

## ARTIGO

# UNRAVELING PUBLIC SECURITY GOVERNANCE

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## ABSTRACT

The global reduction in the Human Development Index (HDI), the higher 'perception of insecurity' in countries at varying levels of development, and the increase in the economic impact of violence highlight the need for more effective public security policies. This scope review follows the Joanna Briggs Institute's Manual for Evidence Synthesis and Prisma-Scr, aiming to describe the profile of primary research on public security governance by discussing its findings. Our findings identify five groups of best practices as follows: a) inclusive and participatory public policies; b) building trust and collaborative environments with target communities; c) adoption of new technologies; d) coordinated emergency responses; e) focus on prevention. Knowledge gaps include limited discussions on ESG, human rights, professional qualification, evaluation mechanisms, social disparities, long-term effects of programs, among others. This study highlights practical implications for shaping public security policies and suggests directions for future research in the field.

**Keywords:** Public security. Public policy. Public governance. Public administration. Social defense.

## DESVENDANDO A GOVERNANÇA DA SEGURANÇA PÚBLICA

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### RESUMO

A redução global no Índice de Desenvolvimento Humano (IDH), o crescimento da 'percepção de insegurança'; em países com diferentes níveis de desenvolvimento e o aumento do impacto econômico da violência ressaltam a necessidade de políticas públicas de segurança mais eficazes. Esta revisão de escopo segue o Manual para Síntese de Evidências do Instituto Joanna Briggs e o Prisma-Scr, com o objetivo de descrever o perfil das pesquisas primárias sobre governança da segurança pública, discutindo seus achados. Nossos resultados identificam cinco grupos de melhores práticas: a) políticas públicas inclusivas e participativas; b) construção de confiança e ambientes colaborativos com as comunidades-alvo; c) adoção de novas tecnologias; d) respostas emergenciais coordenadas; e) foco na prevenção. As lacunas de conhecimento incluem discussões limitadas sobre ESG, direitos humanos, qualificação profissional, mecanismos de avaliação, disparidades sociais, os efeitos a longo prazo dos programas, entre outros. Este estudo destaca as implicações práticas para a formulação de políticas de segurança pública e sugere direções para futuras pesquisas na área.

**Palavras-chave:** Segurança pública. Política pública. Governança pública. Administração pública. Defesa social.

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**Points for Practitioners:**

- Inclusive and participatory public policies enhance trust and legitimacy in public security initiatives, fostering more effective and holistic responses to complex security issues.
- Building environments of trust and collaboration between security services and communities is crucial for successful public security governance, promoting mutual cooperation and resilience.
- The adoption of new technologies, such as data analytics and artificial intelligence, can significantly improve the identification of crime patterns and enhance response strategies.
- Coordinated emergency responses among various stakeholders, including public and private actors, are essential for robust and effective crisis management.
- A focus on crime prevention through community engagement and advanced policing strategies can lead to sustainable reductions in violence and crime rates, benefiting society as a whole.

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

The Human Development Index (HDI) of the planet has decreased globally in recent years. In this regard, the UN warns that the 'perception of insecurity' has increased among countries with HDIs classified as low, medium, high, and even among the group of nations that have a very high index (UNDP, 2022).

In the same vein, as reported in the Global Peace Index of 2023 (IEP, 2023), the economic impact of violence reached \$17.5 trillion in 2022, which accounts for an increase of 6.6% from the previous year, underscoring the urgent need for more efficient governance strategies for public security.

At the center of this multidimensional arena of challenges and opportunities is public governance. This construct is defined by the Brazilian Federal Court of Accounts (Brasil, 2020) as the set of leadership, strategy, and control mechanisms employed to assess, direct, and monitor organizational activities, aiming to achieve institutional objectives efficiently and in alignment with democratic principles.

Public security, in turn, is understood as a fundamental right, a duty of the State, and a shared responsibility of all parties in society, related to maintaining public order and ensuring the safety of individuals (Brasil, 1988). It is, therefore, a fundamental protection system that must function as efficiently, collaboratively, fairly, and equitably as feasibly possible, with the goal of fostering social order.

Thus, despite the polysemous nature of these two concepts, public security governance can be defined as a set of leadership, strategy, and control mechanisms that, guided by democratic principles and the dignity of the human person, direct, monitor, and evaluate public security policies to foster social order.

At the center of this multidimensional arena of challenges and opportunities is public governance, responsible for directing, monitoring, and evaluating people, processes, and technologies through mechanisms of leadership, strategy, and control.

Given that the effects of public security and its governance have a substantial impact on society, a scope review was conducted with the aim of mapping and discussing the characteristics of primary scientific evidence on the governance of public security institutions, systems, actions, and programs.

This study transcends national borders, offering valuable insights for the governance of public safety globally. By identifying best practices and highlighting knowledge gaps, we provide a roadmap for academics, policy makers, and practitioners interested in promoting more effective, inclusive, and technologically advanced public safety systems. This research engages with the existing literature while also paving new paths for future investigations.

In summary, this work identifies best practices in public security governance and contributes to the advancement of scientific knowledge regarding knowledge gaps, analysis dimensions, and the nature of primary scientific studies published until May 2023. Similarly, this knowledge may well be useful to managers who deal with public security policies.

This study is organized into five sections: Section 1, which introduces the theme, objectives, and justification; Section 2, which describes the methodology; Section 3, which presents the results; Section 4, which discusses the findings; and Section 5, which provides final considerations.

## 2 METHODS

This work followed the guidelines of the JBI Manual for Evidence Synthesis (Aromataris and Munn, 2020), the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA-P) checklist (Moher *et al.*, 2015), and PRISMA-ScR (Tricco *et al.*, 2018). The protocol is published on the OSF platform with DOI 10.17605/OSF.IO/4TZAW.

The research question was structured using the PCC acronym (Population-Concept-Context), proposed by the Joanna Briggs Institute (Aromataris and Munn, 2020) as: *What have primary studies on governance revealed about public security institutions, programs, and systems?*

Finally, it is noted that this study adopted a pragmatic interpretivist framework (Creswell and Creswell, 2021) and a mixed-methods approach for synthesizing quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods evidence.

### 2.1 SEARCH STRATEGY

Boolean searches were conducted by combining controlled vocabulary (descriptors) and natural language (keywords) in the Scopus, Web of Science, and Scielo databases. The search was carried out between March 25 and March 31, 2023, and no time, space, or language filters were applied.

The identification of words that composed the search syntax was preceded by searches in the following repositories: Unesco Thesaurus, Elsevier's Science Direct Topics, and the Controlled Vocabulary of USP (University of São Paulo), as well as an exploratory literature review.

The searches were conducted simultaneously in English, Spanish, and Portuguese. However, it should be noted that no language or territory filter was used. After gathering the descriptors and keywords, the

following search syntax was concluded: (Governance OR Gobernanza OR Gobernabilidad OR Governança) AND (“Public Safety” OR “Public Security” OR “Segurança Pública” OR “Seguridad Pública” OR “Seguridad Ciudadana”). As illustrated in Table 1, a total of 578 records were obtained from the searches conducted.

