

Research Article

## Cultural spotlight to the stage of criminology: a bibliometric brief on cultural criminology

K.G.N.U Ranaweera\* 

Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka

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\*Corresponding Author: K.G.N.U. Ranaweera (ranaweera@sjp.ac.lk)

**Abstract:** In the last two decades, cultural criminology has developed a unique viewpoint on criminal behaviour and law. Cultural criminology is a subfield of criminology that focuses on how dynamics of meaning underpin every process in criminal justice, including the very definition of crime. In other words, the goal of cultural criminology is to comprehend crime within the context of culture and cultural processes. This particular form of criminological analysis evaluates the convergence of cultural and criminal processes by interweaving a diverse array of perspectives that share a sensitivity to image, meaning, and representation. In addition, the discipline of cultural criminology is developing new methods that represent particular theoretical perspectives and connect with the distinctive elements of contemporary social and cultural life. The lightning-fast pace of contemporary crime and culture has opened up new ethnographic research opportunities for cultural criminologists. Bibliometric analysis is a common and rigorous technique for examining and analyzing vast scientific data, which enables the dissection of the evolutionary nuances of a specific field and the illumination of its emerging areas. In order to identify the nature and the distribution of the literature on cultural criminology, the paper aims to determine the number of publications, the intellectual structure, and the key concepts of cultural criminology via a bibliometric analysis, using VOSviewer software.

**Keywords:** Bibliometric analysis, Cultural criminology, Ethnography, VOSviewer

### I. Introduction

Criminology aims to establish a set of universal and validated concepts and information about the law, crime, and treatment and studies deviant behaviours that violate social norms, values, and beliefs. However, many crimes are not unique or deviant, and many deviant activities are neither illegal nor criminal (Siegel, 2008, p.4). Criminologists are social scientists; however, they are frequently and incorrectly associated with other crime-related scientific and investigative positions. Despite being a thriving social science today, criminology evolved via a series of adjustments in significant concentration, from philosophy to crime prevention, legal reform, and finally, the scientific method (Miller, 2009, p.3).

Numerous causal theories in theoretical criminology have been created and tested, as have multiple quantitative and qualitative research approaches. Criminology thus offers and is defined by theory methods symmetry by classifying theory as scientific, inferences regarding relationships can be tested. Research involves



collecting facts to operationalize the approach and observe cause and effect. The presence, nature, and implications of relationships are compared to the theory's conceptual logic. When observations contradict a theory's fundamental premises, the hypothesis is disproved. Observations consistent with a theory's statements regarding cause-and-effect linkages are generally considered more trustworthy, but this does not mean the theory is true (Miller, 2009, p.7). Three critical topics should be addressed when defining crime and criminology. The first is crime's relativity, what constitutes a crime varies according to time, place, and who describes it. Examining crime in the context of many cultures from around the world demonstrates, perhaps most vividly, the significance of the concept of relativity in understanding crime and deviance. In that way, criminology is intrinsically cross-cultural. The second thesis is about the prevalence of the scientific approach in criminology. The assumption that criminology is science is central to most, but not all, criminologists. Indeed, criminology is defined as the scientific study of the causes of crime. Finally, the impact of ideology on crime theories and crime policy is a central theme in this work. By offering a wide range of explanations for crime founded on five dominant paradigms and new viewpoints on crime, an intentional effort has been made to highlight the significance of ideology (Brown & Esbensen, 2010, p.1-2).

Understanding crime and its management as products of meaning are central to the cultural criminological approach. It examines the macro-, meso, and micro-levels of social existence in order to develop critical assessments that are politically effective and relevant to today's conditions. Despite its enormous scope, the cultural criminology initiative is concentrated and urgent. It enjoys forming alliances and working together, as well as having a clear sense of direction and a willingness to act. It has carved its own identity while contributing to developing a wide range of viewpoints throughout its brief existence. Now more than ever, cultural criminology is a must-have tool in fighting competing views of crime, criminalization, the judicial system, and the daily lives of the criminally wronged (Ilan, 2019).

