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**PRIVATE-PUBLIC PARTNERSHIPS: PRIVATE SECURITY, CRIME  
PREVENTION AND POLICING IN SOUTH AFRICA**

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## **Private-Public Partnerships: Private Security, Crime Prevention and Policing in South Africa**

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### **ABSTRACT**

While not intending to rehash all the old international debates regarding public versus private policing, this article explores some aspects of this debate in South Africa regarding the role, if any, that the private security industry in South Africa can play in policing and crime prevention, albeit if only in some form of partnership with public policing authorities. The intention in this article is to look at the changed role that private security has begun to play in South Africa in many of the traditional public or state police spheres of operation irrespective of the lack of a formal framework for “partnership policing”. Additionally it examines how co-operation in policing and crime prevention can be realised and made mutually beneficial to all roleplayers within the broad framework of a public-private partnership. The article also outlines a number of specific examples (City Improvement Districts, responding to alarms, CCTV, vehicle tracking and recovery, private investigations) where “infiltration” into the sphere of policing and substantial growth of private policing functions has occurred and accelerated over the last few years.

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# **Private-Public Partnerships: Private Security, Crime Prevention and Policing in South Africa**

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Despite their similar interests in protecting the people of the United States, the two fields [private security and public policing] have rarely collaborated. In fact, through the practice of community policing, law enforcement agencies have collaborated extensively with practically every group but private security (IACP/COPS 2004: 1).

## **Introduction**

Since the advent of democracy in 1994 the South African Police Services (SAPS), like its counterparts worldwide, has struggled to come to terms with high levels as well as changing patterns of crime. South Africa is not unique in experiencing these crime patterns that have become more intense all over the world during the 1990s. Moreover, the police in South Africa have also searched for and experimented with new ways of policing, sometimes following and borrowing from overseas experiences but also developing their own homegrown style of policing.

In terms of the private security industry, as with other worldwide trends, South Africa has also experienced rapid growth in this industry. With that growth, and the changing forms of policing in South Africa, have come demands by the private security industry for greater involvement in policing and crime prevention activities.

But these demands, or as some would say requests or even offers of assistance, have not been without controversy and critique. One of the more prominent of criticisms private security involvement in policing activities has centred around perceptions about their replacing conventional policing where governments have ostensibly allowed these services to run down. However, in this scenario the reality is often that only the wealthy are able to afford the replacement services offered by the private security industry.

Moreover, much of the criticisms of impropriety within the private security industry too readily apportioned indiscriminate blame against the whole industry. In addition, some of these accusations are driven by the self-interest of police officers trying to deflect efforts by private security companies to enter the (policing) domain. Part of the criticism has also at length dealt with the need for regulatory models for the provision of security by private sector companies. Furthermore, a central issue in these debates has been the extent to which private security has impinged on the traditional domains of public policing, and the debate has increasingly focused on how policing can be outsourced – either in the form of a public service provider of security, or in the form of a partnership with local police to perform some of the functions of regular policing.

However, against the backdrop of the existing high levels of crime in South Africa where the state law enforcement and policing agencies are chronically understaffed, underresourced and overworked, it stands to reason that any assistance that any sector of the private security industry can render would be welcomed. Unfortunately this has not always been the case in South Africa.

In South Africa there have also been ongoing efforts by the authorities to increase the regulations pertaining to the industry but this has met with considerable resistance and reluctance from the private industry. One of the problems has been to define the parameters of powers that can be delegated to private security officers in any crime prevention policing operation.

The debate has been complicated by the fact that over the last few years the provision of policing and crime prevention by the private sector has been occurring, even in the absence of any official co-operative and regulatory framework. This last issue has been one of the main obstacles in terms of the public police allowing private police into their domain, since the former argue that the latter provide private policing services for commercial gain while not being constrained by any rules of accountability and reporting lines other than directly to the CEO of the private security company contracted to provide such services. There are a number of implications of this “infiltration”, some would say “usurpation”, of public policing obligations.

Before entering into a discussion of private-public partnerships involving the private security sector there is a need to obtain some conceptual clarity regarding the definitions and terminology used. Accordingly, some of the concepts that are used to describe and define the type of policing activities to be discussed follow below.

### **Private Policing**

Private policing is not a new form of policing that has developed over the last decade or two to fulfil demands posed by new forms of crime and the use of technology in committing crime. It has been around for many years. According to Collins, Ricks and Van Meter (2000) “Security and crime prevention have been present in the earliest known forms of prehistoric civilizations” (Collins et al 2000: 3). The Roman Emperor Augustus Caesar separated military and police functions when he established a security force, the Praetorian Guards, to protect himself from assassination. Another Roman security force, the Vigils, were responsible for maintaining other forms of social order like firefighting and protecting private property by patrolling the streets of Rome. Over the ages private policing developed in Europe primarily at local level where district wardens and others were appointed by City Councils, Town Guilds or municipalities to watch over activities in a town’s wards. The system of “watch and ward” that developed was extended over time to the appointment of parish constables for villages. Their role was largely to enforce local regulations. Guilds, merchants’ associations and other businesses would also appoint “security officers” to prevent the theft of goods and to protect their trade routes. Accordingly, various forms of private police were operational long before 1829 when Sir Robert Peel established his London Constabulary or “Bobbies on the beat”. Peel’s formation of the so-called “new” police was in fact the beginning of a “steady process of centralization, co-ordination, and nationalization of policing in England” (Johnston 1992: 4)

Peel’s “new” police served as a model for public policing. Crucial to this “new” policing was the establishment of formal police agencies paid for by the state and accountable to national control bodies. With the development of national police agencies privately or locally funded police tended to fall away and their previous

policing functions were taken over by these public police agencies. However, in the mid-1800s the concurrent rebirth of the “private security sector” occurred. Private security was offered to private citizens by entrepreneurs offering burglar deterrents, i.e. early alarm systems. Private detective agencies like the famous Pinkertons Agency in America were established to provide private security and private investigation services to anyone willing to pay for such services. Other security companies like Wells Fargo and American Express emerged in the 1850s, offering security for the transport of goods as well as armoured rail cars for cash-in-transit services. The emphasis in these services largely fell on the protection of individuals and private property. One aspect of these services involve the provision of nightwatchmen at factories and warehouses – and during the industrial boom of the 1920s the whole guarding industry emerged. With the strikes in the interwar period private police forces emerged to defend corporate capital or act as strike breakers (Johnston 1992: 18-20). These commercial security initiatives provided the basis of the modern private security industry.

In this article, the term private policing is used interchangeably and synonymously with that of private security. Although in the past a differentiation has traditionally been made between in-house security and so-called contract security – the former usually referring to “personnel who conduct policing activities within an organisation” while the latter to security guards hired (contracted) by an organization “to secure and protect assets and personnel”, they both provide a form of private policing (Nalla 2002: 1112-1113).

Furthermore, while there is a great diversity of specific security services provided by the private security industry, within these security functions modern security requirements dictate that “policing” activities very similar to those of the public or state policing agencies do occur, namely managing security risks (potential crime), risk (crime) profiling, risk (crime) analysis (identifying vulnerabilities), risk reduction, investigating any breaches of security and collecting information/intelligence as well as evidence of breaches in the provision of security (which might well constitute the perpetration of a crime against the organisation/company) and the protection of assets, property and people. Modern security managers might also be concerned with computer crime and information security as part of their private policing activities.

However, there is a clear distinction between private policing and guarding operations. The majority of the security industry is involved in purely guarding functions whereas the term policing implies an overall role of guarding, reaction and investigations. Private security does not generally have all these under one umbrella, although they do exist in separate forms.

Accordingly, the first point that needs to be accepted is that traditional forms and definitions of policing no longer suffice as an argument for the exclusion of private security practitioners from any forms of policing. In effect these days public and private policing serve similar interests. While private security/private policing serve the narrow interests of a contracting organisation or client, and public policing the interests of the wider public at large, both broadly aim to reduce crime and prevent client losses (victims of crime or security breaches/theft of property). In essence then both aim to maintain order and protect their respective clients. Consequently the role of private and public policing has become increasingly blurred.

The similarities do not end there. Many security personnel also wear uniforms and drive vehicles similar to those of law enforcement agencies. Moreover, some of the functions such as securing premises, patrols, responding to alarm calls or crime reports and crowd management are very similar for both forms of policing. Private policing also involves more than just patrol and guard duties. Many of the allied activities to these two functions involve asset or people protection – establishing perimeter security and other protective barriers and security measures – and are essentially also designed to prevent insiders and outsiders from committing crimes, in other words, pure and simple crime prevention. Furthermore, many security companies have developed investigative capacities such as collecting information and evidence, interviewing suspects and developing a criminal case (which is usually handed over to the authorities for prosecution) in the process of investigating “incidents”.

However, differences and distinctions still remain. Generally in the training-oriented literature the clear distinction between public police and private security is made with the police being shown to be offender-oriented and more focused on the deterrent effect of prosecution, whereas security is primarily concerned with victim protection, loss prevention and risk management. Furthermore, in

comparative terms the research available on security work seems to indicate that loss prevention and the provision of a security service are more prominent than offender prosecution and that a loss preventative philosophy is paramount to private security industry operations. Such preventative services are primarily motivated by the need to make a profit but remain heavily vested in the sphere of crime prevention per se.

### **Crime Prevention**

In terms of crime prevention, what is not discussed is that type of crime prevention that is often termed social crime prevention, i.e. where the community at large is involved in initiatives or projects run by themselves that aim to prevent crime in their own neighbourhoods. These typically involve volunteer neighbourhood watches that patrol certain residential areas, or being the “eyes and ears” of the police like in “e-block watches” where private citizens would organise themselves in blocks and report any suspicious activities either to each other or directly to the local police by cellphone (or other means).

Community crime prevention programmes concentrate largely on prevention programmes aimed at a reduction in crime through intervention, at-risk youth activities, life skills programmes and alliances with key organisations and not policing activities as such. The underlying basis of these programmes is education. In other words, programmes to educate the public on protecting themselves and their property. And finally, victim support and victim empowerment programmes which deal with the provision of support directly to those affected by crime with the ultimate aim of preventing revictimisation. Some of these community-based crime prevention programmes have been established in schools.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> One South African example is the Business Against Crime (BAC) programme Tissa Thuto which is a school-based crime prevention program managed by BAC for pupils, teachers, parents and communities in the same schools. It combines the expertise of police, education, community police forums and organizations specializing in sports, mediation and conflict resolution, peer counselling, trauma and abuse, and victim issues. Each partner provides its specific skills-training, resources and modules.

