Twenty-five years on; a bibliographic analysis of articles appearing in the International Journal of Police Science and Management

Introduction

It has been twenty-five years since the inception of the International Journal of Police Science and Management (IJSPM), so this celebratory special issue seems a good opportunity to reflect on the degree to which the articles appearing in the Journal fulfilled the founding (and current) aspirations of the editors. The world in 1989 when IJPSM was founded had its share of tragedies, such as the downing of Pan Am flight 103 at Lockerbie and triumphs such as the fall of the Berlin Wall marking the end of the cold war. Policing in England and Wales was under scrutiny because of its catastrophic handling of the football fans at Hillsborough and also in Australia with the publication of the Wood Commission report (Wood, 1997) into misconduct in the New South Wales Police, whilst in America police shooting of black citizens was a cause of concern (Geller and Scott, 1992).

In the intervening years, some policing issues remain ongoing like the poor investigation and prosecution of violent and sexual crimes against women (Brown, 2022) and continued examples of police misconduct (Porter 2021). New ones have emerged such as the proliferation of crime in the cyber space (Hoar, 2005), the invasive impact of social media (Walsh and O'Connor,2019) and defunding debates in the United States (Fegley and Murtazashvili, (2023) and its reverberations internationally (Corley and Reber, 2023). As then, inflation currently stands at 7.9%, which affects resourcing of public services with the police service in the UK playing catch up after the loss of 20, 000 officers during the austerity years (Facchetti,2021). Yet other concerns ebb and flow as Bartkowiak-Théron (2019:220) notes with respect to police education and training with its current focus on professionalisation (Tong, 2017) and its association with evidence based policing (Fielding Bullock and Holdaway 2020) . Nor has policing worldwide escaped the ravages of the pandemic (Sheptycki, 2022) and the continued presence of terrorism (Wilson, 2020).

As founding editors, the present authors were committed to the reciprocal value of academic research informing police practices and practitioner experience informing the research agenda

(McKenzie and Brown, 1989:1). We hoped the Journal would report both theoretical and empirical papers, reflecting international scholarship and collaborative working. We aspired to an eclectic range of contributing disciples including but not limited to sociology, criminology, psychology, law, social and public administration as well as cross cultural collaborations, taking as read that the contributions would be rigorously peer reviewed. We recognized the advancement of cyber-crime and adoption of new technologies. After the first volume had been published, we further reflected that the Journal's contents would mirror our interests: police culture and diversity (Brown) and operational matters (McKenzie) (Brown, 1999). We, together with three subsequent editors, (Nikki McKenzie, Michael Rowe and Becky Milne) represent distinct areas of interest: (1) the role of psychology in policing and investigation, (2) the application of forensic science to investigations, (3) technological advances and implementation, (4) cybercrime and the digital space, and (5) criminology and global policing including human rights and conflict.[1] The Journal's disciplinary base expanded to encompass, politics, geography, history, economics, political science, jurisprudence, legal theory, biology and even human genetics (incorporating work on DNA) and increasing concerns about the environment.

Thus the aim of the current paper is to present an analysis of the articles appearing in the Journal from March 1989 to June 2023. We adopt a bibliometric approach and report on topics covered, methods used, countries and disciplines represented. We also offer some evaluation of the Journal's influence by examining citations and look at trends in coverage as these reflect policing issues.

Background

Police research has a rich history and Journals dedicated to publishing commentaries on police investigative techniques, management and administration date back almost a hundred years with the publication of The Police Journal (1928) and The American Journal of Police Science (renamed the Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology in 1932). They had much the same remit as contemporary police journals noting the widening scope of policing and the need to alert both the senior and junior ranks to new developments, the difference being that many of the contributors then, certainly for the Police Journal, were serving or former police

