**Abstract.** This scoping review aims to map how a review as a research method is used in Scopus-indexed police journals. Using the scoping review method and keywords ‘police’ and ‘policing’ in the Source section and Title field in Scopus databases, ten police journals covered up to 2022 were identified. After being assessed against the inclusion and exclusion criteria, 81 articles out of 471 were included in the analysis in MAXQDA, software for qualitative and mixed methods data analysis. Although two journals out of ten provided detailed descriptions for review articles, there are no strict restrictions from all the journals. General (n=32), systematic (n=27), scoping (n=11), narrative (n=9), integrative (n=1), and systematised (n=1) review methods were used in the following five categories: interdisciplinary/development (n=24), police strategies/practices (n=20), mental health (n=16), organisation (n=13), and police and community (n=8). This study is the first to map a review as a method used in police journals. However, police-related literature is far more extensive than studies covered in Scopus-indexed journals. For practitioners and policymakers, the study presents an overview and knowledge to formulate questions for academics; researchers get an overview of police journals’ expectations and actual practices; students gain the potential to increase their learning pace and enhance their knowledge of the method’s potential.

**Keywords:** literature review methods, police journal, knowledge creation, police

---

**Introduction**

Answering the challenges of a complex and unpredictable social world, the orientation in the growing body of police-related literature\(^1\) becomes demanding while getting fast and trustworthy evidence is crucial. Practitioners need help with evidence-based decision-making, researchers are looking for knowledge to help refine research questions and directions, police students need the possibility to increase their learning pace, and policymakers need proof to make adequate choices for the sake of society. Luckily, the review as a research method is developed to create new knowledge from the known. Reviews equip readers with coherent information about a particular topic, and the literature review as a research method

---

contributes to conceptual, methodological, and thematic development.² Starting from medicine and spreading through the social sciences, the potential of reviews to create new knowledge from what is known is enormous and becoming evident.³ The general question here is how the review as a research method is used in the field of police to support practitioners, students, researchers, and policymakers.

Despite the vast possibilities for publishing and the interdisciplinary nature of police research, it seems logical to search for police-related knowledge within police journals. Thus, the latter is the primary data source in this research. Since at least 48 review types have been identified,⁴ the choice has to be well-reasoned. To meet the purpose of this study, I use the scoping review (ScR) method, which aims to map key concepts, sources of evidence, and gaps in the topic.⁵

This ScR aims to map how a review as a research method is used in Scopus-indexed police journals. In this research, the ‘how’ is generally understood through the method used, and the topics of the analysed studies.

To provide a state-of-the-art review, I aim to answer the following two research questions:

1) How has review as a method been used in Scopus-indexed police journals’ review articles up to 2022?

2) What are the most common themes, topics, and types of articles published in police journals indexed in the Scopus database up to 2022?

To answer the research questions, I conduct an ScR according to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses extension for Scoping Reviews.⁶ Since ScR is ‘useful for examining emerging evidence when it is still unclear what other, more specific questions can be posed and valuably addressed by a more precise systematic review’⁷ and to ‘identify research gaps in the existing literature’,⁸ it is an appropriate research method to answer the research questions.

I first clarify the essence of review as a research method and elaborate the ScR method in more detail. Then I describe the methodology of this research. The analysis starts with reviewing the context for review research posed by police journals (n=10) and then moves to the included sources (n=81).⁹ The discussion and conclusion sections summarise, criticise, and present further research directions.

Review as a method: aim and limitation

Why do review articles matter? Eugene Garfield, the developer of the concept of a scientific citation index,10 wrote already in 1977 that ‘[i]n any given specialty, after the publication of 50 to 250 articles there is usually a need to consolidate the information into a readable, authoritative ‘review’’.11 Endeavour for original knowledge is the characteristic separating stand-alone literature reviews from those that are part of a piece of research.12 New knowledge can be based only on existing knowledge, and a new becomes achievable only after realising the limits of existing works.13

