

ADMINISTRATĪVO TIESĪBU APAKŠNOZARE

FRAMING AND NARRATIVES AS ASSISTANTS IN ADVANCING A SCIENCE-ORIENTED MINDSET. THE EXAMPLE OF THE POLICE IN THE BALTICS

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Abstract

Country-specific knowledge offered by police science is a necessary precondition for successful policing. However, cursory data on police science in the Baltic countries raises many questions about the real use of scientific knowledge opportunities in these countries.

The paper elaborates on a framework to advance a science-oriented mindset in the police. Principles of narratives and framing were used to overcome a possible conflict between scientists and practitioners, and bridge all the parties related to policing. In this framework, scientists should take the lead.

External, internal, and strategic factors, as Alisson's three key management functions, were used to specify factors of the framework in the research. The framing process that holds a focusing function allows the use of discovered narratives and presents a variety of possible future directions. Creating a metanarrative with beginning, middle, and end grasps all the agents and ties into future developments.

Keywords: *Police science, Narrative, Framing, Policing.*

Introduction

“...there is still a fundamental disconnect between science and policing [...] the policing industry must take ownership of police science.”¹ Let us suppose it is true, but if they (the police industry) do not take ownership? Next what? It is possible to find many arguments to explain or justify the situation. For example, the police are just too busy with daily problems, and/or the context of safety does not demand advancement (is it “too” safe). These kinds of argumentation appear as an excuse. In striving towards an indefinite future, all the parties enter frameless interactions (a new situation with no single solution), and as if they try to understand the situation, they fall back on available frames.² However, it is possible to avoid this foil. Ideas of framing and narratives offer many possibilities to advance a science-oriented mindset as an overall aspiration towards knowledge needed for the police and policing for the sake of safety in the Baltic countries the Republic of Estonia, the Republic of Latvia, and the Republic of Lithuania. The paper offers a framework for advancing a science-oriented mindset necessary for developing police science in the Baltic countries.

The need for new or appropriate knowledge regarding policing issues is present. Incidents in safety often entail higher public interest, and pressure for police to find the correct answers can create a context for an unbalance in a scale of theory and practice. Regardless of an almost century-aged statement of August Volmer – “the scientific approach to criminal investigation is here to stay”³ – the question of balance between theory and practice is still present.⁴ Since half-backed decisions or inaptitude use of knowledge can cause unwanted results,⁵ advancing a science-oriented mindset is crucial. More precisely, “advancement of science in policing is essential if police are to retain public support and legitimacy and if the policing industry is to alleviate the problems that have become a part of the police task.”⁶



From the safety and policing perspective, the Baltic countries have faced many similar challenges after regaining independence. Rapid developments in social life and specific native languages are only some red flags calling for contextual knowledge of appropriate policing. However, and without any criticism, a brief glimpse of police research's cursory data since 1991 (see Table 1) poses a question of the adequacy of a science-oriented mindset.

Table 1: Data of police research during 1991-2020 indexed in Web of Science

Country	Population on January 1 st 2020	Results with the topic-word "police" in 1991-2020	The first five record counts in Web of Science Categories
Republic of Estonia	1,329,000	49	History (11); psychiatry (5); substance abuse (4); public environmental occupational health (3); criminology penology (3)
Republic of Latvia	1,907,700	19	Economics (4); management (3); education educational research (3); social science interdisciplinary (3); material science textiles (2); transportation science technology (2); business (1); criminology penology (1)
Republic of Lithuania	2,794,100	65	Economics (9); education educational research (6); transportation science technology (5); philosophy (5); sociology (5); engineering mechanical (4); history (4)
Republic of Finland	5,525,300	363	Criminology penology (71); public environmental occupational health (35); medicine legal (30); social science interdisciplinary (27); psychiatry (26); psychology multidisciplinary (26); substance abuse (18)
Kingdom of Denmark	5,822,800	377	Public environmental occupational health (47); criminology penology (46); medicine legal (42); political science (20); transportation (18); psychiatry (16); social science interdisciplinary (15); law (14)
Kingdom of Norway	5,367,600	596	Criminology penology (130); public environmental occupational health (64); psychiatry (44); social science interdisciplinary (42); law (42); psychology multidisciplinary (41)

Sources: the author based on Web of Science (2021) and Eurostat (2021)

In the paper, the police science means "scientific knowledge about what constitutes policing, how it is made operational in a variety of social settings, how its institutions reflect or diverge from broader social and political values, what theoretical frameworks guide policing, and how police perform and their effect."⁷ Since a particular approach for developing police science depends on the context of a particular country, the paper focuses on a science-oriented mindset, which is a premise for normative approaches.

