MAPPING THE LANDSCAPE OF COLLABORATIVE POLICING: A BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS OF GLOBAL RESEARCH TRENDS

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Abstract

Collaborative policing is a multifaceted approach that involve the collaboration of various police agencies and community groups to improve crime prevention, information sharing, and public safety. This approach has gained prominence because it can address complex social problems and enhance public safety through collective efforts. This study aimed to determine research trends in collaborative policing using bibliometric analysis combining five leading journal databases, including Scopus, ScienceDirect, SageJournals, Emerald Insight, and Taylor & Francis. A total of 58 articles published up to May 2025 were then subjected to a series of identification processes, including the profiles of the most contributing authors, number of citations, publication types, and keyword co-occurrence. VOSviewer was used to analyze and visualize relationships in the academic literature and identify trends, gaps, and contributions from previous research. The results show that collaborative policing research has undergone significant evolution and is concentrated in Western countries, particularly the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia. Analysis of keyword co-occurrence over time confirms a shift in focus from fundamental concepts, such as community policing to more structured, measurable, and evidence-based approaches such as evidence-based policing and interagency collaboration. This emphasizes the importance of partnerships, information sharing, and multi-agency collaboration as a key focus of current research. This study identifies gaps for further research covering a range of themes, such as quantitative impact evaluation of collaborative programs, challenges in implementation on the ground, the role of technological innovation in facilitating partnerships, and strategies for sustainably enhancing community engagement.

Keywords: community policing, collaboration, crime prevention, evidence-based policing, interagency collaboration.

INTRODUCTION

In the last two decades, policing approaches have undergone a significant transformation from the traditional one-way law enforcement-oriented model to a more participatory and collaborative approach. Collaborative policing is a policing model that emphasizes cooperation among law enforcement agencies, the community, other government agencies, the private sector, and academic institutions to increase the

effectiveness of crime prevention and public safety (Kratcoski and Edelbacher, 2015). This model can address the complexity of contemporary social and criminal problems because it involves collaborative partnerships (Choi and Choi, 2012) and the implementation of third-party policing (van Felius, 2025) as an effort to address various crime problems.

The concept of collaborative policing is also closely related to the idea of networked governance, where policing is positioned within a governance network that demands synergy between actors (Kim, 2025; Bevir, 2016). Several terms are often associated with these various approaches, for example: partnership policing (Stenström, 2023), community policing (Houtsonen, 2017), networked policing (Fleming, 2006), and soft policing (Wooff, 2017). Each approach emphasizes collaboration, trust, exchange of information, and community-based policymaking. In this context, the collaborative approach is not only operational but also strategic because it concerns the division of roles and accountability in security governance.

Although this concept has been widely adopted in practice and policy across various countries, the dynamics, development, and scope of collaborative policing have not been systematically mapped, particularly using a bibliometric analysis approach. Therefore, bibliometric mapping is needed to identify trends, scientific contributions, and remaining research gaps in this field. A bibliometric approach allows for quantitative analysis of the scientific literature to identify publication patterns, prominent authors, and keyword networks and to visualize emerging themes (Marvi and Foroudi, 2023).

The main question in this study is: What are the trends, contributions, and scope of research in collaborative policing studies based on current global academic literature? This study aims to: (1) map collaborative policing research trends through bibliometric analysis of five international journal databases (Scopus, ScienceDirect, Sage Journals, Emerald Insight, and Taylor & Francis); (2) identify the most influential authors and publications; and (3) analyze keyword co-occurrence to explore key themes and opportunities for further research.

The theoretical contribution of this study lies in providing a comprehensive overview of scientific developments in collaborative policing studies while enriching the discourse on inclusive and network-based security governance. Practical contributions are aimed at policymakers, law enforcement, and academics in developing more responsive, participatory, and adaptive policing strategies to contemporary challenges.
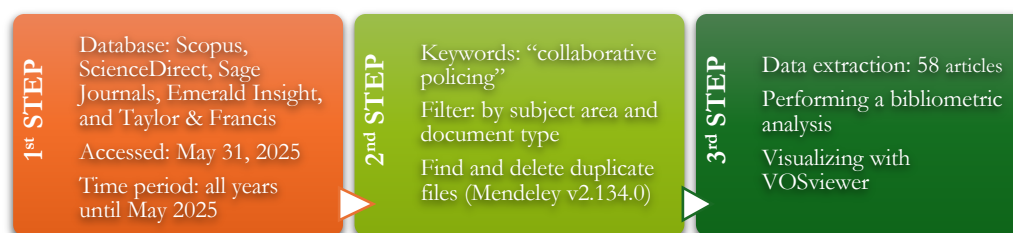
METHODOLOGY