However, the body of knowledge is multiplying, making reviews even more valuable for readers, but challenging for researchers. Also, as Snyder14 argues, ‘[b]y integrating findings and perspectives from many empirical findings, a literature review can address research questions with a power that no single study has’. The importance of reviews is so immense that Garfield15 even presented ‘an opportunity to create a new profession, that of the ‘full-time‘ scientific reviewer’. Indeed, the two unique features of a review article in addressing grand challenges are the ability to broaden the scope of the problem, discover general patterns and gaps, and integrate various streams of research across theories.16 A literature review allows us to understand a voluminous body of knowledge; therefore, it holds the top position of the hierarchy of evidence.17 However, a high-quality literature review requires various scientific skills and capabilities.18

Methodology

I conduct an ScR to answer the research questions, gather and analyse data, and present results. Methodological accuracy is essential in all research, but especially in review research, because of the potential overall impact.

In this research, I follow19 this description of the meaning of the review as a research method: ‘an umbrella term for various types of review articles and define it as a class of research inquiries that employ scientific methods to analyse

11 E. Garfield, Proposal for a new profession-scientific reviewer, Current contents, 1977, p. 84.
12 S. Kunisch et al., op. cit., p. 11.
15 E. Garfield, op. cit., p. 85.
18 S. Kunisch et al., op. cit. a, p. 4.
19 Ibid., p. 5.
and synthesise prior research to develop new knowledge for academia, practice and policy-making’. Accordingly, the inclusion criteria in this research have one main principle: the article should use or intend to use a review as a primary method to analyse prior research to develop new knowledge. Articles that use reviews as a part of research instead of the primary method are excluded.

The intention to use a review as the primary method should be discoverable in the methodology or illuminated via the research ethos. Following the purpose of this research, I aim to capture as many studies as possible, which also means that the evaluation of the quality of each source is inadequate due to principal changes in this field. For example, the first study in this sampling was published in 2002, but the development of review research methods has been remarkable during these intervening twenty years.

For the analysis, I used software for qualitative and mixed methods data analysis — the MAXQDA Analytics Pro 2022 rich toolbox — to mitigate potential biases and decision-making flaws.

Defining a sample from the vast body of literature is demanding but possible. The Scopus database is the source for this research because of its complex search tools, extensive coverage, high-quality standards, and the most significant scope of reviews.

To define police-specific journals, two separate queries were applied. After using the keywords ‘police’ and ‘policing’ in the Source section and Title field, 19 journals were retrieved. Since the review research should hold a future orientation, only journals maintaining present coverage were included. All ten included journals are published in English.

Selection of articles published up to 2022 is the result of the following steps in Scopus carried out for each journal separately:

- retrieving the number of all published articles: Search/Documents Within ‘ISSN’ / Published from All years to 2022 / Added to Scopus Anytime; (executed 2023-01-15)
- retrieving articles using the word ‘review’ in the article’s title, abstract, or keywords: Search / Documents Within ‘ISSN’ / ‘review’ Within Article title, Abstract, Keywords / Published from All years to 2022 / Added to Scopus Anytime; (executed 2023-01-15)
- metadata, including abstracts of the retrieved articles using the word ‘review’, were exported from Scopus directly into Zotero. (executed 2023-01-15)

Actions in MAXQDA preceded the final list of included studies (n = 81):

Zotero RIS files with all the data were exported and imported into MAXQDA.

- In the first phase, the abstracts (n = 471) were assessed against the inclusion and exclusion criteria, coded according to the inclusion decision, and the reason was entered in a comment field;

---


• In the second phase, retrieved texts were assessed against the inclusion and exclusion criteria, coded according to the inclusion decision, and the reason was entered in a comment field.

The PRISMA 2020 flow diagram (Figure 1) explains the research process, and Table 1 presents detailed data about the journals and article selection results. The combination of the two provided the data and the context for the analysis.

