between 1994 and 2002, 2700 went to two companies; KBR and Halliburton, which is now the same company. This was before the last war in Iraq, but shows the existence of a near-monopoly (Wulf 2005, 187).

¹²⁰ Although Cheney had no official connection to Halliburton in 2004, he was still receiving \$178 437 as one of five annual deferred-compensation payments (Thottam et al. 2004).

men were killed in Fallujah, they were working for Euresst Support Services (ESS); a Halliburton subcontractor, and their mission was to guard convoys transporting kitchen equipment. Blackwater had won this contract in collaboration with a Kuwait registered company called Regency Hotel and Hospital Company (Committee on Oversight and Government Reform 2007). While these men were paid \$600 a day, Blackwater charged Regency \$815, not including additional costs, and then Regency would quote ESS a price of about \$1500, and ESS was in turn contracted by KBR, which sent the bill to the US government (Neff and Price 2004) This example indicates a ‘double corporatization’ where both PMCs and various MNCs were profiting, aided by governmental institutions, which awarded these companies contracts without any bidding process. Members of the political and military elite, businessmen, and various force providers in Iraq thus arguably form a transnational security assemblage where profit is made and where there so far has been little accountability towards the US population or the other economic contributors to these reconstruction and security programs. This situation seem to be improved, as Halliburton and some other companies have been investigated for corruption, overbilling and other crimes (Schreier and Caparini, 2005, 99).¹²¹ The poor management of resources that enabled some actors to take advantage has had direct impact on the Iraqi population as many reconstruction projects were poorly executed, and the outsourcing of security meant that some were protected better than others as further described below.¹²²

¹²¹ The money came from the UN oil for food program, seized Iraqi bank accounts, the US lead temporal government, in addition to the US taxpayers and was mostly paid out in cash. See Rosén (2008, 84). for a full list of contributors. In this sense, the war resembles King Leopold’s use of his subjects’ money to finance the ventures in Congo that created personal profit.

¹²² Agencies and reconstruction contractors made extensive use of private security providers since providing security for such organizations was not part of the stated mission of the US military (Rosén 2008, 85). But US forces do protect companies like Halliburton, e.g. escorting convoys (Miller 2005).

As with Sierra Leone, the question if natural resources are extracted or exploited is complex and also socially constructed, and it is perhaps too early to conclude as the industry is in an early phase of re-establishment. What is clear is that both US forces, Iraqi military and security forces and PMCs are used to protect these commercial enclaves from insurgents and in this sense act as investment enablers for the oil industry.¹²³ It is also clear that Iraq has the one of the largest oil reserves in the world, and that the country's economy is dependent upon this industry in order to generate revenues that can be used in the rebuilding of the country. Furthermore, Iraq relies heavily on foreign firms to provide the necessary economic and cultural capital, and the US government is also directly involved in the oil industry.¹²⁴ However, some of the consequences of the new policies are now visible: The monopolistic practices of the reconstruction industry have already been addressed by excluded Iraqi contractors who lose their income and their ability to cater for their families (Thottam et al. 2004) Furthermore, poor regulation and management of the oil industry, the auctioning of oil concession to MNCs, a non-existent bank system, the Iraqi government's dependence on foreign investment and accusations of corruption within the industry and the Iraqi government indicates that the post-war period can produce practices where a few actors are getting rich while there is little improvement for the population (Le Billon 2005b; Dorgan 2008; BBC News 2009a).¹²⁵

¹²³ Erinys International has been awarded a contract to guard oil sites and pipelines in Iraq together with Rubicon International, its UK partner in many projects. Erinys is a prime contractor to the Gulf Regional Division of the US Army Corps of Engineers, tasked with protective services, employing fourteen thousand Iraqis directed by former senior members of the UK armed forces. (Schreier and Caparini 2005, 32).

¹²⁴ For fiscal years 2003 through 2006, the United States made available about \$7.4 billion, obligated about \$7.1 billion, and spent about \$5.1 billion in U.S. funds to rebuild Iraq's oil and electricity sectors (Committee on Oversight and Government Reform 2007).