Although frames⁸ and narratives⁹ are concepts with many faces, we can state that a frame is a perspective from which an amorphous, ill-defined, problematic situation can be made sense of and acted on¹⁰, and narrative is a form of explanation that works by relating actions to individual beliefs and desires that produce them.¹¹ Here, narratives carry a meaning of hints pointing towards some possible explanation of situations, and framing takes focusing purposes and presents a variety of

solutions. The paper is not an evaluation or critique of police science in Baltic countries but it raises some essential questions from the perspective of police science. Since the countries' context, purposes, and opportunities may vary remarkably, the paper aims to present an analytical framework creating a ground for advancing a science-oriented mindset in the Baltic countries and elsewhere.

Notwithstanding many ways to build up the research, the approaches familiar to the police are to be preferred. For that reason, organizational principles and terminology are in use. The paper will follow the well-known logic of Allison's three key functions of managers in both the public and private sectors: (1) strategy, (2) internal components, and (3) external constituencies.¹²

These three aspects direct the analysis through police practices, police culture, and task-environment, and create a map to comprehend and follow ideas behind framing and narratives.

In the following, first, relying on Allison's model, the author has explained the contextual factors of the police; second, the author has clarified the idea and the opportunities accompanying framing and narratives for the advancement of a science-oriented mindset.

Methods and background

Setting the stage

On the one hand, there is a critical need for more profound and adequate information in managing organizations; on the other hand, the context of bounded rationality states clearly: nobody can ever have all the possible information about the social world. Thus, the science-orientated mindset in the police depends on many factors. The internal and external factors of police organization, as well as factors related to police behaviour that have a direct influence on people's everyday lives, are the matter in this chapter. The focus is on the phenomena that pose a high demand for knowledge.

There are several opportunities to comprehend a particular situation of a science-oriented mindset in a particular country. The data presented below carries an informative purpose and should not be seen from the perspective of the methodology of comparative analysis. Although the focus of the paper is on the general concern of police science in the Baltic countries, the data presented in Table 1 indicates at least two possible research questions for further studies: (1) the question of the research focus, and (2) amount. Some additional data is necessary to familiarize police science in the Baltic countries. The size of the countries and native language space are the characteristics making the overall context even more distinct. To avoid possible data overload but lighten the context and the Baltic countries' data, the author randomly picked three European countries with native language spaces. The only purpose is to clarify the context without any judgments.

The best way to understand the meaning and informational contribution of data presented in Table 1 in the context of following internal, external, and strategic views is to acknowledge the difference between typology and taxonomy. The debate between typologists and taxonomists is well-known.¹³ Taxonomy base on empirical data and typology has an analytical basis. These two complement each other. Typology is a heuristic striving holistic and system view. Appropriateness of picked characteristics is one of the possible problems in creating typology since it always carries subjective nature. Taxonomy tries to clarify what is known. It is a tool for testing theories and typologies. Taxonomies have tended to be problem-specific and contextual, and it is not very easy to apply in other settings.¹⁴ Since the paper aims to present an analytical framework, it has the strengths and weaknesses of typology. Like any other analytical framework, this framework offers an opportunity for empirical studies.

The question of scientific knowledge is sometimes confusing. The peer-reviewing process is one general precondition about quality, and publishing in journals indexed in scientific databases appears as a measurement of output. Thomson and Reuters Web of Science (WoS) and Scopus are these often-accepted databases available.¹⁵ In the paper the author has used data from WoS. Of course, additional data is necessary for comparative study, but in this study, the data carry contextual meaning in raising the question of a scientific mindset. It is possible to get different results using other databases and search modulation. More precise data are relevant in implementing and testing the framework but irrelevant in creating a framework.