The application of quantitative techniques to bibliometric data is what is meant by the term "bibliometric methodology." The first discussions of bibliometrics were held in the 1950s (Wallin, 2005), which leads one to believe that the bibliometric methodology has been around for quite some time. On the other hand, the emergence of bibliometrics is a relatively recent phenomenon. This can be deduced from the fact that the disciplines of "business, management, and accounting," "economics, econometrics, and finance," and "social sciences" are among the areas in which it has seen the most growth. It is noteworthy that the development of scientific databases such as Scopus and Web of Science has made the acquisition of large volumes of bibliometric data relatively easy. Furthermore, the development of bibliometric software such as Gephi, Leximancer, and VOSviewer has made it possible to analyze such data efficiently, which has led to a recent uptick in the academic community's interest in bibliometric analysis. Researchers use bibliometric analysis for a variety of purposes, including illuminating emerging trends in article and journal performance, collaboration

patterns, and research constituents, as well as investigating the intellectual structure of a particular domain as it is depicted in the existing body of published work (Donthu et al., 2021).

Alalehto and Persson (2012) track Sutherland's impact on criminology through a bibliometric analysis of papers citing any of Sutherland's work and focusing on publications that are co-cited with Sutherland, which allowed to visualize Sutherland's role about forefathers and founding fathers of criminology during his active period, his followers, and contemporary scholars. Bibliometric analysis results show that the Sutherland tradition had a significant impact throughout the twentieth century, with a peak in the 1930s and 1940s and a gradual decline until the 1990s, when the Sutherland tradition was more powerfully challenged, primarily by the life course tradition. Moreover, Discussing Social vulnerability, also a cultural criminological component, Toharudin et al. (2021) identify through literature with a bibliometric brief, in recent years, knowledge technology and information have advanced at a breakneck pace, and with increasingly sophisticated technology, anyone, regardless of regional boundaries or time constraints, can quickly access and obtain information.

The results of bibliometric analysis on a technology-based cultural shift, which demonstrate the state of “the art of cyberbullying”, indicate a growing interest in cyberbullying research, particularly between psychology and education. The keywords focus on victimization and adolescence, although youth and gender have recently been highlighted. Even though the most frequent authors come from the United States and Spain, which form two clusters, the most cited authors are psychologists and communication studies experts from Belgium. Cyberbullying primarily affects adolescents and young people in school settings; therefore, critical and active digital citizenship education is necessary to prevent this type of behaviour among peers (González-Moreno et al., 2020). Soderlund and Madison (2015) conducted a bibliometric analysis of gender-related publications, as a specific culture component, provided a detailed empirical description of gender studies publications in Sweden, and identified that the field of gender studies is highly interdisciplinary, politically charged, of highly public interest, and strongly supported by Swedish authorities. The level of support is not limited to financial and structural measures but also includes making it a requirement in postsecondary curricula.

Starting from early criminological debates, research on cultural criminological components, as discussed above, vulnerability, cyberbullying, and gender, have been popular topics in bibliometric cultural criminological discussions. This paper evaluates the existing pool of knowledge on cultural criminology, not as a specific component, but as a subfield of criminology via bibliometric mapping.

## **II. Objectives of the Study**

Bibliometric analysis is a common and rigorous technique for examining and analyzing vast scientific data. It enables the dissection of the evolutionary nuances of a specific field and the illumination of its emerging

areas. Nonetheless, its application in the field of criminology research is still relatively new and, in many cases, underdeveloped. In light of this, this paper aims to reveal the current status of cultural criminology literature by determining the number of publications, the intellectual structure, and the key concepts of cultural criminology literature after a bibliometric analysis.

### III. Materials and Methods

The content on Scopus comes from over 7,000 publishers and is reviewed and selected by an independent Content Selection and Advisory Board (CSAB) in order to be indexed on Scopus and to remain indexed (Elsevier, 2022). Several Scopus database operational functions facilitate bibliometric analysis. Such operational functions consist of journal name, document type, publication year, authors and affiliations, the number of citations, and h-index metrics for documents (Sweileh, 2018; Hirsch, 2005; Ranaweera, 2022).

Both bibliometric analysis and a short literature review on the origin and evolution of cultural criminology have been carried out. Existing documents related to cultural criminology were searched through the SCOPUS database using the search string: (TITLE-ABS-KEY ("Cultural Criminology" ) AND ( EXCLUDE ( PUBYEAR, 2022 ) ) AND ( LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA, "SOCI" ) ) AND ( LIMIT-TO ( PUBSTAGE, "final" ) ) AND ( LIMIT-TO ( LANGUAGE, "English" ) ) ), and filtered 234 documents after a manual search.

