



Theoretical Perspectives of Police Science and Their Implementation in Police Duties

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Abstract: This study aims to formulate a conceptual understanding of police science and analyse its implementation in policing practices by synthesising global policing literature. The research adopts a qualitative conceptual approach using a systematic literature review of academic publications, including classical and contemporary studies related to policing theories, strategies, and institutional development. The analysis focuses on major policing approaches such as community policing, problem-oriented policing, intelligence-led policing, and evidence-based policing to identify theoretical patterns, developments, and research gaps. The findings indicate that police science is an interdisciplinary field that integrates criminology, sociology, law, and public policy to explain policing institutions, strategies, and practices. The study also finds that the development of police science has shifted towards evidence-based approaches, emphasising the integration of empirical research, professional judgement, and community values in policing decisions. However, most existing studies still concentrate on operational policing strategies rather than positioning police science as a comprehensive academic discipline with a clear theoretical foundation. This study proposes a conceptual definition of police science as an applied interdisciplinary discipline and develops a theoretical framework linking police science, policing strategies, operational practices, and public legitimacy. The findings contribute to strengthening the conceptual foundation of police science and provide direction for integrating scientific knowledge into policing practices.

Keywords: Police Science, Policing Theory, Evidence-Based Policing, Policing Strategies, Police Legitimacy

Introduction

Police science is essentially intended as an applied field that bridges scientific knowledge (theory, research, methods) with policing practice (policy, governance, and actions) to ensure an effective, accountable, and democratically legitimate policing (Jaschke, 2008). However, the literature also indicates a persistent “disconnect” between science/research and policing practice—many police policies and innovations are implemented without adequate scientific evaluation, resulting in evidence-based policy not yet becoming mainstream in many police organizations (Weisburd & Neyroud, 2011). Such circumstances often make “police science” differ across countries: in some European contexts, it is understood as a relatively established educational, professional, and research

framework, while in many other countries, it is still considered a loose term or a "small part" of criminology/public policy (Jaschke, 2008).

Globally, the shifting paradigm of modern policing increasingly demands that police science have an operational scientific basis: the police must not simply "follow procedures," but must also be able to test the effectiveness of actions, minimize negative impacts, and maintain legitimacy through fair treatment (procedural justice) (Weisburd & Neyroud, 2011). Within the evidence-based policing movement, for example, policing is understood as a decision-making process that involves research, evaluation, analysis, and scientific processes in police decisions (Lum & Koper, 2013). Contemporary definitions even emphasize the integration of three elements: the best available evidence, professional judgment, and community values, preferences, and conditions so that police practice is not only "research-based" but also practitioner-centred and community-oriented (Klose, 2024: 1-2). Thus, the implementation of global police science is moving toward "evidence-based policy," while maintaining democratic dimensions (legitimacy, procedural justice, and accountability).

The problem, in Indonesia, is more specific: the concept of "police science" is still often understood as internal knowledge/service education. It has not yet been fully positioned as a widely recognized discipline with strong links to the global research ecosystem, and has not been consistently translated into work standards and decision-making within task forces (Wahyurudhanto, 2026). Recent Indonesian literature also emphasizes that the context of plural policing (multiple security actors), the dynamics of legitimacy, and democratic security governance demand a renewed paradigm of police science—Indonesian National Police (Polri) is not merely "an executor" but also a manager of security networks that require scientific foundations, regulations, and public accountability (Wahyurudhanto, 2026: 1-2). At the practical level, evidence-based policing studies that lead to scientific decision-making are beginning to be encouraged, but are still portrayed as a need for reform that is not evenly distributed within the organization (de Fretes, 2024).

The research problem of this paper stems from the study's findings that: (1) the evidence-based policing (EBP) model demands a shift in organizational culture from habit/tradition-based decisions to analysis-based decisions—and this in many places is a major challenge to the implementation of EBP (Lum & Koper, 2013: 3-6); (2) in Indonesia, trust-building approaches (e.g., procedural justice) are still considered "underutilized" within Polri, and practices often shift toward repressive patterns, so that the gap between scientific concepts and field implementation remains wide (Fitrianto et al, 2025); and (3) strengthening legitimacy through fair and respectful interactions has proven crucial—even sanctions that effectively suppress violations can erode legitimacy if not delivered respectfully to citizens (Perez-Vincent & Schargrotsky, 2024: 3). This series of problems demonstrates that the key issue is not simply "the existence or absence of police science," but how it is scientifically defined, recognized, and then practiced as the standard for decisions and actions in police duties.

