Thesis Title:

British collaborative support to tackle SOC and criminal activities: A case study of the GAIN Network

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Declaration

No portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

Acknowledgement

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Abstract

Based on a case study of the UK's Government Agency Intelligence Network (GAIN), the research evaluated the organisational and operational risks and benefits of a novel commitment to intelligence sharing and the impact of the new arrangements on the agencies that make up the Network. It answered the question: *In the modern era, the police no longer have monopoly control of crime-fighting; therefore, to what extent does British policing engage with partners to prevent and detect serious organised crime? A case study of the GAIN network*

A systematic literature review was undertaken, and a case study approach was employed. The former focused on globalisation and its relationship with transnational organised crime; the social factors that led to the creation of support agencies in response to that phenomenon, and how relationships between actors are influenced during a mutual collaboration. Data was collected via a survey and a series of semi-structured interviews. In the light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the data collection strategy employed was modified to mitigate any risk to the health and/or safety of the research participants.

The study found that the police still have almost complete control over crime-fighting policy and practice in the context of serious and organised crime. GAIN has delivered benefits for policing, but its benefits for policing's partners are rather less obvious. Ostensibly, the multi-agency collaboration promotes intelligence sharing, disruption activity, and networking among police and other partners. There is some evidence of success in that regard, but largely that is confined to the mechanisms for collaboration that GAIN has established. The strong links that have been forged between partners and between individuals employed by those partners undoubtedly have strengthened those relationships and delivered individuals a greater understanding of the challenges that each other faces. That may bring advantages, in terms of increased outputs and greater efficiencies, in the longer run. However, there is little evidence today of the kinds of creativity or innovation that are likely to see the partnership develop in those ways. Essentially, the GAIN experience suggests that the police are doing what they always have done; leading and directing partnerships and limiting partners' opportunities to influence the direction or gain meaningful control.

Arguably, that means that goals remain too narrowly focused and opportunities to think about policing problems (in this case, serious and organised crime) in new ways are overlooked.

The study has emphasised that the police institution needs to pay constant attention to environmental and social changes as they affect crime and criminal behaviour. Without the knowledge gained through that activity, the police's ability to adapt their responses to serious and organised crime and/or to better harness the energies and endeavours of partners, is bound to be constrained.

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List of Acronyms

ACPO = The Association of Chief Police Officers

BTP = British Transport Police

CDA = Crime and Disorder Act

CDRP = Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership

CKP = Certificate in Knowledge of Policing

CoP = College of Policing

CTSAs = Counter Terrorism Security Advisors

DoS = Director of Studies

EIS = Europol Information System

EMSOU = East Midlands Special Operations Unit

FACT = Federation Against Copyright Theft

GAIN = Government Agency Intelligence Network

GC =GAIN Coordinator

GDPR = General Data Protection Regulation

GLAA = Gangmasters Labour & Abuse Authority

GT = Ground Theory

HMRC = Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs

HMCE = HM Customs and Excise

IL4SC = Initial Learning for Special Constables

IPA = Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

ISAs = Information Sharing Agreements

JITS = Joint Investigation Teams

KM = Knowledge Management

MASH = Multiagency Safeguarding Hub

MOU = Memorandum of Understanding

NaCTSO = National Counter Terrorism Security Office

NCA = National Crime Agency

NGC = National GAIN Coordinator

NPCC = National Police Chiefs Council

OCG = Organised Crime Group

OCGM = Organised Crime Group Mapping

OPCC = Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

PAM = People Achieving More

PCSO = Police Community Support Officers

PEQF = Police Education Qualification Framework

PIPCU = Police Intellectual Property Crime Unit

PKF = Police Knowledge Fund

PNC = Police National Computer

PND = Police National Database

PSVs = Police Support Volunteers

RGC = Regional GAIN Coordinator

RSPCA = Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

PRA = Police Reform Act

RDTs = Regional Disruption Teams

RIU = Regional Intelligence Unit

ROCTA = Regional Organised Crime Threat Assessment

ROCUs = Regional Organised Crime Units

RSPCA = Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

SIS = Schengen Information System

SIENA = Secure Information Exchange Network Application

SOCA =Serious and Organised Crime Agency

TA = Thematic Analysis

TCA = Trade and Cooperation Agreement

UKBF = United Kingdom Border Force

UREC = University Research Ethics Committee

VWAG = Victims and Witnesses Action Group

Chapter 1: Introduction to the study

1.1 Problem Statement

This study explores the relationship between the police, policing stakeholders and the communities they serve and how this relationship is changing in the modern era. The research investigates relations, communication and intelligence sharing in the law enforcement environment. Its particular focus is the combating of serious and organised crime, which, according to National Crime Agency (NCA) chief Lynne Owens *'kills more people every year than terrorism, war and natural disasters combined [and] affects more UK citizens, more frequently than any other national security threat'* (NCA, 2019 p.1). The existence of a crime problem on such a large scale suggests that the methods currently used to contend with it may be inadequate or deficient.

Addressing the problem using the key points reveals that the primary issue faced in western societies in recent years is the renewed globalisation and crime-related, particularly serious and organised crime. The response is to utilise available resources to fight crime by establishing law enforcement agencies capable of tackling and preventing crime. This implies a massive amount of pressure on the police and law enforcement agencies, who are unable to maintain pace and require constant support. It is sorted out by providing additional support to the police in response to a large number of requests. The outcome has been the establishment of additional agencies to assist with investigations and Intelligence, such as the Government Agency Intelligence Network (GAIN). This is one primary motive behind the creation of GAIN.

GAIN is a core capability of the Regional Organised Crime Units (ROCU) and exchanges Intelligence with partner organisations at local, regional, and national levels. GAIN is a promising concept for fighting crime. The entire possible range of information must be used to understand the threat posed by organised criminals, and that information is passed between the different agencies effectively, efficiently, and ethically. The GAIN and its developments, such as the current government's Centre of Excellence for Information Sharing' suggest a significant shift in policy that merits scholarly research. However, there has been little empirical research into GAIN or the success of these arrangements and, therefore, little reliable evidence to support any claim that those benefits have emerged. This new kind of research can bring many benefits regarding innovation in this area when applied to criminology and law.

1.2 Purpose of the study

The research is grounded in the belief that human interactions in the working world must be permeable to change, innovation and reconstruction. Therefore, this study had two purposes: (a) to explore GAIN and its capabilities in-depth and (b) to understand the motive for establishing these new kinds of agencies, such as GAIN and some of the interactive mechanisms behind their functioning.

GAIN's role as multi-agency Intelligence and support for the police and its several partners was not recorded. However, in order to provide an original contribution to the literature on the British Police Force, it was considered essential to study the GAIN to comprehend what precisely this organisation is used for, how it was established, the role of the employees, benefits and/or disadvantages in the use of it by its partners. This was accomplished through the perspective of the GAIN employees and those who came into close contact with the agency. In addition, the possible influence of GAIN within British security regarding SOC and other related factors was investigated to ascertain the potential impact of this agency, which academics have ignored until now. Furthermore, in order to comprehend how GAIN operates, it is imperative to explore sociologically the interpersonal relationships involved in partnerships, considering the motivations for new police support, particularly in the UK.

1.3 Research question

The research answered the question: *In the modern era, the police no longer have monopoly control of crime-fighting; therefore, to what extent does British policing engage with partners to prevent and detect serious organised crime?: A case study of the GAIN network.*

1.4 Conceptual framework

This research aims to use the model of the United Kingdom's Government Agency Information Network (GAIN) to examine and evaluate the contribution of organised operational support to law enforcement. The present study is unique. Truly little is acknowledged about the GAIN and the impact of this new Intelligence working alongside national police and other organisations. Furthermore, the current study employs an original conceptual framework (Figure 1) to explore the evolution of crime and investigation and to examine the emergence of new opportunities to fight crime over time. Imenda (2014) argued that the researcher would synthesise different concepts and standpoints to investigate the research problem and understand a phenomenon. This synthesis is called a *conceptual framework*. The framework represents a synthesis of concepts combined in a circular graph, explaining the possible connection among them.

As illustrated in figure 1, society establishes law enforcement to counteract the phenomenon when crime rises. Because crime is not a stable phenomenon, but in perpetual change, with the evolution of societies, crime is also evolving. Therefore, the culture (society) must deal with a new criminal environment and develop different perspectives to fight it. In fact, according to Ratcliffe (2003, p.3), *'Although it is dynamic and fluid, constantly changing in shape, composition and size, it remains a reality that there will always be a criminal environment that the police will need to understand for subsequent operations to be effective.'*
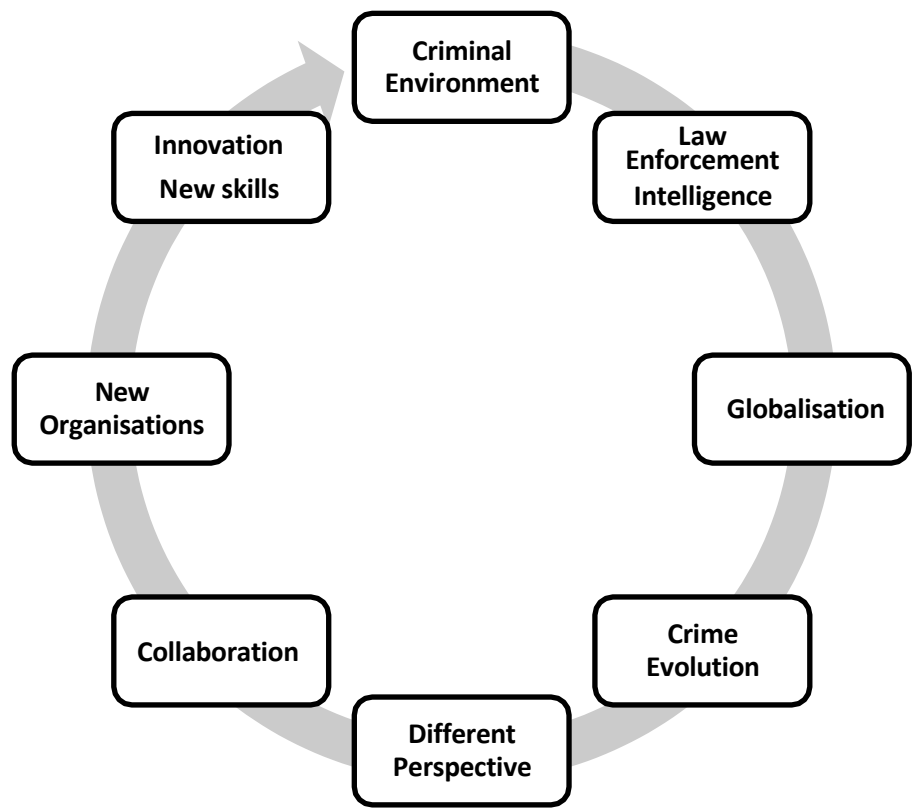
Figure 1 Conceptual Framework based on reactions of events connected with crime-fighting.

Consequently, this requires new collaborations to tackle crime, innovate the sector and combine new skills. Society's response seems to welcome new ways of fighting crime into its sphere by creating agencies and organisations to counter it. However, it seems that this response is invariably identical. The organisations appear to be of a comparable mould, with similar outlooks, with the same inheritance. However, the issue debated in this thesis is the potential next step to a response that nowadays considers partnerships as a vehicle to fight crime. The police institution is unable to cope with everything on its own, as globalisation and related crimes will continue to cause problems and obstacles to society. Over the years, collaborative agencies have been founded as support. The issue being questioned is the similar nature of these supports. New criminality corresponds to a different approach to combating it, requiring new methods. These methods, however, involve reform inside security, allowing for the inclusion of novel perspectives.

The literature review chapter describes the conceptual framework separately, examining and explaining relevant literature.

1.5 Literature research strategy

A review of academic books and journals, reports, government documents and electronic resources has been pursued to contextualise the conceptual framework. The literature focused on authors who have given considerable importance to UK police evolution and public relationship during the ages (i.e. Emsley, 2014; Findlay, 1999; Joyce, 2011; Mansley, 2015; Mortimer, 2009; Pollard, 2004; Rawlings, 2008; Rowe, 2008; Summerson, 1979; 1992) and on authors who have examined how globalisation has impacted crime and the emergence of new collaborations (i.e., Aas, 2007; Aguilar-Millan et al., 2008; Bayley 1996; Briani, 2011; Folami and Naylor, 2017; Gill, 1998; Hope and Sparks 2000; Hope, 2005; Macvean, 2008; McConville and Shepherd, 1992; Natarajan, 2019; Pollard 2017; Reiner 2000). These evaluations helped researchers clarify how to consider historical backgrounds of crime and police development impacted contemporary rivalry to create a dynamic collaboration. In particular, it focused on the work of authors who have examined the UK police and law enforcement network from sociological or systems-focused perspectives (such as Bowling & Ross, 2006; Gilmour, 2008; Harfield 2008a; 2008b; James, 2016; Johnstone, 2004; Macvean, 2008; Segell; Sheptycki, 2004; Sproat, 2011). The literature search also focused on authors who emphasised the attention on social behaviour as part of human association, ingroup and outgroup, trust, and collaboration observations (such as, Aas 2007, Bauman, 1999; Bradford, 2011; Brewer, 2001, 1999; Briani 2011; Cook, 2015; Findlay 1999; 2008, Hardin, 2002, 2004, 2017; Harfield and Kleiven, 2008; Himmelman, 2001; Hughes, 2007; Kelly, 2008; Kurzban & Leary, 2001; Levinas, 1984; Merton, 1972; Mishra & Mishra, 2009; Ratcliffe 2003, Rivera-Cuadrado, 2021; Rosenbaum, 2002; Stenning, 2012; Tyler, 2004; Voci, 2020; Yamagishi, 1998, 2017). Scholars such as Mcdermott, Khalfan & Swan (2004), Block (2008), Harfield (2008a, 2008b), Kerrigan (2009), Kelly (2008), James (2016; 2018) and Sheptycki (2004; 2007; 2019), whose research interests are Intelligence and information sharing, also provide interesting perspectives that helped answer the research question.

1.6 Limitations

The study was not absent from limitations. First, one of the main complications faced during the study was the effect of the Covid19, which delayed data collection, impeded access to research instruments and necessitated the use of online methods. This situation led to the use of the internet and surveys, limiting further insight into the Network. This limited the number of concepts that could have been analysed. Furthermore, it led to participants responding to restrictive questions with no opportunity to elaborate on them. Although the option to further investigate topics with an additional interview was offered, it was not welcomed as a possibility. Not to mention the implications of fatigue in coping with

work carried out remotely without the opportunity to slow down and receive external support. Secondly, contact and access to subjects were limited by administration, policies, and time.

1.7 Assumptions

It was assumed that participants were knowledgeable and/or experienced in GAIN and that there were official documents that could correctly elucidate the information provided by the GAIN Network.

1.8 Aim of the study

This research aimed to examine and evaluate operational support for law enforcement in the context of SOC using the model of these relatively new arrangements. The research explored the environments in which multidisciplinary teams may support UK police agencies; evaluated the extent of Intelligence sharing across the force, regional and national organisational boundaries; investigated social change phenomena such as crime and security connected to globalisation and the response of society to combat phenomena as Serious and Organised Crime; and finally, examine the interactions between social actors and relationships.

Police intelligence practice has the potential to threaten citizens' fundamental rights more than almost any other aspect of their work. Therefore, it is crucial that appropriate checks and balances on information sharing are in place and working effectively to protect citizens' rights to privacy and that the activity can be considered procedurally fair. Not least, the research aimed to encourage a greater understanding of the value of active citizenship in this milieu. In an era of austerity for public services across Europe, the intention is to critically assess the ways in which hard-pressed services could innovate better to meet the needs of citizens by encouraging active citizenship among their communities.

The advantage is to lay the foundations to create, in the future, a civilian multidisciplinary team supporting law enforcement agencies to develop and share intelligence information regionally and nationally on serious organised crime. The idea does not originate because the resolution of these crimes is undervalued but rather because of the seeming absence of enthusiasm for joint working and will facilitate the agents' task and speed up processes. Moreover, creating this kind of support could be adequate to improve the community's security systems and protection.

1.9 Significance

This research may benefit British police departments, external organisations and agencies, and future researchers in exploring a new multi-agency capable of facilitating investigations, exchanging information, and sharing a new source of collaboration that could offer rise to a variety of new partnership systems. This proposed system involves multiple unknown and undiscovered components that influence customer agreement. These arrangements have not previously been studied or been subjected to independent review. Nevertheless, this research's proposed multi-agency intelligence model potentially has value because it incorporates police and third-party services in investigation and Intelligence sharing to combat serious and organised crime.

This study sheds light on a new working model of security and Intelligence, a new type of intelligence agency that works side by side with police forces and as a conduit for other public and private organisations. Its findings suggest how relationships between the police and other institutions can be strengthened. Arguably, the study points to ways in which collaborative arrangements like GAIN can be effective tools for improving performance in developing intelligence spheres like Britain's.

1.10 Structure of the thesis

This thesis is divided into six chapters:

Chapter 1: The research problem statement, aims, purpose, assumption, limitations, and significance are presented in the following section. Furthermore, this chapter explains the conceptual framework that serves as the foundation for the literature review structure.

Chapter 2: This chapter examines the various research methods and their philosophical implications before explaining the most appropriate data collection and analysis method selected for this study. The software used for data analysis has also been outlined as a list of research participants and their pseudonyms. Finally, a mind map and word clouds are illustrated at the end of the chapter based on data collected and analysed from interviews and surveys.

Chapter 3: The third chapter is devoted to literature, focusing on exploration and studies aimed at the definitions, foundation, and historical evolution of the police in England and Wales affected by globalisation, furthermore, providing a comprehensive review of the literature on contemporary society. The social changes caused by globalisation and the alteration in crime are reviewed and discussed.

The several types of support for the police in the UK, the effects of partnership, and the benefits and human issues related to collaboration have been explained. In addition, the concept

of trust, communication and ingroup and outgroup elements have been explored, identifying the advantages of collaborations and what it implies to be in a partnership.

Chapter 4: The fourth chapter is dedicated to the GAIN Network case study. Knowledge and documentation about the multi-agency it have been processed and described, including how and when the Network was established, for what reason, how many employees engage within the agency, who the partners are, and current information about new arrangements. In addition, exploration has been provided on the cloud system and the form used for sensitive data transmitted and received by partners and the agency, providing an exploration of guidelines for UK regulations concerning sharing information and Intelligence among various agencies and the software systems that support such communications

Chapter 5: This chapter focuses on data analysis based on information gathered from interviews and surveys. During the analysis, six significant themes were discovered and analysed. A summary is provided at the end of the chapter.

Chapter 6: This last chapter discusses the advantages and disadvantages of this Network are debated in both the socio-systemic and intelligence dimensions. In addition, the police's dominance in the investigative process and the lack of civil support have been debated. Finally, the study's conclusions are presented within the chapter.

Chapter 2: Methodology

2.1 Introduction

This chapter embraces two approaches. Firstly, it describes the research approach adopted, the theoretical orientation, and why it was embraced. The second part of this chapter provides details of how the research was undertaken and why some methodical approaches were accepted, and others discarded. In addition, this chapter includes details of the selected methodology, research design considerations, participant selection criteria, data collection management and analytical tools used to evaluate the raw data.

The research gains quantitative and qualitative primary data obtained from an online survey and semi-structured online interviews.

2.2 Role of the researcher

The author's role in this research is to collect primary and secondary data and conduct an analysis of this product. The assumed role has allowed participation over all phases of the study, covering research project planning, data collection, conducting interview sessions, design surveys, and data analysis. Critical to the research's success and integrity is reflexivity, the *'monitoring by a researcher of her or his impact on the research situation being investigated'* (Gray, 2004 p.405). The author has sought to minimise bias and maximise objectivity within the research design, including mitigating any influence that may distort the results of findings to the methods adopted. i.e., bias and variance are the two primary sources of error in surveys, and this research has sought to mitigate the total survey error (TES). In this context, TES is defined as *'the accumulation of all errors that may arise in the design, collection, processing and analysis of survey data'* (Biermer,2010 p.817). The first step was to be conscious of personal experiences and perspectives to minimise biases interfering with the investigation (Maxfield & Babbie, 2014).

On the one hand, it turned out to be quite feasible, as personal experience of the law enforcement environment, as with the police, is almost nil. There is no legacy to influence observations of the police system, and the police forces have never employed its intelligence collaborations or the researcher. Therefore, there was no first-hand experience that might have affected the insights. Understanding the Police approach within the investigations and knowledge of collaborations has resulted from attending courses during my university career, leading to a critical approach to the topics discussed. Therefore, there is an outsider's perspective (Fletcher, 2010; Naaeke et al., 2012).

A lack of direct experience and contacts in law enforcement led to challenges in comprehending the system and dealing with the participants. Knowing the participants' experiences enables the researcher to proceed deeply into themes without understanding the subculture (Ely et al., 1991). In addition, several criminal justice organisations have complicated organisational structures (Maxfield & Babbie, 2014). GAIN, as an Intelligence multi-agency, due to being culturally closed and less accustomed to releasing information to the public, dealing with this environment and subculture has turned out to be challenging: '*The police intelligence division-of-labour is designed to limit and facilitate access to information on a 'need to know' basis*' (Sheptycki, 2019 p.50). However, the distancing resulting from the absence of a personal relationship with the participants enabled me not to be overly familiar with the participants and to obtain not too evident information through valid inquiries using interviews and surveys (Maxfield & Babbie, 2014).

Care is taken concerning reflexivity during the research. Every attempt has been made to avoid the influence of the significant negative impact to research objectivity of the author's actions, personal experiences, and philosophical basis and observations. Potential biases are designed as types of systemic inaccuracies resulting from *'conscious or unconscious tendency on the part of a researcher to produce data, and/or to interpret them, in a way that inclines towards erroneous conclusions which are in line with his or her commitments'* (Hammersley, 1997, p.1). It has employed a reflexive stance involving self-reflection on the background as a researcher, personal reflexivity (attitude and expectations), a reflection on the research setting and interpersonal reflexivity involving the relationship between researcher-participants (Walsh, 2003).

2.3 Rationale, research question and aims

The study provided a response to the following question: *In the modern era, the police no longer have monopoly control of crime-fighting; therefore, to what extent does British policing engage with partners to prevent and detect serious organised crime?: A case study of the GAIN network.*

This research used the model of the United Kingdom's Government Agency Information Network (GAIN) to examine and evaluate operational support for law enforcement in the context of serious and organised crime. Specifically, the research aims were to:

1. Critically examine the environments in which multidisciplinary teams may support UK law enforcement agencies.
2. Critically assess the extent of Intelligence sharing across force, regional and national organisational boundaries.

3. Critically analyse processes of social changes (i.e., globalisation related to crimes and security and society's response to combat phenomena such as Serious and Organised Crime).

4. Critically examine interactions between social actors and their relationships.

2.4 Methodology

This project employed Interpretivism and realist research philosophical paradigms. To explore subjects, context, relationships, and organisation this empirical research was based on a Case Study (see Gray, 2014).

2.5 Epistemological Background

The key to understanding the present study is considering the philosophical background to settle proper strategies to achieve reliable and legitimate results. Epistemology provides the indicated basis, 'what it means to know' (Gray, 2004 p.16). Therefore, it is worth focusing on the epistemological background and concepts to respond to which ideologies and theoretical perspectives are used to examine the social phenomenon I intend to study. It should be appropriate to discuss, in the view of Gray (ibid), the difference between Objectivism, Constructivism and Subjectivism before explaining the position developed for this study:

1. Objectivist Epistemology represents an objective reality that is out there, independently by the subjects. The theoretical perspective related to objectivism is positivism and post-positivism. Braun and Clarke (2013) describe these scientific methods. The positive approach (affiliated with empiricism) accepts the connection between objective reality and perception. Hence, the demonstration of knowledge is acquired by unbiased data collection. A post-positivist researcher pursues the truth, recognising contexts influence. Distinctly from the constructivism epistemology approach, post-positivist researchers rely on '*that single truth and thus seek to control for or remove subjective influences on knowledge production as much as possible*' (Ibid p.30).

2. Constructivism Epistemology represents reality as the result of our cognitive structures. Subsequently, the meaning is constructed (Crotty, 1998). The truth is not out there anymore but is produced by the subject's relations with the world. The theoretical perspective related to constructivism is interpretivism. Interpretivism '*looks for culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life-world*' (ibid, p.67).

3. In Subjectivism Epistemology, the subjects give the "meaning" originating from the unconscious, not from the outside world. For Grey, one of the theoretical perspective examples related to subjectivism is postmodernism. Postmodernism highlights diversity, ambiguity, and fragmentation (Gray 2004), and for the researcher, reality is characterised by the representation of the social world and how meanings are generated.

Since the study is mainly based on an intelligence network that involves social interaction between different actors, the question is: *'How can we know about the world of human action?'* (Schwandt, 1994, p.222) or, in the context of this project, how can the world of GAIN's intelligence sharing, and policing partnership be known through the research perspective?

It is suitable to understand the human relationship between this Intelligence organisation and the collaboration with other entities. Moreover, I need to understand the environmental and social changes in crime areas along with the professional's adaptive abilities. The sociologist Max Weber (1947, p.88), referring to sociology, defines what he calls Verstehen (usually translated with understanding) a:

> *science which attempts the interpretive understanding of social*
> *action in order thereby to arrive at a causal explanation of its course*
> *and effects. In 'action' is included all human behaviour when and in so*
> *far as the acting individual attaches a subjective meaning to it.*

Thus, relating to Newton's Third Law of Motion states: that for every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction. Therefore, we can explain the research as a matter of "cause/effect." The role is undertaken by policing, and Intelligence provides security and safety and is strictly connected and constructed through society. The nature of meaning relates to the subject's relations with the crime world. Furthermore, it is relevant to consider Constructivism Epistemology as a response to the outside world. Subsequently, the theoretical perspective appropriate is **Interpretivism**. Based on this scheme, I cannot consider Subjectivism and the Objectivism and relative's theoretical perspective. The following paragraph analyses the theoretical perspective selected for this project.

2.6 Theoretical Perspective

The theoretical perspective of Interpretivism was used to explore the research case and its environment. In the view of Gray (2004, p.20-23), there are five cases of the interpretivist

approach:

- ➢ Symbolic interactionism= with the symbolic interactionism interpretation, the researcher analyses the meaning, recognising that it results from human interaction. Thus, the subject's actions and his perspective on objects and society are under examination. The study will be based on those interpretations. The research methodologies frequently related to symbolic interactionism are ethnography, observation method and grounded theory.

- ➢ Phenomenology=, a phenomenologist researcher attempts to comprehend social reality founded on the knowledge and experience of subjects in that reality. Hence, this approach tends to explore the human construction proceeding by description.

- ➢ Realism= a realistic researcher recognises reality (culture, corporate planning) independently by observation. This research interpretation act for systematic analysis as well as natural phenomena.

- ➢ Hermeneutics= a hermeneutics researcher examines social reality as *'socially constructed, rather than being rooted in objective fact'* (Gray, 2004 p.23). In this matter, the argument is about the notion of accomplishing an in-depth knowledge of reality and meaning through the process of interpretation, not observation.

- ➢ Naturalistic inquiry= a naturalistic inquiry researcher studies multiple realities holistically. Since reality has been considered a component of multiple constructed realities, the research design constructed following this approach cannot be discussed in advance. The research methods frequently designated include interviews, observation (plus with participants), and document collection.

Based on this scheme and focusing on the study's goal, it would be impractical to consider research methodology based on naturalistic inquiry (it would be unrealistic trying to understand multiple realities in this project). A similar argument can be applied to a research methodology based on Hermeneutics (it cannot be led through a process of interpretation and excluding observation). I could have taken into consideration the study based on symbolic interactionism. Symbolic interactionism's inquiry is to comprehend the meaning recognising that it results from human interaction. However, as described previously, the subject's actions and perspective about object and society are under examination and, for this research, is not relevant. A research methodology based on ethnography will indicate a culture study and an investigation between culture and behaviour (Gray, 2004), and this research does not examine this subject.

Furthermore, Tesch (cited in Langenbach et al., 1994 p.93) differentiates ethnography research (culture and language study, based on interviews) from phenomenology (human experience,

mainly based on observations). Phenomenology, for definition, is more focused on individuals and the experience that an individual makes. Instead, Tesch designated ethnography research as more focused on a culture study. A researcher, in this case, does not study individuals but "sites." Therefore, I cannot consider these research methodologies to reach the study's goal. Instead, adopting the case study approach is worthwhile because of the connection between the phenomenon and the context (Gray, 2004). The case study emphasis is concentrated on investigating the issue encountered in the individual selected for the study, not just on the individual per se (Creswell, 2007).

This research combines a qualitative data analysis related to a phenomenon observation already studied in social literature. Consequently, connected to this argument, realism is the proper theoretical perspective for this project, choosing a case study to design the research.

A case study takes advantage *"from the prior development of a theoretical position to help direct the data collection and analysis process"* (Gray, 2004, p.124). Hence, this project examines data and analysis through observations, experience, and measurements. Therefore, this empirical research is based on a **Case Study**.

2.7 Research Design

The current project represents the interpretative analysis of a case study. It focuses on understanding the GAIN Network, the underpinning law enforcement partnership arrangements, and the degree of compliance with these arrangements, the scope and nature of the intelligence information sharing, and the social behaviour displayed in the contexts of trust and collaboration.

This research adopts a case study approach, enabling the research design to focus on one aspect of inter-organisational information sharing. A definition of a case study is:

> *an empirical method that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the "case") in depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident* (Yin, 2018 p.50).

In this context, the case studies aim to investigate in-depth, real-life phenomena and subjects' relationships (Dobson, 1999; Creswell, 2007; Gray, 2014). A case study is a model that does not test hypotheses (Hancock and Algozzine, 2006); it explores behaviours, relationships and events. This method commonly uses interviews (an open, structured, or semi-structured interview), questionnaires, archives, and observations (Eisenhardt, 1989; Hancock and Algozzine, 2006). A case study allows researchers to understand situations and meaning in-depth (Hancock

and Algozzine, 2006). The case study approach is often utilised when there are 'how' and 'why' questions about organisational policy and practice. For several reasons, a case study's most pertinent epistemological background is realism (Perry, 1998). One of these is that case studies are *'contemporary and pre-paradigmatic'* (ibid p.787).

The differences (Gray, 2014) between deductive and inductive should be noticed to understand Perry's view.

- In the *induction approach,* a researcher proceeds during the investigation to collect data. The researcher tries to determine models and meanings from the analysis, testing connections between variables and attempting not to jump to conclusions based on data. Hence, the induction moves from (disconnected) details to a related universal view. To avoid inaccuracy, misconceptions and bias, the researcher should explore multiple cases through multiplying observations.

- Alternately, the *deductive approach* starts with a general view going further into details. Then, the researcher attempts to test the hypothesis through the deduction approach, explaining theories and detecting a relationship between them. The first step elaborates on related ideas/theories examined during empirical observation (creating *measures and indicators*) (Gray, 2004).

'Case study research includes some deduction based on prior theory, although inductive theory building is more prominent' (Perry, 2018, p.788). Because the discussion will revolve around resolving the "how" problem and proposing a theory, the scientific approach chosen for this case study is inductive.

However, there are some limitations to the case study approach. There are dangers in generalising the findings from a single case study to other information-sharing arrangements; however, the results may indicate trends.

Another criticism of the case study approach is that it has not been universally accepted as reliable, objective and legitimate (Yin, 2009).

2.8 Interview Guides

During the initial stage of the research, the ideal approach on which this research was focused to obtain data relating to an organisation such as GAIN was by actively engaging with the participants. In order to take advantage of this, the idea of using semi-structured interviews was therefore considered, which could have deepened the knowledge of the topic in question and

provided additional information. It was also considered that face-to-face semi-structured interviews would also have led to a diverse interaction based on mutual observation and the opportunity to develop a relationship of trust. Unfortunately, Covid19 severely impacted this approach, thus distorting the original considerations on the best type of method to be utilised to gather the required data for conducting the research. As Webber et al. (2022) argue, the imposed lockdown of COVID-19 impacted students worldwide. Universities' abrupt shutdowns and interrupted research suspensions in some situations have exacerbated the challenges that PhD students were already facing, including the relationship with the supervisor, which are essential factors for the completion of studies and, in this situation, failed dramatically. Arguments regarding the impact of covid were also supported by Donohue et al. (2021). Hence, this not only impacted on a personal level but especially the investigative research and participation of the respondents.

Thus, before debating any further, it should be appropriate to clarify the reasons behind the choices employed for data collection. This research was conducted in a unique historical moment during the COVID-19 outbreak. In March 2020, I adapted the study following the guidelines provided by the LJMU, and I applied new methods for data collection (forced to switch remotely, using smart working from home). Nevertheless, it is worth clarifying how the pandemic situation has negatively impacted the study, which initially, involved the exclusive use of semi-structured interviews to be conducted face-to-face. COVID meant that all data collection instead took place online.