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[1] https://journals.sagepub.com/aims-scope/PSM

officers. The American counterpart was intended to communicate the ways in which modern science can be applied to detection emphasizing practical application and encouraged submissions representing "authentic" personal experience. Much of the earliest output was the work of "enthusiastic amateurs", "journalistic pop sociologies" and the "memoirs of retired police officers", with American police research being in its infancy (Reiner, 1992:439). Reiner (2015) notes the modern period of more academically oriented policing research can be dated from the 1950s (the work of the American scholar William Westley) and in the next decade the pioneering research of Michael Banton, Jerome Skolnick and Egon Bittner . The spur to these developments was political conflicts both sides of the Atlantic and the intellectual development of criminology and largely used ethnographic methodologies (Reiner,1989). At the time of the founding of the IJPSM in 1998, policing scholarship was dominated by Lawrence Sherman, David Bayley and Herman Goldstein (Wright and Miller 1998) with only four women appearing in their top 50 policing scholars.

Reiner (1989:8) attempted a "periodisation and typology" of police research in Britain trying to phase contemporary prevailing concerns with scholarly output. He notes the difficulties in doing this because of time lags in publication, with the theme of the study being either ahead or behind the predominant focus of the period or authors pursuing their particular interests independent of contemporary policing concerns. By the 1990s, Reiner suggests that police research had moved out of its more conflictual stage, which had focussed on police deviance, into a more contradictory phase in which police were losing their legitimacy through a degree of politicisation and the embracing by police of harder tactics when maintaining public order. This was succeeded by a crime control phase in the early twenty-first century, when police research became more concerned with intelligence-led policing and detailed crime-analysis (Reiner, 2010). Subsequently Davies (2016) argues that we are now in a collaborative phase entailing a more positive relationship between police and academia.

Two corollaries arise from phasing of police research. Firstly how to measure whether the research has been influential in contributing to policing policies and practices (Betts, 2022) and secondly the rigor of the research (Boulton et al, 2022). The evidence based policing (EBP) movement has been gaining traction in recent years but as Lum and colleagues discovered very few police officers read academic policing journals (Lum et al 2016) although a later study of British police officers found senior ranks saw the importance of EBP and were more likely to engage in academic practice, (Boulton et al 2021) and had greater enthusiasm for police-academic collaborations (see Paoline and Schnobrich-Davis,

2022) . Reading of articles does not of course necessarily mean the ideas are taken up so perhaps the growth in academic-police collaborative research might provide a better indicator, but at Betts (2022;18) argues

> "It seems to me that the growth of institutional arrangements that bind researchers to the researched are likely to negotiate a 'meeting in the middle' in determining research priorities. What may be lost in this coming together is the pursuit of more challenging research agendas and the critical questions these might generate. Police-academic partnerships seem to me to further endanger the production of critical research 'from the edge', while 'preferred partners' are granted 'insider' funding, access and data in return for validatory 'evidence' of a more conservative view of policing."

As the original editors, we hoped this new journal, which we founded after the demise of the Journal of Police Science and Administration (1973-1990), would be a vehicle for a greater and more constructive engagement between academia and police practitioners.

George Mason University has been tracking and noting oscillations in coverage of police research since 2000 (see Beckman et al, 2003, Mazeika et al, 2010 and Wu et al 2018). The latter observed that research on police investigative strategies and community policing had declined since the 2000-07 review and concluded that topics such as sexual assault and computer crime remained marginal in the police literature. Latterly studies conducted to address officer attitude and opinions, occupational health and officer stress and diversity issues saw sizeable increases.

Journal metrics include indices of the number of citations, downloads and online reads. These represent rather rough and ready indicators of impact and are more likely to indicate academic influencers rather than influence on practitioners. Snook et al (2009) created a level of interest score in policing research by dividing the total number of pages dedicated to policing articles by the total number of pages in five forensic psychology journals. They report an upward trend in output , mostly coming from North America and covering operational topics. They suggest that at that time, there was a discrepancy between police practitioner needs, which included psychological assessment of recruits, evaluation of candidates for promotion, and training police personnel in human relations techniques, and the aspects of police research that was then being published.

