

The societal changes and events led to the growth of private security

[Science](#), [Social Science](#)



Fijnaut (1995) attributes the growth in private security to economically motivated reactions to increased criminal-related losses. The growth in many private business properties such as recreational parks and mega shopping malls led to an increase in special crime-related problems as noted by Shearing and Stenning (1983). The high increase in crime during this period resulted in many businesses incurring a lot of losses. This prompted the need to use private security to guard the businesses instead of relying on state security that did not provide quick response to crime (Fijnaut, 1995).

The recent growth in technology has also contributed to the increase in private security. This is due to the facts that new, advanced surveillance technologies could be used which was not the case in earlier times. The new technologies reduced the cost of security, which then stimulated demand for private security services that were (and still are) more cost-effective. Fijnaut (1995) also notes that the growth was also attributed to the fact that many large companies in the eighties had economic drives, which led to slimming down of their secondary functions. These companies, therefore, decided to shift to the use of private security to replace the guards.

Privatization of secondary functions by the governments also led to the growth in private security. In this case, Fijnaut (1995) notes that government agencies like the prisons and police services began contracting elementary duties such as those of receptionists and access controls and transport to private security firms.

In order to promote growth in private security, most governments in Europe introduced legislation regulating private security firms. In this case, private companies are required to fulfill certain requirements before they can be

licensed. This is to ensure that individual guards' criminal records are checked as a selection procedure (Fijnaut, 1995). This enabled those contracting private security to develop confidence in the individual security guards. International terrorist activities and threats in the 20th century saw private entities and governments consider the option of working together with private firms to maintain security considering that regular policing agencies may not be well equipped to deal with terrorists on their own. In regard to public sector law enforcement, private security firms have been contracted mainly to prevent loss and to enforce justice albeit with the help of regular police officers. However, in some jurisdictions such as in the United States, private security officers are no less than their public counterparts and as such perform more or less similar duties as the latter group.