**Fig. 1. PRISMA Flow Diagram**

Tab. 1. Data of included journals and numbers of the sample selection process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source title</th>
<th>All published articles up to 2022</th>
<th>&quot;review&quot; in the title, keywords, and abstract Included</th>
<th>Excluded</th>
<th>Not accessible</th>
<th>ISSN</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
<th>Coverage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>International Journal of Police Science and Management</td>
<td>542</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1461-3557</td>
<td>SAGE</td>
<td>Scopus coverage years: from 2002 to Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology</td>
<td>819</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0882-0783</td>
<td>Springer Nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal of Policing, Intelligence and Counter Terrorism</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1833-5330</td>
<td>Taylor &amp; Francis</td>
<td>Scopus coverage years: from 2006 to 2013, from 2016 to Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nordic Journal of Studies in Policing</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2703-7045</td>
<td>Universitetsforlaget AS</td>
<td>Scopus coverage years: from 2020 to Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police Journal</td>
<td>668</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>0032-258X</td>
<td>Vathek Publishing</td>
<td>Scopus coverage years: from 1974 to 1986, from 2002 to Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police Practice and Research</td>
<td>753</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>1561-4263</td>
<td>Taylor &amp; Francis</td>
<td>Scopus coverage years: from 2009 to Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police Quarterly</td>
<td>545</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1098-6111</td>
<td>SAGE</td>
<td>Scopus coverage years: from 1998 to Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policing</td>
<td>1364</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>1363-951X</td>
<td>Emerald Publishing</td>
<td>Scopus coverage years: from 1997 to Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policing (Oxford)</td>
<td>498</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>1752-4512</td>
<td>Oxford University Press</td>
<td>Scopus coverage years: from 2014 to Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policing and Society</td>
<td>1034</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>1043-9463</td>
<td>Taylor &amp; Francis</td>
<td>Scopus coverage years: from 1990 to 2003, from 2005 to Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUM</strong></td>
<td><strong>6480</strong></td>
<td><strong>471</strong></td>
<td><strong>81</strong></td>
<td><strong>387</strong></td>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Table created by author on Scopus data
Note: Journal data retrieved 28. December 2022; abstracts retrieved 15. January 2023

The two accompanying principles concerning review articles are scientific transparency of the overall research process and accuracy. High standards are linked to potential influence, the ethical and professional underlining principle of scientific research. Aligned to the purpose of grasping studies with the ambition of the review article, this ScR does not assess the quality of studies. Nevertheless, inconsistencies...
in specifying research methods were apparent. There are several definitions of methodology and method, but the ‘most common definitions suggest that methodology is the overall approach to research linked to the paradigm or theoretical framework while the method refers to systematic modes, procedures or tools used for collection and analysis of data’.23 Clarifying the underlying research principles could raise the overall trustworthiness and help both the authors and readers. Thus, ScR, as a knowledge-creation method in this research, needs a deeper look.

Since the identified review types expanded from 14 in 2009 to 48 in 2019,24 why ScR should be used is a valid question. According to Arksey and O’Malley’s seminal work, there are two distinct ways of thinking about scoping studies: as a part of an ongoing process seeking to deliver a systematic review or as a stand-alone research method to identify gaps in existing evidence.

More precisely, the ScR aims to systematically map the literature on a particular topic to identify key concepts and gaps in the research.26 Martin et al.27 call studies that aim to summarise analytical methods conducted within a specific discipline or being domain agnostic a methodology scoping review.

ScRs are exploratory/descriptive, not explanatory/analytical28 and are a valid approach in those circumstances where systematic reviews cannot meet the necessary objectives or requirements.29 In asking questions the ‘What has been done previously?’ and ‘What does the literature say?’ about a particular topic, they provide invaluable information, but not in a framework that makes it possible to propose narrow recommendations for practice.30 The ScR method is perfect for specifying the scope or coverage of a body of literature on a given topic and giving a precise indication of the volume of literature available and an overview (broad or detailed) of its focus.31 Providing practical understanding for decision-makers into the nature of a concept and how it has been studied is particularly helpful when the literature is complex and heterogeneous.32

Because of the potential influence of review studies, the question about quality is hard to overestimate. Therefore, a clear, consistent, and transparent research design is an inherent part of review studies. Quality standards are changed over time, which is one reason why a critical appraisal of studies published in different periods is questionable.

24 M.D.J. Peters et al., 2020, op. cit., p. 2120.
29 Z. Munn et al., op. cit., p. 1.
30 H. Khalil et al., op. cit., p. 157.
31 Z. Munn et al., op. cit., p. 2.
32 M.D.J. Peters et al., 2020, op. cit., p. 2121.
Different review methods have different standards, and some of them get updates. For example, Tricco et al. present the PRISMA-ScR (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic reviews and Meta-Analyses extension for Scoping Reviews) checklist and explanation for scoping reviews. This guidance has already undergone several updates.

