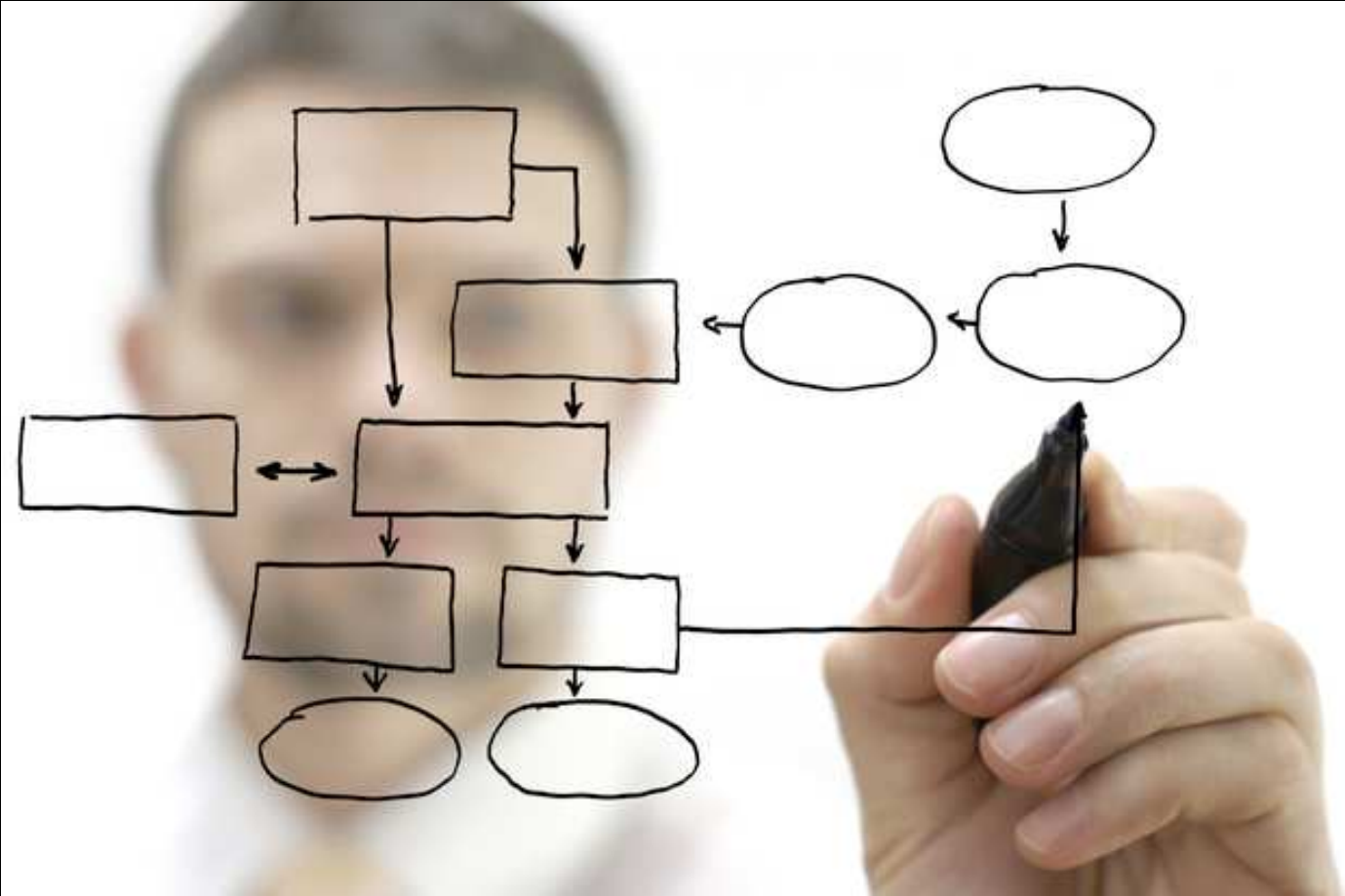


What is going on inside the Police Machine?

