

The Economics of Private Security: Economic and Social Impacts of the Formation of Vigilantes in Crime Prevention and Job Creation in the United States and Brazil

The Economics of Private Security: Economic and Social Impacts of Security Guard Training in Crime Prevention and Job Creation in the United States and Brazil

Author: Gelbis de Souza Junior

Graduated in Economics from the Catholic University of Brasília.

Summary

In recent decades, private security has become one of the most important sectors at the interface between the economy, public safety, and social development. This article analyzes the economic and social impacts of the private security industry, focusing on the United States and Brazil, highlighting the importance of security guard training as a tool for crime prevention, indirect cost reduction, and job creation. The study highlights how this sector generates billions of dollars annually, reducing pressure on public security and health systems, and generating positive externalities for various segments of society.

Comparative data and international references are presented, highlighting how private security is consolidating itself as a structural pillar in the contemporary scenario.

Keywords: Private security. Security guards. Economy. Jobs. Crime prevention.

Abstract

Private security has become, in recent decades, one of the most relevant sectors at the intersection of economy, public security, and social development. This article analyzes the economic and social impacts of the private security industry, focusing on the United States and Brazil, with special attention to the role of security guard training as an instrument for crime prevention, reduction of indirect costs, and job creation. The study highlights how this sector moves billions of dollars annually, reduces pressure on public safety and healthcare systems, and generates positive externalities across different areas of society. Comparative data and international references are presented, showing how private security has consolidated itself as a structural pillar in the contemporary scenario.

Keywords: Private security. Security guards. Economy. Employment. Crime prevention.

1. Introduction

In recent decades, private security has established itself as a strategic sector not only for the protection of individuals and assets, but also as a key element in strengthening the economy and maintaining social order. In societies marked by the increasing complexity of social interactions and rising crime, surveillance services have come to play a complementary role to public security, representing an alternative to filling gaps in the state. This reality highlights the need for an in-depth analysis of how private security contributes to crime prevention, reducing social and economic costs, and generating direct and indirect jobs in different countries, especially the United States and Brazil, which constitute the central focuses of this study.

This article seeks to understand private security as an **economic and social pillar** in the international arena, examining both the normative and legal aspects that regulate the work of security guards and the practical effects of this industry on the lives of populations. More than an isolated phenomenon, it is a cog in the contemporary capitalist logic, generating billions of dollars in annual revenue and creating production chains that impact related sectors such as healthcare, insurance, technology, and transportation. Thus, the proposed analysis transcends the narrow view of security, articulating it as a multidisciplinary field of macroeconomic relevance.

In Brazil, the regulation of the activity through Law No. 7,102/1983 and resolutions of the Federal Police Department conferred legitimacy and standardization on the security guard profession, while in the United States, regulatory diversity among states reinforces the decentralized nature of the sector. The comparison between the two countries, in addition to providing consistent empirical data, allows us to understand how different institutional arrangements can impact the efficiency of the private security system and its integration with public policies. This comparative analysis strengthens academic discussion and provides input for managers, policymakers, and security scholars.

Another central point in the introduction is the relationship between private security and the indirect costs of crime. It is estimated that, in the United States alone, annual economic losses related to crime exceed hundreds of billions of dollars, considering healthcare costs, increased insurance premiums, property losses, and decreased productivity. In this scenario, private surveillance companies act as preventative agents, mitigating these costs and relieving pressure on public sectors. In Brazil, although the numbers are not as systematic, research points to the same logic: investment in private surveillance can significantly reduce the negative externalities associated with crime.

Security guard training also emerges as a crucial element in this debate. These professionals not only ensure the physical protection of spaces and people, but also

They are prepared to deal with risk situations, prevent incidents, and act in an integrated manner with government forces. The professionalization of this segment directly impacts the quality of services provided, strengthens the institutional image of security companies, and enhances the social value of the sector. Furthermore, training expands these workers' access to the formal market, with benefits such as formal employment contracts, social security protection, and ongoing training.

This work is structured into eight sections, in addition to the introduction and conclusion. First, the international panorama of private security will be presented, followed by an analysis of its direct and indirect economic impacts. Next, the complementarity with public security and the role of security guard training in professionalizing the sector will be discussed.