This study employed a bibliometric approach, which is quantitative method used to review the scientific literature. This method uses quantitative and mathematical data to explore topics in the literature, identify trends, and in-depth understand the development of a scientific field (Donthu et al., 2021). Therefore, this approach is relevant for understanding the dynamics and academic contributions of collaborative policing. The bibliometric analysis stage consisted of three steps: (1) selecting databases relevant to the research topic, (2) determining specific keywords and search criteria to obtain accurate data, and (3) extracting data for further analysis from the search results.

First, the scope of the literature search was limited to five leading scientific journal databases: Scopus, ScienceDirect, Sage Journals, Emerald Insight, and Taylor & Francis. These five databases were selected because they reflect international coverage, are relevant to scientific disciplines, and provide comprehensive metadata for bibliometric analysis. In the second step, the search process was carried out using the main keyword "collaborative policing" in the five previously determined databases. A total of 89 publications were obtained from the initial search results. Next, the article data were filtered based on two criteria: (1) the subject area is social science and (2) specifically address and discuss collaborative policing. At this stage, 65 publications were obtained, and the same article titles were rechecked and deleted.

Table 1. Search Query "Collaborative Policing" in 5 Databases

Database	Query
Scopus	(TITLE-ABS-KEY("collaborative policing") AND (LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA,"SOCI")))
ScienceDirect	n/a
Sage Journals	n/a
Emerald Insight	(content-type:article OR content-type:book-part) AND ("collaborative policing")
Taylor & Francis	[All: "collaborative policing"] AND [All Subjects: Social Sciences]

Sources: Author Analysis, 2025

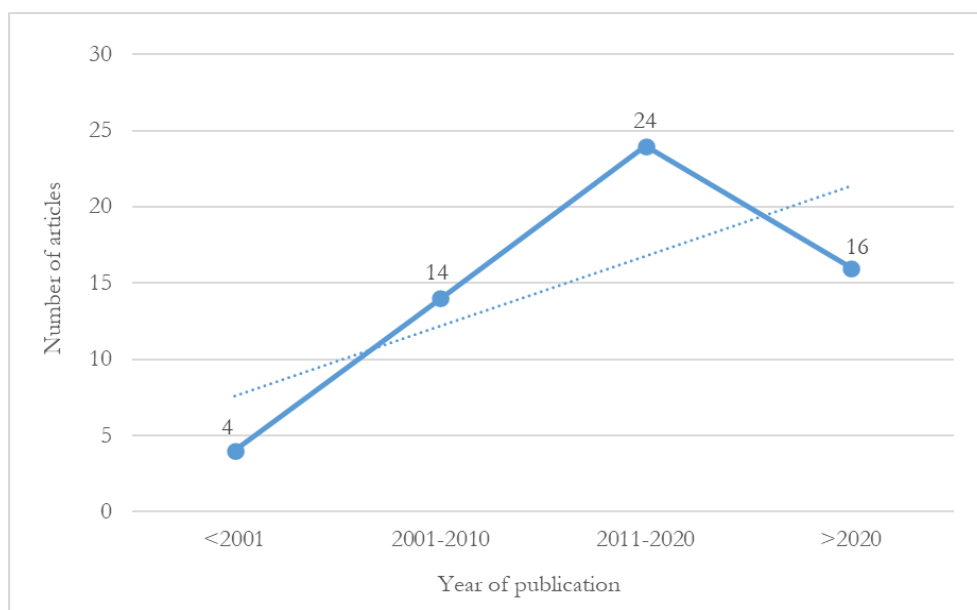**Figure 1**. Steps of the Bibliometric Analysis
Sources: Author Analysis, 2025