There are also business or private sector crime prevention initiatives which typically involve the business sector and provides financial support to community organisations that develop prevention initiatives, develop their own activities or plan events related to prevention, provide human resources or goods and services in support of prevention initiatives, and create internships for young people in their business district, especially those from disadvantaged neighbourhoods, or who have been in conflict with the law. The main business contribution therefore involves supporting programmes that help build safer communities. Through these prevention strategies, they largely focus on reducing risk, and this is where so-called Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) plays a prominent role. CPTED, in brief proposes to reduce people's fear of crime by using safer design of buildings, the built environment and residential areas, thereby contributing towards the enhancement of resident's quality of life. Typically CPTED involves the erection of improved barriers and the use of technology e.g. lighting, CCTV cameras and other physical barriers to cut down on opportunity for the perpetration of crime.

Another aspect that will not be discussed in this article is the so-called "Safer Cities" Partnerships (SCP) – usually private sector businesses, local authorities and the police – which again are not strictly private security/police partnerships. The emphasis in SCPs is more on specific programmes and building designs which aim to make it safer for the community at large to walk in the streets, go shopping and participate in leisure activities. Many of these partnerships involve the private sector funding equipment or programmes in which citizens voluntarily participate. As such they are more "crime prevention" partnerships than "policing" partnerships.

The crime prevention which will be discussed in this article is that emanating directly from the policing activities of members of the private security industry and which is related to activities other than their provision of business or commercial security, although the latter will be described and linked to so-called "private policing" aspects later in this article.

## **Policing and Private Security in the Modern Age**

Private security is no longer a neglected subject or topic of investigation and examination. With the emphasis post-“9/11”<sup>2</sup> on enhanced security of all kinds, the hardening of customs inspections and searches on travellers, as well as within the context of the “fight against terrorism”, security has become a catch phrase for all kinds of new measures, technologies and strategies. However, the emphasis in this new focus on security is largely, and currently remains, on state security and in the USA what is nebulously termed “Homeland Security”, i.e. the protection of US citizens from attack from outside terrorist organisations. Nowhere in this re-emphasis on worldwide security has there been much mention of a “fight against crime”. As a consequence this aspect of private security still remains largely under researched.

Moreover, in the research that is being done the emphasis remains strongly on the police, police structures and the police as an organisation. But it became patently obvious after 9/11 that within this heightened emphasis on security worldwide that it has become ever more important to mobilise, utilise, call on and integrate as wide a variety of resources as possible. The most obvious, largest and widespread of these resources, and which rivals or is often even bigger than policing agencies, is that of private security.

Internationally the last 20 years has witnessed the growing role and influence of private security in many aspects of social control. This phenomenal growth has been attributed not only to demands by the public for increased personal safety and protection, by business for increased security, by the growth not only in the mass property market but also in the size and number of shopping complexes, private security villages and enclosed or gated neighbourhoods. All these factors were subtly encouraged by perceptions of the public about the efficacy of the public police to provide safety, law and order, coupled to the declining trust and

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<sup>2</sup> The blanket term currently widely used to describe the events (World Trade Centre and Pentagon terrorist attacks using commercial airline airplanes) that occurred in the USA on 9 September 2001.

faith in the police to prevent crime. Wakefield (2003: xx) describes the increased presence of private security as follows:

As public life increasingly falls within privately controlled spaces, policed by security officers operating not 'in the public interest' but in the interests of their employers or corporate clients, it becomes subject to a style of policing that is likely to differ markedly from state policing in its objectives, core functions and methods of operation.

Furthermore, this growth in private security has become, as Bottoms and Wiles (1994) assert, part and parcel of a wider security "quilt" or "web" of provision in place of a system of social control that has been dominated for about 150 years by public-funded and state-directed police (Bottoms & Wiles 1994). However, a rider needs to be added here, namely that this growth has been uneven, not only by sector (e.g. guarding as opposed to armed response) but also spatially, i.e. wealthy urban area versus poor rural or agricultural areas. What, in fact, has occurred is the creation of what Bottoms and Wiles (1994) call "bubbles of security". In other words, the provision of security becomes location specific (e.g. private security villages or enclosed neighbourhoods etc.)

A final aspect of this growth that needs mentioning has been the overall increased professionalisation of the private security industry. An increasing number of personnel are being encouraged to undertake tertiary studies in order to become security managers and risk analysts. These better trained security personnel as well as more employees with a higher education (tertiary) level qualification have resulted in improved professionalism and better planned and effective security operations. There has been a consistent call from this growing body of professionally qualified security personnel for improved and increased co-operation with public policing agencies. Their argument basically is that public police can no longer maintain, as they have consistently done, that private security personnel remain poorly or undertrained security operatives who know nothing about crime and its associated risks nor understand the role policing plays in crime prevention and crime control.

## **Changing Forms of Policing and Private Security**

Over the last three decades considerable changes and research on “new” forms of policing has occurred, largely in response not only to the increased incidence of crime but also to the changes in levels of violence and sophistication being shown by criminals. This was linked to rising community concerns and feelings of insecurity by members of the public. In order to become more effective and to bring down these high levels of crime, public police and law enforcement agencies have been forced to change and adapt to this new situation. Coincidentally, much of these new approaches to policing were conceptualised on the back of research by a number of leading academics, who over the years coined such terms as “problem-oriented policing”,<sup>3</sup> “community policing”, “zero tolerance policing” (Karmen, 2004: 24), “soft and hard” policing,<sup>4</sup> (Burke 2004), “visible” policing, “sector” policing, “partnership” policing, and more recently “intelligence-driven” policing. All these terms are used in an effort to describe and encapsulate the essence of the supposedly “new” forms of policing – which in some cases merely consisted of a restating of obvious forms of policing.

Be that as it may, much of the emphasis in the literature has been on the model of the so-called “new police” which developed in Great Britain after 1829 and has influenced the development of state police organisations in many countries. But irrespective of that core starting point definitions of policing have proliferated over the years. In brief, with regard to the interpretations of public policing five broad angles of police work serve as the basis, namely:

- Policing as a regulatory process using a specific body of public

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<sup>3</sup> See the website: [www.popcenter.org](http://www.popcenter.org) for more information on this form of policing, in particular the work of Herman Goldstein.

<sup>4</sup> This policing style refers to the contrast between "hard" policing, which is exemplified by the "zero tolerance" policing approach made popular by Mayor Giuliani and Police Chief Bratton in New York City in the mid-1990s, and under current British probation policies, i.e. a more proactive approach to dealing with crime at all levels through ‘crackdowns’, while "soft" policing, as illustrated under the paradigms of community policing and restorative justice inclusive of so-called democratic or human-rights oriented policing. These policing styles coexist under an "umbrella" of multiagency social control that encompasses the public police, private police, and social service agencies.

- officials;
- policing as the work (exclusively) of the police with activities of other agencies, communities, businesses and citizens broadly subordinate to this prioritised activity;
- policing as a core set of activities as distinguished from the host of other forms of regulation and social control that flow through almost all aspects of life;
- policing as order maintenance based is on the traditional policing functions of safeguarding society (public order) through investigation, crime prevention, regular patrolling and crowd control; and
- policing as governance through a complex network of interlinked agencies and institutions which has shifted control back to the community and become more responsive to people's needs at grassroots level although still operating under a detailed umbrella of regulatory requirements, procedures and processes (Wakefield 2003: 4-7).

Allied to these definitions of policing have been the theorising about the changing nature of policing in society and the need for the use of private security. In the recent past social changes related to the need for change have revolved around researchers' findings dealing with the following aspects:

- The growth in modern cities and the environmental and building demands associated with better or increased social controls.
- A rapid rise in reported crime levels.
- Growing feelings of insecurity in communities.
- Perceptions about increased risks and fear of crime which have become entrenched in peoples' minds.
- The role of the media in more widely reporting on violent crime which has further influenced the growth in feelings of insecurity and fear of crime.
- The "segmentation of control" (Bottoms & Wiles 1994) where, since the 1980s, the primacy of public police control has diminished with the proliferation of alternative service providers –

many of them private security.

· Decreasing funding and resourcing of public police agencies

One of the consequences of the above has been the development of a “siege mentality” where people “retreat” into private “fortified enclaves” and are willing to submit themselves to a comprehensive range of security measures and procedures, to live under constant security surveillance and control and more often than not give up individual freedoms such as open access, free movement and privacy. Overall there has been an exponential growth in the control over private space, where that “space” is “defended” by all means available (but paid for) by individual families.

All these developments have certainly presented communities and governments with a new set of policing challenges. Not the least of them has been the erosion of governments’ virtual monopoly on policing, and the demands on them to harness all resources and co-opt alternative forms of security (policing) to remain effective in all forms of crime control.

In modern times the term “police” has thus come to mean something wider than the mere activities of an agency of the government and has come to encapsulate all forms of “alternative policing” activities, inter alia that of private security. Although there are many different structures for policing internationally, what has developed over the last 20 years is a wide variety of policing frameworks within what can be termed a very segmented security or policing market. The fact that so many different policing agencies co-exist does not necessarily mean that there is a duplication of roles or functions. But this also does not mean that they operate entirely independently of one another, since the distinctions between the various forms of police have become blurred and the lines between them are no longer hard and fast. In essence the different forms, both private and public, should be complementing and supporting each other by means of co-operating, co-ordinating and working together in well-defined public-private partnerships. If both the public police and private security can come to a congruence of end aims and objectives, namely crime control and public safety, no problems or obstacles should be experienced to establishing such partnerships, since the end result of safer communities would be beneficial to both sets of customers, i.e. the public at

large and specific clients. There is an obvious need to extend “once-off” partnerships that arise only for special events (sports or cultural events) to more ongoing sustained partnerships for “every day” policing activities.