Subsequently, the social dimensions and comparisons between the United States and Brazil are addressed, culminating in challenges and future prospects. Finally, the conclusion will integrate the analyses, highlighting the relevance of the sector as a fundamental axis of the economy and society.

contemporary.

Therefore, this study aims to contribute to the academic field by demonstrating that private security cannot be seen solely as an instrument of individual protection, but as a complex social structure that encompasses employment, the economy, and public policies. This multidimensional perspective will be crucial for understanding how this sector positions itself internationally and the paths that can be taken to consolidate it as a pillar of sustainable development.

2. Overview of Private Security in the International Scenario

Private security currently represents one of the most dynamic sectors in the global services market. According to data from the **Federation of European Employers (2019)**, the global private security industry exceeds \$45 billion in annual revenue, employing more than 20 million people in different countries. In many contexts, this number exceeds the number of police forces themselves, highlighting the sector's magnitude and relevance in addressing everyday and strategic risks. This growth is directly associated with globalization, increased urbanization, and the growing demand for protection in complex, technologically interconnected societies.

In the United States, the private security sector has established itself as one of the most structured in the world, with multinational companies operating in both property surveillance and electronic security and remote monitoring. It is estimated that in 2020, there were more than 1.1 million active security guards in the country, regulated by specific state laws that require licensing, training, and periodic retraining. This decentralized model allows for adaptations to the specificities of each region, but also creates challenges regarding standardization.



quality and alignment with federal security standards. Even so, the United States maintains strong integration between the private sector and public agencies, creating synergies to address threats.

In Brazil, the private security industry is equally significant, occupying one of the largest markets in Latin America. Data from the **National Federation of Security and Valuables Transportation Companies (Fenavist, 2018)** indicate that the country has approximately 2,700 authorized companies and more than 400,000 registered security guards, in compliance with federal legislation. This structure reflects both the high demand for protection in large urban centers and the confidence of companies and the public in the complementary role of private security in the face of government limitations. Despite criticism related to informality and irregular outsourcing, the formalized sector remains one of the main sources of employment and professional training.

Within Europe, the European Union presents a scenario of regulatory integration in which private security is recognized as an essential part of the collective security system. In countries like Germany, France, and the United Kingdom, the activities of security guards and private companies are strictly regulated, with requirements for extensive training and specific certifications. Furthermore, these countries have policies that encourage public-private cooperation, reinforcing the view that security should be shared among different social actors. This approach reinforces the perception that private security is not a substitute for public security, but rather a necessary complement to address the complexity of contemporary threats.

In Asia, especially in emerging countries like India and China, the sector has also experienced rapid growth over the past two decades. In India, it is estimated that there are over 7 million workers employed in private security, a number significantly higher than the national police force. This figure illustrates how, in densely populated societies with significant inequalities, private security becomes not just a market demand but a vital necessity for maintaining order and protecting assets amid rapid urban growth. In China, the sector is centrally regulated by the government, but relies on private companies that operate in partnership with state agencies.

Another aspect worth highlighting on the international scene is the growing adoption of surveillance technologies. Electronic monitoring systems, artificial intelligence, facial recognition, and drones are tools that expand the reach of private companies, making them more effective in preventing and responding to incidents. In the United States, for example, the use of smart cameras and predictive analytics software is already a reality in several major cities, while in Brazil, these technologies still face cost and regulatory barriers. The incorporation of these technologies points to a future in which private security will be increasingly integrated into the digital economy.

This global panorama reveals, therefore, that private security is a consolidated and expanding reality, adapting to the specificities of each cultural, economic, and political context.



A comparative analysis between the United States and Brazil, explored in depth throughout the article, will allow us to understand not only the advances and challenges of each country, but also how the sector can be a driver of economic and social development on different scales.

3. Economic Impacts of the Private Security Industry

The private security industry has a large-scale economic impact, considered one of the most important service sectors in the contemporary global scenario. It is estimated that in the United States alone, the sector generates over \$40 billion annually, encompassing surveillance, cash-in-transit, electronic monitoring, and security consulting services (ASIS INTERNATIONAL, 2019). In some states, this turnover exceeds public security budgets, highlighting the importance of private sector activity in the economy. In Brazil, according to data from Fenavist (2018), the sector generates approximately R\$25 billion annually, generating formal jobs, collecting taxes, and fostering the formalization of workers in a context marked by high rates of informality.