The data filtering process yielded 58 documents for bibliometric analysis, including the number of scientific articles, document type, publication year, author background profiles, and institutional affiliations. Visualization was performed using VOSviewer software to illustrate the main research topics and observe collaboration patterns among the authors of articles relevant to this study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
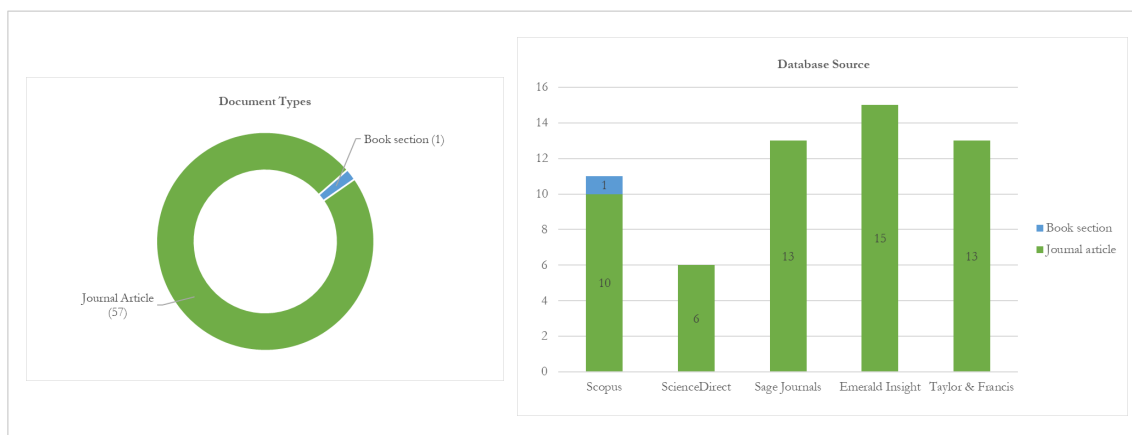
Number of Published Scientific Articles

Data extraction results from a bibliometric analysis of 58 articles on collaborative policing indicate that the first article was published in 1994. The article, written by Bennett (1994), entitled "Community Policing," was published in Criminal Justice Matters, Volume 17, Issue 1, Autumn 1994, Pages 6-7. Bennett explicitly states that public support for community policing is demonstrated, in part, through their interest in more collaborative policing responsive to local needs. This is a direct reference linking public demand with a collaborative policing approach. In short, Bennett's (1994) article serves as a critical introduction to community policing. This article emphasizes that the idea of collaboration between the police and the public is at the heart of the philosophy, even explicitly using the term "collaborative policing" to describe community expectations. This first article indexed by Taylor & Francis marked the beginning of research on collaborative policing, although the next article was published four years later.

Figure 2. Collaborative policing trends in publication.
Sources: Author analysis, 2025

Figure 2 shows that over 17 years (1994-2010), the publication trend on the topic of collaborative policing was relatively small, with only 18 articles. However, since 2011, this topic has been widely studied and published by researchers, with 40 articles recorded as of May 2025, with an average publication of 2-3 articles per year.

Figure 3 presents data on the distribution of collaborative policing publication document types sourced from five leading databases. Of the 58 documents analyzed, journal articles are significantly dominated by publication types, comprising 57 documents, while only one document is in the form of a book section. Based on distributing sources, Emerald Insight is the largest contributor with 15 journal articles. Next comes Sage Journals and Taylor & Francis, each contributing 13 journal articles, followed. Another database, Scopus, contributed 11 documents (10 journal articles and 1 book section), followed by ScienceDirect with 6 journal articles.
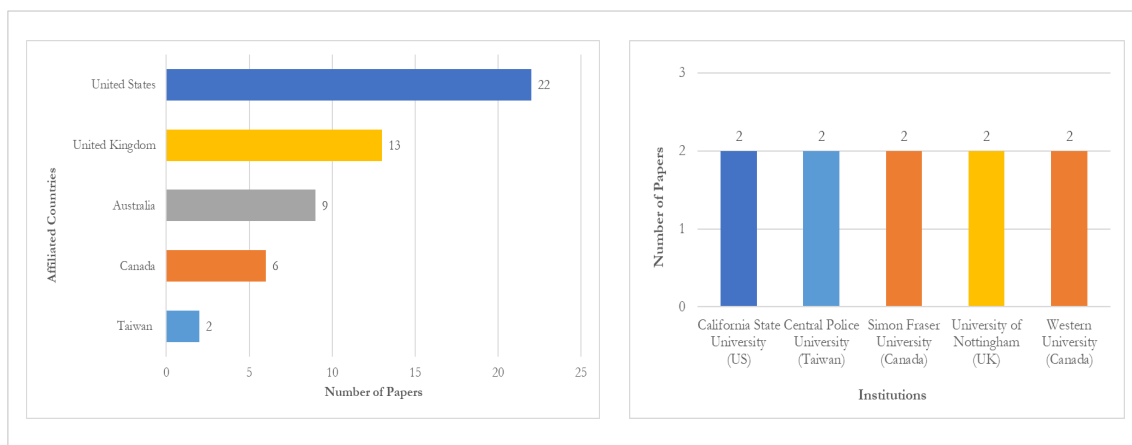

Figure 3. Distribution of Document Types and Publication Sources on Collaborative Policing.
Sources: Author analysis, 2025

Background and Author Contributions

Analysis of the author affiliations of the 58 articles reviewed revealed a wide geographic and institutional distribution, but with a concentration in a few countries. A total of 11 authors from 11 different countries were identified. Figure 4 shows that academics from Western countries dominate research on collaborative policing. The United States made the most significant contributions, with 22 publications. This is followed by the United Kingdom with 13 publications, Australia with 9 publications, Canada with 6 publications, and Taiwan with 2 publications.

