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# **TRANSNATIONAL POLICING IN EUROPE AND ITS LOCAL EFFECTS**

Ben Bowling and Charline Kopf

Ben Bowling BA MSc PhD FAcSS  
Professor of Criminology and Criminal Justice and Acting Executive Dean  
The Dickson Poon School of Law, King's College London  
+44 (0)2078481142  
[Ben.bowling@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:Ben.bowling@kcl.ac.uk)

Charline Kopf BA  
Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology, University of Oxford  
[Charline.kopf@sant.ox.ac.uk](mailto:Charline.kopf@sant.ox.ac.uk)

## TRANSNATIONAL POLICING IN EUROPE AND ITS LOCAL EFFECTS

**Abstract:** The aim of this paper is to develop an agenda for comparative research on the forms, functions and effects of transnational policing in various European countries and its impact on domestic policework. This work seeks to explore the similarities and differences in the extent of communication, cooperation and collaboration among police agencies across the continent. The tasks of investigating crime, enforcing law and maintaining order – which have historically been based almost exclusively within local communities – now stretch far beyond national boundaries. There is evidence from various national contexts that many police officers spend their time working with colleagues abroad. But there have been, as yet, very few comparative studies of the forms and functions of transnational policing in different countries. The limited evidence available suggests that there are wide variations in transnational policing practices across the continent. Transnational policing is driven by political and economic changes, the growth in international travel, information communication technology and migration, and developments in the nature of crime and security threats. The pattern of policework is shaped by the organizational architecture of local, national and global policing systems and specific practices such as posting liaison officers overseas. The key aim is to examine and explain the differences in degree of cooperation with police in other countries and the forms that it takes in specific places.

### **Keywords:**

Transnational, Regional, European, Glocal, Police, Policing, Cooperation, Research

### Introduction

A body of literature, growing rapidly since the early 1990s, has shed light on international police cooperation and institutional developments in Europe (Hufnagel, 2014; Deflem, 2000, 2002, 2006; Fijnaut, 1991, 1993, 2010; den Boer, 2014). However, only scant references have been made as to what globalisation entails for the local practices of police actors on the ground (Fijnaut, 2004; Block, 2007). Indeed, there have been few systematic comparative studies of the forms and functions of transnational policing in different European countries. A key issue is what appears to be an *uneven development* of transnational policing across the continent. Globalisation, in terms of technology and infrastructure, as well as economic,

cultural and organisational effects, varies widely from place to place. Policing agencies in some cities are highly networked while others remain isolated and insular. Similarly, the density, extensity and effectiveness of police cooperation vary widely from one country to the next. The goal of this paper is to begin to develop an agenda for a new generation of comparative research on the forms, functions and effects of transnational policing in Europe.

Starting with different examples of transnational policing – one deriving from popular culture, the others from recent newspaper articles – we will first outline the definition and tasks of transnational policing as well as locate the latter in the context of globalisation touching upon the tensions between the local and the global. A closer look will be given to the pioneering research on the European policing field carried out in the 1990s and this will also allow us to examine the different levels of the architecture of police cooperation across the continent. We draw on the existing findings of specific case studies of transnational policing to identify the main topics as well as similarities and issues in the cooperation among European police officers, as well as highlight the gaps in the academic literature. To make sense of these different structures, we will introduce a socio-spatial typology and make an attempt to apply it to the sub-subregional as well as regional level of EU cooperation. We will then move on to the possible case-studies which we want to explore in our research project as well as the research questions which arose from the literature review.

### Globalisation and Transnational Policing

*“People always say technology has made the world smaller,” Hökberg said. “I think that’s debatable. But the fact that it’s made my world bigger is beyond dispute. From this flimsy townhouse at the edge of Ystad, I can reach all the markets in the whole world, I can connect*

*to betting centres in London to Rome I can buy options on the Hong Kong market and sell American dollars in Jakarta.”*

*“Is it really so simple?”*

(Mankell, 2008: 56)