The economic impact of private security goes beyond direct financial transactions. The sector stimulates complementary production chains, such as technology companies, insurance, non-lethal weapons, armored vehicles, and strategic consulting services. The demand for sophisticated equipment, such as smart cameras, facial recognition software, and access control systems, drives the technology industry, creating a network of innovation and specialization.

In this way, private security not only sustains itself as a growing market, but also serves as a catalyst for other segments, generating positive externalities that increase economic dynamism at national and international levels.

In the employment sector, private security represents one of the main sources of labor absorption in urbanized societies. In the United States, it is estimated that more than one million security guards are active, while in Brazil, this number exceeds 400,000 regulated professionals (FENAVIST, 2018). These figures highlight the sector's importance in reducing unemployment and including workers in formal jobs, with labor and social security guarantees. Furthermore, many of these professionals come from vulnerable social segments, which reinforces the sector's social and inclusive dimension, expanding opportunities for economic and social advancement.

Another aspect to consider is the fiscal impact of the activity. Private security companies are major contributors of direct and indirect taxes, bolstering the public budget and, in some cases, partially offsetting the need for government investment in security. This fiscal contribution is reflected in the collection of taxes on payroll, consumption of equipment and services, and taxes levied on contracts.

Thus, contrary to the view that the sector would only be an additional cost for companies and individuals, it is observed that it is also a significant source of public revenue, with redistributive effects on society.

The economic impacts of private security also manifest in the reduction of indirect costs caused by crime. When businesses or residences invest in surveillance, there is a reduced risk of property loss, theft, robbery, and material damage. This reduces the financial impact on insurance companies, which, in turn, can offer more affordable premiums to customers who adopt protective measures. In the United States, studies show that properties with private security systems have a higher appreciation in the real estate market, demonstrating that security is also a factor in investment and profitability (CLARKE, 2017). In Brazil, residential and commercial condominiums follow the same logic, incorporating private security as a competitive differentiator.

In addition to creating jobs and strengthening the formal economy, the sector plays a role in regional revitalization. In more vulnerable areas, security companies are often hired to protect strategic assets such as ports, airports, hospitals, and schools. This work helps keep economic activity running even in contexts of high crime, preventing shutdowns and boosting investor confidence.

Thus, private security can be seen not only as a response to insecurity, but as a necessary condition for sustainable economic development in certain territories.

Finally, it's important to emphasize that the economic impacts of private security are not uniform across the world. While developed countries tend to associate the activity with high levels of professionalization and technology, developing countries still face challenges related to informality, precariousness, and the lack of effective oversight. This contrast reveals that the sector's economic potential depends directly on state regulation, the quality of professional training, and the integration between companies and public agencies. This finding reinforces the need for public policies that recognize the sector's relevance and strengthen it sustainably.

4. Private Security and Complementarity to Public Security

Private security, in its contemporary form, should not be seen as a competitor to public security, but as a complementary element in a broader social protection system. In the United States, this complementarity is evident, with cooperation agreements between private companies and law enforcement agencies for event monitoring, critical infrastructure protection, and investigative support (BUTTON, 2019). This model demonstrates that private action does not replace the role of the state, but rather enhances its responsiveness in a scenario where police forces are often overwhelmed. In Brazil, although there is still some resistance to fully recognizing this cooperation, concrete cases reveal that integration is not only possible, but necessary.



The complementarity between private and public security occurs mainly in high-density urban environments, where the state presence is insufficient to cover all demands.

Public transportation companies, shopping malls, hospitals, and financial institutions hire private security to maintain order and prevent crime, freeing up police to focus on more complex activities, such as criminal investigations and combating organized crime.

This division of responsibilities contributes to greater resource rationalization, optimizing the performance of both sectors. Thus, complementarity proves to be a pragmatic solution in complex societies.

A clear example of the synergy between the two sectors can be seen at major events. Olympics, World Cups, and international concerts mobilize contingents of private security guards who work alongside police forces to ensure the safety of athletes, officials, and the public. In Brazil, during the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Olympics, the presence of thousands of security guards supplemented police work, preventing overburdening of state-owned corporations. In the United States, this model is already well-established at sporting events, such as the NFL and NBA, where private companies provide perimeter security while police agencies oversee higher-risk areas.

