

**The Patten Report and the light at the end of the Tunnel.
A comparative study of Anglo-Irish and Anglo-French Cross-Border
Policing.**

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Abstract

The recent publication of the Patten Report has focused attention on efforts to co-ordinate the policing of the Anglo-Irish border. The Report calls for increased cross-border policing and mentions Anglo-French police co-operation over the Channel Tunnel as a model for co-operative agreements between the Garda Síochána and the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC). Co-operation between authorities in the North and South of Ireland already exists, however that co-operation is largely informal and a more institutionalised approach is called for by the Report. The emergence of meso-level policing in both areas plays an important role in understanding the comparative development of trans-national policing. The paper uses Anglo-Irish and Anglo-French police co-operation in order to create a comparative understanding cross-border policing. Using the model proposed by Benyon (1994), an examination of the levels of cross-border co-operation is made. The paper points towards the development of functional ties related to the emergence of a meso-level as a key element in the success of Anglo-French co-ordination. Thus, successful co-operation across the Anglo-Irish border requires a more focused approach to co-ordination, which could create strong formal ties. These ties could then form the basis for the spill-over into other areas of co-operation between police departments.

Introduction¹

One of the many provisions in the Patten Report is a call for expanded cross-border policing, employing Anglo-French police co-operation as a model for co-operative agreements between the Garda Síochána and the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC). Co-operation between authorities in the North and South of Ireland is largely informal and a more institutionalised approach is called for by the Patten report. In addition the existence of Europol should provide some structure for cross-border co-operation between authorities. However, the difference between the objectives of Europol and the success of the Kent/Calais co-ordination is related to the functional tasks taken on by the cross-channel police departments. Specific channels of co-operation between British and French police have led to an effective cross-border system that now encompasses the Netherlands and Belgium. Authorities from the Northern Ireland and the Republic could benefit from adopting similar functional approaches to cross-border policing.

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There are several similarities to be drawn between police co-operation over the Channel Tunnel and that of the North and South of Ireland.² Cross border co-operation between the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom and British/French cross-border co-operation share the common goal of combating terrorism. However, the British/French co-operation has been developing over several years, culminating with a focus on policing the Channel Tunnel, whereas expanded co-operation between the Garda Síochána and the RUC has been hampered by a top-down structure for consultation, and a reliance on micro-level networks.

Cross-Border Policing

Policing across borders covers a wide range of issues.³ Questions of national sovereignty, the rights of citizens and legal issues over the exchange of information between police continues to fan the debate over the nature of cross-border police co-operation. In order to properly investigate the comparative nature of police co-operation, theoretical models clarify how police organisations operate across political frontiers.⁴

Previous work on trans-frontier police co-operation has provided a foundation for further growth of the subject area. Michael Levi wrote some of the ground-breaking work on the problems of generating and linking information about trans-frontier crime (Gold and Levi, 1994). Meanwhile, empirical studies of trans-frontier policing have tended to focus on particular areas, and in particular the co-ordination of international

² Both Anglo-French and Anglo-Irish police co-operation as an example of meso-level consultation by Benyon (1994), "There are also various bilateral and multilateral arrangements for fostering police co-operation between neighbouring European states including, for example, those between the Garda Síochána and the Royal Ulster Constabulary at the Irish-UK border...Co-operative arrangements are particularly well established between Kent Constabulary and police forces in France and Belgium." (Benyon, 1994; 513)

³ Attempts to document international police co-operation have included efforts to map out 'international criminality', studies of terrorism, drug trafficking, money laundering and international fraud. (Anderson, 1994). These efforts focus on the wide range of 'international issues' which are faced by national police forces.

⁴ Political frontiers are defined as "territorial zones flanking an international boundary" (House, 1980, p.457). Increasing Europeanisation has led to a greater degree of cross-border co-operation along the internal borders of the European Union (Goldsmith, 1993). European structural programmes, such as INTERREG and PHARE have encouraged local authorities and private enterprise to engage in cross border activities.

efforts. One of the first studies into European policing was carried out by Fijnaut and Hermans (1987) and adopted a critical view of the functions of Interpol. Meanwhile Anderson (1989) emphasised the efforts made by Interpol to create an effective European regional structure and modernisation of police equipment and practices. Out of the recent work on trans-frontier police co-operation the publication of a report by the Leicester University Centre for the Study of Public Order has provided a useful framework for the further study of police co-operation (Benyon *et al.* 1993). This work forms a theoretical foundation for insight into international police co-operation, which is necessary to understand the current developments in trans-national European policing.

