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What are the National Security Implications of Outsourcing Core Policing Functions to a Foreign Private Entity: A Case Study of the Liberia National Police

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Abstract

This paper, prepared in fulfillment of an academic requirement, does not seek to challenge the rationale behind the Liberian National Police's (LNP) decision to outsource traffic law enforcement to the Liberia Traffic Management (LTM). Rather, it aims to critically examine the potential national security implications of such a policy decision. Employing a thematic analysis and a comparative case study approach, the study draws on examples from three African countries—South Africa, Nigeria, and Zimbabwe. The analysis is framed by three key theoretical perspectives: realism, liberal institutionalism, and principal-agent theory, each of which provides insights into the complexities of outsourcing core policing functions. While the case studies reveal various challenges associated with privatized core law enforcement functions, this paper does not claim that Liberia will inevitably encounter similar issues. Instead, the identified implications are presented as cautionary forecasts, highlighting potential risks that the Liberian government should anticipate and proactively address to safeguard national security interests.

Keywords: Core policing functions, Foreign private security entities, Liberia National Police, Liberia Traffic Management, National security, Outsourcing

Introduction

Extensive literature reviews provide compelling evidence that states facing resource limitations, capacity challenges, and constraints in addressing the complex demands of modern law enforcement or security threats increasingly view outsourcing as a practical solution. In Africa, several nations have enlisted private entities to take on essential policing functions. For instance, in

Zimbabwe, the government, responding to chronic resource shortages that have adversely affected police morale, contracted the Dubai-based firm Vitronic Machine Vision Middle East to implement and manage surveillance and traffic management systems utilizing technologies such as automated number plate recognition (B Metro Reporter, 2024).

Nigeria is another classic example. In the oil-rich Niger Delta, Group4 Securicor, a UK-based Private Military & Security company, has been hired by the government and multinational oil companies to support the Nigerian Police and Military in protecting critical infrastructure (Bappah, 2016).

North Africa, particularly Libya, has seen the outsourcing of border security and migration control, often with European involvement, according to Externalizing Asylum (Pacciardi & Berndtsson, 2022).

South Africa serves as a notable example of several international security corporations establishing a significant presence through subsidiaries, partnerships, or acquisitions. One such corporation is Group 4 Securicor, a UK-based firm that offers cash-in-transit services, secures government and corporate buildings, and manages correctional facilities, including Mangaung Prison in Bloemfontein (Steyn, 2023; G4S, 2025; Hopkins, 2015).

These instances highlight the growing trend of outsourcing essential policing functions to address law enforcement challenges in countries like Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Libya, and South Africa, among others. However, this trend raises critical questions regarding sovereignty, accountability, institutional integrity, and the long-term resilience of national security, which have sparked considerable debate in academic and policy forums within these nations.

These pressing questions are leaving a significant mark on Liberia, a post-conflict society where the Liberia National Police (LNP), the principal law enforcement agency vital for bolstering internal security, which also encompasses national security, has come under the spotlight to outsource its Vehicle and Traffic Section, a core public safety function, to Liberia Traffic Management (LTM), a foreign private company. Precisely, the LTM is set to assume responsibilities historically held by the LNP, including traffic regulation, issuing licenses, and enforcement roles (Smartnews, 2025).

In light of the above situation, this article from five distinct segments intellectualizes the rationale behind the LNP's decision, with particular emphasis on its implications for Liberia's national security.

By exploring the motivations, dynamics, and effects of this outsourcing trend within the Liberian context, this research aims to determine whether such practices strengthen or weaken national security. The initial segment establishes the theoretical framework, focusing specifically on three foundational theories in international security studies: Realism (both Classical and Neorealism), Liberal Institutionalism, and Principal-Agent Theory. Each of these theories offers valuable analytical tools for assessing the national security implications of outsourcing essential police functions to a foreign private company, particularly in fragile or post-conflict nations like Liberia. The second segment emphasizes two thematic areas. Firstly, it operationalizes key concepts such as national security, outsourcing, core policing, and foreign private entity. Secondly, it offers a contextual and historical overview focusing on the mandate of the LNP, the challenges related to capacity, legitimacy, and operations, as well as the decision to outsource its core traffic regulation functions. Additionally, this section provides a synopsis of the LTM, highlighting its role, contractual scope, and involvement in Liberia's security landscape.

The third segment offers a concise analysis of the implications of outsourcing essential law enforcement functions in various African countries. This analysis aims to inform Liberian society, the Justice Ministry, and senior management of the LNP about the potential consequences that may arise.

The fourth segment, considered the crux of the article, delves into the national security implications through the frameworks of the three traditional theories discussed earlier.

Lastly, the final segment concludes the paper and offers pertinent recommendations.

Methodology and Materials

This paper incorporates two sub-methods associated with qualitative research methods. First, it employs the case study approach suitable for the title of the paper. The purpose of using a case study approach in quantitative research is to help the researcher gain an in-depth, contextual understanding of a specific phenomenon or situation (Salmons, 2023). Considering the security sensitivity of the topic, the data collection for this approach is restricted to secondary sources such as policy documents, academic literature, media reports, etc.