TABLE 1

**Databases analyzed and their quantities**

Databases	Results
Scopus	380
Web of Science	182
Scielo	16
Total	578

Source: The authors.

The analysis of the search syntax and its Boolean operators demonstrates that the literature selection was based on the identification of works that simultaneously address two major research areas: (i) governance and (ii) public security. These two themes will subsequently be refined through specific eligibility criteria, as presented below.

## 2.2 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

This section presents the inclusion and exclusion criteria used as parameters for selecting the initially mapped publications, with the aim of delimiting the constructs of governance and public security.

The inclusion criteria for publications were established as follows: i) addressing institutions, programs, or systems in the field of public security and social defense (SPDS); ii) dealing with public security governance or any of its defining mechanisms, namely leadership, strategy, and control; iii) providing empirical evidence and access to primary sources of information; iv) for technological research, containing empirical validation through pilots or simulations based on real-world data.

On the other hand, the exclusion criteria were for studies: i) theoretical, lacking empirical evidence or with access only to secondary sources of information; ii) publications in press or of types of errata, letters and notes; iii) studies not fully available on the internet.

Two reviewers (Author 01 and Author 02) independently examined the references obtained, applying the eligibility criteria in a double-blind manner. Any disagreements were resolved by a third author.

## 2.3 IDENTIFIED VARIABLES OF INTEREST

The variables of interest were divided into five groups:

- **Identification:** 1 - title; 2 - author; 3 - abstract; 4 - year of publication; 5 - keywords; 6 - journal name; 7 - country of affiliation; 8 - university or research institute; 9 - DOI; 10 - language of publication; 11 - source database; 12 - web address; 13 - total citations.

- **Method:** 1 - country of data collection; 2 - territorial scope of the field; 3 - approach; 4 - type of data collection; 5 - sampling type; 6 - data treatment technique; 7 - software; 8 - study type; 9 - publication type; 10 - objective; 11 - population type; 12 - population quantity; 13 - year of data collection.
- **Intervention and content:** 1 - main topics addressed; 2 - specific criminal offense under analysis; 3 - explicitly invoked paradigms; 4 - phase of the security cycle it focuses on (prevention, repression, rehabilitation); 5 - public security<sup>1</sup> subsystems in focus; 6 - indicator of governance (Worldwide Governance Indicators – WGI<sup>2</sup>) from the World Bank when explicitly cited by the authors; 7 - theories explicitly named by the authors; 8 - Definitions of public governance, public security, public security governance, and public order; 09 - indication of elements, assumptions, or principles of public security governance.
- **Results and conclusions:** the main findings and recommendations made were mapped.
- **Methodological quality:** critical evaluation of the evidence in publications as explained in item 2.4.

## 2.4 CRITICAL APPRAISAL OF EVIDENCE SOURCES

The critical analysis of the sources of evidence is defined by PRISMA-ScR (Tricco *et al.*, 2018, p. 471) as “the process of systematically examining research evidence to assess its validity, results, and relevance before using it to inform a decision”.

This assessment of the quality and level of evidence in studies indicates the confidence that can be placed in the results of the analyzed research. Zeng *et al.* (2015) mention the existence of several instruments validated by the literature for this task.

In this scoping review, the critical analysis of the sources of evidence was conducted based on the type of methodology adopted in the publications under analysis. For qualitative studies, the CASP-Qualitative Scale (Critical Appraisal Skills Programme) from the University of Oxford (CASP, 2018), consisting of ten items, was used. For quantitative and mixed-methods studies, the MMAT scale (Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool) from McGill University (Pluye, 2011), consisting of five items, was employed.

Each question in the assessment instruments can receive one of the following responses: a) yes, b) no, c) uncertain. Although the instruments do not recommend their own scoring system, to facilitate the representation of results, a score was assigned relative to the percentage of “yes” responses each record received. The methodological reliability of the studies was classified as follows: high ( $\geq 80\%$  “yes” responses); good ( $\geq 60\%$  and  $< 80\%$ ); fair ( $\geq 40\%$  and  $< 60\%$ ); poor ( $\geq 20\%$  and  $< 40\%$ ); and very poor ( $< 20\%$  “yes” responses).

## 3 RESULTS

### 3.1 REGARDING THE SEARCH STRATEGY

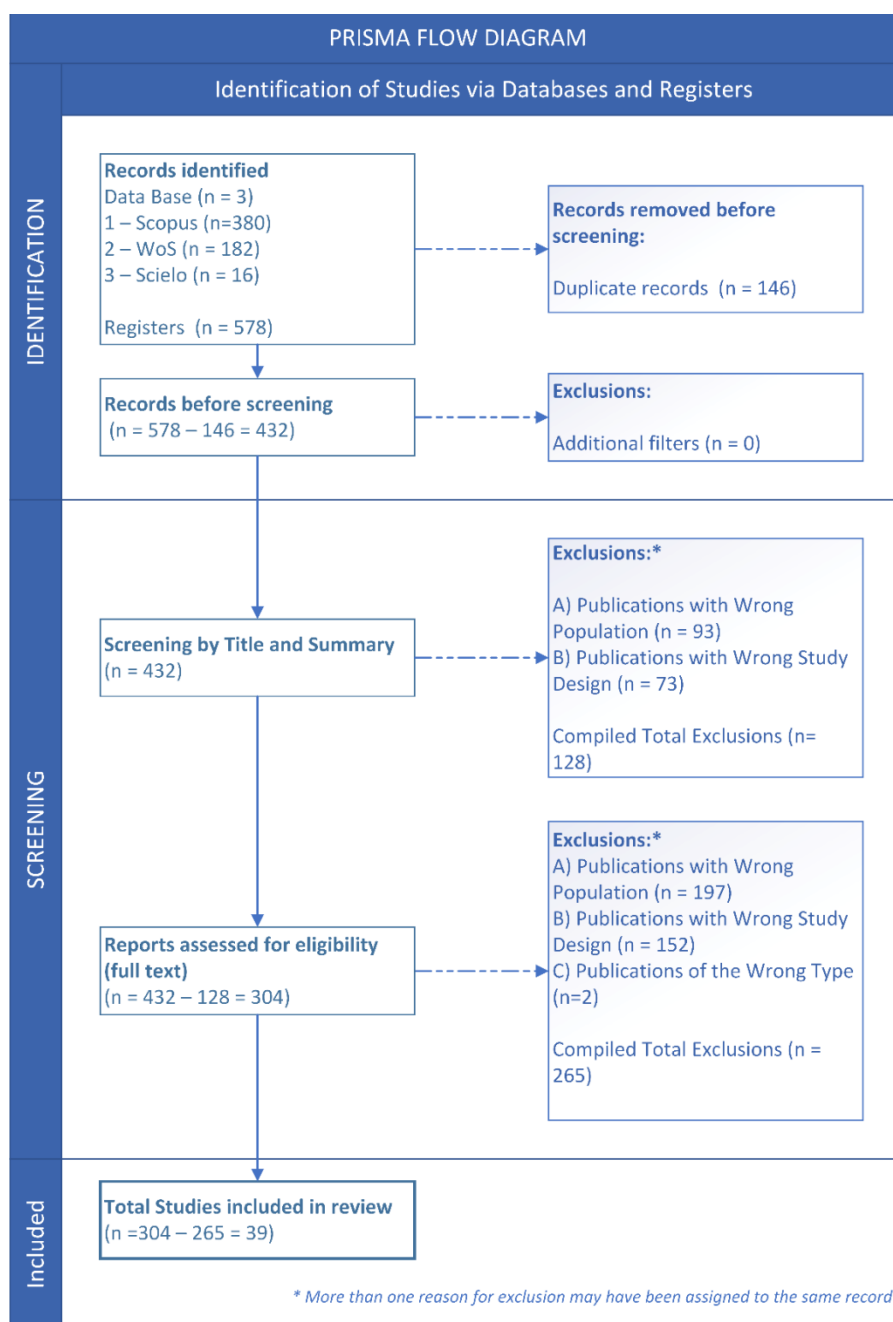
Publications were found in Chinese, Spanish, French, English, Italian, Portuguese, and Russian. The 578 references identified were exported and compiled using the Rayyan software, a web-based systematic review visualization manager.

