

Private Military and Security Companies: Transforming Security Governance?

Proposal for a workshop at the ECPR Joint Sessions, Antwerp 2012,

by Elke Krahmman and Anna Leander

The proliferation of Private Military and Security Companies (PMSCs), i.e. companies that supply military and security services not only nationally, but also internationally, has created a new field of research. Initially, this research focused on the questions of the reasons for the (re)emergence of these companies and how they differed from the mercenaries of old (Cilliers and Mason 1999; Mills and Stremmler 1999). Key cases which facilitated the growing academic interest in the industry were the involvement of Sandline International and Executive Outcomes in the wars in Sierra Leone and Angola in the early 1990s (Howe 1998; Francis 1999; Cleaver 2000). Later research turned to the outsourcing of military support functions by the United States and the United Kingdom, and the issue of state control over PMSCs (Mandel 2002; Singer 2003; Avant 2005; Leander 2006; Kinsey 2006).

Since then research on PMSCs has increasingly diversified as a growing number of scholars from different disciplines, theoretical traditions and empirical interests have started to investigate the industry. Criminological research on the privatization of 'policing' at the national levels has formed one distinct and pioneering tradition with its questions about the division between 'public' and 'private' security and the role of PMSCs in the commodification of security (Baker 2004; Loader 1999; Shearing 1992; Krahmman 2008). International Humanitarian and Human Rights Lawyers have addressed the issue of whether and to what degree PMSCs are subject to international law, and what responsibilities states have with regards to the regulation of these companies (Cameron 2006; Gillard 2006).

Also in the discipline of International Relations, there has been a growing divergence of research questions, including research on the normative, ethical and regulatory dimensions of PMSCs (Percy 2007; Chesterman & Lehnardt 2007; Pattison 2008); their impact on armed forces operations and civil-military relations (Alexandra et al. 2008; Uttley 2005; Krahmman 2010); and their involvement in international interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan (Berndtsson 2009; Isenberg 2008; Spearin 2003). It is mirrored by a multitude of theoretical approaches to the study of PMSCs such as the construction of risk by private companies (Carmola 2010; Krahmman 2011; Leander 2005); the role of PMSCs in Neoliberal

governmentality and ‘assemblages’ of global governance (Abrahamsen & Williams 2010; Leander & van Munster 2007); the principal-agent relationships between states and PMSCs (Cockayne 2007; Leander 2010); and the impact of the gendered and corporate (self-)images of PMSCs on their behaviour and public perception (Joachim & Schneiker 2010).

Whilst the above attests to the strength and vibrancy of contemporary PMSC research, it has also impeded the identification of potential synergies and the creation of common research programmes. The objective of this workshop is to help address this problem by examining in how far scholars from various theoretical persuasions and empirical concentrations converge around the idea that the emergence of PMSCs is part of a transformation in security governance, broadly defined, and how they explain or understand that transformation. To do so, the workshop will be structured around four distinct, but interconnected themes that relate to different dimensions of security governance and its conceptualization:

1) Theoretical Perspectives on PMSCs and Security Governance

The first part of the workshop examines different theoretical perspectives to the analysis of PMSCs that overlap with the concept of security governance and discusses the possible synergies between these approaches with regards to our understanding of the transformations involved in the growing role of PMSCs in global and local security governance. Presentations on this theme might include:

- Theoretical approaches to the analysis of security governance.
- Institutionalist and rationalist approaches to the analysis of PMSCs in global governance.
- Constructivist approaches drawing on the analysis of discourses, practices, governmentality, assemblages, fields and technologies to assess governance.
- Political theory approaches that examine the normative foundations of security governance such as Just War Theory and idea of corporate social responsibility.

2) Definitions and their Consequences

The second part of the workshop focuses on the question of how particular definitions shape public and academic perceptions with regards to the change and/or stability of existing modes of security governance. Possible contributions to this theme will investigate:

- The definitions of PMSCs in national and international laws and how these hide or illustrate changes in the practices of security governance.

