



Policing the COVID-19 pandemic: Understanding Compliance & Control

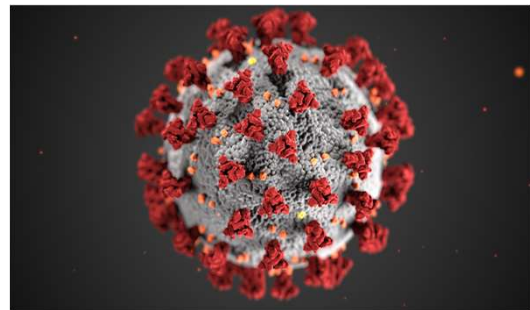
Kristina Murphy, Elise Sargeant & Molly McCarthy
Social Sciences Week, 9 September 2020

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Introductions & Overview

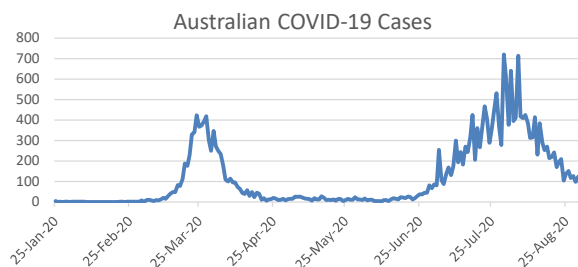
- Acknowledgements:
 - Drs Elise Sargeant, Molly McCarthy & Harley Williamson – project team
 - Social Sciences Week
- COVID-19 in Australia
- Importance of Social Science during the pandemic
- Our Project and Research Findings
 - *Attitudes to Authority during COVID Survey*
- Our Research Focus:
 - Understanding Australians' compliance with COVID restrictions
 - Understanding the role of formal and informal policing during the pandemic



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COVID-19 in Australia: A Brief Timeline

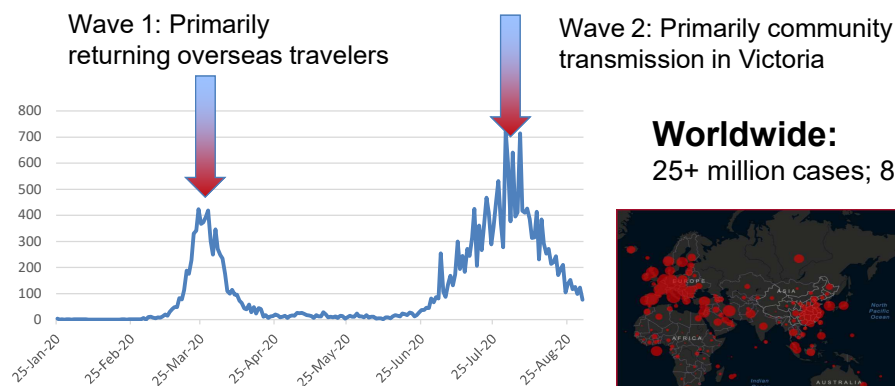
- 25 January – First confirmed COVID-19 case in Australia
- 11 March – World Health Organization declares a global pandemic
- 15 March – Scott Morrison announced immediate social distancing restrictions
- 20 March – Australian borders closed to non-citizens/permanent residents
- 22 March – ‘Hard lockdown’ commences
- 29 March – Hotel quarantine system established for returning travelers
- 1 May – First lockdown eased in some States (15 May for other States)



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COVID-19 in Australia

- Total COVID-19 Cases: **25,819** – 74% in Victoria (1st Sept 2020)
- Total COVID-19 Deaths: **657** – 87% in Victoria (1st Sept 2020)



Worldwide:
25+ million cases; 850,000+ deaths



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COVID-19 Restrictions & Hard lockdown

- Priority of authorities worldwide has been to contain the spread of the virus
- 15 March – 15 May*: Hard lockdown implemented across Australia
- Social distancing & good hygiene practices encouraged
- Only 4 legitimate reasons to leave the house
 1. Work (if it can't be done from home)
 2. Medical care
 3. Exercise in local area
 4. Shopping for essential supplies
- Socialising outside the home unit forbidden
- No travelling for leisure
- Pubs/Restaurants could only trade for takeaway
- No shopping for non-essentials



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Enforcing Restrictions: The Role of Police & Law