A significant element in understanding the micro, meso and macro-level police co-operation is the recognition of their interdependence. Similar to the integration of Europe as a whole the promotion of police co-operation depends on top-down and bottom-up structures, as well as elements of integration such as functional spill-over. In each case of co-operation one portion of police co-operation is dependent on the other for further development. Thus, macro-level co-operation depends on a complex mesh of meso and micro-level networks. In turn meso and micro level co-operation has been furthered by the creation of macro-level structures that promote the exchange of information and assistance across borders.

It is important to define police co-operation using a theoretical model. Benyon (1993, 1994) provides an appropriate model for the comparative aims of this paper. Benyon identifies three types of police co-operation, which are divided based on their respective level of vertical integration. The macro level of police co-operation involves constitutional and international legal agreements and the harmonisation of national laws and regulations. The meso-level is comprised of operation structures, practices and procedures of the police and other law enforcement agencies. Finally the micro-level is characterised by the investigation of specific offences and the prevention and control of particular crimes (Benyon, 1994; 502-503). Each model can be used to identify and understand the extent of police co-operation across frontiers.

Intergovernmental agreements play a central role in macro-level co-operation. The determination of policy by government ministers on policing issues is where fundamental questions over policing are resolved. These issues include extradition procedures, common asylum policy and visa harmonisation. Procedures involving legal issues concerning the operational powers of police across borders also fall under the title of macro-level policing. The litmus test for macro-level police co-operation is the understanding that agreements on harmonisation and collaboration are made at the highest level as they involve issues of national sovereignty (Benyon, 1994, 503).

Previous efforts at macro-level co-ordination include Interpol, the Schengen Group, the Trevi group, and European Union structures such as the European Drugs unit and Europol. These structures have been prominent in the development of international police co-operation at the macro-level. In the historical development of police co-operation these structures have served to promote various levels of European police co-operation, but are also dependent on micro and meso level input.

Macro-level co-operation through organisations such as Europol, support EU member states by facilitating the exchange of data, providing operational analyses in support of member state operations, and by providing expertise and technical support.⁵ Europol's mandate, includes terrorism and other forms of serious international crime, currently comprises:

- Illicit drug trafficking
- Illicit trafficking in radioactive and nuclear substances
- Crimes involving clandestine immigration networks
- Illicit vehicle trafficking
- Trafficking in human beings
- Illegal money-laundering activities

⁵ The Europol Convention on European police co-operation took effect on October 1, 1998, putting in place a new European Police Office to improve the effectiveness of cross-border police co-operation and intelligence-sharing in the European Union's fight against organised crime.

The aim of macro-level policing is for a more all-encompassing approach to police co-operation. Macro-level co-operation covers broad topics of international crime. However, policing the border in the past has relied on informal networks, which unless based on something tangible do not provide the opportunity to institutionalise contact between the two law enforcement entities. The tunnel provided the law enforcement agencies of Britain, France, Belgium and the Netherlands the opportunity to deal with a specific area, thereby creating institutionalised channels from which further co-operation developed. Frontier policing requires the creation of an entity which encompasses both these developments, the broad coverage of the macro-level to combat cross-border terrorism, smuggling, etc., and the specific functional creation of a set of institutional networks. The creation of a meso-level of law enforcement co-operation provides a strong foundation for the integration of police co-operation.

The importance of meso-level networks lay in their ability to provide a framework for the structuring of micro-level networks, and connection to macro-level policy goals. There are considerable opportunities for micro-level initiatives and indeed many already occur through the various formal, and particularly informal, police networks which exist between officers of different countries. However, successful networks themselves tend to be established at the meso level, and many instances of micro-level co-operation depend on effective meso-level arrangements (Benyon, 1994; 504).

In order for successful macro level co-operation to develop in the European Union, the micro and meso level networks need to be addressed. The creation of a frontier free Europe has increased calls for greater cross-border police co-operation. Ministers and policy-makers form agreements to further co-operation, however police co-operation relies on daily contact between the police forces of member states. Thus, the top down co-ordination allowed for by macro-level agreements requires a foundation of bottom-up consultation on the part of individual police forces.