by James Sheptycki,
York University, Toronto, Canada

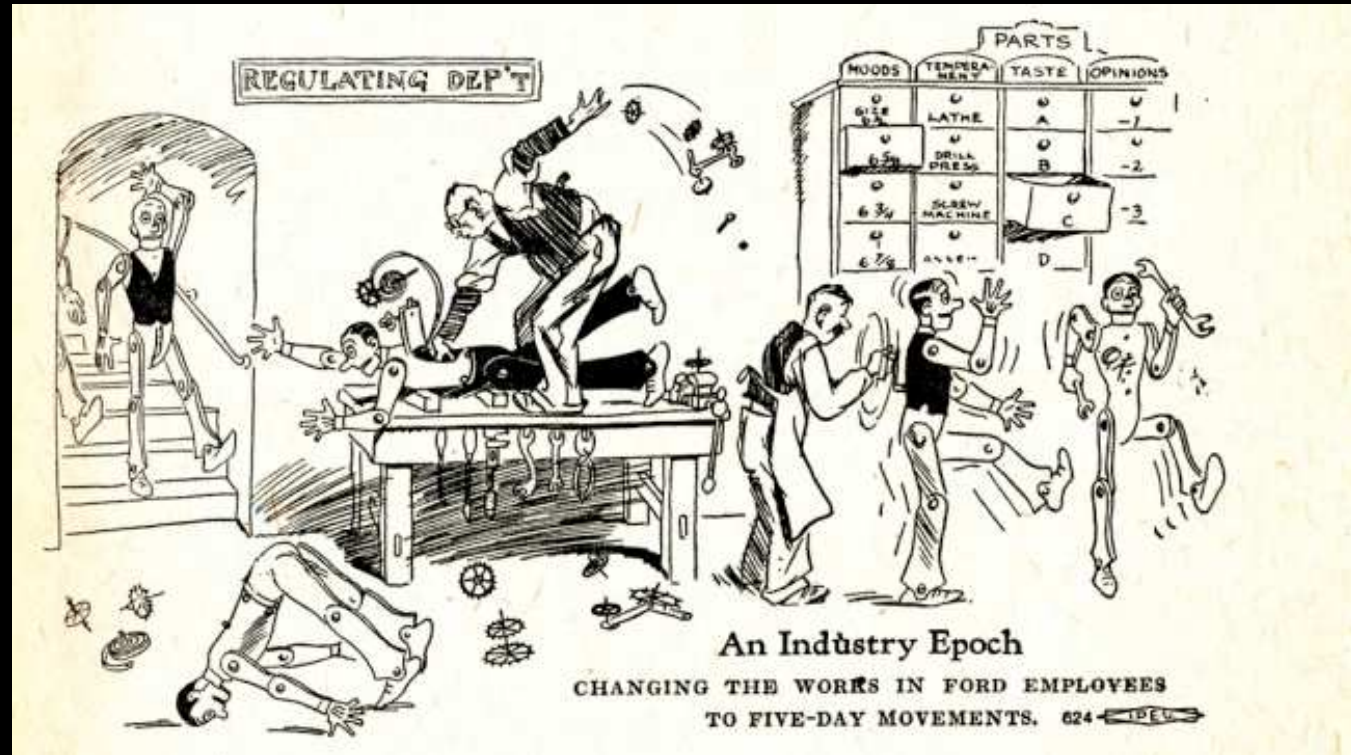


There are known knowns. There are things that we know. There are known unknowns. That is to say, there are things that we now know we don't know. But there are also unknown unknowns. There are things that we do not know we don't know.
(Donald Rumsfeld, US Secretary of Defense, Feb. 12, 2002)

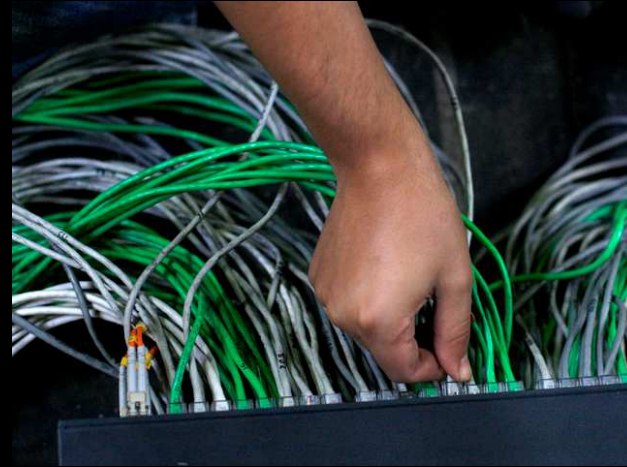


A force that uses intelligence to guide information-based operations can penetrate an adversary's decision cycle and change outcomes, even in the face of a larger opposing force. This strategy underscores the idea that more is not necessarily better, a concept increasingly important today with growing budget pressures and limited resources (Beck and McCue, 2009).



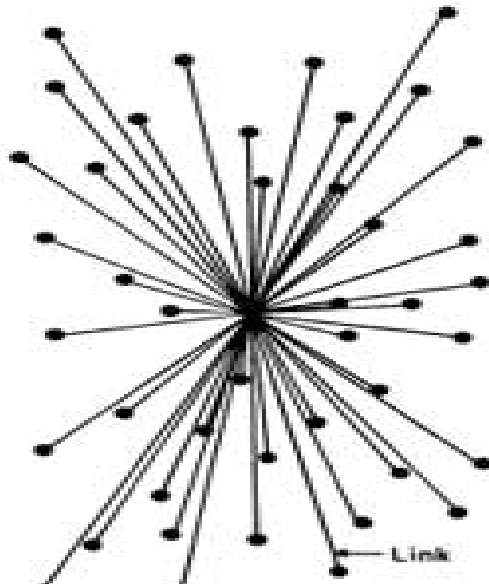


The renaissance of a community policing philosophy in the 1980s recognized the limitations of technology based policing and tried to remedy it, but it appears that it was only a pause. The growing and unreflective reliance on information technologies suggests that the lesson has not been learned as yet and that it is seen as an end rather than an aid (Dupont, 2001 p. 44-45)

