

Juristat Article

Private Security and Public Policing



by Geoffrey Li

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Symbols

- . not available for any reference period
- .. not available for a specific reference period
- ... not applicable
- 0 true zero or a value rounded to zero
- 0^s value rounded to 0 (zero) where there is a meaningful distinction between true zero and the value that was rounded
- ^p preliminary
- ^r revised
- x suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the *Statistics Act*
- ^E use with caution
- F too unreliable to be published

Private Security and Public Policing: Highlights

- Private security personnel continue to outnumber police officers. Results from the 2006 Census indicate that there were approximately 102,000 security guards and private investigators in Canada, compared to about 68,000 police officers.
- Private security personnel grew at a faster rate than police officers, thus widening the gap between the two groups. Private security personnel increased by 15% between 2001 and 2006, while the rate of police officers was up by only 3%.
- Manitoba and Saskatchewan, which had the nation's highest crime rates, employed the most police per capita in 2006. Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland and Labrador, provinces with crime rates well below the national average, had the fewest number of police per capita.
- Quebec reported the most security guards per capita among the provinces, while Alberta and Ontario had the most private investigators per capita.
- The representation of visible minorities among police officers and private security personnel doubled between 1996 and 2006. While the proportion of visible minorities among security guards exceeded that of the overall proportion this was not the case for police and private investigators.
- The number of women employed in the private security industry and in policing continues to grow. Between 1996 and 2006, the proportion of female private security personnel increased from 20% to 24%. Similarly, the proportion of female police officers increased from 13% to 20%.
- The proportion of Aboriginal police officers was similar to their representation in the overall population. In 2006, 4% of police officers were Aboriginal peoples, compared to 3% of Canada's population 15 years and over.
- Police officers generally have higher levels of education and higher incomes compared to private security personnel.

Private Security and Public Policing

by Geoffrey Li

It is becoming increasingly difficult to clearly define the roles and responsibilities of private security and public police. While there remain distinct tasks that are handled solely by one or the other, the task of "policing" and securing society carried out by a network of public police and private security is often overlapping, complimentary and mutually supportive¹ (Law Commission of Canada, 2006).

This article compares the roles, responsibilities, and oversight of private security and public police, discusses the regulations governing the security industry and police, and presents employment profiles from Census data. For the purpose of this report, "private security personnel" include two major occupations: private investigators and security guards.

Roles and responsibilities

In Canada, public police act on behalf of the government and society to enforce laws, maintain the peace, detect crime, respond to emergencies, assist victims of crime, and provide assistance in prosecuting offenders. Police are also involved in community support and outreach programs such as drug awareness and crime prevention. Police services receive their powers to search, arrest, and detain individuals from the *Criminal Code of Canada* and from provincial and territorial Police Acts.

Police have traditionally protected public property and spaces. In the case of "mass private property" — venues that are privately owned or operated, but used extensively by the public such as indoor shopping malls, privately operated airports, and sporting arenas — owners often turn to private security to help maintain order and control access. While private security personnel may perform many police-like functions, they act on behalf of their employer, and not necessarily on behalf of the public.

Private investigators generally conduct investigations (e.g., to locate missing persons, obtain information for civil and legal litigation cases), provide risk management consultations, implement security measures to protect property against theft and fire, and investigate corporate fraud. Private investigators tend to be directly employed by security companies as well as the retail trade and public administration industries (Statistics Canada, Census of Population 2006).

Security guards primarily maintain order and enforce regulations at public events and within establishments, protect property against theft and vandalism, provide armoured car service for transporting valuables, and control access to venues. Security guards also tend to be directly employed by security companies. Other major employers include public administration; the arts, entertainment and recreation industry; transportation and warehousing; health care and social assistance; and, accommodation and food services (Statistics Canada, Census of Population 2006).

Acting on behalf of property owners, private security personnel have the same criminal law enforcement powers as ordinary citizens, and are legally able to arrest and detain individuals². In 2006, the Law Commission of Canada noted that trespass laws, in particular, are frequently used by private security since most provincial trespass statutes empower owners and their agents (i.e. private security) or police officers to arrest trespassers. Trespass acts are "... the workhorse of private security services in their patrol of the shopping malls, airports, sports stadiums and other private spaces where the public tends to congregate" (Law Commission of Canada, 2006).

Training, regulation and accountability

Successful police recruits are required to go through screening and training requirements to ensure that they are suitable and fit for the job. While private security personnel undergo background checks (i.e. criminal records) and training, the duration and scope is not as in-depth as that of the police.