Anglo-French Police Co-operation

The emergence of institutionalised co-operation between British and French authorities has grown a great deal from its tentative beginnings in the 1960s. Initial efforts to support trans-national policing of the English Channel laid the groundwork

for future co-operation. The Cross-Channel Intelligence Conference (CCIC) played an important role in opening networks between police officials and creating a functional base for the development of meso-level institutions. Co-operation between British and French authorities was further advanced by arrangements to accommodate the Channel Tunnel. The need to address the short and long term impacts of the tunnel forced both organisations to open a steady channel of communication through the use of information technology. In addition, efforts to address linguistic differences formed a framework for information exchange between the authorities. Further spill-over has led to the basis of institutionalised co-operation which now encompasses British and French as well as Belgian and Dutch authorities.

Police co-operation between Britain and France is characterised by the existence of a strong meso-level which acts to synthesise horizontal and vertical co-operation. The history of Anglo-French police co-operation serves as a testament to the role played by meso-level institutions in aiding the growth of trans-national police co-operation. Anglo-French police co-operation has been characterised by Sheptycki (1997) as developing through four phases. All of these phases contribute to the growth of horizontal and vertical ties through emergence of a meso-level based on regional policing.

The first phase from 1968-1970 laid the foundation for continued cross-border networking through the initiation of the Cross-Channel Intelligence Conference. The initial conferences, which stressed the need for cross border policing, were held in Maidstone, Kent prior to the entry of the United Kingdom into the European Economic Community. The meetings were designed to co-ordinate efforts to control cross-border crime in areas such as immigration, drug smuggling, the transport of stolen goods and vehicles. However, the meetings concentrated on consolidating a network of liaison officers within the South of Britain. The value of the conference as a forum for organising trans-national policing gradually became more apparent, and the inclusion of representatives from other national police organisations grew. Representatives from France, the Netherlands and Belgium joined, making the CCIC a locus for police co-operation across the English Channel. However, the inclusion of police forces from other states complicated relations, as each of the police forces were

organised differently, with internal relationships between departments creating difficulties for trans-national contact between the overall organisations. Thus, the early conferences were characterised by the insistence on the exchange of information through a centralised administration.⁶

Contact expanded throughout the second phase of co-operation from 1971 to 1985, during which time co-operation gradually increased as police exchanges developed. The importance of liaison officers in promoting the exchange of information was recognised, and the police organisations involved in the CCIC began exchanging officers.⁷ In addition to the stationing of officers, continued efforts were made to ease the exchange of information. The centralised administration of information risked saturation by reports from each organisation, thereby reducing its overall effectiveness. In order to counteract this difficulty a three tier system for the exchange of information was developed. This approach to communication was put to the test during a nine year anti-drug operation, known as Operation Lager. The operation highlighted the barriers to trans-national police co-operation, related to sovereignty. In addition, Operation Lager clarified the view that trans-national policing cannot function solely on the basis of information exchange. An institutional structure could provide a base for dealing with issues such as extradition and the operation of officers outside of their jurisdiction.

This was followed by more intense co-operation during the third phase, focusing on policing of the Channel Tunnel, which took place in the period from 1986-1991. The Channel Tunnel raised the overall awareness of the erosion of borders accelerated by the creation of the European Single Market. The Sangette Protocol, later incorporated into the Channel Tunnel Act of 1987, formed the basis for more advanced

⁶ The central administration of information was discussed in the Cross-Channel Intelligence Conference in Lille, April 16, 1969. Internal disputes between the Gendarmerie, the national police force, and the P.A.F., who controlled movements of peoples at the borders, delayed the exchange of information. Additionally, some information would not be passed on from one department to another, further slowing the process of trans-national information exchange. (See CCIC conference notes April 16, 1969)

⁷ The first police authority to pursue an exchange was from Kent, where a sergeant detective was sent to gather information in Calais, Dunkirk, and Boulogne. Meanwhile Belgian authorities had appointed three liaison officers to facilitate the collection of information. (Sheptycki, 1997)

developments in cross-border policing. It was during this phase that efforts were made to clarify the rules surrounding overseas investigations, through co-operative efforts at defining areas of extra territorial powers. Two areas highlighted for extra territorial powers were - the Tunnel System and the Control Zones. A clear definition of what the tunnel encompassed was declared, including the terminal, maintenance, and service installations. Defining either as a Control Zone or a Tunnel System altered the jurisdiction and the rules for operation (Clutterback, 1989).⁸ Further co-operation between British and French forces was formalised in 1989 during a series of talks between the Chief Constable of Kent and the prefect of Pas de Calais, thereby consolidating local networks at a higher level. Issues such as public security, disaster operations, frontier checks, telecommunications, and operational procedures were all tackled during planning meetings for the Channel Tunnel, and were part of a growing belief in the need for trans-national police networks in order to counter the growing trends in trans-border crime.