In an innovative analysis, International Relations scholar Michael Shapiro examines how detective novels reveal the extent to which policing activities and the cities in which they unfold are enmeshed in global dynamics (Shapiro, 2010: 56). *Firewall* (2008) by Henning Mankell, for example, features a Swedish police inspector named Wallander who realises that key elements of his current case are of a global nature, revealing how ‘a larger global world, which while mostly unacknowledged, affects the dynamics within the smaller worlds of cities’ (Shapiro, 2010: 52). The case involves a computer consultant who is implicated in a transnational plot with the aim ‘to disrupt the world financial markets by programming an ATM machine to set off a chain reaction that would compromise worldwide financial exchanges’ (Shapiro, 2010: 53). The criminal cooperated with a man living in Luanda, Angola, whom he met during his travels and who was enthralled by the computer consultant’s technological and computing abilities. The police officer comes to acknowledge how his ‘local world expands to comprehend the way actions initiated in a third world venue impinge on his small world in Sweden...’ (Shapiro, 2010: 57). Quoting one of the officers’ colleagues, Shapiro holds that ‘their city is no longer merely local’ (Shapiro, 2010: 57): ‘When you’re hooked up to the Internet, you’re in the middle of the world wherever you are’ (Mankell, 2008: 229). This consciousness of ‘glocal policing’ where local, national, and global structures are interlinked (Bowling, 2010: 10) is a perfect example of what Cain calls the ‘indigenous-but-globally-aware’ attitude of practitioners (Cain, 2000: 251). Wallander’s *policing metis*, a term Shapiro coined to describe ‘...a form of intelligence that combines a “capacity to tell signs,” with an understanding of the way that the culture of the city

articulates motivations with opportunities and structures,' has to adapt to this new challenge (Shapiro, 2010: 47). Indeed, resolving this particular case requires new skills, such as penetrating 'encrypted computer files' (2010: 54). For the investigation to succeed, they have to call on a third party, a 'young hacker-turned-crime-solving-assistant,' as Shapiro calls him, thus testifying to the increasing involvement of non-governmental entities in police operations (Shapiro, 2010: 55). The concern with cybercrime resonates with Manning's engagement with policing the cyberspace (2000) as well as Caless and Tong's recent publication *Leading Policing in Europe* (2015). The latter give us an unprecedented insight into the personal opinions of policing officers who consider cybercrime to be one of the most important developments in recent years (Caless and Tong, 2015: 15).

Not only the web, as epitome of a fluid modernity in which boundaries are increasingly blurred, even non-existent, are perceived as one of the main challenges of global nature which commissar Wallander has to face. Transnational financial exchanges and the increasingly rapid movement of bodies throughout the world, are also part of the issues with which the inspector has to grapple and which present a growing challenge to policing entities bound to the notion of a Westphalian nation-state system. In this regard, Brodeur's theorisation of the plural conception of policing is helpful as it goes beyond such an analytical limitation (2010). His understanding of policing as a multifaceted and polycentric web of assemblages that are made up of different policing nodes help us conceptualise the different types and activities of police agents who have to deal with the before-mentioned changes.

A recent example which denotes another type of transnational operation in Europe resulting from globalisation is the import of Chinese police officers to Rome and Milan during high tourist seasons. The action taken by the Italian and Chinese governments is

explained with the aim to make Chinese tourists feel more secure. As *The Guardian*'s headline informs us, 'Italy seeks to reassure Asian tourists with imported Chinese police - Government hopes patrols by Chinese officers in Rome and Milan will help wealthy visitors feel more protected.'<sup>1</sup> Here, the police are not just "breaking the old paradigm' in which policing was seen as an issue of national sovereignty" – as explained by Italy's then minister of the interior Angelino Alfano<sup>2</sup> - but this action also indicates some other important characteristics of transnational policing: police officers are responsible for a wide array of tasks, from dealing with illegal motorcycle gangs, environmental crime (Block, 1993; Tysoe, 1993; White, 2008; Westerhuis et al., 2013; Beirne and South, 2013; Spapens et al., 2014), financial crime (Levi, 2007; Estigarribia, 2013), money laundering (Sheptycki, 2000) and controlling border regions (Hufnagel, 2013) as well as in Wallander's case the 'web', to making tourists feel 'more secure' (Bowling and Sheptycki, 2012).

Drawing on Ulrich Beck's understanding of globalisation as 'processes through which sovereign national states are criss-crossed and undermined by transnational actors with varying prospects of power, orientations, identities and networks' (Beck, 2000: 11), Bowling and Sheptycki define global policing as 'the capacity to use coercive and surveillant power around the world in ways that pass right through national boundaries unaffected by them' (Bowling and Sheptycki, 2012: 8). Their working definition of transnational policing is 'any form of order maintenance, law enforcement, peace-keeping, crime investigation, intelligence sharing or other form of policework that transcends national boundaries' (Bowling and Sheptycki, 2015: xxvi).