Results

Police journals’ aims, topics, and article types

This section presents the results of the analysed aims, topics, and article types presented in police journal homepages to clarify the general context for publishing review articles. Also, the data are necessary to design a deductive part for the second phase.

Concerning the aim, three of ten journals explicitly concentrate on a particular topic (psychology, terrorism) or region (Nordic countries). Although the other seven journals express particular aspects (e.g., interdisciplinarity, innovation), they still carry a more generalist ethos. However, there are no restrictions for using a review as a method.

The police journals cover many topics, which partly overlap and may operate at different levels. The overall 53 topics fall into six categories in two themes (Table 2).

Tab. 2. Themes and topics coverage of police journals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Police organisation, governance, and policy (38 topics)</th>
<th>Research, associated topics, and social context (15 topics)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Police functions (17 topics) (e.g., organised crime, traffic enforcement)</td>
<td>Linking other professions, and themes (9 topics) (e.g., victimology, correctional practice)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police organisation (14 topics) (e.g., career development, police reform)</td>
<td>Research, and advancement of police profession (4 topics) (e.g., professions and practicalities of policing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy, governance, strategy (7 topics) (e.g., community policing, police policy and activity)</td>
<td>Police in social context and community (2 topics) (e.g., what the police do and the policing decisions in community)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Table created by the author on data from police journals’ homepages

The data presented in Table 2 express the broad range of topics that differ in many aspects, including scope. However, since the level of analysis is not predefined, even the narrowest topics can be dealt with at a general level without methodological limitations. The aims and topics express a general context, which,


along with the mentioned article types, may have a crucial impact on the author’s decision to pick a journal or refine a research method.

The journal’s web pages presented the following categories: original articles, book reviews, debates, reviews, and miscellaneous types. The latter contains the biggest category, carrying a descriptive or encouraging ethos (e.g., forum articles; viewpoints; essays; good practice, or practice evaluation). In reading, the labels sometimes felt like a suggestion of a topic or a hidden expectation for a particular type or method.

In six journals out of ten, reviews were mentioned in various ways (e.g., systematic review; general review; theoretical overview; literature review). Two journals (Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology; Policing: An International Journal) provided additional descriptions, which lead more directly to methodological choices. Nevertheless, the fact that some journals do not mention reviews or present detailed descriptions does not mean that the journal does not publish reviews. So, the aim and topics set a context for research and do not necessarily limit the methodological choices. However, the presented article types may guide researchers to prefer or avoid some research methods. Also, a general label such as ‘article’ or ‘research article’ may include research using a literature review as a method, and from that point, a literature review is nothing but a research article. This research exposes actual publishing practices and urges readers not to stop at the description available but to take a tour of published issues.

Methods in use

This study is about review methods. From all 81 sources, the general review in which any particular type was mentioned was the most used type (n=32), and the systematic review appeared as the most often used distinct type (n=27). Interestingly, although using research questions is mandatory in a systematic review, 16 sources out of 27 labelled as a systematic review did not contain a clearly stated research question, which raises the question of the appropriate implementation. The description of steps taken under the label of some methodology without opening the latter is one penetrating characteristic to emphasise. Also, the systematic review itself, as a sign, seems to have some even mythological power to ensure the uninsurable. For example, Ike et al.35 argue that ‘[t]he adoption of a systematic review approach highlights our study’s rigour in ensuring a non-biased and robust review of the literature’. In this uncited sentence, the authors argue that unbiased research in social science research is possible.

Yet, learning from interdisciplinary knowledge is a distinct strength of review research. For example, King and Dunn36 reveal anecdotes from criminal justice textbooks about detecting deception by police officers, and Whelan and Dupont37 present important misconceptions about using network theories in the safety field.

However, the method in use prescribes the potential of research. To give the reader, especially practitioners and policymakers, an initial overview, I describe the methods used in this study’s sample. All the studies that fall under the general review category (n=32) have a broad ambition towards the review article without specifying the review type. Thus, holding the ethos of review research, the general review does not apply as a particular method in this research.

