Policing is a key aspect of the state monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force, and the latter is generally regarded as a defining and essential characteristic of the modern sovereign state (Weber 1978, pp. 54–6; Poggi 1990). In a handbook on multi-level governance, international policing is thus not an obvious choice because states could be expected to protect sovereignty rather than to exercise it jointly in multi-level systems. If they nevertheless do so, we would anticipate relatively few and weak international institutions and states taking great care to keep these institutions under control and preferring the joint management of sovereignty to more intrusive forms.

While there is some truth in this expectation, it is only half of the story. The history and current form of international cooperation against transnational criminality show a different picture: for decades, the field has been marked by an increasing depth of cooperation. International police cooperation is by no means restricted to the European Union (EU) but also takes place within the United Nations (UN), the Council of Europe (CoE), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and a number of other organizations and regimes. As is the case in many other areas, international policing is increasingly marked by a dense web of multi-level structures, shaping, constraining and regulating state activity.

It is the aim of this chapter to shed light on these structures and their impact on the state monopoly on the legitimate use of physical force. In order to do so, the inquiry cannot be limited to the pure exercise of force by policemen but must also look at legitimating action, the definition of problems, the prescription of certain methods of action and the authorization of the use of force (Friedrichs 2008, pp. 5–7). In the following, we describe the form and intensity of cooperation within multi-level structures in international policing (Section 31.1) and explain its origins and shape (Section 31.2). Finally, we raise the question whether multi-level governance in the field of policing is effective and meets the standards of liberal democracies (Section 31.3). While international policing encompasses a number of different issues, our empirical examples stem from the most important ones: the fight against terrorism and the fight against drugs, including money laundering. Both are considered as major transnational security threats to the state and society. While terrorism most explicitly challenges the existence of the state, the paramount importance of drug enforcement is revealed by the fact that drug dealing and addiction endanger the health of citizens and that narcotics constitute the largest of all illicit markets, endangering the economic stability of states.
31.1 DEVELOPMENT AND FORM OF MULTI-LEVEL GOVERNANCE

Multi-level governance in the area of policing started in highly specific sectors where states reacted on perceived transnational problems by institutionalizing cooperation: the production and trade of certain drugs and terrorism.

In both fields, interstate cooperation was launched already in the early twentieth century (Dubin 1991; McAllister 2000). However, for many decades cooperation remained weak, informal and ad hoc. While Interpol, the international organization devoted to police cooperation, had already been created in the 1920s, most states considered it as ineffective and impractical (Anderson 1989). In the 1960s, police cooperation started slowly on a bilateral level, a famous example being the ‘French Connection’ when the USA exerted pressure on the French police to cooperate with US police forces cracking down on cross-border drug traffic (Cusack 1974, pp. 242–4). Among European states, this issue-specific bilateral cooperation developed into the creation of regular multilateral information exchange forums in the 1970s. The first and best-known was TREVI, an informal arrangement of the European Economic Community (EEC) member states which united ministers of the interior and which was kept as informal and even confidential as possible (Bigo 1996, p. 88). However, within the EEC police cooperation was to a large degree left out of this development well until the 1990s. The format of police cooperation in its early years confirms a standard hypothesis of international relations theory: states may be willing to enter into intensive cooperation and even to become part of multi-level institutions in order to avoid collective action problems or increase their welfare, but they will do their best to preserve the core of sovereignty intact. Hence, we cannot speak of multi-level governance during this period with its issue-specific, informal and ad hoc pattern of institution-building. In consequence, the term ‘multi-level governance’ should not be used interchangeably with ‘international cooperation.’ Rather, it should be restricted to instances in which a new level of governance emerges that is at least to some degree independent from the states which have originally created it.