As the second sub-method, the study utilizes the thematic analysis approach mainly for theoretical lenses. When integrated into thematic analysis, theoretical lens or framework draws on existing theories to shape the research lens. It provides tools for analyzing data, helping the researcher interpret findings within a structured context (Naeem, M. et al, 2023).

Contribution to Knowledge

This article makes important and original contributions to the fields of academic and policy knowledge in international security studies, African governance, and post-conflict statebuilding by addressing a gap in the literature on African security sector reform. It uses Liberia as a crucial case study to explore the broader debate on the potential effects of such arrangements on national security, whether they may weaken or strengthen it. Additionally, it paves the way for comparative, regional, or cross-sectoral studies on the outsourcing of security in fragile contexts and offers valuable insights for policymakers, donor agencies, regional security entities (such as ECOWAS and the AU), and international organizations like the UN.

Theoretical Framework

Several theories from international security studies can be applied to frame the analysis of assessing the national security implications of outsourcing core police functions to a foreign private company. This article reviews three theoretical lenses, namely Realism (both Classical and Neorealism), Liberal Institutionalism, and Principal-Agent Theory, which offer valuable analytical tools for assessing the national security implications of outsourcing essential police functions to a foreign private company.

Realism (Classical and Neorealism)

Pioneered by key scholars such as Kenneth Waltz and Hans Morgenthau, the theory posits that the state is the primary actor in an anarchic international system, with national security as its foremost priority. In the context of law enforcement, proponents assert that agencies, including the national police, serve as vital instruments of state power, essential for maintaining internal order, sovereignty, and national security (Waltz, 1979; Carnesale & Nacht, 1976; Weber, 1919; Spektorski, 2024).

In his interpretation of classical realism, Morgenthau (1946) argues that internal security institutions, like the police, are manifestations of political power. Thus, when core law enforcement functions are outsourced, it is perceived as a weakening of sovereign authority, potentially driven by elite political interests or external pressures. The author further contends that outsourcing core police functions has the proclivity to create power vacuums that weaken the state's ability to assert control. In other words, realism holds that security oversight is non-negotiable; therefore, a loss of oversight diminishes state control and accountability. While no realist scholar may have stated this claim in precise words, this idea or claim is supported by foundational realist texts (Morgenthau, 1948; Waltz, 1979; Buzan, 1991).

In the context of Liberia, subscribers to classic realism would be inclined to critique Liberia's decision to outsource policing functions to a foreign private entity as compromising the state's core ability to control its territory, which is the very basis of sovereign power.

In his perspective on neorealism, which focuses on the structure of the international system and the distribution of capabilities, Kenneth Waltz argues that in fragile or post-conflict states, structural constraints such as weak institutions, external debt, and dependency on donors push states toward outsourcing security functions as a survival strategy (Waltz, 1979).

In the context of Liberia, subscribers to neorealism would be inclined to interpret outsourcing to a foreign firm as a structurally driven response to state weakness, but also a move that undermines internal balancing and increases dependency on stronger external powers.

From an analytical lens, both classical realism and neorealism emphasize a crucial argument. Law enforcement must remain under state control to safeguard sovereignty. When law enforcement is marketized or externalized, there is a risk of transforming national security into a commodity, potentially serving foreign or corporate interests. Foreign entities may prioritize profits or external interests over the national good. The case of G4S, a UK-based multinational security firm operating the Mangaung prison under a public-private partnership in South Africa, serves as a compelling illustration of this claim or issue. Reports have surfaced detailing human rights abuses, including instances of torture and mismanagement. G4S faced allegations of prioritizing cost-cutting measures over the welfare and security of inmates. This situation raised significant concerns about the government's limited oversight and the implications for state accountability, particularly regarding the outsourcing of policing and incarceration (The Guardian, 2013).

Another noteworthy example is DynCorp, a U.S.-based contractor responsible for training the Afghan police force. Despite billions of dollars expended with minimal transparency, the outcome was a poorly trained and corrupt police force. Furthermore, reports highlighted instances of abuse and cultural insensitivity among DynCorp personnel. The outsourcing of essential police functions amid a weak state had significant implications, undermining the legitimacy of Afghan institutions and potentially exacerbating local resentment (Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction Report, 2020).

The involvement of Blackwater (now known as Academi) in providing security and policing services during the U.S.-led occupation of Iraq (2003–2011) is a significant aspect of this

discussion. Blackwater personnel were implicated in the 2007 Nisour Square massacre, where 17 Iraqi civilians were killed. This incident ignited widespread outrage and severely impacted U.S.-Iraq relations. It highlighted the potential for foreign private actors to operate with impunity, thereby undermining the sovereignty and legal standards of the host nation (Jeremy, 2007).

In conclusion, it can be inferred from realism that a state's sovereignty is intrinsically linked to national security. The state holds the legitimate responsibility for this, as sanctioned by organic law. Consequently, as illustrated in the above examples, outsourcing any core function vital to the enhancement of national security poses significant implications for state sovereignty. It is akin to a man who claims to be a father but fails to fulfill the responsibilities that define fatherhood.