Different native language spaces appear to be another critical issue from the data point. Writing in a native language makes knowledge available to a particular audience and advances specific terminology. However, policing is an interdisciplinary and inter-country issue, and every piece of new knowledge available for the policing community is also crucial. Moreover, it is crucial not only to the foggy policing community but also to a particular country since they are not in the play in some cases. For example, in Holmberg's¹⁶ study of Scandinavian police reforms, the Finnish police were not included: "However, at the time of writing, very little research on this reform has been published in other languages than Finnish. For this reason, the Finnish police reform will not be included in the analysis."

Research data are collected from the WoS¹⁷ and Eurostat.¹⁸ The timespan 1991-2020 in WoS presents the whole year's data, and the topic word was "police".¹⁹

External view – wickedness is hovering above.

Allison's²⁰ view of external conditions focuses on the organizational aspects. However, the focus of the paper is on understanding the opportunities of developing a science-oriented mindset. Since the object is not a particular organization, it is better to use something hovering above all the organizational context and have a more significant influence on a science-oriented mindset. Wickedness is the phenomenon demanding high-level knowledge from a particular issue and country's perspective. It is necessary to keep in mind that "the way a problem is defined is very closely tied to the type of solution that is proposed."²¹

Rittel and Webber argue that societal problems are inherently different from the problems that scientists and perhaps some classes of engineers deal with.²² They present the difference between tame and wicked problems and argue that wicked problems are difficult to define; they have no stopping rule; solutions are not true or false, but good or bad; there is no ultimate test for solutions; all attempts to solutions have effects that may not be reversible; they have no clear solution; every wicked problem is essentially unique; they may be a symptom of another problem; there are multiple explanations for them, and the planner has no right to be wrong.

Concerning contemporary safety issues like migration crises or terrorism, additional characteristics are necessary:

- 1) time is running out;
- 2) there is no central authority, or only a weak central authority, to manage the problem;
- 3) the same actors causing the problem seem to solve it;
- 4) the future is discounted radically so that contemporary solutions become less valuable.²³

So, the knowledge of wickedness brings many layers and links in explaining how issues are scoped, priorities are set, and possible solutions are considered.²⁴ The context emphasizes particularities at the centre of the science-oriented mindset. The Baltic States have a particular context that requires particular answers. For example, Newman and Head found in their study of gun control across multiple national contexts that "gun violence is a wicked problem in the US, but not wicked in Canada or Australia."²⁵

Internal view – specific and demanding police culture

An organization is a fertile terrain of components influencing a science-oriented mindset, and police culture is crucial. The chapter emphasizes the cultural aspects of the police since police culture tends to be action-oriented, often seeking a quick fix.²⁶ Also, organizational culture is more convenient in thinking about the topic than organizational design elements like centralization or de-concentration. In the paper, culture has the following meaning: "The culture of a group can be defined as the *accumulated shared learning* of that group as it solves its problems of external adaptation and internal integration; which has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, feel, and behave in relation to those problems. This accumulated learning is a *pattern or system of beliefs, values, and behavioral norms that come to be taken for granted* as basic assumptions and eventually drop out of awareness".²⁷ Culture is like a bridge linking all the aspects of an organization, and in this way, influencing how people perceive

the police. Police culture has a substantial impact on the everyday behavior of the police.²⁸ It also reflects the developments of a particular police organization. For example, after regaining independence in 1991, the Estonian police were one component of the democratic state. However, democracy at that time had different meanings and expressions in policing compared to 2021.

Although police culture is often presented as negative and stereotypical²⁹ it is vital in a science-oriented mindset. Especially noteworthy is the layered nature of culture, as Pauline III so clearly presented.³⁰ There is little doubt that culture influences the overall mindset of the police. To identify the role of the police in society, culture as means, should be studied from inside out and outside in.