There is no doubt that such long-term ongoing partnerships can be mutually beneficial to both types of policing in what can be termed a symbiotic collaborative relationship, namely where they “feed off” one other, i.e. drawing different types of benefit from each other. But this is the real challenge – setting up such mutually beneficial but also long-term (permanent) partnerships. A further challenge is to integrate both approaches into one focused system for better overall policing. These shared policing activities could typically involve the following:

- Responding jointly to crimes in progress;
- investigating crimes;
- sharing of crime intelligence;
- joint involvement in crime intelligence gathering (e.g. by means of joint surveillance teams or CCTV operations);
- sharing of expert knowledge (e.g. on the latest technology (private sector) or training methods (police));
- accessing and supplying of official crime information;
- joint planning and policing of special events;
- assistance with training (from both sides e.g. for computer forensics by private sector companies or collecting and correct control of evidence at a crime scene (by the police); and
- crime prevention advice (sharing of risk analysis and audits information).<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Interestingly in the South African context at the time of the SAPS Task Team investigations into partnership policing it was felt that if private security companies were to be used in partnership policing a number of benefits would accrue to both parties namely: Freeing up of police members; as a force multiplier; sharing of information; private security providing vehicles to investigate alarms; being the “eyes and ears” of police; providing technological expertise and assistance while alternatively SAPS able to provide training assistance. On the other hand a number of potential problem areas were also identified namely: Legal liability and civil claims if private security

In all these partnership activities there is the obvious need for clear guidelines and accountability structures to be developed. Ultimately these are to be based on the principle of transparent decision-making – specifically to avoid “rule-bending” by any participating member in such partnerships (e.g. there have been a number of instances reported in the research where security staff use their personal networks or friendships to gain access to restricted information).

However, one of the issues in partnership policing is the form such partnerships should take, and the type of relationships that are built up between each partner – will the partnerships be equal sharing partnerships, will one partner be dominant, or exploitative e.g. one partner demands and makes use only of resources, will there be central control and command, or will someone play a junior subordinate partner role etc. One of the main stumbling blocks of the formation of local level partnerships between the police and private security has been the issue of accountability (and not so much funding or resources). This in turn links to the issue of sanctions and disciplinary procedures for any misbehaviour, the use of excessive force or abuse of powers that might be perpetrated by the private sector members of such formally established partnerships.

One of the other main stumbling blocks to establishing partnerships are police fears of a loss of autonomy and the implied association of private security personnel with private interests, i.e. divergent interests being served which would

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personnel were used in partnership policing; vicarious or public liability; limited powers available to security personnel; unequal/inadequate training for security company personnel; lack of enforcement of a code of conduct; wearing of similar uniforms by private security personnel; dangers of vigilantism if policing powers extended to security personnel; private security being used as reservists; disturbance of crime scene by untrained private security personnel; differential loyalty i.e. that security companies would only assist SAPS when it served their own purposes or when it was to their own financial advantage; poor communication between the two parties; the problem of “fly-by-night” companies and unregistered personnel; lax gun control at some private security firms; possible misuse of crime information by security firms for their own purposes; misunderstanding of powers available to security officers; opportunity for corruption; involvement of certain private security companies in crime and violence (for more detail on these possible benefits and potential problems see Minnaar, 1997: 5-10).

lead to contradictory demands being placed on the activities or operations of such partnerships.

Nevertheless, the partnership approach gained momentum in developed countries in the mid-1990s, linked as it was to the development of community policing and the emphasis on community safety and crime prevention. Allied to this approach was the break with the narrow interpretation that crime prevention was the sole preserve and responsibility of the (public/state) police. The broad notion of community safety was premised on the assumption that this would lead to greater participation in crime control and crime prevention by ordinary members of communities in the fight against crime. It was also felt that by using the term “safety” meant that it was wider than crime per se but also encompassed the physical and social impact of crime and feelings of insecurity associated with the perpetration of crime against communities as a whole.

Furthermore, the emphasis was also more on ‘problem-solving’ and ‘proactive intervention’ than merely ‘catching criminals’. But as (Wakefield 2003: 53) states:

Community Policing bears many similarities to the strategies used by private security in that it is more responsive than traditional policing methods to the circumstances that produce crime or threaten public safety.

In effect, Community Policing, places the responsibility for dealing with less serious crime and the social problems associated with that expression of crime squarely with and in the community, with the local police eventually playing more of an advisory role and only coming in to deal with (reacting or responding to) more serious crime as it arises in a community. However, in South Africa the policy of Community Policing required that the local police establish and promote community safety strategies in collaboration with representatives of the community, namely through the local Community Police Forum (CPF). In this scheme there is no real talk of specific partnerships with the private security sector as such. A final problem associated with partnerships is the lack of specific accountability structures. More will be said about this later in this article.

Having established some basis for a broad conceptual framework the focus can now be turned more specifically to the South African situation. In order to

contextualise this debate further the first issue that needs mention is the growth of the private security industry in South Africa over the last two decades.

### **Growth of the Private Security Industry in South Africa**

The rapid growth and expansion of the private security industry in South Africa<sup>6</sup> is now an accepted fact and cannot be ignored, argued or wished away. Since the 1970s the South African private security industry has grown at a rate of anything up to 30 percent per annum. (Minnaar & Ngoveni 2003; Shaw 1995: 4-5).

In 1990 the private security industry was valued at R1,2 billion and by 1997 this figure was put at R6-billion (Reynolds 2003) but by 1999, inclusive of vehicle security and tracking and in-house security (large mining houses, banks, insurance companies etc.) the value of the private security industry was estimated to be R9-billion. In January 2004 this value was estimated to be more than R14-billion with estimates as high as R18-20 billion also being mentioned (Albert 2004: 56).

The biggest growth in South Africa in terms of numbers, particularly over the last five years, has occurred in the guarding sector. This sector has also seen the largest increase in the number of vehicles where currently upwards of 40 000 (response) vehicles are in use. The alarm and response sector is the second biggest with just under 25 000 vehicles. The largest number appears to be in the in-house sector (which includes municipalities, large mining houses, oil companies and banks) followed by guarding services and the alarm response sector.

Exact figures for each sector cannot be provided although estimates in the order of 175 00 for in-house, 165 000 for guarding services and 50 000 for alarm

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<sup>6</sup> The South African private security industry has broadly been divided into a number of security sectors namely: Security guards (Industrial, residential and commercial); Specialised security guards (Cash-in-transit); Security guards (Reaction service/armed response); Security guards (National key points); Security consultants; Special events security; Security training; Body guarding (inclusive of VIP Protection); Security control room operators; Security loss control (inclusive of crime risk analysts) and Entertainment venue control. Other sectors refer to small specialization such as locksmiths; security technology; installers of security equipment etc. Within the guarding sector industry specialization also occurs, for example, casino, airport, hospital, campus security etc.

response sectors were made by Irish (1999: 1, 6 & 7). This was before the new legislation was implemented requiring the registration of every service provider and security officer (inclusive of in-house security personnel).<sup>7</sup>

By 1 June 2004 the whole private security industry had approximately 750 000 persons registered<sup>8</sup> with the Private Security Industry Regulatory Authority (PSIRA) of whom only 265 000 were described as “active security officers” (Badenhorst 2004). Approximately 25-30 000 new trained security officers enter the market every year. According to Berg (2004a: 6) between December 1999 and June 2003 102 168 new security officers entered the industry. The number of active security officers increased from 115 331 in 1997 to 210 000 in 2002 (Smit 2003: 10). However, because there is such an oversupply of lower end security officers and working conditions are poor with low pay there is a large turnover of personnel in this industry with large numbers becoming inactive (unemployed) or leave the industry every year.

In addition, although a peak of 4 437 registered security providers was reached in 1997 this number had been reduced by June 2004 to 3 553 service providers registered with PSIRA (inclusive of security training centres countrywide) (www.psira-sa.co.za, 28/6/2004).<sup>9</sup> This reduction in number (for instance almost 1 000 installers had been reduced to 300) was due mainly to buyouts and mergers (Smit, 2003: 10). There were also 22 security associations looking after the interests of particular parts of the private security industry.

In contrast with the private security industry there were approximately 132 000 people employed by the SAPS on 1 June 2004. Of these approximately 98 000 were uniformed police officers performing policing functions (Schnetler 2004).

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<sup>7</sup> The current PSIRA registrations do not give a breakdown of the various sector registrations.

<sup>8</sup> This is the total of registered persons whose names are contained in the PSIRA database.

<sup>9</sup> As of 1 June 2004 of this total 554 had been suspended. Included in this total were 673 Security Training Centres.

Accordingly the current ratio in South Africa is approximately 3:1 private security officers for every uniformed police member.<sup>10</sup>

One of the crucial factors in this growth was the concomitant growth in reported crime. After 1994, with the decline in overtly violent political crime and, for various reasons, the substantial increase in the reporting of crime, the true extent of violent crime emerged. As a consequence the fear of crime amongst members of the public soared as did the perception that criminals were acting with impunity. Violent crimes such as car hijackings, rapes and murders were reported prominently by the media. Residents felt helpless and the police, lacking the capacity and resources to deal with the upsurge in violent crime, appeared to be incapable of dealing with criminality. There was a lack of faith in the ability of the agencies of the criminal justice system to reduce crime and punish offenders. Consequently, many people who could afford to engage the services of private security companies, particularly armed response, did so – thereby continuing the trend that existed before 1994. Private security companies seemed able to respond faster to calls for assistance. Hence the decline in the use of state policing by those members of civil society who were better off financially. However, poorer communities do not have the same access to alternatives to state policing as they are not able to afford the services of private security companies. This serves to create and entrench the disparities between rich and poor. Since it was found that most of the police resources were unevenly distributed in predominantly white areas a decision was made to reallocate those resources to previously disadvantaged communities. This shift in emphasis by the SAPS in primarily black communities also contributed to the growth of the private security industry. People in these communities who formerly relied on organs of civil society such as street committees for protection, were now increasingly unable to maintain those structures, thus leaving a gap which private security providers were easily placed to fill. One of the unfortunate by-products of these perceptions in poorer

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<sup>10</sup> Take note that this ratio would have provincial variations where a high density province like Gauteng not only has the highest number of police officers (approximately 28 000) but also the highest number of registered companies and security officers (approximately 125 000).

neighbourhoods (e.g. informal settlements) and in rural areas was the concomitant growth in vigilante activities ( Minnaar 2001).

Simultaneous with the so-called “crime explosion”, the South African Police Services or (SAPS) adopted Community Policing as its philosophy and guiding principle. Part of this new philosophy was the establishment of Community Police Forums (CPFs) that would bring the community and the police closer together. The objectives were to build a relationship where previously one of open hostility existed between the police and the community. Furthermore, the aim was for each of the parties to learn to trust each other given their previous history of mutual antagonism and distrust. In essence there was an acknowledgement by the SAPS that it could not solely carry the responsibility for crime prevention. Hence, the police were asking communities to take part in crime prevention. The emphasis on community policing and the reallocation of resources to townships was perhaps one of the factors contributing to the expansion of the private security industry in monied areas. The restructuring of the SAPS has had a profound effect on the level of service expected by suburban communities and the nature of the relationship between township communities and the police.