Method

The counting and analysis of journal articles to measure subject disciplinary trends has been a consistently used tool (e.g. gender studies in psychology, Eagly et al., 2012; criminology,

penology, psychology and Law, González-Sala et al., 2017; forensic psychology, Brown et al 2022, as well as in policing (Wright and Miller 1998; Beckman et al, 2003; Snook et al, 2009; Mazeika et al, 2010: and Wu et al 2018). These authors identified key journals, using either indexing terms or creating bespoke coding schemes of topic coverage. Collectively known as bibliometrics, Narin (1976) defines this as techniques using citation and/or publication counts to measure productivity, eminence of researchers or creating a mosaic of scientific activity. Our usage reflects the latter. Beckman et al (2003) developed a cross sectional approach to analyze police literature accessing a range of criminal justice multidisciplinary publications. They searched the two databases (from the National Criminal Justice Reference Service and the University of Maryland multi-database) and subsequently coded articles for substantive focus, research typology and publication medium. They described articles as theoretically driven discussions of issues or theories, descriptive narrative accounts not supported by primary research, correlational studies of survey or secondary data and outcome studies of empirical analyses evaluating a policy, program or tactic. This coding seems to confuse methods with analytics. Boulton et al (2021) separated these to categorize the studies they looked at by data type (secondary or primary) and analytic approach (qualitative, quantitative and mixed). We have drawn on these papers to assist in our analysis.

To re-iterate the aims of this paper are to;

1. assess the international coverage of articles;

2. determine the breadth of disciplines represented by the papers' authors;

3. examine the extent to which diversity was represented;

4. discover the range of topic coverage;

5. identify the research design and analytic strategy;

6. assess the relative influence of the Journal.

Analytic strategy

All the articles appearing in the Journal between March 1998 and June 2023 were located and inspected. Each was coded by means of the following coding scheme:

1. Date, volume and part number.

2. The research design employed

    a. primary data collection by quantitative methods which included questionnaires, surveys, experimental studies and randomized control trials;

    b. primary data collection by qualitative methods which included interviews, diary studies, observations;

    c. secondary analyses where researchers accessed court or police records or undertook further analyses on already collected quantitative data;

    d. mixed methods incorporating quantitative and qualitative elements;

    e. desk studies e.g. literature reviews, systematic reviews or meta analyses;

    f. explicitly theoretical driven.

3. The analytic approach used

    a. qualitative methods (including thematic analyses, frequency counts;)

    b. quantitative methods (e.g. bi-variate and multi-dimensional analyses;, regressions and modelling techniques);

    c. mixed methods of analyses (included in a and b above);

    d. comparative analyses;

    e. systematic reviews;

    f. whether a test of statistical significance was applied.

4. The forensic population who were the subject of the paper, which included police personnel, criminal justice professionals, witnesses, suspects offenders victims. This category also included students as research participants, the general public and other professionals;

5. Reference to diversity (i.e. age, sexuality, religion, gender, ethnicity or disability) and which of these groups was mentioned;

6. Identification of the broad topic covered;

7. The jurisdiction where the article originated and

8. Details of the authorship

    a. number of authors for each article

    b. sex of the first author

    c. discipline of the first author

    d. affiliation of author (i.e. whether police, academic or other).

An exhaustive listing of 150 topics were coded and to make the analysis more manageable these were grouped into ten higher order categories by the first author and reviewed and agreed by the second. The second author also coded a randomly chosen volume to check the inter rater reliability of other coding.

Findings

A total of 678 articles appeared in the Journal from its inception in 1998 to June 2023. Of these about a third (36%) were single authored, 33% dual authored and 32% had three or more authors. The majority of authors had academic affiliations (78%). Police officers who had acquired academic qualifications and were currently based in academic institutions represented 6% of the authorship whilst 7% were still serving as police officers.

International coverage

In all when looking at the jurisdiction of the first authors, they came from a total of 41 countries, the largest representation being from the United States (31.1%) and the United Kingdom (26.8%) followed by Australia (10.5%) and Canada ((5.6%). Table one, showing the broader categorizations of countries, reveals worldwide coverage with North America and Europe dominating and Latin America having the fewest contributors.

Table one about here

For the most part, research was undertaken in the first author's jurisdiction, but this was not always the case. For example, a number of scholars based in the United States conducted research in other countries such as the UK 13 (6%), India 6 (3%), China 4 (2%) and Nigeria 2 (1%).