Strategic view – organization and strategies

Strategies are one of the most crucial factors in policing since they directly impact people's perceptions of the police. The meaning of strategy in policing literature is often vague. Here, a strategy is an actual behaviour or program, not an analytical ideal type. Strategies are just names of people's or groups' behaviour elucidating their personalities. For that reason, "Changing policing strategy is likely to have a greater impact on crime than adding more police".³¹ However, it is known that most executives cannot articulate their business's objective, scope, and advantage in a simple statement. If they can't, neither can anyone else.³²

The complex organizational context demands advanced knowledge to answer organizational needs appropriately. Nevertheless, even with the best strategies, not anybody can guarantee success. In paraphrasing the idea of Bob Jessop,³³ strategies are the tools helping to choose a form of failure, and in this way, decrease the chance of failure. Understanding and developing strategies to answer a particular country's needs directly link to a science-based mindset. Robert M. Grant identifies the firm's primary role as integrating the specialist knowledge resident in individuals into goods and services.³⁴ Thus, recognizing the link between knowledge as a precondition for goods and services is essential. The vague and inconsistent focus of scientific research is a preparation for failure in policing. Here, failure has two primary meanings. First, without scientific knowledge, it is hard to imagine a country-specific advancement in policing. Second, the police are developed to deal with safety issues in society. The reference to society presents a hidden idea of policing that encompasses more than police-specific knowledge like police strategies or skills.

It also deals with policy design and organizations. Dealing with safety in society is a complex task. From the Baltic countries' perspective, both questions got a dark presentiment from Table 1 above. Besides, all strategies have limits that perform as a trigger for organizational development. Any strategy fits only with a particular situation, and learning begins after acknowledging that the strategy is not appropriate anymore. Here the science-oriented mindset comes in; it is time to find some other mean (strategy) and redesign it to answer needs. Also, since strategies have different dimensions in problem-solving³⁵, these limited capabilities urge the police to look for new solutions, leading to a science-oriented mindset.

However, in safe societies, it is possible to find police organizations without consciously using any functional strategies³⁶, although strategies can evade de-professionalization³⁷ and are from that perspective protection against stagnation. The keyword is awareness. All random developments produce unpredictable ends.

Towards a science-oriented mindset in the police

Starting with framing

Frames are everywhere. Even simple frames like a window, works as an assistant in helping to focus on something. Beyond that, knowledge about framing possibilities offers many advantages in developing a science-oriented mindset.

Rein and Schön³⁸ describe four mutually compatible images of frames: (1) as a scaffolding (an inner structure), (2) a boundary that sets off phenomena from their contexts (like picture frames), (3) a cognitive/ appreciative schema of interpretation, or (4) a generic diagnostic/prescriptive story. Since narrative frames are that the storyline is more capable of incorporating and adapting to changing events³⁹, it is an appropriate device in this research. The frame becomes a story only after referring

to a particular story.⁴⁰ Rein and Schön⁴¹ described reframing as an attempt to shift the paradigm of a problem. This research emphasizes the signifying abilities of frames. Like a choice for a research objective influences the choice of methods and unit of analysis⁴², the lenses we use in looking at a problem, accompany particular means.

For example, during some period, one can define several actions by the police, which appears as a story after considering these actions through explanatory lenses like police strategy. By adding information (e.g., police strategy), all these actions get other aspects, including moral and normative. For example, data of police research during 1991-2020 are just data, which turns to a story only after some additional information (e.g., comparison) or even value statements (e.g., good or bad). The first question in framing is defining: “what we have?”. Although this limiting question already refers to some perspective (e.g., knowledge about police science), it becomes a story after asking an ontological question: “what it is?”. There are hardly limited opportunities to answer this question, but the question is necessary before the normative question: “how or what ought to be?”. It is also necessary to deal with an epistemological question like “how do we know?”, but for now, there is no need to go further.

