

IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC COVID-19 TO CRIMINAL ACTIVITY IN TRANSPORT

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Abstract: 2020 has been a year like no other for most of us, dominated by a virus that has cost over 1.15 million lives globally and plunged the world into an economic recession which the Chief Economist of the World Bank says it could take five years to recover from. For business leaders in every sector, over the past six months it has been almost impossible to focus on anything but finding the most sustainable way through this sudden and unexpected crisis – and, for most, it will be hard to think about anything else for a long time to come as they battle to protect the futures of their organisations. Against such a dramatic and damaging backdrop, every business can be forgiven for letting Covid-19 dominate their thinking. They have shareholders to satisfy, customers to support and jobs to protect. Right now, the very survival of companies of every size remains in the balance with no end date in sight to the current crisis. The pandemic has not stopped the crime either, we can even say that the number of criminal activities has increased. In this article, we want to point out the difference between criminal activity in transport at the beginning of 2019 compared to 2020. The statistics are taken from the international database of criminal activities processed by TAPA EMEA.

1 Introduction

COVID-19 has created drastic shifts in the supply chain landscape. Corporations have been forced to seek quick alternatives to manage closed borders, blank sailings, flight cancellations and quarantine requirements to keep their supply chains moving. As such, supply chains face new and often uncalculated risks emerging from adjusted cargo routes and switching of transportation modes across the APAC and EMEA regions.

Safety and security are the primary interest of every transport system. Transport safety is a sensitive issue that affects all transport users and transport providers. It is a fundamental right to travel without fear of falling victim to some form of attack. However, it is also important that safety is not so disruptive as to make transport an unpleasant experience. Fortunately, terrorist acts are isolated events, but it must be in mind that transport is a popular destination for such events. Although such an event may be rare, the risk remains and reveals vulnerabilities throughout the transport supply chain. Other forms of transport security threats are more common: crimes committed on the premises of carriers (such as burglary), black passengers, robbery of securities during transport or piracy on the high seas. These have huge economic costs that can be measured in the range from the cash value of cargo theft to insurance losses, downtime and property damage [1-4].

1.1 Global cargo crime trends

According to new research, the insurance company has the largest cargo theft in the world in the field of freight transport, whether it is a criminal activity during transport or in a parking lot. In the following picture we can see a comparison of the total criminal activity in transport for selected years in the EMEA region (Europe, Middle East and Africa). Most crimes occurred in Germany, France and the United Kingdom [5-7].

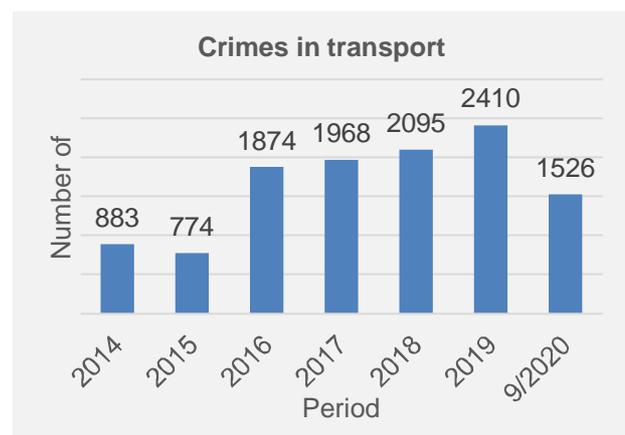


Figure 1 Number of crimes in transport in EMEA region [authors, 8]

If we look at the type of criminal activity, it is shown in Figure 2, so the most common criminal activities are theft from vehicle, theft of vehicle, theft of container or robbery.

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This is followed by theft from facility, fraudulent pick up, hijacking, etc. [9,10].