Since the 1970s, the situation has changed fundamentally. The EU developed into a multi-level polity with increasing geographical range, increasing institutional depth and increasing policy scope incrementally including policing. With the creation of the third pillar, the Maastricht Treaty brought the field of police and justice formally into the EU structure. At the latest since the Treaty of Amsterdam, the EU has made the creation of an ‘area of freedom, security, and justice’ (AFSJ) a political priority equivalent to the creation of the internal market. The Nice Treaty and even more the Lisbon Treaty provide for substantial EU legislative powers in the field of policing, and the differences in the legislative process of this area as opposed to the classical community method used for market integration have substantially decreased. There is now a European Police Office (Europol) and a substantial amount of legislation, most notably the European Arrest Warrant (EAW).\(^1\)

But these developments are not restricted to the EU. The UN has developed an almost universal system of drug control which not only defines very precisely what an illicit drug is and the duties of states to act against their use but also massively restricts the policy autonomy of the participating states. In 1989, the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), a technical body of the OECD, was established, which quickly became
the cornerstone of a regime on money laundering. It provides for tight supervision of financial flows even for relatively minor sums and substantial powers, for example, for the confiscation of suspect money or the blocking of bank accounts for the participating states and even touched upon the taboo of banking secrecy (Gilmore 2004). Next to the UN and the FATF, the Council of Europe adopted the Convention on Laundering, Search, Seizure and Confiscation of the Proceeds from Crime in 1990, and only one year later the European Community agreed on a directive against money laundering which was amended by a new directive in 2001.2 In summary, there are now partly overlapping systems of multi-level governance with a territorial character in the case of the EU and with a sectoral character for all others, most notably within the UN and the OECD (cf. Hooghe and Marks, Chapter 1 in this volume). More important than this difference, however, is what they have in common.

In the first place, these multi-level systems cover a wide variety of activities relating to the monopoly of force – with one notable exception: they do not create an actor which can legitimately use physical force independent from the states. Instead, they define problems, legitimate measures, provide for methods of prosecution and authorize action relating to the states’ exercise of the monopoly of force. The UN drugs regime, for instance, contains an extensive list of substances which are considered to be illicit drugs, leaving no room for interpretation. The EAW contains a list of 32 offenses for which it applies obliging states to surrender the arrested person. These multi-level systems also authorize and proscribe what states have to do when they encounter the problems identified and legitimated.

A second important tendency is the trend away from a political decision-making process to a criteria-based judicial process. This entails a reduction of the freedom of choice for state authorities when and how to use their monopoly of force. This applies to the drugs regime which makes it virtually impossible for states to follow their own path by, for example, giving drugs to addicts in a controlled and supervised fashion. But the best illustration is the transformation from the European extradition regime to the EAW. Historically, states have in principle accepted the idea of extraditing their citizens to other states for trial. As states considered this to be a deep intervention into their sovereignty, extradition even among the consolidated democracies of the EU has traditionally been slow and subject to a final political authorization. The EAW introduces a new system based on the principle of ‘mutual recognition,’ which was originally developed in the context of product safety but which is now being transferred to standards for the rule of law and for criminal justice. It drastically reduces the possibilities of a political veto and only foresees a purely procedural legal appeal before the surrender actually takes place. States even surrender their own nationals to requesting states following this procedure. For many practitioners and scholars, the EAW is a true revolution (Plachta 2003).

31.2 EXPLAINING THE EMERGENCE AND FORM OF MULTI-LEVEL GOVERNANCE

Turning to the origins of multi-level governance in the field of international policing, we seek to address why it has emerged and to explain its form. With regard to the emergence
of multi-level governance, three aspects stand out. Most remarkably, the emergence and increase of cooperation is driven by a particular problem perception. Perceiving international terrorism, drug trafficking and money laundering as problems transgressing national territories has played a key role in pressuring states to agree on intensified cooperation and the build-up of new institutions. In the 1960s, states recognized that drug traffic routes go across continents; in the 1970s, terrorists of different national origins perpetrated acts all over Europe ‘internationalizing’ the problem; and with the increase of cross-border economic activities in the 1980s, the laundering of drug money was perceived as an enormous threat to the economic stability of states. Today, globalized trade and abolished customs control in certain regions have augmented the pressure for internationally coordinated responses against transnational criminal activity further. Moreover, this problem perception is very much event-driven – transnational crime fighting tends to follow the ‘politics of the latest outrage.’ For instance, after a series of attacks, most notably on the Olympic village in Munich in 1972, terrorism moved to the top of the international agenda and after the events of September 11 the fight acquired new momentum.