Training for police within jurisdictions is standardized and centralized at police colleges and academies. Training for private security personnel may vary from company to company, although most provinces have, or are developing, minimum training standards.

Police are held accountable for their actions through a number of mechanisms. Members of the public may file complaints about police activity through local, municipal, or provincial police boards and commissions, and public/civilian complaints boards/commissions. In addition to the police service's own internal investigations, police may also be subject to criminal prosecution and civil litigation.

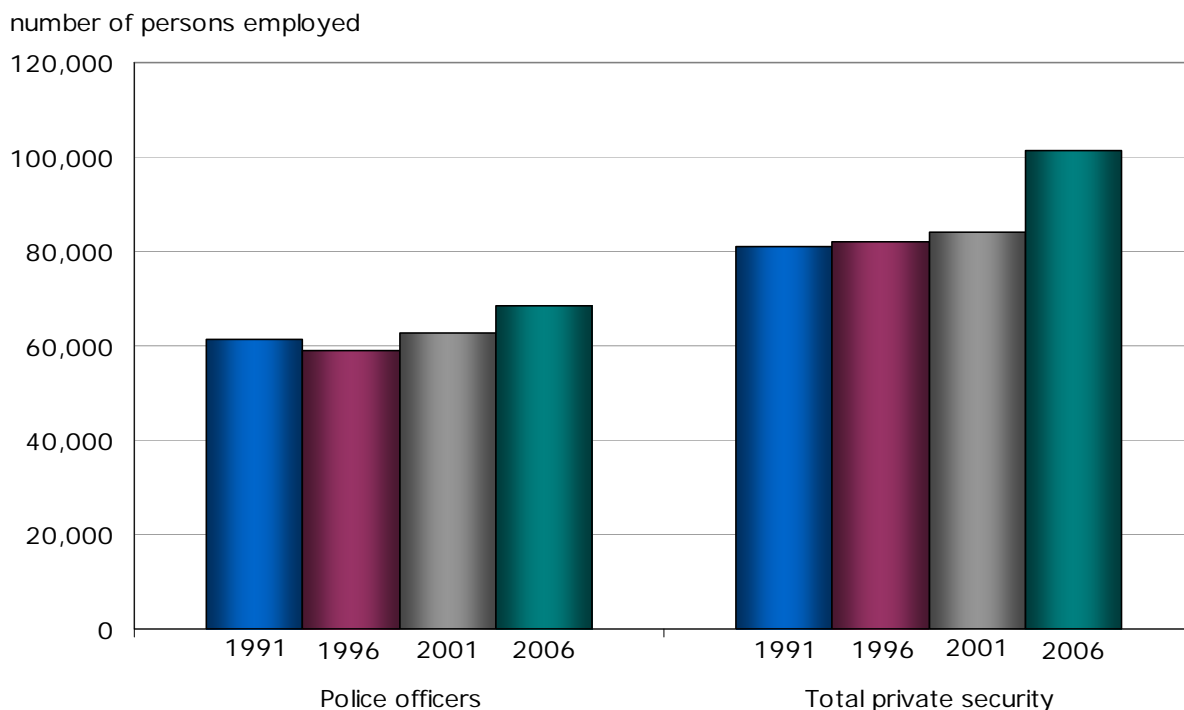
While provinces and territories have laws regulating security personnel and agencies, as well as a process for investigating complaints made against private security, private security personnel are primarily accountable to their employers and clients. As the Law Commission of Canada notes, the government's role in regulating the private security industry is "not as prominent as it has been with public police" (2006). However, many provinces have taken steps to better regulate the private security industry in terms of training, licensing, and oversight.

Large increase in private security personnel between 2001 and 2006

For many years, employment in the private security industry has exceeded that of public police officers (Chart 1). In 2006, this was the case for all provinces except Saskatchewan³. There were about 102,000 private security personnel in Canada, compared to 68,000 police officers, representing about 3 private security personnel for every 2 police officers (Table 1). Security guards made up 90% of private security personnel.

While the rate of both police officers and private security personnel per 100,000 population increased between 2001 and 2006, private security grew much faster, up 15% compared to 3% for police officers. The increase in private security personnel was due to the growth in the number of security guards.

Chart 1
Large increase in private security between 2001 and 2006



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population.

Manitoba and Saskatchewan, which had the nation's highest crime rates, employed the most police per capita in 2006. Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland and Labrador, provinces with crime rates well below the national average, had the fewest number of police per capita (Table 2).

Quebec reported the most security guards per capita among the provinces, while Alberta and Ontario had the most private investigators per capita.