The state of the art of current research position shows that international discourse is moving from the slogan "use research" to an operational definition that demands the

integration of evidence-professionalism-community values (Klose, 2024: 1-2), while the discourse on police science reform emphasizes changing university-police relations so that police science becomes an organizationally owned (police-owned science) that directly supports evidence-based practices (Weisburd & Neyroud, 2011: 1-2). In Indonesia, the articulation of the reform of the police science paradigm has also begun to link it to issues of legitimacy, democratic governance, and plural policing (Wahyurudhanto, 2026), and encourages EBP as a basis for decision-making that reduces bias in practice (de Fretes, 2024). However, an explicit intersection between theoretical perspectives of police science and the implementation map of Polri's duties (including preventive, pre-emptive, repressive, and service domains) has yet to be established as a systematic conceptual framework.

The study aims at (1) formulating a conceptual understanding of police science (as an applied discipline) and explaining how global theoretical perspectives guide the implementation of police duties (Jaschke, 2008) (Weisburd & Neyroud, 2011); (2) mapping the condition and position of police science in Indonesia (particularly Polri) in relation to EBP practices and the principle of legitimacy/procedural justice (de Fretes, 2024: 1-3; Fitrianto et al, 2025); and (3) formulating future implementation directions so that police science becomes a framework for decision-making and action that is measurable, accountable, and aligned with community values (Klose, 2024: 1-2). The novelty of this research lies in the development of a conceptual-implementation model that integrates: (a) the definition/perspective of police science as an applied discipline, (b) a new-generation EBP framework (evidence-professional judgment-community values), and (c) the need for Polri reform in the context of legitimacy and democratic security governance, as a single argumentative design directly linked to police duties (Klose, 2024) (Wahyurudhanto, 2026).

Methodology

This research employs the qualitative approach with a library research method to analyse the concept of police science and its implementation in policing practice. The qualitative approach was chosen because this research aims to gain an in-depth understanding of policing concepts, theories, and practices through analysing the academic literature and previous research. Creswell (2014) explains that qualitative research is used to understand social phenomena through the interpretation of various data sources such as documents, books, and previous research. In police studies, this approach is widely used to analyse the development of policing theory and practice in various social and institutional contexts (Manning, 2010).

Data of the study is collected through a documentary study of scientific literature, including classic police books, reputable international research journals, and academic publications related to policing studies. (Bowen, 2009) explains that document analysis is a qualitative research method that allows researchers to interpret and synthesize various documents to systematically understand social phenomena. The literature analysed includes classic works in police studies, such as Bittner's work explaining the basic function of the police in maintaining social order (Bittner, 1970), as well as modern research on

policing strategies such as problem-oriented policing and evidence-based policing, which are widely discussed in a global policing literature (Goldstein, 1990) (Sherman, 1998).

Data, then, is analysed through thematic analysis and literature synthesis, namely by identifying key concepts in the police literature, comparing previous research findings, and developing a conceptual synthesis of police science. (Miles et al, 2014) explain that qualitative data analysis is conducted through a process of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions to identify patterns and relationships between concepts in the study. This approach allows researchers to systematically examine the development of police theory, from classical perspectives to modern approaches to police studies. Therefore, the literature analysis is conducted by comparing various global studies on policing with the context of police development in Indonesia.

To ensure the validity of the research, this study employed the principle of trustworthiness in qualitative research, encompassing the credibility, consistency, and confirmability of the research data. (Guba & Lincoln, 1985) explain that the validity of qualitative research can be tested through four main criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. In this study, credibility is achieved through the use of reputable academic literature and previous research relevant to the study of police science, both globally and in the Indonesian context. Using this methodology, the study is expected to provide a systematic and academically sound analysis of the concept of police science and its implementation in policing practices.

In fact, this research has several methodological limitations that require attention. First, it does not use primary field data, thus not directly observing police practices in the field. Second, the research relies on the quality and availability of the documents analysed, which may lead to certain perspectives being overlooked. Third, manual analysis can be influenced by the researcher's interpretation, although this has been minimized through source triangulation and systematic analysis. Nevertheless, this approach remains relevant for a conceptual research aimed at building a theoretical framework for police science. Documentation studies allow researchers to synthesize various theoretical perspectives developed in the global literature. Thus, this research is expected to provide a conceptual contribution to the development of police science and its implementation in police duties.

Result and Discussion

The Concept of Police Science in Academic Literature

Police science developed from the study of policing practices, initially understood as a state institution with the authority to use force to establish and maintain security and social order. Bittner (1970) explains that the primary character of a police institution lies in its authority to use legitimate force in certain situations to maintain social order in society. This perspective demonstrates that in the early stages of police studies, the primary focus of research was still related to the state's function in controlling social behaviour through the police force. Therefore, the police were initially understood as an institution of social control that played a crucial role in maintaining societal stability.