Liberal Institutionalism

Liberal institutionalism, a theory articulated by notable scholars such as Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye, posits that security can be preserved through cooperation, the establishment of institutions, and adherence to the rule of law. Additionally, it recognizes the potential positive contributions of non-state actors (Keohane, 1984; Keohane & Nye, 1977). Notably, this theory provides a justification or rationale for outsourcing essential security functions to foreign private security companies, contingent upon conditions outlined by scholars. For example, Avant (2005) and Singer (2003) suggest that private military and security firms can enhance peace and order, provided they operate under accountable legal frameworks and contracts, particularly in post-conflict or fragile states with limited state capacity. Precisely, Avant (2005) asserts that private security actors can be effective in specific contexts but emphasizes the importance of oversight and institutional accountability. For example, in the late 1990s, the government of Sierra Leone contracted Executive Outcomes (EO), a South African private military company, to help combat rebel forces during the civil war. EO successfully pushed back the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and helped restore some orders. Nevertheless, some oversight challenges later led to termination under international pressure (especially from the UN and UK), raising questions about sovereignty and the lack of long-term accountability mechanisms (Francis, 1999). Another example is in post-war Bosnia, where private security companies were used by international organizations (e.g., the UN and NATO) for site protection and personnel security. The companies contributed to operational success and reduced the burden on peacekeeping troops. However, there was an oversight challenge evidenced by some contractors being involved in human trafficking and misconduct, leading to calls for greater regulation and codes of conduct (Avant, 2005).

In contrast, Singer (2003) offers empirical evidence illustrating the reasons and methods by which states outsource security to private entities, particularly when these firms are perceived as more capable or cost-effective. For example, the Sierra Leone government, due to its military weakness and ineffectiveness, hired Executive Outcomes, a South African private military company, in the mid-1990s to combat rebel forces during its civil war. EO helped secure Freetown and pushed back rebels before being pressured by international donors (notably the UN) to withdraw (Francis, 1999). Similarly, the government of Angola contracted Executive Outcomes to secure oil infrastructure and combat rebels. EO conducted successful military operations against UNITA rebels in exchange for resource-linked contracts (Barbesino, 2025).

Thus, from a liberal institutionalist perspective, the outsourcing of core security functions to foreign entities may be justified if these organizations demonstrate greater efficiency, professionalism, or reduced corruption compared to state institutions. The conditions outlined by the two scholars call for a thorough and meticulous vetting process for foreign private security firms. This is vital given the substantial consequences of outsourcing critical security functions that relate to national security.

In conclusion, a careful analysis of the proposed conditions advanced by the liberal institutionalists aligns with realist perspectives that underscore the importance of safeguarding national security interests and state sovereignty. Failing to implement such measures could jeopardize the nation's security interests.

Principal-Agent Theory

Articulated by a few notable scholars, namely Michael C. Jensen & William H. Meckling (1976), Terry Moe (1989), Hawkins et al. (2006), and Anna Leander & Rita Abrahamsen, views the state or government as the "principal" that delegates authority to an agent, which is viewed as the "foreign private security company" to perform a task on its behalf.

In the realm of outsourcing core security functions to a foreign private security company (agent), Hawkins et al. (2006) examined how states (principals) delegate authority to international organizations (agents) and the resulting issues of control and autonomy. The authors caution that when deciding whether to delegate (or re-delegate), principals must carefully weigh the benefits of such delegation against the anticipated agency losses. Analytically, this caution aligns with the liberal institutionalist perspective, which intersects with the interests of national security and sovereignty emphasized by realist theories earlier discussed. Consequently, when making informed decisions about outsourcing essential law enforcement functions to a foreign private security firm, states must consider various options along with their inherent ramifications. This is critical as the national security interests of a state are vital to the preservation of its sovereignty. Several implications of this theory warrant attention. One significant aspect is the economic impact, which can inadvertently compromise the support and sustainability of national security. Consequently, when evaluating various options, states should be acutely aware of the revenue-sharing controversy. For instance, in certain situations, as much as 70-80% of the revenue generated from traffic violations has been allocated to Vitronic Machine Vision Middle East, a technology company based in Dubai, thereby diminishing the fiscal benefits for Zimbabwe (Herald Zimbabwe, 2023).

Finally, the concerns about the potential erosion of public trust in traffic law enforcement. The theory warns that when law enforcement becomes motivated by profit, it can detract from public confidence in the system and in the police themselves. In this regard, Prenzler and Sarre (2012) underscore the issues related to granting police-like powers to private companies, highlighting the risks posed to public trust when enforcement decisions are swayed by commercial interests.

Operationalization of Key Concepts

The segment of the paper defines abstract concepts in concrete, measurable, and observable terms so they can be systematically analyzed in a research study. These concepts include national security, outsourcing, core policing functions, and foreign private security entities.