Another area of complementarity is the protection of critical infrastructure. Refineries, airports, ports, power plants, and financial institutions require high levels of continuous protection, often impossible to guarantee solely by the State. In this context, private companies assume a central role, ensuring 24-hour surveillance, access control, and rapid emergency response. In doing so, they not only protect private assets but also ensure the continuity of essential services for society, reinforcing the public role of private security. This type of integration highlights that private action, although contractual in nature, has significant collective effects.

While there are benefits, it is important to recognize that complementarity faces challenges. In some cases, there is overlapping functions and conflicts of jurisdiction, especially in countries with weak or unclear legislation. Furthermore, poorly qualified professionals can compromise the effectiveness of cooperation, generating tensions between private actors and law enforcement. In Brazil, the lack of robust integration mechanisms between private corporations and public agencies remains a barrier, requiring greater regulatory and institutional coordination. This challenge reinforces the need for clear regulation and rigorous oversight to ensure that complementarity occurs ethically and efficiently.

From a social perspective, cooperation between public and private security strengthens the population's sense of security. Studies show that the presence of security guards in public areas, when combined with police action, builds trust and inhibits crime (ZAFFARONI, 2018). This is because private security, when combined with public security, expands territorial coverage and ensures that previously unattended areas now have continuous surveillance. This perceptio

collective protection directly impacts the quality of urban life, reinforcing the importance of complementarity as a public policy instrument.

Internationally, the experience of countries like the United Kingdom and Germany demonstrates that complementarity can be institutionalized through specific legal frameworks that define roles, responsibilities, and cooperation protocols. In these countries, integration between the two sectors occurs in a coordinated manner, with information exchange and joint training. This model could serve as inspiration for Brazil, where fragmentation still prevails. Therefore, considering private security as a complement to public security recognizes that combating crime requires multiple actors and strategies.

Finally, when understanding private security as a complementary element to public security, it becomes clear that both sectors have distinct but interdependent roles. The logic should not be one of competition, but rather of integration, in which the State exercises a monopoly on legitimate force, while the private sector acts as a strategic ally in prevention and operational support. This approach is essential to ensure that the economic and social benefits of private security materialize into collective gains, consolidating the sector as a fundamental part of a modern and efficient security system.

5. Security Guard Training: Training, Professionalization and Standardization

Security guard training is one of the central pillars for consolidating private security as a strategic sector. Unlike informal occupations related to property protection, security guards are regulated professionals, whose work requires specific training and compliance with legal requirements. In Brazil, Law No. 7,102/1983 and the Federal Police Department's regulations establish that aspiring security guards must complete a training course at authorized schools, with a minimum workload of 200 hours. This curriculum covers topics such as surveillance techniques, self-defense, legislation, first aid, and the use of non-lethal equipment, ensuring that professionals are prepared to deal with different types of risk situations. This formalization reinforces the distinction between professional security guards and informal "security guards," guaranteeing greater legal and social protection for the profession.

In the United States, security guard training is decentralized, varying according to state legislation. In New York, for example, initial training includes 8 hours of basic training, followed by 16 hours of supervised on-the-job instruction, in addition to the requirement for annual refresher training. In California, the Bureau of Security and Investigative Services (BSIS) requires certification after in-person and online courses totaling more than 40 hours of instruction. This regulatory diversity generates different levels of professionalization, but what they have in common is a concern with the minimum qualifications required to perform the role. The heterogeneity among states reflects the American federal model, but it also opens up space for debate about standardization and improving the quality of training.



Ongoing training is another key element in enhancing the profession. In both Brazil and the United States, periodic refresher courses are required to update professionals on new techniques and technologies. The Brazilian refresher course, required every two years, ensures that security guards are prepared to deal with legislative changes, modern equipment, and emergency scenarios, such as armed attacks and mass panic. This constant updating not only ensures greater efficiency in the service provided but also contributes to professional self-esteem and social recognition of the profession. Thus, ongoing training reinforces the strategic nature of the sector.