- With introduction of restrictions came enhanced enforcement; 'normal' behaviours became criminalised
- 18 March – Biosecurity declaration 2020 enacted by Governor-General
- Gave police and courts enhanced powers
 - Move-on orders
 - Powers to force businesses to close
 - Power to issue fines of \$1600 for individuals
 - Up to \$10,000 fine for severe violations
 - Power to arrest individuals flouting restrictions
 - Courts given power to imprison offenders for up to 6 months



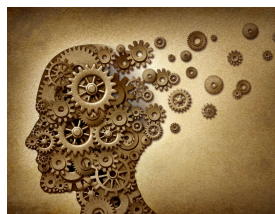
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The Value of Social Science Research

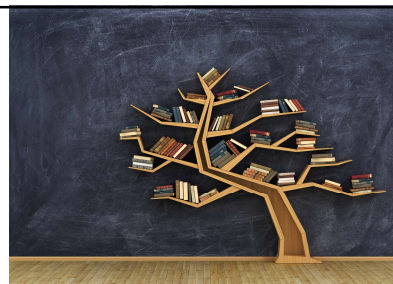
- Social science can offer an understanding of people's behaviour during the pandemic.
- Until a vaccine is found, our success in keeping COVID-19 cases at manageable levels in Australia depends on an appreciation of the sociological and psychological factors driving human behaviour.



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Our Project



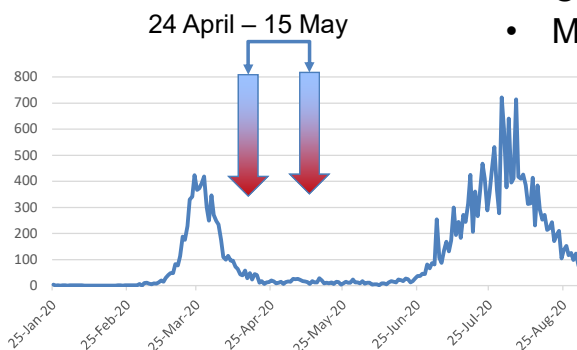
- COVID-19 pandemic the perfect opportunity to:
 - Examine HOW people think and behave in a public health crisis;
 - Examine HOW people think and behave in response to restrictions
 - Specifically rules that criminalise 'normal behaviour';
 - Examine HOW attitudes to authority (government, health authorities & police) change over time during the pandemic;
 - Examine WHY people behave as they do, and think what they think.
- **Our Major Focus Today:** Compliance and Policing

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SURVEY of Australians during country-wide lockdown

'The Attitudes to Authority during COVID-19 Survey'



- Undertaken 5 weeks into lockdown
- Complacency had set in
- Cases had fallen
- More people caught flouting rules
- Nation-wide survey
- Facebook users – online
- 1,595 completed surveys
 - 3,628 users clicked on survey invitation
 - 44% response rate

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Survey Participants

- N=1,595
- 56.5% women
- Age range: 17 to 89
 - Average age= 49.82 years
- 23% born overseas
- 56% University educated*
- From all states/territories*

State/Territory	% of respondents
NSW	26.1
VIC	17.7
QLD	32.4 *
SA	6.5
WA	8.7
NT	.5
ACT	2.7
TAS	5.3

- Broadly representative of overall Australian pop.

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Research focus

- 1) **TINA:** Focus on compliance with COVID-19 restrictions, drivers of compliance, and what authorities can do to foster compliance
- 2) **MOLLY:** Focus on how police might manage citizens who are more likely to defy government and police directives
- 3) **ELISE:** Focus on the formal-informal social control nexus during COVID-19 restrictions

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Australians' Compliance with COVID-19 Restrictions: Good, Bad, or Ugly?

Presenter: Tina Murphy

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Compliance with COVID-19 restrictions



We asked survey participants about their compliance with 5 COVID restrictions during 'hard lockdown':

*How often during the **past week** have you engaged in each of the following behaviours during the COVID-19 outbreak?*

1. Socialised in person with friends or relatives whom you don't live with;
2. Left the house without a really good reason ;
3. Travelled for leisure (e.g. driven somewhere to go for a walk);
4. Gone out shopping for essential or non-essential items when you had COVID-19 symptoms;
5. Gone out shopping for non-essential items when you did NOT have COVID-19 symptoms.