The fourth and final phase, covering the period between 1991 to the present day, highlights the growth of trans-national co-operation in the emerging field of information technology. Along with organisational changes in order to make response by police in Kent and Calais more fluid, efforts were made to facilitate communication across the Channel. The European Liaison Unit (ELU) was created in order to maintain a database on trans-border investigations, as well as a separate database to track suspects who had links with trans-national crime. The ELU, based in Folkestone near the Channel Tunnel terminal, became the centre of cross-Channel communications between police forces. Presently the unit facilitates trans-national investigations and police related work, through the broad dissemination of information across borders. The ELU has facilitated further co-operation through the introduction of Lingua-net, a system of international police communication, which covers the cross-Channel area. The developments in information technology and the

⁸ During the 1980s, much of the groundwork for LinguaNet was being done as manuals and lexicons were published (called Seaspeak, Airspeak and Policespeak) that dealt with standardised language. PoliceSpeak: English/French Channel Tunnel Police Communications 90/93.

dissemination of information between police forces across frontiers has been so successful that it has called into question the existence of the CCIC.

Successful trans-national police co-operation in the Cross-channel region has been based on an ongoing cycle of meso-level contact. As Benyon (1994) illustrates the current state of transnational policing is comprised of the daily exchange of information, documentation and intelligence. Liaison officers, co-operative databases and Memoranda of Understanding have been agreed by the British and French forces, and these meso level agreements provide a framework within which officers can undertake micro-level co-operation. (Benyon, 1994; 513). Early efforts to address cross-border crime through the CCIC led to opening of channels of communication between police forces surrounding the Channel. However, further growth came from the realisation that institutional structures were necessary to maintain the networks required to pursue cross-border co-operation. Ultimately, the recent developments in information technology and the creation of shared databases have provided a strong support structure of meso-level networks. These networks act to integrate the vertical networks, combining macro, meso and micro policing, with horizontal networks reaching across national borders.

Anglo-Irish Police Co-operation

Anglo-Irish police co-operation is not as extensive as their counterparts surrounding the English Channel. Political, as well as operational factors have delayed further integration of the two authorities and prevented institutionalised consultation. As a result the consultation between the two forces has had to rely mainly on informal contacts between officers from both forces. These links, although temporarily helpful in resolving certain situations provide no foundation for further co-operation. Meanwhile, incidents such as the recent impotence of the Royal Ulster Constabulary in apprehending suspects in the Omagh bombing have highlighted the lack of co-operative tools between the RUC and the Garda Síochána.

Due to the overall lack of formalised networks between authorities in the North and South, there has been very little academic attention has focused on cross-border policing in this region. The recent work by Walsh (1999), has stressed the minimalist

nature of the networks that exist between the two police forces. The literature which exists highlights the micro-level network between police officers over individual cases. The description of the lack of institutional structures across the borders has gone so far as to be described as an example of policing in the 'Dark Ages' (Irish Times, September 10, 1999).

Recent attention over the Patten Report has focused on the political implications of the document. Consternation between Unionists and Nationalists has focused on the implementation of the more controversial elements of the Report, including calls for changes in the name of the RUC and the overall administration of the new police force. However, the growth of cross-border co-operation between the Garda Síochána and RUC has been absent from the opposition to the Patten Report. As Lane (1998) states, the need to address cross-border crime as well as terrorism, requires a co-ordinated effort from both police organisations. However, the effort has found little in the way of institutional support in the past, where liaison between the police forces has relied heavily on informal networks between individuals.

Informal contact between the Garda Síochána and the RUC could be described as a good working relationship. The two organisations have conducted cross-border investigations and continued to work together on numerous occasions. Although co-operation has focused on border issues, including the investigation of paramilitaries, the relationship has been issues-oriented. The arrangements have lacked a top-down co-operative structure through which further co-operation could be enhanced. Thus, informal networks are created and lost between police officials over time. A successful micro-level networks exists between individual officers based on immediate concerns, however no support has emerged for the vertical or horizontal growth of cross border co-operation.