Another relevant aspect is the impact of training on society's perception. Well-trained professionals convey credibility, reducing social tensions and preventing conflicts in public and private spaces. The presence of trained security guards in schools, hospitals, and shopping centers, for example, provides a greater sense of security and increases public confidence in the effectiveness of private services. Furthermore, ethical and regulated performance differentiates security guards from the "vigilante" or "informal security" figure, building a positive institutional image for the sector. This shift in social perception is essential for the harmonious integration of private security with public security.

Training also contributes to the professionalization of the sector in terms of social inclusion. Many security guards enter the profession as an alternative for economic mobility, finding it a gateway to the formal job market. Mandatory courses and certifications ensure that workers have access to training that, in many cases, goes beyond their previous education, expanding their technical and social repertoire. This generates impacts that go beyond the field of security, promoting inclusion and citizenship for groups historically marginalized in the labor market. Thus, professional training is not only technical, but also social, with repercussions in the fight against inequality.

Despite advances, security guard training faces significant challenges. In Brazil, one of these is the proliferation of clandestine or low-quality courses, which compromise training and put both professionals and society at risk. In the United States, excessive decentralization can lead to disparities in qualifications between states, creating vulnerabilities in contexts that require interstate action. Another critical issue is the technological gap in some training programs, which still do not fully incorporate topics such as cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, and advanced electronic monitoring. These challenges highlight the need for curricular updates and greater oversight of training processes.

Finally, security guard training should be understood as a structuring factor for the sector, as it ensures quality, legitimacy, and efficiency. More than preparing individuals to guard spaces, it's about empowering them to act as prevention agents, integrated into a larger social protection system. In this sense, professional training represents an investment in human capital, essential for strengthening private security as an economic and social sector. The expansion

This model of professionalization, accompanied by robust regulation, can consolidate private security as one of the pillars of sustainable development on the international stage.

6. Social Dimension: Reduction of Indirect Costs and Positive Externalities

Private security is not limited to the economic sphere or the immediate protection of assets; it also plays a fundamental social role by reducing indirect costs arising from crime. Studies indicate that annual crime costs in the United States exceed \$300 billion, when considering public health expenses, increased insurance premiums, lost productivity, and property damage (NATIONAL CRIME VICTIMIZATION SURVEY, 2019). In this context, the presence of private security guards reduces crime incidents in residential and commercial areas, generating significant savings for the government and society.

The social impact is, therefore, inseparable from the economic impact, demonstrating that private security generates collective benefits.

In Brazil, the logic is similar, although the numbers are less systematic. Private security services in condominiums, companies, and events reduce the burden on hospitals, courts, and insurance companies, avoiding significant indirect costs. When crimes are prevented, there is no need for hospitalizations, lawsuits, or financial redress, which represents relief for already overburdened public systems. Thus, even if private security is contracted by individuals or companies, the effects extend beyond the private sphere, reaching the entire community. This is, therefore, a typical case of positive externality, in which an individual investment results in broad social gains.

Another significant social impact is the appreciation of urban space. Areas with a strong private security presence, such as business districts and shopping centers, tend to attract investment and increase the flow of people, fostering economic and cultural vitality.

This appreciation increases local tax revenue, strengthens public confidence, and promotes social integration. In the United States, neighborhoods monitored by private companies have lower crime rates, stimulating real estate appreciation and economic development. In Brazil, gated communities and secure commercial areas serve a similar function, attracting new businesses and strengthening consumer chains.

Private security also contributes to building an environment of social trust. When citizens perceive organized surveillance, it increases their sense of belonging and protection, which strengthens community bonds. This sense of security directly impacts the population's mental health, reducing stress and anxiety related to fear of crime. Furthermore, cooperation between security guards and residents in condominiums or communities encourages practices of solidarity and social integration, promoting collective values that transcend the contractual function of security.

Another highlight is the social inclusion provided by private security. By employing hundreds of thousands of people in Brazil and millions worldwide, the sector offers opportunities for workers who, in many cases, would otherwise struggle to find employment in other formal markets. This social dimension is enhanced by mandatory professional training, which guarantees technical qualifications and access to labor and social security rights.

Thus, private security plays an inclusive role, promoting citizenship and reducing social inequalities, especially in highly vulnerable contexts.