Both vignettes – Wallander's case and the import of Chinese police officers – provide us with an interesting starting point for a research project on *Transnational Policing in*

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<sup>1</sup> Stephanie Kirchaessner, 'Italy seeks to reassure Asian tourists with imported Chinese police,' *The Guardian*, 4 May 2016: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/may/04/chinese-police-patrols-rome-collaboration-italy>, accessed 2 August 2016.

<sup>2</sup> Angelino Alfano quoted in Stephanie Kirchaessner, 'Italy seeks to reassure Asian tourists with imported Chinese police,' *The Guardian*.

*Europe and its Local Effects*. The tensions between the local and global in transnational policing still tend to be overlooked in scholarship. In an increasingly interconnected world, which sees transnational policing as panacea for transnational crime, not enough questions have been asked as to how globalisation is ‘affecting the form and function of contemporary policing’, and particularly of transnational police cooperation (Bowling, 2009).

#### Developments in European policing: an architecture of formal and informal collaboration

Although cooperation in European policing can be traced back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, systematic scholarly study of the subject did begin until the early 1990s. Pioneering researchers in this field who have documented the transformational growth of transnational organisations in Europe include Fijnaut (1993), Benyon and colleagues from the Centre for the Study of Public Order at the University of Leicester (Benyon et al., 1993) as well as Anderson and Den Boer (1994). The latter’s *Policing Across National Boundaries* (Anderson and den Boer, 1994) and their collection *Policing the European Union: Theory, Law and Practice* (Anderson et al., 1995) co-edited with four other authors are important contributions to the studies of police cooperation in Europe looking at theories as well as practical issues in this realm. The papers in the first book span a variety of topics including European integration, policing refugees, cooperation in police intelligence as well as raise the question of data protection and civil liberties. The second publication is a comprehensive study of policing at the supranational level of the European Union and examines patterns such as the harmonisation of criminal law and procedure as well as law enforcement strategies (Anderson et al., 1995).



From a theoretical point of view, Benyon's typology that – differentiating macro, meso and micro levels of police cooperation – is a useful attempt to bring some clarity into the thick field of European policing structures and reveals the overlapping nature of the different policing institutions (Benyon et al., 1993, 1994). Nevertheless, as Sheptycki points out, much is left 'under-theorised and the reader is left with little sense of the processes which give vitality to the police co-operation enterprise in Europe' (Sheptycki, 1995a: 304). Fijnaut's edited collection on the other hand provides us with an insight into the policing élites' views on cooperation practices in the Netherlands, France, Belgium and the United Kingdom and hence sheds light on the political environment in which those practices unfold (Fijnaut, 1993). Anderson's chapter is particularly interesting as it explores the relation between the French police and the cooperation practices at the EU level. However, the collection's predominant focus on intergovernmental relations offering mostly a national, or even a nationalistic perspective (Sheptycki, 1995a: 304).

The existing literature lays a very important foundation, but says too little about what globalisation entails for the *local* practices of police agents (Fijnaut, 2004; Block, 2007). The fact is that 'most police work is grounded in relatively small geographical locales' (Sheptycki, 1995b: 617) and therefore some of the most interesting transnational policing dynamics are occurring at the local level. This leads us to focus on what might be referred to as the globalization of local policing (or perhaps the localization of global policing).

One of the rare comparative studies of the forms and functions of transnational policing in different European countries is Sheptycki's *In Search of Transnational Policing* (2002). This empirical study of transnational police co-operation between the UK, the Netherlands, Belgium and France reveals how local policing practices on the ground interact transnationally. His exploration of the changing nature of policing institutions and agenda

setting at the national and transnational level reveals the impact of ‘neoliberalism and the marketization of security occurring in specific national jurisdiction’ (Sheptycki, 2005). Analyzing how this shapes the policing practitioners everyday life, he provides us with an insightful account of a subculture of policing. Nonetheless, as Sheptycki himself notes, the field of transnational police cooperation is in constant flux (Sheptycki, 1995a). Indeed, the seemingly incessant administrative reorganisations and reforms in the field of transnational police cooperation and law enforcement make it very difficult to map the cooperation practices and institutions (Sheptycki, 1995a: 306). The rapidly evolving police architecture and agencies of the European Union but also technological changes as well as a growing attentiveness to terrorist threats call for an updated study of current cooperation practices. Hence, the considerable changes in the field make it necessary to return to transnational policing in Europe and develop the agenda for the comparative research on the forms, functions and effects of transnational policing in Europe.