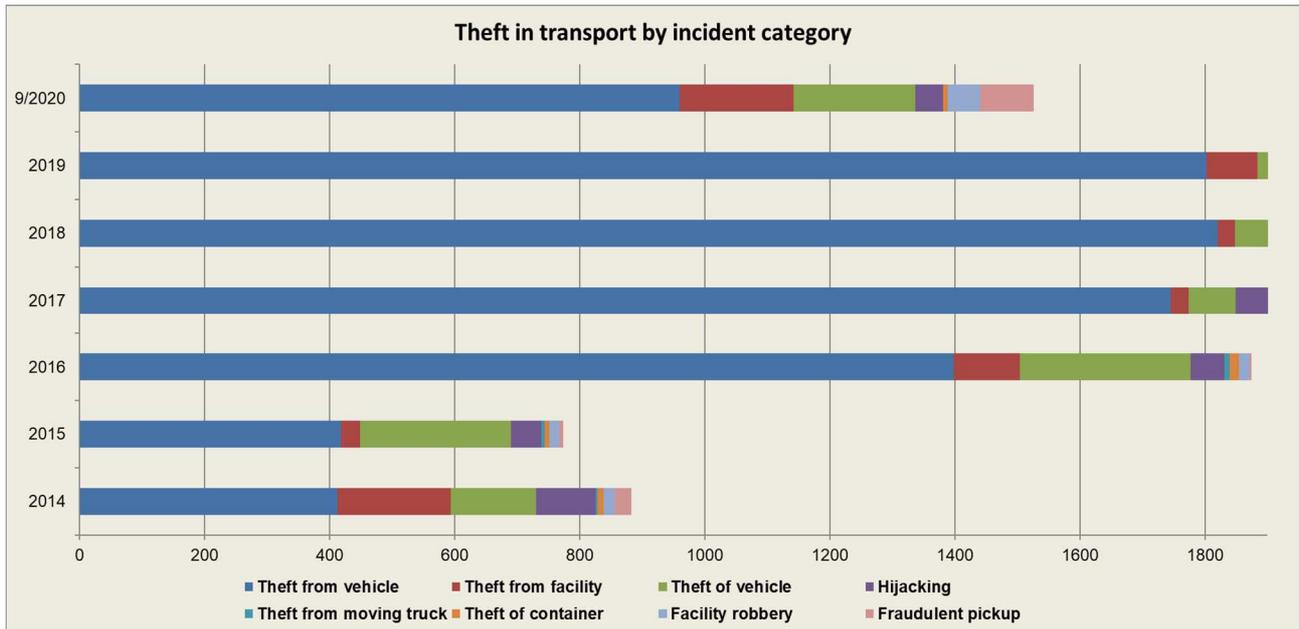


Figure 2 Theft in transport by incident category [authors, 8]

There are different ways of parking on roads in Europe, in compliance with the Regulation 561/2006 or the AETR agreement (required rest of professional drivers). Some use regular public car parks, others park on the side of roads, while those more responsible rely on security car park services [11,12]. The biggest problem is parking in

unsecured parking lots. Drivers use unsecured parking areas because there are few safe parking lots around the world. Their number in this period is 7500, which is absolutely insufficient with the growing number of road freight transport [13,14].

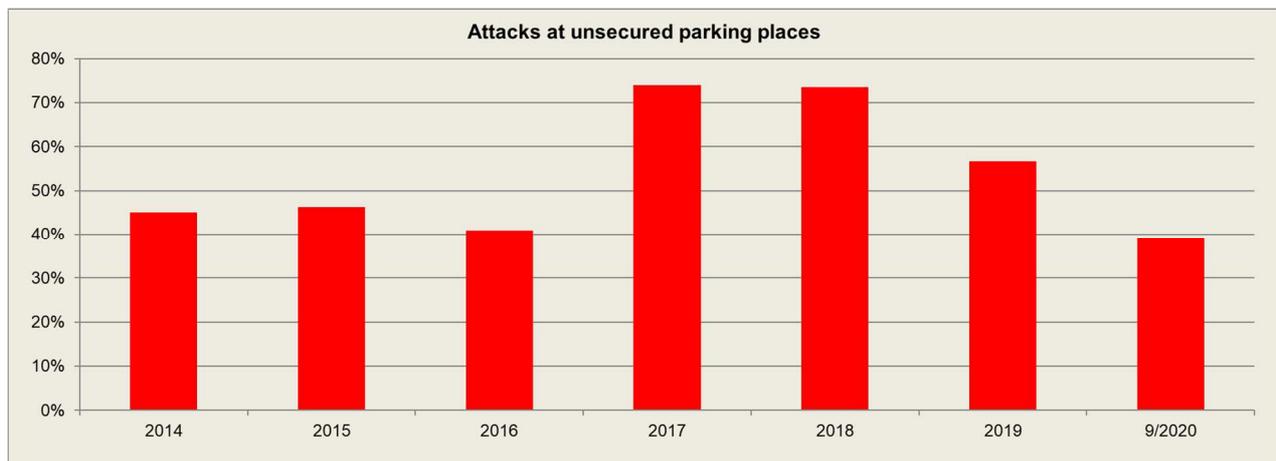


Figure 3 The number of attacks at unsecured parking places [authors, 15]

1.2 Impact of the pandemic on crime

Any idea that cargo thieves would be less active when the coronavirus crossed international borders quickly dispelled the 469 supply chain thefts recorded in two months, with several countries most affected by the virus recording the highest rate of cargo losses [8].