The search strategy generated 578 citations collected by the Rayyan system. Of these, 146 duplicate records were identified, leaving 432 papers for the researchers to apply the eligibility criteria.

Each suggestion for exclusion due to duplication made by the Rayyan software was individually validated or rejected. In the second stage, which involved screening the records, the application of eligibility criteria was carried out independently by two researchers. Figure 1 presents the results of the screening work using the PRISMA flowchart and the specific reasons for exclusion at each stage.

FIGURE 1

PRISMA Flow Diagram



Source: The authors.

In the second stage, related to the screening of records, the application of eligibility criteria was carried out independently by two researchers. The reasons for exclusion were divided into three groups as follows: wrong population, wrong study design, wrong type of publication as presented in Figure 1. After screening, a total of 393 records were found to be excluded.

Two reviewers (authors 01 and 02) examined all of the 432 results in a double-blind manner for the application of eligibility criteria. Upon comparing the results, a low level of conflict in the responses was identified. The agreement between the evaluators was measured using Cohen's Kappa coefficient, as shown in Table 02.

TABLE 2

Kappa Coefficient

Researcher 02	Researcher 01		
	Yes	No	Total
Yes	39	01	40
No	12	380	392
Total	51	381	432

Source: The authors.

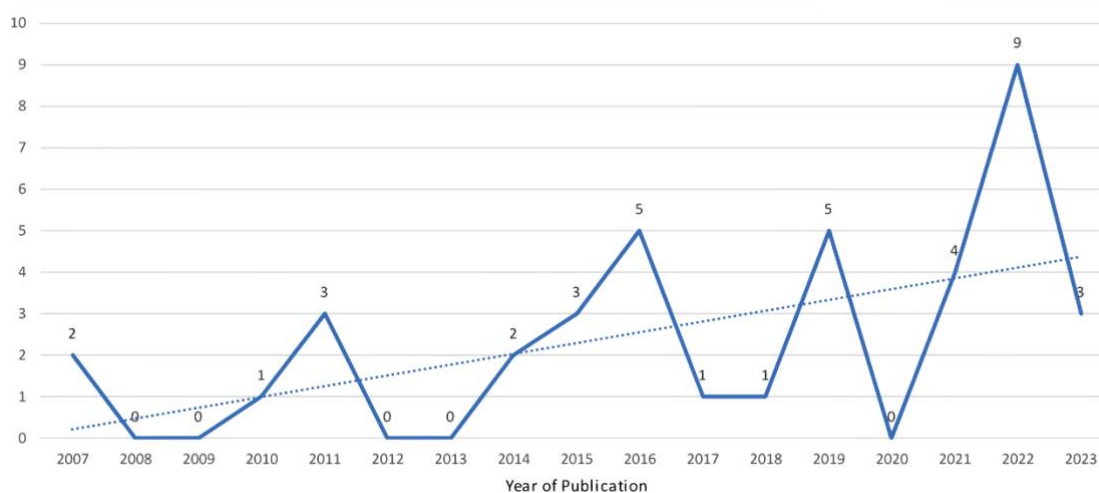
The calculated Cohen's K was 0.84 [ $Kappa = (k1-k2)/(1-k2)$ ]. This value represents an agreement percentage of 96.9%, which, according to McHugh (2012), is almost perfect agreement between researchers. In the end, to reach 100% agreement, a consensus meeting was held to resolve all discrepancies.

### 3.2 REGARDING THE DEMOGRAPHY OF THE RETRIEVED STUDIES

The 39 studies included in this scoping review span from 2007 to 2023, showing an upward trend despite erratic distribution, as depicted in Figure 2.

FIGURE 2

Distribution of studies over time and trendline



Source: The authors.

Among these studies, 87% are journal articles ( $n = 34$ ), 10.5% are conference papers ( $n = 4$ ), and 2.5% are proceedings papers ( $n = 1$ ). Three (3) works self-identify as ethnographies, nine (9) as case studies, and in 27 records, there is no explicit reference to the type of research, indicating that, in this regard, typology is not consistently prioritized in methodological designs.

Regarding the approach, the majority of the research is qualitative ( $n = 28$ ), followed by quantitative ( $n = 7$ ) and mixed methods ( $n = 4$ ). However, it is important to note that clarity in the methodology of the studies is not uniform, and in some cases, it was not possible to identify how variables were selected and treated, as demonstrated in the critical analysis of the sources of evidence.

Regarding territorial aspects, it was observed that, in 23.08% of the cases, research addresses public security from a more local governance perspective, restricted to cities or districts. In 25.64% of the studies, the approach is regional, covering one or more states. Furthermore, 35.9% of the research has a national approach, and, finally, 15.38% was conducted with the scope of reaching more than one country. Table 3 presents, in detail, the territorial scope of the research.