However, some clarifications need to be made to justify the aim behind the category selected before the pandemic. Because interviews involve interaction between the researcher and the subjects, they may generate some challenges (Gray, 2004). Typically, researchers classify five types of interviews (Dantzker, Hunter & Quinn, 2016; Gray, 2004; Maxfield & Babbie, 2014; Tartaro, 2021):

1. *Structured*

    It is usually designed for quantitative analysis; this category plan to prepare standard questions beforehand. The interviewer meets subjects face-to-face (with low interaction between the interviewer and the interviewees during the interview), improving their valuable responses. The subject's contact before the interview will increase the feedback. Usually, a structured interview covers both open and closed questions. All the questions are recorded (to facilitate the transcription); Asking permission before using a recorded tape is fundamental for all ethical issues.

2. *Semi-Structured*

is usually designed for qualitative analysis and consents to examine views and opinions where respondents should expand their answers, exploring subjective significances (Gray, 2004). Contrarily to structured interviews, this category does not use standard questions, enabling to pursuit and gather additional data (Dantzker, Hunter & Quinn, 2016). There is no order for questions, and the direction can determine the queries he wants to proceed with during the interview. The researcher has a list of topics they want to cover during the interviews, but that does not mean they will succeed. The subject's actions can be documented by annotation during the interviews, and all the questions can be recorded. Furthermore, semi-structured interviews enable the exploration of themes that develop throughout the interview (Maxfield & Babbie, 2014)

3. *Non-directive*

   Semi-Structured interviews are usually designed for qualitative analysis and do not use mainly standard questions. This category examines a problem or a subject in profundity. Thus, the researcher needs to understand the research's purposes and what topics will be more focused on during the interview. The interviewee can talk liberally.

4. *Focused*

   Contrary to previous classifications, the interviewees will talk about personal responses on a specific topic and their involvement. The researcher has previous acquaintance with the situation and can report the interviewees' attention if they drift away from the topic.

5. *Informal conversational*

   In this category, the interviewer generates spontaneous questions. The benefits of informal conversational interviews are their elasticity when the researcher chooses what path to follow. The peculiarity of this type of interview is the possibility that the participant may be unaware that an interview is going place. Thus, taking notes for the interview duration is impractical, but if the subjects are aware of being interviewed, it is possible to take notes or record the interview. On the other hand, the disadvantage is what Gray calls the 'interviewer effect.' The second drawback is that "this could require time before the investigator raises comparable queries to the group of persons being questioned. The data analysis can be complicated (developing patterns) as the interviewer asks different questions to different people.

After analysing each interview classification, the Semi-Structured interviews have been seen as the most productive for data collection to reach the study goal. Adopting this approach would indeed have allowed to: Create a relationship of trust (valuing that could be built during a face-to-face interview); Freedom and flexibility during the interviews; Take notes during the language and

body observations; Encourage the communication between interviewer and interviewee; The opportunity to learn the reasons behind the answers, clarifying the meaning.

Completing a research study during a pandemic that brought a shutdown influenced all spheres, but more importantly, it caused several challenges for completing a research project. Due to the circumstances of the lockdown, the research investigation was forced to reconsider a new approach and shift the data collection from face-to-face to behind a screen. Despite the pandemic in progress and the change of approach in the data collection, it was decided to integrate the semi-structured online interviews with the surveys. However, it was considered that reshaping the approach to data collection has not allowed to get as close to the participants as initially thought. This probably also affected the possible richness of the data. Adaptation to external circumstances, however, brings resolution where otherwise there would be no possibility of pursuing the research (see, e.g., Sweet, 2002)

Since the remote method was adopted, the interviews were taken and recorded via Teams. The six audio-recorded interviews lasted between 20 and 60 minute-long in-depth for the participants (all the formulated questions can be viewed in Appendix C). Employees' appearance and speech have been observed during the interviews, resulting in written notes and audio recordings. The entire interviews' corpus transcriptions have been completed through the online free software Otter.ai (https://otter.ai/) and Microsoft Stream (https://web.microsoftstream.com). The transcriptions have been compared with audio recordings, and all files have been uploaded on NVivo 12 (qualitative analysis software operation) to be analysed. Audio files and transcriptions have been safely stored on One Drive and M Drive (password-protected locations and accessible only to the author).

2.9 Online Survey

As was mentioned in the last paragraph, this research was conducted during the COVID-19 outbreak. As already specified, the initial plan was for involved the use of semi-structured face-to-face interviews. COVID changed that; therefore, it has not been possible to form a relationship based on direct experience. This would have allowed for a unique view during the data collection, creating a relationship of trust.

Although it was possible to convert everything into digital form, the essential core seems to be missing because this research bases its study on the human connection. It was equally likely to reach a broad and specific sector audience, but the research might have taken another direction if the circumstances had been suitable. Therefore, the situation was new for everyone, and the

project needed data to collect as fast as possible. During the lockdown, to accelerate the data collection process, the DoS agreed to change and improve the methods of distributing an online survey and collecting other data through interviews. It must be noted that the solely online interview data collection was excluded for varied reasons. The first one is ***Running time***. Using surveys as primary data collection was suitable for convenience and speeding up response times. For each participant, a survey would have taken around 15/20 minutes to complete. There would have been no wasted time transcribing the recordings. After receiving the answers, the next step would have been just the analysis. As an alternative, interviews would have taken much more than an hour each interview. I should have waited for the subject to be accessible for the interview, alone or otherwise at comfort in dealing with delicate topics (not being able to choose a private and quiet environment reciprocally for the interview), hoping for a proper internet connection. Nevertheless, analysing and transcribing the work would have been just as slow. Since I did not have much time to collect and analyse data, I decided it would be faster to take advantage of the surveys.

The other reason is ***More possibilities***. Moreover, the survey allows for obtaining qualitative and quantitative data collection.

The last reason is ***poor quality***. The risks with an online interview are lack of internet connection, distorted quality, missing words, the possibility of interruptions, and failure in the recording. These problems could further work delays.

It was employed Jisc Online Survey (https://www.onlinesurveys.ac.uk) to create the survey. Liverpool John Moores University ensured access and enrolment to the website. Jisc is simple and instinctive to use. Overall, this survey tool provider ensures the security of data processed in compliance with GDPR. Two distinct Surveys were created to obtain the data I needed. The first one was extended to people who came in contact with GAIN, trying to understand if and how they discovered the network, while the second one focused the attention on those who had a more profound knowledge of the Network (Partners, GAIN Coordinators, GAIN Hub employees). The 23 surveys were completed by participants between 10 and 60 mins. All files have been uploaded on NVivo 12 to be analysed. The Survey questions and responses can be displayed in Appendix A and B.

2.10 Participant selection (discussing recruitment, selection criteria)

The research sample was made up of GAIN employees, police participants, and employees of other public sector agencies with insider knowledge of GAIN. The participants can be described as

knowledgeable about this topic and related processes. In addition, each individual had general experiential knowledge of GAIN and its work or police/partnership.

The intention was to obtain their views on the network's work and its impacts on inter-agency information-sharing and partnership. All potential participants were provided with information sheets and consent forms. Participation was completely voluntary. There is a pragmatic view of the number of participants based on the time available for the research and the time committed to the project by a single researcher. When potential participants were contacted directly, the research was explained.

The employees and partners expressed their interest in the study but reaching the agency's members and partners was challenging. Maxfield & Babbie (2014) described a series of steps that can enable the researcher to achieve complex organisations similar to GAIN. From the sponsor to the email, to the phone call and finally, the meeting, all the steps described were carried out so that it was possible to obtain access to the information and contacts needed to move forward with the research. The struggle to acquire data might have been due to uncertainty, especially at the first stage of the study, in sharing information, with the employees about GAIN's structure. Only one person initially made themself available for the interview. However, when the list of GAIN members was subsequently proposed, there was no direct feedback, as they were only waiting for the NGC to get underway. Therefore, to obtain the necessary data, it was asked for the National GAIN coordinator's consent, who managed the circulation of the mail recruitment for interviews and surveys, agreeing to provide the necessary material (such as documents and reports) for the research. This approach embraced by participants may have been influenced by a bureaucratic hierarchy that did not allow a correct flow of information and policies to be respected in the event of releasing material to third parties who are not part of the police or analogous.

Problems due to the hierarchy have also been observed by Sheptycki (2004) in the identified pathologies, underlying how intelligence gaps may occur as a result of the intelligence system's hierarchical structure. The bureaucratic authority is the foundation for organisation management (Meyer, 1968). However, a related outlook may create barriers that lead to an inaccurate as well as unsuccessful sharing and connection between those inside the system and those outside of it. Weber (Drechsler, 2020) similarly emphasises how, in the case of public administration, there are deficiencies such as slowness, a dangerous path toward authoritarianism, mindless hierarchy, and avoidance. Despite this, Drechsler adds that a similar bureaucracy is at its function when it is ethical, capable, and determined. Meyer (1968) describes centralised authority, which might be the background knowledge in a case like this. In the

centralised authority structure, the manager is crucial in everyday activities. They make policy and transform policy generalisations into operational commands. In this sense, the organisation is more responsive to the manager's directions, and much communication passes to and from them. This type of authority renders a bureaucracy highly responsive to the management, but it may also make its activities inconsistent, limiting operational consistency. Modern intel services have experienced a steady institutionalisation phase over the years, transforming them into Weberarian bureaucratic organisations. These organisations, like other bureaucracies, suffer from dysfunctions such as inadequate adaptation to casuistry and resistance to structural reforms. Even in this scenario, as Sheptycki has already remarked, disruption represents a barrier to the proper functionality of the intelligence services for Guisado and Franco (2021, p. 491): *'despite the reform processes promoted in various intelligence communities, institutional inertia prevails, which has significant implications for their legitimacy and functionality.'*

Notwithstanding these barriers, at first, the procedure for data collection was executed saw a search through the literature and online information about this new organisation without finding anything incisive. Then, within the limits of the approach to an intelligence structure, it was possible to contact the GAIN's employees. Once this obstacle was overcome, it was comprehended that the significant issue would have been to reach the GAIN partners to have an external view of the agency itself.

In chapter five, the participants have been identified to be recognised while maintaining anonymity. The only identifiable at the job role level are the GAIN's employees. The rest of the participants are those who had insider knowledge of GAIN.

The 29 participants are labelled as:
P1=GAIN Coordinator; P2=GAIN Coordinator; P3=GAIN Hub Staff; P4= GAIN Coordinator; P5= GAIN Hub Staff; P6=GAIN Partner; P7; P8; P9; P10; P11=GAIN Hub Staff; P12=GAIN Coordinator; P13; P14=GAIN Coordinator; P15=GAIN Coordinator; P16=GAIN Coordinator; P17; P18; P19; P20; P21; P22; P23; P24; P25; P26; P27; P28; P29

The GAIN Network participants came from only 10 ROCUs, so there were only ten coordinators available to be interviewed and three researchers from GAIN Hub, and not all coordinators volunteered for the study. Only seven responded to the invitation. External GAIN participants who might have insight into the Network were even more challenging to approach due to the limited participation, especially considering the low visibility of the Network, which caused the number of

participants to become increasingly restricted. However, those who were part of the study as knowledgeable GAIN experts did not all specify their position, but those who did indicate their involvement in GAIN, for instance, as a civil servant within the NCFU; Investigator with a public body; being part of ROCU; one of the participant was involved in recent GAIN Review; another participant has been involved with GAIN for over ten years in four different organisations, chairing GAIN meetings with national partners and attending national GAIN workshops; while another member engaged with GAIN from both a client and GAIN perspective. Failure to respond can also be attributed to several variables, including the pressure of an unpleasant situation of COVID19 forcing employees to move their work from their offices to their homes. Because of their high levels of stress and burnout, some employees may not have responded. This has caused them to have less and less time to devote to external factors, so they could focus on confining their hours strictly to work and personal use. In addition, getting information about the GAIN was complicated since no previous studies slowed down the process. Moreover, being part of the police and Intelligence was even harder to contact, considering the secretive profession of particular corps, typical of intelligence forces.

Commonly, qualitative research counts on small samples or possibly individual cases (N = 1) chosen intentionally and purposefully, unlike quantitative research, which normally utilises large samples (Gray,2017; Patton, 2002). Since this is a qualitative research, the sample in this study investigation was selected carefully and logically to obtain all possible and reliable information about the GAIN Network and its partnerships and not to offer opinions on the multi-agency. Indeed, as Guetterman (2015, p.3) states, *'sampling is not a matter of representative opinions, but a matter of information richness'*. The sample was not randomly selected, and care was taken to thoroughly search for those who had the opportunity to cross paths with GAIN collaboratively and work-related (such as employees). To accomplish this, the sample was purposive.

The strength of purposeful sampling is found when choosing information-rich conditions for thorough investigation (Palinkas et al., 2013; Patton, 2002). This sampling approach refers to the possibility that a researcher may discover numerous facts about topics fundamental to the objective of the investigation; hence, the term purposeful sampling (Patton, 2002). Purposeful samples, sometimes called *purposive* or *judgment* samples (Bernard, 2000 cited in Patton, 2002, p.230), are utilised when specific individuals, instances, or situations are recognised as contributing essential information that cannot be obtained through other types of sampling (Maxwell, 1997 cited in Gray,2017). According to Patton (2002, p.230), what may be perceived as 'bias' (and thus a weakness to research) in a statistical sample in qualitative sampling transforms into the *intended focus* and hence strength. Nevertheless, a limitation of purposeful sampling is the possibility that the researcher

may ignore an essential feature (on which to base the sample selection), or there may be a bias in making the selection (Gray,2017). Patton (2002) proposed several approaches to purposeful sampling, and everyone had a specific aim. Of the proposed strategies, it is possible to state that this research has utilised a combination of two purposive sampling strategies: *Typical case sampling* and *Snowball or chain sampling* (Patton, 2002). Patton (2002) elucidated that typical case sampling aims to explain and show what is common for those unaware of the context and refers to cases chosen with the support of key respondents, such as personnel or informed subjects, who can assist in determining who and what is typical. Placed in the context of this research, the sample was chosen precisely to explain a phenomenon and context (about the GAIN Network) unknown in the literature using the knowledge of those with expertise in the field. Researchers may need to obtain verification from stakeholders (such as gatekeepers) that a case is typical of a group of cases (Gray,2017). A typical case is selected because it illustrates (it is not definitive) the fundamental elements of a particular occurrence or phenomenon (Gray,2017; Patton, 2002). Typical case sampling does not aim to make broad statements regarding participants' experiences (Patton, 2002). It may be suitable to present a qualitative overview of one or more typical cases when introducing a culture or project to those unfamiliar with the study context. The other strategy utilised has been snowball sampling. This approach instead is employed by the researcher to identify a limited number of individuals of significant key informants who locates other individuals (Gray,2017; Patton, 2002). Similar to the data collection process and thus the search for key informants for this study, I proceeded to look for those who might have had connections with GAIN or those who might possibly be familiar with it. This led me from person to person to request further contacts to reach the gatekeeper who, in turn, compiled a list of employees within GAIN.

Indeed, the snowball sampling process commences by seeking out individuals of influential positions and subsequently soliciting recommendations for additional contacts to engage in conversation with (Patton, 2002). The snowball effect is observed as the inquiry expands and generates further information-rich cases. Biernacki and Waldorf (1981) state that the researcher must establish and regulate the sample's commencement, progression, and conclusion diligently and purposefully. Indeed, according to Patton (2002), identifying recommended informants tends to exhibit an initial divergence, suggesting a plethora of potential sources. Subsequently, it tends to converge towards a select few individuals whose names are repeatedly proposed. One of the foremost challenges the researcher must face when employing the snowball technique for sample identification is the visibility of the target population in question (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981). Studies involving, for example, law enforcement personnel demonstrate elevated levels of social prominence. However, identifying and reaching prospective participants is challenging due to ethical, legal, or

social considerations associated with the behaviour under investigation. According to Eland-Goossensen et al. (1997),employing the snowball sampling technique may facilitate a consistent procedure for sample selection from *hidden populations* where identification, accessibility, and recruitment of participants is a challenging task. In the case of this research, it was indeed complex to initially gather information about GAIN and how to contact the people within it and/or those who had had some interaction with the multi-agency. This is because, although GAIN is a support for the police and other partners, it is part of a sub-group that is not *visible*, both because of the sub-culture within it and because of the limited information released by the agency itself in order to be contacted. However, it must also be noted that this research concerns issues that are hardly released to the general audience, hence more reserved, and as argued by Biernacki and Waldorf (1981), this strategy is compatible with numerous research objectives especially relevant when investigating sensitive topics or which may involve reserved subject matter, necessitating the possession of insider knowledge in order to identify individuals suitable for inclusion in the research.

After explaining the sample and how it was chosen, it can be argued that the identification and sample collection of participants may be considered insufficient, leading to the assumption that the saturation point has been missed. However, it appears that *'data saturation is not the only (valid or invalid) rationale for sample size (in TA research)'* particularly if reflexive TA is applied (Braun & Clarke, 2021 p.211). In exploratory research discussed by Ando, Cousins, and Young (2014), 12 interviews produced all of the themes and 92.2 per cent of the codes, indicating that 12 might have been an adequate sample number for thematic analysis with higher-level concepts. Twelve interviews should be sufficient for research works where the goal is to identify common opinions and experiences between a group of reasonably homogeneous participants (Guest, Bunce, and Johnson, 2006). There seems to be no universal and valid answer to the problems associated with saturation, but in some research contexts, the researcher must develop solutions in line with specific research projects. Despite its limitations, the use of conceptual depth criteria (conceptual depth was proposed as an alternate solution phrase to saturation) could assist the researcher in determining if conceptual categories seem to be adequate and knowledgeable of proper funding for the theorising phase of the grounded theory method for example (Nelson, 2017). Determining the sample selection *a priori* is intrinsically tricky in the case of inductive, exploratory research, which aims to examine phenomena for which the essential themes cannot be identified in advance (Sim et al., 2018). Therefore, the point reached from a sample considered inadequate to answer the research question is valid as long as responses answering the research question are present among that sample. Saturation has varying importance and significance based on the role of theory and the analytic technique used and hence

may fulfil various goals for different types of studies expressed by the researcher (Saunders et al., 2018). In this context, it could be argued, following Braun & Clarke (2021), that the sample obtained, although limited, answers the research question, and since the GAIN Network is the primary focus of the study and has a limited number of Coordinators, it is valuable for this research purpose. The TA used is reflexive and placing a limit on saturation may not be effective in some cases *'when it comes to reflexive TA, data saturation is not a particularly useful, or indeed theoretically coherent, concept'* (Braun & Clarke, 2021 p.212). Finally, ontological, and epistemological paradigms were discussed to better lead the reader towards understanding the choices made during the research. This led to an understanding of the motivations behind all the choices applied to the research, with a detailed picture of why and how the sample was reached and analysed (codes and themes).

2.11 Gatekeeper

Obtaining information about the agency was initially complex, as previously discussed. There were no sources to examine the organisation or website where the agency's contacts could be found. Therefore, the role of gatekeepers is crucial in this study. Spacey et al. (2021) study's results showed how PGRs face several difficulties in using Gatekeepers to access subjects for their research. Consequently, some people experience a negative impact when these obstacles become apparent. In this specific case, the role of the gatekeeper was crucial in obtaining a list of subjects from whom I could start requesting interviews and starting a relationship of trust with the participants (Emmel et al., 2007), and thus, indispensable for data collection. However, it was also vital to relieve the initial stress to which I was subjected (Devine & Hunter, 2017).

More specifically, the gatekeepers helped identify and recruit people who matched that demographic and had a professional interest in the research. Gatekeepers were provided with details of the research and the researcher's contact details. The research gatekeeper was identified by one of my Director of Studies (DoS) contacts. However, explaining the development of obtaining information was vital before I gathered the resources. The DoS's acquaintance provided internal contact within the agency with which they had previously collaborated. As discussed above, being an outsider (both demographically and in terms of role), it was important to have the support of the main supervisor (Devine & Hunter, 2017), who allowed inside contacts within the police force. Once the name of the first participant was obtained, the GAIN employee, after the first interview, supplied a list of all other GAIN employees so that I could start sending emails to recruit participants, thus officially becoming a gatekeeper. Subsequently, having had no direct feedback from the agency employees (waiting for approval from the NGC), it took time before receiving a response from members of staff whose lists had previously been obtained

thanks to the gatekeeper, but since the role that led to more participant involvement was the NGC, it was only possible to set the whole mechanism in motion. Both gatekeepers and NGC have been asked to publicise the research to colleagues in their force/agency verbally and by email/note and to pass on the survey web link, which sets out the purpose, participant information sheet, methods, and intended possible uses of the research, what their participation in the research entails, and what risks, if any, are involved.

The role of the gatekeeper was crucial in this research, as was the role of the NCG. This is because as much as the gatekeeper was willing to provide information, names, and emails in this work environment (as previously observed by Sheptycki, 2004 outlining hierarchy problems), the chain of command seems to be vital.

2.12 Data Collection and Storage

All research data associated with this study are confidential and kept in a secure cabinet in the LCAPS director's office. Names of those interviewed were omitted from any output (instead, participants were identified by ID numbers). Great care has been taken in anonymising individuals referred to in any research output only by their ID number and role. All electronic data were recorded on an encrypted USB and then transferred to the LJMU M: drive. Once transferred, all other records were deleted. All notes and reports are stored in a locked cabinet in the director's office.

2.13 Ethical procedures

After completing the LJMU Research Ethics Training, the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) of the LJMU approved the Ethics application with reference: 19/LCAPS/003. This study utilised data collection (obtained from interviews and surveys) and information voluntarily provided by GAIN employees.

2.14 Data analysis

Thematic Analysis (TA) was the selected method to identify, evaluate, analyse, and report themes (patterns) within data for this research (Braun & Clarke, 2006 and 2017; Hancock and Algozzine, 2006; Gray, 2014). In addition, this method requests whether a dataset relevantly responds to the research question (Scharp & Sanders, 2018). TA analyse different qualitative data to discover and explain repeated patterns. Qualitative Research has allowed me to reflect and think, but above all, to learn from the data I acquire. A qualitative research method investigates the perceptions,

values, and motivations that underpin the behaviours. The main goal is to observe and understand social phenomena through the experiences and perceptions of those who have directly experienced the event and to recognise the importance of participants' perspectives, which will only be comprehended inside their experience and viewpoint (Castleberry and Nolen, 2018). For Braun & Clarke (2019), qualitative data analysis is interpretation and creation, while qualitative research is about *meaning and meaning-making.* The final analysis is the product of a careful and profound reflection of the collected data.

The aim is to identify relevant themes for answering the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2012). I have examined different qualitative methods of analysis before choosing the TA. For example, it can be observed that although Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) tries to find patterns in data (as well as TA), IPA is theoretically bounded (Braun & Clarke 2006). Therefore, this study cannot consider this method since it is not theoretically bounded.

Furthermore, I proceeded to observe the Grounded Theory (GT) method. GT's prime purpose is to withdraw the epistemological structure (for examining the research situation) and create a theory grounded in data collection (Dobson, 1999). However, the difficulty in employing the GT is that despite any effort to preserve the original approach as unbiased, the data will never be neutral: it will be influenced from the researcher's point of view.

There are two reasons to employ TA as a method of analysis: accessibility and flexibility (Braun & Clarke, 2012). According to Gray (2017), the flexibility in a qualitative study indicates that questions and objectives may change throughout the investigative research process, which is approximately what occurred in this research. As a practical example, the flexibility of the analysis method allowed me to revise the initial research question, which was focused on determining whether a civilian organisation supporting the police in the UK could have been practical and functioning, as originally assumed GAIN to be exclusively a civilian organisation. However, data collection and analysis revealed that it was not an exclusively purely civil multi-agency with no connection to police staff. Therefore, the flexibility allowed me to shift the focus to British collaborative support to tackle SOC and criminal activities, elaborating on what GAIN is and its role. Access instead, according to Riese (2019), is a fluid and multifaceted process that is dependent on a researcher's capacity to gain access and establish a *multiple vision*, which includes the accessibility of the researcher and the study. In qualitative research, access can be defined as the procedure by which the interaction between researcher and people/locations studied occurs, allowing the research to be carried out. Accessibility in this specific research about GAIN is the result of the obtainment of the data collected through the relationship formed with the subjects. Through the connection with the participants, I was able to gain the responses that allowed me to

successfully conduct the research. Without the interaction that occurred over the years with the participants, it would not have been possible to construct and analyse the data collection.

According to Braun & Clarke (2006) the TA analysis goes through six phases: 1) Familiarise with the data: Data transcription - reading and re-reading the data - writing down the preliminary hint; 2)Generate preliminary codes: remarkable and essential data are analytically coded; 3) Searching patterns: Organise codes and possible patterns, grouping all data to the potential pattern; 4) Examining patterns: verifying patterns and generate a map; 5) Define and name patterns: generate definitions for patterns; 6)Report: Extracts are selected and analysed. This analysis relates to the research question and literature in a final scholarly report.

Braun & Clarke (2019, 2021) distinguished three types of TA approaches 1) coding reliability TA, 2) codebook TA and 3) reflexive TA. This research has considered the reflexive TA of particular interest. Reflexive TA processes contemplate a qualitative paradigm's values and a profound reflection on data (Braun & Clarke, 2019). The data can grow, expand, separate into several codes, or be abandoned if needed (Braun & Clarke, 2021). The analysis process is essential to "grow and unfold" with the data, stay on the move and reflect in every step: *'codes are conceptual tools in the developing analysis and should not be reified into ontologically real things'* (Braun & Clarke, 2021 p.207).

Different strategies and stages were adopted during the analysis. During the first stage, interviews and surveys were analysed read, and re-read the transcriptions and, responses, and noted preliminary ideas. Subsequently, it was formulated initial codes. Coding entails systematically identifying essential aspects of data and then organising the dataset (Scharp & Sanders, 2018). Next, it summarised all initial codes into emerging themes before organising all data related to the specific theme. Finally, preliminary themes and subthemes were generated after collecting all the important ones. According to Scharp & Sanders (2018), examining themes involves determining whether the themes work in connection to the coded achieves and the dataset. The core of identifying and naming themes is defining what each theme reflects.

Afterwards, it was represented the reviewed themes through a thematic mind map. During the procedure, the words in prominence were checked in surveys and interviews, defying "words and mind maps" and clarifying the complexity of the speeches and themes.

Nvivo 12 (Richards,1999; Welsh, 2002) has been employed for the data analysis. The reliability and validity of the coding process through this qualitative analysis software have been defined and described by Hafeez-Baig, Raj, & Chakraborty (2016) and Siccama (2008).

2.15 Mind Map and Word Cloud

Through NVivo, a mind map and a word cloud were developed. It can be observed in figure 2 that a word cloud based on all participants' responses suggests that GAIN, Police, Sharing Partners, Agencies, Information, and Intelligence were the most used words. These words, jointly with ideas expressed by the participants, suggest that the fight crime support and investigations depend on the acceptance of collaboration and the Network's contribution.

Figure 2 Word Cloud Summary of the Qualitative Data obtained from Interviews and Surveys

In addition to the word cloud, the findings' themes were summarised inside a figurative map (figure 3). A mind map is mainly used to elaborate ideas, visualising the interpretations (Karim et al., 2020), enabling more opportunities for innovative relations (Kokotovich, 2008). It is an excellent system for collecting, generating, and organising concepts by associating keywords and phrases. It helps to visualise and clarify a research topic, among other things. According to Fearnley (2022), mind maps offer the researcher an incredible mnemonic technique, providing quick recollection of the information and items analysed. There are numerous advantages to using mind maps to summarise ideas. Transcribing with a mind map encourages creative thinking between themes and facilitates a combination of similar themes and patterns (Kachel & Jennings 2020). From a perspective on the themes described, the map seeks to review the focal points of the data collected, generated by combining codes on the environment, position, employment, and organisation, including the "shape" of the agency (mechanisms of the Network and the Hub). The GAIN is the focal point from which everything branches off, touching the fundamental themes with its specifications and descriptions. Therefore, we can find structure, partnership

management, benefits and disadvantages, challenges, information sharing and future & development. The graph allows us to have a broad view of the case study.
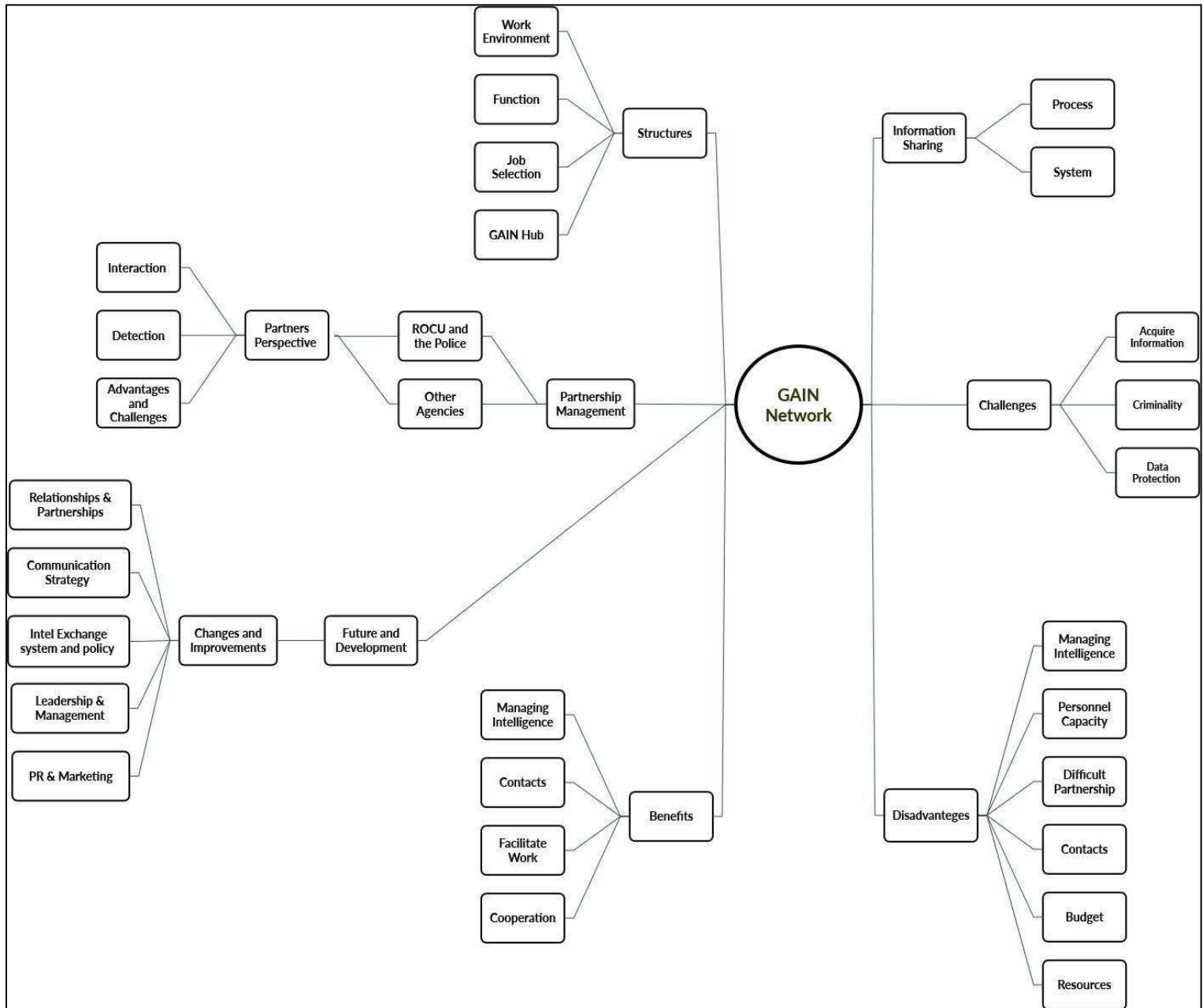
Figure 3 Mind Map Themes Summary of the Qualitative Data obtained from Interviews and Surveys

2.16 Summary of the Methodology

This chapter identified the methodology specifically used to complete the research. The epistemological and theoretical foundations were laid to understand the most appropriate approach to conduct the research method. The research design utilised a TA reflexive approach through a case study to identify themes derived from the participants' experiences about the employment of GAIN through the sharing and acquisition of information, collaboration with

different agencies, and whether there were benefits or disadvantages to utilising it. A qualitative approach is appropriate for the proposed study to understand participants and their experiences concerning the work system's effectiveness or inadequacies within GAIN and the relationship with OC combat. GAIN provided eleven participants between coordinators and researchers from the Network and the Hub, necessary to understand the structure and organisation of the Network. The rest of the participants were identified as subjects of interest as they had the opportunity to work closely with GAIN and thus were able to give their views on the organisation. The data collection strategy selected to respond to the research question was initially considered exclusively individual semi-structured interviews. These interviews would have allowed more in-depth information on experiences and opinions related to GAIN to be presented. However, due to the ongoing pandemic problems between 2020 and 2021, it was revised by modifying a combination of online interviews and surveys.

In conclusion, thematic analysis was employed to ascertain the patterns emerging from the data collection. The data gathered from online interviews and surveys were organised, coded, and determined into themes. Nvivo was the qualitative analysis software utilised to identify themes based on the codes and create a word cloud and a mind map.