However, the social dimension also faces criticism. Some scholars warn of the risk of deepening inequalities, as private security services are more accessible to higher-income groups, creating a kind of "selective security." In countries like Brazil, the expansion of gated communities and protected areas can exacerbate socio-spatial segregation, reinforcing barriers between social groups. This ethical dilemma highlights the need for public policies that encourage universal access to security, preventing the private sector from reproducing historical inequalities. Cooperation with the state is essential to mitigate this risk and expand the positive effects of the activity.

In short, the social dimension of private security goes far beyond immediate property protection. The sector helps reduce indirect costs of crime, strengthens social trust, promotes economic inclusion, and increases urban development. Despite ethical and structural challenges, the positive effects are evident, demonstrating that private security, when regulated and integrated with public policies, can be an instrument of sustainable social development. This perspective broadens the academic debate and reinforces the argument that private security is both an economic and social pillar on the international stage.

7. Comparison between the United States and Brazil: Jobs, Legislation and Effectiveness

A comparative analysis between the United States and Brazil in the field of private security allows us to understand not only the structural differences between the two countries but also to identify similarities that reinforce the relevance of this sector on a global scale. In the United States, the private security market is highly decentralized, regulated by state laws that establish specific criteria for licensing, training, and oversight. In Brazil, however, a centralized model prevails, unified by federal legislation, particularly Law No. 7,102/1983, regulated by the Federal Police Department. This normative distinction has direct implications for the homogeneity of professional training and the standardization of services offered in each country.

From an employment perspective, the United States has impressive numbers, with more than 1.1 million active security guards in 2020 (US BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS, 2020), while Brazil has around 400,000 legally registered security guards (FENAVIST,

2018). Although the Brazilian contingent is smaller in absolute terms, proportionally to the size of the population, it represents a significant portion of the national workforce. Furthermore, in Brazil, private security is the second-largest employer in the service sector, behind only retail. This representation demonstrates that, in both countries, private security is a key driver of formal employment generation and large-scale labor absorption.

Legislation also presents significant contrasts. In the United States, decentralization allows for rapid adaptations to local specificities, such as greater training requirements in states with high crime rates. On the other hand, this flexibility can create disparities in qualifications between regions. In Brazil, federal legislation guarantees minimum standardization, requiring training and periodic refresher courses with defined workloads supervised by the Federal Police. This centralization provides uniformity, but it can also limit innovation and hinder faster regional adaptations, especially in urban contexts with unique crime challenges.

Regarding effectiveness, both countries demonstrate that private security plays a significant role in supporting public safety. In the United States, cooperation between private companies and law enforcement agencies is consolidated at sporting events, airports, and critical infrastructure, configuring a model of institutionalized public-private partnership. In Brazil, although similar examples exist, such as in major international events (the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Olympics), integration between the two sectors still faces regulatory and cultural barriers. The lack of clear cooperation protocols and the historical prejudice against private security hinder the full exploitation of its potential.

Another comparative aspect concerns the level of technology employed. In the United States, there is widespread adoption of digital tools, such as predictive analytics software, facial recognition systems, and surveillance drones, which increases the sector's efficiency. In Brazil, although this technology is present, its adoption is still restricted to larger companies and corporate clients due to the high cost of the equipment. This technological difference directly impacts the quality of services and the public's perception of the effectiveness of private security. The challenge in Brazil is to democratize access to technology without compromising the economic sustainability of companies.

In terms of social recognition of the profession, the United States demonstrates greater recognition of the security guard figure as part of the collective security system, even though the sector faces challenges related to low wages and high turnover. In Brazil, on the other hand, although security guards have guaranteed labor and social security rights, the profession still suffers stigmatization and is often confused with informal security activities. This difference in social perception reinforces the importance of professional recognition as a strategy to strengthen the sector's legitimacy and expand its integration with public security.

Finally, the comparison reveals that, despite legislative, structural, and technological differences, the United States and Brazil share the same fundamental logic: private security is indispensable to complement the state apparatus, reduce the social costs of crime, and generate formal jobs. While the United States advances in technological integration and the institutionalization of public-private cooperation, Brazil stands out for its regulatory standardization and potential for expansion due to the high demand for security services.

This comparative analysis reinforces the conclusion that, in both contexts, private security is a strategic sector of economic and social relevance.