A further factor in the growth of the private security industry in South Africa has been the large scale involvement of this sector in the public policing sphere, which is also a given, even if at times denied or hidden. Additionally, this involvement has both negative and positive aspects, many of the latter being of mutual benefit, not only to the clients that the private security sector serves but also to the police and therefore indirectly to the public the latter serves and protects. This so-called “privatisation of crime control” has in the last five years become far more evident in the South African situation. The public in many of the more affluent neighbourhoods complain about the disappearance of “visible” policing from their neighbourhoods, i.e. they only see the personnel of private security companies parked on the street corners or undertaking patrols, while the SAPS would appear to be conspicuous by their total absence from residential neighbourhoods. In some areas private security is busy replacing or has already replaced public police. These private security companies often “sell” or market themselves not only as a replacement but also as a supplementary service to the

SAPS. A case in point has been the provision of armed response services to private alarm systems.

Finally there has been uneven acceptance or tolerance of this involvement of private security personnel in policing and crime prevention activities, with certain quarters showing a great deal of antipathy. A number of arguments for and against private security playing any role whatsoever are generally put forward (Minnaar 1998).

### **Regulating the South African Private Security Industry**

In the South African context there was an early realisation that the growing private security industry could not be allowed to operate unregulated or unfettered, with all control being exerted by market forces. In the late 1980s the state had already become aware of the growth and expansion of the private security industry in South Africa and the fact that it was largely un- or under-regulated. Moreover, the added recognition by the state that this industry was increasingly performing duties previously within the ambit of the public police led, the state to the conclusion that the industry needed a greater degree of regulation and control.<sup>11</sup>

However, the early pre-1994 legislation was viewed in some quarters as merely being supplementary to the old South African Police (SAP) in order to allow the latter to concentrate on keeping the black population under control and to suppress the burgeoning political unrest of the 1980s. Alternatively the legislation was also seen as protecting the economic interests of a white-dominated and controlled industry. Post-1994 legislation was seen by some as a response by the new government to a manifest need for stricter regulation of this industry (a detailed description of the applicable legislation regulating the private security industry in South Africa can be found in Minnaar & Ngoveni (2003); and Berg,

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<sup>11</sup> The relevant legislation being *The Security Officer's Act 92 of 1987*; *Security Officers' Amendment Act (No. 25 of 1990)*; *Security Officers' Amendment Act (No. 119 of 1992)*; *The Security Officers Amendment Act (104 of 1997)*; *Private Security Industry Regulation Act (56 of 2001)*; *The Private Security Industry Levies Act (23 of 2002)*.

2003). There was also the view that certain operators in the industry might possibly be behind some of the political unrest of the late 1980s and early 1990s. The final position of some commentators was that stricter regulating was needed to reign in and control a powerful and growing industry, which it was feared posed a threat to the fledgling democracy. The latter perception arose in some quarters due to the fact that large numbers of former white apartheid police and defence force officers – some regarded as having strong rightwing sympathies – were now operative and in some cases owning security companies. An adjunct view was the suspicions in police quarters that there was a growing involvement in criminal activity of members of the security fraternity. (Schonteich 1999; Irish 1999; Shaw 1995; Blecher 1996; Nina & Russell 1997). These concerns of the government, in conjunction with the growing involvement of private security firms in criminal investigations and in particular the allied information and crime intelligence gathering capabilities and skills that are used by companies doing in-depth investigations, led the then Minister for Intelligence Services, Lindiwe Sisulu, to launch a Commission of Enquiry with the brief of conducting a review of the Regulation of the Private Security Industry. This Commission of Enquiry was specifically established because of the Minister's concerns regarding the expansion of the Private Security Industry in South Africa, especially with regard to the "intelligence" activities of these companies, as well as foreign involvement in those "intelligence" activities (Ministry of Intelligence Services 2004: 2). The foreign involvement concern was raised as an issue specifically in response to a number of takeovers of large private security companies in South Africa by foreign interests in the last three years. Because of the sensitivities around the role private security plays in South African society, this represented a particular obstacle to extending co-operation in terms of partnership policing between the SAPS and private security companies in South Africa, particularly to those perceived to be controlled from outside the country. The further perception around this issue was the so-called "threats to national security or the interest of the state" (Ministry of Intelligence Services 2004: 4) that such control might pose. Accordingly, the main focus of the Commission of Enquiry was to be the statutory oversight of intelligence services, in particular the "intelligence services" category of :

- Private Security Companies
- Private Intelligence Companies
- Private Military Companies
- Business/Competitive Intelligence Companies
- Private Investigators (Ministry of Intelligence Services 2004: 2).

In addition, the Commission was to look at the actual legality of these intelligence gathering operations of private security companies. Obviously one concern implied by this focus was where private security companies were using confidential information for business or commercial advantage, i.e. making illegal use of information gathered in the course of the investigations or even gathered illegally by means of industrial espionage. Hopefully when the Commission has completed its review it will recommend specific guidelines for the monitoring and accountability required with regard to the investigation and intelligence/information gathering operations that private security firms have become involved in.

With reference to the existing applicable legislation which currently regulates the South African security industry the only point to be made regarding the discussion in this article refers to the fact that none of the legislated Acts or the Regulations stipulate nor mention any involvement in policing (joint or partnership policing) or crime prevention – other than where this would involve the provision of security to a client by means of monitoring electronic equipment, installing alarm systems and providing an armed response service. Crucially no mention is made of any of the additional powers or peace officer privileges as requested in the 1997 submissions to the Amendment Act. It therefore still remains the prerogative of the SAPS to enter into formal agreements for co-operation, outsourcing or joint policing operations with the private security industry. The National Commissioner of the SAPS may still, in terms of the Criminal Procedure Act 51 of 1977, under certain circumstances delegate the powers of a peace officer to private security officers.

This lack of any formal framework regulating the involvement of the Private Security sector to become involved in traditional policing activities, albeit in a subsidiary capacity, would appear to be at the root of much of the problems

resentments and distrust between practitioners in the two fields of public and private “policing”.

Much of the distrust and resentment results from the tremendous growth of the private security sector, as well as the view of the SAPS view on how it fulfils its constitutional obligations for public (state) policing. Be that as it may, this did not prevent a vigorous debate on the role, if any, of the private security sector in either assisting or becoming directly involved in purely policing functions. Allied to this debate was one on privatisation, outsourcing and partnership policing. However, all these debates occurred within the wider debate on how the new SAPS would police South Africa.

### **The Private Security Industry and Changing Policing Approaches in South Africa**

Since the attainment of full democracy in 1994 and as part of the policy debate on police transformation and changing approaches to policing in South Africa, quite a robust and vigorous debate has arisen among police, academics, policy-makers and politicians concerning the future role of the private security industry.

Broadly speaking, these debates have centred around what exact role private security practitioners can play in practical terms to either assist the SAPS or even taking over some of its policing and crime prevention functions (Minnaar 1999). The debate has also become part of the constitutional, political and crime combating/prevention debate about the role of the police in South African society.

An important factor or issue influencing this debate was the operational changes made to the way the SAPS-policed society. Post-1994 the South African Police was changed from a “Force” to a “Service”. To assist this transformation and to move away from the apartheid era in which the police was used by the state as an instrument of oppression and repression, it was envisaged that a strong oversight and co-operative role would be played by communities whereby Community Police Forums (CPFs) would be established in each community to assist and advise the police on how to police their specific community. This type of policing was encapsulated within the acceptance by police management of a new policy on Community Policing. However, as the operational limitations and implementation

obstacles became apparent, there was a subtle move to redefine community policing, and the SAPS policy makers began to make use of the term “visible policing” to define the way that they were dealing with crime at the community level, i.e. instituting more foot patrols and being in closer contact at street level with communities.

At the same time visible policing was supported by the launch of special operations like Operation Crackdown. In essence these were nothing more than high-density, high visibility operations.<sup>12</sup> But in time visible policing was further refined and adapted to a more long-term proactive form of policing to become “Sector Policing”, which has been described as the practical result of the original SAPS policy of community policing and an extension of the concept of “visible policing”. The 1998 White Paper on Safety and Security was the first official policy document to define sector policing describing it as “the division of areas into smaller managerial sectors and the assignment of police officers to these areas on a full time basis. These police officers regularly patrol their own sector and are able to identify problems and seek appropriate solutions.” (Department of Safety & Security 1998: 13). The intention then of sector policing being to encourage constant contact between the SAPS with members of local communities.

According to Dixon and Rauch (2004: 1), the most important aspects of sector policing are its “local geographic focus, problem-solving methodologies and community consultation”. At the end of 2003 the SAPS sent out a directive to police stations across the country to start implementing Sector Policing, which basically entails dividing police station jurisdictions into geographical sectors each staffed with a dedicated team. According to Steinberg (2004) the aim of Sector Policing is to:

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<sup>12</sup> These special operations like Operation Crackdown were premised on the fact that more than 50% of crime occurred within the policing areas of about 12% of South Africa’s police stations (145 out of 1 136 stations). The idea behind Operation Crackdown and the more recent Operation Tshipa was to assemble a massive national task force and saturate these identified crime ‘hot spot’ areas with large numbers of ‘visible’ police in order to carry out frequent roadblocks, cordon-and-search operations and vehicle and premise searches.

[I]mprove neighbourhood policing, which the police have been struggling to accomplish for the past decade. The idea is that grassroots cops will begin to understand microlevel crime patterns and tackle them with creative problem-solving techniques; this will draw police into constant communication with their constituents and help them understand the public as clients and themselves as service providers.

In essence Sector Policing is an amalgam of past policing initiatives drawing on elements of CPF structures, community policing, visible policing, special operations, crime analysis and intelligence-led policing. It also creates a perfect platform for the involvement and integration and co-ordination of the policing activities of certain sectors of the private security industry. Accordingly, within all these policy changes there were persistent calls by the private security industry to be allowed to play a larger role in assisting the police to combat and prevent crime or at least to allow the outsourcing of certain services still being provided by the SAPS, which could very easily be outsourced without compromising any strictly policing functions of the SAPS.

As a consequence, since 1994, with reference to private policing, two policy debates emerged, namely whether any “policing activities” should be either outsourced, privatised or civilianised (Minnaar & Mistry 2004); and alternately whether private security could become more directly involved in policing by means of so-called “partnership policing”.

While the concurrent process of regulating the industry more strictly was taking place, the SAPS, in an effort to try and accommodate calls from the industry for more co-operative crime prevention (Minnaar 1997), coined the term “partnership policing” whereby it was hoped to somehow allow for private security to either assist or be directly involved in certain crime prevention aspects of public policing. But this so-called “partnership policing” was only to be established on the SAPS’ terms, i.e. strongly controlled and directed by police managers at police station level.