The findings of these studies are useful in that they suggest that despite the EU treaties’ constant efforts to harmonise EU police cooperation, it is still a ‘policy field far removed from supranational politics’ (den Boer, 2014: 49). Deflem agrees with den Boer, highlighting the ‘remarkable persistence of nationality...in international police work’ despite increasing transnational policing practices and ‘formation of multilateral cooperation initiatives’ (Deflem, 2006: 339). Fijnaut argues that recent developments in European policing have been a step backwards. Whereas the Treaties of Maastricht and Amsterdam, the Tampere Programme and the Lisbon Treaty were steps forward in the institutionalization of police co-operation, “the Stockholm Programme is disappointing” Fijnaut, 2010: 19). Nonetheless the institutional development for police co-operation in Europe, which includes Europol, CEPOL, Frontex, and the Police Chief’s Task Force, also boasts considerable operational

powers conferred by the European Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters, the Prüm Treaty, and the Swedish Framework Decision. Furthermore, Hufnagel notes that ‘major EU developments in this field are still relatively untested, such as the European Arrest Warrant or the European Evidence Warrant’ (Hufnagel, 2013: 38-39).

If the European policing arena is still far from being supranationally regulated, there is a general consensus that the ‘mere number of levels and agreements involved shows the complexity of these co-operation arrangements’ which have developed over time (Princen et al., 2014: 9). Indeed, rather than being a novel phenomenon, transnational policing is old as policing itself (Bowling and Sheptycki 2012: 3). Since the origins of modern police forces, officers have collaborated with their foreign counterparts in exchanging ideas, intelligence, techniques and methods; they have engaged in collaborative investigations involving overseas travel (Bowling and Sheptycki 2015: xxi, see also Wakefield and McLaughlin, 2009; Matassa and Newburn, 2007: 61). There were, for example, police officers from Germany, France, Austria and Belgium present at London’s 1851 Great Exhibition. And in more recent times, ‘there were already many informal or semi-formal cross-border policing arrangements in Europe at the time of the first meeting of the so-called Trevi Group for intergovernmental co-operation in 1975’ (Bowling and Sheptycki, 2012: 43). As Benyon noted in 1992:

‘[i]n addition to the Trevi Group, Interpol, the Schengen Agreement and the nascent Europol, there is a wide array of less formal arrangements for promoting police co-operation in Europe. The number of these law enforcement networks, groups and agreements is large and together they form a complicated, interconnecting, mesh of formal structures and informal arrangements, serviced by a range of information systems (which are often incompatible)’ (Benyon, 1992: 32).

Those ‘informal or semi-formal agreements’ still make up a large part of European transnational policing, and according to Guille ‘are still favoured instead of using central channels which reminds us of the spider web of the available channels of communication and the lack of trust in national agencies’ (Guille, 2010: 66). Formal agreements are often perceived as complicated, time-consuming and ineffective (Bowling, 2010: 304). Providing us with a useful conceptual tool, Sheptycki introduces three distinctions for theorizing the formality-informality nexus. He distinguishes between formal practices with a capital ‘F’ which are time consuming and formal with a small ‘f’ which works faster. In both cases, there is a formal chain of accountability within the organization, which does not hold true for his third category, namely informal practices (Sheptycki, 2002).

Whereas police officers’ preference for ‘informal’ relations is well established in most of the studies (Schwell, 2008; Princen et al., 2014; Alain, 2000), it is interesting to look at the interpretation of this preference theoretically (Herschinger and Jachtenfuchs, 2012). In contrast to most accounts of police cooperation that give either preference to the institutionalisation or the informality thesis of transnational policing agreements, Herschinger and Jachtenfuchs (2012) argue that both developments are not mutually exclusive. On the contrary, they suggest that formal and informal coexist and can develop simultaneously but also in an alternating way (Herschinger and Jachtenfuchs, 2012). Indeed, there is empirical evidence, that informal cooperation can function as important prerequisite for formal institutionalisation, while it does not necessarily disappear once institutions have been created. The interrelation between formal and informal agreements is confirmed by Hufnagel who emphasises the influence of ‘informal practitioner forums on harmonised EU developments’ (Hufnagel, 2013: 243). She analyses various cases of informal regional EU cooperation which had a significant impact on the institutionalised legal framework of the EU (Hufnagel, 2013: 43). Whereas NeBeDeAgPol (Association of Belgian, Dutch and German