National Security

considered an ambiguous concept, national security lacks universal definition. It is a highly subjective concept in which different countries, institutions, and scholars interpret it differently based on their own historical experiences, political systems, and strategic priorities. It is like the concept "beauty is in the eyes of the beholder." In other words, just as beauty is interpreted differently by each person, national security is perceived differently by each state, leader, or community. For example, country A might define national security as having a strong military. Country B may focus on food security, health systems, or social stability. One government may view a protest as a threat, while another sees it as a democratic expression. Despite its ambiguity, national security is vital to the preservation of state sovereignty. So, in the context of this paper, law enforcement core functions are critically linked to national security, especially in contemporary security environments where internal and external threats often overlap. In other words, this paper holds onto the notion that law enforcement ensures internal order, enforcement of laws, and social cohesion — all of which are foundational to national security.

Outsourcing

In the context of this paper, outsourcing refers to the practice of engaging an external party or organization to carry out functions and responsibilities assigned to a statutory body, institution, or agency due to several challenges that overwhelm the institution to perform its statutory mandates or duties. Statutory agencies are those established by law, specifically by the legislative body, to fulfill essential duties that contribute to the enhancement of national security.

Core Policing Functions

In the opinion of this paper, core policing functions are defined by law or an Act approved by the relevant body of government. For example, the core policing functions of the LNP, which are intrinsically linked to national security, are defined by the LNP Act of 2015, sanctioned by the National Legislature of Liberia. Precisely, Sections 22.72 & 22.87 outline the scope of the LNP core functions. Arguably, this is no provision in this Act that allows the LNP to outsource any aspect of its core functions. By the parity of reasoning, outsourcing any of its core functions to an external party, especially a foreign private security firm, could contravene the LNP Act of 2015.

Foreign Private Security Entity.

In the context of this paper, a foreign private security entity refers to a non-state, private organization based in a foreign country that provides security-related services in another state. These entities are not part of any national military or police force, but they operate on a for-profit basis and often offer services traditionally associated with public security. As mentioned in this article, examples include G4S – A UK-based firm with operations across Africa, including guarding, cash-in-transit, and prison management. DynCorp International (U.S.) – Provided police training in Afghanistan and Liberia. Blackwater (now Academi) – A U.S. firm known for armed security in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In the case of Liberia, the Liberia Traffic Management (LTM) fits the definition of a foreign private security entity.

Contextual and Historical Overview of the LNP

This sub-title draws attention to the mandate of the LNP, the challenges related to capacity, legitimacy, and operations, as well as the decision to outsource certain functions.

The LNP Mandate

The mandate of the LNP is derived from the 1986 Liberian Constitution, the Liberia National Police Act of 2015, and various national security frameworks. Its core responsibilities center around maintaining law and order, protecting life and property, and ensuring public safety across Liberia. Traffic Regulation and Road Safety is among the key elements of the LNP mandate. It entails enforcing traffic laws and regulations, reducing road accidents, managing traffic flow, and investigating vehicle-related incidents (See Sections 22.72 & 22.87 of the LNP Act of 2015).

Challenges in Enforcing Traffic Regulations and Road Safety

Ethnographic observation reveals that despite notable progress, the LNP encounters several challenges in enforcing traffic regulations and promoting road safety, many of which are rooted in structural, operational, institutional, and budget constraints. These issues considerably undermine the effectiveness of the Traffic Division, leading to elevated rates of road accidents, a lack of lawfulness on the roads, and growing public dissatisfaction. Below are brief descriptions of the practical challenges difficult to counterargue or refute.

Limited Human and Logistical Capacity: This challenge manifests in the following ways:

- ✓ Inadequate manpower: There are not enough trained traffic officers to manage traffic across Monrovia and other counties (Kanneh, 2019)
- ✓ Lack of specialized training: Many officers are not adequately trained in modern traffic enforcement and road safety management (Smartnews, 2025)
- ✓ Traffic lights across Monrovia and Paynesville have been nonfunctional for months, and the LNP admits that many intersections are either unattended by officers or officers abandon their posts, leading to chaotic traffic conditions (Kanneh, 2019)

Public Attitudes and Behavior: This challenge is manifested by:

- ✓ Low public awareness: Many drivers and pedestrians are unaware of traffic laws and road safety practices. A Public survey by the National Safety Partnership of Liberia in 2024 found that over 95% of drivers and pedestrians had very limited knowledge of their responsibilities under traffic laws, more than 90% of drivers were unaware of Liberia's road policy, and over 85% of users lacked understanding of the importance of vehicle insurance (News Public Trust, 2024)
- ✓ Cultural disregard for rules: Traffic rules are frequently ignored, especially by commercial drivers and motorcyclists (Lazuta, 2013)
- ✓ Aggressive driving and road rage: Common in urban areas and contributes to accidents (Smartnews, 2025)

In all the above challenges concerning the public attitude and behavior, LNP Chief of Traffic, Alphonso Binda, has disclosed that the LNP is going to hold a dialogue with collaborating partners and stakeholders to ensure that individuals take initiative to curb road fatalities in Liberia (FAAPA, 2024).