Only 120 or 25.5% of the accidents recorded in the IIS TAPA during this period had a combined value of the loss of stolen goods, resulting in a lower than average number of thefts of large cargo. A total of six were recorded, causing a total loss of EUR 1 671 876 or an average of EUR 278 646. For all accidents with a value, the total amount increased to EUR 2,952,303 or on average to EUR 24,602.

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Out of a total of two months, 321 crimes were reported in February TAPA EMEA and 148 in March.

In the next Figure 4 we can see The IIS heatmap tool, which shows the intensity of cargo crimes in the UK and the Netherlands in the month of February 2020. Germany recorded the highest number of cargo thefts in the IIS

database in February and March with 137 crimes, followed by the United Kingdom with 112.

In the next Figure 4 we can see The IIS heatmap tool, which shows the intensity of cargo crimes in the UK and the Netherlands in the month of February 2020.

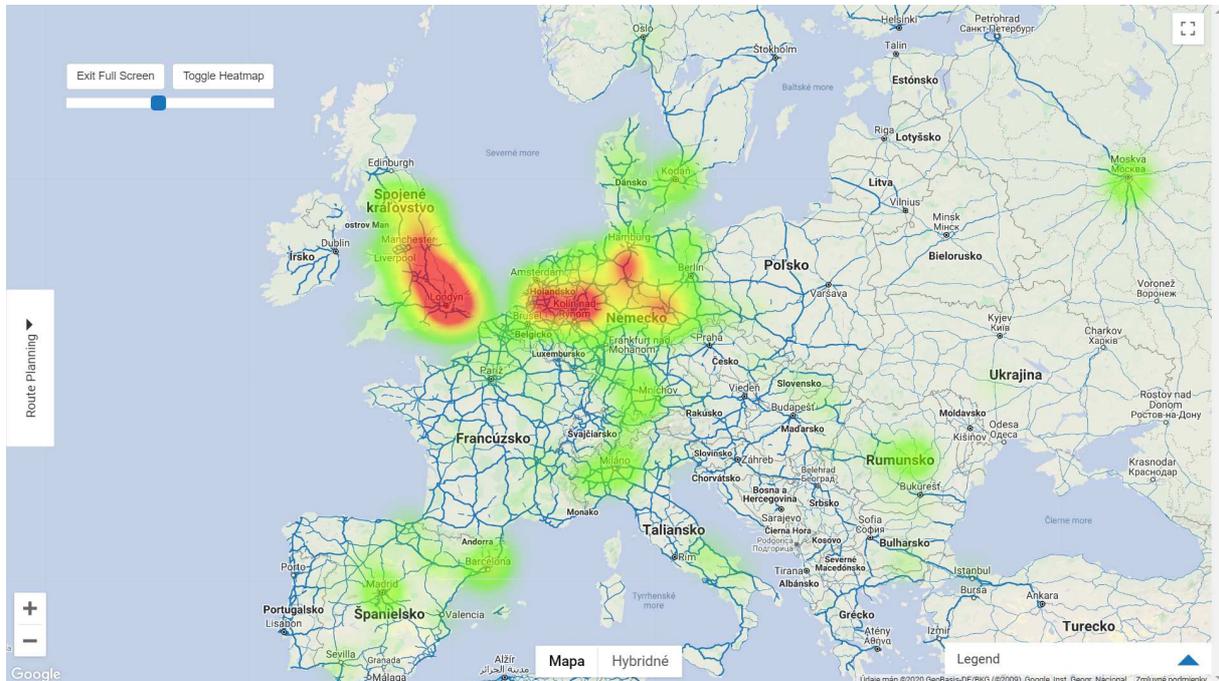


Figure 4 The intensity of cargo crimes in the Europe in February 2020 [authors, 6]

More than half of the crimes with cargo were recorded. The statistics on crimes of violence or threats of violence

were also remarkable, with 42 incidents in this category representing 8% of the total number of February-March.

