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Presentation title: Crime trends during Covid-19 lockdown in Denmark

Inspired by a modified version of the LUPP-model developed by BRÅ, Sweden, we have compared weekly, national rates of different types of crime (burglary, vandalism, assault, domestic disturbance, and rape), in Denmark during the spring 2020 lockdown compared to previous years. Because of the closing of bars and restaurants and that many employees had to work from their home, we assumed that there would be a drop in police registered assault, vandalism and burglaries. On the contrary we expected an increase in domestic disturbance and rape.

Our analysis revealed dramatic effects on crime levels: police registered assaults were reduced by more than a third. We assume that the closing of bars and the restriction of nightlife activities more broadly accounts for a major part of this significant drop. Domestic burglaries also displayed dramatic drops compared to expected levels, which we largely attribute to the wide-spread work-at-home regimes implemented in both the private and public sector. Conversely, we found a higher level of police registered “domestic disturbances” in the weeks following the lockdown. Other data also indicate a possible rise in domestic violence levels following the lockdown. For rape and vandalism, we found a minor reduction.

The results sparked a public debate on what could be learned from changing crime levels during the pandemic. In particular, the overall drop in assaults attributed to reduced nightlife activity caused debate on what could be done to prevent a full “return to normal” when the Covid19-related restrictions are lifted. Domestic violence related to the lockdown and how to respond to it was also a topic of public debate. The question is how practitioners and policymakers can use the results to act in a context of crime prevention and what research questions that needs a further exploration?