The next chapter focus on the literature review concerning the historical evolution of policing in the UK and the process of globalisation that has resulted in changes to fighting crime and the creation of new organisations and supports. Furthermore, arguments about trust, communication, collaboration, ingroup and outgroup have been explored.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

The following chapter will explore what was initially introduced in the conceptual framework. In the circular pattern, it was noted how society reacted to the advent of crime by creating and establishing the forces capable of encompassing, preventing, stopping, and fighting crime. In order to understand, therefore, how the concept of collaboration within law enforcement has evolved, firstly, the project must lay the foundations to begin; thus, it is appropriate to introduce historical sights on fighting crimes and partnerships engagement in the literature. Through various digressions, arguments concerning globalisation, and historical background development of the UK's police and partnership, the section will be essential to understand the establishment of new crime-fighting agencies, to comprehend serious and organised crime and why there is a need to consider the public faith in policing and Intelligence to understand the development and future of security better. A look at crime-related globalisation, the historical evolution that led to the creation of new security apparatus to the present day and understanding what exactly is currently being faced (regarding SOC) is part of the process before getting to discussing the new intelligence systems and new agencies on the ground in the UK such as GAIN. Explaining the historical evolution of crime, police, and community is necessary to understanding context and development, from the origins of the police to the current general structure of the British law enforcement system. It will be critical to consider the legacies that led society to use special forces to combat crime and how it has evolved, explain what new agencies have emerged to counter SOC, discussing parallel policing's cooperation. Following, it is not only the context but also human behaviour within the collaborations that matters. For partnerships to succeed, it is imperative to realise the bond that binds them together. Trust and communication will be explored to gain an insight into their 'role' in various collaborative organisations and what is involved in organisations that deploy and share intelligence.

3.2 Globalisation and crime: a game-changer for the development of security and policing

Globalisation is a peculiar interconnection encompassing multiple realities: culture, economy, legal dimension, politics, and religion (de Sousa Santos, 2006). It connects people worldwide and, at the same time, enhances social lives and creates new opportunities to commit crimes (Findlay, 2008; Folami and Naylor, 2017; Natarajan, 2019). The New Globalisation began

with the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the fall of the Soviet Union (Aguilar-Millan et al., 2008). Briani (2011) and Gill (1998) noted a rapid evolution of the international scenario after the Cold War. Unfortunately, the states failed to deal with the consequences of previous wars, including international terrorism and other crime issues that soon became the main security threats. Globalisation has brought new challenges in the modern era, even for the most stable and advanced societies. Its cultural and social transformations have also brought great insecurity regarding crimes (Hope and Sparks, 2000).

Along with eliminating borders, a new sense of community, and accepting diverse cultures and ethnic groups, globalisation has also revealed another side of the coin. As a result, the inequality between rich and poor has become more evident, as well as cultural and ethnic hostility, civil wars, migrations, environmental crime, international organised crime, and terrorism (de Sousa Santos, 2006). Numerous factors have influenced the development of crime. It has been noted the increase and pace with which crime has developed, for example, in England and Wales since the 1950s (Newburn and Morgan, 1998).

Contemporary societies are coping with new forms of global threats confronting a new and different nature of globalisation (Aas, 2007). As a result, we have seen an exponential increase in transnational crime. The term encompasses offences committed in more than one state and those that may occur in one state but are planned or controlled in another (UNDOC, 2019). Transnational crime has been one of the significant consequences of globalisation due to changing borders and marginalised individuals who struggle to adapt to globalisation (Wonders, 2007).

Therefore, the evolution of these crimes is gradually worrying every institution (Gagliardi, 2012). Harfield (2008b) stated that the geography and resource realities of policing OC in the local community and transnational trafficking focus on a police service structured primarily around minor shire-based forces is not well adapted to handling the challenge. With crime rising and its constant evolution, fear has also increased in the community. As Bauman argued (1999), fear has always been part of human beings. In the past, the strategies implemented to make fear more bearable have shifted attention from things that could not be controlled to those that could be intervened. If we follow this pattern, it can be observed that crime and its fear have led to increased social problems, *ergo* to a subsequent regulation (McConville and Shepherd,1992). The community tormented by insecurity and fear constantly pursues protection through security measures and order policy (Ceretti and Cornelli, 2018). Modern Man desires security to be guaranteed in daily life, slave to the uncertainty generated by society, which corresponds to a request for protection, and establishing stable relationships with partners increase as social insecurity rises (Yamagishi, Cook, and Watabe, 1998). Castel (2011) identifies this response in the

police officers' omnipresence in the context of public safety. It is almost implied that police and justice institutions can provide a sense of stability, security and justice based on valuable trust determined by the condition of late modernity (Bradford et al., 2017). However, nowadays, the community, according to Abbott, has a considerably higher expectation of a rapid reaction, while the police force is dealing with rising demand, growing pressure, policing complexities and limited capabilities. A police officer must now cope with a broader spectrum of criminal behaviour and far more complex criminal justice standards (Johnstone, 2004).

This original algorithm of trust is suggested (figure 4), analysing post-modern society in a context that takes the community, police work, and fear of crime as a reference. With this algorithm, it is possible to relate what Bradford et al. (2007), Yamagishi, Cook, and Watabe (1998), and Castel (2011) have previously explored, attempting to understand a connection to the community's request for protection in the context of modern globalisation in response to emerging crimes. With the evolution of crime and the insecurity provided by society no longer stable, a sense of uncertainty and fear is generated. This leads to a request for systems that can compensate for deficiencies by giving confidence in the justice system. Hence, naturally, either this trust is repaid and thus a cooperative relationship between communities is formed, or it transpires that the expectation is not fulfilled, starting the cycle all over again.
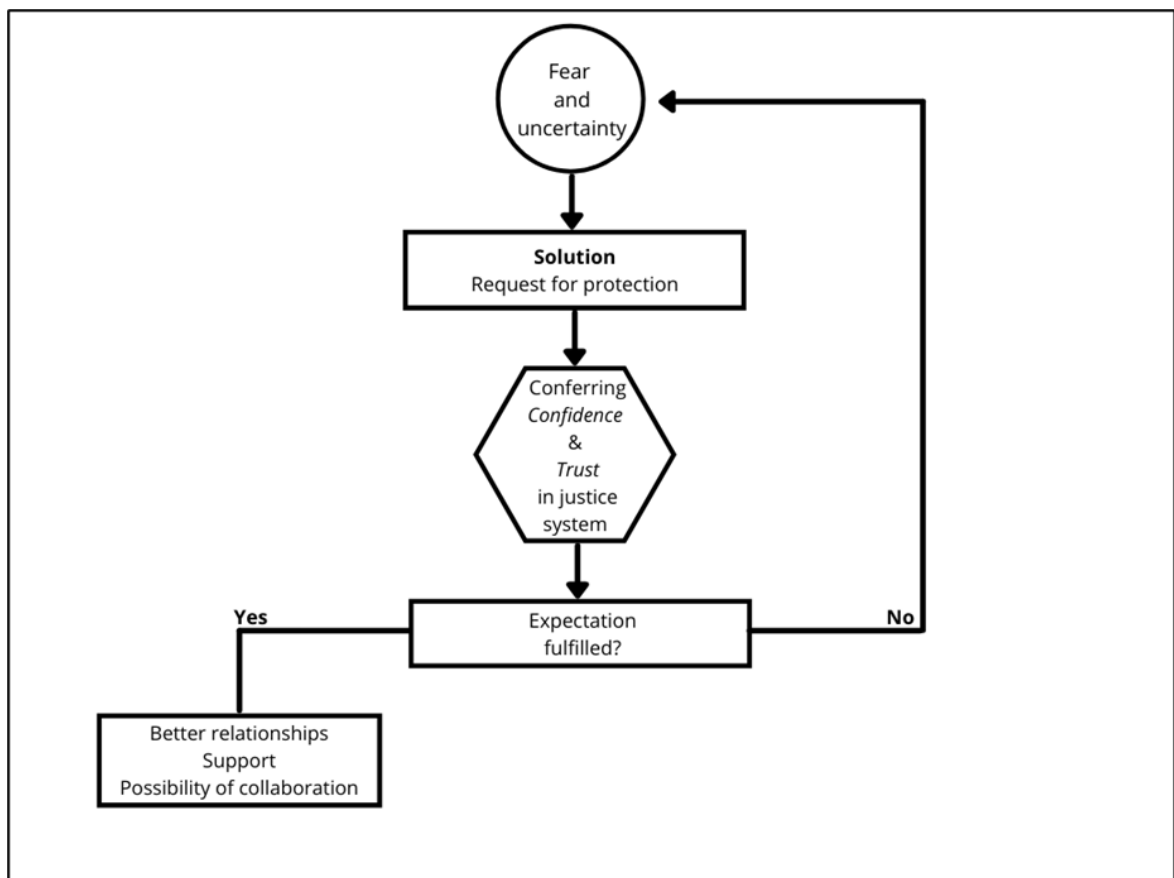
Figure 4. Original algorithm of trust derived by critical literature analysis of community, police work, and fear of crime.

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Crime is a response to the evolution of society itself, and it *'tends towards a unity commensurate with globalisation, while addressing the marginalisation which challenges that unity'* (Findlay, 1999 p.223). However, the expansion of cities brings divergent complications. In the past, economic activity expansion was correlated to villages' and cities' evolution (Rawlings, 2008); thereupon, the effect was the gain of a watch system desired by the local elite. Hence, this change significantly affected the watch system's reforms precisely because of the fear that criminals would migrate from supervised areas to poorly surveillance and police inspection.

History teaches us a need to change and evolve to face new challenges. In the UK, during the course of history, there have been several developments relating to law enforcement and security as crime and population increased, technology advanced, and political changes occurred.

The introduction of modern policing in Northern England resulted from a consensus among the wealthy classes to establish a professional and bureaucratically organised urban disciplinary force and introduce it into working-class communities (Storch & Engels, 1975). This new police mission was derived from social changes and the rupture of class relationships at the beginning of the 19th century. However, it would be appropriate to explain in further detail the reason for the creation of the police (specifically, police in the UK) and how it is connected to the advancement of cities, population, technology, and class differences.

Since the Middle Ages, societies have given over authority for crime prevention and detection to bodies of people identified as watchmen, sheriffs, constables or (latterly ') police.

Originally crime investigation was the community's responsibility and the victim's relatives (Rawlings, 2008). In Saxon times, mutual aid was provided through the 'Frankpledge'; With tythings, a unit formed by the neighbourhood association and supervised by a "hundredman" who was accountable to the "shire reeve" or sheriff' (Rowe, 2008 p.25), there established responsibility to the law (Joyce, 2011; Pollard, 2004) and a sharing of responsibility among the members of each tithing (Mortimer, 2009). Furthermore, the growth of towns and cities increased crimes. Robberies, thefts, and homicides were ordinary and taking care of these issues was a real challenge for the Crown. During Edward I's reign, the Statute of Winchester (1285) stipulated (*inter alia*) that city gates would be closed at sunset and reopened at dawn and that watchmen should protect citizens. The idea was to prevent criminal activity by controlling strangers entering the town after dusk (Mortimer, 2009; Summerson, 1992). It also provided a new system of policing called constables. The responsibilities were to assist the night watch and oversee day policing, the watch and ward system (Joyce, 2011). The Statute of Winchester and the formation of Tithings were innovative approaches to modernise the English system of Law Enforcement (Summerson, 1979; Summerson, 1992).

Overall, between 1740 and 1850, England was distinguished by *'self-policing, community engagement in street patrols, and the private sector provided many policing services: all features of twenty-first-century police reform'* (Rowe 2008, p.25). In the Eighteen century, the metropolis in England counted 670,000 inhabitants, and the number increased to one million people in the Nineteen century in London. However, this new globalisation brought prosperity and various crime and disorder problems (Emsley, 2014). During the 18th, the law was administrated through constables, superintended by magistrates. Generally, their duties, such as inspection of alehouses and night watch, were added along with law and order (Joyce, 2011). Nevertheless, this organisation could not handle contemporary crime raising and law disorders. Low light and dirt on the streets, crime and disorder in the 18th century were the most severe problems to face (Reynolds in Miller, 1999). Some parishes established specialised night- watch, stationary watchmen and mobile patrols to resolve these challenges, develop a chain of command, and legitimise work with salary. Thief Takers were established in a brief time, growing during the late eighteenth century. However, this system was not immune to scandals and eventually became a corrupt organisation (Joyce, 2011; Mansley, 2015).

Around the mid-1800s, a new police force appeared, replacing thief-takers called Bow Street Runners. The Bow Street Runners founder, Henry Fielding, had previously defended the Thief Takers, arguing that Thief Takers risked their lives by serving the community and bringing criminals to justice despite all the corruption. Their methods were unorthodox but seemed to have worked. Fielding wanted to replicate the Thief Takers system at his magistrate's office, thus establishing a new permanent law force. However, he realised he needed financial help, and this opportunity presented itself thanks to the funds that the Duke of Newcastle granted him (Mansley, 2015). After the Austrian succession war, the population experienced an increase in violent crimes, and in 1753, the Duke of Newcastle requested Henry Fielding to try an original approach to fighting crimes (Beattie, 2012; Mansley, 2015). Fielding requested £200 to employ and recompense small officer corps and clerk employees (Mansley, 2015). The idea was to hire former constables as first officers to provide a distinctive quality and distinguish them from thief-takers. This strategy seemed to work for this reliable group of experienced investigators, with an attachment to justice and pay checks and earned reports as secure law enforcers. Despite their methods, runners' work as detectives was a satisfactory police work element, enough to serve as a model for creating the Scotland Yard detectives' group later in 1878 (Mansley, 2015). Therefore, it seems that this system worked sufficiently and resulted in rewarding the results. However, the old system was inadequate and defective now that London, in the mid-19th century, was expanding into a metropolitan city (Reynolds, 1998; Miller, 1999). Subsequently, an increase in disorder and

crime brought gains and expectations to improve the police (Reynolds, 1998). However, industrialisation and urbanisation accelerated crime problems (Rowe, 2008), such as public disorder, public drunkenness, and prostitution, to the great concern of the propertied classes (those with the most to lose from the negative impacts of industrialisation and urbanisation). Their lobbying resulted from the creation of 'the new police' under the Metropolitan Police Act's authority in 1829. Sir Robert Peel Sir reformed the police system with his (so-called) Bobbies after a long opposition by persistent local resistance (Reynolds, 1998; Miller, 1999). Peel's promises (Mansely, 2015) regarding Metropolitan Police referred to greater police control and high order in the city, protecting private property and better surveillance. This new, organised and centrally-controlled force was an anathema to many because it *'offended against a tradition which held that social control should be a private, local and voluntary matter'* (Ignatieff, 1979, p.25). In the 1850s, a nationally uniform policing system was founded across England and Wales (Rowe, 2008). Public order (which previously belonged to the Bow Street's runners, the night watch, the parish constabulary, and the army after 1919) was replaced with the regional police force with Peel's public police force (Mansley, 2015), which today results in totals 43 forces.

The purpose of this brief excursus is to illustrate how even during historical epochs, and particular reference is made to the UK, governments and societies have adapted to new forms of crime and methods of fighting them as a response to increasing populations and territories. Considering insecurity and environmental situations that characterise late modern societies, policing, along with many other institutions, has undergone rapid transformation in recent years, with abrupt shifts between distinct paradigms of how to react to violence and crime (Maguire & John, 2006).

As has been observed, the advent of an ever moving and more global society has thus brought about the development of several types of crime and degradation over time, and in contrast, have arisen new methods of countering crime that has gradually led to the creation of new bodies and agencies. Nowadays, the same is also happening.

The increment in population and industrialisation contributed to creating a new pattern of crimes, and the very idea of the crime itself has changed as a repercussion. Many forms of crimes (i.e., human trafficking, arms and smuggling, frauds, counterfeiting, illegal dumping) have increased because of global trade (Natarajan, 2019); international smuggling and transnational illegal activities are related to transnational social connections (Aguilar-Millan et al., 2008; Kleemans & Van Koppen, 2020) and to fight these threats, new government and law enforcement bodies and other agencies are established.

It could be suggested that the supremacy of intelligence-led police is challenged by various other important police initiatives indicating a desire to react towards other challenging features of late modern societies. Particularly notable, encompassing assurances and neighbourhood policing and several efforts to increase investigatory efficiency in connection to crime (Maguire & John, 2006). However, it has been established that the primary ideas of the police, mostly one police officer monitoring a single area to discourage and identify crime, seem no longer the reality (Andrews, 2022). Policing was intended to be more visible and responsive, with every citizen knowing who their local officer was and how to approach them (Macvean, 2008), but this approach has dropped dramatically nowadays. There are clear indications that the government is reconsidering local crime management, even as it maintains the performance-oriented strategy that permeates the National Policing Plan (Hope, 2005).

Counterterrorism, for example, is a significant challenge to face within our society. The National Counter Terrorism Security Office (NaCTSO) has been instituted on UK soil, a special police unit of The National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC). NaCTSO supports a network of 190 counter-terrorism security advisors (CTSAs) who operate within local police forces. They offer assistance, information and guidance on security regarding terrorism threats to government and industry (United Kingdom Government, 2018). This example shows even more clearly that police forces are no longer enough to counter more severe threats. Moreover, modern technology's advent and development bring unfamiliar types of crimes (i.e., cybercrime).As society becomes increasingly connected and global in vision, Organised Crime has grown more integrated and globally engaged as never before (Europol, 2017). Organised Crime is one globalisation-related element that has brought uncertainty and insecurity to society, leading to security forces deploying to counter it.

Organised crime has always been part of society, but recently, every nation has realised a need for an active collaboration to achieve results (UNDOC, 2010). Serious and organised crime has become one of modernity's most significant concerns, affecting society with economic and social consequences (Kastanidou, 2007). The detrimental effect on communities due to anti-social behaviour associated with organised crime and the fear it provokes becomes hard to assess (Bowling & Ross, 2006). Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) mirror the communities, cultures, and ideologies they come from (Europol, 2017). However, there seems to be no precise identification in explaining organised crime. An attempt is made to give the best characterisation of crime and criminals through specific attributes, but no standard definition agreement has been found, even though it is commonly used to represent a group of people

that act jointly on a long-term basis to perpetrate crimes for profit (Levi, 1998). For example, Van Duyne (1996) affirm that some theories state the violent nature of this type of crime, although others emphasise secret groups such as the Mafia or the Yakuza (Galeotti, 2005; Mallory, 2011). Van Duyne (1996) synthesises an 'us vs them' perspective on criminological articles and policy documents, organised criminality versus others.

This type of representation is not that distant from what so often occurs more generally when we assign to the other the role of 'outsider' to our conception of normality (Cohen, 1977).

The German Bundeskriminalamt (the Federal Criminal Police Office of Germany) describes the organised crime in the aspect of trade (Küster, 1991 cited in Van Duyne), where it is specified that organised crime is a deliberate violation of the law for the profit or to obtain power. These offences, it is specified, are of high relevance and are committed by two or more perpetrators working together as part of a division of labour over a long or indefinite period of time through the use of commercial or similar structures; violence or other intimidation; or influence over politics, media, government, justice and the economy. Van Der Heijden (1996) summarises the identification of the 11 main points that characterise Organised Crime, noting that in order for a crime or criminal group to be categorised as organised crime, at minimum, six of the listed features have to be in place (three of them must include 1, 5 and 11):

1. A partnership of more than two people
2. Each of them, with their assignment
3. for an extended or undefined timeframe
4. employing a particular form of discipline and control
5. alleged to have committed serious criminal offences
6. able to operate on a global scale
7. employing violence or other intimidating methods
8. employing commercial or entrepreneurial structures
9. conducting financial laundering operations
10. exercising influences on politics, the media, public administration, legal authorities, or the economy
11. motivated by pursuing profit and/or power.

However, it must be emphasised that this identification takes place for a specific reason. After two meetings were held in Paris and The Hague to develop an evaluation mechanism

regarding serious and organised crime, a strategic plan was approved in December 1994 (ibid). A consensus was reached on a list of eleven characteristics of organised criminal groups registered by the police authorities. This list was to be used as a selection tool. The agreement was obtained on a list of eleven characteristics of organised criminal groups recorded by the Police Force. The purpose of this list was to be used as a selection tool. Moreover, even though the description does not adequately describe the dynamic and flexible nature of today's organised criminal networks, the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime has established an international agreement concept of an organised criminal organisation since 2000. A terminology also accepted in the EU's Council Framework Decision 2008/841/JHA of 24 October 2008 on the battle against organised crime and continuing to represent law enforcement agencies' global understanding of organised crime (Europol, 2017). The definition of the term OG described in the Europol (2017, p.13) document is *'a group of three or more persons existing over a period of time acting in concert with the aim of committing crimes for financial or material benefit.'* However, according to Wall et al. (2015, p.19), the ambiguity of such wide definitions of organised crime has been criticised by Calderoni, 2008, for example, or Finckenauer, 2005; Hagan, 2006; Maltz, 1996, even though they allowed for the inclusion of a wide range of criminal organisations in the research, as well as the consideration of variances between European nations.

Understanding and tackling organised crime is one of the core areas on which part of the police's work is concentrated nowadays. Currently, the police have to operate at a national, regional, and local level, dealing with illegal activities in various areas, ranging from cybercrime to local crime and organised crime activities. Thus, some of the gaps created in the investigative environment are being filled through the external support involved in the transformation of policing in England and Wales (Gilmour, 2008). This also meant developing definitions and operational methodologies that could assist in analysing and mapping organised crime. However, seven areas of policing in the UK, dubbed "protective services," along with SOC, have been recognised to be beyond the capability of local police forces to implement effectively. In addition, beyond the metropolitan areas, a significant percentage of local law enforcement agencies lack the resources to investigate organised crime (Harfield, 2008b).

If the action is connected to society and influenced by it (D'Andrea, 2010), the reaction to a globalised world leads us to consider further opportunities to combat crime. Questioning social changes as the primary security breach issue is crucial to promoting policing collaboration. Each country develops its solution to an anti-crime centre. The diversity can clarify these differences in the country's traditions, law, intelligence, legislation, security, history, and culture. It would be worth noticing that the government's reaction to fighting it is also rapid with crime's evolution.

However, if criminals employ multiple measures and technologies and travel from one place to another, law enforcement agencies must cooperate with multiple responses. Therefore, cooperation between various countries' intel agencies must evolve and expand (Zivanovic, 2008). Overseas, exemplar cooperation may be observed with Europol. The latter is a crime intelligence organisation, and it assists the police with the authorities of the organs forces in fighting serious forms of organised crime even if, like Interpol, it is not directly involved in police operations (Stenning & Shearing, 2012). Europol assists law enforcement organisations all over the EU, encompassing the capacity to set up Joint Investigation Teams (JITS), including organising the exchange of information through the Secure Information Exchange Network Application (SIENA) and the Europol Information System (EIS) (Hadfield et al., 2022). According to Abbott: *'from a law enforcement perspective, things like the European arrest warrant, the speeding up of mutual legal assistance generally and mutual recognition of other countries' decisions are all moves in the right direction. The setting up of Europol is a good thing too'* (Johnstone, 2004 p.411). This international police organisation was founded by the EU's international governing authority, relying on and representing a police culture developed at the European and global scales. Europol trusts cooperate with specialist police forces within and outside of Europe and with non-governmentally formed international police institutions such as the Counter-Terrorism Group and the Police Chiefs Operational Task Force (Deflam, 2006). Interpol was founded as an institution of police agencies, and it quickly became the core intergovernmental body for facilitating international police cooperation, symbolising a transition in policing transnational crime from unilateral to plurilateral approaches (Gerspacher, 2008).

The UK, like other countries, often finds itself cooperating with other law enforcement agencies on certain cross-border cases. The functioning of these collaborations is also information-based involving intelligence sharing. However, the core assumption of the National Intelligence Model (NIM), the ideology of intelligence-led police regarding the organisational system that effectively addresses and designates responsibility for investigating and disrupting organised crime, has been duplicated in the European Criminal Intelligence Model (ECIM), a different option for a centralised of activity via Europol and Eurojust (Harfield, 2008a).

The system for exchanging and sharing information between law enforcement agencies in the EU today, as previously stated, is the Secure Information Exchange Network Application (SIENA). The SIENA is a framework introduced on the first of July 2009 and was developed to address the communication requirements of EU law enforcement (Europol, 2021). However, it was not until 2010 that several countries began to use it, including EU law enforcement agencies and partners in collaboration, such as the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF), Eurojust, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex), Interpol, countries outside the EU (Australia, Canada, Norway, Switzerland, and the United States). This platform allows for sharing of crime-

related information among the Member States, liaison officers, analysts, and experts from Europol and third parties. One of the SIENA improvements Europol anticipated includes expanding the system to regional initiatives and further developing the information management architecture by adopting new technological advances as they become available. Access to SIENA has recently been granted to highly specialised law-enforcement units and programmes. For example, forty-nine counter-terrorism authorities were linked to a specialized SIENA counter-terrorism environment at the start of 2020. Indeed, a device in SIENA allowed it to manage restricted content on counterterrorism. The counter-terrorism units associated with the platform improved information and intelligence sharing in this area.

As Brexit occurred, there have been some changes in regulations and agreements between the UK and Europe. In December 2020, the European Union, Euratom, and the United Kingdom signed and agreed to establish regulations between the United Kingdom and Europe: the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) (Council of the EU, 2020). Between the arrangements reached, the TCA also acknowledges the importance of close collaboration between the national police and legal institutions by defining a framework for criminal and civil law enforcement and legal cooperation, particularly in combating and pursuing transnational crime and terrorism (European Commission, 2023). Indeed, "Part Three" of the TCA document establishes the conditions for UK-EU cooperation in the post-Brexit scenery, outlining the arrangements for exchanging information, extradition procedures, and accessibility to EU law enforcement institutions (Hadfield et al., 2022). The TCA preserves and allows an important part of the existing collaboration networks regarding, for example, Europol and criminal data information, Prüm network, the automatic exchange of DNA, fingerprint, and vehicle registration data, and the access to Passenger Name Records (PNR) (Arnell et al., 2021; Hadfield et al., 2022). The Prüm Framework is one of the most important tools for law enforcement agencies to work together to combat cross-border crime (Migration and Home Affair, 2020) and was created to offer methods and facilities for collaboration in OC, countering terrorism, and illegal immigration by sharing DNA, fingerprints, and PNR. The Prüm network accelerates the collection of information and improves criminal detection, notably in the case of organised crime and terrorism although it continues to raise challenges of technological, ethical, legal and scientific type and socio-economic concerns (Sallavaci, 2018).

However, the European Union Security and Justice Sub-Committee's report "*Beyond Brexit: policing, law enforcement, and security*" published in March 2021, highlighted that the UK cease to be granted access to the Schengen Information System (SIS II), which was used by UK law enforcement agencies prior to Brexit for gathering real-time data on criminals, missing persons,

and matters of interest (UK Parliament, 2021). Through the several amendments, the loss of SIS II emerges to be the most significant (Arnell et al., 2021). The former report discovered that the Interpol I-24/7 database (which these agencies will utilise instead), does not at present supply with the same information at the same pace. It also emphasise the possible vulnerability of Part Three agreements, saying that the agreement might be suspended or ended if the UK does not observe with EU data protection legislation changes, or if the UK infringes rights in the use of personal data (UK Parliament, 2021). It is critical for criminal justice specialists to assist in the effective execution and successive enhancement of Part Three cooperation (Wilson, 2021).

However, despite the challenges raised by Brexit and the new arrangements this did not seem to affect the cooperation between law enforcement agencies in the UK and those in Europe, which continue to be active. The NCA and Europol, in September 2021, agreed to a new collaboration agreement for which Lynne Owens, Director General of the National Crime Agency at the time, clarified that the agreement with EUROPOL supports the NCA ongoing efforts to combat the whole spectrum of criminality challenges affecting the United Kingdom and Europe and the TCA, along with the agreement with EUROPOL, emphasise the magnitude of the NCA's role in defending the UK from SOC (NCA, 2021).

International collaboration is able to give advantageous outcomes and Europol seems to have a unique role in this contest because it relies on cooperation. Consider the DisrupTor operation's example (identifying and arresting sellers and buyers of illicit goods on the dark web). The judicial and law enforcement authorities of Austria, Australia, Canada, Cyprus, Germany, Netherlands, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the US have coordinated and completed this operation. Edvardas Šileris [Head of Europol's European Cybercrime Centre (EC3)] believes that Law enforcement is most effective when operating together (Europol, 2020b). Another valuable collaboration example (Europol,2019a; 2019b) is with the identification of the victims of child sexual abuse thanks to the Victim Identification Taskforce 7 (VIDTF 7), considering a partnership of 21 countries with 30 law enforcement experts and Interpol with the support of the Europol's European Cybercrime Centre (EC3). Furthermore, we could mention the operation (Europol,2020c; Eurojust, 2020) to arrest a group of criminals for smuggling migrants across the English Channel due to law enforcement cooperation from Belgium, France, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom Eurojust and Europol assisted. Along with these examples, it might be worth citing a new grant scheme launched by Europol in July 2020 to coordinate operational activities against serious and organised crime in the EU (Europol, 2020a). Abbott believed that to combat worldwide organised crime and terrorist activity, it must step beyond cooperation and into partnership, proceeding into coordination (Johnstone, 2004). According to Deflem (2006),

international terrorism will continue to motivate police and security agencies in the EU and worldwide to work together. Operating together and exchanging knowledge are natural human behaviours. However, current international methods and protocols are prolonged. Moreover, factors like reciprocal legal services, laws, and varied needs in other countries complicate law enforcement tasks (Johnstone, 2004).

International intel agency collaboration helps to combat transnational crime. This requires an expansion in scale and scope for collaboration between different countries, for example, making considerable progress in international intelligence organisations' cooperation (Zivanovic, 2008). There is certainly progress in Europe, trying to fight current crime. Let us take the example of the National Victim Identification Taskforce workshop at the Criminal Police Central Directorate in Italy (Europol, 2019). Though, the differences and correlation in international law enforcement cooperation and legal support, capacity, proficiency, and condition may compel innovative partnerships outside the EU (Harfield,2008b). The most significant impediment to greater collaboration is the goodwill (Zivanovic, 2008) that can be overcome thanks to the desire to stop and tackle rampant crime, expanding their conception of the national interest and persuading them of the relevance of international intelligence collaboration. According to Zivanovic (ibid), reinforcing established facilities or creating new ones with reinforced mandates to coordinate and lead intelligence work would facilitate efforts and enhance the performance of intelligence activities.

The international cases explored lead us to understand how important experience and collaboration are and the possibility of facing together a common threat. This agreement for innovation (changes and fears that we cannot defy alone) means that we should no longer be anchored to the traditional past when it comes to fighting, preventing, and stopping crime but act according to society's evolution.

The more progress in technology and society, the more difficult it is to keep everything under control, as has been done in the past. In certain aspects, according to Sheptycki (2007), the established transnational policing capabilities have been unable to react to the criminological outcomes of globalisation. Therefore, there is a severe need for new bodies to help the police with their enquiries, but above all, different perspectives and approaches to a vast worldwide problem. Now, the new globalisation leads us to improve security and intelligence organisations. However, it is undoubtedly naive to maintain the status quo of previous protections (Castel, 2011). Thus, new organs and systems are needed to face and prevent crime, especially SOC. This led to the emergence of governmental and non-governmental agencies and a need for civilians to be introduced into the fight against criminality.

Globalisation incremented opportunities for criminals and crime's international expansion due to an increasing movement of people and communication (Natarajan, 2019). The increase in the population has also led to an evolution of neighbourhood crime within communities. The streets are no longer the centre of most crimes. The public and private police's attention is shifted to other fronts, *and 'the traditional call for "more police on the streets to fight crime" has become increasingly anachronistic'* (Stenning & Shearing, 2012 p.7). As Gill (1998) observes, in the UK, from the 1960s to 1990s, police had to turn from local crime disorders to facing non-local issues (i.e., drugs, immigration), which started to reveal a different point of view to fight, prevent and stop crimes. In response to these transformations, society is trying to use *'new methods, new rationalities and solidarities in responding to these issues'* (Aas, 2007 p.2). This phenomenon suggests, or more specific, cooperation and new crime fighters are required. However, it would be naïve to exclude globalisation's interconnection with crimes because, as observed, there is a striking correlation. However, criminal justice policy, individual agency, and foreign policy in connection to transnational organised crime, according to Harfield (2008b), restrict general agreement and partnerships, denying opportunities for large-scale collaboration and organisation at the global international level, and it may preclude the globalisation of appropriate reaction in aspects of policing organised crime.

Lynne Owens (NCA) explained contemporary crime in the UK (cited in Perry, 2018). The argument about crime mainly concerns *'organised crime, illicit national and transnational networks'* (ibid). Owens argues for a new police model, given the inability of the existing model to respond to contemporary challenges and globalised crimes. Furthermore, she advocates more significant investment in fighting these crimes (Townsend, 2019). Owens' views carry great weight as the head of the country's national detective force and a senior police leader. However, they perhaps also point to the way in which the continuing utility of the police crime control monopoly, is rarely questioned by the institution.
Arguably, the problem is much greater than the police alone can manage.