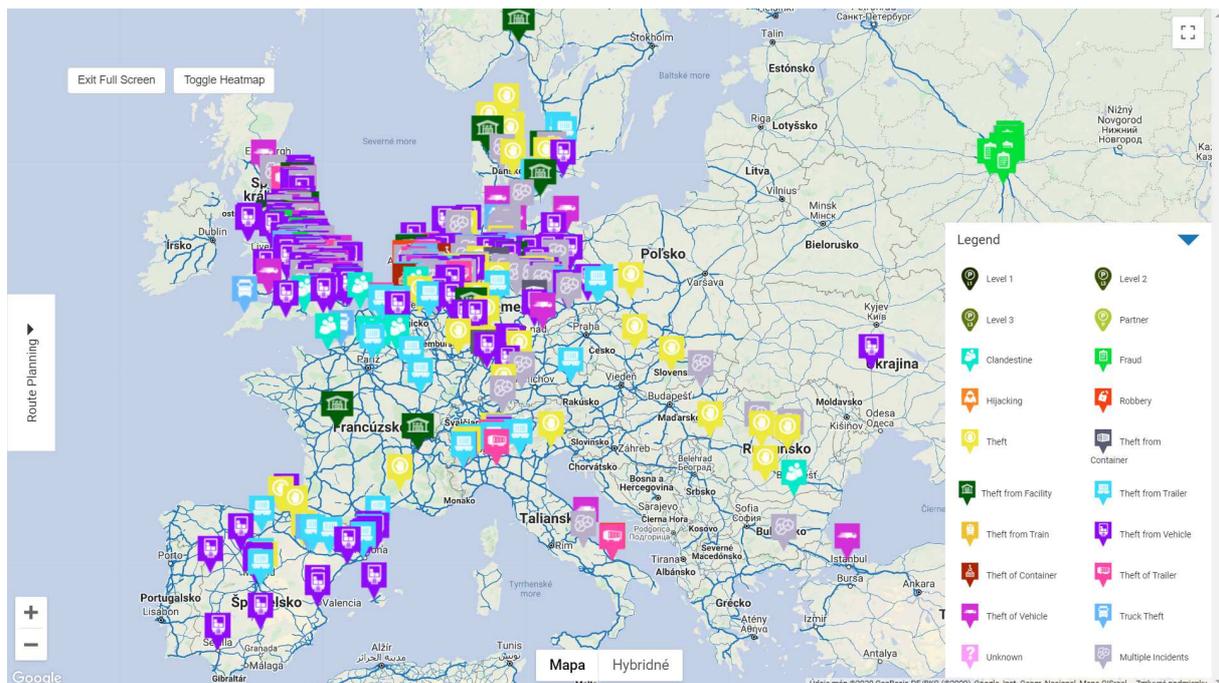


Figure 5 The type of crimes in Europe in February 2020 [authors, 8]

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If we compare only two months February and March in 2019 and in 2020, then we can see the following facts.

In February 2020, 963 crimes were reported, of which only 545 reported damage to goods amounting to more than EUR 17.5 million. 562 cases occurred on the road or in an unsecured parking area. Great Britain (388) and Germany (273), followed by Spain and France, recorded the most cases. In March 2020, 625 crimes were reported, of which only 393 reported damage to goods amounting to EUR 36.5 million. 309 cases occurred on the road or in an unguarded car park. Great Britain (695) and Germany (413) recorded the most cases, followed by France and Spain.

If we compare these data with the same period in 2019, so we can see that. In February 2019, 1385 crimes were reported, of which only in 660 cases did they report the amount of damage to goods, which amounted to more than EUR 19.8 million. 842 cases occurred on the road or in an unsecured parking area. Germany (407) and Great Britain (278) recorded the most cases, followed by Spain and France. In March 2019, 1352 crimes were reported, of which only 528 reported the amount of damage to goods, which reached the limit of EUR 25.8 million. 819 cases occurred on the road or in an unguarded car park. Great Britain (422) and Germany (293) recorded the most cases, followed by France and Spain.