- The (re-)definition of ‘inherently governmental’ or ‘state’ functions with regards to security governance and its consequences.
- How PMSCs attempt to shape their public image by redefining themselves and their roles in security governance and its broader implications.

3) Empirical Research

The third part of the workshop investigates empirical case studies and discusses the commonalities and differences that characterize the use and operations of PMSCs in distinct geographical and functional dimensions of security governance. Papers in this section might range from:

- The use of PMSCs in local, national and global security governance.
- The place of PMSCs in hybrid or networked modes of governance that involve a multiplicity of state and non-state actors.
- The operation of PMSCs in different sectors of security governance, such as military and humanitarian interventions, security sector reform and anti-piracy operations
- The consequence of these forms of PMSCs involvement.

4) Issues, Gaps and New Developments

The fourth part analyses what issues have been the primary concern with regards to PMSCs as a new mode or actor of security governance and which have so far been under-researched. This part is specifically open to new scholars and disciplines which have yet to publish their research or make an impact on the field. Possible contributions in this part might relate to the questions of:

- How PMSCs perpetuate and/or undermine specifically gendered forms security governance such as represented by the professional military and the division between ‘humanitarians/civilians’ and ‘soldiers’.
- What impact the intra-organizational governance structures of PMSCs and their clients have on their collaboration.

5) Synergies and Future Research

In conclusion, the workshop discusses collectively the divergences and synergies that have emerged from the preceding sections. It establishes possible directions for future research that integrates, builds and expands on the concept of security governance with regards to the roles

of private and business actors. In addition, the concluding section identifies how this research might be taken forward through collaborative research projects and joint publications such as a special issue on PMSCs and security governance in a peer reviewed journal such as *Security Dialogue*.

Funding:

The workshop organisers are planning to apply for a major ESRC / Danish Research Council research grant to support a three-year project on ‘Markets in the Making of Multilateral Interventions (3MI)’ of which this workshop will be part of the outreach and dissemination strategy. Additional funding will be sought from the British Academy and the Tuborg Foundation.

Biographical Note:

Elke Krahmman is Senior Lecturer in International Relations at the University of Bristol. Her main research interest is in the theoretical and empirical analysis of the transformation of global security governance, including the proliferation of Private Military and Security Companies and commodification of security. Her recent publications include articles in *European Journal of International Relations* and *Review of International Studies* as well as the monograph *States, Citizens and the Privatization of Security* (Cambridge University Press, 2010).

Anna Leander is professor of international political economy at the Copenhagen Business School. Her research focuses on international relations theory and the commercialization of international security.. She has recently published *Business in Global Governance* and “The Paradox of Private Military Company Impunity”. She is associate editor of *International Political Sociology* of the “Global Political Economy” series at Routledge. She is a board member of the Danish Institute for International Studies and of the DANIDA/DU initiative “Building Stronger Universities”. See www.cbs.dk/staff/al.

References

- Abrahamsen, R., and Williams, M. (2010) *Security Beyond the State: Private Security in International Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Alexandra, A., Baker, D.-P., and Caparini, M. (eds.) (2008) *Private Military and Security Companies: Ethics, Policies and Civil–Military Relations*. London: Routledge.

