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Corporate Security in the 21st Century

Theory and Practice in International Perspective

Edited by

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Foreword

Over the last 30 years, there has been a substantial increase in scholarship on private policing and security. Academics such as Shearing, Stenning, Johnston, South, Rigakos, and Gill, among many others, have expanded our understanding of the private contribution to policing. However, much of this work has focused upon private contract security companies and the staff they employ. Comparatively, there has been much less research on the corporate security units of large organizations that sometimes purchase the services of these private security companies. This book provides a selection of chapters that consider aspects of corporate security, a much-needed addition to the thin base in this area.

Research in this field is important for several reasons. Corporate security often has significant power within their nodal context, which can have a major impact on the lives of people who work in them. There are rules, there are systems to enforce those rules, and there are sanctions applied to those who break them. The consequences of breaches of these rules can often be worse than those of the criminal justice system. Actual crimes are often dealt with by these systems too, without reference to public or criminal law. Such systems therefore deserve more academic scrutiny. There are plenty of chapters in this book that will stimulate interests and ideas.

Corporate security also affects many places people visit, from the rules that are set to the strategies which are used to try and influence our behavior. Much of this is to our benefit in trying to make safe and secure locations, but there is also a 'dark side' to such approaches which seek to subtly discourage certain groups from visiting places, the so-called domestication by cappuccino. The subtle strategies are much harder to condemn and challenge, but these surely require more research and academic debate. Another theme throughout this book is the strategies used in corporate security. Scholars of public policing will be surprised by the different approaches used to respond to similar crime problems.

The governance of corporate security is a significant issue too. I have recently conducted a research on insurance fraud investigators who are investigating false claims, sharing intelligence, conducting surveillance, and prosecuting offenders in the civil courts for 'contempt of

court,' where imprisonment is an option and does occur. Many more of their investigations are simply handed over to public police for processing. These corporate investigators, however, are neither licensed nor accountable to any complaints or oversight body. Surely, this is a major gap in governance to which more research should be dedicated and to which this book provides some sound foundations.

It is also important not to become too preoccupied with the negatives, as corporate security provides huge benefits to the organizations they serve and ultimately to customers. The safety of the places where we work and play are an important part of their functions. Security failure also ultimately affects the bottom line of organizations and much can be done to reduce this cost. This book presents chapters that offer insights into why corporate security has not worked, how it could work, and how it could improve.

There is much in this book to show that corporate security could do better. It could be orientated to be more ethical, it could be more effective in enhancing security, and it could be better regulated and controlled. The chapters together provide a substantial contribution to the gap in the literature on corporate security by bringing together leading scholars in this field from around the world. This volume provides the foundations for many scholars to identify a wide variety of issues for further research and inquiry. It also offers fascinating insights rooted in empirical research from across the globe on corporate security. For scholars of security, policing, and criminology, there are many chapters that will grab your interest. You will enjoy this book.

*Professor Mark Button
University of Portsmouth*

Series Editor's Preface

This book covers new territory in critiquing the role of security departments within commercial companies and, importantly, in state organizations too. We learn about the somewhat jaundiced past of security departments in spying on workers to implement sometimes draconian policies enforced with intimidation or even brutality backed up by the state. Unsurprisingly, it represents an example of security failure; it fueled a determined reaction from workers in forms that found expression in a lack of commitment to and diligence about work, absenteeism, and, in some cases, the resistance was forceful. In recent times, corporate security departments have become more organized, prominent, powerful, and pervasive, which is somewhat inspiring this volume.

Moreover, corporate security work is largely invisible, and so there has been less public outrage at behaviors – compared at least to other areas of security – and much less call for it to be held to account. All this has occurred against a background where corporate security departments are involved in the dispensing of private justice. They often prefer not to report incidents to the police, and by doing so they try to avoid potential reputational damage. In any event and despite their backgrounds (many have a public service background and especially common is a police or military one), we learn that they frequently mistrust and may conceal information from the police. The key point is that corporate security workers are able to avoid unwelcome scrutiny, and they have been subject to very little regulation; this makes a book about their work necessary.

In the following pages, you will read about the role of departments in protecting the corporate interest on the one hand and community and its safety interests on the other. The balance creates tensions, between, for example, having to help a business make a profit and yet be accountable to the national interest via the protection of the national infrastructure. You will also read about a role played in generating fear, as well as in spreading the security web with potential consequences for personal freedoms.

There is much new to contend with in this book, and readers are invited to look at corporate security in what for many will be in an entirely new way. It will be seen that corporate security is complex, and

the body of knowledge is still evolving. How timely then that Kevin Walby and Randy K. Lippert have put the spotlight on corporate security and done so in a way that rarely has been considered before, not least in incorporating international coverage of issues. Many will disagree with observations made, and many will be persuaded that the gap in research in this area is unjustified and will, it is hoped, generate further study moving forward.

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Special thanks are due to the contributors from around the world for embracing this project from the beginning and following through with timely, intriguing, and cogent chapters about corporate security. We are fortunate to have the opportunity to exchange ideas with so many leading scholars researching and writing about security today. All the contributors' remarkable dedication to scholarship truly inspires us.

We thank Evelyn Mayanja for her careful copyediting and formatting.

Finally, this collection would not have been possible without the efficient people at Palgrave MacMillan, especially Julia Willan and Harriet Barker. Thanks also to Devasena Vedamurthi for much help with the final phase.

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