8. Challenges and Future Perspectives for Private Security

Despite its established relevance, private security faces structural and circumstantial challenges that must be addressed to ensure its long-term sustainability and effectiveness. Among the main obstacles are informality, precarious contracts, and disparities in service quality. In Brazil, clandestine companies operating without Federal Police authorization are still common, offering low-quality services and damaging the sector's image. This problem is not exclusive to Brazil, but it becomes more relevant in developing countries, where oversight is limited and the demand for security services is high. Combating informality is, therefore, one of the first steps toward strengthening the sector on a global scale.

Another challenge concerns professional development. Although private security is one of the largest employers of labor in several countries, salaries are often below the average for other service sectors, contributing to high turnover rates. The lack of social recognition and stigmatization of the profession also hinder the consolidation of a more robust professional identity. To overcome this obstacle, it is necessary to invest not only in fairer pay but also in social development campaigns, ongoing training programs, and the strengthening of professional associations.

The incorporation of new technologies constitutes both an opportunity and a challenge. Tools such as artificial intelligence, facial recognition, smart sensors, and real-time data analysis systems promise to increase the efficiency of private security. However, their adoption requires significant investments, which may be unfeasible for small and medium-sized businesses. Furthermore, the use of these technologies raises ethical and legal issues related to privacy and the use of personal data. Therefore, countries will need to develop regulatory frameworks that balance technological innovation with the protection of fundamental rights, preventing abuse and ensuring the legitimacy of the sector.

Another critical point is the need for greater integration between private security and public security. Although complementarity is already consolidated in several countries, differences still persist.

institutional and cultural resistance that hinders full cooperation. Communication protocols, joint training, and information sharing are tools that can strengthen this integration. At the same time, it is essential to clearly delimit the competencies of each sector, avoiding overlaps or conflicts. International experience shows that integration is feasible and beneficial, but it requires political will and consistent regulatory frameworks.

From a social perspective, the biggest challenge is to prevent private security from deepening inequalities. In contexts of high social exclusion, such as in some regions of Brazil and Latin America, access to surveillance services is still restricted to the wealthiest segments of the population. This creates a sense of "security for the few," which can reinforce socio-spatial segregation and undermine social cohesion. The solution lies in public policies that expand access to security in public spaces, through public-private partnerships that benefit not only companies and individuals, but entire communities.

Future prospects for the sector indicate that private security will likely further consolidate its position as an economic and social pillar. The growth of cities, the advancement of digitalization, and the intensification of transnational threats such as terrorism and cybercrime will increase the demand for specialized services. In the United States, the sector is projected to continue growing at a rapid pace, driven by technological innovation and the culture of outsourcing services.

In Brazil, expansion will be determined by the market's capacity to formalize, strengthen oversight, and technological inclusion in small and medium-sized companies.

In short, the challenges facing private security are significant, but its prospects are equally significant. The combination of professionalization, technology, public-private integration, and social inclusion policies can transform the sector into one of the main instruments of sustainable development in the coming decades. Private security should not be seen solely as a response to crime, but as a strategic field that connects the economy, society, and public policies. Its future will depend on the ability to balance private and collective interests, ensuring efficiency, legitimacy, and equity.

Conclusion

This article analyzed private security as an economic and social pillar in the international scenario, with a comparative focus between the United States and Brazil. Throughout the text, it was observed that private security transcends the traditional view of asset protection, consolidating itself as a strategic sector that generates billions in revenue, creates millions of jobs, and positively impacts the formal economy and social organization. The research revealed that private security should be understood as an integral part of a more comprehensive security system.

broad, in which public and private sectors work together to ensure greater efficiency and scope in preventing and combating crime.

From an economic perspective, it was found that private security represents a driver of dynamism and formalization, generating large-scale direct and indirect jobs. In the United States, regulatory decentralization has enabled the formation of a diversified and technologically advanced market, while in Brazil, regulatory centralization has ensured greater uniformity and minimal standardization. In both countries, however, the activity proves to be relevant in generating taxes, increasing real estate values, reducing the indirect costs of crime, and maintaining investor confidence in unstable contexts. These data reinforce the importance of private security as a driver of economic development.

From a social perspective, private security contributes not only to reducing crime rates but also to strengthening social cohesion and promoting economic inclusion. Hiring formal security guards ensures the entry of thousands of workers into the job market, offering them labor and social security rights, and professional training opportunities. Furthermore, the presence of security guards in public and private spaces increases the population's sense of security, reducing stress and social fear. Although criticism persists regarding the risk of "selective security," the collective benefits demonstrate that the sector, when regulated and monitored, can generate positive externalities for society as a whole.