Nine percent of papers were international in coverage, and these tended to be literature reviews. There were 13 two way comparison: USA and UK (10); USA and Taiwan (1) ; Scotland and the Netherlands (1) ; France and the Netherlands (1) and one three way comparison : UK, USA and Australia. The focus of these papers was mostly to do with quality of service, diversity, gender and equality issues or investigative interviewing.

The UK and African based scholars were most evenly split between sole and collaborating authorship with those from the Far East, Latin America and South East Asia the most likely to work collaboratively (73%, 75% and 80% respectively) (Chi square (9, N=678)=19.89,p<.001).

Disciplinary coverage

The discipline of first authors mostly hailed from the social sciences (51%) and police and criminal justice studies (24%). Psychology (which included forensic, clinical occupational/organizational, counselling, and criminological psychology) accounted for 21.8% of subject specialism. Authors whose subject discipline was criminology accounted for 19.3% and 19% designated themselves as coming from criminal justice studies. (See table two).

Table two about here

There may be a jurisdictional slant to these designations. The majority of Criminal Justice designations associated with a first author were from the United States (70%) whereas only 9% of those from England and Wales, 5% from Australia and 2% from Canada so designated themselves. In England and Wales first authors more often called themselves criminologists (55%) compared to 14% from USA, 10% from Australia and 9% from Canada. These difference were statistically significantly difference (Chi square (3, N=260)=98.77. p> 0.0001).

Authors from all disciplines were equally likely to write singly or collaboratively.

Topics

There were over 150 topics represented in the Journal over the period, of which about a third only appeared once. Occupational and traumatic stress was the single most written about topic (7%) followed by misconduct and corruption (5%) policewomen (4%) and police reform (4%).

A higher order coding revealed management issues as the most dominant (24.5%) followed by investigative processes (14.2%) and specific crimes (11.5%). Accountability and misconduct, stress, welfare and well-being and other policing deployments accounted for 9.6%, 9.1% and 8.6% respectively. Public/community issues and police personnel represented 7% of topics apiece whilst least covered were other personnel (4%) and equipment (4%). Within the broad crime and investigative processes categories burglary and investigative interviewing were the most frequent with violence against women and girls being marginal. (See table three)

Table three about here

The trends in coverage over time of these broad themes are presented in figure one. Coverage of operational issues declined over time whilst there was an upward trend for all other categories.

Figure one about here

Looking at periodicity phasing of topics covered, using Reiner's contradictory and crime control phases together with Davies' collaborative phase, figure two shows a degree of synchronicity (which was statistically significant-Kruskall-Wallis $H(2) = 13.6$, $p < .001$). In the contradictory phase, the Journal published more articles relating to police personnel and accountability compared to the other two phases. Investigation and crime related articles were more likely in the crime control phase whilst stress and welfare issues more likely appeared during the collaborative stage reflecting experiences of police forces internationally including India, Pakistan and Sweden.

Figure two about here

About half the response samples were police personnel with 39% being rank and file officers, 4% recruits, 3.5 % chief officers and 1% other senior ranks, and 0.5% specials or police volunteers. Only 2% of papers mentioned police support staff.

Diversity

Women were the first named author in 31% (210) and men 69% (466) of articles. Where women were named as first author, they were more likely to have collaborated (75%) than where men named as first author (58%). These differences were statistically significantly different (Chi square (1, N= 676)=17.99, p<.001). Australasia was most likely to have a women as the first named author (53%) and the Middle East, Far East and Latin American having male first named authors (100%, 80% and 100% respectively) (Chi square (9,N=676)=36.38, p<.001).

In terms of number of submissions, 6 women were amongst the first 50 authors who had contributed 3 or more papers.

Figure three shows that women first authors were more likely to present research on investigative strategies, policing personnel and stress and welfare compared to male first authors, whilst the latter were more likely have equipment issues and management concerns as their topic. (Mann Whitney U=16 p<.01)

Figure three about here

Of the 25 papers specifically focusing on policewomen's experience, 20 were written by a woman as first author.