Chiefs of Police in the Rhine-Meuse Region) functions as ‘informal regional cooperation and was established outside the governmental realm’ - such as the Cross-Channel Intelligence Conference (CCIC) (Sheptycki, 2002) - it was a crucial trigger for the institutionalised EU framework in that it raised awareness on matters of police collaboration among ‘law-makers,’ and its reforms served as a model for the Schengen Agreement (Hufnagel, 2013: 43). Those interrelating agreements make up a ‘patchwork quilt’ of transnational policing (Sheptycki, 1995b: 628), with intersecting, overlapping pieces of different sizes, shapes and thickness, are held together through the work of liaison officers. These are the ‘fixers and facilitators’ (Block, 2007: 374); like ‘station-masters’ shunting information between police agencies (Bigo, 1996), or as ‘oil and glue’ acting as both adhesive and lubricant for the transnational policing system (Nadelmann 1993; see also Block and den Boer 2013).

#### The dynamics of transnational policing at the local level

Most empirical case studies have found that personal contacts play a vital role in transnational policing. This evidence suggests that cooperation depends on the personnel and the trust between practitioners, leading to a ‘cyclical pattern in which co-operation is re-established and reinvented as new sets of actors replace the initiators of earlier co-operation efforts’ (Princen et al., 2014: 13). While it is claimed that this is more efficient and less bureaucratic, it also entails negative points: Firstly, it means that the low level of formalization of most of the agreements makes cooperation practices dependent on the individual motivation of a handful of practitioners and hence renders collaboration efforts vulnerable to complications and delay. Secondly, considering issues of transparency and political legitimacy, such practitioner-driven initiatives are highly problematic (Bowling and Sheptycki, 2016; Hufnagel, 2013). The focus put on personal contacts leads us to another

crucial factor in transnational policing, which is the agency of local policing actors. This agency can be identified in two aspects, namely the personal initiative of policing actors in uploading local and/or *ad hoc* processes to the national level, as well as the need to ‘translate’ international norms and regulations into the local context (Sheptycki, 2002; Maguer, 2002; 2004; Schwell 2016).

Regarding the work of Anderson et al. (1995), Sheptycki already noted in 1997: ‘There is the complication of a lack of a single working language or unified legal framework. Added to this is the fact that these various police agencies have their own traditions of political accountability’ (Sheptycki, 1997: 132). Qualifying this argument, recent studies have shown that in contrast to what one might think, language tends not to be a major hurdle for transnational cooperation efforts (Peters et al., 2016: 54; Princen, 2014: 6, Yakhlef et al., 2015: 22) except at times in the international realm such as demonstrated in Block’s analysis of European Liaison officers in Russia (Block, 2007). The majority of studies locate the key difficulties in disparities at the inter-organisational level. This means that the different national organisational structures constitute the main obstacle in transnational police cooperation practices (Peters et al., 2016: 56).

The organisational structure of different national policing units, as major difficulty in transnational policing, is in turn put into question by cooperation practices. This can be explored in the context of the Franco-German police customs and cooperation centre (PCCC) which designated as ‘experimental institutional arrangement’ has been analysed by Nogala (2001: 139), Maguer (2002) and Hufnagel (2013). Maguer’s analysis of the Franco-German police customs and cooperation centre (PCCC) in Kehl is particularly important, as she notices the challenging of professional identities and the manifestation of competition (Maguer, 2002). The challenging of professional identities can be explained by the fact that

the police customs and cooperation centres (PCCCs) allow police officers to direct their requests to anyone in terms of the nature and context of the demand and not according to the professional identity (Maguer, 2002: 2). On the one hand, this opens up professional networks that were initially closed, hence contributing to the creation of a greater pool of competencies. On the other hand, Maguer notes that this has also negative effects as it sometimes leads to a confusion of tasks and actors as well as the misunderstandings between the different agents endangering the stability of the relations between the border services. Furthermore, considering that this also challenges the way police ‘make sense of their work’, it leads us to ask what impact this has on the subculture of policing, which – although it shares many common features in different agencies around the world – ‘exhibits considerable local variation’? (Bowling and Sheptycki, 2012: 26) Does it foster a transnational subculture of policing in which police officers ‘experience a common sense of purpose, objective, and aim’ although they do not share the same national language (Yakhlef et al., 2015: 22)?