Systematised review: The label ‘systematised review’ may confuse readers since it seems similar to a systematic review. Indeed, there are similarities or, more precisely, overlaps. It includes some critical aspects of the systematic review but is considered a systematised review if the study does not meet all the systematic review criteria.38 According to Grant and Booth,39 a systematised method often appears as an assignment in a postgraduate study if it cannot meet all the systematic review method criteria.

Integrative review: As the broadest type of research, the integrative review method captures experimental and non-experimental studies and integrates knowledge from theoretical and empirical research.40 Also, it is not common to emphasise philosophical or paradigmatic perspectives, but Kirkevold41 claims that ‘more reviews should be carried out from an explicit philosophical and theoretical perspective, rather than being purely descriptive of the existing research’. According to Torraco,42 in the frameworks of individual research, most integrative literature reviews deal with both mature and new topics. Thus, by doing research in an integrated way, new knowledge will be generated.

Narrative review: Xiao and Watson43 argue that ‘narrative review is probably the most common type of descriptive review in planning, being the least rigorous and ‘costly’ in terms of time and resources’. This type of review grasps various methods, and in the case of quantitative studies, it presents findings without any reference to statistical significance.44 Green et al.45 introduce a review of the narrative research method. A narrative review may deliver valuable information on the topic of interest if planned and carried out correctly. At the same time, the narrative review provides the weakest evidence if one strives to resolve some particular problem.

Scoping review: In general, the scoping review tries to identify the potential size, scope, and nature of the literature of interest.46 It can define conceptual boundaries
and gaps in the field of study. According to Arksey and O’Malley, there are two different ways of thinking about the scoping review: as a part of a review to produce a full systematic review or as a particular research method. They also insist that there is no definite procedure for the scoping review, and the quality assessment is not strict as in a systematic review.

Systematic review: In their study of review research as scientific inquiry, Kunisch et al. present the stream of positivist tradition in systematic reviews and shows the spread of ideas across many disciplines, especially those keen on evidence-based decisions. Despite the rigorousness and strict method, systematic reviews do not produce ‘answers’ but are bases for decisions. It is a research method and a process for collecting and critically evaluating relevant data to identify all empirical evidence in the frames of a research question. Grant and Booth describe the purpose of a systematic review as being ‘to systematically search for, appraise and synthesis research evidence, often adhering to guidelines on the conduct of a review’.

Frequently used topics in review methods

In this phase of the analysis, I have two purposes. Firstly, to recognise the covered topics in every review method, and secondly, to recognise how a topic gains attention. For the latter, I use the categories revealed through the analysis. However, the analysis covers often-used topics in all categories by review type (see: Table 3) and presenting all the detailed analysis results would overload this article. Thus, for coherence, I present training, community, and mental health as penetrating and distinct topics to describe the usage of the review type.

Training

The word ‘training’ appeared in 67 articles out of 81 of the studies, but emerged as a distinct topic in 27 within three categories and three review types.

In the general review method, training appears within two categories: interdisciplinary/development, and police and community.

Although in the interdisciplinary/development category, training (n=13) as a term holds a prominent position and positive axiomatic connotation, proof of the latter is not easy to find. For example, Vess et al. argue that ‘[s]ex offender specific supervision requires training in effective assessment and interviewing skills’. Although the purpose of the study is not to find evidence about this

47 Y. Xiao, M. Watson, op. cit., p. 95.
49 S Kunisch et al, 2023, op. cit.
51 H. Snyder, op. cit, p. 334.
52 M.J. Grant, A. Booth, op. cit., p. 95.
particular argument, it still presents only one angle. At the same time, studying circumstances under which prior conviction evidence may positively or negatively influence judgements, Schmittat argues that ‘it remains unclear if legal training improves the cognitive compliance to not use PCE for certain judgment’.

In this regard, training appears to be a topic that needs further attention from both empirical and methodological perspectives. On a large scale, the positive influence of and need for training in various fields seems axiomatic. However, training is always a choice to take something in and simultaneously let something out. As Paterson put it: ‘The added value of higher education involvement lies within the role of designing and implementing a learning strategy that is underpinned by a clear evidence-base to meet identified targets’.