### **“Partnership Policing”**

As the transformation of the SAPS took hold during 1995-1996, the private security industry also came under pressure to become more accountable and

relevant to crime prevention functions. These changes also fell within the context of state moves to increase regulation of the industry. Accordingly in 1995 and 1996 the SAPS were approached by a number of individual security firms with requests for the formation of partnerships with them on an ad hoc basis. Although partnerships with the private sector is provided for within the 1996 National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS) programme on environmental design and maintenance, and such partnerships are also in line with the support initiatives put forward by Business Against Crime (BAC) and other private sector roleplayers, currently there are still no fixed policy guidelines as to how such partnerships should be formalised. There are also a number of practical and legislative constraints to the operationalisation of any such partnerships on a formal basis.

While the 1998 White Paper of the Department for Safety and Security emphasises the role and involvement of other new roleplayers outside of the SAPS within a framework of social crime prevention programmes, (Department of Safety & Security 1998: 5) this White Paper does not spell out how this will be implemented in practical terms for the private security industry in South Africa. In terms of partnerships the White Paper merely states that, with reference to visible policing, the “capacity to implement visible policing be augmented through partnerships with local government” (Department of Safety & Security 1998: 13) (underlined for emphasis). The implication here is that this would be done in conjunction with the proposed metropolitan or municipal policing structures.

Furthermore, the White Paper does not provide a practical guide to private-public policing even though it explicitly mentions the private security industry in terms of being a “partner” against crime:

Another important element of safety and security in democratic South Africa is the necessity to enhance the spirit of voluntarism in our country. There are many important partners in the fight against crime. These include, among others, organisations of civil society, particularly business and community organisations, citizens who volunteer for service as Police Reservists as well as the private security industry which performs a useful role. The role of such players is, in principle, one of partnership with the State. For this reason, greater attention will be paid to their role in the safety and security environment in future policy processes (Department of Safety & Security 1998: 7) (underlined for own emphasis).

Finally, the White Paper refers only to areas of intervention to ensure effective crime prevention by way of Community Crime Prevention where:

These interventions involve communities taking responsibility for crime prevention in their own neighbourhoods. Such interventions involve localised programs, which mobilise a range of interest groups to address crime prevention on a town or city basis. Projects could include improving surveillance through schemes such as car guards or community marshals... (Department of Safety & Security 1998: 17).

It would appear that the above created some sort of opportunity for the private security industry to engage in crime prevention exercises at a community level. However, as in the past, no legal or regulated framework for such initiatives was established or proposed at all. The implication within this omission is that any such action would actually occur in a legal and practical vacuum. According to Julie Berg:

[G]overnment policy in terms of the National Crime Prevention Strategy, 1996 and White Paper of Safety and Security, 1998 refer to the partnering of the community and the responsibility of communities to respond to the crime threat. However, the nature of this proposed partnership is never detailed in terms of resource-use; policing powers; competition and the profit motive; community interest; forms of policing and how these should be regulated and held accountable; and in broad terms the role of the state versus the role of private initiatives-whether for-profit or not-for-profit (Berg, 2004b).

In addition, there remains uncertainty in a number of quarters as to precisely what kind of support/co-operation or service would be provided by the security industry to the police. Moreover, the wide diversity of services provided by the general private security industry in South Africa further complicates the matter. Although a number of so-called joint or co-operative partnership initiatives have already been launched between certain companies/individuals and police stations at a local level, these have proceeded without the formal recognition or approval by the South African Police Services management and also without due acknowledgement to the legal implications<sup>13</sup> of such actions.

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<sup>13</sup> Briefly these legal implications refer to civil and public liability, as well as 'peace-officer-powers'. For the private sector to provide assistance to the police beyond just the provision of

There is, in fact, no formal national co-operation agreement in existence between the SAPS and the Private Security Industry.<sup>14</sup> Accordingly the outsourcing of some of the operational functions of the SAPS is at best problematic. There is also no mandate from the South African Police Service that supports or provides guidelines regarding the expected standard service delivery in terms of outsourcing any policing functions to the private security industry. Moreover, there are no clear guidelines regarding the role of the Security Industry and the police or any clear-cut instructions defining the exact relationship between these two entities.

However, irrespective of the lack of a formal framework for Partnership Policing a substantial growth of private policing functions has occurred and this has accelerated over the last few years. Outlines of selected examples of this private security “infiltration” into the sphere of policing are provided below.

### **Growing Involvement in Public Policing**

In the post-1994 period feelings of insecurity and fear of crime among most South African citizens continued to permeate public perceptions (this is confirmed by a number of public surveys by the Human Sciences Research Council and more recently victim of crime surveys undertaken by the Institute for Security Studies).<sup>15</sup> As a result an ever-increasing number of South Africans are making use of private security companies to protect themselves and their property. According to Irish (1999), the South African private security industry was increasingly “performing functions which used to be the sole preserve of the police.” (Irish 1999: 1).

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information or being the eyes and ears for local police is still legally guided by the existing powers extended to members of the public, i.e. they have no additional powers legislated specifically for this industry. For a more detailed discussion of these issues see Minnaar, 1997.

<sup>14</sup> There are, however, ad hoc agreements for co-operation between individual companies and the SAPS. One notable example is that of the Tracker Vehicle Recovery company (see later section).

<sup>15</sup> The results, inter alia about perceptions of safety and security, of the most recent victims of crime survey (2003) conducted by the Institute for Security Studies is contained in Burton, P., Du Plessis, A., Legget, T., Louw, A., Mistry, D. & Van Vuuren, H. 2004. *National Victims of Crime Survey, South Africa 2003*. ISS Monograph No. 101. Brooklyn: Institute for Security Studies. July

Furthermore, with the refocusing of the policing approach of the SAPS in the post-1994 period more and more SAPS resources were also channelled into crime priority areas such as drug trafficking, car hijacking, violent crimes using illegal firearms and the activities of criminal organisations, which in turn lessened the resources available for visible policing in residential areas (particularly the more affluent, previously white neighbourhoods). Accordingly many people (the private security industry, municipal authorities, businesses, the public and the police) in some form or another utilised and made use of the resources offered by the private security industry in the fight against crime. Such security services mainly revolved around security villages, gated neighbourhoods/enclosed areas and armed patrols of residential areas by private security personnel. (For more detail on the growth, impact and crime reduction role played by gated neighbourhoods and security villages see Landman 2002a and 2002b; Landman & Schonteich 2002; and Naude 2004). Among the more visible replacement of police in certain security functions have been those of responding to alarms;<sup>16</sup> the provision of CCTV services in CBDs; certain types of investigation services; security services at gated neighbourhoods/enclosed areas and security villages, and vehicle security and tracking.

While in a number of areas successful partnerships were launched these were on an ad hoc basis and dealt largely with co-ordinating response to alarms, sharing information coming to private security company control rooms, vehicle tracking and recovery, operating CCTVs in CBDs (currently largely limited to the main metropolitan areas of South Africa) and in some cases providing transport for shared visible police patrolling of residential neighbourhoods.

### **Inner City Partnerships/City Improvement Districts**

One form of joint policing has been the projects launched by CBDs in the major metropolitan areas by municipal police, SAPS and business. Two examples of these projects are mentioned here, namely Pretoria and Cape Town.

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<sup>16</sup> Over the last five years the private security industry in South Africa have almost entirely taken over the function of responding to private alarm activations.

In Pretoria a joint project between the SAPS and the Pretoria City Council, called Operation Kwano (a Northern Sotho word for co-operation or the joining of hands), has assisted the fight against crime in the inner city. The Kwano concept was originally implemented as a once-off anti-crime operation in the inner city of Pretoria during the Christmas holiday season of 1996. Besides additional police patrols private security guards were placed on tourism routes to co-operate with the special SAPS Tourist Protection Unit. But with the establishment of the Pretoria Inner City Partnership (PICP) it was decided to reinstate Kwano on a permanent basis in 1997 and during 1998 more private security guards, specifically to patrol the tourist routes of the CBD, were appointed. Two security companies are under contract to the Kwano Forum to provide guards to protect in particular tourists, especially along the official tourists routes used by them, as well as shoppers in the CBD. Members of the SAPS Sunnyside and Central police stations and the city council's Traffic Safety and Security Services (now the Tshwane Metro Police) meet weekly to plan joint operations and share intelligence to combat crime. The Crime Prevention Unit of Pretoria Central Police Station is now served by four support units namely a Crime Combating Unit, a Tourist Unit (which patrols in the Pretoria CBD together with the tourist guards hired by the PICP.) This initiative is funded by contributions from the more than 300 stakeholder members of the PICP. The tourist guards were dressed in blue uniforms with bright bibs and were in constant communication with the police during their patrols. Some of the guards had dogs and were armed with guns and batons, but had the same powers and authority as ordinary citizens. In May 1998 54 such guards were deployed to patrol the Pretoria CBD. An additional 92 were appointed later in the year to patrol such areas as Sunnyside and Marabastad, a Mobile Unit (which supplies policing and protection services on trains in conjunction with Metrorail's Protection Services Department in the Pretoria area; Metrorail's Protection Services Unit in Pretoria itself has 40 members which are supplemented by the hiring of an additional 228 private security guards), and a Business Watch Unit. One of the reasons for the continued success of Kwano has been the fact that the SAPS (Sunnyside and Pretoria Central police stations) have established specific alliances with certain sectors of the community.

Another initiative of the Sunnyside police station was the launching of the “Comrades” Neighbourhood Watch involving specifically domestic workers - these are trained in crime prevention and then form a network of domestic workers throughout the area linked to the police station and thereby becoming the eyes and ears of the police. The Kwano Operation is one of the models upon which community co-operation and the use of private security can be established for neighbourhood crime prevention (Anon 1999; Municipal Reporter 1998a & 1998b; Webb 1998; Anon 2001).