Subsequently, police studies began to evolve to view the police as an organization with a broader function in managing public security. Wilson (1968: 30) explains that the police are an organization tasked with maintaining social order through social supervision and law enforcement in society. This perspective demonstrates that the police function not only as a law enforcement institution but also as an organization that manages public security. Thus, police studies began to develop as a field of research that examines the role of the police within the social system.

A significant development in police studies occurred when Goldstein (1990: 15) introduced the concept of problem-oriented policing, which emphasizes the importance of understanding the root causes of crime before determining strategies for handling it. This approach demonstrates that policing practices require a scientific analysis of the social problems that underlie crime. Therefore, policing focuses not only on law enforcement but also on analysing the social conditions that influence crime. This approach has encouraged the development of police studies as a field of study that uses scientific methods to understand public security issues.

Furthermore, the development of police studies has also been influenced by the concept of community policing, which emphasizes the importance of partnerships between the police and the community in maintaining environmental security. (Skogan, 2006: 27) explains that community policing aims to strengthen the relationship between the police and the community so that the police can be more responsive to public security needs. This approach demonstrates that the police function not only as a law enforcement institution but also as a public service organization. Thus, modern policing practices increasingly emphasize the importance of collaboration between the police and the community.

The development of modern police studies also demonstrates the importance of using scientific research in policing practice. Sherman (1998: 3) states that evidence-based policing is an approach that uses empirical evidence from academic research to determine the most effective policing strategies. This approach demonstrates that modern police practice is increasingly influenced by developments in science and scientific research methods. Therefore, police science is developing as a field that connects academic research with policing practice.

Police studies are also developing in understanding the relationship between the police and the community from the perspective of legal legitimacy. Tyler (2006: 26) elaborates that police legitimacy is greatly influenced by public perceptions of procedural justice in police actions. When the public views the police as a fair and trustworthy institution, they tend to be more obedient to the law and more willing to cooperate with police officers. Therefore, police legitimacy is an important concept in contemporary literature; the police are also understood as institutions that play a role in managing social risks in modern society.

From an organizational perspective, the police are also understood as institutions with complex bureaucratic structures and organizational cultures. Manning (2010: 21) explains that police organizations are social systems influenced by organizational structure, professional culture, and public security policies. This perspective demonstrates that police

studies address not only operational practices but also the dynamics of police organizations. Thus, police science has developed as a field of study that studies police organizations within a social and political context.

Bayley (1994) also emphasized that modern police must be understood as institutions responsible for managing public security through various crime prevention and community service strategies. This perspective demonstrates that police play a crucial role in the national security system and public security governance. Therefore, police studies have increasingly developed as a field of study that studies public security strategies. Thus, police science addresses not only policing practices but also the broader management of public security.

Furthermore, modern police research emphasizes the importance of integrating scientific research with policing practice. Weisburd (2008: 8) explains that police research must integrate academic research with police practice to improve the effectiveness of public security policies. This perspective suggests that police science serves as a bridge between academic research and operational police practice. Therefore, the development of police science is crucial for enhancing police professionalism.

In the development of contemporary literature, the police are also understood as institutions that play a role in managing social risks in modern society. Ericson & Haggerty (1997) explain that modern policing plays a role in managing various social risks in an increasingly complex society. This perspective demonstrates that the police function not only as law enforcers but also as institutions that manage social risks in society. Thus, police studies are also related to risk management in modern society.

Based on the synthesis of these various theoretical perspectives, this study formulates the following conceptual definition of police science: Police science is an interdisciplinary discipline that studies police institutions, policing strategies, and law enforcement practices through a scientific approach to understand, explain, and improve the effectiveness of police duties in maintaining security, preventing crime, enforcing the law, and building legitimacy and social order in society. This definition positions police science as a field of study that not only studies police organizations but also explains the relationship between the police, the state, and society in managing security and public order. With an interdisciplinary approach and based on scientific research, police science serves as a conceptual foundation for the development of professional and accountable policing policies and practices. Therefore, the development of police science is crucial in supporting the transformation of police organizations toward a modern, science-based policing model.

Philosophy of Police Science (ontology–epistemology–methodology–axiology)

The philosophy of police science can be understood through four main dimensions: ontology, epistemology, methodology, and axiology, which form the basis for the development of this science. Ontologically, police science studies social realities related to public security, crime, social order, and the role of the police institution in maintaining societal order. Bittner (1970: 39) explains that the essence of the police institution in modern society lies in its authority to use legitimate force in certain situations to maintain social

order. From an epistemological perspective, knowledge about police practices is built through the integration of various disciplines such as criminology, sociology, law, and public administration, thus developing police studies as an interdisciplinary field that examines the relationship between the state, law, and society (Manning, 2010) (Reiner, 2010).