The history of Anglo-Irish police co-operation finds its beginnings with the existence of the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) prior to 1922, which policed the entire island of Ireland outside Dublin. After 1922 the force was divided into the RUC and the Garda Síochána, both of which were comprised of members of the RIC. Thus, the precedent for informal co-operation across the border was established early in the history of the

two police forces. Combating terrorism became a priority between the two forces in the 1970s and aided the ongoing development of informal networks. However, as Walsh (1999) points out, co-operation had been affected by the political temperature of relations between the two governments. No formal structures for co-operation existed until the Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985.

The Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985 allowed for the introduction of an Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference. The conference provided a forum for Ministers and officials in the Irish government and Northern Ireland Administration to meet and discuss matters pertaining to Northern Ireland. Included in the Agreement was a provision for the participation of advisers such as the Garda Commissioner and the Chief Constable of the RUC. In addition, Article 9 of the Agreement specifically addressed cross-border police co-operation, calling for co-ordination between the Garda Commissioner and the RUC Chief Constable to pursue a programme of threat assessments exchange of information, liaison structures, technical co-operation, personnel training and operational resources.⁹ Although this was a step towards increased cross-border co-operation, it relied on high level contact of individuals and thus does more to reinforce macro-level co-operation with little support for the meso-level.

As it stands there is no regular procedure for joint investigations or even sharing of information on particular investigations. The closest cross-border policing on the Irish border has come to these arrangements has been the efforts during the investigation of the Omagh bombing. However, the co-operative nature of this investigation has been criticised as two separate investigations with only a small degree of consultation between high-level officials. In essence the co-operation came about as a result of personnel from the two forces coming together to review progress after labouring long and hard on their own separate investigations.

⁹ Article 9 reads, "With a view to enhancing cross-border co-operation on security matters, the Conference shall set in hand a programme of work to be undertaken by the Commissioner of the Garda Síochána and the Chief Constable of the Royal Ulster Constabulary and, where appropriate, groups of officials in such areas as threat assessments, exchange of information, liaison structures, technical co-operation, training of personnel and operation resources" (Anglo-Irish Agreement).

Omagh has come to represent the failings of Macro-level co-operation across the Anglo-Irish border. Co-operation between the police forces was hampered by the disagreements between the British and Irish governments. The Garda Síochána and the RUC desired powers similar to those given to the Garda Síochána in investigating the murder of Dublin journalist Veronica Guerin.¹⁰ During the investigation the Irish State used 'accomplice evidence' or 'supergrasses', giving immunity from prosecution and protection against retaliation in exchange for evidence against former criminal colleagues. The Irish government was particularly reticent to this approach because of Sinn Fein's opposition to the use of supergrasses. RUC officers also found it frustrating that because the two forces operate in different jurisdictions, the conflicting laws on evidence, for example, meant that the Garda Síochána could not use information and evidence gleaned by the police in Northern Ireland in the Republic. A senior RUC officer was quoted in the Observer as saying, 'Omagh will be a template, a model on the failures of cross-border policing and how we can learn from the mistakes and weaknesses of that investigation for the future.' (Observer, April 2, 2000). Thus, to some extent macro-level structures went so far as to impede micro and meso level co-operation.

In addition to the lack of institutional structures, the instruments of co-operation between the Garda Síochána and RUC have lacked many of the essential requirements of cross-border co-ordination. Despite meetings between police officials, major co-operative initiatives are still missing from the trans-frontier co-operation of the two forces. There have been no attempts to pursue disaster planning between the two forces, or to structure exercises in which both forces train to handle emergency situations. In addition, no structured co-operation in education and training exists between the two forces. Exchange of information still relies on contact between officials, thus the fast acquisition of information on criminals, especially those exploiting the border is not readily available. The lack of a common database adds to this dimension making cross-border policing increasingly difficult as contact can slow

¹⁰ The use of such witnesses proved invaluable in the conviction of Paul Ward and Brian Meehan, the two Dublin criminals found guilty of murdering Veronica Guerin

the investigation process down. Finally the police forces do not have any sort of exchange program which could help to open the lines of communication between the organisations (Walsh, 1999).

