Speaker: Peter Neyroud

Presentation title: Policing the covid-19 pandemic: Exploratory study of the types of organizational changes and police activities across the globe

Co-authors: Jon Maskály (University of North Dakota, USA) and Sanja Kutnjak Ivković (Michigan State University, USA)

Objective: The COVID-19 pandemic upended major facets of our society, including policing. This study describes the changes made by police agencies around the world.

Data/Methods: We employed a mixed-methods approach, to collect quantitative survey data that was buttressed by qualitative responses. The instrument was distributed to police executives around the world and we ultimately collected data from 27. The survey asked about the degree of change, the valence of changes, and consequences of the pandemic on future police operations.

Results: Some changes (i.e., the use of personal protective equipment) are relatively ubiquitous and common-sense based on the pandemic. Other organizational changes show a great deal more variation, especially when considering the valence of the change. The specific changes and challenges do not necessarily appear to be related to the type of country. Finally, the police executives expressed a highly optimistic—and potentially overly rosy—view of the potential longer-term consequences from the pandemic or the operational changes that were made because of it.

Conclusions/Implications: Overall, the results paint a more complicated picture of the responses to the pandemic made by police organizations in our sample. The implications of these findings for future research, police practice, and the development of policy are discussed.