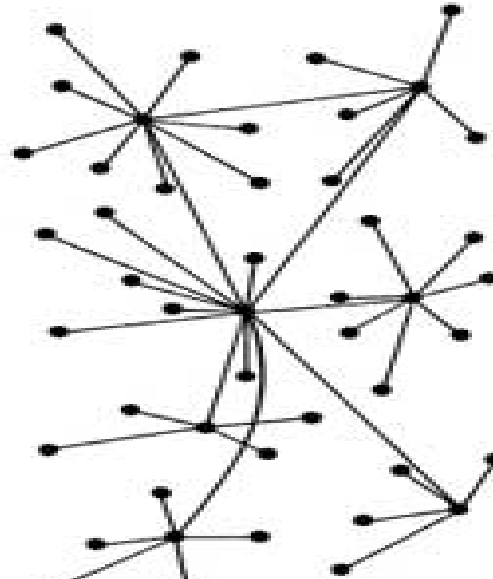


Five reasons why information flows informally

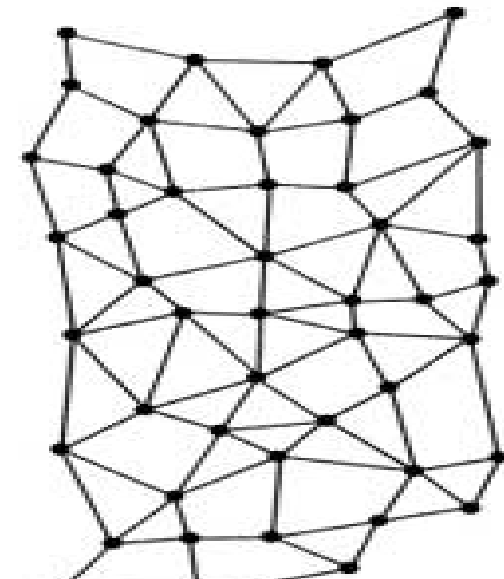
- special squads
- `leaking dirty data`
- `intelligence` vs `evidence` (the pre-investigative stage)
- constant organizational change (Moore's Law)
- Infostructure & infoculture



Centralized



De-centralized Sectoral

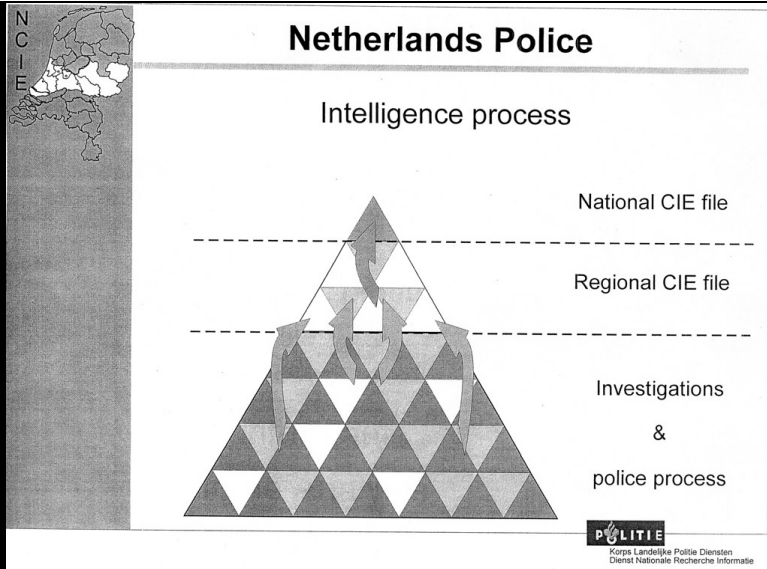


Networked Point-to-Point

THREE IDEAL TYPES OF COMMUNICATIONS ORGANISATION

Successive waves of technological change have transformed police organization





Managing the information process

Organizational pathologies:

- Information silos
- Linkage blindness
- Intelligence gaps
- Compulsive data demand
- Information overload
- Noise
- False positives



Many officers speak disdainfully of them [street checks] due to management's continual haranguing for more of them. The numbers game has even forced some pushback in the form of phoney names, addresses and bizarre descriptions. One card described a male of obvious South Asian appearance as female and white. A short person was described as eight feet tall ... a soured officer might intentionally target blacks to sabotage the system. Quantity replaces quality and the general public becomes far too familiar with a possibly abusive process





The result is a perpetual sense of everyone's part of being out of control. The organization is experienced as a juggernaut. There is an endemic feeling in insecurity that is derived from a feeling of never having enough knowledge and from a reflexive awareness that there are always systemic faults that can be ameliorated by better communication rules formats and technologies. (Ericson and Haggerty, 1997)

Both street cops and management cops are steeped in the police métier and the appearance of intelligence-led crime fighting well suits it, both because it appeals to core subcultural beliefs and because it allows police work to continue behind the façade of institutional rationality. If this conclusion seems too pessimistic to police reformers, then the lesson should be that the key to transforming police organization for the better lies in non-rational ideals and notions about social peace and the good society that concern individual human dignity, social well-being and communal life.

