

Estonian Police and Border Guard Board



EUROPEAN POLICE RESEARCH AND SCIENCE CONFERENCE
“Global Trends in Law Enforcement Training and Education”

Towards multi-strategic police organization

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The unusual design of the article



Traditionally in empirical articles a theory precedes empirics, in this case it is opposite: the empirical data puts the questions that theories should answer.

The empirical part consists of three different studies: (1) the case of Estonian police; (2) the analysis of police reforms in Europe; (3) the analysis of police literature regarding strategies of policing.

The theoretical part grasps two perspectives: (1) the police organization as an open system; (2) the role of strategies in police organization.



Following the conference's topic



Taking the path on the conference's topic (police education) in this article the idea to enhance the metalanguage of the police will be emphasized.

The argument: traditional view of organizations with limited knowledge about police strategies detach the police from its core mission and pave the way for new reforms (shocks).

Research questions:

- (1) how the concept of organization should be understood in a way that it would empower the police to answer wicked problems;
- (2) what are these mechanisms that tie the internal structure of police organization, and links the police to its task environment?



The case of Estonian police



Despite the fact, that the Estonian police had not implemented any police strategy, and developments of the organization were inconsistent in many ways, the general level of security improved remarkably.

The first question for this article posed by the case of Estonia is following:

what role police strategies could play in police organization and in relation to its task environment?



Police reforms in Europe



The police reforms under discussion were caused by many reasons except the general level of security and were mainly oriented on efficiency and effectiveness of the police.

The analysis of police reforms posed the second question for this article:

how the concept of an organization should be understood to maintain and advance police's professional status, and what are these organizational and professional ties that hold the police on the line of its core mission?



The problem of monostrategic policing



The dominant narrative of the police as a monostrategic or in some cases as a semi-strategic or in the rare cases triple-strategic organization gives an incomplete picture of real life. In reality, there are always many techniques from diverse strategies in use. The consciousness in using different strategies depends on how well the leader or managers knows the metalanguage of the police.

Police strategies are the constitutive ties through the principles of criminology and management that constitute the police science.

The analysis of police strategies puts the third question and primary impulse for this study: what mechanisms would empower the police to be multi-strategic organization that could be more responsive to wicked problems?



The problem of problems.



From the Pittel & Webber (1972)

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John C. Camillus in Harvard Business Review (2008):

“Wicked” problems can’t be solved, but they can be tamed. Increasingly, these are the problems [police] strategists face—and for which they are ill equipped.”

Security is one of many outstanding examples of wicked problems.

Increasing requirement for collaborative compliance/resolution

Figure 1 – Typology of problems, power and authority

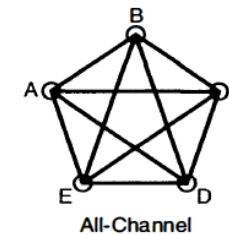
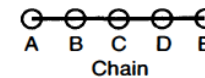
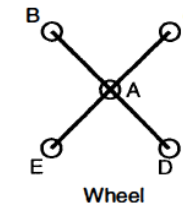
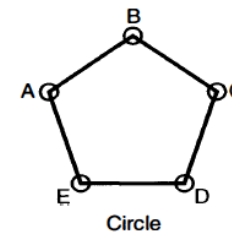


Security as a wicked problem, and organization as an open system.



Traditional organizations are designed for efficiency, which emphasizes vertical linkages such as hierarchy, rules and plans, and formal information systems. The imagination of fixed intra-organizational ties is essential to these organizations.

The actual picture of an organization as a communicative network has ever-changing loose ties.



The police have characteristics from both types, and strategies are these mechanisms that make the difference and creates flexibility for addressing wicked (security) problems.

See Scott, 2002: 161)



The indispensable role of strategies in an organization.



Some examples of bridging and buffering techniques.

Buffering tactics	Bridging tactics
Coding: select and control every source that will be used by technical core.	Bargaining: the purpose is to avoid total dependence on some external source or partner.
Forecasting: analyze in order to find potential holes in future regarding a core mission.	Contracting: the aim is to capture and take access to internal or external resources.