Consultation between the Garda Síochána and the RUC occurs on a daily basis between individuals. However, the co-ordination has never had the opportunity to develop beyond informal networks. Much of this is due to the *ad hoc* nature of border policing, as institutional structures under which further co-operation could grow do not exist. The investigation into the Omagh bombing illustrates this point, as the only contact between forces came from informal micro-level networks between individuals. In order for Anglo-Irish policing to move beyond its present state, cross-border structures need to be fostered which will allow for the synthesis of micro, meso and macro level networks both horizontally, across borders, and vertically, between levels of governance.

Conclusion

A brief comparison of the policing of the borders of the North and South of Ireland with the practices of the police forces on either side of the English Channel raises a number of issues related to the meso-level development of cross-border policing. Both systems operate under the macro-level policing agreements, which many other European police forces also operate.¹¹ Additionally, micro-level contacts commonly occur in the pursuit of daily business. However, the over-riding difference between the two systems is the developmental status of their respective meso-levels.

The Anglo-French border is comparatively advanced in the pursuit of meso-level institutional arrangements that help to further co-operation between police services on either side of the border. Meanwhile, although Anglo-Irish co-operation appears to be successful in the micro-level relationships, no over-arching structure in the form of

¹¹ The one notable difference is the Schengen convention, in which the United Kingdom and Ireland are not participants. Although the 'special relationship' which exists between the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland allows for border crossing with limited stopping. Thus, the border between the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland is easier to cross than the borders between states which are members of the Schengen agreement.

institutionalised meso-level structures exist. Thus, there is little or no support structure for fostering the functional spill-over of micro-level relationships.

Seizing and or capturing criminals is simplified in the case of tunnel co-operation due to the tunnel zones and control areas which include the trains which travel between Britain, France and Belgium. However, the issues become much more contentious in the North of Ireland where a defined area for co-operation, such as a high speed train, is not available. Issues over jurisdiction need to be addressed between the two organisations, which at times in the past has been difficult due to the differing outlooks of the two law enforcement agencies.

The existence of cross-border accords is a crucial element of police co-operation which appears to be more successful Anglo-French police co-operation than the efforts of the Anglo-Irish Agreement. Although the political sensitivity of the border region may inhibit progress on the Agreement, it does not necessarily entail a loss of sovereignty. Instead the protocols provide institutional guidelines that provide the police organisations rules of conduct, which in turn prevent the co-operation of police organisations from relying on *ad hoc* arrangements. Anglo French co-operation has been strengthened by the focus of cross-border agreements signed by Kent Constabulary and police forces in Belgium, the Netherlands, and France. Meanwhile the provisions for cross-border policing in the Anglo-Irish Agreement seem to lack a meso-level element, relying on instead on macro-level structures.

The signing of protocols has been assisted by more practical means of contact such as the development of a Cross-Channel Intelligence Conference. Participants in the conference include members of the police services in France, Belgium and Holland. The conference allows those working in the services to make contact with their counterparts in other police services. Kent has also participated in an annual Cross-Channel Intelligence Conference with police services from France, Belgium and Holland. Working groups cover areas such as smuggling, vehicle crime, organised crime trends. Meanwhile the Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference covers several issues, leaving police co-operation low on the agenda. In addition the participants in the Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference tend to work at the

macro-level with little connection between their efforts and the micro-level networks of individuals.

The Cross-Channel Intelligence Conference allowed for the exchange of information and officers which characterised the later stages of Anglo-French co-operation. This led to agreements over the co-operative operation of officers. The officers were able to work with counterparts in mainland European jurisdictions, in areas such as evidence gathering and interviewing witnesses on both sides of the Channel. Thus, a British police officer investigating a case, which involved criminals operating or moving to France, could rely on his French counterparts to gather evidence or interview witnesses for them. This is quite different to the difficulties faced during the Omagh bombing, when RUC investigators were unable to carry out investigations in the Republic of Ireland. The power to pursue investigations on either side of the border facilitates the apprehension of criminals who use the border as a defence against investigation.

Another meso-level development that characterises Anglo-French policing and seems to be lacking in Anglo-Irish cross-border policing is the existence of liaison officers. Although provisions exist under the Police Act of 1998 in Northern Ireland, the Police Authority can make arrangements for the secondment of an officer, meanwhile no reciprocal agreement exists in the Republic of Ireland.¹² The role of these officers is to facilitate the cross-border exchange of information and also in time of emergency to aid in the informal contact between the police forces. In the case of cross-Channel co-operation some Kent officers are based in France and vice-versa, while no such system exists between the Garda Síochána and the RUC.