¹²⁵ In December 2009, forty-four companies took part in a bid for ten oil fields in the second auction since the invasion in 2003 (BBC News 2009a).

The corporatization of force within western states

When the Hurricane Katrina hit the US in 2005, one of the hardest struck cities was New Orleans. In the immediate aftermath, the city was becoming the new market for the same companies that were operating in Iraq. Contractors working for Blackwater in Iraq were transferred to New Orleans as the company was hired by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to protect FEMA employees and the reconstruction projects (Klein 2008, 493; Scahill 2006).¹²⁶ The company was paid at least \$33 million for its services between September and December 2005, and the lack of a bidding process indicates practices of overbilling as seen in Iraq (Scahill 2005).¹²⁷ The reconstruction industry also transferred many of their employees from Iraq, as companies such as Bechtel, CH2M and Fluor was contracted to rebuild the city. A similar pattern emerged where over 80% of the contracts were awarded by FEMA without any bidding process, and the connection between FEMA and these companies was concerning (Cray 2006; Lipton and Nixon 2005).¹²⁸ Again, it seemed that a surge of private contractors including corporate non-state force providers were able to take advantage of a situation where the need for urgent response trumped the need for transparency and oversight. These

¹²⁶ FEMA is the Federal Emergency Management Agency and is responsible for preparing, protecting, responding and recover from disaster, and became a part of DHS in 2003 (Federal Emergency Management Agency 2010).

¹²⁷ While the government paid Blackwater \$950 a day a guard, the 'guards' were allegedly only paid \$350, which left the company with a profit of \$600 before additional costs. Also PMCs such as DynCorp, Intercon, American Security Group, Blackhawk and an Israeli company called Instinctive Shooting International (ISI) was involved (Scahill 2005).

¹²⁸ The Shaw Group and KBR were represented by Joe M. Allbaugh, a lobbyist who was also President Bush's former campaign manager and a former leader of FEMA (Lipton and Nixon 2005). Furthermore, PMCs were also hired by private individuals like Patrick Quinn III, who were in negotiations with FEMA to provide the agency with housing (Scahill 2005).

companies replaced in large the state as a provider of basic services including the provision of security, much aided by federal agencies like FEMA and DHS. The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform concluded in a report that full and open competition on contracts was the exception, contract mismanagement was widespread and the costs to taxpayers were enormous (Minority Staff Special Investigation Division 2006).

It can be argued that many of the contractors on the ground surely also had a genuine desire to help out, and that these actors should be paid for their services. But again, these construction and security efforts seemed to be more of a exploitative nature as a range of PMCs and construction companies made large profits in a short time span. In 2008, more than two years after the disaster, Louisiana residents were still spread over forty-five states, and in New Orleans there were still about four thousand temporary mobile homes (Hirsch, Levert, 2009: 212; Jervis 2008). Perhaps the situation would have been the same with the use of more directly controlled governmental institutions like the US engineer corps, but it would at least removed allegations of disaster profiteering.

The disaster thus replicated in many ways Iraq, where a chaotic situation was seemingly systematically exploited by a range of companies for economic profit coming from government funding instead of natural resources. However, where these practices had only economic consequences for the majority of the American population, they were more severe for the Iraqis, who faced a deteriorating security situation in the years after the invasion.¹²⁹ This was partly caused by misguided policies and mismanagement, and a security divide was manifested in the establishment of the Green Zone in Bagdad. Also in

¹²⁹ The Saddam regime clearly posed as a threat to the majority of the Iraqi population, and in this context it is perhaps more accurate to say that the actors, and in some ways also the threats, have *changed* since 2003.