From a methodological perspective, police science develops through the use of scientific research methods to empirically understand crime phenomena and policing practices. Popper (2002) emphasizes that the development of science is based on the process of critically testing hypotheses through falsification, so scientific theories must be testable through empirical research. Kuhn (2012) explains that scientific development is also influenced by changes in scientific paradigms that shape researchers' perspectives on understanding social reality. From an axiological perspective, police science is directed at normative values such as justice, security, protection of human rights, and the legitimacy of the police in a democratic society, as fair and transparent policing practices will increase public trust in the police institution (Bhaskar, 2008: 1; Tyler, 2006: 26). Therefore, the philosophy of police science not only explains the ontological and epistemological foundations of the science but also emphasizes that policing practices must be oriented toward achieving security and social justice in society.

Implementation of Police Science Globally and in Indonesia

The implementation of police science globally has shown significant progress in recent decades, particularly through the application of scientific approaches to modern policing practices. One of the most influential approaches is evidence-based policing (EBP), which uses empirical evidence from scientific research to determine the most effective policing strategies for preventing crime and improving public safety. Sherman (1998: 83) explains that EBP is an approach that uses research findings on the effectiveness of police practices to develop more effective policies and strategies in law enforcement. This approach has since become widespread in various police agencies in the United States, the United Kingdom, and European countries as a basis for operational police decision-making.

In addition to EBP approaches, the global implementation of police science has also evolved through community policing strategies, a policing approach that emphasizes partnerships between the police and the community in maintaining neighbourhood security. Research shows that community policing can increase public trust in the police and strengthen the relationship between police and citizens in maintaining social order. Skogan (2006) explains that community policing strategies encourage police to collaborate with the community in identifying and resolving security problems in local neighbourhoods. Therefore, this approach has become a model for implementing police science, widely adopted in various countries to increase policing effectiveness.

Other research also shows that the implementation of modern police science increasingly emphasizes the importance of police legitimacy in building strong relationships between the police and the community. The concept of police legitimacy explains that the success of policing practices is determined not only by the effectiveness of law enforcement but also by the level of public trust in the police institution. Tyler (2006:

26) explains that police legitimacy is strongly influenced by public perceptions of procedural fairness in police actions, so fair and transparent policing practices can increase public compliance with the law. Therefore, various modern police studies emphasize that the implementation of police science must consider the dimensions of procedural justice in policing practices.

Furthermore, the developments of global police research also indicate that the application of police science is increasingly supported by the use of data analysis and empirical research in operational decision-making. This approach enables police to identify crime patterns, evaluate the effectiveness of policing strategies, and develop more targeted public security policies. Lum & Koper (2017) explain that EBP encourages the use of data analysis, program evaluation, and scientific research to improve the quality of decisions within police organizations. Thus, the global implementation of police science is increasingly directed at integrating academic research with operational police practice.

In the Indonesian context, the implementation of police science has also developed in line with efforts to reform its police organization and increase the professionalism of its police officers. Various studies indicate that police reform in Indonesia seeks to strengthen police professionalism and accountability through the development of police education and the implementation of good policing principles. Research on police reform indicates that strengthening police education and scientific research are important factors in improving the quality of policing practices in Indonesia. Therefore, the development of police science in Indonesia is closely linked to strengthening academic and research capacity within police educational institutions.

However, various studies also indicate that the implementation of police science in Indonesia still faces various challenges, particularly in integrating academic research with operational police practice. One major challenge is the limited use of scientific research as a basis for formulating police policy. Research on evidence-based policing practices indicates that the implementation of a scientific approach within police organizations often faces organizational, cultural, and human resource barriers den Heyer (2022). Therefore, the development of police science in Indonesia requires strengthening the integration between academic research, police education, and policing practice within police organizations.

Discussion

This subchapter contains an analysis of the research findings obtained from a literature review on the concept of police science and its implementation in police duties. The analysis is conducted by comparing the research findings with various police theories developed in the academic literature. Creswell (2014) explains that the analysis stage in qualitative research aims to interpret research findings by linking them to relevant theories. Therefore, this subchapter not only describes the research findings but also interprets their meaning in the context of policing theory and practice.

In this analysis, the research findings indicate that the development of police science globally has been influenced by various theoretical approaches to police studies. Some important approaches that have influenced the development of police science include

community policing, problem-oriented policing, and EBP. Goldstein (1990: 15) explains that problem-oriented policing emphasizes the importance of analysing the root causes of crime in formulating effective policing strategies. Therefore, the findings of this study indicate that police science cannot be separated from the development of policing theories developed in academic literature.