Proportion of visible minorities and women increasing in both policing and private security

In 2006, the Law Commission of Canada stated that "...in spite of concerted efforts to increase diversity in police services in Canada, women, members of visible and ethnic minority groups, as well as Aboriginal peoples, remain significantly underrepresented, compared to their representation in the communities being policed" (based on 1996 Census data). Data from the 2006 Census show that, for Canada as a whole, this continues to be the case for visible minorities and women.

The representation of visible minorities among police officers and private security personnel doubled between 1996 and 2006. While the proportion of visible minorities among security guards exceeded that of the overall proportion of visible minorities among the population of Canada, this was not the case for police and private investigators (Text table 1).

The representation of females among police and private security personnel continues to increase. In 2006, females comprised about 1 in 5 police officers and 1 in 4 private security personnel (Text table 2). In 1996, the comparable figures were 1 in 8 police and 1 in 5 private security.

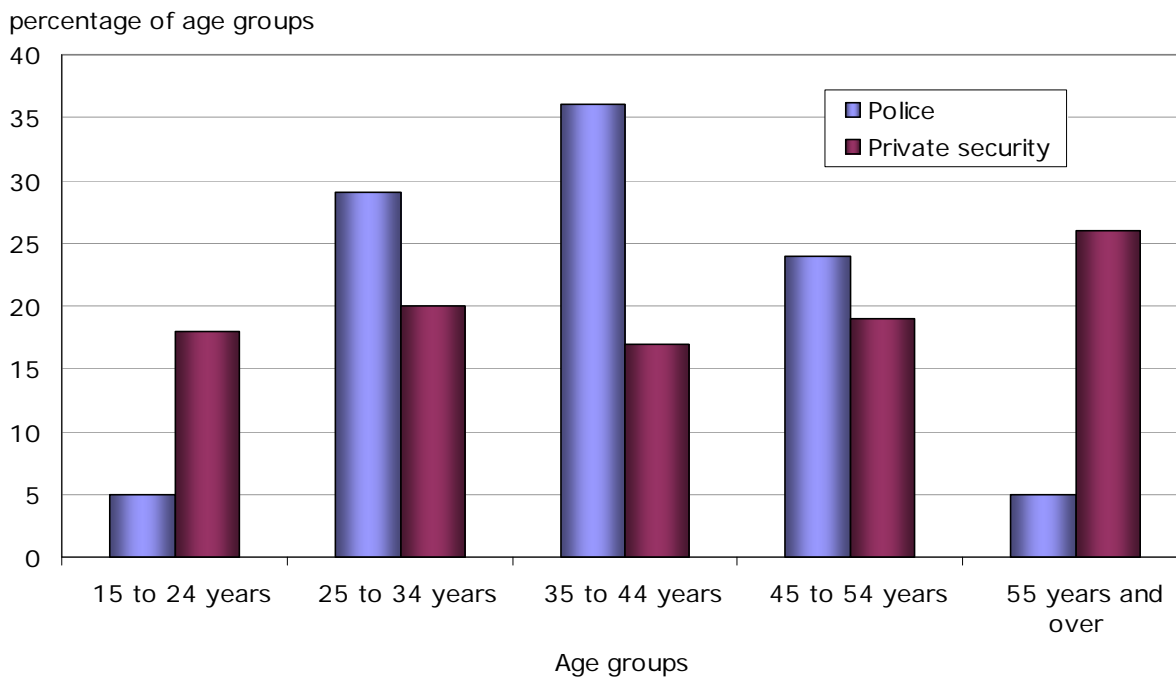
According to the 2006 Census, while Aboriginal peoples comprised 3% of Canada's population 15 years and over, they made up 4% of police officers and 5% of private security personnel (Text table 3).

Private security employees more evenly distributed across all age groups

Private security personnel came from all age groups while the majority of police officers were between 25 and 54 years of age.

Chart 2

Private security personnel come from all age groups



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population.

There are relatively few police officers over the age of 55 (Chart 2). Among private security personnel, those over 55 years of age actually comprise the largest proportion (26%). As noted by Rigakos (2002), retirees may see a job as a security guard as a possible second career.

Police attain higher levels of education

Employment requirements usually dictate that police officers possess a high school education, although a college or university diploma or degree is usually preferred⁴. As such, police officers generally have higher levels of education than private security personnel. In 2006, 75% of police officers had completed at least a college certification, compared to 55% of private investigators and 37% of security guards.

Police officers earn more than private security personnel

In 2005, the average annual income⁵ for full-time police officers was higher than that of their counterparts in private security. Comparing those who worked full-time throughout the year, police officers earned about one and a half times the average income of private investigators, and more than twice that of security guards. However, these figures do not control for factors such as training requirements, specialized education, seniority, and the level of experience.