Scanty Budget: This challenge is manifested by

- ✓ Traffic and road safety receive limited financial support from the national budget, creating serious logistical challenges that impede traffic regulation and enforcement in Liberia. A 2024 press release from the

National Safety Partnership of Liberia (NASAPAL) stressed that the government has not increased budgetary allotments for personnel in frontline public safety, including for traffic policing (Verity Online News Contributor, 2024)

The LNP Decision to Outsource Its Core Traffic Regulation and Enforcement

By the parity of reasoning, it is safe to assert that the LNP's inclination to outsource its core traffic regulation and enforcement functions to Liberia Traffic Management (LTM), a private security firm, as of 16 July 2025, amid a barrage of concerns, is informed by the above challenges exposed by this paper (Yates, 2025).

According to the agreement, LTM will assume full control of core traffic-related services, including vehicle registration, driver's licensing, enforcement of traffic violations, toll collection, and freight and truck management. The company is expected to work in coordination with the Liberia National Police to ensure compliance with all traffic laws and regulations (Yates, 2025).

To be more descriptive, the LNP decision is based on several considerations believed to address the challenges impeding the LNP core traffic safety functions

Logistical Challenges: The LNP lacks modern traffic control infrastructure, including functioning traffic lights, patrol vehicles, and digital monitoring tools (Kanneh, 2019).

Human Resource Deficits: A chronic shortage of trained traffic officers, compounded by poor remuneration and limited incentives, has led to poor performance (Smartnews, 2025).

Revenue Generation: Outsourcing to LTM is seen as a way to modernize traffic enforcement while potentially increasing revenue collection through traffic fines, digital ticketing, and vehicle registration enforcement

Efficiency and Modernization: LTM is expected to bring in technological solutions, including automated traffic systems and electronic monitoring, thereby increasing efficiency (Verity Online News Contributor, 2024)

Brief Overview of Liberia Traffic Management (LTM)

LTM is a private company that was established through a 25-year concession agreement signed in January 2019 with the government led by George Manneh Weah (Koinyeneh, 2024).

Located around the Samul K. Doe Sports Complex in Paynesville, the outskirts of Monrovia, the company facility is equipped with inspection and registration technology, SUVs, and motorbikes for road safety enforcement (Koinyeneh, 2024). This initiative began during President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's administration and was later finalized by President George Weah in 2018, with the agreement officially taking effect in January 2019 alongside a \$50 million investment (Koinyeneh, 2024).

Following this agreement, a Memorandum of Understanding was expected to be finalized between the Liberia National Police (LNP) and the Ministry of Transport; however, this process was unexpectedly stalled in January 2022.

According to the agreement, the LTM operates as a public-private partnership in collaboration with the LNP and the Ministry of Transport. In this structure, the LNP maintains its enforcement responsibilities, while the LTM oversees logistics and operations (New Dawn, 2022).

Despite a 25-year concession agreement between the Liberian Government and the LTM, the project has remained stalled throughout the George Weah administration.

Before the inauguration, the Boakai administration expressed initial interest in advancing the concession. However, this interest may have waned due to public criticism surrounding the company, which notable Lebanese investors, including Dr. Imad Hajj, support. Dr. Hajj is a well-known figure in Lebanon, reportedly a popular presidential candidate in recent referendums, as reported by major Lebanese media outlets (Koinyeneh, 2024).

It can be argued that the reemergence of the LMT signifies a thorough and meticulous investigation by the Boakai administration, which views the LMT as an integral part of its broader "ARREST" Agenda for Inclusive Development (AAID). This agenda is geared towards enhancing infrastructure, public safety, and economic efficiency within legally sound frameworks (Lomax, 2025). Consequently, perceived as a "win-win" initiative for both revenue generation and modernization, the agreement between the Liberian government and LMT was finalized on July 16, 2025. This was confirmed by Deputy Information Minister Daniel Sando, who remarked that "this long-awaited move aligns with the government's vision for a modern and efficient traffic management system" (Yates, 2025). Undoubtedly, this decision represents a significant shift in public security governance throughout Liberia's history, drawing the attention of the Senate Committee on Defense, Intelligence, Security, and Veteran Affairs for a comprehensive legislative investigation, as it poses a potential threat to Liberia's national security and sovereignty (Kwaytah, 2025).

Concise Analysis of the Implications of Outsourcing Core Law Enforcement Functions to Foreign Private Companies in Africa.

This segment provides a concise analysis of the implications of outsourcing essential law enforcement functions in various African countries, with a focus on South Africa, Nigeria, and Zimbabwe. This analysis aims to inform Liberian society, the Justice Ministry, and senior management of the LNP about the potential consequences that may arise.

South Africa

In traditional contexts, there exists a considerable body of literature and reports highlighting the growing involvement of both foreign and domestic private security companies (PSCs) in public safety functions, including services typically associated with law enforcement. Focusing specifically on the subtext, attention is drawn to Group 4 Securicor, a UK-based firm that provides cash-in-transit services, secures government and corporate buildings, and manages correctional facilities, such as Mangaung Prison in Bloemfontein, in partnership with the Department of Correctional Services (Steyn, 2023; G4S, 2025; Hopkins, 2015).