One study falls into the police and community category and deals with training programs regarding disabilities provided to police officers.

The systematic review method was used in eleven training-related studies. In the interdisciplinary/development category, training (n=6) was one main topic. While training is primarily related to a particular organisation, whether educational or safety-oriented institutions such as an academy or police organisation, the border-crossing importance of training programs is worth mentioning. In this category, the training concerns a variety of disciplines, such as remand prisoners or effective communication during major crises, which all carry the police-supportive ethos.

In the strategies/practices category, training (n=5) is not just training for muscle memory but with other actors from the accompanying fields. The need for interdisciplinary knowledge and inter-functional awareness-oriented training was evident. Here, the training is closely related to police practices in various domains, for example, gaze control and police and social work and service collaboration.

The narrative review method was used in two studies falling into the interdisciplinary/development category. Training appears to concern the quality of interviewing and police misconduct to achieve better quality.

---

Community

The word ‘community’ appeared in 68 articles out of 81 studies but emerged as a distinct topic in 25 within three categories and two review types.

In the general review method, community appears within two categories: police strategies/practices, and organisation.

In the police strategies/practices category, a community, although from different angles, is one penetrating term (n=8). Asking, ‘are two types of strategies and related theories sufficient for understanding policing gun crimes?’ Jiao63 presents lines between community, police, and safety via police strategies. Prince et al.,64 examine investigative practices, and in addition to community policing, community-related aspects such as members and engagement get attention. Studying trends in policing and the mentally ill in Europe, Moore,65 amongst others, presents the community as a coherent body. Crowl’s66 study about the effect of community policing on fear and crime reduction, police legitimacy, and job satisfaction stretches community policing strategy from police-community relations to organisational aspects such as job satisfaction and policing behaviour.

Like in many other categories, the term community (n=4) holds an important position in the organisation category. A community appears as one slice of the police’s task environment,67 as a police strategy affecting police organisational design,68 or as a particular way of policing (community policing).69

In the systematic review method, community appears within three categories: police strategies/practices, organisation, and police and community.

In the strategies/practices category, the term community (n=6) presents various meanings with their accompanying terminology. For example, community, in addition to the widespread usage, signifies domain (e.g., law enforcement70), community-embedded organisation (e.g., schools and hospitals71), and representative of the police function (e.g., community support officer72).

---

70 B. Heusler, C. Sutter, op. cit.
71 G.T. Patterson, P.G. Swan, op. cit., p. 864.
In the organisation category, the term concerns organisational aspects of community policing strategy or program. Whether in the context of the level of the police or a characteristic in the organisational design.

In police and community, the term community appears mainly from two perspectives. The first concerns community policing interventions, and there is little to add. The second, however, is the perspective of relations between the police and the public. Although the meaning here concerns improving police-community relations, not a relational perspective per se, it is still worth mentioning.

**Mental health**

The word pair ‘mental health’ appeared in 37 articles out of 81 but emerged as a distinct general category supported by 16 studies and a specific topic in five studies within two categories and two review types.

In the general review method and mental health category, police officers’ mental health (n=3) is in the spotlight, forming a somewhat coherent line. While Violanti et al. deal with police stressors and their impact on mental and physical well-being, Velazquez and Hernandez study the reasons why police officers do not seek mental health treatment, and Marston et al. focus on how gamification may help to deal with mental health issues.

If the scoping review studies in the mental health category concern the police, the studies (n=2) in the strategy/practice category are also concerned with mental health issues but focused on policing. Park et al. ask how police officers who are not trained in mental health professionals deal with mental health issues, and Hickey et al. are interested in police reassurance following a collective trauma event.

To understand the complexity of the police profession, these two lines concerning mental health issues in scoping review studies — focus on the police and policing — present the value of different theoretical and analytical perspectives.