At the institutional level, the research landscape is more evenly distributed. Of the 53 different institutional affiliations, no single institution is dominant. The five institutions with the highest number of publications—each with two contributions—are California State University (US), Central Police University (Taiwan), Simon Fraser University (Canada), the University of Nottingham (UK), and Western University (Canada). This indicates that collaborative policing is an area of interest for many institutions, although no single research center has yet emerged as a leading figure in the field.

Figure 4. Top 5 Most Affiliated Countries and Institution Publishing "Collaborative Policing" Research
Sources: Author analysis, 2025

Distribution of Highly Cited Journals and Articles

Bibliometric analysis of 58 articles on collaborative policing identified that the publications were spread across 33 different sources. Table 2 presents the top five sources with the most articles published in this area. With 11 articles, Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management was the most productive source. Police Practice and Research ranked second and third with 5 articles and Policing and Society with 4 articles, respectively. Of the top five sources, three journals had searchable impact metrics (CiteScore, SJR, and SNIP), which generally indicate indexing status in the Scopus database. Interestingly, despite ranking fourth in terms of the number of articles (3 articles), Child Abuse & Neglect demonstrated significantly superior impact metrics (CiteScore 6.1, SJR 1,497, and SNIP 1,555). This indicates that Child Abuse & Neglect has very high academic influence and prestige within this research area despite not publishing most articles.

Table 2. Top Five Collaborative Policing Publication Sources Based on Article Numbers

Rank	Source Title	CiteScore (2024)	SJR (2024)	SNIP (2024)	Number of Papers
1st	Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management	n/a	n/a	n/a	11
2nd	Police Practice and Research	4.5	0.707	1.172	5
3rd	Policing and Society	5.8	0.896	1.447	4
4th	Child Abuse & Neglect	6.1	1.497	1.555	3
5th	Policing: An International Journal	n/a	n/a	n/a	3

Sources: Author Analysis, 2025

Table 3. Top 3 Articles on "Collaborative Policing" with the Most Citations in Each Database

Rank	Title (Authors)	Year	Source Title	Document Type	Total Citations	TC/Y
Scopus Databases						
1st	Police 'empires' and information technologies: Uncovering material and organisational barriers to information sharing in Canadian police services	2013	Policing and Society	Article	35	2.92
2nd	Changing the way we do business: Reflecting on collaborative practice	2012	Police Practice and Research	Article	32	0.68
3rd	'Fencing them in': The A-League, policing and the dilemma of public order	2009	Soccer and Society	Article	7	0.44
ScienceDirect Databases						
1st	The enforcement archipelago: Detention, haunting, and asylum on islands	2011	Political Geography	Article	385	27.50
2nd	The Memorandum of Good Practice: theory versus application	2001	Child Abuse & Neglect	Article	185	7.71
3rd	Catch 20.5: Corporate morality as an organizational phenomenon	2010	Organizational Dynamics	Article	92	6.13
Taylor & Francis Databases						
1st	Policing Terrorism: A Threat to Community Policing or Just a Shift in Priorities?	2006	Police Practice and Research	Article	67	3.53
2nd	Building the capacity of police change agents: The nexus policing project	2008	Policing and Society	Article	49	2.88
3rd	Police 'empires' and information technologies: uncovering material and organisational barriers to information sharing in Canadian police services	2012	Policing and Society	Article	34	2.62

