

POLICE RESEARCH ABSTRACTS

(Compiled by the Centre for Criminal Justice and Police Studies at UWS)

John W. Bond (2008) 'The value of fingerprint evidence in detecting crime', *International Journal of Police Science and Management*, vol. 11 (2): 77-84.

Fingerprints are collected routinely from crime scenes for a wide range of offences and their timely identification is now seen as key to their success in the investigation and detection of crime. In this study, a logistical regression analysis of fingerprint identifications for the volume crime offences of residential burglary, commercial burglary and theft of motor vehicle in Northamptonshire, UK over a three-year period has revealed a number of predictors, other than timeliness, that influence greatly whether fingerprint identifications result in the detection of crime. The results indicate that a number of these predictors are of statistical significance and may be just as relevant in determining whether a fingerprint identification successfully detects the crime as the timeliness of the fingerprint identification. The most significant predictor was found to be investigating police officer accreditation, with fingerprint location and mobility also being relevant. Accreditation of the Crime Scene Examiner recovering the fingerprints and whether DNA material from the crime scene was also identified were found not to be significant. Consideration is given to where further emphasis is needed by the UK police service to maximise the opportunities

K.C. Scott-Brown and P.D.J. Cronin (2008) 'Detect the unexpected: a science for surveillance', *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies and Management*, 31 (3): 395-414.

The purpose of this paper is to outline a strategy for research development focused on addressing the neglected role of visual perception in real life tasks such as policing surveillance and command and control settings. The scale of surveillance task in modern control room is expanding as technology increases input capacity at an accelerating rate. The authors review recent literature highlighting the difficulties that apply to modern surveillance and give examples of how poor detection of the unexpected can be, and how surprising this deficit can be. Perceptual phenomena such as change blindness are linked to the perceptual processes undertaken by law-enforcement personnel. A scientific programme is outlined for how detection deficits can best be addressed in the context of a multidisciplinary collaborative agenda between researchers and practitioners. The development of a cognitive research field specifically examining the occurrence of perceptual "failures" provides an opportunity for policing agencies to relate laboratory findings in psychology to their own fields of day-to-day enquiry. The paper shows, with examples, where interdisciplinary research may best be focussed on evaluating practical solutions and on generating useable guidelines on procedure and practice. It also argues that these processes should be investigated in real and simulated context-specific studies to confirm the validity of the findings in these new applied scenarios.

David Best et al. (2008) 'Gender differences in risk and treatment uptake in drug using offenders assessed in custody suite settings', *Policing and Society*, vol. 18, no. 4: 474-485.

The aim of the study was to assess gender differences in risk profile among drug users in police custody in Birmingham and to examine levels of drug treatment engagement by gender. This article presents findings from an assessment of 1082 Arrest Referral Risk Matrices used by Drug Arrest Referral Workers in police custody between 2005 and 2006. Risk is measured on three elements, 'drug spend', current offending and arrest history, and three warning categories (lack of drug treatment engagement, history of violence in the last 12 months and history of weapons in the last 12 months). This generates a composite score that categorises the offenders as high, medium or low risk. The results revealed higher overall risk and higher drug spend amongst female drug using offenders, yet lower levels of treatment engagement than in males. The study supports previous research suggesting high levels of acquisitive crime among female offenders, yet there is little indication that this group are being targeted satisfactorily through drug treatment services.

Robert Smith (2009) 'A call for the integration of 'Biographical Intelligence' into the National Intelligence Model', *Policing* 3(2):191-199.

Biographical intelligence is an established concept within Intelligence circles and is used to develop a wider picture of activities of heads of state and politicians likely to be harmful to the interests of the sovereign state collecting such data. However, to date, despite the pervasiveness of the National Intelligence Model in Britain in professionalizing the face of policing, the concept of biographical intelligence has yet to mature. This briefing paper examines this overlooked issue and in particular discusses why biographical intelligence could prove to be a useful addition to the Intelligence armoury of policing. The paper demonstrates how crime entrepreneurs can gain competitive advantage across

a lifetime by exploiting existing gaps in the intelligence system and how as a result they can stay 'one step' ahead of the police intelligence apparatus. The constructed narrative shows up systemic flaws in the system that are still relevant and open to exploitation by resourceful and intelligent criminals.

Peter Sproat (2009) 'To what extent is the UK's anti-money laundering and asset recovery regime used against organised crime?', *Journal of Money Laundering Control*, 12 (2): 134-50.

Politicians justified the introduction of the illiberal and liberal parts of the UK's anti-money laundering and asset recovery regime by reference to the extra-ordinary threat posed by organised crime. This paper attempts to evaluate the extent to which the financial measures contained in the Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA) 2002 and the Serious and Organised Crime and Policing Act 2005 are actually used against this threat. The objective is achieved by reference to four distinct datasets found on the use of these measures. The first consists of the regular, usually monthly, bulletins on the Proceeds of Crime produced by the Assets Recovery Agency (ARA). The second – which reveals the length of sentences given to those convicted of money laundering offences under the POCA – was gathered from the Financial Action Task Force, the Home Office and Justice Office in Scotland. The third consists of the value of the cases which had been, and which were being, dealt with by the ARA at the time the National Audit Office produced its report on the institution. The fourth is the number of financial reporting orders which have been imposed upon criminals, follows the discovery of an earlier version whilst examining parliamentary records. The triangulated results suggest that the POCA powers – originally used by use against organised crime – were used against this alleged threat only on a small minority and number of occasions. This infrequent use raises major questions of either the ability of the policing agencies including the Serious and Organised Crime Agency to take on organised crime and/or the credibility of those who exaggerated a threat of organised crime to justify them (often illiberal) powers. This paper questions whether the POCA will achieve one of its original aims. It will interest politicians and practitioners concerned with the combating of organised crime and/or anti-money laundering and asset recovery as well as criminologists and those interested in civil liberties.