The G4S, formerly known as Group 4 Securicor, is a British multinational security company founded in 2004 from the merger of Group 4 Falck and Securicor, operating in around 100 countries across six continents. It is the largest security services provider in the world (G4S, n.d.).

In South Africa, its head office is in Centurion, Gauteng, where it also operates the National Control Centre (G4S, n.d.).

In South Africa, the G4S had a number of serious implications, especially in areas related to accountability, national sovereignty,

human rights, and the public perception of the state's control over security.

Notably, one of the aspects of its operation that has brought public scrutiny to the South African government due to its significant implications is the Mangaung Correctional Centre in Bloemfontein, under a 25-year contract signed on March 24, 2000, and expected to end on June 30, 2026 (Sibanyoni, 2023). The R10.6bn contract seeks to build, maintain, and run the maximum security prison, with capacity for 3,000 prisoners (Hopkins, 2018).

Below are some of the implications of the calculated decision taken by the Department of Corrections Services in South Africa that strengthen the validity of the basic assumptions of realism, one of the key theoretical frameworks guiding the argument of this paper.

The well-documented reports in which 42 inmates accused the G4S in a court of law of being subjected to electric shocks, forcibly injected with antipsychotic drugs, and placed in lengthy isolation is one of the implications that speak to accountability and oversight failure resulting from the outsourcing (Hopkins, 2018).

Interestingly, around the same time, the Wits Justice Project revealed troubling practices within the prison, including the use of electric shocks, forced administration of antipsychotic medications, unlawful segregation of inmates, and questionable deaths. Although the government stated it would investigate these allegations, the anticipated report has yet to be released, and the security provider involved has not faced accountability, continuing to manage the facility. More importantly, the Wits Justice Project received reports, statements, leaked video footage, and government reports that all confirm widespread electroshocking of inmates. In terms of the effects of electric shocks, inmates at Mangaung have reported dizziness, welts on their skin, as well as urinating blood (Hopkins & Arends, 2016).

Another classic case worth mentioning is the escape of Facebook rapist and murderer Thabo Bester, which G4S justified as an isolated incident (Madowo, 2023; Sibanyoni, 2023).

The case of G4S's allegation about gross human rights abuses in the Mangaung Correctional Centre in Bloemfontein raises serious concerns that strike at the heart of public trust and democratic legitimacy in South Africa is another implication resulting from the outsourcing. For example, in 2013, the Department of Correctional Services controversially dismissed whistleblowers while renewing G4S's contract, even after multiple abuse reports, a move that drew significant public criticism. This action was criticized as it appeared to protect G4S while punishing those who exposed potential wrongdoing. The whistleblowers had reportedly exposed issues related to G4S's management of correctional facilities, leading to calls for greater transparency and accountability (Hopkins, 2015).

In order to enhance public trust and legitimacy, which have been raised as concerns by the public, the South African Department of Correctional Services announced its takeover of the Mangaung Correctional Centre located near Bloemfontein. This decision was prompted by a "worrying deterioration of safety and security at the centre" (The Guardian, 2013).

Without prejudice to the facts presented, these incidents highlight serious accountability and oversight failures that reflect poorly on the South African government. Arguably, accountability and oversight are closely tied to sovereignty. This claim aligns with realism (both classical and neorealism) discussed in this paper,

which argues that outsourcing core state functions such as security and law enforcement tend to weaken state authority. This, in turn, impacts accountability and oversight mechanisms. In other words, as noted in this article, realism holds that security oversight is non-negotiable; therefore, a loss of oversight diminishes state control and accountability that have implications for public trust and democratic legitimacy.

Similarly, liberal Institutionalism, which seems to support the outsourcing of core law enforcement functions to a foreign private firm, is also mindful of sovereignty. The theory emphasizes the importance of oversight and institutional accountability, which are essential attributes of sovereignty. Therefore, it cautions that the breakdown of accountability structures poses a direct threat to both sovereignty and legitimacy (Avant, 2005). To avoid this problem, the principal-agent theory cautions that when deciding whether to delegate (or re-delegate), the principal (state) must carefully weigh the benefits of such delegation against the anticipated agency losses. Analytically, this caution aligns with the liberal institutionalist perspective, which intersects with the interests of national security and sovereignty emphasized by realist theories earlier discussed. Conclusively, the implications encountered suggest that the South African Government did not carefully weigh the benefits of outsourcing the Mangaung Correctional Centre in Bloemfontein to the G4S.

Nigeria

There are literature reviews indicating that, similar to South Africa, certain security functions in the oil-rich Niger Delta regions of Nigeria have been partially outsourced to foreign firms, particularly for the protection of pipelines. Notable among these companies are Erinys International, ArmorGroup, and Salamander Security, all of which have operated in Nigeria, particularly in the Niger Delta region, often providing security services to multinational oil corporations such as Chevron & Shell.