Comparison of criminal activities in February and March 2019-2020

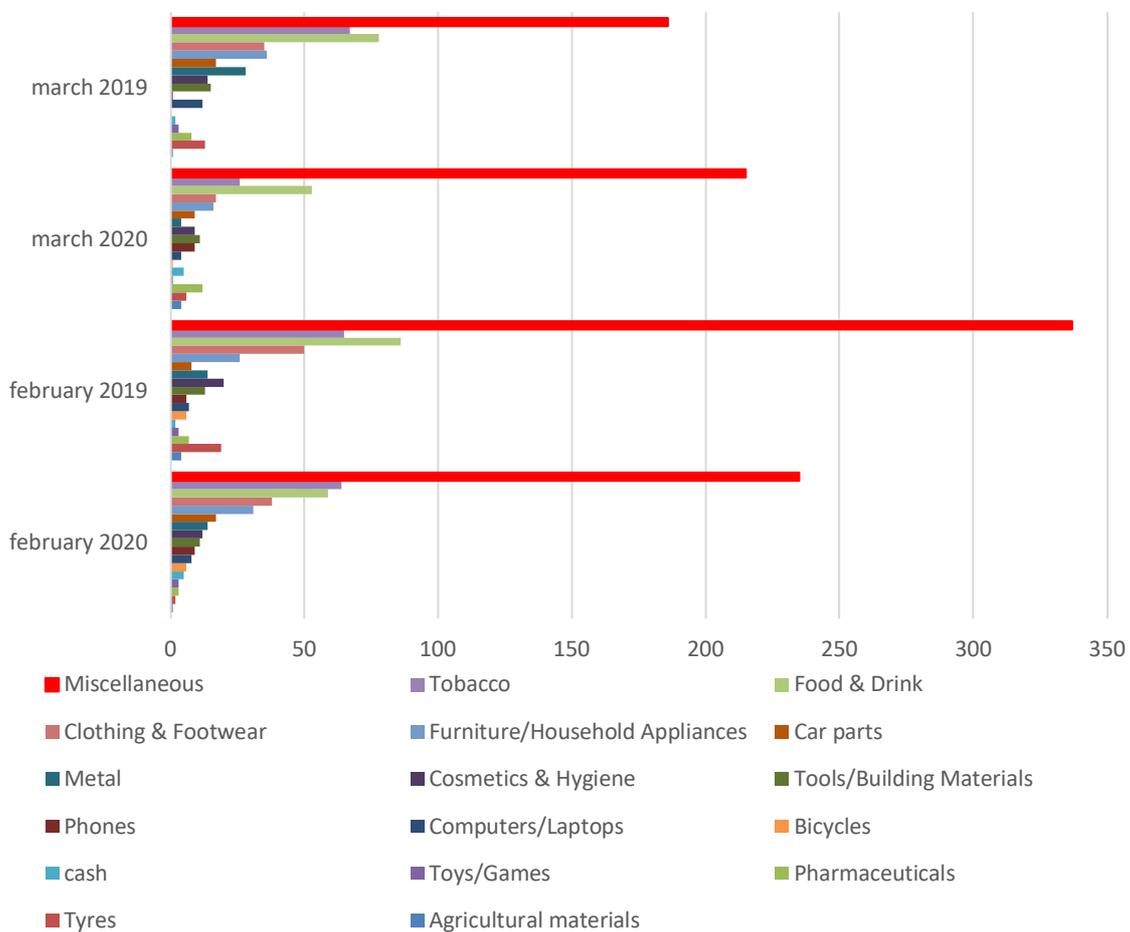


Figure 6 The type of crimes in Europe in February 2020 [authors, 8]

As we can see from the graph (Figure 6), there were more incidents in selected months in year 2019 than in year 2020. Among the most stolen specified goods were miscellaneous, food and drinks and clothing and footwear. The only change was the type of goods in March 2020, when there was an increased theft of protective equipment.

The supply and demand nature of the black market for stolen goods also prompted a spate of thefts of Personal Protective Equipment as offenders looked to cash in one of the most sought-after products to help fight the outbreak of the coronavirus. In addition to the €5m theft of fæ masks previously highlighted in Spain, TAPA’s IIS was also notified of cases involving:

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- Millions of respiratory masks stolen from an Aviation Transportation Facility in Kenya on 20 March.
- 680,000 face masks from an unknown location in the Czech Republic on 17 March.
- 500,000 face masks taken from a truck in France as it headed to towns across the Spanish border on 7 May.
- 200,000 face masks disappeared from a truck parked at a motorway service area in Spain on 8 May.
- 50,000 medical suits were taken from a shipping warehouse in Turkey on 7 April.
- 50,000 respirators from a Destination Facility in Cologne, Germany, on 16 March.
- A shipment of hand sanitiser from a truck at a MSA in Odsmsalbron in Sweden on 6 April.
- Boxes of facemasks were taken from an Authorised 3rd Party Facility in Moscow on 19 March.
- Protective medical gowns and gloves from an Authorised 3rd Party Facility in Bergen, Norway, on 20 March.