3.3 The UK's Network - law enforcement and collaborative facilities

Today Regional and National bodies play a critical role in the pyramidic structure. However, they largely have been overlooked in research, particularly the GAIN arrangements, which seem to have been ignored by scholars altogether. According to the literature search, there has been no

independent empirical research into GAIN. Therefore, it is necessary to lay the foundations before undertaking the path that will lead to the definition and description of the agency. Consequently, attention needs to be given to identifying the UK's network.

Police in the twenty-first century have become increasingly complicated (Harfield, 2008a; Macvean, 2008; Sheptycki, 2004). Currently, England's and Wales' police sector includes police constabularies with 43 forces, different organised crime units, and governmental agencies that assist police forces in their inquiries. Law enforcement agencies in the UK work at local, regional, and national levels, as described in Table 1.

Locally	*Regionally*	*Nationally*
The forces work in a limited range of areas to disrupt criminality	Regional Organised Crime Units (ROCUs) employ specialist resources to disrupt complex or cross-boundary crimes	National Crime Agency, HM Revenue & Customs, Immigration Enforcement, Border Force, Civil Nuclear Constabulary

Table 1. UK Law Enforcement Agency Operation

New organisations are now rising to face new threats helping the police. Along with International support (Interpol and Europol), the UK offers several parallel police agencies and special units. An agency, for instance, involved in SOC that is crucial to understanding the role of the GAIN Network is ROCU. Nowadays, it is known that the ROCUs also deal mainly with Serious and Organised Crime together with other organisations. ROCUs are a fundamental part of the policing system that joins the national police, formed by regional police units, and are the primary connection between the National Crime Agency (NCA) and police forces in England and Wales. This organ, counting 10 ROCUs, includes specialist policing forces with 14 core specialist capabilities (Home Office, 2018a) and focuses on Serious and Organised Crime Strategy (despite dealing with other forms of crime, e.g., homicide and kidnap) across England and Wales (HMIC, 2015; James, 2016). ROCUs cooperation is provided regionally but available to all police forces through an established tasking system (Home Office, 2018a). As indicated in the report, the specialist's abilities include 'undercover policing, specialist surveillance, and cyber-crime investigation' (HMIC, 2015 p.4) and having access to an extensive range of Intelligence, using local and regional information to locate organised crime groups.

In addition, representatives of HMRC (Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs), UKBF (United Kingdom Border Force), NCA and GAIN are incorporated within ROCUs (James, 2016). The 10 ROCUs in England and Wales are North Est (NERSOU), Yorkshire and Humber (YHROCU), Northwest (NWROCU), Southern Wales (TARIAN), West Midlands (ROCUWM), East Midlands (EMSOU), Eastern (ERSOU), Southwest (SWROCU), London and Southeast (SEROCU). ROCUs differ

in size, structure, and competence despite providing equal services across the regions. For example, EMSOU appeared to be the most successful, advanced, and developed of the 10 ROCUs in 2015 (although the HMIC observed an evolution in the rest of the others) and, together with SEROCU, offered 13 ROCU capabilities (ibid). Comparatively, NW ROCU (former TITAN) is deemed to be less developed regardless of supporting six police forces and facing every type of threat. Furthermore, Yorkshire and the Humber, West Midlands and London uphold capabilities within constituent forces. ROCUs and their forces reached an agreement: reallocating resources to provide particular functions at a regional level (ibid).

As a result of these collaborations and activities, ROCU operations attained 2,052 disruptions in 2017/18, while their support to partners provided more than 2,675 additional disruptions (Home Office, 2018a). Hence, it is observed that further cooperation and new organs are gaining momentum. It seems that new bodies such as ROCUs have considerable importance.

The government has considered a profitable investment of over £160 million in improving ROCUs' capabilities since 2013 (Home Office, 2018a). Subsequently, in 2017 the Home Office further announced the intention to invest £40 million to improve ROCU capabilities over the next three years. Later, the government decided to invest 2018/19 a further £50 million to enhance ROCU and NCA's digital forensics, intelligence and data-sharing capabilities and guarantee a specialist cybercrime unit in every police force in England in Wales. These political movements should persuade to think about active government involvement in enhancing and augmenting new mechanisms to fight crime.

According to Bowling & Ross (2006), many bodies have overseen various parts of SOC. Precursor bodies such as the National Criminal Intelligence Service (NCIS) and the Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) also prevented and helped to deal with the new challenges of fighting serious and organised crime (National Audit Office, 2019). According to Harfield (2008a), England and Wales at the time demonstrated the challenges involved in policing organised crime within a single jurisdiction. National Criminal Intelligence Service (NCIS) and the National Crime Squad (NCS) both merged into SOCA in 2006 as a result of the Serious Organised Crime and Policing Act 2005 (Newburn and Reiner, 2007, p.939). As a result, SOCA was established at the national and international levels to identify and mitigate the harm caused by organised crime.

However, it is necessary to take a step backwards. NCS was established in 1998 in response to suggestions in the 1995 Home Affairs Committee report on OC, while the NCIS originated under the Home Office as the National Drugs Intelligence Unit and became a discrete body (Bowling & Ross, 2006) and as explained by the former Director General John Abbott (Johnstone, 2004), was

established in 1992.

NCIS was a result of the realisation by senior police, customs and excise officials and civil servants that serious and organised crime was rapidly increasing as a concern in the country (Johnstone, 2004). As a result, NCIS seemed to play a critical role in criminal intelligence. NCIS was responsible for gathering, preserving, transmitting, and analysing intelligence information to identify and report intelligence to national police forces (Bowling & Ross, 2006; GOV.UK, 2022; National Criminal Intelligence Service, 2008). Abbott (Johnstone, 2004) clarified that six years before the interview, there was no yearly strategic assessment of the danger to the UK from serious and organised crime. The former Director General explained that the company has grown over the years in terms of personnel, funding, and effectiveness: '*The one thing that life has taught me is that there is always change'* (Johnstone, 2004 p. 413). According to Sheptycki (2004), NCIS brought together professionals from around 25 agencies in a large-scale interdisciplinary workplace environment. Despite being interdisciplinary and multi-agency, the UK NCIS was big company with hundreds of people operating under a function labour division. However, even at the pinnacle of an intelligence pyramid such as NCIS, information was hard to transmit from across barriers formed by the intelligence labour division, and *'as a consequence, intelligence products are but fricative emanations'* (Sheptycki, 2004 p.320). During the examination of what Sheptycki (2004) called pathologies in Intelligence, he discussed duplication, saying that the latter in the United Kingdom was institutionalised in the different intelligence systems managed by HM Customs & Excise (HMCE) and NCIS. It was applied to the overseas liaison officer network used by both organisations. The remedy to duplication has been pursued in the UK to progress work allocation and collaboration.

The Home Office has dealt with organised immigration criminality, while HMCE has been in charge of investigation and intelligence in the fight against serious drug smuggling. However, this strategy has been replaced with the establishment of SOCA (Bowling & Ross, 2006), which later assumed NCIS responsibilities. SOCA was established in 2006 (Segell, 2007) and merged into the National Crime Agency in 2013. SOCA, an expression of high policing with the legislative role of providing intelligence support to other law enforcement agencies, developed its information and intelligence capability for its features due to the new fundamental idea of organised crime reduction (Harfield, 2008b) formed at the national and international levels to identify and disrupt the dangers posed by organised criminal organisations (Harfield, 2008a).

SOCA aimed to acquire intelligence about organised crime networks operating in the UK. In addition, the organisation employed foreign agencies to discover linkages between criminal gangs in the UK and overseas, with around 120 agents operating as liaison officers in 40 locations

worldwide. The agency began with 4,200 employees. Roughly half operated as criminal detectives, and the other half worked in analysis and intelligence. SOCA was organised into four directorates, each specialising in a particular activity component. Staff from the various directorates needed to collaborate in multidisciplinary teams to address specific threats (Segell,2007). The first directorate was Intelligence, collection, and analysis of information to better understand organised crime. The directorate guaranteed that every action was knowledge-led, focused on set targets, and that SOCA had excellent working partnerships with other agencies, including law enforcement. The other directorate was Enforcement which offered a responsive operational reaction to threats by constructing high-quality criminal cases against threats and OC organisations. The third was Intervention in pursuing criminal assets and collaborating with the private sector. Lastly, there were corporate services in which SOCA's capabilities were supported, facilitated, and developed.

According to Harfield (2008a), the fact that SOCA's abolition was shortly contemplated after its establishment reveals a potential lack of strategic direction, trust, and commitment after identifying a direction, criticism supported by Sproat (2011), who sought to compare the law enforcement activity of SOCA with its predecessor NCS based on additional financial resources provided to the predecessor. Furthermore, according to Sproat, SOCA's comparatively low success in achieving convictions in the United Kingdom highlights fundamental concerns about the politicians and/or professionals who have administered the SOCA.

However, what is most relevant to understand about this organisation is not its rise or collapse as an intelligence agency but rather the role and function it played within law enforcement in the United Kingdom. It is vital to understand that SOCA was oriented toward reacting to Level 3 crime and was in charge of combating organised crime (Gilmour, 2008). Nevertheless, what precisely does this mean?

Law enforcement agencies in the UK seem to operate at three levels. Gilmour (2008) describes the development of the police force in a three-tiered characterisation of its reaction to criminal activity:

Level 1: Local problems that can be controlled inside a Basic Command Unit (BCU) (often crime, criminals, anti-social behaviour, and a need for reassurance).

Level 2: cross-border concerns; organised criminality acts, significant occurrences involving more than one BCU and crossing borders into neighbouring units. This level may also encompass discussions of widespread public concern, even if the initial occurrence is classified as Level 1.

The last one is Level 3: which focuses on Serious and Organised Crime, terrorist acts, or other extreme activities on a national or worldwide scale. This may include significant occurrences, incidents, and other problems of national security concern, which are frequently covered in the mainstream press and can severely weaken trust on a higher level. The police sector's structure, from local units to regional groups and ultimately to the national level, is reflected in levels of criminality in the illegal trade (Sheptycki, 2004).

As illustrated in the division of duties, local police departments are solely concerned with responding to Levels 1 and 2, while SOCA was focused on responding to Level 3 (Gilmour, 2008). The UK has gradually centralised serious and organised crime police, resulting in 2005 (as presented before) with the establishment of SOCA, which was later superseded by NCA (Newburn and Reiner, 2012). According to the authors, this entity will directly report to the Home Secretary. It will have investigation and law enforcement responsibilities similar to those traditionally owned by the police, UK Border Agency, and HM Revenue & Customs (Home Office, 2011 as cited in Newburn and Reiner, 2012).

These three levels of descriptions are also defined by the National Intelligence Model (NIM) (United Nations, 2010). NIM embodies a national endeavour promoting efficient intelligence-led policing and unifying intelligence-related facilities, systems, and services across the police service in England and Wales (John & Maguire, 2004), requiring several capabilities to be established and developed to professionalise and enhance intelligence work addressing relevant threats, from minor to serious crimes (National Centre for Policing Excellence, 2005). According to Kirby & McPherson (2004), NIM is a business strategy that allows police forces to collaborate with a high depth of awareness and considerably helps issue solutions. The NIM offers a system that includes language, standard protocols, operational processes, and defined management and responsibility. Partners are essential and should be seen as a resource throughout all levels of the NIM (Kirby & McPherson, 2004) and provides a framework of business operations for the administration of all types of police priorities (Maguire & John, 2006). According to the NCPE document (2005), the NIM guides risk management, financial and technological resources, commitment to partner agencies, and tactical revisions.

Furthermore, it is described how the NIM aimed to improve intelligence-sharing opportunities between different forces and between local and national police levels, adopted by police forces and other agencies such as the former Serious and Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) and United Kingdom Immigration Services (UKIS), and Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships

(CDRP), attempting to mitigate any barriers to efficiency by generating harmonised procedures and languages and establishing a collaborative working environment. Intelligence-Led Policing (ILP) in the United Kingdom appears to have attained its pinnacle with the NIM (James, 2013). The ideology of intelligence-led police, as expressed in the NIM, is an organisational structure and procedure that aims to manage and allocate responsibility for detecting organised crime and disrupting it to limit the damage (Harfield, 2008a). In order to provide realistic representations of crime and disorder concerns, the ILP model relies on information exchange (Sheptycki, 2004). These data might culminate in an enforcement result or other outcomes, such as a hint on how to avoid potential instances or related situations.

However, according to (Sheptycki, 2004), a factor which complicates the British police sector (and consequently also intelligence and information exchange) is its non-unitary nature being a diverse range of institutions. In the UK, as shown before, many institutes include the police sector, involving the police itself (Sheptycki, 2004), divided into 43 forces in England and Wales, 8 in Scotland and 1 in Northern Ireland. Furthermore, the British Transport Police, the Ministry of Defence Police, the UK Atomic Energy Authority Police (replaced by Civil Nuclear Constabulary in 2005), former NCIS and NCS combined into SOCA and subsequently incorporated into the NCA in 2013, as observed earlier. Moreover, the Serious Fraud Office (SFO), Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HM Revenue and Customs or HMRC formed by the merger of the Inland Revenue and Her Majesty's Customs and Excise in 2005) and the Immigration and Nationality Department (IND) now UK Visas and Immigration. Sheptycki also notes that a myriad of other government agencies in the UK provides and gain information circulating in the intelligence cloud, like the former Benefits Agency, the Revenue Agency, and the Financial Services Authority (FSA), renamed Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) in 2013, for example.

Moreover, it is precisely the intricate system between law enforcement and other agencies in the UK that the collection, elaboration, and diffusion of intelligence is a problem in the multi-agency sharing of criminal data (Sheptycki, 2004). Because every agency acts based on *hierarchical information flows* (Sheptycki, 2004 p. 313), there is not one intelligence pyramid but several. Consequently, this results in difficulties in conducting cross-national comparisons as a considerable discrepancy is encountered. The characteristics identified by Sheptycki are the principle of pyramidal information hierarchy (intelligence flowing upwards) and the multi-agency scenario, which requires information to be moved among or across multiple information structures. This entails a not inconsiderable organisational difficulty. The author identifies 11 pathologies (2004, p. 313) that, according to him, affect the sharing and acquisition of information in a criminalistic environment (mainly connected with references to the contexts of the United

Kingdom) and are 1) *digital divide:* regarding communication and information sharing challenges, also considering that several ICT systems are in place in the policing forces and continue upgrading. Where there is a requirement to manage cross-border or inter-institutional sharing of information, the digital divide can present unusual issues; 2) *linkage blindness*: It alludes to links in crime series that analysts fail to acknowledge due to poor or insufficient data (Sheptycki, 1998 as cited in Sheptycki, 2004). Although a regulation structure exists, horizontal flow in information hierarchies is frequently weak since the most emphasis is on guaranteeing vertical flow; 3) *noise*: The quality of processed data flowing in the intelligence system is called noise. All information is open to interpretation, and intelligence outcomes are a distorted version of the input that may be of questionable quality. The interval between data reporting, recording, and processing appears to be connected to the noise level in an information system. 4) *intelligence overload*; Overloading intelligence systems occurs when information reports are extensive, and analysts are forced to perform additional jobs. For networks to succeed, the danger of information overload must be proactively handled (Whelan, 2015); 5) *non-reporting and non-recording*; From a logistical perspective, collecting intelligence in standardised formats requires time (Ericson, 1981, 1994; Ericson and Haggerty, 1997 cited in Sheptycki, 2004). Non-reporting creates unnecessary *'intelligence gaps*' (p.318), leading to linkage blindness. 6) *intelligence gaps*; Intelligence gaps result from the intelligence system's hierarchy, and in this scenario, the Levels outlined above (Levels 1, 2, and 3 in which law enforcement agencies in the UK operate) come to the fore. The discrepancy is caused by a flaw in the intelligence system and the nature of the set goals; 7) *duplication*; It appears that duplication increases the construction of *'information silos'* (p. 320), resulting in two major issues: resource waste and linkage blindness. When the author reported these pathologies; 8) *institutional friction*; This pathology mentioned by the author illustrates the issues involved with collaborative systems. Like other aspects of inter-agency cooperation, intelligence sharing depends on a collaborative partnership. In broad multifunctional organisations, notions of work vary, resulting in institutional friction within a seemingly cohesive leadership structure. The problems of crossing through administrative barriers are described as institutional friction. The development of combined interdisciplinary teams may be capable of resolving such frictions, although this would rely on the number of these team members. 9) *intelligence-hoarding and information silos*; The latter pathology discussed may arise in a distinct set of pathologies, which the author names *information hoarding* and *information silos.* Information hoarding is characteristic of the widespread policing subcultures in the police force. Hoarding can become an a posteriori rationale for the non-disclosure of important data, which originates from institutional friction and of the inability to report or record knowledge that has

been *hoarded* in the mind of a single individual who considers the job of documenting data twice extremely timewasting. Moreover, information silos are the natural outcome of hierarchical information systems. There is only one way for information to migrate between information silos: upward. Intelligence products may be distributed down the silo or unleashed into the larger digital landscape from the top, although vertical sharing of knowledge affects information distribution at lower levels of the organisational hierarchy. 10) *defensive data concentration*; defensive data concentration typically occurs in reaction to high-profile criminal concerns; analysts may be deprived of the opportunity to gather knowledge regarding lesser-known issues which are not still documented. 11) *the differences of occupational subculture*. The last one described by the author refers to the culture within the intelligence system. This is addressed to those who work in this environment, specifying how analysts are well aware of the problems they encounter in such a working context. The structural concerns (a system designed as a centralised and hierarchically ordered information ecosystem rather than a web), and analysts are well aware of them. Organisational pathologies that are sub culturally correlated are divided into two sub-categories:

- *Intra-agency occupational subcultures* = these concerns emerge within the setting of a specific organisation or agency. A number of the issues encountered are due to an imbalance in the status and prestige of different professional roles.
- *Inter-agency occupational subcultures* = emerge in the background of the multiagency environment that constitutes the entire police sector. Differences in labour environments damage multi-agency collaboration, and there can be a fight for resources and authority amongst institutions under these situations (Blagg et al. 1988, as cited in Sheptycki, 2004).

All these issues enumerated by Sheptycki are relevant to learning how it occurs and the type of challenges that may arise within agencies using information sharing and intelligence analysis. These pathologies are not to be underestimated or ignored because they become part of the intelligence culture that allows the system to become vulnerable and dysfunctional. According to Harfield (2008a), England and Wales provide an example of the difficulties associated with organised criminal policing in a single jurisdiction. The reason why it is worth being familiar with and aware of this problematic background is that an agency such as GAIN, for example, in order to be effective and have benefits on a business level, requires an understanding of these dynamics inside the organisations within the justice and security system in order to fight crime better. New collaborations are forming at the intermediate level (Harfield, 2008a), and to be effective, it must understand both the strengths and weaknesses associated with the system enabling it to function.

Today, UK's Intelligence and Security are involved in tackling serious and organised crime, undermentioned: GAIN, National Ballistics Intelligence Service, Security and intelligence agencies, and National Cyber Security Centre. These systems must be able to function to the best of their ability. In addition, reforms are necessary to adopt a mainly Victoria notion of local policing, delivered locally, into a far from local twenty-first-century policing milieu (Harfield and Kleiven,2008).

3.4 Supplementary Support in Crime-Fighting; Active Citizens

In the beginning, the idea behind this research was to explore a possible civilian investigation and intelligence support helping the Police in tackling SOC and other criminal activities, precisely in England and Wales, and the advantages on employing it. Unfortunately, with the lack of information about this new agency and therefore only with the data collected, it was possible to recognise that GAIN is not exactly a civilian support and yet has a link to the Police as the coordinators are entitled as Police Staff.

The initial inspiration with which this research was commenced was to study a collaboration between civilians and the Police and try to understand if there were any benefits in utilised it. Since it was not possible to state that GAIN is a civilian support, this chapter aim to identify what kind of collaboration are encounter between community and Police.

Hope (2005) reviews some historical events that promoted the local multi-agency partnership idea to fight crime. In the 1980s, a political conflict arose in the UK over democratic police accountability, involving local authorities, mainly large left-controlled cities, within the Labor Party opposite the Conservative central government. With the advent of a local government of policing, the idea that emerged was establishing a local multi-agency partnership (Mclaughlin 2002 and Crawford 1997 as cited in Hope, 2005). The essence of such strategy was predominantly a voluntary, cooperative agreement between partner agencies based on community needs, focusing on local crime problems and prevention measures (Home Office, 1984 and 1990 as cited in Hope, 2005). Throughout, the symbolic crime problem monopoly continued to remain in the hands of the police to create partnerships between the police and the community to enhance the efficiency of the police service by fostering cooperation with the public. The Crime and Disorder Act (CDA) of 1998 introduced significant policy innovations like integrating local government into the local crime control network and placing importance on managing what the government started to call disorder. Sections 5-7 of the CDA 1998 established Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships

(CDRPs) in each Local Authority District by enforcing a collaborative duty on local authorities and the police to design and develop crime prevention tactics in partnership with other assigned agencies and the community. These provisions meant that the central government discarded accountability and ensured an agreement with the police service. According to Hope (2005), the CDA offered different solutions to local crime control, like bringing local authorities and their resources into crime-fighting. As a result, the CDA improved the efficiency of police and their image within the community. The CDA has made it possible to give a share of responsibility to the community, thus offering a different body to assume or share the blame.

As stated by Hope (2005, p.382), communities that generate "*active citizens*" have cohesiveness, mainly the kinds of "*social capital*" that allow volunteer groups to communicate their voice. Social Capital includes a collective heritage of shared norms, beliefs and values, social relations, institutions and trust that encourage participation and joint activity for shared benefits, and can be measured and analysed at individual, collective, and geographic levels (Bhandari & Yasunobu, 2009). According to Coleman (1988), Social Capital is outlined by its function and it's a resource accessible to an actor. The system of relationships between and within actors includes Social Capital. Hence, if the relationship between actors is what determines Social Capital, it is to be considered an active community (as described by Hope mentioned earlier). Hence, if a group of actors come together to alter a status that negatively afflicts the community and through cooperation and cohesion, they work side by side to improve the place where they live, the first glimmers of change are visible. Therefore, change begins not only from the 'will' to change but from active advocacy to actually achieve change, and this, it possible to say, is a 'product' of Social Capital, '*Like other forms of capital, social capital is productive, making possible the achievement of certain ends that in its absence would not be possible*' (Coleman, 1998, S98).

As argued by Putnam (1994), the civic community has a long history with communal republics (such as Florence, Bologna and Genoa), established in the 11th century and networks of organised reciprocity and solidarity, same communities that experience civic participation along with effective administration today. Communities did not become civic merely because they were wealthy, but precisely because they were civic. Financial growth and good administration require social capital which embodies values and relationships of civic involvement. Nevertheless, Putnam (1994) also reminds us that social inequalities may be anchored in social capital; thus, the rules and networks that benefit some groups may impede others, specifically if the norms are socially biased or the networks are socially selective. Therefore, we must remember that acknowledging the relevance of social capital in supporting the community's life is no excuse to not worry about who is on the inside and therefore benefits from social capital, and who is benefits and who is not,

who is inside and who on the outside.

Therefore, it is a sign of an active community that generates interest, is willing to cooperate with law enforcement, and is ready to improve itself, such as volunteers, who seem driven to assist police officers through self-improvement and community beliefs (Pepper & Wolf, 2015).

The civil renovation program has the ability to develop new local governance of crime founded on the notion that citizens and the state are co-producers of public security. Although Hope (2005) adds, some disadvantages may arise, like suffering from high crime rates and a lack of access to the public services required to alleviate their troubles. McConville and Shepherd (1992) debated that there has been a purposeful act to transfer responsibility for crime rendering tackling crime a public obligation instead of an issue that can be left to the disposal of the police. The civic responsibility has again led to a sense of a need on the part of the community to be more active, and this is where the conception of the Neighbourhood Watch was founded. The Neighbourhood Watch symbolised the community's commitment and desire to be active in the fight against crime (McConville and Shepherd, 1992). However, towards the end of the 1970s in England and Wales, there were different motives toward bureaucratic rationalisation of the process of the civilisation of the various tasks traditionally performed only by the police and the implementation of community policing ideals. At the end of the 20th century, to bring communities and police officers, community policing was developed in England and Wales (Emsley, 2007). The growing interest in community policing was a result of circumstance and context. It acknowledged that several police entities had become disconnected from their communities. In the 20th century an example of efficient community and Police collaboration has been discovered by Fink and Sealy (1974). Thanks to the introduction of citizens as receptionists in selected precincts (in New York City) whose role was to greet people coming to the station house, a better understanding of the role of the police had been developed. It was noticed that this program increased the credibility of the police in the neighbourhood. The program included understanding the criminal justice system (function, disabilities, and limitations). According to Fink and Sealy, if citizen participation and inclusion in the criminal justice system are enhanced, the police will be more likely to request and obtain cooperation, encouragement, and support: '*the more the community is involved, the better the relationship is going to be between community and police. The better the relationship, the greater the trust*' (1974, p.48).

Creating a better legislative body that cares about citizens, their well-being, and their safety requires the participation of the community itself.

Today the collaboration between the Police and community in the UK develop in the creation

of *Special Constabulary*, which was established in its current form by the Police Act, 1964. There is a Special Constabulary in every police force in England and Wales. These Specials are part-time voluntary police officers who wear identical (or equivalent) uniforms and equipment as police constable (Britton, Wolf, and Callender, 2018). There is a 'standard employee selection procedure for police officers, with an analogous but briefer procedure for special constables (Wolf, Pepper and Dobrin, 2017). Once hired, special constables are typically trained in conformity with a standard national programme known as 'Initial Learning for Special Constables' (IL4SC). Nonetheless, there are considerable obstacles to the discrepancy and the lack of standard guidelines among police volunteers. Enrolment and training strategies differ significantly across Special Constables forces (Britton, Knight & Maloney, 2016). The community commitment is purely volunteering based on the same powers as public police officers. According to Blunkett (2003b), voluntary and community groups play an essential role in community life by allowing individuals to join in pursuit of a common goal and participate in communal activities. Historically, Specials' duties were limited to uniformed patrol. However, they were often called upon to police special events (ceremonial parades, football matches and the like). Specials are used (in different roles) in various agencies, including the NCA, which values their '*niche expertise and skills that are rarely available within law enforcement'* (NCA, 2019). Special Constables' roles range from different areas of expertise in policing, such as cyber-crime, public security, front-line response, and neighbourhood policing (Wolf, Pepper and Dobrin, 2017).

Nevertheless, it should be recognised that though Specials are volunteers, they are also police, which raises the question of how the extension of their use beyond patrol and their other historic functions should be understood. It seems that even if a fair number of Specials join the police, after their volunteering, a significant number of Special Constables in the years dropped incredibly. When the report was written (Britton, Knight & Maloney, 2016), there were 38,000 volunteers in the UK, which included roughly 16,000 Specials, 8,000 PSVs Police Support Volunteers (PSVs), 11,000 Volunteer Police Cadets, and 3,000 Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner volunteers (OPCC). There have been a few changes with time regarding the number of volunteers. It is underlined that the number of PSVs [a non-mandated and non-uniformed volunteer introduced in England and Wales in the 1990s (Millie, 2019)] increased, although growth has stabilised, while the number of Volunteer Police Cadets increased significantly (Britton, Knight & Maloney, 2016).

The number of Specials seems to have increased compared to 20 years earlier but decreased after the peak in 2012.Unfortunately, this collaboration seems to be failing (England, 2018). The number of volunteers has fallen between 2010 and 2017. In 2012 the number of

Specials in the 43 police forces across England and Wales was 19,159. In 2017, the number went down to 12,601, and according to the Office of National Statistics (2022), the number of special constables has dropped to 9,174 (down 4 per cent) from 9,571 in 2020. It is also worth specifying that the number of volunteers has not only dropped specifically for this category. In the latest 2021/22 report, Clark (2023) shows that the percentage of people claiming to perform voluntary work has been declining since 2013/14 when approximately 70 per cent of the population reported having volunteered. Reflecting on these numbers, the question arises of how to understand the motivation for these statistics. For example, in a study by Smith et al. (2020), the discussion focuses on investigating the volunteer experiences of nine long-term Samaritan volunteers. Being a "*Good Samaritan*" (ibid p. 852), boosts confidence, identity, wellness, and life fulfilment. Volunteer programmes may offer economic benefits while also improving community cohesion, public trust, and organisation openness (Gravelle and Rogers, 2009). However, responses from participants in Smith et al.'s (2020) study indicate that burnout and abandonment from volunteering at Samaritans appear within a relational and social context rather than solely caused by personal factors.

Concerning the Specials and their experience, one of the anonymous interviewees (England, 2018), a former special at Thames Valley Police, revealed that volunteers could not take any initiative, so they did not feel capable of doing their job individually. So instead, the police officer undertook the lead. Moreover, it was not easy for Specials to do their night shifts because of their day jobs. This development is evidence of returning to more traditional policing forms (essentially predating the new police creation). However, these types of active community involvement suggest the latter's interest in fighting crime alongside the police, through the justice system, although engaging in volunteer activity.

Unfortunately, these types of collaborations cannot be based primarily on mere voluntary cooperation. In this case, therefore, it seems that the police retain control over policing and crime-fighting business. If the community does unpaid work for the police without controlling the job even with full power (merely acting as volunteer support and not a full-fledged partnership), it might be interesting to consider a more mutually beneficial labour integration. Establishing mechanisms to enhance special constables' role in local community policing can help police organisations bridge the gap between law enforcement and community members (Dickson, 2021). Initial support for Special Constables should prioritise establishing an enduring professional identity, developing relationships, and creating an atmosphere of belonging (Britton et al., 2022).

An example of the difficulties just discussed can be found from the point of view related to PSV volunteering alongside the police. PSV volunteering has been presented as a way to

encourage civic engagement while providing activities that the police cannot offer (Millie, 2019). According to Lancashire research, individuals who volunteered as PSVs were frequently post-retirement seeking something helpful and entertaining to do. They were motivated to provide a contribution driven by self-motivation and altruism, but the challenges volunteering alongside the police occurred in the same way as argued above regarding the Specials. In addition to being inadequately assigned sufficient tasks or not being properly informed, several volunteers were concerned about receiving police power. Most PSVs considered their position supportive. However, when the police want to improve community-police relations, and volunteers are expected to act as a bridge between the two, such subordination is questioned. Police departments are highly hierarchical, with volunteers at the bottom of the pecking order. There are also other examples of volunteer work conducted in the police environment and its challenges. A study conducted by van Steden and Mehlbaum (2019) revealed that police volunteers in the Netherlands are motivated to contribute to police work and society, but the training, supervision, and management of the police require improvement. Special constables and police support volunteers can perform many duties, but their mutual relationship and place in the police organisation are constantly disputed. This community seems to want to do good for society but experiences uncertainty about its position within the force. Volunteers in Dutch police are undervalued because of slow policy-making processes, unclear vision, and distrust over substituting salaried work for voluntary work.

These voluntary work suggests an appetite for just that kind of development, which indicates that helping the police with their enquiries is necessary but seems essential to have a formal job as policing staff, not just as a volunteer. Perhaps this collaboration between the police and the outsider can only work if established with the police forces, at least for now. However, O'Neill and McCarthy (2014) show that some police officers have learned to embrace collaborative work and have created relationships with colleagues in partner agencies (originally considered outsiders) due to police culture rather than in spite of it.

If with 'specials,' the responsibility comes forward as volunteering; the duty appears otherwise with the Police Community Support Officers (PCSO). PCSO is part of community policing, and this term defines staff whom chief officers select under sec 38 PRA (ACPO,2007).
In the Policing and Crime Act 2017 Factsheet -Police Reform Act (PRA) 2002- Section 38-45, chapter 1, referring to police powers for civilian staff, the Home Office document state:

(1) The chief officer of police of any police force may designate a

relevant employee as either or both of the following—
(a)a community support officer;
(b)a policing support officer.
(1A) The chief officer of police of any police force may designate a
police volunteer as either or both of the following—
(a)a community support volunteer;
(b)a policing support volunteer.

The advent of PCSOs appears to have answered a community call regarding neighbourhood police, considering the service's rising demand generally (ACPO,2007). According to the Office of National Statistics (2022), the number of PCSOs increased since around March 31, 2021, after declining every year since 2010. Recently has been counted 9,284 PCSOs improving 0.4 per cent on the same point in 2020. The government's approach to introducing neighbourhood policing guaranteed that funding and resources were available to create the program at the local level (Macvean, 2008), but it seemed insufficient. The essential role was to contribute to the visible neighbourhood patrol. However, the power provided for this support staff is limited, even dealing with minor crime and disorder issues. The same challenge was noticed by Macvean (2008), according to which the police employ a more significant number of civilians, together with Community Support Officers who patrol the streets but have little authority. The fundamental standpoint is to unify the community and the police forces and connect various agencies. The encouraging feature of PCSO staff is gaining community intelligence (something that is not usually accessible to police officers). If there is increased contact between the police and the community, it is not unrealistic to assume a corresponding increase in intelligence levels. Although neighbourhood policing encourages increased community participation, it also provides intelligence from that engagement (Macvean, 2008), opening the door to collaboration, even if it is subtle and unseen.