---

75 T.J. Ike, et al., *op. cit.*
### Tab. 3. Often-used topics in all categories by review type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Keywords in general categories by review methods</th>
<th>General review (n=32)</th>
<th>Systematic review (n=27)</th>
<th>Scoping review (n=11)</th>
<th>Narrative review (n=9)</th>
<th>Integrative review (n=1)</th>
<th>Systematised review (n=1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interdisciplinary/development (n=24)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>training (n=14), education (n=11)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(n=6) training (n=6), communication (n=5), network (n=3)</td>
<td>(n=0)</td>
<td>(n=3) training (n=2), personality (n=3)</td>
<td>(n=1) education (1)</td>
<td>(n=0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police strategies/practices (n=20)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(n=6) community (n=5), community (n=6), drug (n=4)</td>
<td>(n=2) mental health (n=2)</td>
<td>(n=3) force (n=3), perception (n=3), complaint (n=3)</td>
<td>(n=0)</td>
<td>(n=0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental health (n=16)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(n=8) post-traumatic stress disorder (n=8)</td>
<td>(n=3) stress (n=3), resilience (n=3)</td>
<td>(n=1) well-being (n=1)</td>
<td>(n=0)</td>
<td>(n=1) secondary trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder (n=1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation (n=13)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(n=4) community (n=4), public (n=4)</td>
<td>(n=5) accountability (n=5), public (n=5)</td>
<td>(n=0)</td>
<td>(n=0)</td>
<td>(n=0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police and community (n=8)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(n=2) training (n=1), perceptions of the police (n=1)</td>
<td>(n=3) trust (n=3), community (n=3)</td>
<td>(n=1) factors influencing trusted relationship (n=1)</td>
<td>(n=2) race (n=2)</td>
<td>(n=0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Table created by author

Note(s): Text in italics indicates an overall number of category’s sources in a particular review type

### Discussion and Conclusions

In this ScR, I aimed to map how a review as a research method was used in Scopus-indexed police journals. Since the journals’ expectations limit the authors’ choices, I first determined ten police journals holding present coverage in Scopus and identified 81 studies with the ethos using a review as the method for knowledge creation published up to 2022.

Using data on the aims, topics, and article types presented on police journal’s homepages, I discovered 53 topics falling into two themes (Table 2):

1. police organisation, governance, and policy (three categories with 38 topics);
2. research, associated topics, and social context (three categories with 15 topics).
Although two journals out of ten provided detailed descriptions for review articles, there are no strict restrictions from all the journals. In fact, with one exception (Nordic Journal of Studies in Policing), all have published review articles.

Since the chosen methods should align with the ambition of the research, the discovered methodological choices are one of the most crucial pieces of wisdom for the audience. Studies with clearly elaborated methods bring valuable knowledge to different readers. For example, systematic reviews (n=27) could get the attention of people looking for bases for decision-making, but scoping reviews (n=11) for those trying to grasp a field or topic. Uncovering the latter was one of the two research questions. After the axial coding and analysis, I ended up with the above elaborated five topics: interdisciplinary/development (n=24), police strategies/practices (n=20), mental health (n=16), organisation (n=13), and police and community (n=8).

From henceforth, being aware of the expectations and focus of police journals, the potential of the review method, and the topics studied, the field’s current state is mapped. Practitioners and policymakers have an overview and the knowledge to formulate questions for academics; researchers have an overview of police journals’ expectations and actual practices; and students can speed up their learning pace and enhance their knowledge of the method’s potential.

This scoping review has some limitations. To make the review feasible, I limited the study to Scopus-indexed police journals, but the scope of police-related literature is far more extensive. As such, the results are only generalisable to Scopus-quality police journal-oriented English-language peer-reviewed articles.

The lack of comparative knowledge of high-level police journals’ preferred aims, topics, and methods, and, more importantly, the knowledge-production methods, such as review methods, keep students, practitioners, researchers, and policymakers behind the veil of ignorance. This ScR aimed to map how the review as a research method is used in Scopus-indexed police journals. The evidence found shows that although it is possible to publish research using the review as a method, in light of the growth of all studies, the overall use of this knowledge-creation method is modest. To encourage researchers and mobilise readers, elaborated descriptions in police journals’ specifications for review articles could be helpful. Also, the overall contribution of research with a clearly expressed research question, aim, and method surpasses studies with undefined research questions, vague aims, and nebulous methods.