Response: 1=never; 2=rarely; 3=sometimes; 4=often; 5=very often

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How Many Australians Complied?

Survey Question	% Fully Compliant Those who responded 1='never'
Socialised with friends	49.7%
Left house without legit. reason	54.5%
Travelled for leisure	60.4%
Shopped with COVID symptoms	94.1%
Non-essential shopping	42.8%

- 21.2% of sample complied fully with all 5 restrictions
- 21.0% complied with 4
- 19.4% complied with 3
- 17.4% complied with 2
- 18.5% complied with 1
- 2.5% complied with none

A lot of non-compliance going on!
Not ugly, but not good!

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What Motivates Compliance Behaviour?

Review of criminology & public health literature

3 clusters of variables associated with compliance:

1. Instrumental Factors
2. Normative Factors
3. Individual Difference Factors

See Murphy, Williamson, Sargeant & McCarthy in press



1. Instrumental Factors

- *Rational choice theories* – weigh up costs/benefits; fear of consequences:
 - risks of being sanctioned (deterrence); Risks to health (self vs others); perceived severity of COVID

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What Motivates Compliance Behaviour?

2. Normative Factors

- *Legal socialization theories* – socialisation & experiences with authority - LEGITIMACY
 - Duty to support authorities ('I comply because it's the right thing to do and authorities deserve my support') - tied to legitimacy judgements
 - Personal morality ('I'm a compliant person');
 - Threats to freedom;
 - Opposition to laws/police power;
 - Police procedural justice;
 - Trust in authority (to be competent & benevolent);
 - Consistency of authority communication.



3. Individual Difference Factors

- Age; gender; emotionality (anxiety; anger); political affiliation; education; employment status; knowledge of diseases



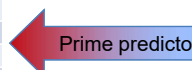
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Predicting Compliance: What did we find?

	Block 1	Block 2	Block 3
	β	β	β
Demographic/control Variables			
Time	-.12***	-.11***	-.10***
Age	.14***	.07*	.09**
Gender (0=male)	.17***	.12***	.07**
Country of birth (0=overseas)	-.01	-.01	-.02
Educational attainment	.04	.02	.02
Employment (0=unemployed)	.00	.01	.00
Ethnicity (0=minority)	.02	.02	.02
Political affiliation	-.12***	-.06*	-.03
General anxiety/fear	.10***	.00	.02
Knowledge of COVID	.05*	.06*	.06*
Instrumental Variables			
Sanction Risk		.05*	.04
Health risk-self		.12***	.07*
Health risk-others		.02	.02
Severity of COVID		.23***	.08*
Normative Variables			
Duty to support authorities			.39***
Advice contradictory			-.03
Trust (competence)			-.05
Trust (benevolent/integrity)			.01
Adjusted R ²	.090	.180	.264

*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001

- Older people and females more compliant;
- More knowledge, more compliant;
- Perceived health risk to self, and seeing COVID as a severe disease, more compliant;
- Duty to support authorities, more compliant.

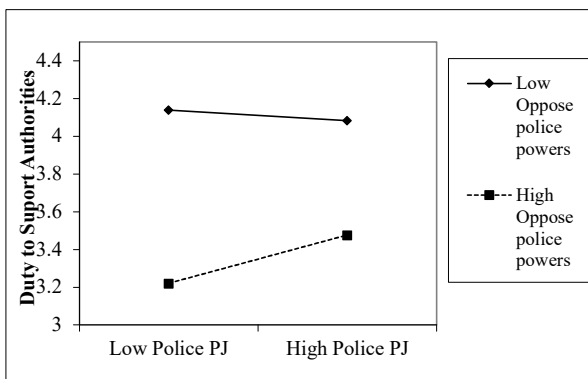


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Predicting Duty to Support Authorities

Demographic/control Variables	β
Time	-.01
Age	-.07***
Gender (0=male)	.03
Country of birth (0=overseas)	.03
Educational attainment	.02
Employment (0=unemployed)	.01
Ethnicity (0=minority)	.01
Political affiliation	-.11***
General anxiety/fear	.03
Anger/annoyance	-.12***
Knowledge of COVID	.01
Attitudinal Variables	
Sanction Risk	.03
Health risk-self	.01
Health risk-others	.03
Severity of COVID	.18***
Law abiding identity	.03
Time to relax restrictions	-.15***
Worry about freedoms post COVID	-.05*
Oppose police powers during COVID	-.37***
Procedural justice policing	.06**
Adjusted R ²	.569