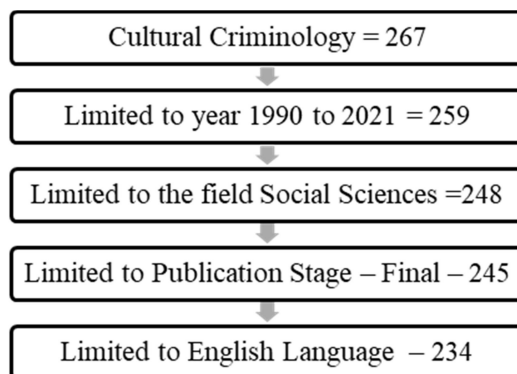


Fig.1: Data Filtering

### IV. Results and Discussion

Although the SCOPUS data identified pure cultural criminological publications, the subject's origin runs back to the 1980s. According to the evidence, seductions of crime, authored by sociologist Jack Katz in 1988, is regarded by many as a significant contribution to the cultural criminological approach. The basic argument of "Seductions of Crime" is that situation-specific emotional and sensual feelings significantly influence criminal behavior, which is not a comprehensive theoretical structure but rather the sensuous sensations and emotional states of the offender that play a role in many types of criminal behavior, ranging simple to the complicated

("Katz, Jack: Seductions of crime," 2010). Before Katz, Howard Baker, in 1963 with the labelling theory, discussed the cultural factors within a criminal act. Labelling theory is a sociological perspective that emphasizes the significance of social labelling in the emergence of crime and deviance. The theory assumes that although deviant behavior can initially stem from a variety of causes and conditions, once individuals have been labeled or defined as deviants, they frequently face new problems arising from the reactions of self and others to negative stereotypes (stigma) that are attached to the deviant label Becker (1966).

As a hybrid approach of sociology and criminology, culture criminology has evolved from more than a simple merger of 1970s British cultural studies into current American criminology. Cultural criminologists indeed continue to rely on the insights of cultural studies as a burgeoning discipline, as well as contemporary cultural studies analyses of identity, sexuality, and social space. Furthermore, by emphasizing representation, image, and style, cultural criminology embraces the insights of cultural studies and the philosophical reorientation provided by postmodernism. Instead of the modernist duality of form and content and the modernist hierarchy that suggests that form must be stripped away to get to the meaningful core of content, cultural criminology operates on the postmodern premise that form is content, style is substance, and meaning, thus resides in presentation and representation. According to this viewpoint, the study of a crime necessitates a journey into the spectacle and carnival of crime, a walk down an infinite hall of mirrors where images created and consumed by criminals, criminal subcultures, control agents, media institutions, and audiences bounce endlessly off one another (Ferrell, 1997).