Continued co-operation between French, British, Belgian and Dutch authorities has also been reinforced through top-down measures. The pursuit of European funding by participating police organisations has solidified networks between organisations by

¹² Walsh (1999) states that the Police Act 1998 (Northern Ireland) allows the Police Authority to make arrangements for one or more members of the RUC to be seconded for a period to (a) an international organisation or institution or (b) “any other person or body engaged outside the United Kingdom in the carryin on of activities similar to any carried on by the Police Authority or the Chief Constable”. This could be construed as a basis for creating liaison officers.

providing funding for further co-operative projects. The funding also provides a basis for continued and expanding co-operation by providing resources for further development. Comparatively, no such efforts have been made to date by the police organisations in the North and South of Ireland. The need to reinforce meso-level structures through top-down funding combined with the nature of changing European borders makes the development of trans-national horizontal and vertical ties with European officials an imperative for the future of policing.

An additional element, which appears to be lacking in Anglo-Irish policing, is the existence of disaster planning between authorities. Disaster planning adds to the meso-level structure on which further co-operation can grow. It is also a necessary component to cross-border policing. In the case of the English Channel region, officers from surrounding border services take part in responses to disaster policing. In this respect, they can relay best practice ideas to their own force, as well as co-ordinate necessary assistance that may be called upon. In Anglo-Irish policing disaster response has often been an *ad hoc* arrangement. This leaves little room for the continued growth of networks and the exchange of ideas of best practice. Thus, the cross-border dimension to disaster policing can provide the basis for a more fluid response to trans-national issues.

Recently the emergence of compatible information technology systems has become increasingly important in the realm of trans-frontier policing. Police forces have become increasingly dependent on the dissemination of information, and the exchange of information across borders can be critical to the prosecution of crimes. In the case of the Cross-Channel policing, the first steps towards adopting compatible databases of information for use by numerous police organisations began with through the Cross Channel Intelligence Conference. However, the sharing of information did not fully develop until the changes brought about by the Channel Tunnel. The creation of a common database through the linguatnet system allowed British and French authorities instant access to each organisations information technology. The exchange of information no longer relied on phone calls or access to documents, but instead could be retrieved almost instantly on either side of the border. A similar system does not

exist in the Irish border region, where the exchange of information continues to rely on informal contact between officers.

In order to take a functional approach to the development of Anglo-Irish police relations, the establishment of a conference, similar to the CCIC may provide the basis for further meso-level developments. Although contact already exists in the form of the Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental conference, this structure appears to be too focused on macro-level co-operation with little room for meso-level structures that aid the expansion of networks. The introduction of a common database and information technology infrastructure, as well as the developments in the Single Market and recent political events in the North may help to expedite the incubation process. Thereby promoting police co-operation in the North and South of Ireland to a level comparable with that of the police forces on either side of the English Channel.

A further development, which is crucial to the success of Anglo-French co-operation, is the influence locality on networks. The input of local police officials in the development of networks surrounding the Channel was central to creating a foundation for further development. The local and regional input into co-operation brought a micro-level element that aided vertical integration with macro-level policy statements. The nature of policing on the Irish border is much more dependent on two much larger police forces which had a macro-level focus. Thus, the ability to co-ordinate informal micro contacts became increasingly difficult. The existence of local and regional policing organisations helps to build meso-networks that can then integrate into the micro and macro level by providing a central structure for the pursuit of cross-border contact.

Overall the progress in the English Channel region has demonstrated the need for meso-level structures in trans-national policing. The meso-level structures work to strengthen vertical and horizontal links between police forces. Acting as a top down structure for micro-level policing, the structures provide a forum for individual contact, the exchange of information and ideas, as well as a chance to build on existing networks. From a vertical perspective, the meso-level structures allow for the pursuit of macro-level goals, providing police forces with access to European and

national channels for policing. The policing of the border between the North and South of Ireland has suffered from the lack of a meso-level structure, relegating attempts at policing the border to dependency on informal relationships between police officials. In order for Anglo-Irish policing to reach a level comparable to that of Anglo-French policing, some steps must be taken to provide a meso-level framework for the further growth of cross-border policing.

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