New Orleans, ‘green zones’ of security were established by the National Guard, US Army, US border patrol, local police, and a range of PMCs doing policing services, protecting those who could pay such as the FEMA and rich (gated) communities, and simultaneously on various occasions treating the de-privileged as a security concern instead of providing aid (Hirsch and Levert 2009; Scahill 2007, 330; Klein 2008, 494).¹³⁰ This apartheid of poverty is not restricted to security, but with an increased reliance on non-state force providers who operate on a logic of profit, security is increasingly becoming one of several services that are denied those who cannot pay, transforming economic inequality into social inequality (Cilliers and Mason 1999, 26). Furthermore, the cooperation between these actors shows the conflation of force providers also within a western state. The outsourcing of the provision of security to non-state force providers as seen in New Orleans and Iraq and the behaviour of the state forces thus questions the willingness and ability of the US government to provide security for the population in a non-discriminatory and accountable way. As Avant notes “Making security something for which private companies and individuals are responsible calls into question the very notion that security is an exclusively public or ‘collective’ good” (2005b, 129).

When some of the actors in addition are making big money, and are aided by government policies, this indicates a shift from ‘government’ towards fragmented ‘security governance’ where the provision of services like security not only are increasingly privatized, but also corporatized (Krahmann 2005).

¹³⁰ See Hirsch and Levert (2006) for examples of how deadly force was used by the police against civilians to ‘contain’ them when they were in need of aid. Shortly after the Katrina hurricane, President George W. Bush tried to repeal the Posse Comitatus act which ban the use of US military for domestic law enforcement (Scahill 2007, 337).

Conclusion

This thesis has focused specifically on the corporatization of force, defined as when force is employed, by state or non-state actors, in order to create or facilitate economic profit. By analysing the conflation of state and non state providers of force, and also focusing on the consequences of these practices, this thesis argues that the essential question is not *who* provides security, but *for whom* security is provided. It has thus taken a broader approach to the debate about the desirability and ramifications of the private military industry.

Based on a re-articulated definition of ‘public’ and ‘private’ where notions of accountability are central, and taking a pragmatic state-centric approach, this thesis argues that the common understanding of the state as a principally ‘public’ provider of force is faulty, and that non- state force providers in principle can be just as admissible as they also can provide force in a non-discriminatory and accountable way, serving the ‘common good.’ The conflation of state and non- state force providers is further illuminated by the close cooperation of these actors within what here is defined as transnational security assemblages. Although these assemblages do not require a state of war, they illustrate Owens’ argument that warfare is organized violence carried out by *political* entities, not public entities.

This thesis has as such demonstrated that there is no principal distinction between the state soldier and the non-state warrior at the individual level, and that this distinction also is blurred on a structural level. Both PMCs, state militaries and militias have historically acted as investment enablers for other corporate entities, securing commercial enclaves and economic profit. Acknowledging that the difference between extraction and

exploitation is socially constructed, it is clear that these practices have had severe consequences for the people within the territory concerned. However, the impact on African society has also varied greatly. While the Belgian King was responsible for the death of millions in his quest for profit and RAC enslaved thousands, EO was able to improve security for the population where it operated, and the cases might seem incomparable in this sense. However, also RAC did provide security to some, as EO did for those within the commercial enclaves, and this thesis argues that the provision of security to the people was more a side-effect of EO's operations, which also increased the company's international legitimacy. While Leopold could exploit the Congo almost unnoticed for several years, such secrecy is not attainable today, and dominant international norms further delegitimizes such practices. As such, while the severity of the consequences of these assemblages clearly are of quantitative different proportions, these assemblages are qualitatively comparable. These cases have also highlighted the continuity, pervasiveness and complexity of such practices, and the blurring of the national/transnational distinction as actors from across the world have come together either willingly or by force.

The focus on the provision of 'extraterritorial' force within Africa has connected the phenomenon under investigation to the concept of colonialism, but this thesis have only focused on a specific aspect, namely the provision of force. Furthermore, by briefly exploring what seems to be similar practices in Iraq and New Orleans, this thesis has completed a full circle from pre-colonial Africa to current events within a democratic industrialized state, thus underlining the distinction between intergroup domination and the concept of the corporatization of force. This last chapter has also highlighted that

these assemblages are not seeking natural resources as such, but *economic* resources. Still, it can be argued that it would have been more fruitful to also select cases outside Africa in order to provide a more ‘complete’ analysis of the corporatization of force where also more ‘mundane’ practices were more thoroughly addressed. One example could be the current outsourcing of prison systems in many countries. Another interesting development is the ‘refugee industry’, where PMCs increasingly are providing security to camps, thus enabling humanitarian organizations to provide their services. Here, the refugees are becoming the centre of a complex assemblage where they indirectly constitute the commodity that generates profit for at least some of the actors, but the consequences of this development requires further research.