TABLE 3

## Territorial scope of primary research

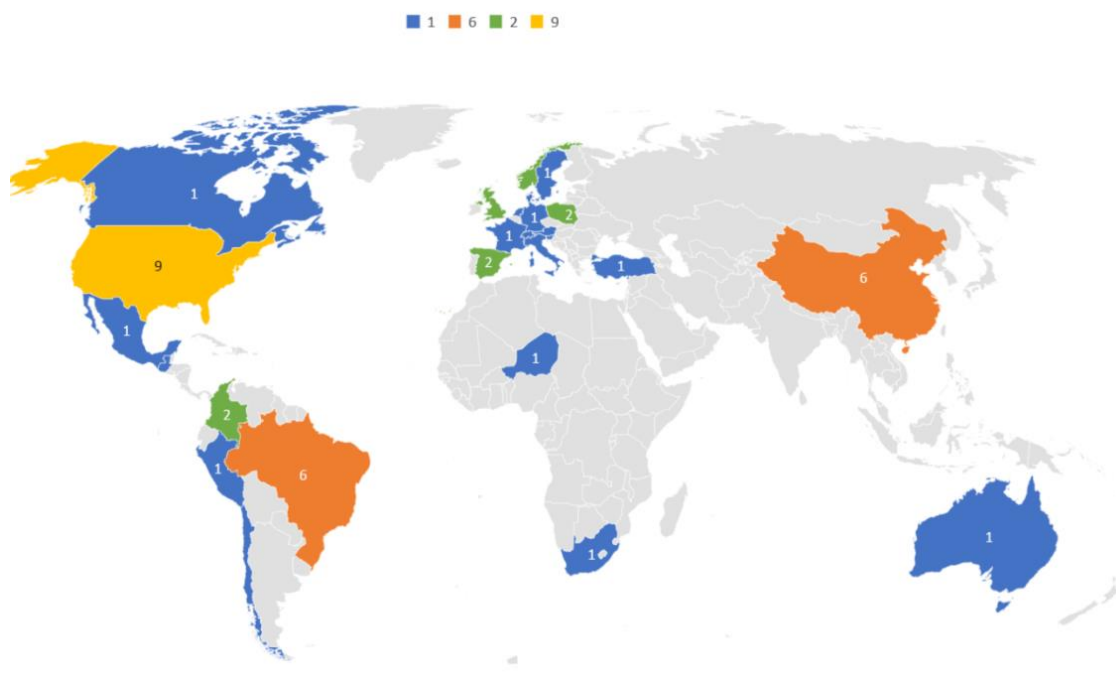
Territorial Coverage	Studies
Local governance, restricted to cities or districts	Marks e Wood (2007); Haubrich e Wehrhahn (2015); Ticar e Eman (2016); Flock e Breitung (2016); Peron e Alvarez (2021); Welsh-Carroll, Flanigan e Gutierrez (2022); Zhang <i>et al.</i> (2022); Cahuana <i>et al.</i> (2022); Hochmüller (2023).
Regional approach, comprising one or more states	De Lint, O'connor e Cotter (2007); Sardan (2011); Ratton, Torres e Bastos (2011); Kozuch e Sienkiewicz-Malyjurek (2022); Cohen (2018); Welsh (2019); Liu e Zhu (2021); Gomes e Silva (2022); Liu, Li e Zhu (2022); Yang, Wang e Zhang (2022).
National approach	Fedorowicz <i>et al.</i> (2011); Flores-Macias (2014); Fedorowicz <i>et al.</i> (2014); Fedorowicz, Sawyer e Tomasino (2015); Trindade (2015); Jacobson (2016); Bartelings <i>et al.</i> (2017); Jaime-Jiménez <i>et al.</i> (2019); Kapucu e Demirhan (2019); Cai, Li e Wang (2021); Löfstrand (2021); Li <i>et al.</i> (2022); Sienkiewicz-Malyjurek (2022); Lu <i>et al.</i> (2023).
Research carried out in more than one country	Franke, Charoy e Ulmer (2010); Sala (2016); Ball <i>et al.</i> (2019); Cozens, Greive e Rogers (2019); Bullock <i>et al.</i> (2022); Krogh e Lo (2023).

Source: The authors.

This territorial representation is useful in defining the profile of primary research on public security and governance.

FIGURE 3

Countries that participated in data collection in primary research and their frequencies



Source: The authors.

In Figure 3, we observe the geographic distribution of countries that, after meeting eligibility criteria, contributed primary research on public security governance. The analysis also reveals that, out of the 26 countries studied, 69.23% (n=18) have a very high Human Development Index (HDI) ( $\geq 0.8$ ); 23.07% (n=6) have a high HDI. Guatemala, with a medium HDI, and Niger, with a low HDI (0.400), are exceptions, each representing 3.84% of the cases. In the portfolio, no countries classified by the Institute for Economics & Peace as having a “Very Low Global Peace Index” were found (IEP, 2023).

Regarding data collection, the fieldwork phase of these studies is commonly characterized by the use of interviews (n=29), which are present in 74.3% of cases. Other techniques include participant and non-participant observations, totaling 23% (n=9); surveys and questionnaires, 15.4% (n=6); focus groups, 7.8% (n=3); workshops, 2.6% (n=1). More than one data collection strategy may have been used by the same study.

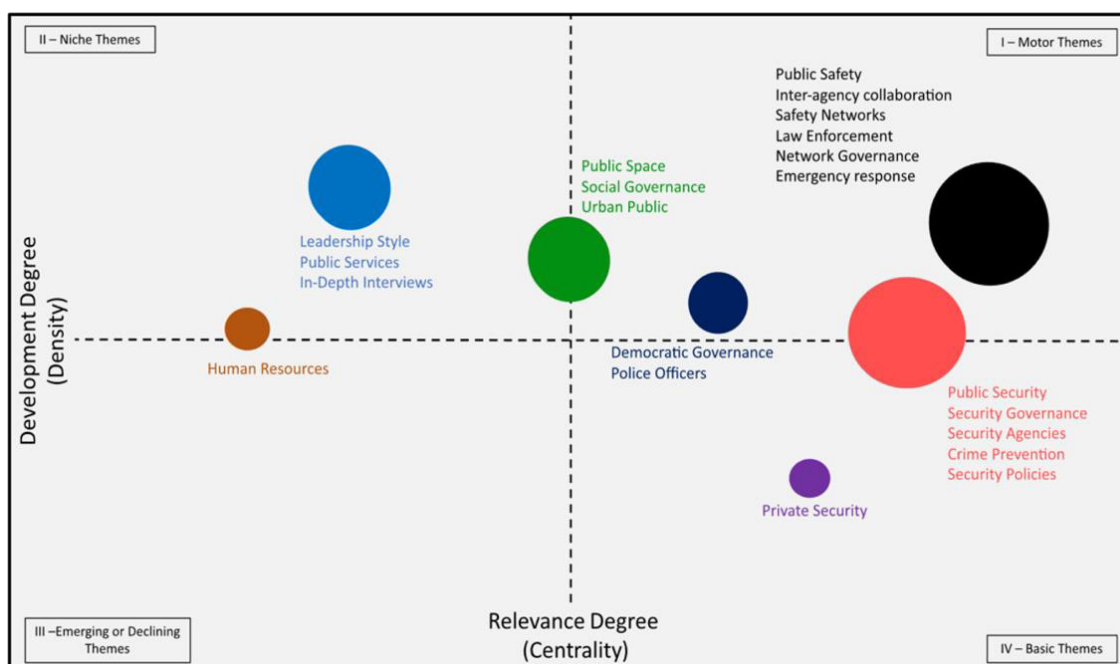
Among the studies on public governance, only 25.6% (n=10) specify the data analysis software. Thirteen distinct programs were identified. The most commonly used are quantitative approaches like SPSS (n=3), followed by Amos (n=2), NetLog (n=1), R (n=1), Survey Monkey (n=1). In the qualitative approach, Atlas-ti, NVIVO, and QCA 2.0 (all with n = 1) stand out. Qualtrics performs quali-quantitative analysis, and TextIt is designed for chatbots.