This research analysis also shows that the development of police science is not only related to operational police practices but also to the structure of the police organization. Manning (2010) explains that a police organization is a social system influenced by bureaucratic structures, organizational culture, and public security policies. This perspective suggests that policing practices are influenced by the dynamics of the police organization within society. Therefore, police science also studies the relationship between the police organization and its social environment.

Furthermore, research findings indicate that police science plays a crucial role in managing public security in modern society. Bayley (1994) explains that modern police play a role in maintaining public security through various crime prevention strategies and public services. Therefore, policing practices are not only related to law enforcement but also to the broader management of public security. Therefore, police science serves as a scientific framework for understanding public security strategies.

Based on this analysis, this research demonstrates that police science is an interdisciplinary field that integrates various theories in understanding policing practices. Police science combines the perspectives of criminology, sociology, law, and public administration in explaining the role of the police in society. Reiner (2010: 2) explains that the police are a social institution that plays a crucial role in maintaining social stability and enforcing the law in a democratic society. Therefore, the study of police science makes a significant contribution to understanding the relationship between the police, the law, and society.

Additional Analysis of Previous Research

The developments of global police research in recent years demonstrate the growing use of scientific approaches in policing practice. Research on EBP demonstrates that the use of empirical research in police decision-making can increase the effectiveness of crime prevention strategies and the efficiency of police resource use. Weisburd & Braga (2019: 15) explain that the application of EBP has become a key approach in modern police reform because it connects academic research with operational police practice. Therefore, the development of global police science increasingly emphasizes the integration of scientific research and policing practice within police organizations.

Other research also indicates that modern policing practices increasingly emphasize the importance of police legitimacy in building public trust. An empirical study conducted by Mazerolle et al. (2020) shows that procedural justice policing practices can increase public trust in the police and strengthen public compliance with the law. This research demonstrates that the implementation of police science is not only related to the effectiveness of law enforcement but also to building the social legitimacy of the police force.

Therefore, the concept of police legitimacy has become a crucial focus in the development of modern police research.

Furthermore, recent research also shows that the use of technology and data analysis is increasingly becoming a crucial part of the implementation of police science. Lum & Koper (2017) explain that the use of data analysis and program evaluation within police organizations allows police to more accurately identify crime patterns and formulate more effective policing strategies. This approach demonstrates that modern police science is not only concerned with policing theory but also with the use of technology and data analysis in policing practice. Therefore, the integration of scientific research and technology is a key characteristic of the development of global police science.

Comparative Analysis of Police Science Implementation

The global implementation of police science demonstrates a strong trend toward research and data-driven policing. Various countries, such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia, have developed police policies that systematically utilize scientific research in formulating public security strategies. Weisburd (2008: 8) explains that the evidence-based policing approach has become a key paradigm in modern police reform because it can increase the effectiveness of police policies. Thus, the global implementation of police science demonstrates a strong integration between academic research and policing practice.

In contrast, the implementation of police science in Indonesia is still in its early stages of development in integrating scientific research with policing practice. Several studies indicate that the development of police science in Indonesia is still primarily focused on police organizational reform and increasing the professionalism of police officers. Gunawan (2024) explains that the study of police science in Indonesia is still in its infancy, striving to establish a systematic academic discipline. Therefore, the development of police science in Indonesia requires strengthening the integration between academic research, police education, and operational police practice.

Such a comparison demonstrates that the development of police science in Indonesia offers significant potential for adopting various scientific approaches that have developed in global police research. Integrating academic research, police education, and operational practice can strengthen the professionalism of police organizations. Therefore, the development of police science in Indonesia serves not only as an academic study but also as a basis for developing policing policies and practices. Therefore, strengthening police science as an academic discipline is a crucial step in supporting police reform in Indonesia.

Conclusion

This study concludes that police science is an interdisciplinary applied discipline that integrates criminology, sociology, law, and public policy to understand and improve policing practices. The findings show that the development of police science is closely linked to the adoption of scientific approaches such as evidence-based policing, which emphasises the integration of research, professional judgement, and community values in decision-making. However, police science is still predominantly treated as a collection of operational

strategies rather than a comprehensive academic discipline with a clear conceptual foundation. Therefore, this study proposes a conceptual framework that positions police science as a scientific basis for policing strategies, operational practices, and the development of public legitimacy. To strengthen its implementation, it is recommended that police institutions enhance the integration of scientific research into practice, develop evidence-based police education, and encourage further empirical studies to support the institutionalisation of police science in policing systems.

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