While the pressure stemming from problem perception explains the establishment of cooperation, the diffusion of specific norms through institutional structures has increased the intensity and binding character of international institutions against criminal activity. The international drug prohibition regime dating back to the early twentieth century structured by a series of three international drug treaties under the aegis of the UN is a case in point. Today’s interpretation of drugs has been developed over the course of decades. The illegality of drugs and the interpretation of their use as deviant is something which is taken more or less for granted. Nearly all states of the world have signed the UN treaties, accepting legal constraints regarding the production, sale, possession and consumption of drugs (Levine 2003, p. 145). Prohibiting money laundering of drug profits pertinently shows that next to the binding character of the regime’s rules, the acceptance of its underlying norms influences the compliance of the signatory states. States do not want to appear ‘soft’ on drug trafficking making it very difficult to articulate reservations against particular measures against money laundering (Dombrowski 1998, p. 15). Over four decades, the universal acceptance of drugs as illicit and the ensuing legal sanctions regarding trade and consumption has resulted in a ‘global drug prohibition regime’ (Nadelman 1990).

Finally, the effects of a perceived problem pressure and the diffusion of global norms have been paralleled and reinforced by functional and organizational spillover effects in the field of international policing. In particular, the completion of the EU’s internal market with its abolition of internal borders established de facto a common internal security zone decreasing the validity of borders both as instruments of control and obstacles to transnational criminal activity (Monar 2001, pp. 754–5). The successive inclusion of the field of policing and justice within the EU structure leading to the AFSJ impressively demonstrates this spillover from the economic sphere. The introduction of the principle of mutual recognition within the framework of the EAW represents the major example for this effect. While originally introduced by the European Court of Justice (ECJ) in its famous ‘Cassis de Dijon’ ruling in 1979 for the area of economic cooperation, the application of mutual recognition in criminal matters now helps judicial decisions travel across borders. However, spillover effects can also be found outside the EU. When in
1988 states established the money laundering regime with the UN Convention against
Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, the basic idea to make
drug dealing more risky for drug traffickers was taken up quickly by other institutional
forums like the FATF and the Council of Europe.

While international policing stems from various sources, its form is above all due to
the general reluctance of states to cede national sovereignty to a supranational level.
Overall, modes of cooperation are preferred that preserve a maximum of sovereignty
and the development of the field clearly demonstrates this preference. In the 1970s and
1980s, ad hoc measures and expert-driven cooperation, mainly through different police
networks (such as TREVI) were dominant. The epistemic communities of high-ranking
police officials and their demands for pragmatic and functional cooperation have shaped
to a great extent the preferences of states on the outlook of international policing (Bigo
1996). However, and despite these preferences for sovereignty-preserving forms of coop-
eration, the institutional framework matters. It is thus no surprise that over time the
most intensive and intrusive forms of international police cooperation have emerged
in the EU. Even more as the EU is one of the rare examples of a governance body in
the international arena bundling together different policy competences (cf. Hooghe and
Marks in this volume). EU member states favored efficiency-enhancing cooperation in
the EU to the UN’s sovereignty-preserving but less effective framework.

31.3 EVALUATING MULTI-LEVEL GOVERNANCE

Having described multi-level governance in the field of crime fighting, we have traced
its origins and sought to explain its form. It is now time to take a step back for an
evaluation. The main virtue has been on the side of capacities for effective problem-
solving. While the central problems of transnational crime such as drug-trading and
terrorism persist, institutions have been set up to deal with these problems. They seri-
ously constrain national policies and work on a shared normative understanding of the
problems at hand. The main deficit of multi-level governance is its record regarding the
protection of individual rights and democratic participation. The evaluation can thus be
framed according to the classic opposition of security versus freedom: security has been
enhanced by the system, but freedom seems to suffer.

The straightforward way of proving effective problem-solving capacity would seem
to be measuring problem reduction. In the case of crime fighting, one could think of
falling crime rates. The difficulties with such numbers are however manifold. Not only is
it notoriously difficult to compare data between countries, it is also difficult to compare
data across time. Definitions of crime are socially constructed. Hence, they are subject
to changes and can be easily criticized. Moreover, once a social phenomenon has been
defined as a crime and moved into the focus of the prosecuting agencies, official numbers
might rise and not fall: if more effort is put into crime detection, more crimes will be
detected. Nonetheless, crime rates might be used as an indicator of problem-solving
capacities. We could consider the number of drug-related deaths to be an indicator of
the overall effectiveness of drugs policies. It rose in Western Europe until the early 1990s
and then stagnated with a slight decrease since 2000.3 With regard to the EAW, arrests
and surrenders constitute the relevant figures. The last Commission report on the EAW
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(COM (2007) 407) mentions that 6900 warrants were issued in 2005, leading to 1770 arrests of which 86 percent were surrendered to the issuing member state. Numbers have increased in comparison to the preceding year. Surrender is much faster than under the old extradition procedures: it is now under five weeks, while it used to be around a year.