When analyzing the theories most explicitly mentioned by authors in their primary research, we most frequently find the presence of Rational Choice Theory (n=5) as well as of Institutional Theory (n=3). They are followed, with a frequency of 1 each, by the theoretical reinforcement of: Broken Windows Theory; Antecedent-Behavior-Consequence (ABC) Theory; Situational Crime Prevention Theory and Environmental Criminology; Social Contract Theory; Network Theory; Collaborative Governance Theory; Network Go-



FIGURE 5

Thematic map of public security governance in abstracts of primary research



Source: Authors from Bibliometrix 4.0 in R.Studio.

The themes were categorized into four quadrants, each representing a unique combination of centrality and density. Quadrant I, with high centrality and density, includes the “Driver Themes”, which are fundamental and widely discussed in public security governance. Quadrant II, “Niches”, contains themes with many internal connections but lower centrality, indicating specialized research areas. Quadrant III, “Emerging or Declining”, houses themes that are growing or diminishing, with low centrality and density. Finally, Quadrant IV, “Basic”, contains themes that are widely discussed with high centrality but have fewer internal connections, highlighting their importance but with less impact in terms of citations and interactions.

According to Figure 5, the topics of “leadership” and “public services” are positioned in Quadrant II, indicating they are specialized themes with high density but low centrality. In contrast, “interagency collaboration”, “network governance”, and “public security” exhibit high levels of both density and centrality, placing them in Quadrant I, also known as driver themes. “Democratic governance” and “police officers” also fall into this category, albeit less frequently. Themes related to public, primarily urban spaces, and social governance lie between Quadrants I and II. Between Quadrant I (driver themes) and Quadrant IV (basic themes) are “crime prevention”, “security policies”, and “security governance”, among others. In Quadrant IV, “private security” is noted for its high relevance but low development, suggesting its importance to public security yet underdeveloped status. Lastly, “Human Resources” falls between Quadrants II and III, addressing emerging or declining themes.

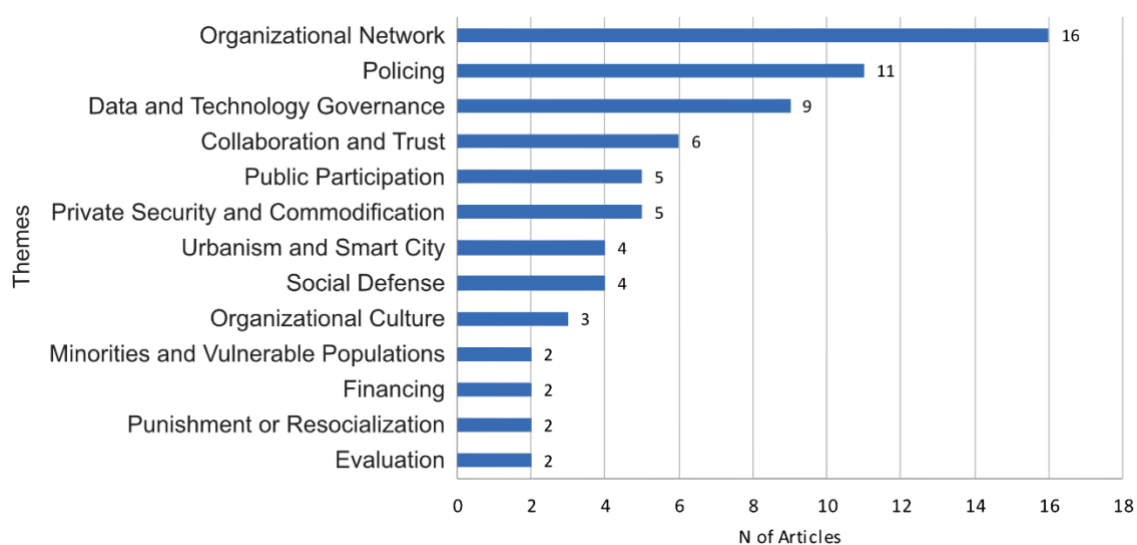
In general, the thematic map presented in Figure 5 highlights the current state of primary research on public security governance, providing guidance for researchers to identify core themes, emerging trends, niches, or those in decline.

To gain a more comprehensive understanding of the themes in primary research on public security and its governance, a content analysis was conducted following Bardin (2016), using theme words as units of analysis categorized semantically. This qualitative analysis confirmed the multifaceted nature of research in public security governance, covering dimensions ranging from corporate to technological and social aspects.

Thirteen recurring themes were identified among the selected articles. The central themes and their frequencies can be found in Figure 6.

FIGURE 6

#### Most recurring themes in publications on Public Security Governance



Source: The authors.

The theme “Social Defense” covers emergency services management and associated risk governance. Liu and Zhu (2021, p. 17) describe emergency management as a broad concept including natural disasters, public health incidents, and social security. Li *et al.* (2022) emphasize that enhancing security in public spaces is vital for urban development, yet risk assessments often ignore the interactions among various factors. Example codes include emergency, emergency management, and risk governance.

In “Financing”, the discussion revolves around securing resources for the public security and social defense agenda. From these defining elements, the following codes were mapped: tax, taxation, privatization, subsidies, and provision.

The theme “Penalty and Resocialization” brings together research that addresses the implementation and effects of penalties resulting from breaches of criminal law norms, as well as initiatives aimed at reintegrating former inmates into social life. Examples of codes in this category include inmate, rehabilitation, decarceration, reintegration, imprisonment, penalty, and punitive processes.

The “Evaluation” theme focuses on the quantitative and qualitative measurement of variables relevant to public security services. According to Li *et al.* (2022, p. 2), evaluation is conceptualized as predicting the future state of urban public space security based on risk evaluation and the identification and assessment of the severity of losses caused by risk accidents. Examples of codes in this category include process evaluation and risk evaluation.

“Private Security and Commodification” highlights the role of private enterprise in public security governance, partnering with the State in co-creating services. Marks and Wood (2007) note the increasing role of state police among hybrid policing actors. Peron and Alvarez (2021, p. 189) state that these processes turn security into a joint state and non-state activity, converting infrastructures into surveillance systems. Example codes include the following: policing as a commodity; private security; non-state policing actors; corporate security; private guards; and the private security industry.

“Urbanism and Smart City” is a theme that deals with the interaction between public security and urban space, especially in the context of smart cities and social urbanism. Examples of codes identifying this theme are as follows: public space accessibility; transient public space; spatial access and use; 24-hour city (Flock and Breitung (2016); Cozens, Greive, and Rogers (2019); Hochmüller (2023); Peron and Alvarez (2021)).