### Theorising transnational policing

While we are able to identify some similarities between the exchanges on an organisational and professional level, as well as detect common difficulties, numerous areas of transnational policing remain uncharted territory and major questions are left unanswered. We agree with Block that the ‘picture of operational police co-operation is far from complete, and lacks both overview and insight’ (Block, 2007: 367-68). The interlinking of formal and informal practices points to the complex structure of transnational policing which ‘...is multi-leveled, trans-jurisdictional, multi-functional and resides in state-based institutions and within private corporate and non-governmental ones’ (Bowling and Sheptycki, 2015: 118). To unpick and discern the pattern of this ‘patchwork quilt’ (Sheptycki, 1995b: 628) of different forms of policing agreements and make sense of those contact points which seem to be woven together into a sort of irregular tapestry, we propose to structure our research project according to

Bowling's and Sheptycki's socio-spatial typology, which differentiates between the global, international, regional, sub-regional, national, and (g)local loci (Bowling and Sheptycki, 2012).

To represent this multisite European police cooperation system and identify the roles performed by the various agencies – governmental, non-governmental, private, public as well as civil – involved, the research project would complement the existing figure by perhaps adding new categories (bilateral, multilateral, cooperation based on information exchange, cooperation based on compensatory strategies such as training, etc.). Importantly, it could help us understand to what extent intergovernmental agreements and institutions are endowed with supranational features. As transnational cooperation agreements seem to be multiplying exponentially in a rhizomic way (Deleuze and Guattari, 1993), the table could evolve into a continuously updated database.



**Table 1. A socio-spatial typology for transnational policing**

<b>Locus</b>	<b>Network</b>	<b>Examples</b>
<b>Global</b>	Policing entities that have a global reach	Francopol, Interpol; UNPol; World Customs Organisation (WCO); Financial Action Task Force (FATF)
<b>International</b>	International liaison officers posted overseas	In and outside of European countries: Example of Chinese Liaison Officers in Rome and Milan; European liaison officers in Russia, Morocco or the Caribbean; US, Canadian and other country liaison officers resident in European capital cities.
<b>Regional (EU Level)</b>	Regional security structures and associations	The European Police Office (EUROPOL), Schengen Information System (SIS); European Border and Coast Guard Agency (FRONTEX); European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL)
<b>Subregional (Bilateral and Multilateral Agreements)</b>	Cooperative collaboration where the relationship is structured around a specific geographical area between two or more countries, while also accepting cooperation on a Pan-European level	Benelux Working Group on the Administrative Approach to Organised Crime, Ramogepol (France, Monaco, Italy); NeBeDeAgPol (Netherlands, Belgium, Germany in the Meuse-Rhine Region)
<b>National</b>	National security structures created to be able to coordinate a national response and to work with international partners, as well as civil agencies	UK National Crime Agency (NCA); German Bundeskriminalamt (BKA) 'International Coordination' Division aims at improving the cooperation with international partners
<b>Glocal</b>	Local policing agencies and units transnationally linked	Drug Squad, counter-terrorism, criminal investigation departments; Interpol National Central Bureaux (NCBs) nested in domestic police forces

Source: based on Bowling (2009: 5).

## Methodology and research questions

To explore this field in detail, a research study based on fieldwork and interviews with police officers across the continent is proposed. As with Bowling's study of *Policing the Caribbean* (2010), the account of the evolving European transnational policing environment will draw on the case study tradition (Yin 1993). It will involve the collection of detailed empirical evidence using interviews with key informants (e.g. senior police officers, liaison officers and commanders of specialist units), observation and document analysis. Unique cases of transnational policing processes will be selected through theoretical rather than random sampling in numerous European countries. The western European capital cities of London, Berlin, Brussels, Paris and Madrid will certainly be included, but the research will also need to explore the experiences at the edges of the continent including the Baltic, Mediterranean, Nordic and East European states. The aim of the research project is twofold in that it seeks to understand the general case of transnational policing, including cooperation among and between European countries (individually and collectively) and Third States (non-EU states). Within this, we shall examine specific cases of cooperation among agencies and the local effects on police agents.