PCSOs' role cannot replace a sworn police officer and can be considered a complement rather than a replacement. It is essential to emphasise the words *complement* and *replacement,* in this case, chosen by ACPO. Therefore, it is noted that this new support staff is there to *improve,* not to *substitute* a system. There is an enthusiasm for collaboration and an understanding of the advantages of working collaboratively (Lumsden, 2016) with scholars, utilising specialist research knowledge (Bradley & Nixon, 2009). According to these last two authors, some interesting changes have occurred in constructing positive connections between the police and auxiliary academic institutions over the years. For example, the Tasmanian Institute for Law Enforcement Studies has created a collaboration with the university to undertake police research. Collaborations on this kind of research project ensure that everyone has a voice. The tactical response to police

knowledge needs should come from consistent partnerships between police and universities in Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. It is not an easy journey, but it may bring many advantages.

Cooperation between police and researchers is well suited to commitment and open innovation. There appears to be an interest in using research to provide insight and enhance policing. The tradition of crime science and 'what works' among police officers shows a prevalent research/evidence paradigm. Partnerships between police and academics are vital for political, organisational, and individual purposes (Goode & Lumsden, 2018). They demonstrate the persistence of the 'what works' paradigm and evidence-based practice and are employed to rationalise offering services in reaction to austerity. In addition, there are suggestions in the future that this will become more formal in the event that the College of Policing (CoP) is established and influential in England and Wales. The CoP seems to be a key factor in involvement between the police and academy and plays a role in education. The CoP is responsible for establishing guidelines for police services on education, training, skills, and credentials. The Police Education Qualification Framework (PEQF), which was launched in 2016, provides a wide spectrum of specialised education for police officers, personnel, PCSOs, and special constables Police Federation (2023).In June 2015, the CoP launched a Leadership Review to reform the structure and organisation of the policing workforce. The suggestions involve examining the rank structure, implementing flexible paths to employment, enhancing education, nationally promoting vacancies, creating possibilities for careers, and promoting versatility in assigning authority and legal responsibility to police officers. The CoP, the Higher Education Funding Council for England, and the Home Office announced the Police Knowledge Fund (PKF) in 2015 to strengthen the evidence in key areas and integrate evidence-based policing strategies (College of Policing, 2023). This produced 30 collaborations between police forces and academic institutions, which aided in the implementation of applied studies in significant fields while additionally informing the creation of novel resources and technical approaches for assisting tactical and strategic decision-making. The CoP has also assessed the police's initial training and educational curriculum (Pepper & McGrath, 2015). They introduced the Certificate in Knowledge of Policing (CKP) qualification in 2013 to provide students with knowledge and an understanding of core policing themes (Pepper & McGrath, 2019), and consultations (in 2016) to develop a qualification framework for the police, recognition of existing staff expertise, and initial entry routes to the police service.

In an era of austerity and budget constraints, utilising knowledge, information, and

experiences help improve practice, revitalise traditions and cultures, and provide positive interactions to progress, which society needs (Lum et al., 2012). However, the funding reduction in the UK has led to substantial cutbacks in departmental budgets, local government resources and constabulary numbers, representing a severe challenge for cross networks and emerging collaborations (Crawford and L'Hoiry, 2019). Notwithstanding, as stated by Crawford and L'Hoiry, austerity, on the other hand, has raised some critical questions about the organisation's goals, competence, ability to respond, effectiveness and efficiency. This sort of mentality encourages practitioners to seek collaborative benefits derived through cooperation working to achieve lengthier operational efficiencies. According to Britton, Knight & Maloney (2016), support systems, regional and national organisations and facilities were severely lacking at the time. There was a national resourced programme for Cadet provisions, but in 2016 there were no similar arrangements for Specials, PSVs, and OPCC volunteers. Regions had arrangements for Specials and PSVs but rarely had regional support resources. However, they emphasised how there were few great examples of cross-force collaboration, and most of this collaborative effort appeared to revolve around Special Constables, although it is possible to do more. Collaboration between citizens, communities, and local governments, the *'Big Society'* (Eaton, 2010 cited in Rogers & Gravelle, 2011, p.27), may result in a profitable and active environment that relies on innovation and expertise to achieve its aims (Rogers & Gravelle, 2011), and a close consultation with the community is required for successful project delivery (Rogers, 2004).

Therefore, it is good to consider and recognise that the community seems to be part of the crime-fighting process, but at the same time, this interconnection between police and the community is relatively weak. For example, neighbourhood policing advocated interaction and communication between members of the community and the police (Macvean, 2008), but despite this, there is no solid bond between them. According to Rogers (2004), to achieve significant change, crime reduction initiatives should engage local partnerships and authorities. In addition, within the current discussion, what emerges is that the police system is trying to keep as much control as possible on combatting crime. The police established the parameters of involvement for partnerships; nevertheless, this worked as an agreement. O'Neill & McCarthy's (2014) study reveals that the police do dominate collaborations in regard of resources and personnel. As a result, police-community partnerships are shown not to be equal since the police make all significant decisions (Somerville, 2008). Community participation with the police benefits both relations and regulators of crime and disorder (Myhill, 2012). However, it should be added that in a globalised culture with several diverse ideas and traditions, where face-to-face

communication is minimal and interpersonal engagement is frequently very impersonal, jointly governing a community on the participatory model is tricky (Blunkett, 2003a). According to Alderden & Skogan (2014), institutions would benefit from increased civilian personnel engagement. Data from Dick and Metcalfe (2001) reveal negligible variations in involvement between police officers and civilian employees, which contradicts some police officers' beliefs that civilians are less involved in policing than sworn officers. In this study, it was revealed that the engagement antecedents correlate highly with how people are managed, and it was found to be equally valid for police officers and civilian support staff. The most imperfect, but perhaps most significant, relationship to build within agencies working for community safety and the community itself (Harfield and Kleiven 2008). However, the involvement must be dynamic and contributory, even in challenging information sharing.

3.5 Elements of consideration in collaboration, enabling partnerships beneficial and effective

An important aspect to consider is the nature of benefits that can be experienced within collaborations, whether such collaborations are mutually profitable, and how to achieve them. In order to do this, an attempt is made to comprehend the *human side* of these collaborations, thus focusing on the essential elements which must not be underestimated in a working relationship. Network members are inclined to employ informal relationships, for instance, in facing obstacles with formal partnerships and obtaining information for private profit, which may or may not convert into an advantage for their organisation or the network (Whelan, 2016).

Collaborative partnerships help partner organisations achieve goals with concrete benefits. According to Kelly (2008), organisational culture is an essential factor to consider. Culture is represented in the organisation's visible components, such as its declared aims and promoted ideas. However, culture is also connected to how people act, expectations and perceived actions. Creating organisational cultures that promote information sharing is more challenging in connection to the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) because many organisations have different individual policies and value systems. In addition, collaboration varies significantly over societies based on differences in social norms (Henrich and Muthukrishna, 2021). Accordingly, no nation can provide the perfect solution that can be copied and implemented by other countries because each country's conditions and needs vary significantly. Nevertheless, it could be a great start to understanding the potential and the key points to creating something

valuable for the community and law enforcement to cooperate.

Management of collaboration frequently gets effectively when single agencies perform better; therefore, if we want collaborations between agencies to flourish, we must be concerned about the welfare of individual agencies (Kelman, Hong and Turbitt, 2013). When multi-agency collaboration is required, inefficient working methods may arise (Sheptycki, 2004). These disparities can be mitigated by using common performance indicators.

 In order to achieve this, it is first necessary to understand collaboration mechanisms, pros and cons, and realise what is functioning and not working. Most importantly, it is essential to comprehend the needs of the constituent individuals and what drives the partnership's work environment since the relationship between people within an organisation, especially an agency focused on the information sharing of criminal intelligence, occupies an important role. According to Abbott (Johnstone, 2004 p.413), when building an organisation that includes employees on assignment from other organisations and directly hired personnel, there are people from a wide range of backgrounds, cultures, and expectations and a code of conduct (as the author wrote) is required: '*Everyone needs to know the ground rules. It is very important, particularly given the nature of the work and the vulnerability to attention by serious and organized crime groups*'.

It also means realising the bridging and possible flaws in human behaviour within social relationships, which are specially formed within partnerships. Being aware of and thus adopting appropriate conduct renders labour and partnership easier and more effective.

Collaboration embraces responsibility as part of the process since collaboration is a common choice for uniting and improving. From Latin *responses*, responsibility indicates that everyone must answer for actions and consequences that derive from them. The action's basis is given by the intention of a choice (Alznauer, 2015). Sheptycki, when analysing the various intelligence pathologies, in specific discussing the intra-agency occupational subcultures, makes an interesting note (2004, p.324):

> *Staff extractions for the purposes of training, together with sick leave and other situational exigencies, mean that many units in the police sector suffer from an at least perceived chronic shortage of personnel 'on the ground'. In such circumstances, (re)training of existing staff may be perfunctory and insufficient to change old habits. This problem may be superseded as younger cohorts come of age under the intelligence-led paradigm and move into positions of responsibility.*

In every action, the author is the principle and recipient of a change and subsequently leaves a trace. Individual actions influence other people, societies, and cultures and are also

related to external stimuli (for example, the response to a crime rising, as we have seen in previous chapters). Levinas (1984) reminds us that responsibility is not a simple attribute of subjectivity; individuality is not one for itself. However, once again, it is for another: Others approach Me nearly to the extent that I feel - to the extent that I am responsible for the other (Mkhwanazi, 2022). By experiencing a representation of I and We (Shteynberg et al., 2022), the individual, in turn, experiments with a sense of collective responsibility, whereby the individual self and what is in the collective's interest are considered. Therefore, an individual responsibility based on social institutions and economic enterprises is essential. We are, therefore, responsible for what we develop together. Collaborating does not represent just a group of people in the same room working on a project. Collaborating also means taking responsibility for building a better future together and improving what is wrong. Societies' evolution caused crime escalations, and the reaction to these issues also increased. Edwards (2009) pointed out that between 1948 and 1960, intergovernmental and non-governmental international cooperation approaches were intensifying. Following WWII, there was an increasing recognition of and confidence in cooperation, which resulted in unprecedented action to global collaboration.

As shown, with historical evolution, people required collaboration. Increased globalisation and reduced barriers to change could make companies too expensive or too slow to respond, mainly if the expertise to be accessed is not core. Numerous institutions cannot keep up with the rapid transformation, and their activities are unable to satisfy increasing customer requirements or external threats (Darby, 2006). Companies cannot invest in new networks or enter new markets, particularly international ones, rapidly and with the knowledge necessary to succeed. Alliances enable these objectives to be met while mitigating many investment risks.

As a consequence, international cooperation has resulted in effective resolution coordination. Globalisation is connected with an increased proclivity to cooperate with worldwide distant persons in modern times. It may be explained by the premise that people living in more globalised nations are more likely to engage in social relationships with people living in faraway locales, which likely generates empathy for them. (Buchan et al., 2009). As a result, the citizens accepted the responsibility of cooperating and partnerships to fight crime.

Rosenbaum (2002, p.172) defines partnership as a *'cooperative relationship between two or more organizations to achieve some common goal'* while Himmelman (2001, p.277) extends the concept of a coalition, describing it as *'an organization of organizations working together for a common purpose.'* He explains that organisations employ four simple strategies: networking, coordinating, cooperating, and collaborating, measured in relationship to challenges, opportunities, and trust. As stated by Hughes (2007), in recent years, national governments in

anglophone 'neoliberal' countries such as the UK have shared a common ambition: to substitute criminal bureau-professional provisions with multi-functional embedded collaborations whose functioning will be overtaken by the necessity to generate more measurable and quantifiable outputs and cost-effective outcomes. It means that now is the time to discover a new work style based on collaboration.

Multi-agency intelligence methods seem to improve understanding and sharing among security network partners (Sheptycki, 2019). As the case study of this research is GAIN, the distinctive feature of the agency is the information sharing between various organisations and partners, including the police. As commonly recognised, Intelligence seeks to minimise uncertainty by detecting patterns in crime and disruption. To do this, however, it needs efficient cooperation. Moreover, qualitative analysis and evaluation cannot be achieved without investing in competent employees; the effectiveness of technology, policy and successful operations depend on skilled experts' development (Phillips, 2008).

The structure of an organisation should allow goals to be fulfilled quickly and effectively, and employees at all levels should be able to use their abilities. Structures influence and reflect organisational communication patterns and management styles (Kelly, 2008). Agency collaboration greatly complicates the arena for intelligence-led policing by introducing organisational objectives other than simple measurements of crimes discovered and convictions secured (Harfield and Kleiven, 2008). Given these complications, it should be ensured make collaborations more straightforward.

Being part of a team is one of the essential requirements today to work well in different environments. A partnership allows us to cooperate and question ourselves, thus giving the right weight to the problems and conflicts that will always be present within a group, especially considering that other values are attributed to the various professional figures for the different preparation and competence. Furthermore, it is vital not to perceive cultural diversity solely as a possible negative aspect since differing views, values, and mindsets might be helpful; learning how organisational culture affects and is influenced by networking is a critical task (Whelan and Bright, 2020). Police forces that appreciate its analysts must also advocate for removing cultural and institutional impediments that lead to poor data quality. In an era when data is believed to be impartial and not, data quality is a long overdue requirement (Oconnor et al., 2021).

Integration can, therefore, occur when it is possible to maintain respectful communication of each other's roles. The human interactions in the working world must be permeable to change, innovations and reconstructions. While retaining the activities related to specific skills, flexibility is

necessary. Knowledge-based policing suggests an attitude where creativity and innovation are more important than partnership processes and protocols that may limit thinking, ideas, different viewpoints, and freedom to work creatively together even if processes and protocols are there to assure the work is done with criteria said (Harfield and Kleiven, 2008). However, the realisation that a possible intervention is not possible due to partnership protocols, for example, should prompt a review of the partnership working in order to eliminate any impediments. Concerning Maschington and Vincent's (2004) study, it is significative underlines the importance of contracts to both parties as a considerable influence to cooperate effectively and must be analysed to comprehend how and why specific patterns of inter-organisational connections evolve. Besides norms and practices, organisations must recognise the perceived benefits of individual exchanges. Interpersonal cooperation dynamics influence broader organisational relationships. Whelan and Molnar (2018) argue that a network view on culture and trust has significant implications for policing and criminologists' studies.

Some key elements have been identified that might facilitate and enhance inter-agency collaborations, such as between GAIN and other organisations. These factors are communication, trust within the group and the difference between the ingroup and the outgroup.

Summarising the most critical points concerning collaborative work extrapolated from Kelly's text, noteworthy arguments can be observed to reflect practical and satisfying cooperation. Beforehand, it should be ensured that everyone is working toward the same objective and being defined, discussed, and appropriately communicated at a larger scale. Hence, mutual understanding and open communication are the cornerstones of a strong partnership. By communicating and defining stakeholders' obligations and responsibilities, the partnership will avoid fragmented and unclear lines of authority, responsibility, and obligation among the organisations. Communication, which is necessary for relationships, must be nurtured, but more importantly, we must identify a practical approach that allows for a positive outcome. Whether face-to-face or other methods are employed to improve communication, the most crucial components are transparent and open communication, cooperation, and coordination (Mishra & Mishra, 2009).

A multi-agency can bring advantages from the working point of view, inserting new stimuli and innovating the sector leading to the most advantageous possible collaboration (Barton and Valero-Silva, 2013). Multi-agency solutions are becoming increasingly common in the more classic 'crime-fighting' areas of British policing, among others. Collaborative partnership is increasingly centred on the co-location of services to make the highest level of information exchange feasible,

particularly regarding protection tasks (Andrews, 2022).

In addition, private sector firms have identified the need to increase employee autonomy in the decision process, providing more adaptability and organisational responsiveness to environmental changes (Kelly, 2008). Partnerships are examples of 'networked community governance' instead of hierarchical command and professional control (Hughes, 2007). Many organisations in the public sector have chosen a hierarchical structure, but this leads to vertical communication and poor horizontal communication links between operations and teams (Kelly, 2008). In order to function optimally, communication is a fundamental basis to be taken into consideration in collaboration. If the way people in the organisation communicate in a line that extends only upwards, it could be possible to ignore the wholeness. Instead, there should be a *circular communication* able to embrace all parts. It is impossible not to communicate (Watzlawick and Beavin, 1967), and it must be realised that communications can be performed differently and perceived differently.

For a relationship to be successful, it needs an effective and genuine dialogue. According to Choi et al. (2019), communication between law enforcement and people must be carefully considered to promote a more stable, secure, and responsible community. Communication is a turning point in creating a bond and, of course, a "good example", especially in these times of crisis (Jones, 2020). Careful communication and attitudes change (Peyton, Sierra-Arévalo & Rand, 2019). Reference is made here to Luhmann's concept of communication (Czarniawska, 2017), which emphasises that a communicative event is composed of information, utterance and meaning. The information transmitted and received may be identical, but the meaning is created within the system, where communication can only relate to what is relevant to the system at hand. Therefore, communication between two dissimilar systems can be difficult. This is intriguing not only from a collaborative standpoint but also from the viewpoint of information sharing within intelligence agencies. Although the information is transmitted and received, its meaning changes once a system adopts it. The emphasis here is not on the information that will lead to intelligence creation but on the information provided by various groups and how they adapt their skills to achieve effective collaboration, primarily based on information exchange and investigation. Inside the ingroup, the information and its meaning will be according to the group mentality, so accepting that of an outsider will be more challenging.

In this situation, norms, knowledge based on experience, policy, structure, and grades influence the communication systems affected by this background. Hence, a collaboration grounded on two different systems can be highly complex because communication, which is the

basis of authentic and optimal partnership, will be affected by such obstacles. Luhmann's discourse focused mainly on the figure of consultants. In this case, however, the focus is on group members who come into contact with each other in collaborative work. The acquisition of the regulations, expectations, and norms related to specific social roles as aspects of the individual self is represented by social identities (Brewer,2001). In this evaluation, it is also critical to emphasise the dilemma of insiders and outsiders.

Citing Merton's work (1972), it is fair to presume that insiders are members of specific groups and holders of specific social statuses, while outsiders are non-members. Following this viewpoint, it could also be added that each individual is a part of both. Each individual can be a member of some groups while not being a member of others. For example, a might well be a member of a multi-agency collaborative who works side by side with the police may, nevertheless, not be integrated among the police and hence viewed as an outsider. At the same time, a member of law enforcement (although part of the force group) may not be included within the group of their collaborators because they are seen as belonging to a different background and sub-culture, despite the professional collaboration.

It should be observed that there are two types of group-based truth assumptions: insider truths that contradict outsider untruths and outsider truths that refute insider truths (ibid). This alludes to how two distinct mentalities might interact with one another. According to this vision, if we consider the notion of the division of the external collaborative group member and uniform groups, it could be seen in the police group the inclination to know the truth from an internal perspective, rejecting or, at the very least, distancing themselves from what may be possible external approaches. Instead, there could be a non-police staff group (or otherwise a member of an external collaboration) whose truth does not coincide with the internal police group. Then there will be two opposing truths working together to achieve the same goal. The claim is advanced as an epistemological principle that specific groups have monopolistic access to particular forms of knowledge (Chhabra, 2020). Therefore, as stated by Merton, the claim asserts that only certain groups have access to that knowledge, while other groups can obtain it for themselves. Alternatively, it could be added that knowledge cannot be understood or learned by the outsider group since they cannot understand the internal truth that only those insides can fully comprehend.

A practical example is provided, considering the police's understanding of crime and everything related to it, thereby supporting dominance in this field. Or, according to Sheptycki (2019), information sharing between police-to-police intra-agency differs from information sharing with non-police agencies due to basic variations in attitude to the police work as 'insiders' or

'outsiders. According to Merton, this is a significant statement in fields of sociology that assumes the *balkanisation* of social science, with distinct baronies retained solely in the hands of insiders enduring their qualifications in the form of one or more ascribed statuses. As a result, it appears that only the police can understand crime. It could be considered questionable, as knowledge could be acquired. However, if this concept can be accepted as possible, it must also be considered that knowledge is composed of experience and various approaches that can thus be learned elsewhere. An external collaborator will not have the knowledge of an employee in uniform because of the lack of experience and training, for example, but they will have supplementary forms of knowledge that a police officer, for example, may lack, and the opposite is also correct. However, this knowledge can be shared through collaboration, and benefits could be realised because something innovative is always brought on board (Menon & Pfeffer, 2003). This type of conduct requires an adaptive environmental response. In practical terms, people would be appropriate to adapt to receive more advantages (Kurzban & Leary, 2001). Indeed, as it can be noted, police and intelligence agencies operate in a challenging and dynamic environment in which they need to be capable of adapting (Lemieux, 2008). The latter assumes the external collaborator of a police support agency to be a non-member of law enforcement. Cooperation that occurs between diverse groups but with the same background (consider as an example agency whose members have previously been police officers or at least have been members of law enforcement agencies) will be much less problematic. The reason for this is that the conceptual vision will be alike, harmonised at least. If it is not a shared one, it will be embraced by attempting to support the view and the goal. In this context, collaboration might proceed more fluidly considering the overcoming of 'truth'. Nevertheless, this does not indicate an absence of disagreements or challenges during the collaboration, but rather a more fluid process, or at least fewer obstacles.

Through interaction, people are connected to various groups (Atal, 2001), which applies within a cohesive group such as the police and law enforcement. There is a tendency to 'protect' territory from 'foreign threats,' and it can thus be hypothesised that the human being tends to defend those who are part of the group belonging from outsiders (Kurzban & Leary, 2001). Furthermore, because trust and cooperation (Brewer, 1999) are advantageous but risky to put into practice, there is a tendency to limit the number of people entrusted with these two qualities, consequently only to those part of the ingroup. It seems that an intergroup interaction guarantees the occurrence of implicit bias while decreasing trust among groups (Choi et al., 2019). We are always more cautious with those not our group members (Voci, 2020).

A practical example would be to consider an external collaborator as a potential threat to

the survival of the internal police group. Therefore, there will be a tendency to perceive the partner as an "external enemy" rather than a potential resource. As it has always been in historical memory, a stranger, an external entity, the outsider, was considered an enemy and a threat to the community, the group, and the internal balance (Evrigenis, 2007). It is not stated that this is always the case, but it is generally preferred to exclude outsider rather than accept them into the group. This is most likely due to our predisposition to emphasise duties and internal members trusting they are satisfactory.

If the ingroup is not a simple aggregate of individuals, it is considered homogeneous and is viewed as a unique entity; its members are expected to be consistent and work together to achieve harmony and internal collaboration. According to social identity theory, an ingroup is a group of individuals sharing distinctive features or social experiences. In this schema, social identities symbolise a process of identification or integration with others who have a collective identity (Brewer, 2001). Social identity may reduce the discrepancy between individual and group welfare, increasing trust and confidence that peers' members will contribute equally. As a result, people will be more eager to accomplish beneficial results for their group leading to a significant contribution to the general welfare (De Cremer & Van Vugt, 1999). This entails collaborating more diligently and effectively toward a common goal.

On the other hand, excessive internal differentiation may cause one to lose sight of the work's aim. As a result, if the collaborator is not recognised within the group (and vice versa), or if the distinction within the group is too big, it will tend to have a dull rather than functional collaboration (Voci, 2020).

It is considered a success when the perception shifts beyond the ingroup's boundaries and is accepted by outsiders (and vice versa). The common belonging to a group with a separation inside it in terms of work structure indicates a good harmony that will push all those parts of the group to operate more successfully (Abrams & Hogg, 2010). Moreover, if the group members perceive themselves as similar, even if not equal, this will positively affect the group, and everyone will tend to appreciate one another.

To achieve positive organisational functioning outcomes, agencies must guide and motivate their employees' attitudes toward insider status (Stamper & Masterson, 2002). However, caution and distrust are common phenomena that emerge after introducing a new member into a social group (Voci, 2020). As a result, there must be an open attitude toward accepting new members. Due to the widespread impact of intergroup rivalries on organisations, the measurement and severity of cooperation differ wildly across societies. Consequently, there is a natural inclination to place trust in members of the ingroup rather than members of the outgroup.

Since time is of the essence in cooperation and trust, the latter is addressed to those recognised, and it might be suggested as equals. As a result, members of the ingroup are privileged (Voci, 2020).

However, rules, norms, team leadership, labour division, personal experiences, willingness to cooperate, connections, and trust are all components that emerge together to allow collaborative work to take place (Zaghloul & Partridge, 2022). Aside from sharing values and norms, it is fundamental to have a trusting partnership. The partnership requires evaluated management to generate interactions that will aid in developing cohesive working relationships. The collaboration process together with trust seems to be an essential element. It becomes apparent that social capital (discussed in 3.4) is a required resource for society not only to progress, but to improve, '*Successful collaboration in one endeavor builds connections and trust-social assets that facilitate future collaboration in other, unrelated tasks*' (Putnam,1994, p.10).

Trust has traditionally been identified as vital for network operation (Powell 1990, as cited in Whelan and Bright, 2020). Trust developed between social interactions is connected to individuals' or groups' psychological protection and security (Giddens, 1991). It is primarily established on relationships (Hardin, 2002; Igarashi et al., 2008; Bradford & Jackson, 2011; Lawler, Thye, and Yoon, 2015). Through the interactions, a sense of trust is developed between two parties, which is absent if there is no actual relationship or only temporary. Moreover, to establish a connection, the fundamental components are the motivation to attend to the interests and the competence of the trustee and those entrust (Hardin, 2004; Whelan, 2016). Trust acts as an intermediate interaction that induces the so-called 'leap of faith', which requires a practical commitment, thus establishing and trying to achieve an early sense of ontological security (Giddens, 1991). We deliver our trust to strangers daily, for example, when flying, by having confidence that the aeroplane is following policies and the crew onboard is competent (Rutter, 2001). Using an example related to this context, we trust that our personal information is treated with respect and according to the regulations. Likewise, we rely on the police, hoping they are competent in their operation area and behave appropriately.

The trust established is fundamental to allowing a more efficient and present collaboration: '*co-operative incidence is very strongly and positively related to the level of interpersonal trust in a society*' (Jones and Kalmi, 2009 p.190). Trust becomes a sine qua non component for a successful relationship and cooperation (Van Lange, Rockenbach and Yamagishi, 2017) and takes time to develop (Weber & Carter, 2003). Trust, de facto, is important because it develops and encourages

social interaction, can be increased through communication, and leads people to collaborate (Yamagishi and Yamagishi cited in Yamagishi, Cook, and Watabe, 1998; Zak and Knack, 2001; Knack and Zak 2003; Cook, Hardin, and Levi, 2005).

Confidence and trust are based on our ability to distinguish risks and threats, remote or of immediate interest (Luhmann, 2000). A social evolution, generating complex societies, might create systems that demand more confidence and trust, which also occurs in the sub-culture of the working environment. Confidence is a prerequisite for participation, and trust is required to improve opportunities. Confidence in the system and trust in partners may influence each other. A lack of confidence or complication in identifying situations or partners which justify trust may have adverse effects that diminish the variety of activities accessible to the system. A lack of confidence may lead to feelings of alienation, therefore feeling a sense of disconnection and estrangement, as Luhmann (2020) described. In that case, the partner losing confidence and trust will feel detached from the system, leading to a decline in interest in the system itself and a possible collaboration. Once trust becomes axiomatic, as a result of a constantly reinforced confidence, it produces a body of knowledge as to the expected consequence of trusting the police to do what they promise (Gilmour, 2008). During focus group interviews conducted by Whelan and Bright (2020), participants emphasised the importance of trust within Fusion Centres. Many interviewees also spoke of the idea of promoting a culture of trust, underlining the connection between organisational culture and trust. Following the Fusion Centres example of Whelan and Bright (2020), the importance of interpersonal and inter-organisational trust in the establishment and operation has been discussed. Interpersonal trust was mentioned in some situations as a probable explanation for why fusion centres developed, and it was a component in encouraging healthy connections among those inside them. Inter-organisational trust was considered fundamental to the operation of Fusion Centres and necessary for individuals to feel confident in trusting the actors in the partnership organisations. In the interviews collected, the participants explained how in their opinion, trust is built over time. According to the authors, this points to how it creates a kind of, dare to call, *paradox*, considering that by definition, security clearance for a person or institutional entity should imply trust. Nevertheless, while these processes have been identified as vital, it is unlikely that they alone form a necessary basis for building trust among actors with no prior relations.

According to Brewer (1999), we have evolved to trust cooperation and social learning as our primary adaptation mode as a human species. The cooperation between parties leads to relying on others to share information and resources and assist one another. The choice to collaborate is a trust quandary since the benefits depend on everyone else's desire to do the same. Trust

proves to be an essential cornerstone for multiple approaches. Not only does it help to connect multiple people to the extent that the role is legitimately covered. In collaborations, trust is crucial. It is considered the optimum vehicle for good collaboration, facilitating the flow of information, and encouraging a knowledge-sharing environment where the company can improve (Mcdermott, Khalfan & Swan, 2004). Within their networks, cooperative stakeholders consider seriously mapping affinitive and pragmatic trust relations (Coleman & Stern,2018). People expected to be able to trust that good and efficient work would be done in order for them to invest time and energy in the stage of collaborative work. There are also expectations regarding regulation awareness, the ability to work in groups and be working in groups and being productive, even outside the familiar environment, and recognising system differences.

Trust and collaboration are essential in the working world, particularly in a specific scenario where information sharing occurs within agencies, such as between GAIN and its partners. Information flows effectiveness is subordinate to trust, which is essential for excellent communication. The lack of the latter can cause gaps in information sharing, and as a consequence, information flows become untrustworthy. This, therefore, leads to an inefficient collaboration since the subjects must try to guess the partner's activities, although proper management systems and interpersonal logistics chains generate opportunities for communication (Mcdermott, Khalfan & Swan, 2004). Indeed, key elements affecting knowledge sharing have been identified in 1) creating an appropriate organisational structure and 2) a working environment that promotes collaborative work and the development of trust: *'If trust is established, then the levels of communication of tacit knowledge will increase'*. (Kelly, 2008 p.261). Furthermore, managing a work environment that provides the proper attention to these factors makes it possible to tackle one of the issues organisations must face nowadays: managing information through technology connected to the legal framework in England and Wales. The primary objective of information sharing is to allow the agencies involved to collaborate more effectively in evaluating risks and deciding how to handle them (Ministry of Justice, National Offender Management Service, and HM Prison Service, 2021).

> *While it can be assumed that the KM (i.e., knowledge management) information technology tools are generally conducive to the flow of explicit knowledge or information, the application of these tools in a partnership such as the CDRP (i.e. Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships) poses interesting problems under English law. (*Kelly, 2008 *p.261)*

The example provided by Kelly (2008) is Data Protection Act 1998 [now updated Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018) and amended in 2021 by regulations under the European Union

(Withdrawal) Act 2018]. Agencies involved in information sharing must respect data subjects' rights, outlined in the DPA and the Human Rights Act of 1998. (HRA). According to the principles derived from this legislation, information sharing must be lawful, necessary, and proportionate. Furthermore, the information-sharing must adhere to the Data Protection Principles outlined in the DPA, which require that the intent of the intelligence-gathering needs to be defined, accurate and up-to-date, safely retained and not more than necessary. Each agency should comply with its policy in this regard. (Ministry of Justice, National Offender Management Service, and HM Prison Service, 2021). The DPA (2018) classifies and defines the data protection framework in the UK and how organisations, governments and third parties use it. The DPA (2018) also implemented the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which became effective in 2021 and laid down rules concerning the protection of natural persons about the processing of personal data and regulations correlating to the free movement of personal data. As a result, various regulations are established concerning 1) general processing administration, 2) law enforcement processing, 3) intelligence services, 4) information commissioner functions and competence, 5) enforcement, and 6) supplementary provisions. In addition, it sets out the fundamental principles, rights, and obligations for most processing of personal data in the UK, except for law enforcement and intelligence agencies.

Furthermore, the GDPR defines data protection principles for everyone responsible for using personal data, including, for example, lawfulness and transparency, purpose, fairness, accuracy, limitations, accountability, confidentiality, etc. The police's gathering, retention, and use of intelligence material are supported by the code of practice on managing police information. The material should be used to protect life and property, maintain order, prevent crimes, prosecute offenders, and any duty or responsibility of the police emerge under common or statutory law (Kerrigan, 2009).

Law enforcement and intelligence services' processing regimes are regulated in parts 3 (relevant provisions sections 29-81, schedules 7-8) and 4 (relevant provisions sections 82-113, schedules 9-11) of the DPA 2018. In these parts, the following purposes are established: **The Law Enforcement Purposes** = Preventing, investigating, detecting, or prosecuting criminal offences or enforcing criminal penalties, as well as protecting against and preventing threats to public safety. (DPA 2018, Section 31, part 3 chap 1); **Intelligence services** = a different data protection regime for the intelligence services. In this context, information exchanged is explained within the agencies are of interest. Two or more intelligence services are joint controllers if they jointly determine the purposes and means of personal processing data. Joint controllers must

transparently determine their responsibilities for compliance through an arrangement among them, excluding those responsibilities defined under or through legislation. The arrangement must name the intelligence service as the contact point for data subjects (DPA 2018, Section 104-chapter 4); **Right to information** = This section explains the procedures and the applicability. The intelligence service must provide to a data subject: identity and contact details; the legal basis and reasons for processing personal data; the categories of personal data; the receivers or categories of receivers of the personal data; the right to submit a complaint with the Commissioner and the Commissioner's contact details; any additional information required to ensure that personal data is processed fairly and transparently. Where the intelligence service deems it appropriate, it may comply with the subsection by making information generally available.