The theme “Popular Participation” emphasizes the importance of active community participation in the decision-making process, formulation, and implementation of public security policies, aiming to promote a more inclusive and democratic approach. The codes representing this theme are as follows: citizen participation; active citizenship; volunteers; public protests; social movements; demonstrations and security sociability (Cahuana *et al.*, (2022); Yang, Wang, and Zhang, (2022); Haubrich and Wehrhahn (2015); Sala (2016); Peron and Alvarez (2021)).

“Collaboration and Trust” highlight the need for partnerships among public security actors, including government agencies, private companies, civil society, and the public. Sienkiewicz-Malyjurek (2022) notes that inter-agency collaboration, though well-established, is challenging. Ball *et al.* (2018, p. 4) link low trust in government to dissatisfaction with programs and partisan polarizations. Cohen (2018, p. 888) emphasizes the positive impact of collaboration on law enforcement efficiency and performance. Example codes include collaboration, inter-collaboration, collaborative governance, trust, trust networks, and reliability.

“Organizational Culture” highlights the importance of understanding cultural dynamics in public security organizations and their impact on effectiveness. Cohen (2018, p. 888) equates organizational culture to individual personality, emphasizing its profound influence. Kapucu and Demirhan (2019, p. 161) note that police culture significantly affects performance and information sharing, stressing the need for cultural management to enhance collaboration and efficiency. Example codes include culture and cultural.

The theme “Minorities and Vulnerables” is dedicated to studies that address actions and programs concerning marginalized and vulnerable groups in society (examples of codes: migrants; the poor; homeless; Black people; and women). These studies are crucial for understanding the dynamics of exclusion and vulnerability within security policies. The work of Welsh Carroll, Flanigan, and Gutierrez (2022, p. 285-286) illustrates these issues in detail, revealing that the apathy, disrespect, and discrimination faced by people in extreme poverty often result in these individuals’ reluctance to seek services or engage with offers of help.

“Policing” highlights police activity and the enhancement of strategies and models. This includes, for example, intelligence-led policing, community policing, and problem-oriented policing. Codes for this theme include policing; police inquiry; police marketing.

The theme “Data Governance and Technologies” addresses the efficient use of databases and technologies for public security. Examples of codes include information technology, big data, the Internet of Things, information security, scenario-based decision-making, and technological possibilities.

**Unraveling public security governance**

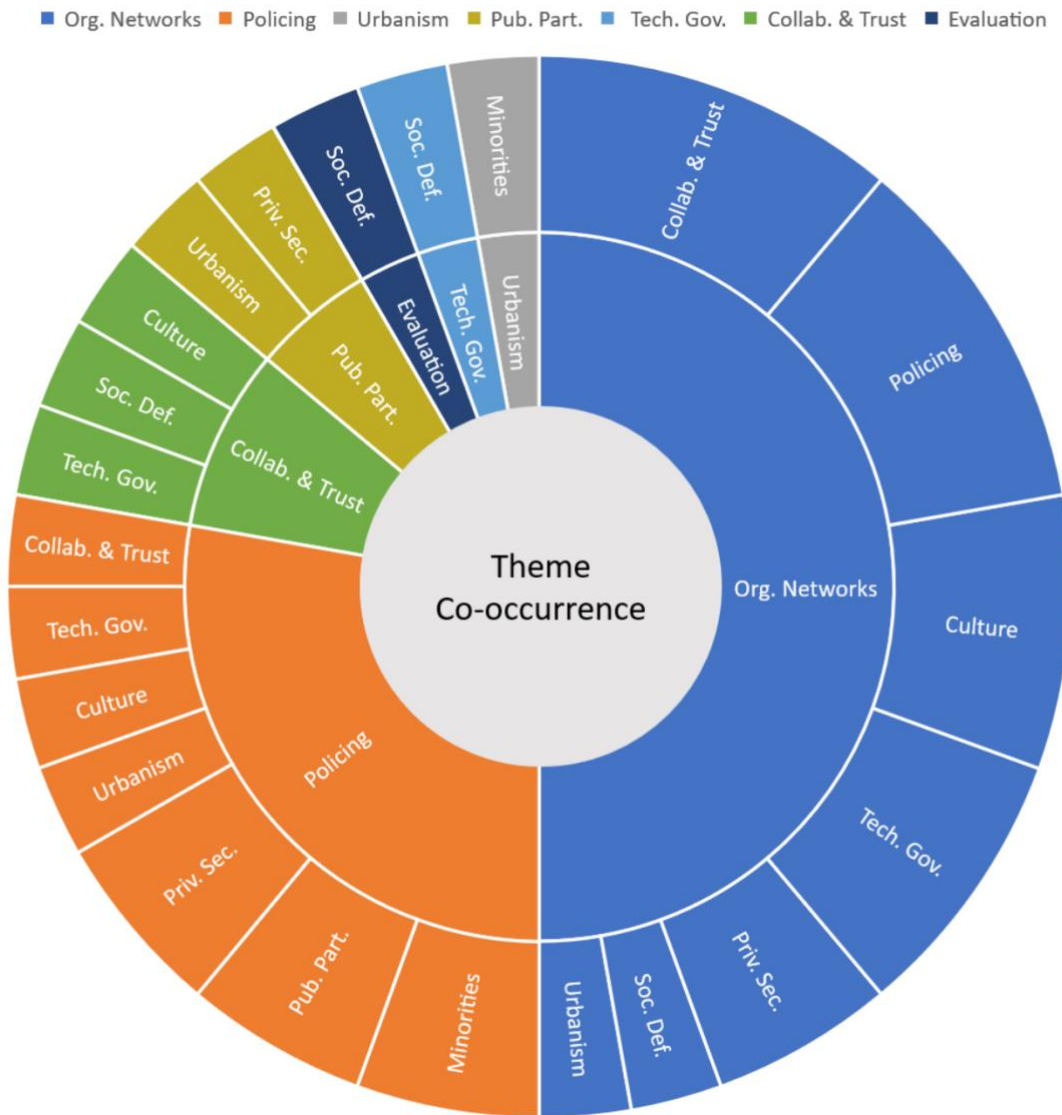
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The theme “Organizational Networks”, the most prevalent, outlines and guides inter-organizational public security networks to achieve objectives. Sienkiewicz-Malyjurek (2022) defines these networks as autonomous entities with complementary competencies linked by interdependencies and inter-organizational relations. Cohen (2018) highlights the shift from hierarchical public governance to collaborative public governance, requiring new skills, structures, technology, and management practices. Perón and Alvarez (2021) observe that public-private partnerships have reorganized policing towards ‘preventivism’, where risk management is central. Fedorowicz *et al.* (2011; 2014) emphasize the importance of information sharing between government and the private sector in forming Public Safety Networks (PSN). Codes include network, inter-organizational systems, functional interoperability, inter-agency, and inter-organizational.