Although the evidence introduced above delivered the potential of the review as a knowledge-creation method, the mild use of reviews in light of the growing body of literature opens the door for review research in both already-established topics such as police strategies and organisation, and also unavoidably critical but largely untouched topics such as sustainability and climate change.

References


About the Author

Priit Suve, PhD, Associate professor of public management of School of Governance, Law and Society, Tallinn University and professor of police theory Institute of Internal Security of Estonian Academy of Security Sciences in Estonia. Field of scientific: the police, policing, organisations, power. E-mail: priit.suve@sisekaitse.ee.

Streszczenie. Niniejszy przegląd ma na celu określenie, w jaki sposób recenzja jako metoda badawcza jest wykorzystywana w czasopismach policyjnych indeksowanych w bazie Scopus. Korzystając z metody przeglądu zakresowego i słów kluczowych „policja” i „policyjny” w sekcji Źródło i polu Tytuł w bazach danych Scopus, zidentyfikowano dziesięć czasopism policyjnych z okresu do 2022 roku. Po ocenie pod kątem kryteriów włączenia i wykluczenia, 81 artykułów z 471 zostało włączonych do analizy w MAXQDA, oprogramowaniu do analizy danych jakościowych i metod mieszanych. Chociaż dwa z dziesięciu czasopism dostarczyły szczegółowe opisy artykułów przeglądowych, nie ma ścisłych ograniczeń ze strony wszystkich czasopism. Ogólne (n=32), systematyczne (n=27), zakresowe (n=11), narracyjne (n=9), integracyjne (n=1) i usystematyzowane (n=1) metody przeglądu zostały wykorzystane w następujących pięciu kategoriach: interdyscyplinarne/rozwojowe (n=24), strategie/praktyki policyjne (n=20), zdrowie psychiczne (n=16), organizacja (n=13) oraz polityka i społeczność (n=8). Niniejsze badanie jest pierwszym, które przedstawia przegląd jako metodę stosowaną w czasopismach policyjnych. Jednak literatura związana z polityką jest znacznie obszerniejsza niż badania uwzględnione w czasopismach indeksowanych przez Scopus. Dla praktyków i decydentów badanie stanowi przegląd i wiedzę umożliwiającą formułowanie pytań dla naukowców; badacze uzyskują przegląd oczekiwanych i rzeczywistych praktyk czasopism policyjnych; studenci zyskują możliwość zwiększenia tempa uczenia się i poszerzenia wiedzy na temat potencjału metody.
**Resumen.** La presente revisión tiene por objeto identificar cómo se utiliza la reseña, como método de investigación, en las revistas policiales indexadas en la base de datos Scopus. Utilizando el método de revisión por alcance y las palabras clave “policía” y “policing” en la sección Fuente y en el campo Título de las bases de datos Scopus, se identificaron diez revistas policiales. Tras evaluar los criterios de inclusión y exclusión, se incluyeron 81 artículos de un total de 471 para su análisis en MAXQDA, un programa informático de análisis de datos cualitativos y métodos mixtos. Si bien dos de las diez revistas proporcionaron descripciones detalladas de los artículos de revisión, no existen limitaciones rigurosas por parte de todas las revistas. Se utilizaron métodos de revisión generales (n=32), sistemáticos (n=27), de alcance (n=11), narrativos (n=9), integradores (n=1) y estructurados (n=1) en las cinco categorías siguientes: interdisciplinarios/de desarrollo (n=24), estrategias/prácticas policiales (n=20), salud mental (n=16), organización (n=13) y policía y comunidad (n=8).

El presente estudio es el primero que aborda la revisión como método utilizado en las revistas policiales. No obstante, la bibliografía relativa a la policía es mucho más amplia que las estudios incluidos en las revistas indexadas en Scopus. Para los profesionales y los responsables de la toma de decisiones, el estudio proporciona una revisión y fuente de conocimiento para formular preguntas a los investigadores; los científicos obtienen un panorama de las expectativas y las prácticas reales de las revistas policiales; los estudiantes tienen la oportunidad de acelerar su aprendizaje y ampliar sus conocimientos sobre el potencial del método.