As the concept of the corporatization of force build upon the motivation for economic profit, it alludes to the problem of intentionality. However, the profit motive is here applied since it is an innate part of the PMI, and binds it together with MNCs as they also operate on a logic of profit. This is not to say that economic profit per se is immoral, or that other motives like ideology are more legitimate. Furthermore, the thesis has only briefly addressed the discussion of the interdependence between security and economic development that seem to dominate global politics as neo-liberal policies aimed at serving the ‘common good’ are implemented both in western states and also in Iraq. There is also a challenge in separating the effects of the corporatization of force specifically from effects caused by other variables within complex and often chaotic events. Were these assemblages directly responsible for all atrocities, and what role did other actors play?

Despite these remarks, this thesis has demonstrated both theoretically and empirically the historical conflation of state and non-state providers of force, and the consequences. While these assemblages have provided security to the regime and the economic industries, this has come at a high cost for the people within the territory concerned. Recognising the challenges the re-emerging private military industry poses, this thesis argues therefore that we should focus less on the force providers, and more on *for whom* force is provided, thus placing the human in the centre of the security discourse.

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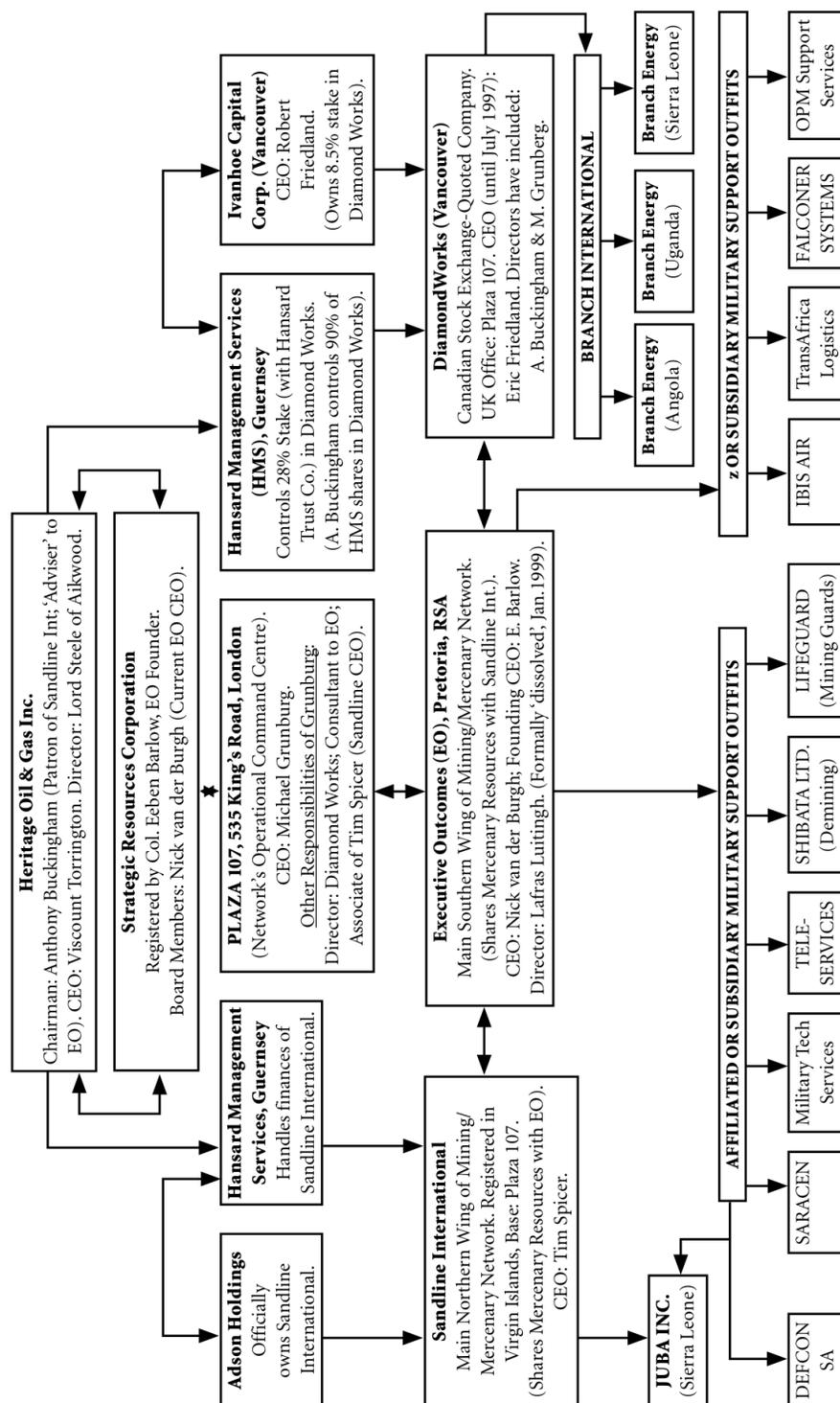
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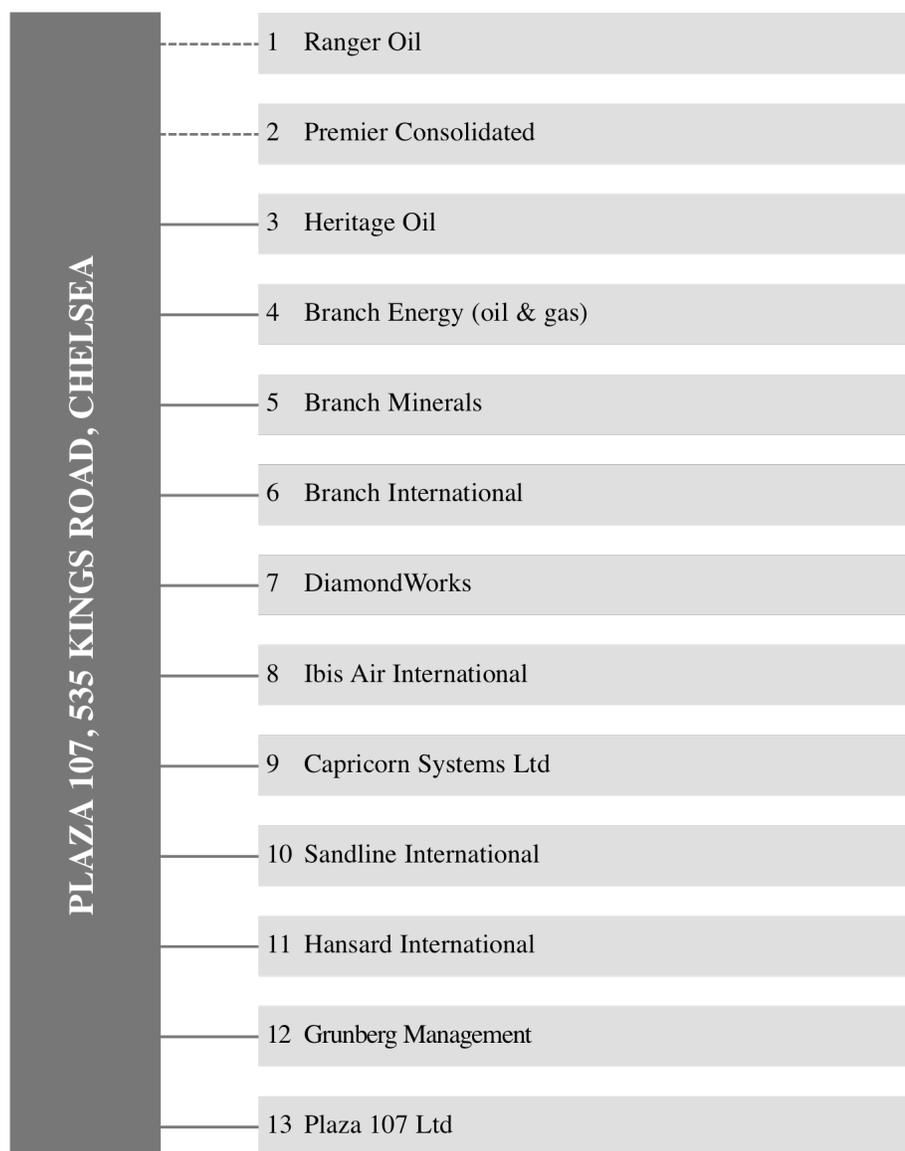
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Appendix A: Anatomy of interlocking mining and mercenary network