Under subsection, the intelligence service is not required to provide a data subject with information that the data subject already has (DPA 2018, Sections 93-94-chapter 3). This is only a succinct outline of what is anticipated from the DPA. Since the DPA sets guidelines on disseminating and using personal data, this may negatively impact communication and information sharing between the police forces and partner organisations below the CDRP (Kelly, 2008). In addition, the Freedom of Information Act (2000) may prevent converting sensitive implicit knowledge into explicit if third parties can access it later. Only by following the law may the information be shared by or with the police. Public authorities must have the legal authority to share information (Kerrigan, 2009). Section 115, part V of the Crime and Disorder Act of 1998 states:

> *Any person who, apart from this subsection, would not have power to disclose information—to a relevant authority or to a person acting on behalf of such an authority, shall have power to do so in any case where the disclosure is necessary or expedient for the purposes of any provision of this Act.*

This section does not require information to be divulged, does not justify disclosure, and gives anyone the authority to share information with certain authorities if required to carry out the provisions of the Act, which include local crime and disorder reduction strategies. The information holder should recognise statutory and common law disclosure restrictions, such as data protection, human rights, and confidentiality law measures (Kerrigan, 2009). Chief officers are in charge of developing and implementing adequate procedures and systems to ensure that personal information is handled in compliance with the Data Protection Act of 1998 and other legislation (National Policing Improvement Agency, 2010). In a working environment governed by such regulations, CDRP organisations must have mechanisms to encourage communication that

allows for higher informality and universalism (Kelly, 2008).

However, it is right to reflect additionally on another part of the legislature related to inter-agency information sharing. Furthermore, focusing on information exchange can also be considered the Criminal Justice Act of 2003 (CJA 2003). Section 325(3) incentivises information sharing by imposing a duty of cooperation on certain Multi-Agency Public Protection agencies. In addition, section 325(4) specifies that such collaboration might include sharing information and offering additional legal permission for data sharing between these bodies (Kerrigan, 2009). CJA 2003 authorises the foundation of Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements ("MAPPA") in England and Wales' 42 criminal justice areas. They involve local criminal justice agencies and other organizations to collaborate in dealing with offenders. The Secretary of State for Justice granted this MAPPA Guidance under the CJA 2003, designed to help agencies involved with MAPPA offenders (Ministry of Justice, National Offender Management Service, and HM Prison Service, 2021).

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) sections 8 and 14 Code of Practice respond to the challenges that an ISA should resolve and include what kind of information is to be shared, quality and security, why and with whom; what are the consequences if the agreement is violated and the conditions dictating the duration the information is held. The agreements provide national coordination for serious sexual and violent offenders (Kerrigan, 2009). MAPPA is not a statutory body but rather a mechanism for agencies to better release their legal duty and protect the community collaboratively (Ministry of Justice, National Offender Management Service, and HM Prison Service, 2021). This small interlude is valuable to describe how the multi-agency collaboration is structured and the agreements. MAPPA and the duty to cooperate (DTC) described in the arrangements (ibid) ensure the possibility for different agencies to collaborate. Cooperation guarantees that all the relevant agencies know what they are doing. The Responsible Authority and the DTC agency must have clear communication channels for the partnership to be effective. Without collaboration, there is a chance of damage, where agencies may jeopardise one another's work. When their responsibilities and expertise coincide, a formal collaboration approach is compelled. The MAPPA work collaboratively avoids conflicts and decisions made in ignorance of other agencies' activities and facilitates joint working.

Concerning the exchange of information, the Mappa guidance made some specifics. A distinction is made between Information-sharing, which refers to sharing information among Responsible Authority (RA) and DTC agencies, and Disclosure, which refers to exchanging information about a MAPPA offender with a third party (not associated with MAPPA, such as a

member of the public or a specialist working in a professional context). Furthermore, a shared understanding of agencies' regulations will make their collaboration more manageable because of some differences. Therefore, the Strategic Management Board (SMB) should develop an Information-Sharing Agreement (ISA) outlining information sharing management in each area.

This analysis is intended to understand and lay the groundwork for the flow of information across agencies. This overview tries to shed light on the downsides agencies might encounter during information sharing collaborations, e.g., related to the regulations allowing such sensitive sharing. What is worth mentioning is that awareness of the law must be comprehended and known by all sides, not just one. Furthermore, obstacles in exchanging/acquiring information are critical aspects that should not be ignored. Block (2008), who primarily focuses on cross-border intelligence sharing, observed two legal and organisational obstacles in the intelligence exchange. In this case, applying what Block detected in the cross-border system impediments on the national territory can be interesting. The differences in legal systems might prevent or slow down the sharing of intelligence, but even more important is the poor awareness of those differences that is typically far more obstructive than the differences themselves. A fundamental ability is appropriate awareness of the relevant legal distinctions and expertise in translating operational demands and effective solutions across legal traditions and systems.

This approach may also be utilised nationally, where several police forces and multi-agency organisations exist. Officers must be highly aware of the sensitivities and risks of handling intelligence. However, they should be thoroughly familiar with regulations and well trained about the restrictions to avoid delaying processes. The other obstacle concept was related to the organisational level. Block (ibid) identifies impediments to information sharing and cross-border liaison in the complexity and diversity of law enforcement systems and the differing interests and cultural differences. Discrepancies in the significance of Intelligence in the investigation process and a deficiency of agreed criteria for gathering and transmitting intelligence led to this uncertainty. These impediments can be recognised in cross-border occurrences but can also be observed at the national level. Regional differences, including how to handle a specific situation or system disparities. Intelligence work is technical and sophisticated, and without investing in the proper personnel and training, it is best avoided (Phillips 2008). Partnership policing must not devolve into dysfunctional, disconnected, and foreseeably counterproductive individual firms; instead, there must be an available framework of reference by which plural policing provision is informed and controlled, strategically and operationally. Partnership policing generates new intelligent requests and possibilities and demands new knowledge and awareness to use the

intelligence so that interventions do not just create another problem (Harfield and Kleiven, 2008).

Inter-agency collaboration has inherent importance. The choice of collaboration can make the difference between success and failure (Darby, 2006). Darby lists three critical success factors: the ability to collaborate, the right partners, and effective relationships. Every professional figure maintains a central role in enhancing the intervention to achieve the set objective in a teamwork environment. The ability to share and organise is fundamental for group work.

Several advantages can be identified according to a general concept. Fruitful collaborations must be created, cultivated, and supported by individuals who understand the advantages of partnership practice and apprehend the opportunities these connections provide (Crawford and L'Hoiry, 2019). Below is the design of a scheme that includes some of the most appealing features, which briefly summarises the benefits of cooperation and what will be experienced, correlating to law enforcement partnerships and external partners:

Benefit	**Example**
Major information	The intelligence will be translated into practical information that police service and partners can easily use
Encouragement and Responsibility	The agencies would encourage new generations to unite against crime and take an active part in the community, taking on new responsibilities
Rapidity and Knowledge	The specialisation in different areas of expertise and fast sharing of information would make more comfortable the tasks undertaken by the police
Collaboration and Partnership	Law enforcement/multidisciplinary teams actively cooperate, increasing arrests and enforcing the rules

Table 2 Critical Summary of Collaboration Benefits between agencies to fight Criminal Activity

Darby (2006) lists possible causes of an unsuccessful alliance, such as poor communication, relationship mismatch, differing objectives at the outset, Slow results or payback and lack of shared benefits. These are just a few examples provided, but they have a relevant value in understanding how difficult it is within collaborations to maintain relationships between people and at the work level. In addition, when a company has numerous alliances or connections with one party, partnerships with other parties could become quite challenging. The incapability to cooperate is also the source of divergent aims and misread operating mechanisms.

There are many factors to consider in a partnership, and it is not always simple to

accomplish all that is necessary for a successful partnership, but within any agency where there is cooperation, *'being a good collaboration manager involves good management'* (Kelman, Hong and Turbitt, 2013 p.624). Therefore, the manager must realise how and what to improve in their organisation to ensure partnerships are exploited at their full potential.

It is challenging work that demands commitment, dedication, and an attitude of openness. However, little things can lead to success within an operation, including teamwork.

3.6 Summary of Literature Review

This literature review aimed to identify the main problem and the knowledge to interpret the nature of the problem using previous studies as a reference.

There are theses, articles, and books about intelligence and support agencies, how collaboration occurs, the merits and weaknesses, and how law enforcement agencies cope in this environment. However, few studies have been conducted on the 'human' operation that enables this field. However, it seems to be a vital part of taking into account.

This chapter has researched and articulated topics concerning the 'human' evolution of coping with crime. As has been widely explained, there is indeed a concern with the rapid development of crime due to globalisation, which has led to a response from society, not only on a national but also on an international level. It reviews how the UK Law Enforcement Network has evolved and has come to cope with internal and exterritorial crime by distributing as many organisations as possible regionally, locally, and nationally. It was described why these geographical changes occurred and why there is a need for cross-agency collaboration, especially in this modern era. Nevertheless, without insight into key concepts such as trust, communication and the insider and outsider, it is not so easy to realise that specific scenarios are vital to collaboration. It seems that nowadays, the police require support and expertise since coping with crime is much more challenging. This could eventually lead to new approaches within collaborations and support with external multi-agencies devoted to fighting crime alongside the police, bringing new experiences.

The next chapter defines the case study of this research, which is what the GAIN Network is and how it is structured.

Chapter 4: Government Agency Intelligence Network (GAIN)

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will provide an overview of the GAIN Network data from Government materials and other evidence. The information results from GAIN's official documents that have been kindly granted and which it was able to discover through other sources. The following paragraphs will enlighten the Network's concept, purpose, partners, and innovations. In addition, a new GAIN function, the GAIN+ National Intelligence Hub, and the format in which the agency exchanges information with its various partners are described.

4.2 Description and Creation of the Network: Why the GAIN Establishment?

Cooperation across national borders is becoming increasingly important due to continuous globalisation (Dorrough, Froehlich & Eriksson, 2022), and since 1997, collaboration has been a fundamental aspect of British social welfare policy (Dowling, Powell & Glendinning, 2004). In the early 1990s, the concept of forming police partnerships with other public and civilian agencies emerged nearly simultaneously in the United Kingdom and other Western European countries (Frevel & Rogers, 2016). This movement fuelled the real or perceived inadequacy of old police-centred strategies for reducing crime and crime-fighting (and the assumption that other agencies might support their special competencies).

As mentioned and discussed in 3.2 and 3.3, many organisations join forces and cooperate to tackle crime, whether in the UK or abroad. The GAIN Network is part of these organisations, established to counter and fight criminality, especially SOC.

To combat a threat that employs numerous strategies, the government requires the ability to utilise different responses. Military, police, or other bodies do not always possess such a broad range of operating capabilities, but intelligence services typically have these capabilities (Zivanovic, 2008), and GAIN has been marketed as a multi-agency group that brings together intelligence and investigation staff within the ROCU environment and other local government agencies (HMIC, 2015). The three main channels of business, considering the partnership, are 1) intelligence sharing, 2) disruption activity, and 3) network development (Government Agency Intelligence Network, 2021). As the official reports by Government Agency Intelligence Network

(2021) illustrate, GAIN primary activity concentrates on Organised Crimes – High-Risk Individuals – Modern Slavery – Human Trafficking – Child Sexual Exploitation – Fraud. Its fundamental purpose is to underpin police partnerships with other non–police agencies engaged, broadly, in preventing and detecting serious and organised crime, reducing threats, and protecting the environment and the public purse. Managing demands and dealing with different issues necessitates improved collaboration with other organisations to provide the most suitable and effective answer to requests for support (Boulton et al., 2017). A timely response by a multi-agency organisation might release additional resources and reduce costs. The idea of partnerships between stakeholders has been reinforced and is now subject to several transformations (Frevel & Rogers, 2016), as in the case of GAIN. The partnership continues to be a citizen-oriented policing instrument involving people and organisations from society to ensure safety, security, and protection (Frevel & Rogers, 2016).

GAIN primary role is coordinating law enforcement agencies and government departments' efforts against serious and organised crime in a progressively globalised and connected milieu. This has mainly been achieved by establishing strategic agreements and establishing coordinators in police ROCUs (James, 2016). The organisational structure at the personnel level of the network is subdivided as follows: a Regional GAIN Coordinator (GC) in each of the 10 ROCUs and 1 National GAIN Coordinator.

GCs works with the Regional Organised Crime Threat Assessment (ROCTA) team in their ROCU and are a point connection within Government agencies, allowing them to work together. They focus on the 4P approach (Pursue, Prevent, Protect, Prepare) at the Strategic & Tactical level and represent an accurate overview of SOC. These 4P approach derive from CONTEST strategic approach. CONTEST is a strategic response to international terrorism to reduce the risk to the United Kingdom and its foreign interests (Home Office, 2010). An updated version of CONTEST was released in March 2009, detailing terrorist danger and explaining the four core areas of counterterrorism action: Pursue (to stop terrorist attacks), Prevent (to stop people developing terrorists or supporting terrorism), Protect (to fortify defences against a terrorist attack), and Prepare (to minimise the effects of a terrorist attack) are examples of this (Home Office, 2010; Home Office, 2018b).

Moreover, the role of the coordinators appears to be further elaborated. GCs engage with Local SOC Partnership Boards and sponsor GAIN and Organised Crime Group (OCG) mapping in their Region (Government Agency Intelligence Network, 2021). Furthermore, GCs manage 3 out of

10 regions' Regional Disruption Teams (RDTs) and one of the role is also to assist the referrer in intelligence development and discover opportunities to cooperate to disrupt criminality. The Disruption Team promotes the agency's close working relationship with public partners and the private sector (Government Agency Intelligence Network, 2020). Collaborations of this kind aim to combat various forms of crime locally, regionally, and nationally in the UK. As a practical example, RDTs also deal with other matters, such as child sexual exploitation. Child sexual exploitation is combined at the regional level of policing by RDTs in the ROCUs. The mission of RDTs is to discover and disrupt every kind of SOC (Wager, Robertshaw Seery & Parkinson, 2021). Recently, some examples of collaborations including GAIN and its partners have been seen in action. In 2023, the Federation Against Copyright Theft (FACT), NEROCU, and the UK Police initiated an anti-piracy campaign aimed at users of illicit streaming platforms. The Police Intellectual Property Crime Unit (PIPCU) and the Government Agency Intelligence Network (GAIN) have teamed up issuing warning notifications in an effort to limit the danger, risk, and disruption posed by severe and organised crime (Durham Constabulary, 2020; Thomson, 2023). Likewise, during the County Lines Intensification Week in March 2023, the Northamptonshire Police arrested 25 people and recovered drugs and firearms. Police forces across the UK concentrated their efforts on criminals who wander across the country selling illicit substances, and to combat these illegal activities, the Serious and Organised Crime Team, Neighbourhood Policing and Intelligence, British Transport Police, Community Safety Partnerships, GAIN, and local businesses collaborated (Northamptonshire Police, 2023).

These results seem to highlight an effective and active collaboration on English soil to counter criminal activities, taking advantage of the cooperation of different agencies available in England. Indeed, examining the origins of GAIN and the motivations behind its establishment, it can be observed that collaboration is the cornerstone of this agency.

GAIN was initially conceived to be used as an agency that can hold information about a specific offender. However, it was later observed that GAIN is also an advantageous means of investigating partner agency databases for potential leads (HMIC, 2015).

Caroline Simpson, National GAIN coordinator (Alliantist, 2014a), introduced the network revealing its creation around 2008/2009. The project was an idea of the Chief Constable of Derbyshire, Mr Creedon, who considers collaboration the only way to face serious and organised crime. Simpson explained that she worked with the Home Office and the Deputy Chief Constable (Mr Goodman) to examine how GAIN could grow and develop in the country, adding that:

It was as a result of that work that the Home Office recognised the value of GAIN and added it into the Serious and Organised Crime Strategy as a key way in which the Regional Organised Crime Units and our Partners could collaboratively work together to disrupt and enforce against serious and organised crime (Alliantist, 2014a)

The GAIN Network could be stated to be the result of a 'partnership', as defined by the Audit Commission (1998, cited in Dowling, Powell, & Glendenning, 2004): a collaborative working agreement in which partners or separate entities work together to accomplish a shared objective. This could include the development of new processes or organisational structures for establishing and carrying out a joint program and sharing information, benefits, and risks. According to Stevenson et al. (2011), organisations must establish shared objectives and goals based on the exchange of information, which will result in collaboratively commissioned activities to achieve goals and fill gaps. Although, as is pointed out by Rogers (2004), agreeing on a goal is not enough to reduce crime. Rowe and Devanney (2003) argue that we must comprehend how partnerships function in environments that are ruled by hierarchies and markets. Placing diverse people together without recognising the impact affecting their conduct may not always imply an entirely novel way of work. Indeed, despite the benefits emphasised regarding collaborations and multi-agencies in 3.5, it must be also emphasised that sometimes a multi-agency may likewise experience difficulties and challenges (Robinson, Hudson & Brookman, 2008). For example, Fleming et al. (2006) investigated changes in the area of victim and witness services to provide perspective to the Leicester Victims and Witnesses Action Group (VWAG). They highlight how VWAG's work illustrates collaboration challenges, funding competition, and personnel turnover. With this investigation, Fleming et al. (ibid) tried to emphasise the factors for multi-agency to function properly. A multi-agency must possess defined objectives, reduce competition, have a designated liaison, devote time, include smaller agencies, use information collected to avoid raising expectations, and jointly bring key skills and experience to enhance services. However, some of these factors seem to have been considered by Simpson.

Indeed, Simpson realises that all the partner agencies must better handle resources and time because of limitations, including accepting the need to work together. The collaboration for Simpson contributes to casting aside the silos mentality bringing new skills, areas of expertise, legislation, and new values, furthering sharing information to detect crimes: *'disrupt and enforce against these individuals or groups of individuals by sitting around the table and bringing all of our powers and knowledge to that operation'* (Alliantist, 2014a). Working in silos is a feature already

encountered previously, and collaborating appears to be a welcome change to overcome such issues (Bradley, 2009). Organisations collaborating to achieve a common goal may enhance certain aspects, such as reducing duplication and maximising resources. People and organisations with diverse abilities and assets must work together to discover innovative remedies for complicated challenges (Candeira et al., 1998), and must be introduced to diverse viewpoint (Rowe and Devanney,2003).

Neil Felligham (Alliantist, 2014b), the South-east GAIN Coordinator at the time, ascertained that GAIN initially only worked with a few agencies. However, it seems that in 2014 (when the online video was posted), GAIN began to expand its collaboration with several agencies (including NCA), and not just locally, even as they continue their collaboration with local forces, for example. There is now a full-time GAIN Coordinator in every ROCUs region. In order to deal with Organised Crime, they were looking for a way to use the other agencies *'to provide us with information or intelligence and also use their powers and legislation to make sure that we can disrupt the organised criminals'* (Alliantist, 2014b). Collaboration and joint working for Felligham resulted in benefiting from the power and expertise of the partners to achieve the best possible cross-prosecution.

GAIN ensures that everyone is brought together at the same time. According to Simpson (Alliantist, 2014a), there is an issue of trust and confidence during intelligence sharing. Indeed, it can be improved security efforts by establishing trust, impartiality, involvement with partners, and discussing problems (Cherney & Hartley, 2017). Although instead of presuming that beneficial network characteristics, such as trust and helping others will develop, partnerships must actively promote this behaviour (Rowe and Devanney, 2003).

Simpson considers her primary role to ensure a satisfied and confidently information-sharing process between all the partner agencies and coordinators: *'To give that confidence and assurance we have put in place a number of mechanisms that will provide that consistency of approach and enable you to have the confidence to work with GAIN Network'* (Alliantist, 2014a).The examples chosen for this affirmation are the GAIN operating framework '*which enables effective partnership working*' and the National Executive Board *'which provides governance and structure for all of our gain partners'* (Alliantist, 2014a). In the table relating to the National Executive Board displayed in the video interview, three sections are described: Standards & Governance, Partner Collaboration and Coordinator Collaboration. Some descriptive information is provided in each column relating to the specified section.

For Standards & Governance, there are listed:

- Standard Operating Guidance including Risks and Treatments
- Partner Induction Project
- Coordinator Induction Project
- Executive Board Meetings and Governance
- Published Presentations & Case Studies

For Partner Collaboration, there are listed:

- Referral Engagement & Profile Delivery
- Multi Agency Joint Operations Projects
- All Partners Communications Shared Group/s
- Core Partner & Coordinators Private Group
- Joint Training & Resource Sharing

For Coordinator Collaboration, there are listed:

- Partner Account Management
- General Communications sharing & ideas exchange
- National, Regional Meetings & Events Planning
- Adhoc Projects and Groups

However, the HMIC inspection in 2015 found GAIN under-used by forces and partner agencies and needed to be '*significantly strengthened to support a genuinely integrated approach to understanding serious and organised crime*' (HIMC, 2015). In response, in 2017/2018, GAIN established a National Intelligence Hub, based in East Midlands Special Operations Unit (EMSOU) within Leicestershire Police, intended to integrate member agencies further to collect or share Intelligence. The current team structure is: one National GAIN Coordinator, one National Intelligence Evaluator, three Researchers, and one Administrator.

The Hub is a key to collecting and managing every GAIN partner referral, sharing, and developing intelligence, and representing a central connection for GAIN partners, coordinators, and other agencies, simplifying the interaction between partners and the Regional GAIN Coordinators/DT). In addition, the Hub has direct access to EUROPOL (via Sienna), where it can conduct enquiries on behalf of the referrer with Europol SOC and/or specific countries.

GAIN Hub's aims (illustrated in Government Agency Intelligence Network, 2020) are: to find appropriate agencies to send to and circulate the referrals, ensure that the referrals fit the in-scope criteria (otherwise discuss alternatives with the referrers), and for referrals from non-police agencies, they conduct research on behalf of the Police: Police National Database (PND), Police National Computer (PNC), Organised Crime Group Mapping (OCGM).

This background information about GAIN lays the foundation for understanding whether and

how collaboration within the criminal justice landscape is changing. This perspective made it interesting to combine the improvements applied with those that may still need to be worked on.

4.3 Intelligence Management

Hitherto, the network has been described purely in its structure. In this paragraph, the functions of intelligence management (what is a referral, submission, process, and coordination) will be explained.

As specified above, gathering, sharing, and developing intelligence among police and partner agencies, GAIN Hub utilises the *referral process.*

The referral is basically a Data Protection Form that can be sent to proper agencies (not all speculatively) to help and assist concerning intelligence gaps.

The referral form is submitted to the Hub via email (Government Agency Intelligence Network, 2021). GCs also have an outlook on the referrals and the responses. Proceeding with the Referral process: Core Agency Member completes the form. Firstly, every member needs to fill out the form (Government Agency Intelligence Network, 2021) and must be sure that the referral is in scope (Mapped Organised Crime Group, High-Risk Individuals, Vulnerabilities, i.e., Human Trafficking, CSE/CT but not solely, and/or A Tasked Operation for the referring Agency or Organisation). At the top of the form is specified that:

> *Request for Personal Information. Requesting to GAIN partner agency for the disclosure of personal data or information under GDPR Article 6 (1) (d) or Section 19 Anti-Terrorism, Crime & Security Act 2001 and Sch 2, Part 1 (2) or Sch 2 Part 1 (5) (1-3) Data Protection Act 2018* (Government Agency Intelligence Network, 2020).

The document will be filled with details of the referrer and the summary of criminality/intelligence; it will require and ask if the PNC/PND check has been completed (and/or other databases/systems like EUROPOL/SIENA) How, however, is the verification with the PND accomplished? What is meant by using this system for intelligence in the UK? To comprehend these passages more deeply, it is necessary to explain the system in the UK about PND.

Although some information is held on local intelligence databases, the police national computer (PNC) is the primary data repository for policing reasons. The goal is to provide rapid and reliable intelligence. A lack of a unified definition of the term intelligence has distinguished the field of intelligence studies (Dokman, 2019). Indeed, in accordance with the findings of the content analysis and the five elements acquired by Dokman (2019, p.203), a new definition of

intelligence is provided: '*Intelligence is characterized by actionable knowledge of foreign/ other countries that is disseminated in the form of information towards end users, i.e. decision makers*'. However, although this new definition of Intelligence is present, in this crime-related context, the definition of Europol (2003) and the NCA (2023) will also be considered. According to the Europol definition, Intelligence entails fundamental facts that offer more insight into criminal activity and relies on unprocessed information, whether may include information such as a crime, an incident, an offender, a suspect (Europol, 2003). Intelligence offers knowledge that is usually unavailable and is meant to be utilised to improve the investigations of law enforcements. Intelligence has also been defined by the NCA (2023) as information that has been carefully evaluated for significance and validity. As has been indicated by Brown (2007), the concepts of knowledge and information are closely connected to intelligence. Information can be obtained from various sources including open sources, covert human intelligence sources, undercover personnel, technical interception, law enforcement collaborators, security and intelligence agencies, private sector reporting, and fellow citizens (NCA, 2023). The police investigate a crime, use various methods, and what information is shared and with whom is frequently defined by information gathering and the nature of data (Kerrigan, 2009). Kerrigan has listed a few examples of data-sharing facilities, and here are a couple: QUEST (querying using enhanced search techniques) checks the names database and helps in suspect identification by utilising information such as physical details and individual characteristics. CRIMELINK allows investigations against intelligence from serious serial-type crimes focusing on similarities in incidents and supporting recognising patterns and connections.

The tool for intelligence collection and sharing data inside the police is available to all trained staff in police forces and other law enforcement agencies. Implementing and enhancing the application of policing provides better reliability in the use of resources. Change and improvements in technology and other resources are required to understand contemporary crime better and react appropriately (Neto, 2021). According to Kerrigan (2009), at the time, efforts were being made to improve the ability to manage shared information because information stored by one force was not always accessible to other forces through the PNC. In other scenarios as well it was observed that system separation and information redundancy were unproductive and inefficient (Stevenson et al., 2011), and only by integrating systems and developing a uniform dataset can efficient information sharing be achieved. Adequate information sharing is essential to ensure consistency of care and service provision across the criminal justice system (Bradley, 2009).

Although information technology is ubiquitous in most everyday society, it is still obscure

and obsolete in government functions and has to be modernised. (Phillips, 2008). As a result, there was a discussion regarding creating a National Police Database (PND) through the IMPACT program. The idea was to have a single access point for searching information stored in the police's central-local operational information systems and national police systems. What is necessary to know about PND is summarised in the code of practice (National Policing Improvement Agency, 2010).

The PND is one of the several force, regional, and national management systems for the Police forces that enhances the Police service's capacity to handle and share intelligence and other relevant data. The PND enables the Police to electronically share, connect, and search local information, enduring artificial geographical and jurisdictional limitations. All data should only be collected from the PND when deemed needed and legally permitted. PND and the information gathered must be used regularly throughout the Police and following policy requirements and legal liabilities imposed by the Data Protection Act 1998, the Human Rights Act 1998, and the common law duty of confidence. The Data Protection Act of 1998 specifies when personal information should and should not be disclosed, but the Human Rights Act of 1998 establishes the right to confidentiality, except when necessary for national security (Stevenson et al., 2011).

Every chief officer is a data controller for the information stored on the PND. They must determine what information to maintain and put on the system, the restrictions regarding its access, and understand the consequences of such choices. Information in the network must be handled under the guidelines authorised by the Management of Police Information and the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) Data Protection Manual of Guidance. The code of practice has a short section entirely dedicated to training for staff, explaining how the access to and use of the PND is limited to those who have completed specified training. The training is necessary to act following the regulatory framework for information management and upholding high levels of competence.

Furthermore, the training promotes consistency of processes across the Police Service. It is also specified that the training is not only limited to the staff who will use the system but is also essential for those who do not have direct access to the system and might request others to do it on their behalf and for those who may be granted information gained from the PND. Furthermore, requests may be processed on behalf of other people, but only for a specific reason by an authorised PND user with their login credentials. Ultimately, the code specifies that the data collected from the PND may be shared as long as it is legal and performed in line with the Code of Practice for the Management of Police Information. Information on PND use can be found online

(CASE STUDY Police National Database joins forces, 2022). Afore to the PND, there was slow or non-existent intelligence-sharing between forces. All existing crime intelligence data is stored in dozens of different databases across the country. Although it appeared that combining the existing intelligence retained by police forces across the UK was challenging, in a single, cohesive, searchable database was challenging, considering that the system had to be entirely secure. This project involved approximately 200 different databases, including many that kept information in incompatible ways (also regarding their contents). The intelligence data is held by all 43 police forces in England and Wales, as well as the eight Scottish forces, British Transport Police, the Police Service of Northern Ireland, and other law enforcement agencies. As a result, intelligence verification that was initially hard to perform manually or time-consuming to complete using the stopgap Impact Nominal Index (INI) system, with the PND, should take much less and be less complicated. This system should fill in the gaps and allow the police to see the entire picture. Twelve thousand registered PND users can easily link suspects, incidents, and places based on their access grade. Therefore, through this system, it is possible to obtain and insert the relevant information for the cases. For organisations who rely on GAIN, after following some of these steps and after completing the document with the referrer's details and the summary of the information, GAIN will be asked to specify details regarding subjects/entities for searching. After completing and selecting other required information, the referral is sent to interested GAIN members who handle it, filling in the GAIN Referral Result. Finally, the intelligence is shared with the requesting agency. At that point, there is the intervention (individual or joint).

The GAIN Hub regularly circulates referrals with different agencies. GAIN partners (Government Agency Intelligence Network, 2021) combine 20+ national/regional/local bodies, agencies linked to the Government (Core GAIN agencies), and other private organisations listed in figure 5. It is specified in their document (Government Agency Intelligence Network 2020) that the Hub regularly circulates referrals when significant, based on the content of the GAIN referral (as well as intelligence requirements and gaps). Therefore, the lists of partners as new agencies are not static.

Medicines & Healthcare Regulatory Authority		National Illegal Money Lending Team	National Fraud Intelligence Bureau

Medicines & Healthcare Regulatory Authority   National Illegal Money Lending Team   National Fraud Intelligence Bureau

The Pensions Regulator   Animal Plant Health Agency   Trading Standards (Regional & National)

ACPO Criminal Records Office

Security Industry Authority   Charity Commission   Govt Internal Audit Authority;

Environment Agency

UK Border Force   Food Standards Agency   Driver & Vehicle Standards Agency

BBC   SKY

Solicitors Regulation Authority   HM Passport Office

Companies House   **Core GAIN agencies**   Military Aviation Authority 'MAA'

Gambling Commission

ACPO Police Forces of England & Wales

National Crime Agency (NCA)   HM Prisons & Probation Service

Federation Against Copyright Theft (FACT)

Gangmasters Labour & Abuse Authority (GLAA)   Insurance Fraud Bureau

HM Revenue & Customs   Insolvency Service

Home Office Immigration Enforcement

UK Anti-Doping   Dept of Health & Social Care

NHS Counter Fraud Authority

Intellectual Property Office   Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA)

Figure 5 Core GAIN Agencies List

4.4 PAM's adoption

Mark Darby declared (Darby, 2014) that GAIN adopted PAM as a cooperation platform for sharing information and joint work. GAIN selected PAM to facilitate cost-effective intelligence information exchange and multi-agency cooperation on shared projects.

Simpson (Alliantist, 2014c) emphasises how a mechanism was needed to allow the police and all partners to work together. They needed a secure network and platform that would allow information sharing and work together on joint operations and have a *'referral mechanism that would work on at that platform'* (Alliantist, 2014c) and PAM was the mechanism they were seeking. One of GAIN's problems was that they had 43 different police forces and 20 different government agencies working on different intelligence and information systems, making even simple tasks like keeping a contact list incredibly difficult.

> *I really like working with the PAM staff, they're all brilliant, they are very approachable and nothing's too much trouble, and one of the thing I really like about PAM is the fact that they actually know what you want before you know what you want and they can develop your ideas in such a way that they see things that actually I could never see* (Alliantist, 2014c)

As society evolves, so does technology. As a result, law enforcement agencies use the

newest and most advanced tools to keep up with the evolution of crime (Hooper, Martini, & Choo, 2013). The Internet has significantly altered the computing scenery, and nowadays, cloud computing is an emerging trend in information technology. It is a collection of resources and services made available via the Internet (Sadiku, Musa, & Momoh, 2014). Several organisations rely on platforms to help the various agencies in the UK to collaborate and exchange information. Cloud computing aims to realise the notion of computing as a service. It also expresses the tendency for computing resources to be treated as trustworthy solutions (Reilly, Wren & Berry, 2010). The capacity of cloud services to support the use of the same resources or apps by various users and the potential to spread the resources available on an as-needed basis are key features of cloud computing (Hooper, Martini, & Choo, 2013). Furthermore, a customer can buy different resources, like storage and network bandwidth, and when demand increases, the customer provides more resources in near real-time. PAM is a cloud service ranging from pure file sharing to organisational working management services. This cloud software utilised by law enforcement and its partners across the UK government is essential as GAIN is one of the agencies employing it.

