

COVID-19: Crime and Policing

A first snapshot of academic publishing on crime trends and police activity during Covid-19 pandemic

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Introduction

- Project : Impact of Covid-19 on police, justice and prison institutions in Switzerland (funded by the UNIL Faculty of Law, Criminal Justice, and Public administration)
- Research questions
 - How did the COVID-19 pandemic and government responses to the crisis impact crime, the police and police personnel ?
 - How did the academic literature deal with the previous research question ?

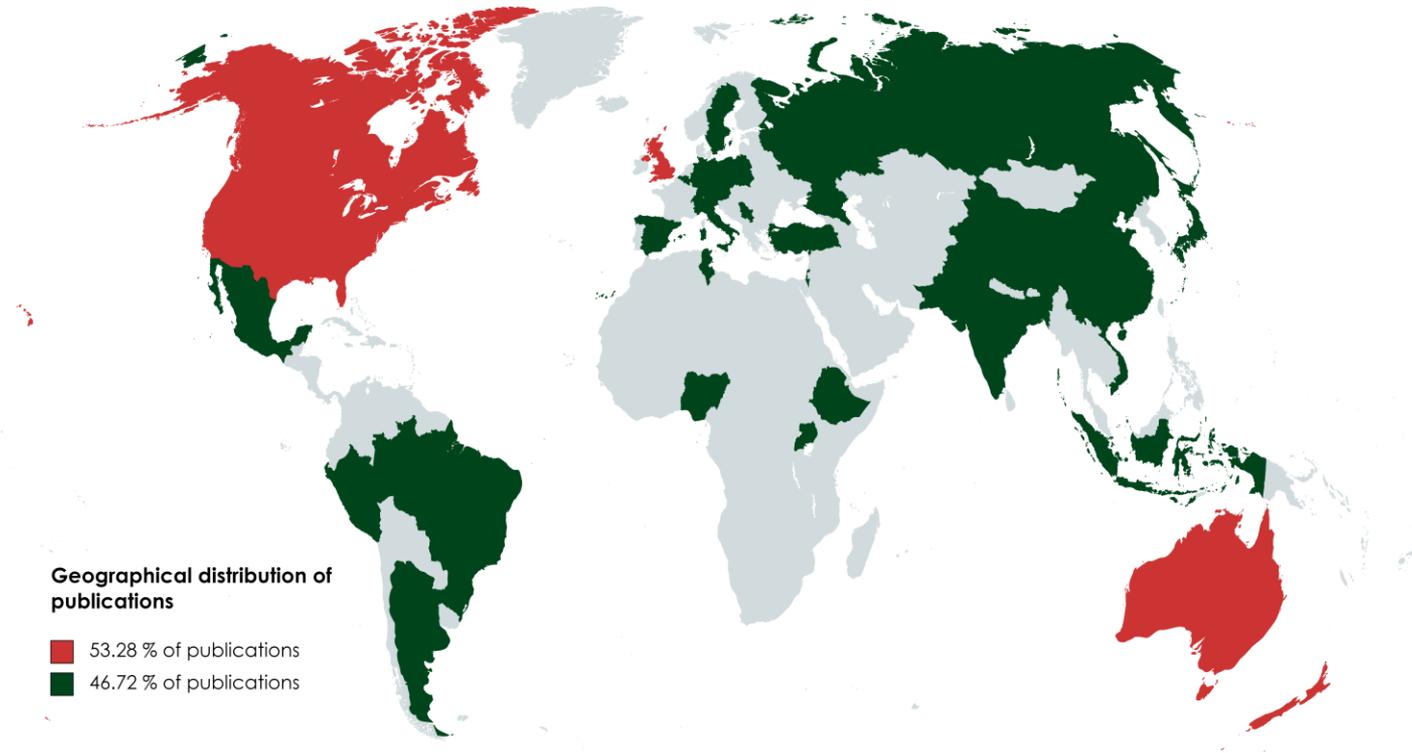
Methodology

- Literature review
- Data collected between 04.05.2021 - 31.07.2021
- Period of publication : February 2020 – July 2021
- Publications written in English
- No territorial limit