*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001



← Prime predictor

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Take Home Message: Tina's Compliance findings

- To foster voluntary compliance with COVID-19 restrictions, risk of sanction matters little: important to instill people's duty to support authorities in a time of crisis
- When implementing unpopular laws or when granting additional powers to police, important that police adhere to **procedural justice** in interactions with public
 - Promotes duty to support authorities;
 - Can overcome concerns about unpopular laws.
- Police can't control the laws they enforce or how citizens perceive those laws, but they can control how they treat people.



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How to encourage compliance among those least likely to comply?

Presenter: Molly McCarthy

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How to encourage compliance among those least likely to comply?

- Five **motivational postures** that individuals can hold towards authorities - influences willingness to comply with laws/ directives:^{1 2 3}

- Commitment
- Capitulation
- Game-playing
- Resistance
- Disengagement

→ Most consistently associated with non-compliance in policing contexts

- **Resistant** – do not dispute the purpose of authorities, but reserve the right to challenge unfair or unjust laws or directives; may lodge complaints, protest, verbally contest or physically resist
- **Disengaged** – reject the purpose and goals of authority, think they would be better served without the authority, and see themselves as living outside the legal system; actively avoid contact with authorities

¹ Murphy, 2016; ² Sargeant, Davoren & Murphy, 2020; ³ Braithwaite, Murphy, & Reinhart, 2007

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How to encourage compliance among those least likely to comply?

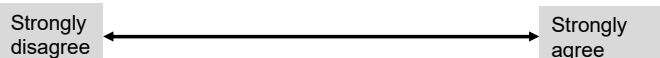
- Research suggests resistant individuals concerns about fairness can be ameliorated to some extent by **procedurally fair treatment** by authorities^{1 2}
- **Less clear how to influence compliance by disengaged** individuals, who may still be dissatisfied with police despite procedurally fair treatment^{2 3}

Survey questions

- It is important not to let the police push you around
 - As a society we need more people willing to take a stand against rude police
 - It is important that people lodge formal complaints against disrespectful police
 - If police were disrespectful toward me I would not cooperate with them
- I try to avoid contact with police at all costs
 - Even if I needed help from police I would prefer to avoid making contact with them
 - If I find out that I'm not doing what police want, I'm not going to lose sleep over it

Resistant

Disengaged



¹ Murphy, 2016; ² Sargeant, Davoren & Murphy, 2020; ³ Braithwaite, Murphy, & Reinhart, 2007

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How to encourage compliance among those least likely to comply?

What predicts resistance and disengagement?

Variables	Resistance b (SE)	Disengaged b (SE)
Age	-.001 (.001)	-.016 (.002)***
Gender (0=female)	.224 (.039)***	.334 (.050)***
Educational attainment	-.012 (.011)	-.037 (.014)*
Country of birth (0=Australia)	.041 (.045)	-.028 (.057)
Key worker (0= not key worker)	.022 (.041)	-.080 (.052)
Political affiliation	-.068 (.013)***	-.050 (.016)**
Trust in authority	-.254 (.017)***	-.388 (.022)***
Constant	5.183 (.141)***	5.804 (.178)***
R2	.168	.258
Adjust R2	.164	.254
F	45.25***	77.74***
N	1577	1577

*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001

Note: findings are preliminary, may be subject to further change

- Both postures more common among **men**, people with a more **left-wing political orientation** and those with **low trust in authority**
- Disengaged individuals are also more likely to be **younger and less educated**

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How to encourage compliance among those least likely to comply? Does resistance predict compliance?