The case studies will examine transnational cooperation located in border regions and cooperation centres, but also on those practices which take place away from the geographical location of the frontier, the latter being increasingly dislocated. This means that our research project will also analyse practices of cooperation in the headquarters of police agencies located in cities, as well as in what we call transnational spaces, the liminal places where sovereign jurisdictions has been transgressed (see Bowling and Sheptycki 2015b: vii). These are the places which mark transition points between here and there, through those which persons and goods pass on their way towards their destination. These include border zones,

transnational communication hubs such as airports and seaports, but also seas, oceans and airspace as well as the fluid world of the web and mega-events. Indeed, here the territorial element exemplified in Lessig's question 'So where are they, when they are in the cyberspace?' becomes especially relevant (2006: 298). Most importantly, we shall examine how the policing of European transnational spaces is held together through the work of liaison officers. It is already clear that new institutional structures, policing techniques, policing laws and powers are emerging as the transnational policing agenda incorporates these spaces. Fascinating questions concerning jurisdiction, authority, equity and effectiveness are now opening up (Bowling and Sheptycki 2015b: xviii).

Those spaces of police cooperation will function as a guiding thread according to which the possible case-studies of our research project are organised. The study will examine cooperation in (i) border regions; (ii) cooperation in police and customs cooperation centres (PCCCs); (iii) cooperation at airports; (iv) cooperation at ports ; (v) in maritime areas; (vi) cooperation on cybercrime; (vii) cooperation practices through Europol (viii) cooperation between EU member states and Third states such as a) between Spain and Morocco and b) through international liaison officers. The following key research questions have been identified from the existing literature:

- What is the extent and nature of cooperation (a) among policing agencies in European countries and cities and (b) between European agencies and those from third countries or cities?
- What are the outcomes of transnational policing practice and how is 'good policing' to be assessed in the European sphere?
- How effective and efficient are mechanisms for communication, cooperation, coordination and collaboration among European police agencies?
- What are for the main legal, organizational, operational, technological and economic issues and obstacles in transnational cooperation practices?

- How does our understanding of formal and informal modes of interaction in police co-operation affect outcomes?
- What is the role of private actors in European transnational policing? In the context of the increasingly pluralised character of security provisions, are the state and public police agencies still the main actors? How are priorities set, by whom and how does this differ depending on the location, such as sea ports, airports or train stations?
- How much discretion can the different policing actors make use of and does it vary across the different countries?
- How does variation in police education affect relations between agencies in different countries?
- How can transnational policing operations be held accountable to national governments and more broadly to the people they serve?
- What legal, technical and bureaucratic mechanisms ensure integrity, legality and adherence to international human rights norms?

## Conclusion

European policing has undergone a major transformation since the early research in this field conducted in the 1990s. The extent and nature of cross-national cooperation has grown markedly in the past three decades and some of the complexity of the organizational arrangements and policing practices has been captured in the growing body of scholarly research. New challenges have emerged, including major terrorist attacks across the continent, the financial crash, military conflict at the edges of Europe and the concomitant refugee crisis. The traditional problems of organized crime and money laundering persist and we are increasingly aware of the human consequences of organized environmental crime and people trafficking. The successes and failure of domestic police agencies to respond effectively to these problems, to share information appropriately, and their capacity to

respond to suspects with equity and fairness, are now more visible than ever before. The potential and limits of pan-European policing are a matter of widespread public interest and attention even while seismic changes are occurring within the European Union. It is significant, perhaps, that the first act by the British government following the referendum vote to leave the EU was to opt in to the revised Europol framework effective May 2017.<sup>3</sup>

We think that a major transnational and comparative study of European policing is required to fill the knowledge gap identified in the review of the literature presented in this paper. This main aim of this programme of research will be to explore the uneven impact of globalisation on transnational police cooperation in Europe through an analysis of the similarities and differences in the extent of communication, cooperation and collaboration among police agencies across the continent and the effects that this is having on domestic policing. It seems clear that policing is transforming at all levels from the global through the national, regional, sub-regional and the local. There is much that we know, but much more that needs to be known. We hope we will see a European policing community that is open to research, a network of researchers willing and able to collaborate on studying transnational cooperation and training institutions willing and able to use that knowledge to improve policing for the benefit of all.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/parliament-notified-of-europol-opt-in-intention>

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