Erinys International, a UK-based private security firm, conspicuous for its role in Iraq during the U.S. occupation, but also operated in Nigeria, especially in the early 2000s. contracted by oil majors like Shell and Chevron to provide security services, Erinys International conducted risk assessments, surveillance, and escort duties for oil installations and personnel, and was involved in community relations and early warning intelligence in conflict-prone areas (Iyare, 2009).

Additionally, the firm also performed the following security functions outlined by Yaniti (2012).

- Training and supervision of Nigerian security personnel, often working alongside local police or military units.
- Conducted intelligence and surveillance operations to monitor militant groups and anticipate attacks.
- Provided strategic security assessments to oil firms to plan safer routes and operations.
- Recruited local security operatives, including ex-military personnel and community-based individuals, to support its operations.

Although the human rights concerns associated with Erinys International were not as severe as those facing G4S in South Africa, there were still occasional allegations—though not always substantiated—regarding excessive use of force or complicity in abuses when private contractors operated alongside state forces. For instance, in joint operations where Erinys contractors supplied intelligence or logistical support to Nigerian troops during

crackdowns in areas like Gbaramatu Kingdom, civilian casualties were reported (Ikelegbe, 2005).

Abrahamsen and Williams (2011) argued that even if Erinys contractors did not directly engage in abusive actions, their presence in volatile regions and contractual ties with violent state actors raised significant questions about complicity and willful negligence.

Without prejudice to the facts presented, these incidents, regardless of their gravity, highlight serious accountability and oversight failures that reflect poorly on the Nigerian government. Regarding public trust, critics argued that citizens may view foreign private security as further detachment of the government from its constitutional responsibilities (Avant, 2005).

When viewed through the lenses of the theoretical frameworks guiding this article, the Nigerian situation is relevant. For instance, as far as realism is concerned, the operation or functions carried out by Erinys International, especially in the gathering of intelligence and surveillance operations to monitor militant groups and anticipate attacks, are non-negotiable national security functions of a sovereign state. The partial outsourcing of core functions introduces the concept of intelligence exposure risk within the realm of international security studies. This term refers to the peril that critical and sensitive information may fall into unauthorized hands, particularly due to inadequate controls over foreign private entities tasked with national security responsibilities. Such a situation undermines a state's ability to safeguard itself and maintain strategic autonomy (Chesterman & Lehnardt, 2007). In essence, this concept implies that delegating sensitive data or operations to foreign firms could jeopardize national intelligence. In international security, intelligence is a strategic asset. Losing control over it through partial outsourcing could undermine national sovereignty. This is why liberal Institutionalism, which seems to support the outsourcing of core law enforcement functions to a foreign private firm, is also mindful of sovereignty. The theory emphasizes the importance of oversight and institutional accountability, which are essential attributes of sovereignty. Therefore, it cautions that the breakdown of accountability structures poses a direct threat to both sovereignty and legitimacy (Avant, 2005).

Zimbabwe

Overwhelmed by financial constraints impeding its determination to modernize traffic law enforcement infrastructure, in 2024, government of Zimbabwe approved a contract with Vitronic Machine Vision Middle East, a Dubai-based company specializing in smart traffic technology, to install cameras and sensors throughout Harare and Bulawayo (Ruzvidzo, 2024). This system will automatically detect traffic violations, including speeding, running red lights, and illegal parking, and will connect to the Central Vehicle Registry to identify vehicle owners, enabling fines to be issued without direct police involvement. The company plans to invest between US\$60 million and \$80 million, recovering its costs through a revenue-sharing model based on traffic fines (Ruzvidzo, 2024).

From the realist and liberal Institutionalist lenses, coupled with the principal-agent Theory, this outsourcing has the potential for data sovereignty and cybersecurity risks. This is because the system relies heavily on automated license plate recognition (ALPR), real-time surveillance, and integration with government databases (e.g., Central Vehicle Registry). So, if the data is stored or mirrored off-

site (e.g., outside Zimbabwe), it could undermine the government's ability to control and protect sensitive national information.

The outsourcing arrangements have significant economic implications, particularly highlighting a controversy surrounding revenue sharing. Reports indicate that Zimbabwe relinquishes a substantial portion of traffic fines to Vitronic. In certain instances, up to 70–80% of revenues from traffic violations are allocated to the foreign company, which in turn diminishes the fiscal benefits for the country. This situation could potentially impact the sustainability of national security (Herald Zimbabwe 2023).

Another important issue that could happen is social tensions and inequality. For instance, the automated system may disproportionately target low-income drivers unable to afford the immediate payment of fines or appeal fees. In this kind of situation, if appeal or dispute resolution mechanisms are poorly managed, it could spark social unrest or perceptions of a "predatory state". This is where the principal-agent theory is applicable. It cautions the state or government (the principal) to weigh the benefits of such delegation against the anticipated agency losses.

The National Security Implications for Liberia

The experiences drawn from three African nations, particularly the case of South Africa, illuminate potential national security implications for the Liberian government stemming from its choice to outsource certain core functions of the LNP to the LTM. While the insights derived from these countries serve as valuable cautionary lessons for Liberia, it is essential to emphasize the national security challenges that Liberia may face, grounded in relevant theoretical frameworks.