Women first authors were most likely to be social scientists and very few from STEM subjects (only 3 compared to 18 men). Proportionally more men (26%) declared police and criminal justice studies as their designated discipline than women (20%). The gender distribution by discipline was statistically significantly different (Chi square (6, (N=639)=19.70,p<.003).

Specific mention of a protected characteristic (gender, ethnicity, age, disability, religion and sexuality) occurred in 252 (37%) of papers. When this occurred, gender was the most likely characteristic mentioned (111 times) followed by age (29) and ethnicity (20). Disability, religion and sexuality were infrequently addressed. Co-occurrences are shown in table four. Mentions were mostly in relation to participants in empirical studies and reference to findings broken down by those characteristics. Only one paper was found that presented findings in terms of inter-sectionality (Holder et al, 2000).

Table four about here

Diversity issues were more often reflected in papers where women were the first authors (50%) compared to when a male was first author (31%) (Chi-square (1, (N=676)=21.08, p<.001).

Research design and analytics

Overall, 127 (18.8%) of papers were designated as narrative desk studies. Embedded within the research design were 53 (7.8) explicitly theoretically driven papers. Specific theories mentioned include rational activity theory, expectancy theory, diffusion innovation theory and cultivation theory. There were 21 (3.1%) papers using psychometrics and 67 (9.9%) designated as an evaluation of a tactic, policy or procedure (of which 22 (33%) applied statistical tests of significance). Around 79% (542) were empirical papers. Of these 374 (55%) used primary data, 138 (20%) were secondary sources and 30 (4%) were mixed designs. Table five shows the split between qualitative, quantitative and mixed analytical strategies. Overall statistical tests were employed in 38% of papers. (See table five)

Table five about here

As to be expected quantitative analytic strategies were more likely to use statistical analyses (60%) than qualitative designs (9%) (Chi square =(1, (n= 469) =22.6. p<0.0001). Qualitative studies often used chi-square analyses as did quantitative studies with relatively few of the latter using more sophisticated structural equation modelling or regression analyses. Only a third of papers presented as an evaluation used statistical tests of significance.

Influence

The current Impact Factor of the Journal is 1.6 which is on the lower end of comparable Journals (e.g. Police Practice and Research (PPR) 0.6; Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology (JCLC) 1.1; Policing a Journal of Policy and Practice 1.8; Policing an International Journal of Police Strategies and Management (PIJPSM) 1.9; Police Journal 2.5; Police Quarterly 3.1). A tracking of changes in impact factor overtime (taken from researchbite web page) shows an upward trajectory for IJPSM and comparable journals (which were not statistically significantly different). See Figure four

Figure four about here

 Looking at the google scholar citation for individual article citations ranged from 265 (Pratt, Cullen and Bevins, 2000) to zero. Analysis of citations by volume was statistically significantly different (ANOVA, F=4.3, p<0.001) with citation peaking at volumes 6 and 7 (see Figure five). As to be expected citation decline with newer volumes.

Figure five about here

Where the paper had a woman as a first author average citation was 25.2 compared to male first authors which was 19.9 (t=-2.36, p< .018). There were no statistically significant differences by discipline or author's location.

Discussion

Overall, the Journal has met its aspiration to be international in coverage and multi-disciplinary. Around 44% were on broadly management topics and around a third on operational issues. About a third of papers had an explicit reference to diversity of which gender followed by age was the most likely protected characteristic mentioned. Only about one in ten papers made an explicit reference to a named theory. Thus, in terms of the original editors' goals for the Journal these were partially met.

For the later editors, there was fair coverage of the role of psychology in policing in so far as about a fifth of contributing authors came from psychological disciplines. There were relatively few papers on the application of forensic science to investigations and on technological advances and implementation within policing. Cyber-crime and the digital space only began appearing in later volumes whilst , as found by Wu et al (2018), with these issues remaining marginally covered. Whilst criminology was well represented human rights and conflict were less so.

Three broad observations that can be made for the Journal to consider when thinking about its future output; replicability; concentration of articles in the global north and androcentrism.