While these numbers hint at successes, we believe a different approach tells us more about problem-solving capacities. The question is whether institutions have been set up which are equipped to deal with problems effectively. The mere existence of institutional structures is not enough. Interaction in them has to be intensive enough to make successful cooperation possible. But what is more, the output produced should be of a binding character. It should not be mere talk, but ideally bind actors in two ways. First, the established rules ought to be binding: it should be difficult for actors not to comply with them. Second, the regime should establish norms that intrinsically guide actor behavior: they accept that the underlying rationale of the regime is right. If a regime is binding in this sense, it is well equipped to deal with problems effectively.

Both are the case in the issue area of international crime fighting. First, the nation-state’s monopoly of force has become embedded into a system of multi-level decision-making that constrains national policies. The constraining effect is highly visible in the drug-prohibition regime. The UK and Germany have been repeatedly criticized for establishing shooting galleries and for testing the prescription of heroin to addicts. Second, the criminalization of drugs that is at the heart of the UN regime has become a universally accepted norm. Similarly, it is hardly disputed that the fight against money-laundering is a successful method to combat drug trafficking. The norm is so powerful that very elaborate prosecution systems have been set up and traditional taboos such as banking secrecy have had to give way. We can thus conclude that the multi-level governance of crime fighting is rather effective.

While making banking secrecy less absolute has been interpreted as a sign of effectiveness, it constitutes also a deficit. More security may come at the expense of freedom – and banking secrecy is one expression of the individual’s right to privacy, which is a fundamental freedom. As exemplified in this case, multi-level policies against crime have impacted heavily on individual freedoms. The most significant impairments have occurred in the fields of informational freedom/privacy and of judicial rights. Informational freedom refers to the individual’s right to determine or at least to know who possesses what information about him or her. One case in point is the exchange of data with Europol. Europol’s main activity is currently the compilation and analysis of data. Data protection is not governed by a common standard, but by the national standards of the member state that inserted particular data into the system or – significantly – that has last edited it. However, all member states have to comply with the 1981 Convention on Data Protection by the CoE. For countries with a higher standard than that prescribed by the convention the arrangement may effectively lower standards (Lavenex and Wagner 2007, p. 238). The data protection standards may be further lowered by exchange with third countries. The impairments result directly from the multi-level nature of the cooperation.

The same is true for judicial rights. As has been outlined, the EAW is the first application of the principle of mutual recognition to the creation of the AFSJ. Mutual recognition measures are easier to agree on than harmonization legislation as they do not require substantive changes of national legislation and do not spell out the differences
between legislations (cf. Mitsilegas 2006; Lavenex 2007). However, some harmonization of procedural rights would be required to give them effect in proceedings across Europe – but the member states have not yet agreed on the proposed Framework Decision on procedural rights.

A further example regarding judicial rights is the listing of terrorists by the UN Security Council and the EU to freeze their financial assets. These decisions defy due process standards in several ways. Individuals should be notified of the decision, they should be given reasons for the decision and should be able to challenge it in court. However, due to the multi-level nature of the issue (national intelligence, international decision, national implementation) it is unclear whether such decisions can be challenged, and if so, in which courts (Frowein 2004, p. 76). The EU has adopted regulations that transpose the UN decisions, but also add further persons to the lists. The ECJ has been hesitant to check whether the listing harms fundamental rights (cf. Peers 2003, p. 239; Eeckhout 2007; Guild 2008, pp. 181–90). However, in its recent OMPI⁴ judgment it required the Council to fulfill certain due process requirements when putting somebody’s name on the list (fair hearing, statement of reasons and effective judicial protection). The Council subsequently changed the procedure so that listed persons will now be informed and given some reasons for their listing.