Sources: Author Analysis, 2025

Table 3 presents the three publications with the highest number of citations from each database to identify the most influential articles in collaborative policing research: Scopus, ScienceDirect, and Taylor & Francis. These data covers a long period of publication,
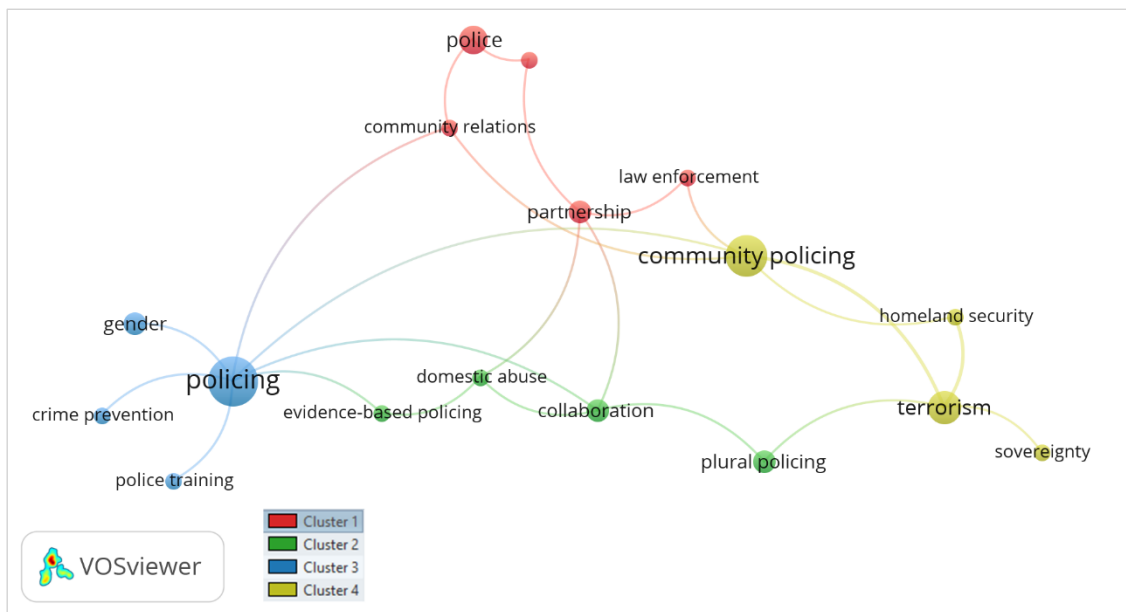
with the oldest relevant article dating back to 1994, demonstrating the topic's evolution over more than three decades. The most striking finding comes from ScienceDirect, where the article titled "The enforcement archipelago: Detention, haunting, and asylum on islands" (2011) is the most cited publication by a significant margin, with 385 total citations and an average of 27.50 citations per year (TC/Y). The high impact of this article is likely influenced by its publication in the journal Political Geography, which has a cross-disciplinary audience (such as political geography and migration studies), beyond policing studies.

For comparison, the most cited article in Scopus is "Police 'empires' and information technologies: Uncovering material and organizational barriers to information sharing in Canadian police services" (2013) published in Policing and Society with 35 citations. Meanwhile, the article "Policing Terrorism: A Threat to Community Policing or Just a Shift in Priorities?" (2006) from the journal Police Practice and Research holds the top spot with 67 citations. Overall, the distribution of the most cited articles across journals such as Political Geography, Child Abuse & Neglect, and Policing and Society demonstrates the interdisciplinary nature of collaborative policing research.

