

Preface

This book documents the most-cited scholars in major criminology and criminal justice (CCJ) journals, and their most-cited works, over a 25-year period. It is based on the assumption that the most-cited scholars tend to be the most influential in the field. Three series of longitudinal analyses are described: (a) the most-cited scholars in 4 international journals from 1986–1990 to 2006–2010; (b) the most-cited scholars in 6 American journals from 1986–1990 to 2006–2010; and (c) the most-cited scholars in 20 American and international journals from 1990 to 2010.

We studied citations in a small number of the most prestigious CCJ journals in order to overcome the many problems (described in Chapter 1) of using large-scale sources of citations such as Web of Science, Google Scholar, and Scopus. The main strength of our research lies in its careful checking and correcting of citations, its exclusion of self-citations, and its longitudinal comparative analyses (using exactly the same methods) over a 25-year period.

Circumstances were very different when we began our research in 1988. There was no Internet and very little interest in citation analysis or any other research on scholarly influence in criminology and criminal justice. In the past 25 years, there has been a massive increase in interest in research on scholarly influence in general and citation analysis in particular. The Internet and electronic resources make large-scale citation analyses a lot easier but such analyses are typically full of problems and errors that have been corrected in our analyses.

We trace the waxing and waning of scholarly influence over time, as older scholars such as Marvin E. Wolfgang give way to younger scholars such as Robert J. Sampson, who in turn are now being usurped by still younger scholars such as Alex R. Piquero. We carried out this research without funding, because we were curious about the results. Citation research is highly controversial. While many scholars are fascinated by the results, others (especially those who are not highly cited) are very hostile to citation analysis. Nevertheless, it is clear that citation analysis is very important, and it has the advantage of being a scientific, objective, quantitative technique. The raw data (citations in journals) are freely available to anyone who wishes

to replicate our analyses. However, researchers should be warned that there were over 500,000 cited authors in nine major CCJ journals during our 25-year period.

We hope that readers will find our results fascinating. We are very grateful to Maureen Brown for providing excellent secretarial assistance throughout the time period of this research.

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