A more recent development (2000) has been initiatives like the City Improvement District (CID) in Cape Town where the city managers instituted a whole programme of urban renewal for the urbanized areas of Cape Town. One objective was to concentrate on the effective provision of services inter alia security, in order to reduce crime and thereby create an environment in which business can thrive. In these district initiatives property owners agree to an additional assessment to raise funds to pay for a variety of services. Most of the Cape Town CIDs<sup>17</sup> have opted to contract private security companies to perform the security service in their area. According to Berg (2004a: 6-7), because of the security demands and the hiring of security companies by the various CID managers, the SAPS and the private security companies were unintentionally forced to co-operate in the provision of policing and security services in these CID areas.<sup>18</sup> Before the implementation of the CID areas in Cape Town there

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<sup>17</sup> Only one of the CIDs (Wynberg) opted for community police officers or CPOs instead of private security. These CPOs are trained police reservists who have been given police training, uniforms and weapons, but are paid from the CID raised funds. However, they have the same powers as SAPS officers but with a more community-orientated approach to their policing by providing a community service (Berg, 2004: 7)

<sup>18</sup> The Central City CID, the largest of the Cape Town CIDs, paid for and appointed (in October 2002) 160 permanent security officers that patrolled the Central City CID area in shifts with 10 horse-mounted patrols and five dedicated patrol vehicles. This enabled round-the-clock surveillance and response with one roving/backup vehicle. In addition, in full co-operation with the SAPS a central 24-hour operations control centre serving a 72-camera surveillance network was established. These security personnel were backed up by 45 SAPS personnel from the Caledon Square Police Station (Anon, 2002a: 28 & 36).

apparently existed “very little standardized co-operation ...between the SAPS and private security in the Western Cape” (Berg 2004a: 6-7). As a result of the CID initiatives a form of informal agreement emerged between the SAPS and the security companies hired by the CID managers. In the Berg study of the Western Cape CIDs, it was found that the nature of this agreement was largely “co-operative and interactive” (Berg 2004a: 8).

In the Cape Town CIDs it would appear that the security companies are also subordinate to the SAPS. Private companies interviewed by Berg did not take over the duties of police officials but rather supplemented the police in that they provided additional manpower while concurrently having access to better resources, such as vehicles and more sophisticated equipment, that are used to assist the SAPS. But within this relationship there is a strong element of constant communication, not only at street level but also by means of regular meetings between the two groups held at the local police stations, private sector participation in the Community Police Forums (CPFs), and the establishment of linked radio networks. In addition, operationally there are jointly organised operations and roadblocks and a general sharing of information and intelligence (the sharing is reciprocal with the security companies sometimes phoning the SAPS to offer their services while at times the police would phone them to ask for assistance). Some of the SAPS members interviewed by Berg openly acknowledged that the better-equipped private companies are certainly of significant assistance to the police who are usually underresourced and burdened with high case- and workloads. But as Berg noted, these relations between the two sectors has largely relied on the personal efforts of individuals from both sectors (Berg 2004a: 9).

Cape Town also has a network of Crime Watches other than the above CIDs, some of which emanated from the old “Rent-a-Cop” system used in the CBD in the mid and late 1990s whereby reservists were paid to undertake crime prevention patrols or stand guard at warehouses. However, this programme was disbanded in 1999 when it was found that certain police reservists would report for duty at a police station, be issued with a police firearm and would then go off in uniform to guard or patrol only the area or building of the company or private individual/s paying him. In other words, they would in fact not be performing

their strictly police duties as a police reservist. Irrespective of its disbandment a number of CPFs and Neighbourhood Watch Associations set up more formal Crime Watch structures specifically to supplement underresourced SAPS in their areas. Their operations included a monthly levy which was collected from local businesses and households. These funds were then used not only to buy equipment but also to pay police reservists to undertake patrol and other crime prevention responsibilities in their neighbourhoods. Some serving police officers also moonlighted for their local Crime Watches on their off days to earn additional money. Things came to a head in August 2004 when the Western Cape Provincial Commissioner, Mzwandile Petros, issued an instruction disbanding those Crime Watches that employed and paid for police reservists, as well as summarily dismissing such reservists from serving in the SAPS. At issue here was not only the payment of police reservists but also their use of police vehicles and equipment to essentially undertake private policing. What often happened was that a local Crime Watch would purchase and donate a vehicle to their local police station and then expect that vehicle to be booked out to their Crime Watch police reservists. This not only skewed the allocation of scarce resources, i.e. wealthy areas made use exclusively of these donated resources, but fuel and tyre costs had to be funded by police putting additional strain on already stretched police budgets. Fact of the matter is that all these activities are in contravention of the Police Act (Hartley & Smetherham, 2004).

The disbandment of these Crime Watches was strenuously opposed by the Crime Watches across the Western Cape. Many of them had in fact supplied their local police stations with equipment and signed formal contracts with them to use the equipment and the reservists to patrol their areas. According to Craig Ginsberg, founder of the Sunset Beach Crime Watch in Cape Town, the Western Cape Crime Watches made up “one third of the active policing in the Western Cape [while] in some areas they make up 60 percent to 70 percent of the active police force” (Smetherham & Hartley 2004).

Some of these Crime Watches claimed that their areas had seen decreases in crime in their areas since the inception of the crime watches of between 40 and 80 percent. But soon after these closures locals were expressing fears that crime was again rising in their areas (Smetherham & Hartley 2004). The crux of the problem

would appear to be the payment of the policing services of reservists (and moonlighting police officers) as well as the use of police equipment and vehicles to undertake their patrols and responding to crimes as members of the police and not as “paid-for” private security personnel.

As a result of this, new guidelines were issued by the Western Cape Provincial Commissioner Petros, in which he outlined a “new” way for the crime watches to operate. In brief it came down to the fact that “new” crime watches would not be issued police radios or police vehicles with which to respond to crimes, or be allowed to employ (i.e. pay for) policemen with powers of arrest, but were allowed continue to function purely as neighbourhood watches that patrol and keep a lookout for criminal activity – which then had to be reported to the local police station for them to respond and make any necessary arrests (Hartley & Smetherham, 2004). So once again effective private-public partnerships in the sphere of policing foundered. This was directly as a result of disallowing the crime watches from using those of police powers that make for effective policing, irrespective of the fact that they were privately paying for those policing powers (responding directly to crime, making arrests, collecting evidence) necessary to act as a deterrent to crime. What remained was the crime prevention functions of visible patrolling and reporting suspicious activity. The only way the crime watches could continue to operate was for them to adhere to the Private Security Industry Regulation Act of 2001 and the South African Police Service Act of 1995. In the case of the former legislation, by definition, these crime watch patrols were functioning as a private security company and should therefore either have applied for exemption or register with PSIRA. In terms of the Police Act there are various requirements regarding the use of state resources, badges, uniforms etc.

### **Responding to Alarms**

Responding to burglar alarms (from private homes, businesses and factories) is strictly speaking viewed as part of the police’s activities in combating and preventing crime. But over the last number of years this has more and more devolved down to private security companies. In essence, one could say that this function has become outsourced although not for the account of the SAPS.

However, the “takeover” of this function by private security companies was more by default than by design.

In the alarm response field what has happened over the last few years in South Africa is that various private security companies have established their own armed reaction units or a reaction ability specifically regarding alarm systems. As this sector of the private industry expanded in the early 1990s, most private alarm systems linked installed alarms not only to the radio-control centre of the security company providing the system or their rapid armed response service but also directly to the local police station. (Alternatively telephones were programmed to automatically dial the local police station if the alarm was activated.) This was done since legally the SAPS has a responsibility to attend to alarm occurrences. Hence if an alarm is set off the police are obliged to respond. In reality what the police have found is that a large percentage of such call outs are false.<sup>19</sup>

As a result some local police stations have insisted on either being delinked or that the private security company first screen every alarm activation and only forward positive calls (or panic/emergency calls) to them for the SAPS to actually attend to such a call out. In essence such practices have lessened the burden on the police to respond to every alarm activation by transferring the onus of first response to the private security company providing the service.

An extension of the linking of alarms to the security companies control rooms has been the implementation of a linked communication and information reporting system. This system was first piloted in 1997 in the city of Durban but relaunched in 2002 and is called “Securinet”.<sup>20</sup> This system directly links security companies in the city to the police (SAPS and Durban Metro Police) and the protection services of the city (ambulances, fire brigade, civil protection and municipality). This is all about spreading information with serious crimes reported to the police

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<sup>19</sup> From a number analyses (see Minnaar, 1997 for more detail) of time spent by SAPS reaction units in attending to false alarms it became obvious to the police that a great deal of time and money is wasted on this. In certain areas a large percentage of alarm occurrences proved to be false, in some areas as high as 90% have been found to be false.

<sup>20</sup> Securinet is the brainchild of KwaZulu-Natal branch of the Professional Security Council (PSC) of South Africa.

being passed on to security personnel of the companies linked to the Securinet network. In essence, the business sector would act as additional “eyes and ears” by potentially linking 35 000 security guards in KwaZulu-Natal to this communication and information network. In this way they could play a significant role as a deterrent and thereby combat crime by alerting the police whenever they spot any suspects on the reported list supplied by the police. Securinet uses a computer (e-mail) and cellphone system whereby the police radio control rooms send out e-mails and SMSs (via internet and GMS cellular network) to the security companies on the network (Anon 2002b).

In Johannesburg another scheme to harness cellphone technology was launched in 2001 as *eBlockWatch* whereby a network system using cellular telephones can send crime alerts via SMS to signed-up members’ cellphones. These crime alerts include everything from attempted hijackings to burglaries. Its founder, André Snyman, stated that he wanted to use the system as a “crime fighting” tool ([www.eblockwatch.co.za](http://www.eblockwatch.co.za) 1/6/2004).

### **Surveillance in Central Business Districts by Closed Circuit Television (CCTV)**

“Outsourcing by default” has also extended to the provision of CCTV surveillance in a number of Central Business Districts (CBDs) in South Africa.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> CCTV cameras funded by Business Against Crime (BAC) have been installed in the CBDs of Cape Town, Johannesburg, Pretoria, Durban, Port Elizabeth and Kimberley with a number of smaller municipalities installing their own smaller systems. The BAC CCTV in Cape Town started with a pilot 12 camera project launched in December 1998 while a full 75 camera footprint covering Cape Town City Centre was commissioned in December 1999; a fifteen camera pilot system in the Johannesburg CBD was commissioned in April 2000 and has subsequently been expanded considerably to cover most of the CBD of Johannesburg. These cameras are linked to a BAC controlled monitoring room to which the SAPS have access (For more detail on the implementation of BAC’s CCTV surveillance systems in CBDs see Penberthy, 2001. This paper can be viewed at [www.crimeinstitute.ac.za](http://www.crimeinstitute.ac.za) under publications/Papers of the 2<sup>nd</sup> world conference papers...) In Durban the CCTV project known as “Eye-in-the-sky” is a joint project between the Durban Metro Police, BAC and the SAPS. In 1998 it consisted of 15 cameras along the beachfront, 23 in the CBD and 15 around the International Convention Centre (Anon, 2002b). A pilot CCTV surveillance system was installed in the Pretoria CBD in 2000.