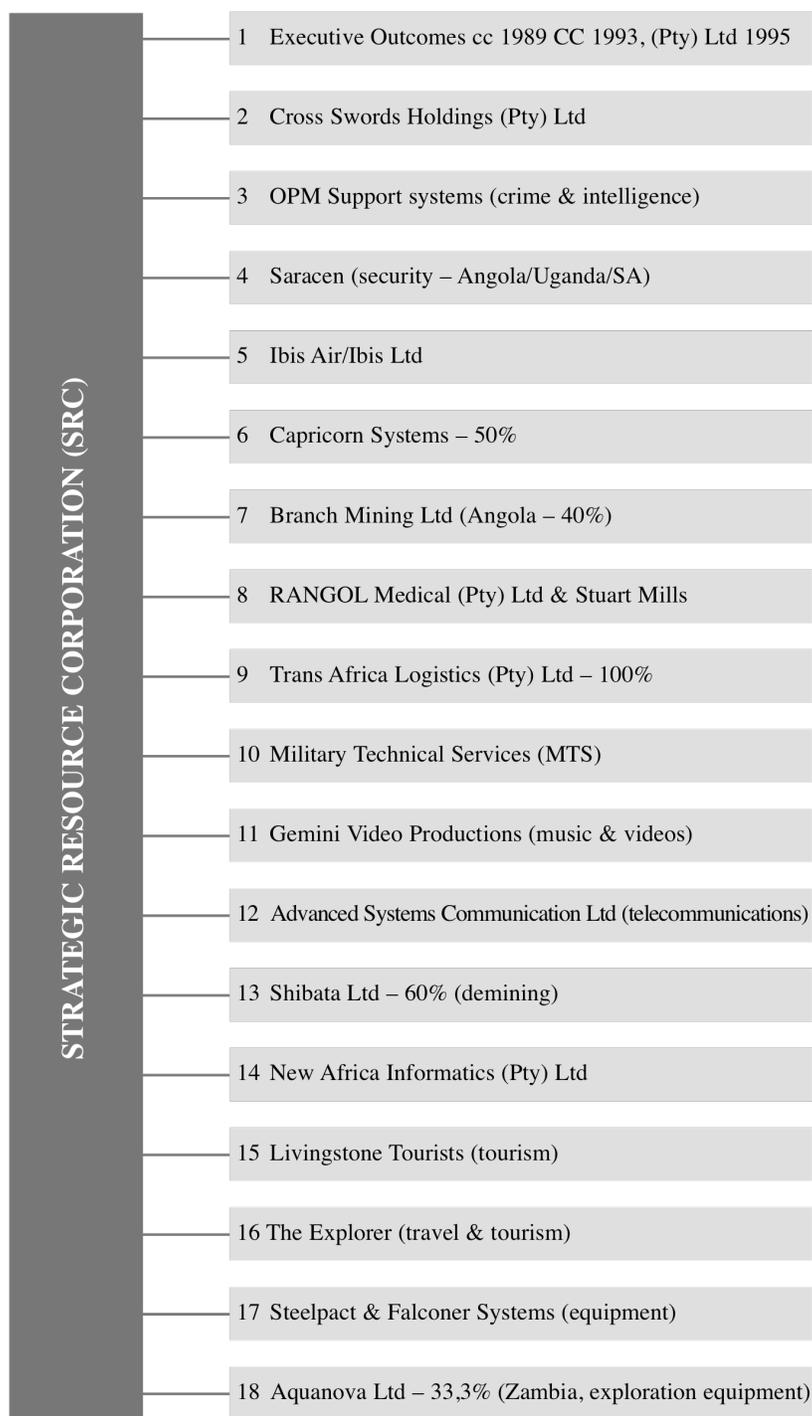


Source: Small 2006.