	Block 1 – influence of Resistance b (SE)	Block 2 – influence of COVID risk perception b (SE)	Block 3 - influence of policing factors b (SE)
Age	.011 (.003)***	.006 (.003)*	.005 (.003)*
Gender (0=female)	-.402 (.074)***	-.304 (.072)***	-.245 (.071)**
Educational attainment	.005 (.021)	-.003 (.020)	.004 (.020)
Country of birth (0=Australia)	.013 (.085)	.007 (.081)	.003 (.081)
Key worker (0= not key worker)	.037 (.077)	-.018 (.075)	-.009 (.074)
Political affiliation	-.122 (.024)***	-.063 (.024)**	-.073 (.024)**
Trust in authority	-.233 (.034)***	-.080 (.036)*	-.095 (.040)
Resistance	-.218 (.048)***	-.205 (.046)***	-.132 (.049)**
Knowledge COVID-19		.125 (.051)*	.117 (.051)*
Health risk - self		.156 (.040)***	.135 (.040)**
Health risk – loved one		.014 (.032)	.022 (.032)
Seriousness of COVID		.252 (.040)***	.238 (.039)***
Sanction risk			.131 (.044)**
Proactive police contact			-.281 (.115)*
Citizen-initiated police contact			.243 (.111)*
Freedom loss			-.106 (.027)***
Procedural justice			.052 (.042)
Constant	3.012 (.329)***	1.630 (.382)***	1.556 (.424)***
R ²	.121	.189	.207
Adjust R ²	.117	.183	.198
F	27.02***	30.40***	24.00***

Resistance is associated with non-compliance with physical distancing

*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001

Note: findings are preliminary, may be subject to further change

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How to encourage compliance among those least likely to comply? Does disengagement predict compliance?

	Block 1 – influence of Disengagement b (SE)	Block 2 – influence of COVID-19 risk perception b (SE)	Block 3 - influence of policing factors b (SE)
Age	.009 (.003)***	.004 (.003)	.005 (.003)*
Gender (0=female)	-.412 (.075)***	-.317 (.073)***	-.260 (.073)***
Educational attainment	.003 (.021)	-.004 (.020)	.006 (.020)
Country of birth (0=Australia)	.001 (.085)	-.004 (.082)	-.000 (.081)
Key worker (0= not key worker)	.023 (.078)	-.029 (.075)	-.013 (.074)
Political affiliation	-.114 (.024)***	-.054 (.024)*	-.068 (.024)**
Trust in authority	-.242 (.036)***	-.094 (.037)*	-.014 (.040)
Disengagement	-.118 (.038)**	-.098 (.036)**	-.009 (.044)
Knowledge COVID-19		.112 (.051)*	.111 (.051)*
Health risk - self		.158 (.041)***	.134 (.040)**
Health risk – loved one		.010 (.032)	.023 (.032)
Seriousness of COVID-19 health threat		.253 (.040)***	.238 (.039)***
Sanction risk			.134 (.044)**
Proactive police contact			-.281 (.116)*
Citizen-initiated police contact			.241 (.112)*
Freedom loss			-.119 (.027)***
Procedural justice			.080 (.048)
Constant	2.588 (.309)***	1.216 (.376)**	1.018 (.449)*
R ²	.115	.183	.204
Adjust R ²	.110	.176	.195
F	25.44***	29.09***	23.45***

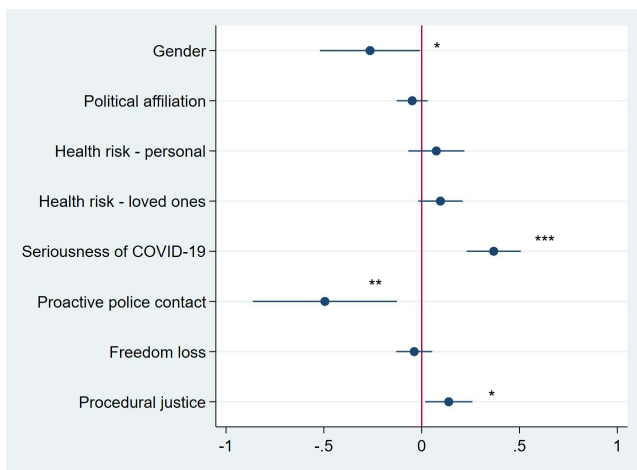
Disengagement is associated with non-compliance with physical distancing, but not when policing experiences and concerns are considered

*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001

Note: findings are preliminary, may be subject to further change

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How to encourage compliance among those least likely to comply? What predicts compliance among highly resistant individuals?