*The volume of publications related to the cultural criminology*

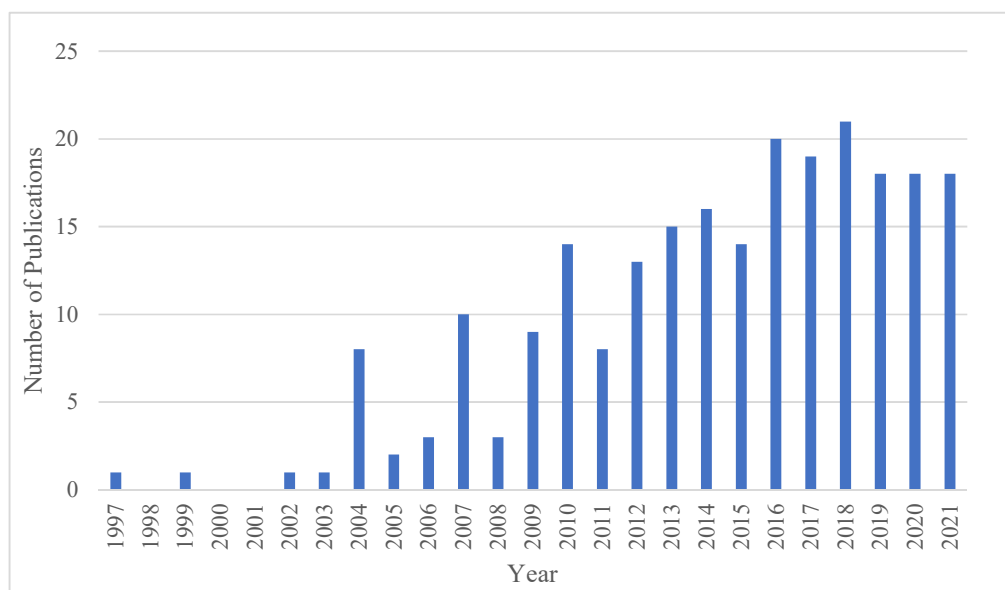


Fig. 2: Number of publications

According to figure 2, the timeline of the publications, which is begun in 1997, has not been continued well until 2003. Within 12 years (1997-2009), total publications were ten or fewer. Although in 2010 it increased again in 2011, a significant drop is visible. From 2012 to 2021, the number of publications fluctuated, but the numbers were consistently higher than in the early era. The highest number of publications was recorded in 2018, and onward publications are similar. Figure 3 indicates the citation volume for each year.

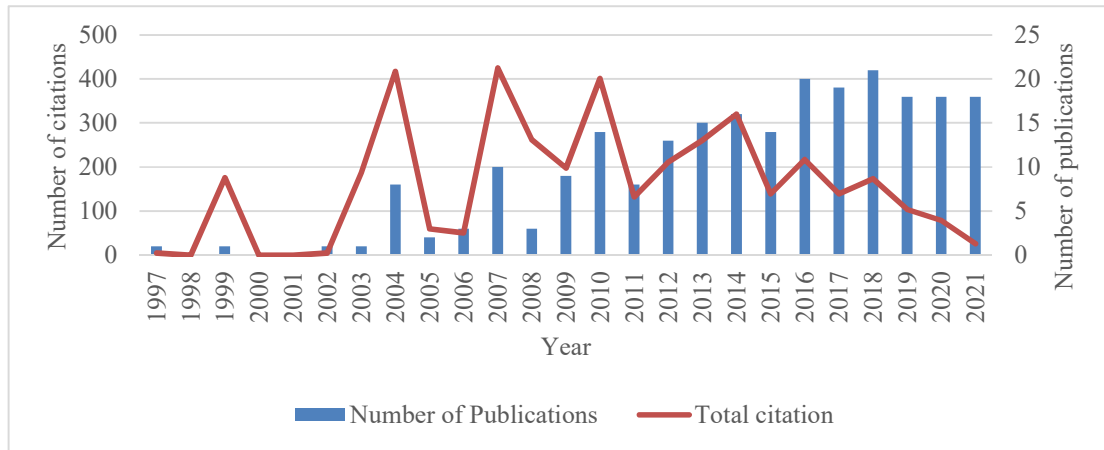


Fig. 3: Number of citations

Three significant years (2004,2007,2010) indicate a higher number of citations, although the number of publications was comparably less than in other years. Since 2018 there has been a gradual drop in the citation, which is evident due to the time frame of the publication.

*Intellectual structure of cultural criminology*

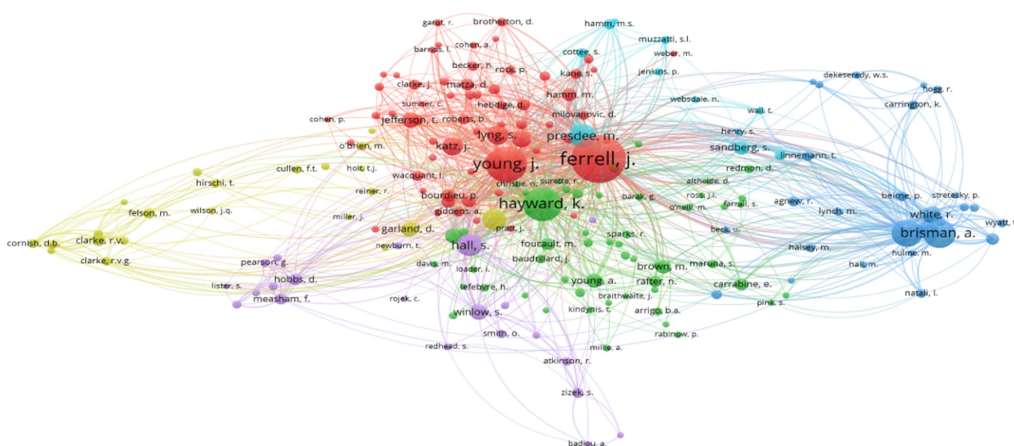


Fig. 4: The citation network



Note: A minimum occurrence of 2 was applied for the keywords whereby 553 of the 101 meet the threshold. A thesaurus file was used to replace similar words that are spelled differently. some of the 94 items in the network are not connected. The most extensive set of connected objects consists of 93 items, 12 clusters, and 346 links, with total link strength of 536.