Appendix B: Plaza 107, UK network of private companies

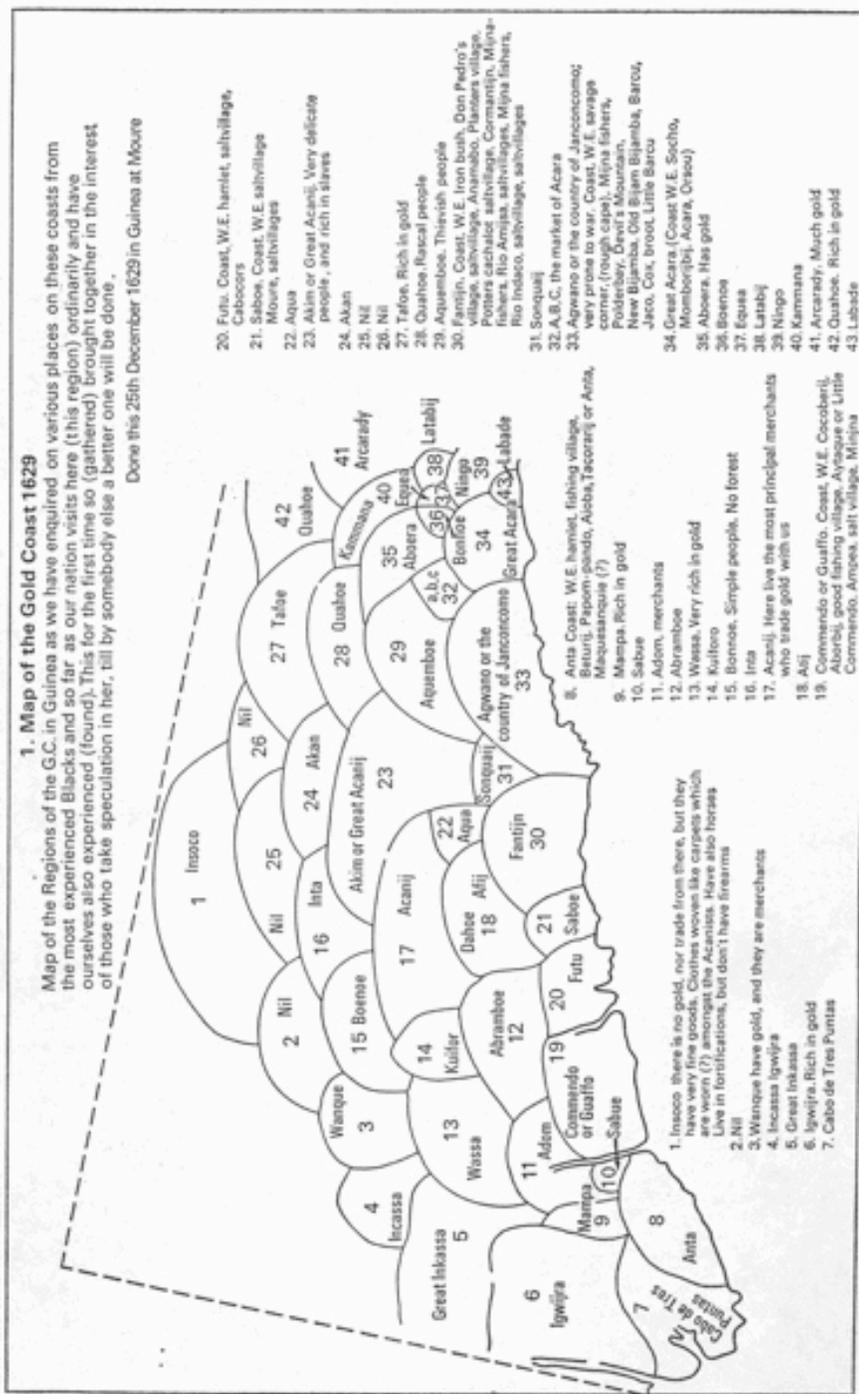


Appendix C: South African network of private companies 1995 and 1996