Increases in income between 2000 and 2005 for both police officers and private investigators were greater than was seen for security guards and for all occupations (Text table 4).

As well as earning less than public police, private security personnel were about five times more likely to experience unemployment. While 1% of police officers were unemployed during the week prior to the Census, 5% of private investigators and 6% of security guards were unemployed.

Summary

As has been the case for several years, private security personnel continue to outnumber police officers. Results from the 2006 Census indicate that there were about 3 private security personnel for every 2 police officers.

Provinces with the nation's highest crime rates, Manitoba and Saskatchewan, employed the most police per capita in 2006 while Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland and Labrador, provinces with crime rates well below the national average, had the fewest.

While representation of Aboriginal peoples, women and visible minorities among police officers and private security personnel increased between 1996 and 2006, women and visible minorities generally are underrepresented.

Survey Methodology

The primary data source used for this *Juristat* article was the Census of Population. While surveys such as the Labour Force Survey and the Survey of Employment, Payroll and Hours collect information on income and employment, the level of detail was not sufficient for the purposes of this report.

The Census collects data on every person in Canada and is conducted every five years. The data used for this report are from a sample of one in five Canadian households who were asked questions on topics such as education, ethnicity, mobility, income and employment. The results from this 20% sample were then weighted to the national level.

Except where noted, data refer to the employed labour force, comprised of persons who worked for pay, were self-employed, or worked without pay in a family farm, business or professional practice; and those who would normally have worked but were absent from their job or business⁶.

For the purpose of this article, public police officers and private security personnel are classified according to Statistics Canada's 2006 National Occupational Classification for Statistics (NOC-S). Police Officers are captured on the Census under NOC-S codes A351 — commissioned officers and G611 — non-commissioned officers. Those referred to collectively as "private security personnel" are employed as private investigators and security guards. Private investigators (code G625 "Other Protective Service Occupations") include workers who conduct private investigations for clients or employers, and implement security measures to protect property against theft and fire, while the larger security guards and related occupations category (G631) include security guards and other related workers.

Counts from the Police Administration Survey

Counts for police officers are also collected by Statistics Canada's Police Administration Survey (PAS). The survey is conducted annually and gathers information on personnel and expenditures directly from municipal, provincial and federal police services. Counts of police officers from the Census are consistently higher than counts provided by the PAS due to a number of methodological differences between the two data sources.

For instance, the PAS includes counts of full-time officers and converts those working part-time into full-time equivalents (e.g., four police officers working 10 hours per week equal 1 full-time police officer), and also excludes temporary police officers. However, for Census counts part-time police officers are not converted to full-time equivalents and counts could include temporary police officers. Therefore, caution must be observed when making any comparisons between the Census and Police Administration data.

In 2006, police officer counts from the Census were 10% higher than those reported on the PAS for that year. However, trends between the two surveys are very similar. For example, between 2001 and 2006, both the Census and the PAS indicate a 9% increase in the number of police officers (Text table 5). Provincially, the rates per capita are generally consistent as well.

Detailed data tables

Table 1
Police officers, private investigators and security guards Canada 1991, 1996, 2001, and 2006

	2006		2001		1996		1991		Percentage change ² in the rate 2001 to 2006	Percentage change ² in the rate 1991 to 2006
	number	rate ¹	number	rate ¹	number	rate ¹	number	rate ¹		
Police officers	68,420	216	62,860	209	59,090	205	61,280	224	3	-4
Total private security	101,525	321	84,000	280	82,010	284	81,095	297	15	8
Security guards	91,325	289	73,535	245	69,780	242	72,880	267	18	8
Private investigators	10,200	32	10,465	35	12,230	42	8,215	30	-7	7

Note: Counts for police officers, private investigators and security guards are estimates from the 1991, 1996, 2001, and 2006 Census of Population and represent persons aged 15 years and over who were employed in the week prior to Census Day.

