

# **Equal Versus Efficient Security against Crimes and its Paradoxes**

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Police services are cited by economists as an example of a standard public good that should be supplied by the state to prevent market failure on account of the free-rider problem. However, in historical perspective, public police is a relatively new phenomenon. Even today in many countries the number of private security workers is larger than the number of public police officials. In this paper, we argue that the public police often do not aim to correct the public good market failure. On the contrary, the policy goal of fighting against crimes - especially against violent ones - has moved towards ensuring equal-security for all residents. This aim has gained influence from writings of constitutional law scholars, who argue that the right to equal-security against crimes derives from equal basic constitutional rights. It has also gained acceptance as a practical police strategy. The paper examines legal and economic implications of the right to equal-security against crimes. Without questioning the 'equal-security for all' approach toward policing it shows that it is inconsistent with several other important legal objectives. It reduces efficiency as well as effectiveness of the crime fighting efforts. It can result in a higher number of crimes than under a market mimicking state. It shows that even without discriminatory intent, the equal-security-oriented policing leads to crime clearance and punishment rates that are different across police districts and also across communities and therefore in a statistical sense discriminating.