Accordingly, there are many possible explanations of the data of police research in 1991–2020 in Baltic countries (what it is), but these explanations give a meaning to the data and predefine opportunities in moving towards the normative question. The ability to refer to various aspects of a particular frame (data) and multiple possible meanings to interpret the data makes framing a powerful tool. Since even the most intractable policy debates can lead to reframing,⁴³ it is worth testing it for the sake of a science-oriented mindset in the Baltic countries. Since framing, in the paper, operate as a means of focusing and presenting varieties, the question of how to start becomes even more striking. How to achieve a normative leap from data to recommendations, from fact to values, from 'is' to 'ought'?⁴⁴

Narratives create meanings and build bridges

Storytelling is how we make meaning in our lives, and narratives create social meaning by imposing a coherent interpretation of the mess of events and actions around us.⁴⁵ The ability to capture the overall complexity is the characteristic of narrative, and the process of narrative creation builds a bridge between related agents. While framing helps be precise, a narrative can grasp many frames into a meaningful story. The variety of frames and narratives becomes understandable in thinking of the Baltic countries. In order to build up a coherent view in a particular country to advance a science-oriented mindset and grasp current narratives into one, it is helpful to define a metanarrative. The latter is the candidate for a new policy narrative that underwrites the assumptions for decision-making.⁴⁶ Here, a metanarrative is meant to write with small-m. Like Enlightenment, metanarratives with big-M carry a meaning of consensus, but we need to look for a different agenda.⁴⁷ A joint metanarrative above the Baltic countries may create additional empowerment. However, gathering all the Baltic countries is not a necessary precondition. The framework elaborated here is also possible to use elsewhere; it is a mental model.

The process of creating a metanarrative is inherently appropriate for contemporary participatory democracies since the purpose is to figure out the stories that are drowned out by the dominant discourses.⁴⁸ Vast contribution from van Eeten⁴⁹ in implementing and developing Roe's ideas in dealing with controversial narratives about metanarratives is worth following.

Since the police operate in safety, which is an overlapping ground of problems grasping various disciplines, police science is crucial. Here, the ability of narrative concerning complex issues gets a unique value: “the best stories create a tapestry that is both lovely and useful and that helps *make sense of complex situations occurring within an environment of conflicting values.*”⁵⁰ Because of this inner complexity, the need for multiple views is evident, and storytelling expands epistemology beyond the comfort zone. It is naïve to argue that published papers are too complicated compared to the “real life.” It is a blunt fact that there are no cars or houses without science. Science-oriented mindset helps overcome often even axiomatical (naïve)inductivist or learning-by-doing positivist

worldview. Using appropriate narratives is a move towards normalizing a science-oriented mindset in presenting the shortcomings of empiricism.⁵¹

Framing and narratives - creating a ground to advance science-oriented mindset

Principles of framing and narratives elaborated via external and internal factors of an organization and input from strategies are valuable building blocks to create a ground for advancing a science-oriented mindset. Here the author has connected the above-elaborated information into a framework that can help act in frameless situations. Three primary tasks will combine ideas about organizations and knowledge of dealing with policy problems:

1. Discover narratives related to a science-oriented mindset in the police.
2. Use discovered stories to acknowledge a current situation and outline future directions.
3. Build a metanarrative.

In this process, scientists and the police are mutually supportive and dependent. One general problem seems to be the overall lack of knowledge characterizing a current situation comprehensively. Although there are many possible starting points, the presumption is that the police are responsible for advancing police science.⁵² However, to analyze a narrative, one has to have one. It would be helpful to get knowledge to start with. The police need pieces of evidence about themselves. As it was presented above, the police have a specific culture, so it is necessary to handle the police and society as different units of analysis. The purpose is to discover narratives about the nature of safety problems, the actual role and position of the police in society, and police behaviour. Narratives about all these aspects have to be discovered separately. These different analyses allow recognizing similarities and differences and starting a constructive process to find a metanarrative. Here, the ball is in the hands of scientists whose responsibility is to discover and present narratives hovering above. One main strength of this framework is that nobody knows “the truth” *before* research. Discovering narratives are not pre-given since they will appear through study. From that equal position, it is possible to expect a constructive future.

Discovered narratives are only building blocks and do not have a deterministic nature: a metanarrative is a new direction, a story with a beginning, middle, and end. The strength of creating a metanarrative is that it is a plus-sum game. From here, the idea of framing takes the lead. Framing allows discovering various possibilities together. It becomes in force through cooperation and creates a mutual dependency. The process gives a stimulus for a learning environment, and different views on narratives clarify current positions. This kind of revealing situation leads to bridges between the parties.