Such outsourcing and the funding of installation and running costs has been a boon to the SAPS in that while they do not impinge on policing functions on the ground, they provide an additional support service for the Service without requiring any financial outlay or expensive infrastructure. Accordingly, the police have encouraged such anti-crime surveillance and monitoring services without outsourcing or losing any policing functions. BAC's stated intention in the field of Surveillance Technology is "to work with the lead law-enforcement agency, the South African Police Services, in the first instance, in order to provide the technological tools that will assist the SAPS and other law enforcement agencies in ensuring the most economic and effective use of manpower." (Penberthy 2001: 1).

In the BAC- administered control rooms a system has been developed whereby the CCTV operators<sup>22</sup> are trained in risk profiling, non-verbal communication (as exhibited by the public under surveillance by the CCTVs), surveillance techniques and incident management – all supervised by an incident manager. Their control rooms, besides all the individual monitors, are equipped with one big screen on which an individual monitor picture can be shown. Furthermore, each BAC control room also has one police officer from the SAPS on duty (assigned by the local police station) with an eight-hour shift rotation (i.e. three rotations) of different officers. In addition, the area covered by the CCTVs has a dedicated police vehicle assigned to it. If any incident in the making is observed by the CCTV operators the police officer on duty in the control room can radio the patrol vehicle immediately and dispatch it to the potential crime scene. Accordingly the BAC system allows for immediate ordering of a reaction and there is no communication problem or time delay in responding (Rogers 2004). The BAC CCTV systems have led to a considerable reduction in reported crime in the CBDs where they have been installed. In the Cape Town case study the system not only replaced the use of 450 police officers patrolling the CBD with 25 police officers on three eight-hour shifts (representing a considerable saving in manpower and costs), but in the first year of operation the full 75-camera system

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<sup>22</sup> Paid for and trained by the commercial company set up by BAC to install and finance the CCTV systems operated by them.

led to a reduction of 38 percent in reported crime from the area with a predicted reduction of 80 percent by the end of the second year (Penberthy 2001: 7).

### **Private Investigations**

There are other areas where the provision of private security has made inroads. It has become common practice in South Africa, for those who can pay, to hire private investigators to complete investigations i.e. do their own investigations, collect evidence and find suspects or even recover stolen goods. A number of high profile murder cases have been solved in this manner by hired private investigators. Since the SAPS detectives they do not have the time to investigate every docket, and in such instances victims are often prepared to hire a private investigator. Sometimes these investigators have been provided with clandestine access to a docket, or have make use of state resources such as criminal records and fingerprints files, which are supplied by contacts in the police, to eventually hand over completed investigations to the SAPS for prosecution. In other cases private investigators are called in by companies to resolve internal fraud cases (without the attendant publicity and possible embarrassment of exposure). More and more companies in fact hand over the completed investigation to the SAPS, particularly because there has been such a low conviction and success rate in police investigated cases dealing with commercial crime. Many of these commercial crime cases are complicated fraud or embezzlement cases, or even computer fraud wherein the SAPS simply does not have the requisite forensic, technical and commercial expertise to investigate the cases properly. Many organisations also conduct their own investigations on so-called “petty” crime. The insurance industry for example routinely conduct their own investigations and only where fraud is proven do they hand over such cases for criminal prosecution. Some big mining and industrial conglomerates (like Anglo-American) even appoint their own legal experts via the National Prosecuting Agency (NPA) as prosecutors in certain cases where the company is involved, i.e. pay for the prosecutor, in order to assist the state to obtain convictions.

In terms of the private investigation field the widespread use and hiring of private investigators so that these crimes can be solved has become commonplace. A number of purely investigative companies have been established in the last five

years. These have largely been staffed by ex-police officers and are dedicated to the investigation of criminal and other cases for the specific aim of building cases that can simply be handed over for prosecution on completion.<sup>23</sup>

### **Vehicle Tracking and Recovery**

Concomitant with the growth<sup>24</sup> of the crime of vehicle hijacking in South Africa during the 1990s (For detail of vehicle hijacking in South Africa see Minnaar 1998; and Minnaar & Zinn 2000) and allied to the high rate of vehicle theft<sup>25</sup>, the vehicle tracking and recovery company sector also developed. As hijacking of vehicles escalated security companies installed more and more sophisticated electronic and immobiliser systems to thwart potential hijackers and car thieves. The way these tracking and recovery companies operate has, in effect, released police from dealing directly with a large proportion of hijackers and car thieves. However, this is only applicable to car owners that can afford the installation of the sophisticated systems and the monthly service retainer that all companies charge. Although special anti-hijacking police units were established to patrol the

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<sup>23</sup> Interestingly, two of the biggest such companies are those headed by a previous National Police Commissioner (1994-1999), George Fivaz (Fivaz Associates) and Commissioner Basie Smit (National Investigation Associates), a former National Head of Detectives. Another big company Justicia Investigations makes specific use of intelligence gathering capabilities and polygraph testing for the purposes not only of pre-employment and applicant screening but also for “statement verification, locating hidden assets, obtaining investigative leads, narrowing a list of suspects and obtaining evidence for use in criminal or labour courts” (Justicia Investigation website at [www.justicia.co.za](http://www.justicia.co.za), accessed 15/6/2004).

<sup>24</sup> For the period 1995-2003 an average of approximately 15 000 motor vehicles and 5 000 trucks were hijacked annually in South Africa for a ratio of 35 (cars) and 11 (trucks) per 100 000 of the population – the highest rate in the world. (SAPS website at [www.saps.gov.za](http://www.saps.gov.za)) (Accessed 1 June 2004).

<sup>25</sup> For the period 1995-2003 an average of 98 000 motor vehicles were stolen in South Africa giving an average ratio of 240 per 100 000 of the population (SAPS website at [www.saps.gov.za](http://www.saps.gov.za)) (Accessed 1/6/2004).

major highways in Gauteng<sup>26</sup> the majority of recoveries of hijacked and stolen vehicles was undertaken by vehicle tracking and recovery companies.<sup>27</sup>

Insurance companies have also encouraged owners to fit these tracking devices and for owners who do so, insurance companies reduce monthly premiums accordingly. In short the system works as follows:<sup>28</sup> A signal can be sent by the company that fits a tracking device in a motor vehicle via a network of satellite and high-site radio masts to switch on the tracking device in a stolen or hijacked vehicle. The car thief or hijacker will therefore be unaware that he was driving a tracker-fitted vehicle and the company can activate its tracking and recovery team. Alternately, some companies rely on a phone-in system, whereby the customer is required to advise the company of a theft or hijacking. At that time the control centre will activate the tracking device and proceed with the tracking and recovery operation.

Tracking systems are becoming increasingly sophisticated, with some companies having now fitted the capability to some vehicles for internet tracking. By utilising the latest web-based technology, tracking company customers are able to track the movement of their own vehicles (very handy for trucking companies or for positioning of a family vehicle if concerns arise about where such a vehicle

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<sup>26</sup> Seventy percent of all hijackings occur in this province – being the economic heartland of South Africa with the highest level of car ownership as well. Coincidentally it is also the centre of hijacking syndicates being conveniently close to major routes to borders where hijacked vehicles are smuggled over the borders into neighbouring countries.

<sup>27</sup> The three major companies that dominate the South African market – Tracker (became operational in October 1996), Netstar and Matrix – claim a high recovery rate for their clients' vehicles. One of these companies, Tracker, recovered 20 000 vehicles over a seven year period (1996-2003) which also resulted in almost 4 500 arrests including bringing down more than 80 syndicates and over 120 'chop shops' (panel beating or second hand parts workshops where vehicles are cut up). Just the Tracker recoveries represented a saving of almost R2-billion (cost of replacement of stolen vehicles) to the South African economy. At the same time this company had approximately 260 000 vehicles on its books ([www.tracker.co.za](http://www.tracker.co.za). Accessed 17/6/2004). On average tracking companies in South Africa recover between 10-15 000 vehicles every year.

<sup>28</sup> Technical details of the various systems can be obtained from the websites of the Tracker, Netstar and Matrix companies at [www.tracker.co.za](http://www.tracker.co.za); [www.netstar.co.za](http://www.netstar.co.za); and [www.matrix.co.za](http://www.matrix.co.za). Information accessed on 17/6/2004.

might be), simply by logging on to the company website. Additionally, this Internet tracking facility can now also be accessed by means of a cellphone (the latter system utilises a combination of Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) and the cellular network (GSM) technology together with the Internet.

Most of the major tracking companies also provide an early warning system service to customers. With this system the car owner does not have to telephone the tracking company if the vehicle is stolen. The vehicle is fitted with a remote arming device. If the unit is armed and any of the doors are opened, the ignition is forced, or the vehicle towed, away the unit will start transmitting a distress signal that the company's control centre will pick up either from the stationary position or from the moving vehicle. The control centre will then try to contact the owner; if they fail to make contact or if the owner is unsure of the status of the vehicle; the company will respond and attempt to recover the vehicle. Some early warning systems also have a concealed panic button. If this is activated the company will pick up a hijack panic signal and institute an emergency response to the hijacked vehicle.