Each article was classified under up to five themes, each represented by a numeric code ranging from 1 to 13. The themes encompass a variety of areas, as can be seen in the following Figure 7.

**FIGURE 7**

**Co-occurrence of themes**



Source: The authors.

The pairs of themes most frequently developed together are “Organizational Networks” and “Policing” (n=4), as well as “Organizational Networks” and “Collaboration and Trust” (n=4). This suggests that the current literature is exploring the intersection between the structure of organizational networks and the role of trust and collaboration environments in their development within different entities, and, to the same extent, the impact of these networks on policing systems.

This may indicate that the formation and effective functioning of organizational networks depend on a high level of collaboration and trust. In fact, the mapped articles announce a shift in the understanding of public security, moving from a more isolated model to one that emphasizes collaboration and trust among different stakeholders, namely public entities, the market, the third sector, and civil society (Marks and Wood, 2007; Sala, 2016).

This understanding is equally compatible with the co-occurrence of the themes “Policing” and “Popular Participation” (n=2) and “Minorities and Vulnerable” (n=2), reinforcing the focus on the importance of a more cohesive interaction between law enforcement and the community, with particular attention to minorities and vulnerable populations.

The co-occurrence of these themes reflects a trend toward transformation in the direction of more inclusive and participatory models of public security governance, such as multilevel governance (Bichir, 2018; Kempner-Moreira *et al.*, 2022), nodal governance, and anchored pluralism (Loader and Walker, 2001, 2006, 2007; Slakmon *et al.*, 2006; Sennes and Lima, 2021).

Next, it can be observed that the theme “Organizational Networks” also frequently appears in conjunction with “Organizational Culture” (n=3) and “Data and Technology Governance” (n=3). This relationship is highlighted because the traditional paradigm of public security fosters an organizational culture of isolationism, mistrust, and occupational conflict, making it difficult to create a formal network for co-producing the common good. This is well illustrated by Cohen (2018) when examining how the culture of security forces restricts interagency collaboration.

The relationship between the pair “Organizational Networks” and “Data and Technology Governance” underscores the research community’s concern with management tools that enable and optimize network integration (Fedorowicz *et al.*, 2011; 2014; Jacobson, 2016).

It is also noteworthy that there are themes that rarely or never appear together in the selection of articles. These pairs of themes include, among others, “Data and Technology Governance” with “Punishment or Re-socialization”. This may suggest that the intersection between data governance and the re-socialization of inmates is an area that has not been sufficiently explored in the literature. Considering the growing importance of technology in society 5.0, it may be valuable to investigate how data governance and technologies are being applied to the context of the rehabilitation of ex-convicts.

### 3.4 REGARDING THE QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE EVIDENCE

A total of 29 publications were assessed using the CASP Qualitative tool, which consists of ten questions, while the MMAT was applied to ten studies, responding to seven questions, with the first two being screening questions. Therefore, qualitative studies could score between 0 and 10 points, and those assessed by the MMAT could score between 0 and 5 points, with each point representing a “yes” in the answers.

The results showed that the average score for qualitative studies was 7.06, with a median of 8 and a standard deviation of 1.94 points. For quantitative and mixed methods studies, the average score was 3.2, with a median and standard deviation of 3 and 0.87 points, respectively. This reflects a medium level of evidence at 65%, considered to have good reliability ( $\geq 60\%$  and  $< 80\%$ ).

However, these results require careful interpretation. The instruments used (CASP and MMAT) do not have an established system for assigning global scores, and oversimplifying the evaluation process can bring about misconceptions in the studies. Additionally, the two instruments, although serving similar purposes, have structural differences, adding an extra layer of complexity to the critical analysis.

## 4 DISCUSSION

Based on empirical research developed in the 39 articles analyzed in depth by this scoping review, it was possible to identify five key governance practices in public security:

- A) Development of inclusive and participatory public policies to promote coproduction networks. Several articles highlight the importance of integration and collaboration among various actors in the field of public security (Lint *et al.*, 2007; Bullock *et al.*, 2022; Krogh and Lo, 2023). Indeed, the inclusion and community engagement in decisions and public security policies can enhance the effectiveness of these initiatives, build trust and legitimacy, and promote a more holistic response to complex public security issues. This practice can range from training volunteers to respond to emergencies (Krogh and Lo, 2023) to the use of private policing services by the government (Marks and Wood, 2007; Sala, 2016). This theme of networks and community participation is explored in research such as Lint *et al.* (2007); Haubrich and Wehrhahn (2015); Sala (2016); Kapucu and Demirhan (2019); Peron and Alvarez (2021); Yang *et al.* (2022). Cohen (2018) also emphasizes that collaborative networks are an essential component of every police officer's toolkit. In other words, collaborative activities, such as sharing information and resources, serve as critical heuristics essential for the execution of everyday public safety operations.
- B) Building environments of trust and collaboration: another good practice is to cultivate environments of trust and collaboration between organizations, particularly between security services and the communities they serve. Community engagement is crucial for building trust and cooperation with security agencies, as a successful collaborative process requires mutual trust (Cohen, 2018). Public security should be viewed as a shared responsibility with the community and not exclusive to law enforcement agencies (Haubrich and Wehrhahn, 2015). The integration of citizens, including through volunteerism, can strengthen community response and resilience, as highlighted by Krogh and Lo (2023). Hochmüller (2023) expands on this notion, proposing community resilience as a way to leverage local knowledge to adapt to violent environments, emphasizing the role of municipalities. Strengthening trust between police and communities has been highlighted as crucial and can be achieved through transparency, social responsibility, and community engagement, as discussed in studies such as Lint *et al.* (2007); Sala (2016); Kapucu and Demirhan (2019); Sienkiewicz-Matyjurek (2022); Krogh and Lo (2023).
- C) Innovative technologies: the adoption of new technologies and data analysis methodologies plays an increasingly crucial role in modern public security. This includes the use of data analysis to identify patterns of violence and crime (Liu *et al.*, 2022), surveillance cameras and facial

recognition (Peron and Alvarez, 2021), artificial intelligence, simulations, and computational modeling (Lu *et al.*, 2023) to understand and respond more effectively to crisis situations. The strategic use of technology allows for the early identification of potential threats and evidence-based decision-making. The role of technology in public security is also discussed in works such as Franke *et al.* (2010); Fedorowicz *et al.* (2011; 2014); Jacobson (2016); Cai *et al.* (2021); Zhang *et al.* (2022); Liu *et al.* (2022); Hochmüller (2023).