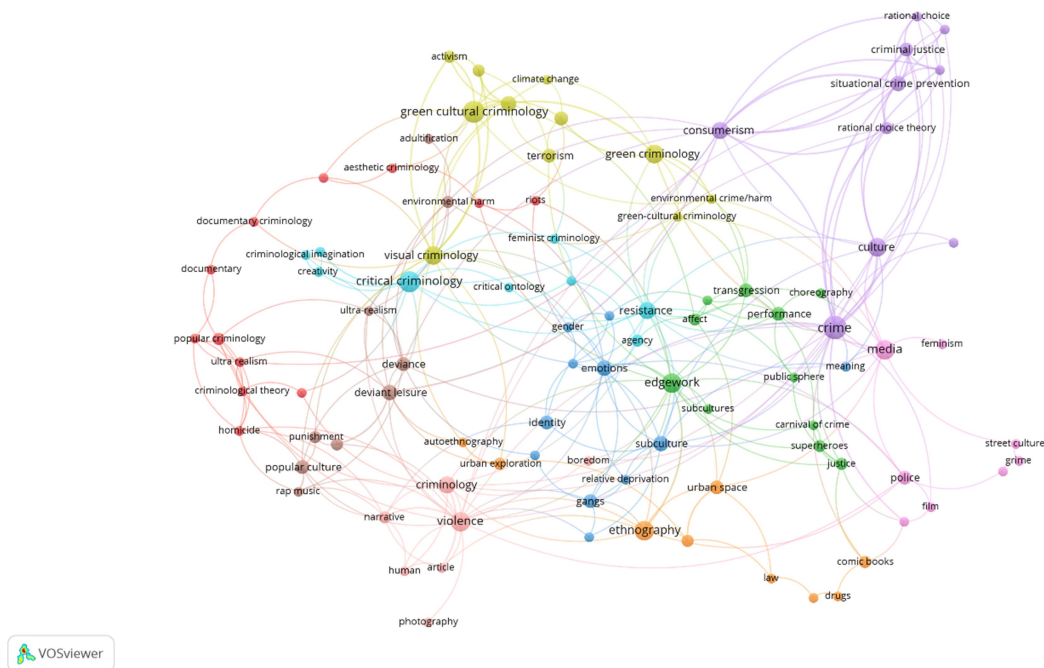


Fig. 5: Keyword co-occurrence excluding "cultural criminology"

Note: A minimum occurrence of 2 was applied for the keywords whereby 553 of the 101 meet the threshold. A thesaurus file was used to replace similar words that are spelt differently. The term "Cultural criminology" was removed as a keyword, and some of the 93 items in the network are not connected to each other. The most extensive set of connected objects consists of 90 items, 10 clusters, and 261 links, with a total link strength of 322.



Table 2: Clusters and keywords

Cluster Number	Name of the cluster combined with components of cultural criminology	Keywords
1	Subfields of criminology	popular criminology/aesthetic criminology criminological theory/ disorder/ documentary criminology/homicide radical criminology/riots /sensory criminology/ true crime /ultra-realism
2	Environmental criminology	green cultural criminology/green criminology/visual criminology/ social media/narrative criminology terrorism/activism/Twitter/climate change/ecological crime/harm
3	Modern politics	edgework/resistance/performance transgression/affect/superheroes carnival of crime/choreography public sphere/urban politics
4	Art and law	ethnography/ urban space /comic books graffiti/ drugs /film/law/regulation retribution
5	Youth culture	emotions /subculture /gangs /identity fear of crime/gender /relative deprivation young people /youth culture
6	Crime prevention	crime/culture/consumerism /situational crime prevention /criminal justice rational choice theory /decision making rational choice /social justice
7	Popular culture	deviant leisure/ deviance /popular culture punishment/ urban exploration video games/ autoethnography delinquency/rap music
8	Theories of crime	critical criminology/ agency creativity/criminological imagination critical ontology/feminist criminology intersectionality/theory
9	Crime distribution	media/police/feminism/grime /policing street culture
10	Other	violence/ criminology narrative/ boredom human/photography

Existing works, in particular, bring up new areas of study that seem to move cultural criminology beyond an earlier focus by augmenting ethnographic work on subcultures with media analysis approaches inherited from cultural studies. Without wishing to exaggerate the similarities between what is stylistically and substantively three very different contributions, there does appear to be some thematic convergence, particularly in the

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emphasis on certain forms of criminality as an active, situated, in some ways, politically charged response to a distinctively late modern cultural experience. In the argument for greater recognition of the dynamic tension between foes, although these advances are generally welcomed, the assessment will demonstrate that they are not without challenges (Fenwick, 2004).