In an interview (UKCloud Ltd, 2017), together with Sam Peters (operation director of Alliantist), Mark Darby discusses and explains the services offered to agencies such as GAIN. Darby is the founder and chief executive of Alliantist, a tech company based in the United Kingdom that supports two cloud management system products with a worldwide client base, PAM, which creates and delivers secure cloud software with knowledge-based facilities embedded within and alongside and ISMS.online. In addition, Alliantist provides expert consultancy services coaching for aspirant alliance professionals and training courses for organisations and their partners (Darby, 2006).

Darby (UKCloud Ltd, 2017) emphasises that criminals and organised crime groups do not have a geographical 'boundary line' where they commit crimes, so a platform like the PAM is a' *trusted secure place for all of the partners to work both nationally and locally and across county lines'.* Further on, Peters mentions PAM by saying that it makes organisations cooperate *'across organisational boundaries so police working with local authorities and other agencies and partners can share information'.* They decided to collaborate with UK cloud after an expensive analysis of the various technological capabilities of cloud providers; they wished for a secure network that had access to customer networks and was simple to manage for the team*: 'What we do is effectively equip police and their partners to work better together, sharing information to reduce serious and organised crime to protect vulnerable people'* (UKCloud Ltd, 2017)*.*

PAM focuses strongly on the SOC, states Peters, attempting to help the community comprehend the risks they incur *'by securely sharing information using PAM'* (UKCloud Ltd, 2017). In Lancashire, they work at the county level, with 350 users having access to various sections of the platform *'to share disrupt OC'* (UKCloud Ltd, 2017), while Darby illustrated that they also work with other agencies and organisations across the country, such as in the Northwest, with Operation Jenga and the Merseyside police and others. Indeed, Merseyside Police (Peters, 2016) appears to have been using the pam platform for some time, particularly in relation to serious and organised crime, securing vulnerable people, and enabling Merseyside Police personnel and officers to organise and manage operations for policing public order events. PAM collaborates with GAIN on a national level, clarifies Peters and *'where national organisations share information.'* Darby also resumes the example of GAIN by explaining how they work with GAIN, which he reaffirms is part of the ROCUs. GAIN with its partners (UKCloud Ltd, 2017):

> *come together on our platform to share intelligence about that criminality to make decisions together on who they're going to go after using their collective powers, so much more chance of a successful prosecution and disruption and then use our platform to actually go about achieving that disruption.*

The description webpage (PAM, 2022) specifies that Pam is made up of initiatives in which the organisations collaborate confidentially and safely. It can be used for Multi-Agency Safeguarding, Serious & Organized Crime, Cyber and Information Security Management and Collaboration. Information sharing is challenging for government agencies and partners, not least due to the disparities in systems and processes used by organisations (Darby, 2014). Security is everything for any IT application; no person or institution desires unprotected data, nor do they want their personal details revealed to unauthorised users (Reilly, Wren & Berry, 2010). The employment of cloud services brings up new concerns about trust, privacy, security, and data transfer facilities. Cloud mechanisms rely on inter-party trust (Singh, Powles, Pasquier, and Bacon, 2015). Trust agreements between service providers and users of cloud services may need to include additional features to address all critical interactions. The policy and institutional problems identified with information in the cloud are becoming more prominent as cloud computing becomes more dominant and capable of ensuring computational capabilities (ibid). Many identified issues can be solved and handled, but some changes may be required (The Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering, 2010).

The different types of initiative areas adopted are part of the product the PAM offers, which reflects specific solutions work for agencies. They are listed and explicitly illustrated: **Groups**, workspace for operating alone or collaborating with others via the cooperative pam capabilities; **Projects**, arrange, and configuration change-related work in a SMART way; **Tracks**, rapidly transfer and track structured workpieces through a simple procedure. Display all work in one location; **Subjects**, to share sensitive information and cooperate with specific people or groups of people successfully. The goal is to achieve better results by prosecuting, preventing, and protecting or preparing (them and the communities) from danger. Lastly, the **Accounts** handle information and collaborate internally on essential relationships with other organisations. Peters (UKCloud Ltd, 2017) state that

> *Whether they are using PAM to collaborate, to share, to deliver more effective results or other technologies from innovative providers like UK cloud, the future of criminal justice has got to be collaboration, it's got to be people working together.*

Cloud computing is a significant transformation that will impact future computing and IT practices (Reilly, Wren & Berry, 2010). Darby (Darby, 2014) added that GAIN might engage more than 100 organisations, and PAM helps overcome this challenge by linking people involved to collaborate safely, cost-effectively, and user-friendly manner. Fellingham (Alliantist, 2014b) commented that he had to deal with four or five different systems to be able to use to manage GAIN referrals:

> *'What PAM's done is draw it into one place, make it easily accessible and portable so that we can actually use it wherever we are, and it means that I'm not opening many different systems, I'm using one system now'.*

From a partner's perspective, it would be simpler for them because, instead of emailing, they have immediate access to what GAIN have, which means they can do tasks much more quickly and easily. He also adds that their way of seeing things helps them structure processes dealing with operations, for example. Simpson (Alliantist, 2014c) was amazed by the PAM's time comprehending what their projects were about entirely. Nevertheless, they tried to understand the concept of GAIN, how it was developed, and the network's future while assisting in implementing the project that GAIN wishes to conduct with PAM.

4.5 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter aimed to help the reader understands the structure and functions of GAIN through the documents received from the Network itself and from data obtained from online interviews that explored these topics. Since there is a gap in the literature regarding GAIN and its functions, this is the first chapter devoted entirely to the Network. In this chapter, the reader becomes more aware of this multi-agency.

In order to understand GAIN at its core, it is necessary first to describe and specify what GAIN is, which roles exist within the organisation and how it operates. The creation of the Network has been illustrated to explain the reason behind the GAIN foundation. It was also clarified how many coordinators there are in GAIN, what role they cover, the job they undertake within the agency and how the employees are divided between the GAIN Network and the GAIN Hub. The motivation for the creation and labour performed was defined for the latter. In addition, the agency's partners were examined and listed. Through the chapter referral document, intelligence and information-sharing agreement have been explored and discussed. These materials made it possible to learn what form the agency uses to share information with partner agencies and which software cloud is employed. The concept of exchanging and obtaining information with the relevant rules and technologies that are part of this was analysed to understand how employees approach this intelligence activity. The software utilised by the Police (i.e., PND) was described and explained to obtain insight into the exchange of information by the police. The paragraph on intelligence management explained how information is conveyed from one organisation to another, who has access to it, and why GAIN is essential from this aspect. Finally, the last part of the chapter has been dedicated to elucidating the PAM collaboration platform GAIN uses to share information and join work. This section serves to clarify the use of this cloud, why it is valuable and the importance for GAIN

This chapter allowed to have a clear picture of what GAIN effectively represents. Since, as pointed out above, the literature has failed to provide a detailed explanation of this multi-agency, an overview of all the information available online and from subjects should be provided.

The next chapter focuses on data analysis and the themes discovered.

Chapter 5: Findings

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will delineate and examine the data collected through surveys and semi-structured online interviews. The sections will provide and describe a review of the Interviews' and Surveys' main themes that emerged during the codifying process. The interviews and surveys have revealed six major themes by utilising the reflexive Thematic Analysis (TA): 1. *GAIN Structure and Function* includes the participants' perception of the GAIN Network (from an insider/outsider perspective), the work environment and roles. 2. *Interaction and Experiences* describe participants' personal experiences and interactions with the Network. *3. Stakeholders Management,* consider the partnership, relation and detection between Police and the community, GAIN, and partners. *4. Benefits of the Network; 5. Identify Issues and disadvantages.* The fourth and fifth themes illustrate the advantages, disadvantages, challenges, and issues. *6. Quality of Information Sharing and Intelligence administration* defines the information sharing process, system, and limitations.

The summary of the finding will reveal the improvement and development the network collaborators and Coordinators would like to see, describing proposals, plans, ideas, and visions expressed in the interviews and surveys of what can happen in the future regarding the Network itself (improvement, expectations) and other subjects (i.e., Intelligence, partnerships, laws, and Government).

5.2 Themes

5.2.1 Theme one: GAIN Structure and Function

This section presents the participants' observations regarding the structure, functionality, and purpose of the GAIN Network. Furthermore, the subjects' comments regarding the utility of the arrangement are highlighted.

P1 in the interview broadly describes the origins and functions of the network, saying that GAIN was founded by the Policing and formalised as one of the ROCU Core Capabilities in 2012 (as shown in chapter 4), representing an improvement for sharing Intelligence and exchanging information with non-police partners and promoting multi-agency enforcement activity within a defined legal framework. In the documents provided (chapter 4) and in this interview has been

clarified that the GAIN has several objectives, such as to disrupt against the highest harm SOC and networks; To build a network of defence for vulnerable people, communities, businesses, and systems; Identify and support those at risk of engaging with criminality and finally to establish a single, whole-system approach.

P1 also added that GAIN agencies cooperate to perform different tasks. Principally, the agencies support HM Government's SOC Strategy. That function is overseen by a National Coordinator who (like all the coordinators) is a police appointee.

A GAIN Operating Manual defines all parties' roles, responsibilities, and processes (but the participant did not elaborate more because this information has not yet been disclosed). Beyond that, P1 also said that GAIN was an excellent example of the government's efforts to encourage a partnership approach to the disruption of SOC. GAIN makes sure they receive responses and contributions for intelligence development across agencies.

A few participants discussed the information exchange activity. P18 speaking as a partner outside the police force now and having come in close contact with the GAIN, said, *'The police would not investigate the offences we examine and its to everyone's mutual benefit we have the tools to complete that task. GAIN is a two way process and probably the police underuse the data held by agencies.'* According to P11, the exchange of information is the basis of the GAIN working system and can vary according to the partners with whom they come in contact. The justification of information acquisition and a more direct comparison produce some benefits:

> *Dare to Share" has long been the GAIN motto. While there have been a few issues with some partners - efforts have been made over the last few years to make information sharing easier across the board. More partners now have ISAs with GAIN which allow for more fluid movement of intel between partners. There are still one or two partners who are strictly 'one way streets' in terms of sharing but, on the whole, any systemic restrictions can often be overcome by face-to-face dialog with the partners agencies - often managed by the respective Regional GAIN Coordinator (GC). Evidenced success stories have made it easier to justify information sharing and there has been a clear benefit to both sides in terms of disruptions, enforcements or case building.*

It has been found a similar type of reasoning and a confirmation with P2, who explained that '*GAIN is a one-way flow of information*' supporting the Police by providing the Intelligence obtained from partners and sharing information and Intelligence abroad. Adding then that:

> *It is very much two ways because invariably the people that we are investigating from a serious and organised criminality point of view, they tend to have a footprint and other agencies as well. They do not just focus on one element of criminality; they go across the board. So invariably the other agencies will normally have an interest in, or they will be aware of them.*

This statement was provided after they talked about the difficulty of managing information sharing with different agencies, saying that the exchange of information varies from agency to agency, which will later show the arguments in section 5.2.6.

In the end, as pointed out by P16: '*GAIN, in essence, is an information sharing network where information/intelligence is shared.*'

P1 described what had been called the Governance board. The Governance board apparently establishes the strategic direction to fight SOC, ensuring that partners contribute and supervise and guide the performance of GAIN, guaranteeing that worthy performance information is used to run improvements. Furthermore, GAIN can improve the Network to understand better-organised crime risk strategically and tactical. GAIN is seen by P1 as:

> *a relatively small concept, although it works locally, regionally, and nationally. The National links and globalisation of criminality is primarily dealt with by the National Crime Agency. What we are able to do is to feed in any information from our partners into that agency, so that we can engage and share information and Intelligence abroad. So, some of our agencies are heavily involved in activities overseas. So, The Intellectual Property Office, they deal with a lot of criminality abroad in counterfeiting, and have a big footprint in Europe. The Food Standards Agency, the Medicines Health Regulatory Authority and the Environment Agency with the exportation of waste crime. So, I think a lot of the agencies that we deal with do have a European footprint. But I think most primarily, most of the work we are concentrated on is in is in the UK. We use Europol and Interpol for intelligence checks. But we are basically a regional Organised Crime Unit capability, and that's where most of our activity sits.*

P28 said that GAIN '*removes the need to contact several other agencies individually*', becoming '*a central hub for working with partner agencies*'. P24 stated that the GAIN is *'is a police led initiative that seeks to harness the data, powers and capability of other partners to address Serious and Organized Crime'*, then adding that *'GAIN are just a conduit to identify agency cross overs and Intelligence sharing'.*

P1 and P2 talked about the roles assumed by workers within the structure, where P1 says that:

> *There is a GAIN Coordinator in each of the nine ROCUs and a further one for London, based within the Metropolitan Police Service but also covering City of London and BTP (British Transport Police). The GAIN function is coordinated through a National Coordinator and supported by the National GAIN Hub.*

P1 also reported the core responsibilities of the National GAIN Coordinator (NGC) and Regional Gain Coordinators (RGC). The interviewee described the role of the NGC, saying that the NGC is there to guarantee that '*there is coherence and that a common approach is adopted across GAIN partners,*' adding that it is their responsibility to make sure that GAIN is embedded into the broader law enforcement environment. Moreover, the NGC appears to assure that GAIN is well utilised at the regional and national level and that it *'continue to identify gaps in the range of GAIN partners.'*

On the other hand, the RGC seems to be responsible for providing a link between partner agencies at a regional level and *'identify and where appropriate coordinate partnership activity'*, offering context in the tasking process (which could identify Organised Crime Groups and Criminals or Vulnerabilities as high risk). Additionally, other duties appear to guarantee that partner agencies can gain access to support for operations, maintaining an understanding of the partner's capabilities, including their capability to respond to requests. As argued, the RGC should work in the context of a collaborative network, as previously stated, due to the numerous partner agencies members of the GAIN. They have priorities at a regional and local community level and must pursue, build, and maintain productive relationships. The participant also adds, talking of the coordinators that:

> *'if one of those coordinators decided to leave the job, then the job description would be put out, and anybody could apply for it. But there is a level of security checks that you have to go through because you are working in […] a confidential environment.'*

Most indicate that GAIN almost entirely relies on these figures, NGC and the GCs; No other employees are appointed.

P2 remarked that there are *only* nine GAIN Coordinators in the country (10, including the Metropolitan Police). The word *only* used by the participant has been underlined because subsequently, one of the coordinators' criticisms has been the lack of personnel in covering large areas. The latter participant frames the Network and the working environment specifying:

> *Down from the National GAIN hub, you have got ten police regions, of which nine of those police regions have a regional Organised Crime Unit. The 10th, which is the Metropolitan Police, City of London, do*

not have a regional Organised Crime Unit, but they like the other nine regional regions. Police regions all have a GAIN coordinator […] 'There is a national GAIN Hub. That is the real headquarters of the GAIN network […] based at Leicestershire police headquarters. We have an office manager [..] a team of researchers and analysts that when the GAIN referrals come through to them, they then undertake the initial police research and then send out to the partner agencies for the agencies to disseminate the Intelligence to them.

P5, concerning RGCs, stated: *'The role of the GAIN coordinator […] who is able to identify whether a partner needs to be involved in some think. So, it would be the GAIN coordinator's role to bring that partner, if necessary, into that process.'* P4 added that GAIN *'has a good team structure where all the coordinators and GAIN work closely and regularly with each other […] Previously there wasn't gain officers were reliant on having to try and find the correct person, build those relationships. With us as gain coordinators, were able to have already done that work, build that relationship. And now we can be that conduit, that gateway to facilitate either conversations, information exchange, or coordination of enforcement activity..'*

An example provided by P6 regarding the work carried out by the GAIN Coordinators, in terms of the partnership, was:

> *Very good example with using GAIN was working with National Crime agency on sexual abuse and exploitation of children rather than I organised, convened and chaired a conference with partners organised through the GAIN coordinator in Yorkshire, the GAIN coordinates from the Northeast of England, and the Northwest of England also attended, and brought agencies with them because of the scale of the problem. And that was really good in terms of getting interesting people together, who could share knowledge, experience and resources to tackle, tackle the problem on a range of different levels, particularly in terms of disrupting these things earlier opportunity, and making it harder for the criminals to get away with it.*

There were also notable references to the GAIN Hub within the interviews, which was the most recent inclusion, created three years ago (as reported in chapter 4, section 4.3). For example, P1 reported that GAIN Hub provides Intelligence sharing across core GAIN agencies, using Intelligence to evaluate threat and risk and detect potential operational cross-over. In addition, the Hub offers access to partner intelligence and approaches intelligence sharing in response to serious and organised criminality and national strategic threats for GAIN agencies.

> *Before the GAIN Hub was created* – says P5 – *each ROCU has their own GAIN coordinator and that GAIN coordinator had to process those referrals […] were having to do all the administration and all*

the background work and what is involved in referral and then did not have any time to actually go and do that partnership work with those other agencies to bring the agencies in the police together.

The National GAIN Hub has been established to provide a key point of contact, rather than all the GAIN Coordinators that are distributed around the country working for different ROCUs. P13 describes the National GAIN Hub saying that:

promote, support, and provide expert/professional knowledge to agencies outside the policing world and within the policing world whilst enabling the sharing of information. We help to establish and build professional relationships utilising our network of established contacts, regional coordinators, and by relationship building with partners.

Moreover, P11 clarified what GAIN Hub its purpose and function denoting:

there is now a single route for referrals and a consistent approach to evaluation and allocation to partners. The Hub also acts as the Police element of the GAIN - providing crime and intelligence checks on behalf of partners who do not have access to PNC, PND or other police systems.

P11 defines the GAIN Hub team as very small with three researchers and someone in the administrative section who manages the database in which the Hub hold all the material. The participant also talks about the experience in the GAIN Hub, saying that at the beginning, they visited some partner agencies (together with another researcher or evaluator), developing a good relationship with the partners. When a new agency was found that could be included in the GAIN, the participant said that was proposed to the NGC:

At one time or another I have had dealing with most, if not all, the GAIN partner agencies. For the past few years we researchers have taken responsibility for acting as Single Points of Contact (SPOCs) for particular partners - thus providing them with a POC and encouraging dialog between us.

The participant continued by saying the Hub can be described as an agency within GAIN (part of the Police entity) and has enhanced *'the information sharing within and without by bringing other agencies on board.'*

In terms of the partnership, P3 said that the collaboration with partners 'works pretty well […] Most of the partners are engaged… to varying degrees' P3 said that GAIN had 'made a point of trying to make putting a personal face on the Gain Hub'. The Hub is placed at the Leicestershire Police Headquarters Intelligence Bureau; it was and still is ideal for one of the interviewees because it could give some perspective in feeling inserted within the police structure, physically and metaphorically. However, if giving a personal face to the GAIN seems relevant, on the contrary, it has been shown how GAIN Hub is also seen as a virtual environment. Indeed, P3 defined the Hub as 'a virtual environment anyway, we basically move referrals in and out and around via the management system. We are in the centre of the web now.' Being a virtual environment does not seem to have lost or increased benefit; The Hub works (and has worked) virtually without too many problems. It has been underlined that during the lockdown between 2020/2021, ordered by the Government to contain COVID19, the Hub was forced to adapt to the new containment regulations like everyone else. Nevertheless, the network has not undergone extreme changes as P3 said:

> Dealing with our partners and customers, they dial into a central number anyway, which they used to when we were in the office that they'd seen no change […] The GAIN Hub hasn't changed at all since the beginning of lockdown.

With the outbreak, they were obliged to work from home, using Microsoft Teams constantly in the background to communicate with each other and do their job. It is not apparent to speak in this case of a virtual environment.

A critical point to discuss is the position assumed by the GAIN employees. Contrary to what was initially believed during the first approach, it has been confirmed by the participants that GAIN is closely connected to police, not only for operations and function but mainly for the role.

The role undertaken by the GAIN personnel is precise "Police Staff." P1 underlined that they are 'police staff role' but 'is not police officer role.' The employee also adds, 'The GAIN Network is actually sits within policing.' GAIN, therefore, is mainly a Police function funded by policing.

GAIN lies within policing, as P5 said: 'I am employed by the police service. All the people that work at the GAIN Hub.' P4 underlined, 'We are hosted by the police force, such myself, I cover […] four forces (which one is told) region for my host force is (which one is told)'. The subject then adds 'being a public civil service'. Therefore, the position assumed in the workplace is effectively seen as 'civilian' because no one wears police uniforms, but as has been clarified, the role is Police

Staff.

P2 remarked, *'I am employed by the Police, as are all my colleagues. So, you [...] have to work for a police force in order to see the vacancy for the GAIN [...] because it is internal only circulation'*. However, dissimilar from the last participant, P1 reported regarding the possibility of being able to apply for the vacant position as Coordinator or be part of the GAIN staff, that:

> *it's run by the police, and you, anybody, can apply for. It is a civilian post, and anybody can apply to be a GAIN Coordinator [...], So it is a police-civilian post. If one of those coordinators decided to leave the job, then the job description would be put out, and anybody could apply for it.*

Thus, the role hired by NGC and the GCs could be considered ambivalent, being in a position between civilians and law enforcement. The uniform is not worn, but the context and origin are still grounded on police forces.

Being so close to the Police, or better saying be part of them, seems to have implications, as interviewees revealed. P2 stated to feel close to the Police because they have a sort of inside, and not see themself too far from them in the future. The interviewee also adds that it must not be easy to be external *'because it is a culture. Every organisation has a culture [...] It is getting to know our culture, and you know how to work within that culture as well and not to be seen as an outsider, which can be difficult.'* It almost appears to be a particular advantage to be familiar with policing culture, especially working closely with the police. The outsiders will find it harder to settle in and, above all, to comprehend the environment or be understood. P11 underline that

> *Working with/for the GAIN has provided a unique appreciation of the capabilities and roles of a range of 'civilian' partners which, from a career policing background, is quite a shock. Sitting in the middle also gives an insight into how effective collaborative operations can be.*

The ambivalence is, hence, once again emphasised. Being in the middle allowed the GAIN employee to feel partially civilian and partially police staff. However, this implies some struggle from the police in distancing from certain functions that they consider to be their own.

5.2.1.1 Theme one: Summary

This theme revealed the structure and people involved within the GAIN, with a description of the origins and functions of the Network. The GAIN network was founded by Policing and formalised as one of the core capabilities of the ROCU. Its objectives include disrupting the highest harm SOC

and networks, identifying and supporting those at risk of criminality, and establishing a single, whole-system approach. The exchange of information is the basis of the GAIN working system and can vary according to the partners with whom they come in contact. The difficulty in sharing information with different agencies varies from agency to agency. GAIN is an information-sharing network that seeks to harness other partners' data, powers, and capability to address Serious and Organised Crime. Participants responded to the interviews and questionnaires outlining the various roles assumed within the agency. The purpose of the Network and some of the activities performed, as well as strategic directions used in GAIN through the Governance Board, for example, to direct the fight against the SOC, were explained by the participants to understand in detail what the agency is about and what the various functions are.

5.2.2 Theme two: Interaction and Experiences

Describing the interaction with the Network, various partners have each in their way, explained how they came in contact with GAIN, why, and how their experience has been. It is worth noting that the interactions with GAIN are not the same for all the subjects; some of them used the Network as an external partner, and someone else instead was aware because internal to the police.

P6 clarified that they became aware of GAIN around 12 years ago, working in the Police. Their agency employs RGCs based around England and Wales and utilises GAIN Hub for several things, such as access to the national database. For this subject, it is valuable to have a Network such as the GAIN available, especially for agencies that are *'second or third tier of law enforcement.'*

P7 said that they are *'significant users of GAIN and an important interface between the private sector and public in the specialist area of intellectual property crime'*. Meanwhile, P20 described their interaction with the GAIN answering that they became aware of it as a GAIN representative attended their OC group meetings. P19 also had the same experience describing a GC in the ROCU who has given presentations and worked on a couple of cases.

Whereas P16 replied: *'I have been involved with the GAIN network for a number of years'* pointing out that they have been involved both as a customer perspective with partner intelligence for ongoing investigations, then the perspective changed from the GAIN side assisting other investigating Officers with partner intelligence, be it agency or law enforcement. P27 used to work in a ROCU as a Police Officer alongside the GC. P11 instead described their first contact experience with the GAIN explaining how they occasionally heard and utilised GAIN in their

capability as a Tactical Intelligence researcher in the Regional Intelligence Unit (RIU) and later Confidential Unit within the EMSOU:

> *This would have been from around 2009 to 2017 and at a time when the GAIN was effectively 7 or so Regional Coordinators operating independently under a National GAIN Coordinator. At that time my contact with GAIN was handling the occasional request for police intel from a partner agency as directed to me by the East Midland GAIN Coordinator. At the time I considered it an annoying tick-box exercise and had little time for GAIN - employed, as I was, with Serious Organised Crime, Major Crimes and Crimes in Action.*

After this experience, at the end of 2017, the participant said they were attracted to a call for researchers and an intelligence evaluator to work in a new National GAIN Hub. Furthermore, P28 specified their connection with GAIN stating that they '*request for intelligence on suspects*'. P26 linked with GAIN '*to establish up to date information during a criminal investigation*'. While P23 answered that they '*requests for intelligence products from other Government Agencies or Public Authorities.*'

The collaboration for P24 is '*submitting GAIN requests and Sharing Intelligence via GAIN with selected GAIN Partners*'; P17 explained using GAIN for '*numerous cases of seeking intelligence or responding to a request*', while P21 illustrated the interaction saying: '*Investigator with public body engaged in criminal investigation seeking intelligence or data recorded on PNC, etc to support the enquiries.*'

Lastly, P22, another network user, added to have '*regular contact with coordinator who chairs multi agency (including Police) partnership groups and has acted as a facilitator of advice and contacts. Referrals via trading standards highlighted NCA interest in nominals under investigation.*'

5.2.2.1 Theme two: Summary

Interaction with GAIN has been described by various partners in the second theme, some of whom used the network as an external partner and others as internal to the police. Although it is one of the most concise sections of this chapter, this theme has acquainted the reader with the different types of partnerships with GAIN, how they originate, and the partners' process of becoming aware of their network. For example, P6 became aware of GAIN around 12 years ago, while P20 became aware of it as a GAIN representative who attended OC group meetings. P16 has been involved with the GAIN network for several years, while P27 used to work in a ROCU as a Police Officer. P11 described their first contact experience with the GAIN as a Tactical Intelligence researcher in the

Regional Intelligence Unit and later as a Confidential Unit within the EMSOU. All these partnerships and encounter descriptions are fundamental to understand how successfully GAIN manages to establish collaboration and preserve its relationships.

5.2.3 Theme three: Stakeholders Management

The third theme reveals partnership and relations. First, several collaborations between GAIN and other agencies will be commented on, starting with the police and the ROCU. Next, the subjects' observation will focus, more generally, on the accomplishment of being in associations with external agencies and the relationship with the community. Finally, the participants also had the opportunity to describe the international collaboration.

Participants said that the most significant partnership is between GAIN and the Police. GAIN is Home Office funded and Police controlled. *'GAIN is already part of the police family [...] the relationship is good,'* P4 says. P1, concerning what binds GAIN and Police, explained that 70% of all referrals into the GAIN Hub come from policing:

> *That means that policing demands more of partners that partners do of the police or other agencies [...] policing needs to understand that agencies do not have SOC as their main focus and have limited resources but at the same time I think to get that 'whole system approach to tackling SOC other government agencies need to understand the role they can play in assisting the police to tackle SOC.*

Although GAIN is an integral part of the Police, the latter is also seen as a "partner", as P2 stated*:*

> *even though I'm police staff [...] I'm also common to the Regional Organised Crime Unit. So, I am employed by the police. The police are only one of my partner agencies. So, I have 20 or other government agencies that I link into so by default, my role probably is more partner than police now.*

Another critical partnership underlined is with the Regional Organised Crime Units (ROCUs). As already observed in section 5.2.1 and chapter 4.1, GAIN is part of the ROCUs, which is itself part of the Police. ROCU is described by P27, saying that **'***ROCU were set up to tackle organised crime, using a multi agency support'*. At the same time, P5 underlined that ROCU is part of the police force, and if someone works for a ROCU, they are employed by the police service. The latter participant described the interaction between police forces and ROCUs, saying that:

> *All police forces work under the National Intelligence Model and have*

tasking process […] all the crime and all problems […] there are only a certain amount of resources that could be diploid to those particular problems, so tasking process is within police forces. A police force might […] go through a tasking process to take their problem to the region. So they will take their problem to the ROCU and they will then bid to have their problems investigated to be adopted by the region. So, that's how that works […] Is a constant cycle with every month. Every ROCU who have task in meetings with their police forces who are bringing things that they would like the ROCU to adopt on their behalf

P12 talked about the relationship between the police forces and the ROCU in employing the GAIN, saying: *'Like to see police Forces / ROCU using GAIN partners as standard when doing intel development cases and performing a GAIN referral in same way that we run a basic intel check on localized systems like PNC and PND.'* Hence, it appears that there is an understanding between the police forces and some external partners, an interest that pushes them to collaborate. However, this underlines the difference between law enforcement agencies and partners in the legislation. Consequently, some priorities adjust during the investigations. P4 underlines police priorities: '*the police will have different competing priorities, which will mean police jobs will be prioritised about the partner job, which will mean we cannot always allocate officers to go out and do the enforcement'*. Still, as P6 outlined, '*the police are rightly the lead law enforcement agency in the UK; they are the most experienced established and probably the best resourced.'*

P4 clarified that several agencies are part of the GAIN Network, they have different partners:

The majority of the ones that speak to us and linked the most are the government agencies, those that are linked to law enforcement, though, National Crime agency, HMRC, Immigration Border for those are our main customers. But we have others that sit slightly outside of those that will be other regulatory bodies

The GCs work closely with the partners, P1 said: '*to try and disrupt the criminality. So, they would work by collectively working with a number of agencies to visit premises,'* and as confirmed by P2, P3, P13, and P24 GAIN, bring in other agencies to help in the fight against serious and organised criminality. For P1, it seems that the commitment made between partner agencies and GAIN is positive because, for them, a '*number of agencies have been able to contribute in a structure way to tackle S&O criminality either through the sharing of intelligence, sharing of resources or utilising partner agency legislation*'. In addition, as clarified by one of the Survey's

participants, GCs create relationships with a range of third-party agencies/organisations that can work with other GAIN partners to tackle SOC investigations under controlled circumstances.

Currently, agencies have no standard expectations or requirements regarding the level of engagement (or involvement) with the GAIN partnership. P1 clarified: '*There is also no direct cost to the agencies for joining GAIN, even if there will be indirect costs for referral resources*'. It then describes the process that occurs when an agency is "recruited" or wants to be part of the GAIN

> *Will in the first instance make an approach to the National GAIN Coordinator who will establish the nature of the agency and whether there will be a mutual benefit to both parties. If it is deemed that there may be a mutually beneficial relationship the new partner agency will be asked to complete an induction framework.*

This procedure allows compliance with all the necessary legislative and governance requirements, but GAIN reassures the agencies on how information/intelligence is managed. It all ends with

> *the final gateway being confirmation at the National Executive Board. Once confirmed, the established agencies will be made aware of a new core GAIN agency. This process provides the necessary reassurance to each agency that the information/intelligence that they provide is managed appropriately*.

From P6, working together has its positive side but '*can be so much better*'. Its value guarantees it focuses on partners' issues and reflects their needs. The subject sees GAIN as a multi-agency group that enables partners t*o 'deliver within their specific areas of responsibility to protect the public,*' adding that *'GAIN isn't or shouldn't be seen about necessarily supporting police work.'* In the end, the partner discussed saying that GAIN is about different agencies of state working and collaborating better to protect the public, '*and if that is done right* – they say – *the public will support it because they will see the benefits it brings them of making sure people who defraud them*'. An idea supported by P5, who said:

> *The idea behind it is a serious organised crime strategy is that police forces, and all the partner agencies, the sort of that the government back partner agencies, can share information with each other to make it really difficult for you to be a criminal that, but still has to be a legal basis.*

The opinions of those who have had the opportunity to work with the GAIN seem to be

overwhelmingly positive. It can be noted, for example, the response of the P24 which said:

> *The relationship between my Agency and GAIN is a good robust relationship with sharing opportunities beyond Intelligence [...] The work of GAIN is available to those staff who have a need to know. Due to the sensitive nature of the Intelligence sharing, to prevent data leakage.*

Alternatively, the answer that has been given by P27, who noted:

> *'There is many ex-police officers who are fully vetted and currently vetted that could have access to the databases, which would then free up the GAIN network to become more involved with networking, which I think is an important part of the role.'*

For P11, collaborating and using new ways of detecting crime would be an advantage that should not be underestimated, leaving space even for those who are not part of the police sector: *'For too long there has been (and continues to be) an overwhelming arrogance from Law Enforcement that they "are the LAW!". If nothing else, GAIN has shown that there are many more ways to skin a cat.'* Overall, the participants have also drawn attention to what it means to collaborate, work in partnerships, observing positive sides. Indeed, these partnerships seem to carry considerable weight. For example, P1 revealed several benefits of working towards the same goal, *'to disrupt serious and organised crime must be beneficial'*. It also seems that the ability to communicate and coordinate activities are improved.