All the major tracking companies have agreements with the SAPS in terms of responding to stolen or hijacked vehicles. While responding themselves to the activation of a signal, the companies will at the same time communicate directly with the local SAPS radio control rooms so that any police units in the area can also respond to the stolen or hijacked vehicle and possibly set up their own roadblocks and give chase to the suspected stolen vehicle. The three big national tracking companies all have control centres all over the country while operate 24 hours a day. These centres co-ordinate the ground and air-recovery operations<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Response and recovery teams usually consist of highly trained recovery personnel that are able to respond at immediate notice. Basically each team would consist of a driver and a tracker, who uses mobile tracking equipment to locate the signals from a stolen vehicle. These teams will retrieve stolen vehicles from any location in South Africa. Whilst they may at times work in conjunction with the SAPS, they do not rely on the overburdened SAPS to recover their customer's vehicles. The ground recovery teams (in the case of the 'big three') are usually backed up by Air Recovery Teams largely making use of helicopters but also having fixed wing aircraft around the country. The air recovery teams consist of the aircraft pilot and the airtracker. The tracker is responsible for locating the signal, guiding the pilot and the ground crew to the stolen

and communicate and liaise with the police. One company in particular (Tracker) has a more formal co-operative agreement with the SAPS whereby they have sponsored the Police Tracking Computers (PTCs) that have been fitted to the vehicles and aircraft of numerous police units throughout South Africa.<sup>30</sup> Border posts throughout South Africa have also been equipped with such PTCs. Any of these vehicles, aircraft or border posts that are within range of a stolen or hijacked vehicle, is able to pick up the signal being emitted from the tracking unit activated either by the company, owner or the early warning system. This enables them to locate and recover the vehicle. Tracker has provided training in the art of vehicle tracking to police members in the units fitted with PTCs, while the company also maintains and services the Police Tracking Computers installed in all the Police vehicles ([www.tracker.co.za](http://www.tracker.co.za); [www.netstar.co.za](http://www.netstar.co.za); and [www.matrix.co.za](http://www.matrix.co.za), 2004). This form of “partnership policing” has over the last few years worked well with a good working relationship being established and numerous successes in the recovery of stolen vehicles and the apprehension of suspects being achieved.<sup>31</sup> All in all the establishment of the South African stolen vehicle tracking and recovery industry in the early nineties has played a significant role in combating crime.<sup>32</sup>

There are a number of other instances where the private sector has evidenced a growing involvement besides the examples mentioned above. One of the more important areas has been that of protecting cash-in-transit and preventing bank

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vehicle, and communicating with the control centre. With the use of the sophisticated tracking equipment that replicates a network, the aircraft is able to track and locate vehicles that may have left the urban communication signal network. The boast of these tracker companies being that they are on average able to recover vehicles in under an hour (See [www.tracker.co.za](http://www.tracker.co.za). Accessed 17 June 2004).

<sup>30</sup> These are units such as the Anti-Hijack Unit, the Dog Unit, the Airwing, the Highway Patrol, the Vehicle Theft Unit and the Flying Squad.

<sup>31</sup> Where arrests are made by tracking company personnel they are immediately handed over to the SAPS with the security personnel involved submitting an ‘arrest’ statement with the opening of the case docket by the police.

<sup>32</sup> The industry has assisted the SAPS in reducing the number of annual vehicle thefts from approximately 107 000 in the 1998/99 financial year to just over 93 000 in 2002/03 ([www.saps.gov.za](http://www.saps.gov.za))

robberies.<sup>33</sup> A number of specialist companies in this field have lead the SAPS in terms of providing more sophisticated equipment for the protection of money in transit. For instance hard-skinned (armoured) vehicles now have the capabilities for rearview video camera surveillance, timed release of gas inside the vehicle after penetration, dye release on opening cash boxes, etc. – all in an effort to provide better protection and stay ahead of the criminals, as well as foil would be cash-in-transit robbers. In addition, in 2002 the South African Banking Council set up a private company, the South African Banking Risk Intelligence Centre (SABRIC) (Pty) Ltd, to collect and analyse information on the modus operandi, location and type of cash-in-transit and bank robberies in order to develop solutions and strategies to prevent this type of crime (Steyn 2004).<sup>34</sup>

Moreover, the sheer growth in the installation of more sophisticated commercial alarm and access control systems in factories, shops and shopping complexes; the expansion of guarding services at the shopping malls and in shopping car parks; the increased use of more sophisticated equipment such as x-ray and metal detector machines (even at restaurants that have been robbed or had their patrons held up at gun point), risk-analysis software packages (incident reporting and management); and the development of intelligence gathering (by private organisations) capabilities, have all pointed the way to greater involvement in crime prevention and crime fighting by the private sector across the board. With the growth in tourism there has also been a large increase in the number of trained and professional VIP protection officers (close protection) in order to provide

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<sup>33</sup> Between April 1996 (the first year this crime was listed in the SAPS Crime Statistics as a separate crime from bank robberies) and March 2003 an annual average of 265 cash-in-transit robberies occurred in South Africa. Coincidentally the highest annual number of 374 occurred in the April 2002/March 2003 financial year. At the same time over the same period an annual average of 417 bank robberies occurred with the highest number of 561 occurring in the 1996/97 year, while the lowest annual number of 127 occurred in the 2002/03 year – an indication that improved security measures at banks was having an affect. ([www.saps.gov.za](http://www.saps.gov.za). Accessed 17/6/2004).

<sup>34</sup> Pierre Steyn is the Managing Director of the South African Banking Risk Intelligence Centre (SABRIC) (Pty) Ltd

assistance and protection to the foreign tourists, celebrities and film makers who are now coming to South Africa in greater numbers.

But as outlined above, most of this growth has occurred in the absence of any formal and legal framework for operating, specifically the absence of any form of “partnership policing” or of specific crime prevention policing operations, even though such co-operation does occur at some levels. There is no national co-ordination of the latter initiatives and the growth and involvement in such activities obviously needs to be regularised and better directed and utilised. However, this will only be possible if the government representatives, namely the Department of Safety and Security and the SAPS (inclusive of the various Metro Police services), take the initiative.

## **Conclusion**

One of the arguments put forward concerning the privatisation of policing is that private security could well fill the “gap” that is supposedly left by the inability of police to combat crime. However, the perceived “gap” should not be used as an argument in favour of the replacement of state policing by private policing. Instead what should be examined here would be how the private security industry can could assist and support public police to overcome the mentioned “gap” or vacuum in policing efforts.

Overall, in terms of developing and extending “partnership policing” between the SAPS and the South African private security industry, inclusive of a crime prevention role, this will obviously only occur within certain parameters. The latter will have to play a secondary and subservient role in the provision of logistical support, and all such activities will have to be co-ordinated with policing activities. However, whether the South African security industry will be allowed a more permanent position or to take over more functions performed by the police remains a moot point. Furthermore, what is in question here are lines of accountability. If some sort of partnership relationship between private security and the police comes about this and is mutually accepted, there can be no argument against the fact that public regulation of the industry (in terms of private policing with aspects of civilian oversight and monitoring greater than the current inspections implemented by PSIRA, with a clear process for reporting and dealing

with complaints against registered members of the industry) would be a prerequisite for its efficient and effective functioning.

The underlying principle for establishing policing partnerships between the private security industry and the SAPS should not be whether the former can replace policing functions but rather where they can supplement and be supportive of overall policing actions. In addition, there can be no talk of the provision of security outside of the formal structures of the state. Furthermore, it is certainly not a question of privatising crime control but co-operating in the fight against crime and co-ordinating the joint efforts in this regard. The bottom line would then be that the police cannot afford to or be seen to abdicate from their policing responsibilities and line functions. Moreover, it must be borne in mind that while the security industry has a vast amount of expertise and manpower at its disposal, this will only be made available if there is a counter benefit (or they are paid for these services as is the case in most of the City Improvement Districts (CIDs) in Cape Town), and if such co-operative actions are covered/protected by the law.

In support of the above (Nalla 2002: 1110) asserts that

...the fact that personnel employed in private security, especially in recent years, far outnumber law enforcement officers and that they engage in pursuits similar to those of law enforcement, suggests that the police could have willing partners in cooperative efforts to achieve common goals.

But to realise this objective there are a number of initiatives that need to be more thoroughly implemented. Without a doubt most professional security officers see themselves in essence as “crime fighters”. In order to better utilise them in crime prevention there is a need to establish a more formal National Forum<sup>35</sup> where representatives from public police and private security can discuss and formulate solutions to their perceived problems in co-operating better. More importantly this Forum can provide the opportunity for the setting up of a national “Think Tank”

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<sup>35</sup> This Forum to be other than the PSIRA board which is not a forum in any sense but rather concentrates on professionalising the industry by setting training standards, sending out inspectors to check on registrations and working conditions, and implementing the Code of Conduct etc.

to research, test and recommend policy which can lead to the development of a formal framework where partnership policing can operate in practical terms to the benefit of the community at large. The Forum can also assist the government in formulating the requisite legislation, in order not only to formalise the various ad hoc and informal co-operation initiatives that are occurring in some areas, but also to establish appropriate structures for partnership policing to occur at a sustainable and effective level.

In South Africa, given the current levels of distrust and suspicion with which any suggestions emanating from the private security industry are viewed in official circles, the lead for such an initiative will need to come from the Ministry and the SAPS. The SAPS management is currently of the opinion that it is sufficient to sit on PSIRA and regulate the industry through that channel using the existing legislation. Clearly there is a need to think “outside of the envelope” when dealing with the private security industry’s involvement in crime prevention and partnership policing.

Allied to these initiatives there should be a review of the professional qualifications currently available to private security officers. These should be aligned with making a more meaningful contribution particularly where they are directly involved in crime prevention and partnership policing.

Because of the privatisation of urban space that has occurred all over the world, a concomitant need has arisen for further and more in-depth research on the nature of private security, especially local- level studies of private security personnel in their operational roles which take into account both the security and safety of their clients and companies, their partnership role with regard to the local public police agencies. Such research could provide a better and broader understanding of the so-called “quilt” or “web” of security provision to the whole of society.

In conclusion, the following words of Wakefield (2003: 234) would be fitting:

.... [the] growing role of a regulated private security industry in the policing of areas of mass private property, residential areas and even town centres should, therefore, not be seen as unpalatable so long as attention is paid to the powers and tools they are given for controlling their territories, the training they receive and the accountability structures that provide a check on their practices. [Furthermore] in relation to the exchange of information, standards

must be set and safeguards must be laid down to ensure that such information remains confidential .....

More specifically, such co-operation must not be used to advance the private interests of any commercial clients of private security companies.

Public-private partnerships between the private security industry and public policing agencies would therefore clearly provide mutually beneficial features within a collaborative approach as well as further opportunities for increased systems integration between the two parties by specifically drawing on private sector resources like CCTV and other technology driven strategies and data collection methods. This view was strongly endorsed by the Private Security/Public Policing National Policy Summit held by the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) which had concluded that:

By some estimates, 85 percent of the country's [USA's] critical infrastructure is protected by private security. The need for complex coordination, extra staffing, and special resources after a terror attack, coupled with the significant demands of crime prevention and response, absolutely requires boosting the level of partnership between public policing and private security (IACP/COPS, 2004:1).

Furthermore, this National Policy Summit recognized that establishing viable private/public partnerships:

...will require a concerted, positive effort, not just agreement, on the part of association leaders, law enforcement professionals, private security practitioners, and funding agencies. Only if all those parties embrace the effort and accept responsibility for seeing the effort through will the full benefits of partnership be attained (IACP/COPS 2004: 25).

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Mr Charles Rogers, Senior Lecturer, Department of Security Risk Management, School of Justice, College of Law, UNISA. Information supplied on 25 June 2004.

Mr J. Schnetler, Head: Strategic Research, Management Services, SAPS. Telephonic communication, 28 June 2004.



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