## V. Conclusion and Recommendations

Identifying the current status of cultural criminology literature by determining the number of publications, the intellectual structure, and the key concepts of cultural criminology literature after a bibliometric analysis, it is clear that in the last two decades, the area of cultural criminology has established its distinct perspective on criminal conduct and its control. As its name implies, cultural criminology emphasizes the role culture plays in defining the type of offenders, criminal conduct, and even criminal punishment. By "culture," refers to common styles and symbols, criminal subcultures, the dynamics of the mass media, and other aspects.

Recent advancements in cultural criminology have led to the formation of new initiatives aimed at broadening the substantive scope of research in cultural criminology, notably in the direction of greater diversity and inclusion. After considering the authors, conclusions can be made on the distribution of the subject. Cultural criminology, which developed in the United States and the United Kingdom, has extended worldwide. Cultural criminologists are now investigating the discourse around crime in Japan, the culture of Russian prisons, and the worldwide connections of urban street gangs. Relevant issues include the mistreatment of Filipina women in Australia, illegal street racing in Finland, and the interaction between immigrant cultures and the criminal justice system in different regions. The co-citation network indicates the texture of the subject and the depth as well.

Furthermore, the keyword network revealed, that field of cultural criminology is creating new approaches to reflect specific theoretical viewpoints and to link with the unique characteristics of modern social and cultural life. For example, ethnographic research and the quest for criminological comprehension have traditionally been distinguished by the researcher's long-term interaction with the people being studied, which is based on the idea that the more time a researcher spends within a group or setting, the more they grasp the cultural dynamics of that context. Even if this is true, the lightning-fast speed of modern crime and culture, as seen by virtual crime and communications, quick news and entertainment, and short-term jobs, has opened up new avenues for ethnographic study for cultural criminologists.

Another trajectory focuses on representation and style rather than subject matter, philosophy, or procedure, which is ideal for the discipline of cultural criminology. Criminologists who study culture feel that issues related to crime, violence, and the administration of justice are at the heart of contemporary society's concerns. As a result, academics must find ways to disseminate their scholarly work to the public, contribute to

public dialogue, and help change culture to be safer and juster. An argument that conventional, mainstream criminology is unprepared to deal with this challenge has been established. Far too often, criminologists speak and write primarily for other criminologists. When they do, they use incomprehensible academic language, as well as notions that are too abstract and difficult to grasp graphs and tables. Consequently, the ultimate effect is an intimidating and insular approach, and the potential contribution that criminology may have made to broader society is lost. Concurrently, criminologists and their work are routinely pushed outside public discussion and social advancement attempts. Cultural criminology emphasises the importance of symbolism, meaning, and emotion in defining the complex reality of crime and its control for all parties involved, including offenders, victims, crime control agents, politicians, journalists, and the general public. In this regard, it is meant to serve as a dual challenge: first, to fundamental public perceptions of crime and criminal justice, and second, to mainstream criminological theories and methodologies, which ignore cultural effects. The evolution of cultural criminology, indicated via the bibliometric analysis, clarifies that the field of “cultural criminology” is evolving daily parallel to cultural changes and structures.

As the main limitation, the quantitative form of the bibliometric analysis on the cultural component cannot reveal the whole picture. However, it gives a birds-eye view of the subject. Moreover, cultural criminologists are increasingly experimenting with new types of study and different ways of communication to make criminology more interesting for students, politicians, and the general public and have accomplished this while staying mindful of concerns of style and representation. Manifestos, short, forcefully written texts that may briefly explain fundamental concepts and issues, are sometimes released in place of lengthier reports. Instead of relying on traditional forms of academic writing, occasionally written short stories incorporate cultural criminological themes or craft true fiction, which consists of stories that combine several actual, existing crime issues into a more appealing narrative form. Visual documentation, such as photographs, photographic collections, documentary films, and websites, make criminology aware of this reality which is a reaction to a world overloaded with media pictures that are not included in the bibliometric brief.

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