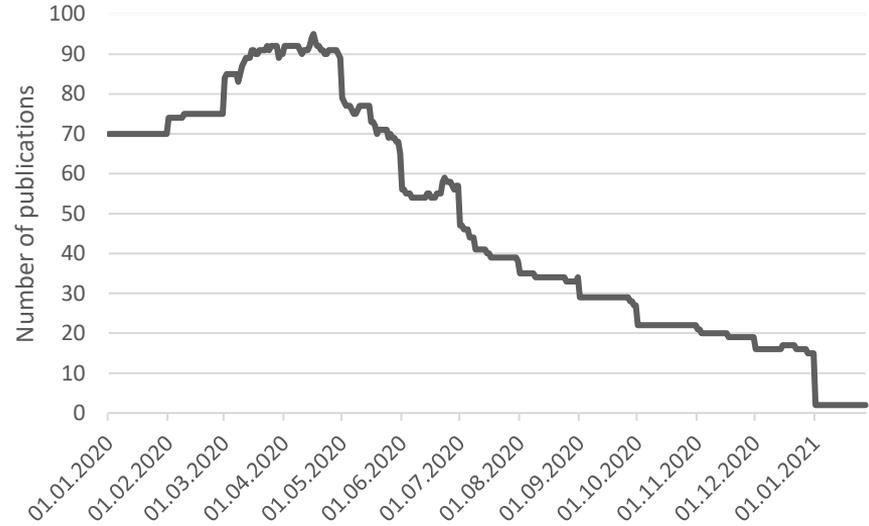
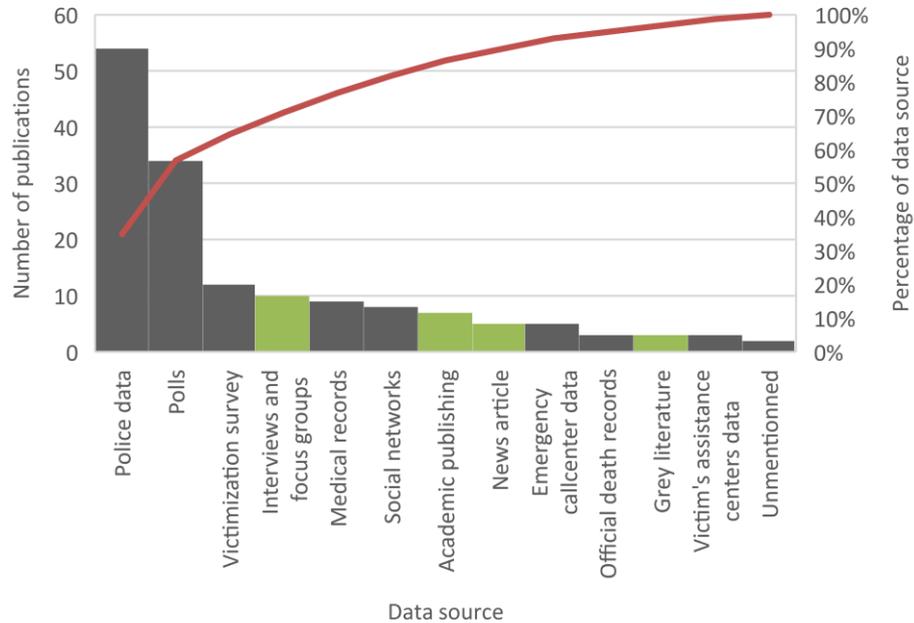
156 publications collected

	Keywords	Search engines	Search results consulted
Peer-reviewed articles	Crime AND lockdown ; Crime AND pandemic ; Crime AND COVID-19 ; Police AND COVID-19	Google scholar, BCUL, Web of science, Sociological abstracts and Pubmed	First 100 results
Reports of police organisations	Crime AND COVID-19 filetype:pdf ; COVID-19 impact Police filetype:pdf	Google	First 50 results

Results (1/3)



Results (2/3)



Results (3/3)

Crime (105 publications)

- Certain crimes greatly reduced (particularly property crime)
- Crime reduction concentrated in city-centers
- Rise of other forms of crime such as domestic violence and cybercrime
- Most of crimes that saw a reduction followed a U-shaped recovery

Police (22 publications)

- New missions given to the police : making sure the health guidelines were respected
- Extensive use of ICT
- Lacked readiness to face the health crisis

Police personnel (26 publications)

- Important impact on mental health and disproportional exposure to the SARS-CoV-2
- Disappointment by what was perceived as a lack of readiness from the government to handle the crisis
- PPE used when available

Conclusion

- Crime and policing were greatly impacted by COVID-19 and by government responses to the crisis
- Situational crime theories can explain short term crime evolution
- This research should be repeated within a year in order to get a better overview of academic publications

- Limitations
 - English keywords lead to publications from English-speaking regions
 - Police data during the pandemic
 - Polls and surveys were mostly conducted online and their results lacked external validity

Thank you for your attention!

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