Co-occurrence Analysis of Keywords

Keyword co-occurrence analysis is a bibliometric technique used to study the relationships between keywords in a document collection. Researchers can identify emerging topics and trends in a field by analyzing keyword occurrences' frequency and pattern. The analysis yielded 184 author keywords from 58 articles on the topic "collaborative policing," which were grouped into four clusters (Figure 5). Cluster 1 (colored red) is characterized by five nodes dominated, by community relations, interagency collaboration, law enforcement, partnership, and police research. Cluster 2 (green) is characterized by four nodes dominated, by research topics such as collaboration, domestic abuse, evidence-based policing, and plural policing. Cluster 3 (blue) is characterized by four nodes dominated by crime prevention, gender, police training, and police. Cluster 4 (colored yellow) is characterized by four nodes dominated by research topics related to community policing, homeland security, sovereignty, and terrorism. Overall, this visualization illustrates the interconnectedness of various concepts in policing studies through the central idea of collaboration. This map shows that collaborative policing is not a stand-alone topic but rather a "conceptual umbrella" where key terms such as 'partnership' and 'collaboration' serve as bridges connecting fundamental
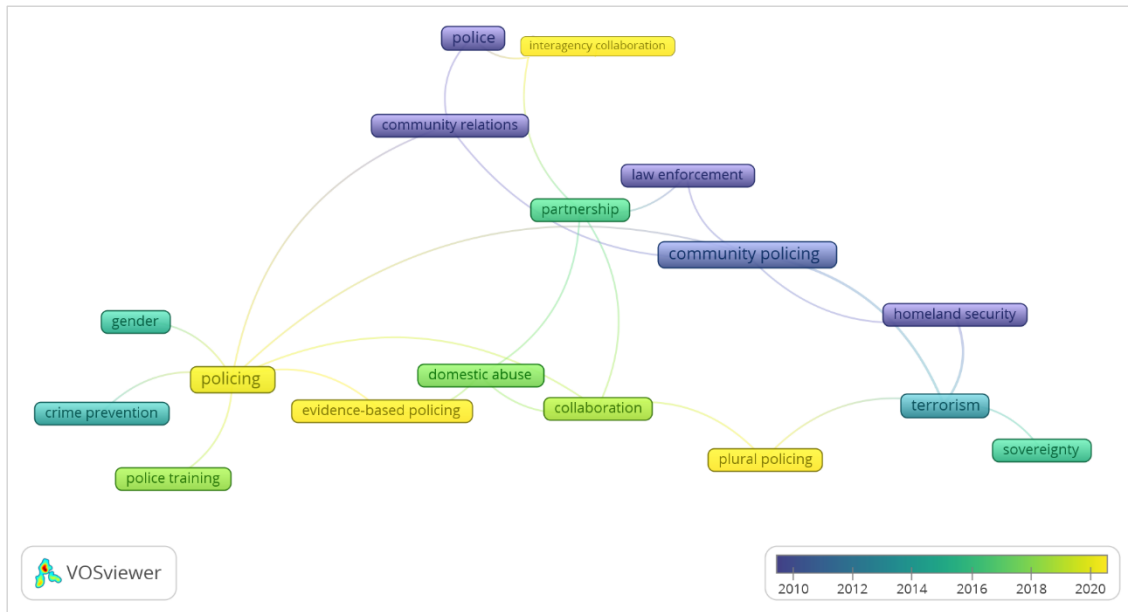
policing practices (as in the Green Cluster) with complex contemporary security issues (as in the Yellow and Blue Clusters).

Figure 5. Keyword Co-Occurrence Network Visualization of Collaborative Policing.
Sources: Author analysis, 2025

Figure 6 presents a keyword co-occurrence overlay visualization that maps the relationships of keywords from 1994 to May 2025. The topic of "collaborative policing" has evolved and expanded in scope, encompassing trends, concepts, and research focus. An increasing emphasis is placed on more specific, structured, and evidence-based approaches. This is evident in the recent emergence of newer terms, such as plural policing, evidence-based policing, and interagency collaboration. Furthermore, the development of the concept of policing is gaining increasing attention as a key factor in crime prevention strategies. Overall, this visualization provides a strong foundation for further research in the field of "collaborative policing."

In contrast, earlier concepts (in purple and blue, circa 2010-2014) such as community policing, law enforcement, and terrorism constitute thematic pillars that serve as the foundation for subsequent research developments. This color evolution from blue to yellow signifies that the discourse of "collaborative policing" continues to move from the question of "why" collaboration is necessary (which is largely answered by the concept of community policing) to the question of "how" collaboration can be implemented effectively, measurably, and involves various specific parties (which is now answered by the trends of evidence-based policing and interagency collaboration).

Figure 6. Keyword co-occurrence overlay visualization of collaborative policing.
Sources: Author analysis, 2025

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study's bibliometric analysis provides a landscape map of the quality and quantity of articles from authors worldwide on collaborative policing studies. Between 1994 and May 2025, these articles were published in reputable journals drawn from five leading databases—including Scopus, ScienceDirect, Sage Journals, Emerald Insight, and Taylor & Francis. A bibliometric analysis of 58 scientific articles reveals significant developments in this field of research, particularly since the 2000s. A significant increase in the number of publications on specific models and applications of collaborative policing has been noted, indicating a growing interest in this topic. The analysis shows that research topics in this field are evolving toward a more structured, evidence-based, and multi-stakeholder approach. Recent studies have increasingly emphasized the importance of impact evaluation, interagency information sharing, and strategic partnerships in solving complex security problems. Concepts such as community policing, evidence-based policing, and interagency collaboration are central focuses. Keyword analysis indicates a shift in research focus from theoretical aspects to practical applications, with a growing number of studies exploring how collaboration concepts can be effectively, measurably, and inclusively implemented across multiple stakeholders. Therefore, this study recommends that future research delve deeper into implementation challenges in the field, quantitatively measure the impact of

collaboration programs, and explore the role of technological innovation in facilitating effective partnerships.

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