The interdependent nature of the organization and its task environment.

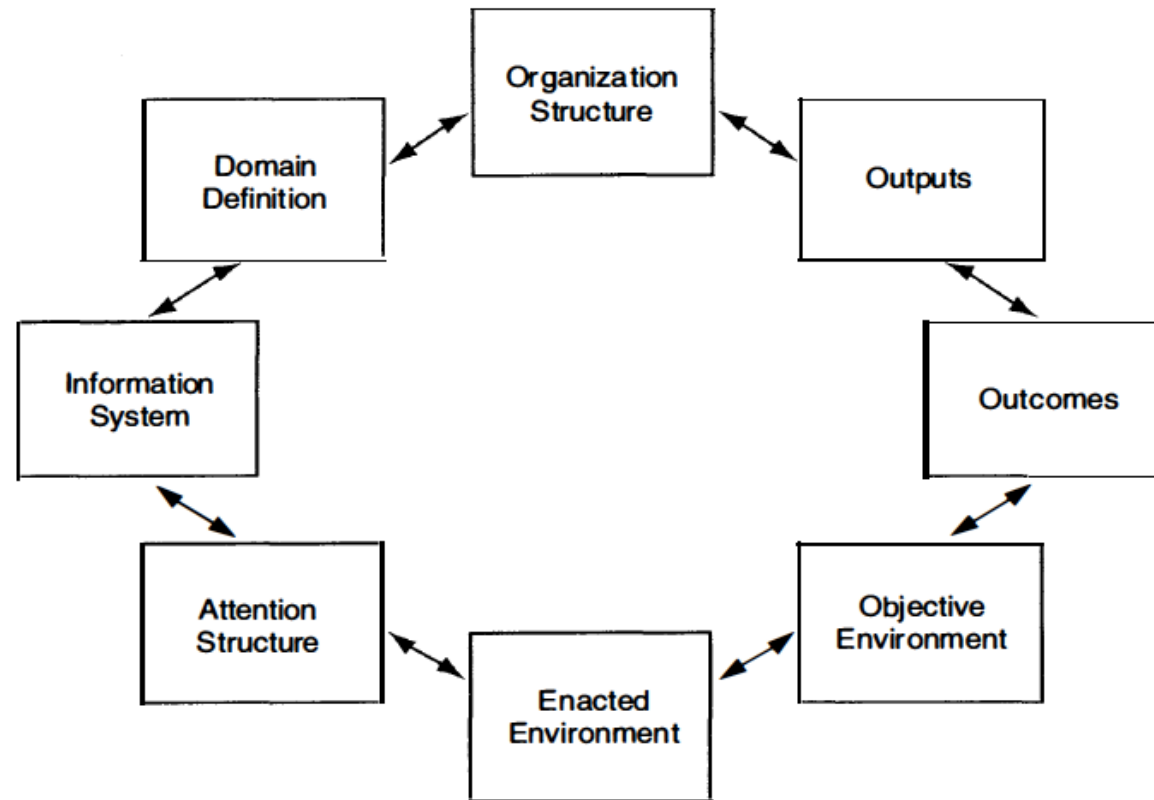


FIGURE 6-3 Organization-Environment Relations: A Cycle of Interdependence





Why should we know the metalanguage and learn more about police strategies and organization?

- Police strategies are the focal points or coupling points for criminology and management principles in composing police science, i.e. the essence of the metalanguage.
- The police organization is a compendium of various loosely coupled groups (units, police stations), alliances (informal task forces) and functions (law enforcement, forensics) and therefore need to be treated as an open system.
- Police strategies have at least two vital functions to ensure the survival of an organization: (1) they should protect the technical core of the police, and (2) link the organization to its task environment.





Police strategies are the essential part of the metalanguage of the police, a tie within an organization and between the police and its task environment, and the key to mitigating the difficulties of wicked problems.

Thank you!