Determining influence is difficult to demonstrate. Boulton et al 2021 concluded that no simple formula exists to guarantee research makes a significant impact to practice and/or policy. They, to some extent, reflect Betts' (2022) concerns in the suggestion that where practitioners and academics work together to design research with specific aims around a particular intervention, the work is less rigorous but more likely implemented possibly because the force in question is more receptive to these findings as they have specifically asked for answers in relation to that topic. We cannot directly address the question of implementation in this paper, but we can show that the impact factor of the Journal has steadily increased over 25 years in line with other Policing Journals. A citation count reveals that articles about public attitudes towards, satisfaction with and trust and confidence in policing and community issues (such as fear of crime, media coverage) appeared to be most influential in terms of academic take-up. There was a degree of periodicity in that article coverage did synchronize with the phases identified by Reiner and Davies and it was striking that there were a number of papers utilizing psychometrics as suggested by Snook et al (2009).

Yet there were a significant number of papers in which the topic only occurred once and unlike e.g. Policing a Journal of Policy and Practice, IJPSM does not make use of the special issue format in which a number of papers on a theme can synthesis current thinking on a topic. In strictly scientific terms, Monk and Koziarski (2023:31) suggest that replication and reproduction are critical for understanding the reliability of findings from previous scholarship i.e. the cumulative nature of research is not only critical for knowledge creation, but for verifying what we know as well. They lament that this is insufficiently done in policing research. The Journal may wish to use the special issue format to address this potential shortcoming.

Whilst the Journal had good international coverage, articles were reflective of Anglo-American models of policing with relatively modest representation from Africa, Asia and Latin America. There is an emergent critique that suggests more attention should be paid to criminal justice practices in the 'global south' (Carrington et al, 2019). They argue (p163) countries from Asia, Africa and Latin America offer the opportunity to expand " the

criminological imagination beyond the North Atlantic world" and are making important contributions to critical thinking about crime, justice, and human rights, but which are rarely registered in this field of knowledge. Carrington and colleagues are critical of the practice of scholars from Asia training in criminology (and the social sciences, more generally) at universities in North America and Europe returning home to teach at universities in Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan, of using key texts translated from English which marginalized the contribution of distinct Asian theories of crime and justice. As was demonstrated above, there are a number of papers from scholars who are based in the United States or UK who study populations from their countries of origin by and large adapting westernised concepts and methods. The question for the Journal then is should it be asking for papers from this emergent field of scholarship to enrich thinking about crime and policing in the global north?

The Journal has, like the police service itself, a skewed ratio of women to men as contributing authors. Kringen (2014:376) argues that feminist critiques illustrate that androcentric research fails to consider the impact of gender on crime and criminal justice and that by failing to include gender not only ignores the possibility of gender differences, but also denies that the difference is worthy of further investigation. More particularly in the area of policing research it has been dominated by male researchers who have focused mainly on male officers. As a result, the existing understanding of policing is androcentric, and, in most of this research, women are treated as "other." Perhaps the Journal should consider moving away from only publishing research about women's experiences in navigating the police occupational culture but increase publicising innovative policies and practices that contribute to new thinking about management techniques and operational practices reflecting scholarship from the global south. It was also noteworthy that other protected characteristics were unlikely to feature in analyses of empirical data.

Conclusion

Overall, IJPSM has achieved a diverse authorship in terms of discipline and jurisdiction, and covered a wide range of topic and thus largely achieved the ambition of the original and subsequent editor, Michael Rowe. Rowe (2018) hoped that the Journal would share "research findings across a broad range of topics of interest to contemporary policing around the world." Rowe also suggested that challenges of climate change, biosecurity, environmental hazards, forced migration represented topics that the Journal might cover and as yet there

have been relatively few articles dealing with these issues. It has been less successful in publishing articles with a diversity dimension particularly when addressing ethnicity, disability and sexuality. The number of women contributors remains relatively low with only 6 appearing in the top 50 of first named authors. Whilst this is an incomplete picture as women do appear as second and third authors, the indications are that women, as in policing itself, are underrepresented. Violence against women, cyber-crime and new technologies have also been marginal. Instructions to authors and use of the special issue format may assist in addressing these limitations.

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