Multi-level governance has not only impacted negatively on individual freedoms. Policy-making in the issue area also performs poorly as regards democratic participation. The dominant mode of decision-making is executive multilateralism: executives are the only actors that have a say in the final decision and very often they are the only ones involved at all. While this system of governance has a multi-level nature, the units at the lower level are not made up of heterogeneous factions that could affect decision-making (cf. Mayer, Chapter 3 in this volume). Rather, all factions except for the executive are excluded. This is of course true of governance by intergovernmental networks, but also of EU governance in the field, which has been described as ‘intensive transgovernmentalism’ (Lavenex and Wallace 2005). National parliaments are confronted with fixed bargains and the European Parliament does not have a say either as it is merely consulted. However, the latter’s involvement has gradually increased. With the Treaty of Lisbon it would get co-decision regarding some aspects of police cooperation. Mutual recognition as a method is democratic at first sight, as it keeps national legislation in place that has been adopted according to democratic processes. However, it subjects individuals to criminal law that has been produced in a political community that is not their own (Mitsilegas 2006, pp. 1287–8). Multi-level governance does not only limit participation in policy-making, it also depoliticizes policies as it withdraws certain policy options from political discourse. The prescription of heroin to addicts is not an option, but also pain treatment is complicated by the UN drugs regime. Development-oriented measures that could be an alternative to opium or coca crop eradication have a hard standing.

31.4 CONCLUSION

As in other issue areas, multi-level governance also exists in the field of policing. In fact, we have shown that the extent and the binding character of multi-level governance are
substantially higher than one might expect. While difficulties of agreement, weak forms of cooperation and a focus on technical expertise have marked the early years of international police cooperation, the picture has changed. During the last decades, states have entered into an increasingly dense web of institutions for police cooperation by no means restricted to the EU but including the UN and a number of other organizations and regimes. Today, the states’ use of the police, and hence the use of their monopoly of force, becomes increasingly constrained by and embedded in international institutions. This is clear evidence of multi-level governance. States get entrapped by the unintentional consequences of initial, largely functional approaches to international police cooperation, which are difficult to change once established.

However, states do not ‘give up’ their monopoly of force – there is no sign of supranationalization of the actual use of force in the OECD world. Cooperation against transnational crime is much more about regulating the exercise of the monopoly of force by embedding it in a system of multi-level decision-making. Different levels assume different tasks in this multi-level system of governance: regulation and legitimation take place at higher levels, while the actual use of force is still located at the lower level. In our view, the EAW illustrates best this typical pattern of multi-level governance in areas close to the state monopoly of force. While the EAW does not allow police agents from one state to arrest a criminal in another state, a commonly agreed legal framework regulates how states should proceed when putting their monopoly of force into the service of other states. Hence, only states have police agents with the right to use force but this right is embedded into an increasing net of supranational or international regulation.

A perception of certain problems in the field of policing as crossing borders has led to the creation of policy-making institutions at a level beyond the nation-state that would match the territorial scale of the problems (cf. Geys and Konrad, Chapter 2 in this volume). Today, states jointly exercise policy-making authority by adopting substantial rules in the field of police activity. These substantial rules become increasingly precise and detailed and also include strong monitoring mechanisms. As a result, states still possess the monopoly of the use of physical force but the concrete usage and its legitimating reasons are increasingly determined by international or supranational institutions. States are not free any more to decide whom they want to extradite or rather not to extradite, whether they want to provide shooting galleries and under which conditions to confiscate money. These systems are difficult to change because such change would require supermajorities. Exit is equally close to impossible either because of a prevailing normative hegemony in the fields of drug control and money laundering or because it is linked to the overall structure of the EU. The EU in addition even increasingly introduces supranational jurisprudence into the field.

How effective and legitimate is this multi-level governance of international policing? Overall, it has been rather effective as it has been able to improve security, but this has come at the cost of less individual freedom and decision-making processes that do not meet democratic standards. Low politicization, low involvement of civil society versus executive multilateralism in decision-making characterize the field. Yet, if international police cooperation is meant to grow in the coming years, a balanced approach to freedom and security needs to be found. Multi-level governance in the field of policing should not come at the price of individual freedom and the lowering of established democratic standards.
NOTES

4. OMPI: Organisation des Modjahedines du peuple d’Iran, Case T-228/02, judgment of 12 December 2006.

REFERENCES


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