*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001

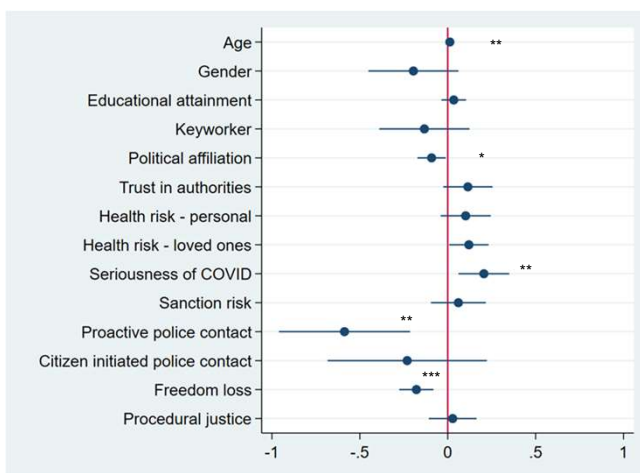
Note: findings are preliminary, may be subject to further change

Compliance higher in:

- Females
- See COVID-19 as more serious health risk
- Did not have recent proactive contact with police
- Believe police in community are procedurally fair

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How to encourage compliance among those least likely to comply? What predicts compliance among highly disengaged individuals?



*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001

Note: findings are preliminary, may be subject to further change

Compliance higher in:

- Older people
- More left-wing political orientation
- Concerned about health risk to loved ones
- See COVID-19 as more serious health risk
- Did not have recent proactive police contact
- Not concerned about freedom loss post COVID-19

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Take Home Message: Molly's motivational postures findings

- Compliance with physical distancing lower among resistant and disengaged individuals
- Motivated to comply by concerns about seriousness of COVID-19 health threat
- Primary drivers of compliance in these groups relate to experiences and perceptions of policing
- Negative impact of proactive police contacts highlight the considerable influence of police encounters on future compliance
- Procedural justice principles may improve experiences of proactive police stops; influences compliance for resistant individuals
- Public messaging could more clearly address concerns about freedom loss post COVID-19; particularly influential on compliance for disengaged individuals

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The formal-informal control nexus during COVID-19: How does police efficacy impact on informal social control during lockdown?

Presenter: Elise Sargeant

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How does police efficacy impact on informal social control during lockdown?

What is social control?

- A “mechanism by which a person or group expresses a grievance” and a “a mode of conducting normative business”
 - Informal – by the public
 - Direct – intervene directly, shouting, scolding, negotiating
 - Indirect – calling the police
 - Formal – by the police/other authorities
 - E.g. Neighbourhood disputes

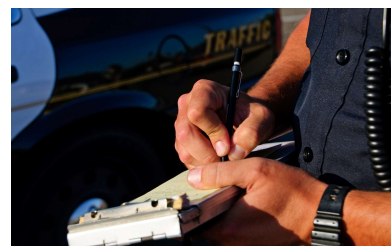


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How does police efficacy impact on informal social control during lockdown?

Social control during COVID-19

- We have new norms for behaviour and regulations
 - Social distancing, mask wearing, quarantining, hand washing, protesting, etc.
- Police enforcing new regulations via formal social control:
 - Fines
 - Arrests
- Members of the public also enforce regulations and new social norms via informal social control:
 - Direct – telling people to stop, public shaming etc.
 - Indirect – calling the police (e.g. reporting of beauty salons)



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How does police efficacy impact on informal social control during lockdown?

Hypotheses about the relationship between formal and informal social control from the criminological literature:

1. when police are effective they enhance residents' capacity to fight crime informally;
2. when people view police as ineffective they may not feel confident or safe to intervene; and
3. when formal control is inadequate a vacuum may be left behind encouraging citizens to intervene in retaliatory ways



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How does police efficacy impact on informal social control during lockdown?

Survey measures:

- **Formal social control (police efficacy):**
 - How much confidence do you have in the ability of the police to handle the COVID-19 crisis
- **Informal social control:**
 - If you saw people breaking the rules on social distancing how likely would you be to do the following.....:
 - 1) shout at them to go home,
 - 2) use social media to publicly shame them,
 - 3) call the police to report them, or
 - 4) do nothing.
 - *On average survey respondents tended to lean toward doing nothing rather than intervening.*



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How does police efficacy impact on informal social control during lockdown?