- D) Coordinated responses to emergencies: the fourth group is a specialization of the first good practice mentioned and indicates that an effective response to emergencies requires effective coordination among various stakeholders. This includes the implementation of more robust emergency management systems (Krogh and Lo, 2023) and the construction of integrated networks of public and private actors (Liu and Zhu, 2021).
- E) Focus on Prevention: emphasizing crime prevention is a key practice, serving as an anticipatory step in the public security cycle and aiming to optimize social benefits. This involves the adoption of advanced technologies, new policing strategies, and social urbanism, as indicated by studies such as Lint *et al.* (2007), Flores-Macías (2014), Haubrich and Wehrhahn (2015); Sala (2016); Cai *et al.* (2021); Zhang *et al.* (2022); Hochmüller (2023). According to the UNODC (UN, n.d.), effective prevention requires a collaborative approach, tackling the roots of conflicts and shifting from punitive to evidence-based preventive strategies. Such an approach prioritizes the reduction of violence, especially against vulnerable groups.

Essentially, professionals who interact directly with victims and perpetrators of crimes should be integrated into prevention programs, ensuring effectiveness in case management and referrals, always seeking the best interests of the parties involved.

Another issue worth highlighting is the knowledge gaps. Eight of them were identified as follows:

- 1 - Professional training and development: while Gomes and Silva (2022) addressed the training of correctional officers, there is limited discussion about the professional development of competencies (knowledge, skills, and attitudes) for members of public security and defense networks. This applies not only to police forces, which are crucial for the effectiveness of security policies and practices and require specific competencies but also to other actors aiming to develop competencies that enable network integration and co-production.
- 2 - Evaluation mechanisms: although evaluation is a registered topic in the database, it appears to be an area that still requires further development. Efficient evaluations can enhance public policies to generate social value. There is an urgent need to develop new evaluation methodologies capable of considering public security as a process and that are more suitable for the specific stages of the security cycle (prevention, repression, and reintegration). These methodologies should also consider stakeholders of various natures (police officers, prosecutors, members of the judiciary, traffic agencies, firefighters, forensic experts, etc.). After all, control is one of the three major mechanisms of public governance, which includes monitoring and evaluation (Brasil, 2020).
- 3 - Psycho-social impact of crime and violence: among the mapped studies, there is not much attention given to the psycho-social impact of crime and violence, especially on victims, witnesses, and communities. Understanding the emotional and psychological aspects related to security or

insecurity can provide valuable insights for the formulation of more humane public policies.

- 4 - Social inequalities: although some articles raise discussions about minorities and vulnerable populations, such as Flock and Breitung (2016) and Carroll *et al.* (2022), there seems to be a gap in the discussion of how social and economic inequalities influence public security. For example, empirical evidence studies addressing unequal access to security resources, the effects of segregation, and the impact of poverty on crime and violence are lacking.
- 5 - Long-term effects: while many articles discuss the implementation and immediate outcomes of various security strategies, there is a relative lack of longitudinal studies explicitly examining the sustainability (ESG) and lasting effects of these policies and interventions. An exception is Jacobson (2016).
- 6 - Security policies vs. security perception: the study of the relationship between the effectiveness of public security policies and the resulting perception (or lack thereof) of security by a population constitutes another observed gap. It would be interesting to assess how different policies impact the population's perception of security and how this, in turn, affects the effectiveness and continuity or discontinuity of these same policies. One of the few exceptions was Flores-Macías (2014), which presented to some extent this relationship by demonstrating the conditions that enabled the adoption and renewal of a security tax for Colombia's economic elites to finance public security.
- 7 - Concentration in high HDI countries: there is a notable shortage of primary studies related to public security governance in countries with medium or low HDI, with only one representative for each category, Guatemala and Niger, respectively. This distribution suggests a potential knowledge gap in the scientific literature, where contexts with medium or low HDI may be insufficiently explored. This observation is reinforced by the fact that none of the countries classified by the Institute for Economics & Peace as having a "very low Global Peace Index" were identified in our primary research (IEP, 2023).
- 8 - Explicit definition of "public security governance": an explicit definition of "Public Security Governance" was not found, possibly due to the eligibility criteria for this review, which excluded studies focused solely on secondary sources. Indeed, if all theoretical on this topic are excluded from the sample due to methodology, such gaps are predictable. However, in Bichir (2018) it is observed that defining governance is a challenge due to its polysemous nature and varied use in public and academic discourse.

This complexity intensifies when combining the governance construct with the concept of public security, given the wide range of activities that security encompasses, from law enforcement to the administration of criminal justice, now also influenced by non-public actors. However, based on the evaluated studies and insights from organizations like the OECD (2015), the UN (2015, 2018), and Brasil (2020), it is possible to propose a definition of public security governance.

Therefore, public security governance can be defined as a set of leadership, strategy, and control mechanisms that direct, monitor, and evaluate public security policies, characterized by the integration of various governmental and non-governmental actors. It should be guided by respect for the principles of human rights and sustainability, both in terms of operational effectiveness and in terms of social justice and equity.

It should be clarified that the set of leadership, strategies, and controls involved in public security governance can also be classified as a social system because it brings together independent yet interconnected vertices that function as a coherent unit with its own codes. It is open and dynamic because it is autopoietic, communicating with the environment it is embedded in and evolving through these interactions. It is participatory because it emphasizes the inclusion of the community and integration with various actors in public security processes. It is oriented towards human rights, as these are the constitutional foundation of the legal systems in democratic countries. Finally, it is guided by the principle of sustainability in a broad sense, as the perpetuation of socially just, financially, and ecologically sustainable actions and programs is a condition for effective action in combating violence and crime.

## 5 CONCLUSION

Public security is a transdisciplinary issue of pressing social and academic relevance, encompassing various perspectives, interfaces, and subsystems. Consequently, a growing body of literature, with different research designs, is increasingly dedicated to this issue. This article revisits primary research and aims to bridge the gap between theory and practice, facilitating the development of evidence-based public policies.

The conclusions presented here are based on research conducted in various countries and languages, highlighting common practices and identifying knowledge gaps that can guide future research and policy formulations. The main best governance practices identified include the development of inclusive and participatory public policies, the creation of environments of trust and collaboration, the adoption of innovative technologies, the coordination of emergency responses, and a focus on crime prevention. These practices are directly aligned with the guidelines and principles of the emerging paradigm of citizen security.

However, several knowledge gaps remain and some future studies can be suggested. Primary research presents a limited discussion on professional training and evaluation mechanisms, especially those that consider public security as a process rather than merely a product. The psychosocial impact of crime and violence, particularly on victims and communities, is underexplored. The influence of social inequalities on public security governance is another area that needs more empirical evidence. Additionally, the long-term effects of security policies and their relationship with public perception are under-researched. Notably, there is a scarcity of studies from countries with medium or low Human Development Index (HDI). Furthermore, the absence of central themes such as human rights and ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) in the reviewed studies highlights the need for a broader and more inclusive research agenda.

In conclusion, this study provides valuable insights for the formulation of public security policies and highlights critical areas that require further research. Addressing these gaps can lead to more effective governance strategies, promoting social cohesion.

## ETHICAL ASPECTS

This research relied exclusively on secondary data, which were collected from publicly available sources. All data were handled in accordance with ethical standards for secondary data analysis, ensuring that there was no breach of privacy or confidentiality.

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