One may be inclined to argue that traffic enforcement is peripheral to national security; as such, outsourcing poses no significant threat to a state's national security. While this claim sounds logical, the realist school sees any outsourcing of law enforcement capacity as creating space for internal disorder, which threatens regime stability. This is because realism emphasizes the primacy of state sovereignty and the state's monopoly on the legitimate use of force. Therefore, outsourcing core LNP functions is viewed as a weakening of government authority, since it dilutes the state's exclusive control over coercive power as it relates to traffic regulation.

From a realist perspective, Liberia must recognize that outsourcing traffic law enforcement or related roles to a non-state actor like LTM raises significant sovereignty concerns. This arrangement risks creating parallel structures of authority that may operate independently of national interests. Similar situations have occurred in the past with entities like G4S in South Africa and Erinsy International in Nigeria.

Moreover, the government should be mindful that if LTM operates without stringent accountability or if it is perceived as corrupt, partisan, or predatory, it could undermine state legitimacy. This erosion of legitimacy could weaken national cohesion and strategic security.

In conclusion, realists would be highly skeptical of outsourcing core policing functions to LTM. They would argue that such a move has the propensity to weaken Liberia's sovereignty and legitimacy and compromise internal security.

From the perspective of liberal institutionalism, there are several implications that the government of Liberia should consider, even if the theory supports the decision to outsource. If outsourcing

undermines accountability or results in quasi-legal enforcement without appropriate oversight, liberal institutionalists are likely to express concerns regarding the integrity of institutions and the principles of democratic governance. This suggests that liberal institutionalism places a strong emphasis on norms, transparency, accountability, and the rule of law as conditions to protect the sovereignty of Liberia that also encapsulate its national security interests. In the case of G4S' alleged human rights abuses in South Africa, norms, transparency, and accountability undermined the legitimacy of the government. Therefore, the government of Liberia should take cognizance of this situation.

The principal-agent theory presents several important considerations for the government of Liberia (Principal), particularly regarding its decision to outsource responsibilities to LTM, given the capacity gap within the LNP. One significant implication is the presence of moral hazards and accountability risks that have the potential to erode public trust. This suggests that the private agent (LTM) may act opportunistically if not subjected to adequate supervision. Such behavior could manifest in forms such as over-ticketing, abuse of authority, or selective enforcement of rules for financial gain. This is why the theory warns that when law enforcement is driven by profit, it erodes the public trust in law enforcement. Therefore, it is essential for the government to recognize that LTM has made substantial financial investments that it expects to recoup within a specific timeframe, especially during the current regime, which is a party to the agreement. The apprehension over potential contract termination due to a change in government could drive LTM to engage in selective enforcement for profit. To mitigate this risk, the theory emphasizes the necessity of implementing clear oversight mechanisms, ensuring that agents cannot exploit the authority delegated to them.

Another implication is monitoring and enforcement costs. This implies that the principal must invest in systems to monitor the agent and enforce compliance.

In Liberia's case, weak institutional oversight, which has been a challenge, may make it difficult to hold LTM accountable, thereby exacerbating the principal-agent problem.

Finally, the theory has economic implications that indirectly affect the support and sustainability of national security. In Zimbabwe, the government's decision to outsource core traffic enforcement to Vitronic Machine Vision Middle East created a situation of revenue-sharing controversy. Zimbabwe reportedly gave up a significant portion of the traffic fines to Vitronic. For example, in some cases, up to 70–80% of revenues generated from traffic violations go to the foreign company, reducing fiscal benefits for the country (Herald Zimbabwe, 2023). The government of Liberia should be mindful of this and initiate the necessary mechanisms and arrangements to avoid a repeat of the Zimbabwe scenario.

Conclusion

This paper, fulfilling a mandated academic requirement, does not contest the rationale behind the government's decision to outsource traffic law enforcement to the LTM. Instead, its primary objective is to unpack the significant national security implications that the government should consider. The theoretical frameworks utilized to support this argument have effectively contributed to achieving the paper's aim.

Informed by theoretical frameworks, coupled with cases, especially those from South Africa, the implications unpacked in this paper

do not necessarily indicate that Liberia will face these challenges; rather, they represent potential outcomes that the government should anticipate if appropriate measures are not taken. In essence, these implications serve as forecasts or cautions.

Among the theoretical frameworks discussed, it is crucial for the government, if allowed to review this article, to consider the principal-agent theory. This theory warns that when law enforcement is motivated by profit, it can undermine public trust in law enforcement. Of course, profit making is the sole purpose for any corporate firm, as in the case of LTM. However, the partnership or enforcement must create room for flexibility through discretion. The outsourcing of traffic enforcement to Vitronic Machine Vision Middle East, a Dubai-based company, came with one potential implication that weaken the public trust in law enforcement in Zimbabwe. The lack of flexibility and discretion regarding fines for traffic infractions or violations frustrated many people who rationalized that the company's main concern was profiting making not the modernization of law enforcement. (Herald Zimbabwe,2023).

Each of the theoretical frameworks also includes recommendations intended to guide the early implementation of the agreement.

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