- Avant, D.D. (2005) *The Market for Force: The Consequences of the Privatization of Security*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Baker, B. (2004) Multi-choice Policing in Africa: Is the Continent Following the South African Pattern? *Society in Transition* 35, 204–23.
- Berndtsson, J. (2009) *The Privatisation of Security and State Control of Force: Changes, Challenges and the Case of Iraq*. Gothenburg: University of Gothenburg.
- Cameron, L. (2006) Private Military Companies: The Status in International Humanitarian Law and Its Impact on Their Regulation. *International Review of the Red Cross* 88, 573-598.
- Carmola, K. (2010) *Private Military Contractors in the Age of New Wars: Risk, Law and Ethics*. London: Routledge.
- Chesterman, S., and Lehnardt, C. (eds.) (2007) *From Mercenaries to Markets: The Rise and Regulation of Private Military Companies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cilliers, J., and and Mason, P. (eds.) (1999) *Peace, Profit or Plunder? The Privatisation of Security in War-torn African Societies*. Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies.
- Cleaver, G. (2000) Subcontracting Military Power: The Privatisation of Security in Contemporary sub-Saharan Africa. *Crime Law and Social Change* 33, 131–49.
- Cockayne, J. (2007) Make or Buy? Principal-Agent Theory and the Regulation of Private Military Companies. In: Chesterman, S., and Lehnardt, C. (eds.) *From Mercenaries to Market*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Francis, D.J. (1999) Mercenary Intervention in Sierra Leone: Providing National Security or International Exploitation? *Third World Quarterly* 20, 319–38.
- Gillard, E.-C. (2006) Business Goes to War: Private Military/Security Companies and International Humanitarian Law. *International Review of the Red Cross* 88, 525–72.
- Howe, H.M. (1998) Private Security Forces and African Stability: The Case of Executive Outcomes. *Journal of Modern African Studies* 36, 307–31.
- Isenberg, D. (2008) *Shadow Force: Private Security Contractors in Iraq*. Westport: Praeger.
- Kinsey, C. (2006) *Corporate Soldiers and International Security: The Rise of Private Military Companies*. London: Routledge.
- Krahmann, E. (2008) Security: Collective Good or Commodity? *European Journal of International Relations* 14, 379–404.
- Krahmann, E. (2010) *States, Citizens and the Privatization of Security*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Krahmann, E. (2011) Beck and Beyond: Selling Security in the World Risk Society. *Review of International Studies* 37, 1-24.
- Leander, A. (2005) The Power to Construct International Security: On the Significance of Private Military Companies. *Millennium* 33, 803–26.
- Leander, A. (2006) *Eroding State Authority? Private Military Companies and the Legitimate Use of Force*. Rome: Centro Militare di Studi Strategici.
- Leander, A. (2010) The Paradoxical Impunity of Private Military Companies: Authority and the Limits to Legal Accountability. *Security Dialogue* 41, 467-90.
- Leander, A., and van Munster, R. (2007) Private Security Contractors in the Debate about Darfur: Reflecting and Reinforcing Neo-liberal Governmentality. *International Relations* 21, 201-216.
- Loader, I. (1999) Consumer Culture and the Commodification of Policing and Security. *Sociology* 33, 373-392.
- Mandel, R. (2002) *Armies without States: The Privatization of Security*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner.
- Mark, M., and Cilliers, J. (1997) *Mercenaries and Mischief: The Regulation of Foreign Military Assistance Bill*. Institute for Security Studies, South Africa.
- Mills, G., and Stremlau, J. (1999) *The Privatisation of Security in Africa*. Johannesburg: SAIIA.
- Pattison, J. (2008) Just War Theory and the Privatization of Military Force. *Ethics & International Affairs* 22, 143-162.
- Percy, S. (2007a) *Mercenaries: The History of a Norm in International Relations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Shearing, C.D. (1992) The Relation between Public and Private Policing. *Crime and Justice* 15, 399-434.
- Singer, P.W. (2003) *Corporate Warriors: The Rise of the Privatized Military Industry*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Spearin, C. (2003) American Hegemony Incorporated: The Importance and Implications of Military Contractors in Iraq. *Contemporary Security Policy* 24, 26–47.
- Uttley, M. (2004) Private Contractors on Deployed Operations: The United Kingdom Experience. *Defence Studies* 4, 145–65.
- Joachim, J., and Schneiker, A. (2010) Von taffen Jungs und schwächelnden Soldaten: Eine Gender-Analyse der Privatisierung von Sicherheit. In: Fischer-Lescano, A., and Mayer, P. (eds.) *Recht und Politik globaler Sicherheit*. Frankfurt/Main: Campus.