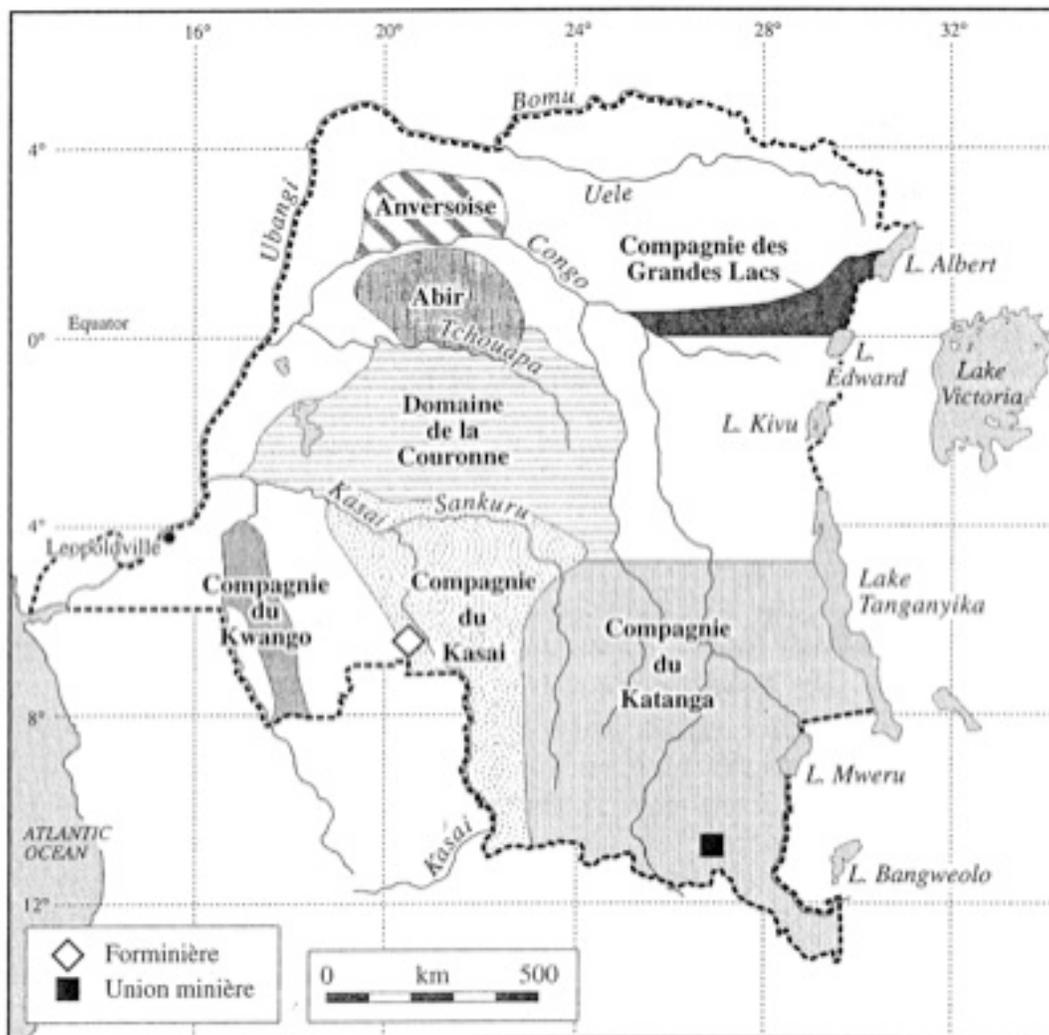
Source: Pech 1999.

Appendix D: Map of the Gold Coast 1629



Source: Daaku 1970.

Appendix E: Congo Free State concession areas



Source: Ewans 2002.