- Protective face masks from a vehicle in Coulounieix-Chamiers in France on 18 March.

Demand for another highly publicised type of product during the lockdown was also reflected in the theft of 130,000 toilet rolls from trailers in Walsall in the United Kingdom on 20 March [10].

2 Result and discussion

It is also clear from the following figure 7 that in 2019 more criminal activities were recorded in the EMEA database than in 2020. The reasons may vary:

- the victims did not report the crime to the Tapa EMEA database,
- worldwide lockdown and restrictions on the movement of persons have also affected the number of thefts of goods,
- fewer goods were transported, due to closed companies at the beginning of the year,
- thieves have focused on cyber space.

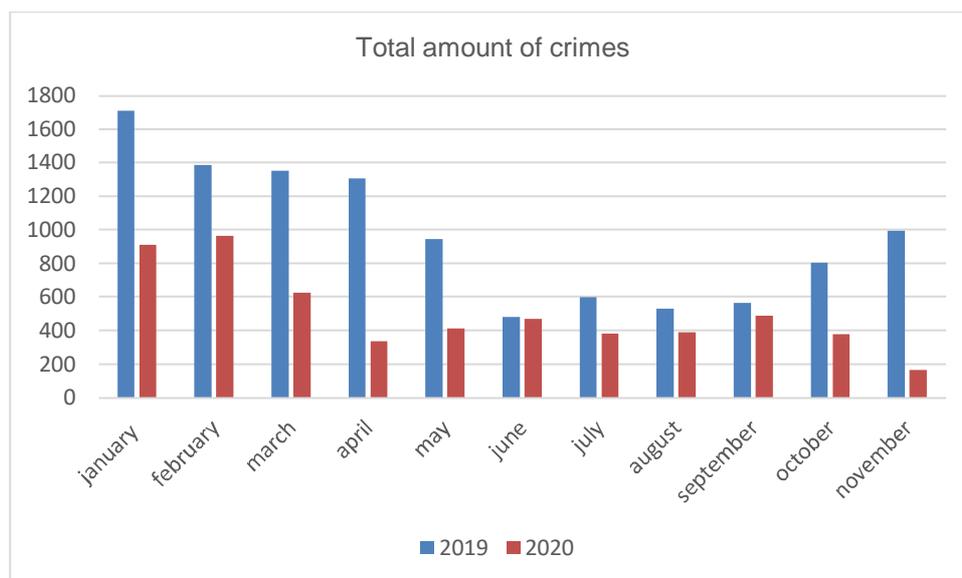


Figure 7 Total amount of cargo crimes in 2019 and 2020 [authors, 8]

Everybody believe most of these major crimes are being conducted by Organised Crime Groups who, far from being locked down by a pandemic or fearful of getting overtaken by next generation technologies, are still going about their very lucrative business and reaping substantial rewards for their efforts. At a time when our world and businesses feel like they are being turned upside down and may never be the same again, we must not lose sight of the fact that for the perpetrators of crimes against carriers, pandemic or no pandemic, it's business as usual using very simple and traditional methods to attack supply chains.

3 Conclusions

Cargo theft may not be a major problem during a pandemic, but when bad things happen, bad people can

find opportunities. We saw the disappearance of medical mask shipments. Cargo crime occurs in places that are not typical, such as Hong Kong, because supply chains are redirected and some products have priority, which affects their value. One example is medical masks, but hand sanitizer and toilet paper - which are not usually high-priced but currently in short supply - are attractive products for cargo thieves that can be stolen and resold. The impact of coronavirus pandemic 2019 (COVID-19) is one of the biggest threat's companies have seen during the year for supply chains due to its ubiquity and potential duration. But from the point of view of the amount of stolen goods in the transport chain, we can see that measures to restrict the movement of people have also caused a lower number of stolen goods.

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