1. Rate calculated per 100,000 population.

2. Percentage change based on unrounded rates.

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population

Table 2
Police officers, private investigators and security guards by province and territory, 2006

Region	Police officers		Security guards		Private investigators	
	number	rate ¹	number	rate ¹	number	rate ¹
Canada	68,420	216	91,325	289	10,200	32
Newfoundland and Labrador	800	158	1,140	226	55	11
Prince Edward Island	165	121	250	184	25	18
Nova Scotia	1,835	201	2,455	269	220	24
New Brunswick	1,405	192	1,910	262	165	23
Quebec	17,555	233	25,870	343	2,145	28
Ontario	26,875	221	34,985	288	4,350	36
Manitoba	2,780	242	3,145	274	320	28
Saskatchewan ²	2,310	239	1,935	200	305	32
Alberta	6,270	191	7,795	237	1,250	38
British Columbia	7,935	193	11,490	279	1,355	33
Yukon	150	494	105	346	0	0
Northwest Territories	225	543	165	398	10	24
Nunavut	120	407	75	254	0	0

1. Rates are calculated per 100,000 population.

2. The police officer count for Saskatchewan includes about 170 officers working at the RCMP's Training Depot, a national training facility.

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population.

Text table 1
Proportion belonging to a visible minority group, Canada

	2006	2001	1996
	percentage of visible minorities		
Police officers	6	4	3
Private security	20	15	10
Security guards	21	16	11
Private investigators	12	11	6
All occupations¹	15	12	10
Canada population 15 years and over ²	15	13	11

Note: Counts for police officers, private investigators and security guards are estimates from the Census of Population and represent persons aged 15 years and over who were employed in the week prior to Census Day. Census data for persons in a visible minority does not include Aboriginal persons.

1. Includes those employed as police officers, private investigators, security guards and all other occupations in Canada.

2. Includes all persons aged 15 years and over regardless of their employment status.

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population.

Text table 2
Proportion who are women, Canada

	2006	2001	1996
	percentage of female		
Police officers	20	17	13
Private security	24	23	20
Security guards	24	23	20
Private investigators	29	25	21
All occupations¹	48	47	46

Note: Counts for police officers, private investigators and security guards are estimates from the Census of Population and represent persons aged 15 years and over who were employed in the week prior to Census Day.

1. Includes those employed as police officers, private investigators, security guards and all other occupations in Canada.

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population.

Text table 3
Proportion who are Aboriginal, Canada

	2006	2001	1996
	percentage of Aboriginal		
Police officers	4	4	3
Private security	5	4	3
Security guards	5	4	3
Private investigators	3	2	1
All occupations¹	3	2	2
Canada population 15 years and over ²	3	3	2

Note: Counts for police officers, private investigators and security guards are estimates from the Census of Population and represent persons aged 15 years and over who were employed in the week prior to Census Day.

1. Includes those employed as police officers, private investigators, security guards and all other occupations in Canada.

2. Includes all persons aged 15 years and over regardless of their employment status.

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of population.

Text table 4

Average annual employment income in constant 2005 dollars, Canada

	2005	2000	1995	Percentage change from 2000 to 2005
	average income in 2005 dollars			percentage
Police officers	73,582	67,272	65,821	9
Security guards	31,029	30,743	30,861	1
Private investigators	49,762	44,227	41,837	13
All occupations¹	51,124	48,561	45,951	5

Note: Data on average annual employment income are estimates from the 1996, 2001, and 2006 Census of Population and represent persons aged 15 years and over with employment income, who worked full year, full-time during 1995, 2000, and 2005 respectively.

1. Total All Occupations includes police officers, private investigators, security guards and all other occupations in Canada.

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, Consumer Price Index.

Text table 5

Police officers, Canada, selected years

Year	number	rate per 100,000 population
1991	56,768	202.5
1996	54,323	183.5
2001	57,076	184.0
2006	62,461	191.9
2007	64,134	195.1
2008	65,283	169.5

Source: Police Administration Survey

References

Law Commission of Canada "In Search of Security: The Future of Policing in Canada" Ottawa, 2006.

Rigakos, George "The New Parapolice: Risk Markets and Commodified Social Control" Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002.

Statistics Canada, unpublished data tables, Census of Population, 2006.

Notes

1. For examples of the types of co-operation between public police and private security, see [Rigakos, 2002](#).
2. Section 494 of the *Criminal Code of Canada*.
3. The total number of police officers in Saskatchewan includes those working at the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Training Depot, a facility for instructing recruits from across Canada. If those officers involved in training were excluded from Saskatchewan totals, then the number of private security personnel would slightly exceed the number of police officers providing policing services in that province.
4. For examples of minimum requirements, see www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/recruiting-recrutement/howtojoin-commentvousenroler/requirements-exigences-eng.htm#req4 and www.torontopolice.on.ca/careers/minreq.php.
5. Data on employment income are estimates from the 1996, 2001, and 2006 Census of Population and represent persons aged 15 years and older with employment income who worked full year, full-time during 1995, 2000, and 2005 respectively.
6. The complete definition may be found at www12.statcan.ca/english/census06/reference/dictionary/pop028.cfm.