Since creating a metanarrative may not be familiar to all the parties, the additional value comes to the front. Finding and using an appropriate method to reveal stories hovering above is necessary. Looking for appropriate methods, explaining them to others, and putting them into action, already presents the charm of a science-oriented mindset. The idea of “science as intellectual enterprise”,⁵³ fits probably with most organizational forms. The paper deals only with the opening of discussion for using framing and narratives to advance a science-oriented mindset. So, the definition and (re)construction of (current) narratives are the topics for further research. Yet, one additional piece of good advice from the literature is that there is no best methodology or theory to succeed.⁵⁴

Conclusions

The paper began with the blunt statement of disconnection between science and policing from leading scholars in the field, and the author has created the framework to overcome this disconnectedness. The paper challenged the commonly prevailing question of the responsibility of advancement the police science, packed framing and narratives as equipment, and directed the issue to scientists. Motivated employees are an outcome of organizational design and management, not a precondition. In following this axiomatic knowledge from the organization’s field, the context for all the agents should be presented. This complex task needs scientific expertise. It is also a challenge for scientists to demonstrate the genuine need for a science-oriented mindset.

The country-specific scientific knowledge helps to decrease the possibility of failure in safety. Appropriate means are required since it is not easy to create a ground for advancing a science-oriented mindset in the police in Baltic countries. Narratives can present a story with a beginning, middle, and end. Before creating plans for developing a science-oriented mindset, narratives related to safety problems, the police's role in society, and police behaviour linking police to everyday life have to be discovered. To assure transparency, these narratives hovering above society and the police should be studied separately. These narratives are input for the framing process, which is essential in the overall process. Framing makes an available variety of the possible future states and pushes to find appropriate means to succeed. The bridging character of framing links all related agents. In a frameless situation, the framing process focusing on the future prevents falling back to previous frames available. The process towards a metanarrative is already an example of a science-oriented mindset.

The framework presented is now available, but the implementation needs goodwill and action. Also, it is an excellent chance for scientists to present the power of scientific knowledge. For making hidden narratives visible, high-level knowledge is welcome.

Although the idea for this research springs from data about police research in Baltic countries, the framework is not limited to them. The reason concerns epistemic issues; the framework is typological, not taxonomical. However, the framework must be tested for the same reasons, and further studies are needed. The urgency for a science-oriented mindset to confront challenges in safety has never been greater. This study re-raises the question of a scientific-oriented mindset in the police, presents a framework for advancement, and, in this way, overcomes the dualist thinking of scientists and practitioners.

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Anotācija

Policijas tiesību zinātnē ir daudz pētījumu, kuros ir aprakstīti nepieciešamie priekšnoteikumi tiesiskās kārtības nodrošināšanai un uzturēšanai. Tomēr Baltijas valstu policijas pieredzes analīze atklāj nepietiekamu jaunāko zinātnes atziņu izmantošanu praktiskajā darbībā.

Šajā rakstā ir piedāvāta sistēma, kas balstīta uz zinātnei orientētas domāšanas veicināšanu policijā. Autorprāt, būtu jāpārvar iespējamais konflikts starp zinātniekiem un praktiķiem un jāsavieno visas ar tiesiskās kārtības uzturēšanu saistītās puses. Šajā kontekstā zinātniekiem būtu jāuzņemas vadošā loma.

Ārējie, iekšējie un stratēģiskie faktori kā trīs galvenās tā saucamās *Alisson* vadības funkcijas tika izmantoti, lai precizētu šī pētījuma ietvaru. Pētījumā autors pievērš uzmanību dažādiem policijas darbības attīstības iespējamajiem nākotnes virzieniem, uzsverot strukturēta metanaratīva izveidošanu, kas aptvertu visas iesaistītās kompetentās institūcijas.

Atslēgas vārdi: policijas tiesību zinātne, naratīvs, ierāmējums, kārtības uzturēšana.