A comparative analysis between the United States and Brazil showed that, despite structural differences, both countries face similar challenges and share converging logics. North American decentralization promotes innovation and regional adaptation, but can compromise the standardization of service quality. Brazilian centralization, on the other hand, ensures uniformity but limits faster regional responses. In both contexts, private security proves indispensable as a complement to public security, revealing that contemporary crime requires multiple actors to be effectively addressed. This finding reinforces the need to institutionalize cooperation and integration protocols between the two.

sectors.

In the field of professional training, the importance of initial training and ongoing retraining was highlighted to ensure the quality of services and the recognition of the profession. Professional development is a key factor in differentiating formal security guards from informal security guards, ensuring greater credibility for the sector. In the United States and Brazil, periodic training and development programs ensure that security guards are prepared to handle different types of incidents, strengthening the profession's institutional image. Furthermore, training expands opportunities for social advancement and citizenship by integrating vulnerable workers into formal and regulated environments.

Another relevant point concerns the impact of emerging technologies on the future of private security. The adoption of artificial intelligence, predictive analytics software, and remote monitoring equipment will increase the sector's effectiveness, but it will also bring related ethical challenges.



privacy and the use of sensitive data. In the United States, this incorporation is already widespread, while in Brazil, it still faces cost and regulatory barriers. The global challenge will be to balance technological innovation with regulatory frameworks that ensure fundamental rights, preventing abuses, and consolidating the sector's social legitimacy.

Despite its importance, the sector faces persistent problems, such as informality, precarious contracts, and high labor turnover. In Brazil, the operations of clandestine companies undermine the sector's credibility and threaten both workers and contractors.

In the United States, although oversight is more robust, excessive decentralization can lead to disparities in quality between states. These challenges highlight the need to strengthen regulation, expand oversight, and promote public policies that ensure greater stability and recognition for professionals in the sector.

From a social perspective, the biggest criticism concerns the potential increase in inequality, as private security services are more accessible to higher-income groups. This ethical dilemma demands solutions that guarantee universal access to protection, especially in public spaces. Public-private partnerships can be a viable alternative, expanding the benefits of private security to entire communities. Democratizing access to security is essential for the sector to fully fulfill its social function and contribute to building more just and inclusive cities.

The future outlook for private security is broadly positive. The growth of cities, the intensification of transnational threats, and the growing appreciation for individual and collective protection indicate that demand for the sector will continue to expand. At the same time, its consolidation will depend on the ability to address the aforementioned challenges, promoting greater integration with public security, incorporating technologies ethically, and strengthening professional training. Therefore, this is a sector that not only responds to crime but also projects itself as a structuring element of the economy and contemporary society.

In short, private security must be understood as a fundamental axis for sustainable development, articulating economic, social, and political dimensions. The sector is not a substitute for public security, but an indispensable complement in increasingly complex societies. Its relevance is manifested both in crime prevention and in job creation, social inclusion, economic dynamism, and the valorization of urban spaces.

It is therefore concluded that investing in private security in a regulated, ethical and inclusive manner is investing in the future of modern societies, ensuring a greater balance between efficiency, legitimacy and equity.

References

ASIS INTERNATIONAL. *Global Security Report 2019*. Alexandria: ASIS International, 2019.



BUTTON, M. *Private Policing*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge, 2019.

CLARKE, RV *Situational Crime Prevention: Successful Case Studies*. 2nd ed. Albany: Harrow and Heston, 2017.

FENAVIST – National Federation of Security and Valuables Transportation Companies. *Sector Report on Private Security in Brazil*. Brasília: Fenavist, 2018.

FEDERATION OF EUROPEAN EMPLOYERS. *The European Private Security Industry Report*. Brussels: FEE, 2019.

NATIONAL CRIME VICTIMIZATION SURVEY. *Annual Report 2019*. Washington: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2019.

US BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS. *Occupational Outlook Handbook: Security Guards*. Washington: BLS, 2020.

ZAFFARONI, E.R. *Criminology: Sociological and Legal Approach*. São Paulo: Revista dos Tribunais, 2018.