	Intervene – do nothing				Intervene – report to police			
	b(SE)	t		β	b(SE)	t		β
Age	-.011 (.002)	-4.37	***	-.113	.009 (.002)	3.81	***	.095
Male ^a	.166 (.068)	2.45	*	.059	-.206 (.063)	-3.25	**	-.073
Born in Australia ^a	.002 (.078)	0.02		.000	-.053 (.074)	-0.72		-.016
Unemployed ^a	.162 (.118)	1.37		.030	-.038 (.116)	-0.33		-.007
Owns home ^a	.181 (.074)	2.44	*	.062	-.127 (.071)	-1.79	^	-.043
Tertiary educated ^a	.031 (.066)	0.47		.011	.030 (.062)	0.48		.010
Collective efficacy	.003 (.046)	0.07		.002	-.077 (.043)	-1.80	^	-.041
Police handle COVID	-.416 (.028)	-15.09	***	-.362	.548 (.024)	22.65	***	.474
Intercept	4.952 (.211)	23.49	***	.	.849 (.200)	4.23	***	.
F	43.07(8, 1563)***				83.37(8, 1563)***			
R ²	0.1597				0.2511			

Regression analyses with robust standard errors (N=1572); ***p≤.001; **p≤.01; *p≤.05; ^p≤.10; a. reference category = other.



Key findings:

- **Males** more likely to do nothing, less likely to call police
- **Older people** more likely to call police, less likely to do nothing
- **Police ability to handle COVID-19** reduces the likelihood of doing nothing and increases the likelihood of calling the police to report

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How does police efficacy impact on informal social control during lockdown?

	Intervene – shame on socials				Intervene – shout at them			
	b(SE)	t		β	b(SE)	t		β
Age	.004 (.002)	1.92	^	.054	.005 (.002)	2.39	*	.065
Male ^a	-.009 (.055)	-0.17		-.004	.025 (.057)	0.43		.011
Born in Australia ^a	-.016 (.064)	-0.25		-.006	.194 (.061)	3.16	**	.076
Unemployed ^a	.032 (.102)	0.32		.008	-.069 (.098)	-0.70		-.016
Owns home ^a	-.042 (.061)	-0.68		-.019	-.043 (.061)	-0.70		-.019
Tertiary educated ^a	-.047 (.053)	-0.90		-.022	-.021 (.055)	-0.38		-.010
Collective efficacy	-.055 (.038)	-1.45		-.039	.004 (.040)	0.10		.003
Police handle COVID	.111 (.022)	5.05	***	.128	.116 (.023)	4.98	**	.130
Intercept	1.448 (.178)	8.13	***	.	1.111 (.183)	6.07	**	.
F	4.34(8, 1563)***				6.06(8, 1563)***			
R ²	0.0205				0.0272			

Regression analyses with robust standard errors (N=1572); ***p≤.001; **p≤.01; *p≤.05; ^p≤.10; a. reference category = other.



Key findings:

- **Born in AU** more likely to intervene by shouting
- **Older people** more likely to intervene by shouting
- **Police ability to handle COVID-19** increases the likelihood of both shouting and shaming

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Take home message: Elise's formal-informal control nexus findings

- During COVID-19 police resources are strained
- Our findings suggest police behaviour (or at least how the public perceive it) may encourage informal social control – i.e. encourage citizens to intervene when others flout social distancing rules
 - Theoretical mechanisms:
 - When police are effective citizens can rely on police to intervene on their behalf (i.e. when calling the police – indirect intervention)
 - Citizens feel supported to intervene directly when police are perceived to be efficacious, police as back up
 - Police help to set norms for behaviour – “if police are serious about this, I should take action too”



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Conclusion

1. **Motivating compliance is complex**
 - **Duty to obey authorities is important but can be impacted if laws are unpopular or if authorities use power unjustly.**
2. **Certain individuals more likely to defy. However compliance can be prompted by:**
 - **For resisters – procedural justice treatment important;**
 - **For disengagers – addressing concerns about ongoing freedom loss the key.**
3. **To “police” the COVID-19 pandemic we need both police and citizens to engage in social control**
 - **Police can encourage citizen engagement through being effective.**



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Any questions?

Contact: t.murphy@griffith.edu.au

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For more information on GCI:

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GCI Insights: blogs.griffith.edu.au/gci-insights/

Podcast: bit.ly/AMatterofCrime

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