For P2, relationships and partnerships help build plenty of contacts during years of activity and good intel-sharing activity with most agencies. According to P5, one of the strengths of being in a partnership is facilitating police work and time efficiency in completing and filling out data protection. Plus, promotion, support, and providing expert knowledge to agencies outside and within the policing while facilitating information sharing. P7 stated instead that they emphasise a 'Problem-solving' approach:

> *where there is a collective approach that does not threaten an agency's position and where they feel confident to contribute. For example, in dealing with the advertising revenue organised crime derive from illegal streaming websites our analysis showed that gambling websites were heavily present on them. We were able to work with the Gambling Commission who regulate the UK domain in gambling matters to reach out and discourage them from advertising on criminal websites. It had an amazing impact reducing cash flows by some 80%.*

A different way of considering the problem is one of the benefits found during collaborations and partnerships for the P8: *'looking at a problem more holistically provides the best placed picture of a problem'*. Furthermore, according to the P9, it seems that thanks to the partnerships, it is possible to rely on partners for support or lead, to use skills and capabilities *'the pooling of information from partners identifies opportunities as well as ideas. it also shares responsibility '*.

Benefits include greater information sharing and better Partnership working. A better understanding of what enforcement opportunities Partner Agencies can offer Policing in combatting Organised Crime and in identifying opportunities for disrupting their activities, as P15 observed. P23 revealed a valuable example of what it means to work with different specialists *'Having worked in the Police for over 30 years before moving to an external law enforcement agency, it is very clear the additional expertise and experience that is available outside of policing which can enhance the quality of investigations.'* The same concept was recognised by P17, who talked about multiple viewpoints instead of just law enforcement to help in the investigations. *'Sometimes you don't know what you don't know i.e. what may be available to help or support your work or investigation. Sometimes agencies are tackling elements of the same problem from differing agendas or angles. Combining the resources in some cases has been very directive or effective.'* P10 has underlined the benefit of sharing software, while P15 discussed how the collaboration enhanced partnership work, increased awareness of an agency's role, remits, and limitations, and identified opportunities for broader involvement in fighting OC. Other advantages the subjects encounter is working together on cross-over cases (P28) and proposing alternative approaches and alternate skills of engagement with and disrupting criminal networks (P19).

Being in a partnership means improving the work and having different views as P6 stated: *'Working together, working in partnership, collaborating, it is a lot easier to get the job done rather than try and do it in isolation or ignorance of each other'.* In comparison, P24 specified that a support agency could bring evidence to detect a subject of interest. Other benefits encountered are disruptions, enforcements, case building (P11) or improving the collaborative protocol (P26). As well enhanced partnership working and the possibility to determine, for Policing, what opportunity the partner agencies can offer to combat and disrupt SOC activity (P15). *'Benefits include greater information sharing and better Partnership working'* stated by P15 and also claimed by P13 and P14. P14 also observed that the external cooperation had made numerous possible collaborations as part of the support tactics for SOC investigations.

Moreover, P12 discussed improving the time speed of intel flow and joint working, mitigating

operational cross-over. P12 also commented on familiarisation and confidence that partners provide better partnerships for enquiries. Private sector and industry contacts are helpful to understand OCGs (Organised Crime Groups) lifestyle, which facilitates developing an improved strategy to track and disrupt. P16 provides ideas on what it means to collaborate with partner agencies or other specialists; i.e., have the opportunity to use and get access to various experiences and skills, helping to enhance the capacity to solve problems in the best way and improve the level of understanding, especially if the agency does not have that kind of capability or power to deal with that issue. In this regard, other participants agree like P18, who underlined that working with partners means additional knowledge, Intelligence and information, different skills and knowledge of partner agencies that can be shared, such as P22, who said *'opens eyes to alternate skill set and legislation which can be utilised to pursue or disruption offenders'*

P25 identified other benefits like saving time, additional capability, and knowledge, providing an opportunity for innovation. In addition, understanding other agencies help to understand how to assist each other and all the difficulties that every agency has to overcome; as the latter participant said: *'Using experts outside the Policing world often adds a different perspective which can be just as relevant. Wider networks offer more knowledge and expertise an increased support can also be motivational.'*

Furthermore, if there is an interest in collaboration between both parties, sharing information is easier; as P21 said, '*Some are very easy as we have direct access into their database with username and password'*; or could bring further benefits as P29 explained saying that sharing available information could lead to better decision making, being careful that the support agency working alongside the police is professionally trained, knowing the legislation.

During the interview, P6 had the opportunity to express their point of view regarding the management of partnerships:

> *In terms of how partners, for the partners, hold information, that can be a benefit to worse […] working together […] in partnership, collaborating, it is a lot easier to get the job done rather than try and do it in isolation or ignorance of each other.*

According to them, the organisations must '*knows and understands their legal obligations to lawfully share for a specific purpose.*' The challenge of sharing information is debated while they add that it is '*frustrating when obstacles can be put in your way when people are being when people have been unnecessarily cautious around sharing information* […] *they are possibly retaining information that could be of value to others if they only got involved.*' Associated with

the legislation that allows the exchange of information, one of the points emphasised was the respect between partners:

> *I understand that where things can be better is by is where the partner agencies understand and respect the membership of a partner as GAIN, that itself should immediately enable the flow of information and intelligence, then the law to be a bit smoother than sometimes it can be.*

Collaborative work, especially in the Intelligence division, requires a thoughtful approach to the legislative matter. Often the issues fall on legislation, as participants explained.

P28 underlined the possibility to learn from each other during a collaboration, trying to give to new agencies facilitation of joint working as a high priority *'We have many agencies carrying out law enforcement activities, very important that we are able to share information, learn from each other and work together on cross-over cases.'*

When it was asked to answer the poll if participants believed that a support agency working alongside the police (essentially, as a knowledge exchange mechanism) could facilitate the work, the subjects all responded optimistically. The responses tend to encourage collaborative work. Many appreciate partnerships precisely because they have the opportunity to work in an environment that can bring many more benefits than disadvantages. In both surveys, a poll (slightly different in terms of preferences from the first and the second survey) was included, where it was asked to choose among several options that could be considered a benefit of external collaboration according to the participants.

Focusing on the choices made by the subjects, the responses selected in the first survey indicated a careful discussion on the modern working environment, permeated by new knowledge and development of new skills, attention to the issues to cope with, and the establishment of external collaborations. For example, P10 said: *'Working with partners is now the norm not the exception, I would like to embed partners in Police environments to gain a true understanding both ways.'* On the other hand, the answer that received the least votes was the choice pertaining to enhanced legitimacy. Whereas in the second Survey, the majority preference has also presented the prevail of the careful growth in joint work and, in addition to the enhanced legitimacy through inclusivity. The other choice to receive fewer votes has been to recognise cultural sensitivities around problems/issues.

In addition, some participants provided a practical example of their working collaborations; for example, P16 said: *'from a law enforcement perspective I have disseminated partner intelligence to other internal departments in support of their investigations and likewise information from Police*

systems with has been shared with partners'. Whereas P11 said: *'For the past few years we researchers have taken responsibility for acting as Single Points of Contact (SPOCs) for particular partners'.* P2 described how working in partnership helps to adapt to the environment, using each other's powers and Intelligence to get a bigger picture of the working cases.

Furthermore, according to P1, the partnership would help disrupt the criminality and simultaneously impact the community, raising *'the confidence that the police and partners are interested in making their communities a safe place to live'*.

Although types of collaborations between agencies were previously argued, another key point during the data collection was the relationship with the community. Given the numerous references, the relationship with the community and its connection seems necessary. It appears that the community has its influence. When asked how GAIN could help the community and vice versa, P1 replied that the community could help *'by supporting the sharing of intelligence and resources, we help tackle criminality at a national, regional and local level making the community a safer place'.* It implies that the community still provides information (crucial in some cases), which can only occur through interactions. The last comment led to arguments regarding the lack of a close relationship between the police and the community, leading to critical disadvantages, such as obtaining intelligence. As a matter of fact, debating about community and law enforcement's role seems to have been a recurring argument concerning trust. More specifically, it has been discussed, for example, how tough it is to gather intelligence from the community, underling some of the affirmations that have been given about the trust placed in the Police. According to P2: *'some members of the community do not trust people that work for the police […] there is a section of community that will not work or share intelligence with the police.'* The Police seem no longer capable to build a relationship with the community. As there have been several cutbacks in policing, P2 explained, *'there are not enough resources as they used to be [...] neighbourhood policing is not like it used to be [...] You knew your local beat officer, you felt there'.* It seems complicated to obtain information from the community in some neighbourhoods, despite criminal activity being present, highlighting confidence concerns between Police and community: *'that might be in dangerous by sharing that intelligence with the police […] there is that distrust with the police.'*

Moreover, the participant adds that should be new perspectives and different approaches to reach people and acquire intelligence regarding SOC and criminality. P24 noted that *'all Serious and Organised Crime, criminal investigators must recognise and address cultural and community issues as a part of their investigation'.* Therefore, it is appropriate to

accentuate the concept of community and its value within the system. The involvement and impact of new organisations regarding the combat of the SOC appear to have a favourable implication within the community itself. Nevertheless, it is not merely significant to exchange information but to understand how to make the community cooperate with new organisations, directly and indirectly, feel part of it.

P3 considered that:

> *it is easier for the community, I think, to help individual partner agencies […] that make up GAIN by reporting things to those agencies as when they see them. And then it is […] in following up those reports that those agencies then engage with GAIN.*

However, as previously mentioned, this is linked to a relationship of trust that must be restored. Therefore, not only should a better relationship between the community and the police be established, but many of the new organisations or agencies, such as the GAIN, should be visible to the public. In this way, a positive response would be obtained from the public, which would be more available.

P2, however, notes that the community does not need to be aware of an agency such as GAIN:

> *I do not think the GAIN needs to be because it is the police that has to be the front-facing organisation that deals with criminality because that is what the police do. I see the GAIN is very much there to back up the police by providing the intelligence that we can get from other partner agencies'*

Moreover, it has been added a reflection on the kind of relationship that GAIN tries to have with the community '*we are getting into the community, but that is just scratching the surface, and I think we should say more to the community […] I think we need to ask the community what do they want us to do?*' It seems that they should be more open to the community, the relationship appears to be necessary, but as the interviewee pointed out, there is a lack of trust.

The partnership with the community is absent; GAIN acts behind a curtain, not having direct contact with the members of the community as explained by P3, emphasising how, as a government agency, they do not work for the community as a partner: '*the nearest partnership that we have with the community or, you know, the general public will be some of the Trading Standards teams*'. Moreover, they stated that having several partners on their side, who have contact with the public, ensures they get even more information '*because basically […] we are sat in the middle of a circle of 47 partners. Now, they will have a public-facing side if you like, which*

they are all absorbing [...] the information and complaints and Intelligence.' The participant also adds that the public impact is not so accentuated '*because the public don't know anything about GAIN, which is one of our shortfalls, really we do not have that much in the way of public perception*.' According to the interviewee, GAIN and its partners can help the community by eliminating criminals from society. Even if the community is not aware of GAIN as an organisation, as a network, they can still see the impact and visible positive signs that GAIN is doing with its work:

> *Whether the community knows of GAIN [...] they'll certainly see the impact of GAIN [...] the visible signs that GAIN has been on the job [...] that's how I would like to see the community sort of engaging [...] I can't imagine that there's a need or a capability for like a public-facing element of the gain hub.*

Trust is essential in the world, especially when compelled to work collaboratively. P3 expressed a different angle to observe the level of trust between GAIN and some partners. They stated that there is a high level of trust because the partners do not deal with a faceless organisation '*because of the nature of how the hub operates, and how the partners work [...] with the hub, you can actually that, that there's more confidence in the system'.* The latter participant also emphasised that GAIN, as a network, is composed of people. There is actual interaction, and it seems to change how an organisation is seen '*is staffed by real people rather than an automated [...] there is a, an element of confidence'.* As had already been mentioned previously by the same interviewee, being face to face, or in any case having an interaction that does not only require virtual use, but entails also having different, more profound confidence and trust. However, even though trust is built on human relationships, it seems to have different variables, such as the people and the culture behind the organisations, as P4 acknowledged that '*with GAIN and the other agencies, the trust is better with certain agencies than others*'. While P1 noted '*I think, generally, the trust in good'.*

The last relationship to talk about it is the international one.
The argument around international collaboration interestingly focuses on the relationship with EUROPOL. In an interview, one of the coordinators said that they currently, through Europol, work with police partners all around Europe, which means that EUROPOL is the conduit where GAIN can put in a request to their overseas police forces; they have colleagues based at The Hague '*When Europol help UK police force with an inquiry* – said P5 – it i*s actually UK police officers or UK police staff that are actually dealing with that inquiry working for Europol*'. It seems that another advantage through Europe, according to P2, is that they will fund meetings '*we can through*

European funding, have meetings with our partner forces in various parts of the world'. While P1 said about Europol, *'we use Europol and Interpol for intelligence checks, but we are basically a regional Organised Crime Unit capability, and that is where most of our activity sits'.* The Europol, as explained by P2, gave them an insight into cultural aspects of Eastern Europeans to understand better the criminals coming from Est Europe *'it is totally different to the way that our criminals work, is fascinating, but we are not geared to tackling that type of criminality, unfortunately, which is why we are having to work closely with our colleagues in Europol'.* Collaborative relationships are influenced, both national and international, by legislation, as noted previously. With the advent of Brexit, the collaborative relationships between Europol and British law enforcement agencies, including the GAIN, have had to be dealt with some changes. As pointed out by P4: *'our staff will be so impacted around the Schengen agreement with the European countries […] There is now a more longer administrative process by which we have to go through to put those notices out.'*

P1 stated that one of the GAIN main problems related to the UK's exit from the EU is the loss of SIENA. The interviewee then explained in specific what this SIENA is:

> *SIENA is Europol's secure messaging system that enables law enforcement officers from EU member states to exchange intelligence with Europol and international partners in a secure manner (up to and including UK Restricted) where serious and organized criminal activities that affect two or more EU states are suspected.*

Another subject emphasises the loss of SIENNA. In fact, according to P3, Brexit will not impact the UK. The only particular implications will be the loss of Europol SIENNA *'many of the partners are probably going to have problems post Brexit, if they have European link or a European sort of presence.'* They also report the loss of the Schengen Information System (SIS). Nevertheless, the collaboration is still active, and the exchange/collection of information with Europe, although difficult, still seems to work.

On the other and, P4 added that another thing that could change after Brexit could be priorities: *'however, there is a suggestion that Europol will prioritise their members date more than the UK, policing. So therefore, our information exchange in theory will be processed at a lower risk and a lower priority.'* According to some agreements, this will exclude higher threats such as terrorism, continuing to be shared in real-time with relevant agents. Moreover, it appears, as P5 claimed, that the sharing of information at present and the collaborations are still in progress *'at the moment I could still send a request to Europol for checks on individuals from the Schengen*

states for information about their Intelligence or criminality'.

P2 spoken instead of a possible modification of agreements and controls due to Brexit. Furthermore, it is added that Europol gives them an insight into cultural aspects of Europe to understand better the criminals. However, with this detachment, some of these aspects could be lost. According to P4, there could be significant changes *'our staff will be so impacted around the Schengen agreement with the European countries'*; however, they claim that something that is not changed now is the European police report. They explained how some administrative processes could take longer during the interview. Here is a practical example of what could have happened before Brexit:

> *Previously, we were able to put alerts out on our police national computer for vehicles, people, objects, property documentation, and those would get automatically alerted onto the European member state databases. So they if that person passed through their borders or stopped, we would get notified.*

According to the interviewee, there is also the possibility that Europol may give priority to member states over the UK policing, so the UK intel exchange might be theoretically processed with lower risk and a lower priority. At the moment, however, it has been pointed out that there is still a certain continuity and good collaboration: *'They have information desks in The Hague, and UK policing and through the GAIN we will make requests of the Europol police for information exchange'.* Finally, it is hoped that the intel exchange will not be hindered. Indeed, they say, there will be an impact, or in any case, it will be influenced by the Schengen agreement with European countries.

5.2.3.1 Theme three: Summary

The third theme outlined GAIN's relationships and collaboration. Here there is an exploration of what types of collaborations exist in GAIN. Various collaborations between GAIN and other agencies were commented upon, and the observation of the subjects particularly focused on the realisation of partnerships with external agencies. GAIN is a multiagency group that enables partners to collaborate better to protect the public. The participants agreed that working with partners means additional knowledge, intelligence, information, and different skills and knowledge of partner agencies that can be shared. GCs work closely with their partners to disrupt their criminality, and as underlined by the participants, respect between partners is also important, as it should enable the flow of information and intelligence and understanding other

agencies can lead to better decision-making. The commitment made between partner agencies and GAIN is positive, as it allows them to contribute in a structured way to tackle S&O criminality.

The participants emphasised the different agencies that are part of the GAIN network, particularly governmental ones, such as those that are linked to law enforcement (and already described in 4.3), for example, the National Crime Agency, HMRC, and Immigration Border. The relationship with the community and its connection is key during data collection. It has been discussed how difficult it is to gather intelligence from the community and how EUROPOL is the conduit for GAIN to request overseas police forces. The participants also emphasised that the strategy behind these collaborations is that we can share information and intelligence (with a legal basis) to fight crime.

5.2.4 Theme four: Benefits of the Network

This section focuses on the benefits of working within the GAIN and working with GAIN highlighted and commented on in the surveys and interviews by the subjects.

Several participants found numerous benefits of working and collaborating with the Network, describing their interaction and functionalities. P17, for example, noticed an advantage in working closely with GAIN for the ability to reach out to partners, access the material, and share trends and typologies. P16 agreed that GAIN offers efficient access to law enforcement and other agencies to their respective material. The latter comments were confirmed by P13, who pointed out: *'the GAIN process has also helped to mitigate operational crossover, and has acted as an enabler for joint / multi-agency working',* then adding that the National GAIN Hub has *'improves access to information for agencies that would otherwise not have the contacts or expertise to request information from others.'* While P12 stated*: 'GAIN has opened up new partner links and developed relationships. Quicker time intel flow. Better joint working,'* then specifying that the GAIN is *'the only network that links into and coordinates Government Agencies, both for intel sharing but also multi agency enforcement'* trying to promote in the best way they use of each partners powers and tactics. Another insider (P14) argued that the GAIN had enhanced the Intel sharing arrangements by building relationships with Intel staff across the ROCU landscape. P27 commented that, related to the importance of GAIN in the Intelligence sharing area, enlightened that individual forces have their criminal intelligence system not loaded on the PND network (that could be valuable Intelligence):

> *Without the GAIN network other agencies can not work without the sharing of intelligence. For example individual forces each have there own criminal intelligence system, which is not loaded on the PND*

network, for example 999 calls which was loaded onto the IIP, this was all valuable intelligence. The other example is the use of PNC, and all the transactions on that system, without this network there is NO other agencies which includes Border Force, and unless a HMRC officer is based in a ROCU then there is no sharing of intelligence.

For P8, there is good communication and engagement, and it is an essential sector for coordination with other government and law enforcement agencies. Good multi-agency work coordinated by GAIN *'GAIN is key function for partner agencies dealing with organised crime and it is crucial sector for co-ordination with other government and law enforcement agencies. I have seen some really best practice multiagency work coordinated by GAIN'*. It seems for P10 that GAIN is an excellent point of contact to find the right people to talk to.

P26 confirmed the GAIN purpose during their collaboration, finding *'Up to date assistance in one contact'*, as for P18, who said that GAIN improved the partnership approach to managing Serious and Organised Crime. P28 also commented on the benefit of using the GAIN, underling once more the images of the Network as a contact and transition agency, saying it operates as a central hub for working with various partner agencies, removing contacting other agencies individually and facilitating joint operations. At the same time, the Police can collect Intelligence for their purposes.

According to P20, one of the values of using GAIN is a better understanding of a person's background and receiving intelligence information concerning, for example, human trafficking or modern slavery. Furthermore, the same subject said that they also saw GAIN benefits up close: *'I have seen the benefits of having a GAIN representative at meetings and also as I use GAIN for every job.'* P25 explained that there is operational support and an improving understanding of what other law enforcement agencies are doing. Regarding the possibility of using additional material and power, P16 replied that:

> *The GAIN network has brought significant benefits to a number of investigations I have been involved with both with physical presence on days of activity, utilising other partner powers to disrupt criminal activity or by using partner information/intelligence to enhance ongoing investigations.*

As already shown, the collaboration between the GAIN and the partner agencies is the system's main focus. P24 explains further, underling the possibility of acquaintance between GAIN partners and identifying each other as such; this leads them to recognise that controls and regulations have been put in place to ensure the sharing and storage of sensitive information.

In addition, the benefits of exchanging information were also listed by the participants, which said, for example, that there is access to data and intel held by other agencies (P21) or for P22 who said that there is shared knowledge that prevents duplication and work, thus having resources in common to be able to fight organised criminal gangs. For P9, GAIN allowed some partners to manage risk around dangerous offenders, discussing topics and common interest information that was not previously known, enabling legal and efficient disruption: *'Involvement in GAIN increases the awareness and appreciation of what it brings within one's own organisation. this generates professional interest and engagement which drives a virtuous circle of collaborative working'*

According to P25 and P27, one of the values is sharing intelligence within organisations, managing data sharing standards and processes. Equally, P7 expressed their opinion on the subject, saying: *'We are much better able to share information, intelligence, not solely by IT developments but by managing data sharing standards and processes.'* Moreover, as P23 noted to be able to utilise information held on other databases to which some do not know exist or do not have access, such as P19 who stated that GAIN improves intelligence information base from broader partners and discover valuable contacts within other organisations. P13 also shared some feedback from agencies and law enforcement that had the opportunity to work with the GAIN saying that the Network: *'has provided information/intelligence to support and progress investigations from sources that would not have ordinarily been available.'*

However, P29 emphasises that the advantage lies only when the information is provided fully *'This does not happen in a large number of cases and falls woefully short. The returned information is usually short of the requested information even though GAIN are able to access that information.'*

Although the numerous reports of the benefits, some difficulties and issues collaborating or working with GAIN have also been noted on the other hand, and this leads to the next theme.

5.2.4.1 Theme four: Summary

The benefits of working with GAIN have been highlighted in surveys and interviews and have been revealed in this theme. Participants noted the advantage of working closely with GAIN for reaching out to partners, enhancing the Intel sharing arrangements, building relationships with Intel staff across the ROCU landscape, accessing the material, and sharing trends and typologies. The benefits of exchanging information include access to data and information held by other agencies, shared knowledge that prevents duplication and work, and managing risk around dangerous offenders. In addition, the National

GAIN Hub has improved access to information for agencies that would otherwise not have contact or expertise to request information from others. GAIN has been described as a key function for partner agencies dealing with organised crime, providing operational support and coordination with other government and law enforcement agencies. Additionally, GAIN allows partners to manage risk around dangerous offenders, discuss unknown topics and common interest information, and enable legal and efficient disruption. However, some difficulties and issues in collaborating or working with GAIN have been noted, leading to the next theme.

5.2.5 Theme five: Identify Issues and Disadvantages

This theme focuses attention on significant complications and disadvantages encountered by the participants. It will concentrate on the problems identified by partners or other colleagues who worked closely with GAIN, and it will focus on the challenges and issues identified by the GAIN employees relating to the Network and the involvement of partners. Finally, the last part will emphasise challenges and issues that every participant has encountered in partnerships related and overall matters.

As stated previously, the participants noted (in addition to the benefits) also some difficulties related to the working system with the GAIN Network. For example, P21 observed a slow and frustrating process. The subject furthermore specified the lack of understanding *'about what we were trying to achieve in the application'*, sketchy details received (requesting further details), and applications refused *'on basis that I could only make one application for information on a single subject every 12 months which frankly is ridiculous and when challenged we did receive the data eventually.'* P27 perceived how there is a lack of awareness of some agencies on what GAIN can do, a statement sustained by P6, who underlined

> *If people are unaware of GAIN, or they disbelieve what GAIN is says it stands for, then cause problems [...] I think it's a lack of understanding of what the network can do what it isn't set up to do [...] on what different organisations are trying to do.*

Other concerns have been emphasised, such as resourcing issues, staff, and budget. P12 discussed the struggle to share and not enough awareness as well, saying that *'non GAIN partners still need to be made more aware of GAIN and police priority areas, what information we are seeking and bets method for dissemination'*.

P11 and P13 also revealed issues related to recognition and arrangements, such as failing

to acknowledge the Network or no comprehension of its potential within the country, and at the same time revealing that the GAIN Hub has not have been established as a permanent body, obtaining annual reviewable funding, and absent of appropriate funding and investment to develop its capability. P13 also added: *'in my opinion GAIN is undervalued and, whilst successfully operating to meet requirements, has the potential to provide a much more effective service to law enforcement and partner agencies.'* P27 emphasised a problem concerning not only the staff deficiencies but also a management issue:

> *The GAIN network needs to be a larger network, or that certain individuals within government agencies that have the appropriate vetting have access to the databases, this would then free up the GAIN network to then actually get involved in some actual law enforcement and get other agencies to involved in investigations, and tackle at multi levels.*

P10 talked about limitations regarding facilitation *'Limited as all organisations tend to have a set of rules that supersede the Gain Form'*. At the same time, P17 identified challenges in collecting from/sharing information with GAIN saying *'that are concerns about the security of the information or further dissemination.* P23 underlined that sometimes some issues lie in security, just as sometimes it resides in the formatting of data or a reluctance to share with an external stakeholder, *'The timeliness of responses can sometimes be an issue'.* P8 unlighted how GAIN employs a different engagement within regions.

More generally, some have drawn attention to how there is a domination of the Police in SOC definition, such as P7, who said: *'it is also the responsibility of non-police GAIN members to develop their capability of recognising it and presenting it to the same sort of standards as mainstream policing'*

Conversely, the disadvantages were also observed by those who work internally in the GAIN. Several examples provided were complex partnerships, lack of resources and budget observed by P1 (as also previously noted by other participants shortly before), *'The issues are more to do with resource and demand upon agencies whose primary objectives are not Serious and Organised crime.'* The same problem was encountered by P6 with the GAIN Hub, underlining that *'the challenges with the gain hub have probably been more about a resourcing issue [...] I know they have been they have had some challenges about resources in terms of budgets and retaining staff.'* P2 also faced several related problems like the cost of technology and lack of personnel: *'There is only one of me [...], and there's only one of my colleagues in all the other police regions. So, I cover*

six police forces […] is quite a hard thing to do'. The subject also enhances a difficulty related to maintaining that contact *'maintain that contact with everybody is difficult because the limited numbers of GAIN co-ordinators that are on our country,'* and at the same time re-establish contact again after moving on. They likewise emphasise difficult Intelligence Sharing (people hiding behind Data Protection Act; Partners being very protective with their Intelligence), an argument supported by P29, blaming a *'lack of training and understanding in this field',* saying that:

> *people hide behind the Data Protection Act and GDPR because they don't know what they are doing or understand the legislation and are frightened to share the information even though they are protected in law to share the information under strict criteria.*

Whereas P15 discussed disbenefits in Intel agreements, *'Disadvantages Include identifying difficulties in information sharing arrangements between Agencies, a lack of Legal Gateways to exchange information and Intelligence'*.

Supplementary issues have been detected by the participants P1, P2, P3, P4 and P5, such as: sharing Intel between non-government agencies and private partners; identification and admission of weaknesses; competing for resources; getting information because hard to find and trying to make sure the quality of referrals. In addition, the participants detected problems related to the police, for example, finding impediments in the Police while trying to get a partner agency operation to be resourced by police officers or waiting for the Police for the right resources to assist because of the lack of some legal permissions (such as arrest). Furthermore, attempt to let understand the policing of other forms of criminality with a significant impact on society, making sure to get the right resources put against that.

The last part will identify challenges encountered in the wide-ranging work environment by all participants. For example, according to respondents, there is a strict local gateway from some Govt Agencies, leading to prohibition with some sharing or many requests and time-consuming, as P12 mentioned:

> *Non GAIN members require more dialogue to understand level of vetting and security, best contacts, data available and legalities to correctly share (DPA Crime Disorder Act for Police not always the relevant and right legislation) - need to ensure necessary and proportionate at all times*

Apparently, the restrictions are related to the Intel exchange and the ability to understand

the legislation; P23 discussed the lack of understanding of legislation (created to protect, not prevent, information sharing). P11 identified challenges in obtaining information beyond the Network to non-government organisations or private businesses, managing expectations within the legislation and difficulty for the Police to be inclusive/accept external agencies or ideas. While declaring support for the GAIN, they inform that some partner agencies are not fully committed (tending more to individuals than organisations). The latter participant also adds:

> *The first challenge from the Hub point of view is trying to educate the referrers to outline exactly what they seek, where they believe that information lies and to provide the justification and proportionality for having it. The second is, having identified the recipient agency(ies) to finesse them into providing the information sought where the referral may not be as explicit as they/we would like.*

P7 and P27 identified some difficulty accessing key databases like PND and PNC (although, in the next theme, some participants will illustrate it as an innovation that had brought several benefits). P27 specified:

> *I did not appreciate when whilst I was working as a Police Officer how the network is extremely important for the agencies that are not Law Enforcement Agencies i.e. Police, NCA. It is incredibly difficult to access databases, i.e. PNC for names and vehicles, also PND which without the systems other agencies find it difficult to mount any kind of action against suspects etc*

P7, on the other hand, it has listed more issues related to different areas, For example, 'Commercial sensitivity and competition rules' or 'Interaction detracting from the organisations' primary purposes and performance indicators'; they also observed significant differences in attention regarding nature and impact of criminality; Lack of will at management levels.; Challenges working in areas that do not quite fit SOC agenda 'yet has a significant impact beyond the reach of any particular agency on its own'. Seeing organisations, especially in regulatory areas, are not used to external tasks and not designed to cope. P2 addressed their comment on explaining issues related to criminals from abroad/overseas, difficulty in approach and

understanding. Struggle to deal with cities 'Big Cities, Big Problems', not only at the criminal level but also in the relationship between the community and the Police. P13 instead concentrated their comments talking about issues related to divergent priorities of institutions; lack of personnel in various institutions resulting 'in challenges to receive a timely response' and finally lack of knowledge 'Lack of specificity on the part of requestors of information resulting in them not knowing how to ask for what they are seeking, or not complying with legislation.' Then finally, there is P8, who observed variation of Intel collection due to restrictions in place with certain agencies and the nature of their work.

5.2.5.1 Theme five: Summary

The most important details described in this theme are the challenges and issues encountered by the participants of the GAIN Network. These include a slow and frustrating process, a lack of awareness of what GAIN can do, and resourcing issues, staff, and budget, and a lack of recognition and arrangement. The GAIN Hub has not been established as a permanent body, obtaining annual reviewable funding and lacking appropriate funding and investment to develop its capabilities. Additionally, there are problems concerning staff deficiencies and management issues. The GAIN network needs to be larger, or certain individuals within government agencies with appropriate vetting have access to the databases. Challenges in collecting/sharing information with the GAIN include security, formatting of data, and timeliness of responses.

It seems to be a domination of the Police in the SOC definition, and disadvantages include complex partnerships, lack of resources, and budget. P6 and P2 discuss the challenges of the GAIN Hub, such as resourcing, cost of technology, and lack of personnel. They also discussed the difficulty of maintaining contact and Intelligence Sharing, which is difficult because of a lack of training and understanding. The disadvantages of Intel agreements include identifying difficulties in information-sharing arrangements between agencies and a lack of Legal Gateways to exchange information and intelligence. The participants identified supplementary issues, such as sharing Intel between non-government agencies and private partners, identifying and admitting weaknesses, competing for resources, getting information hard to find, and trying to ensure the quality of referrals. They also identified problems related to the police, such as finding impediments while trying to get a partner agency operation to be resourced by police officers or waiting for the police for the right resources to assist. Additionally, they identified challenges in obtaining information beyond the network, managing expectations within the legislation, and difficulty for the police to inclusive/accept external agencies or ideas.

5.2.6 Theme six: Quality of Information Sharing and Intelligence administration

This theme seeks to illustrate other comments, showing obstacles, strengths, or innovations during the exchange of information between various agencies (GAIN included), whether they are part of the police or not.

Starting with P13, who defined what is required during Information sharing: '*Information sharing requires systems that are fit for purpose to collect, record, evaluate, and disseminate data in an efficient and accountable manner, and to provide records that can be searched against in order to mitigate errors and duplication.*' When the Police National Database was introduced in the UK, says P1, the system has effectively brought together Intelligence across policing, and it is encouraging, '*but it still didn't bring in the partners, that didn't bring in other government agencies intelligence.*' During the interviews, P1 clarified the role of the Police National Database (PND), introducing it and identifying it as a significant improvement in the intelligence-sharing process:

> *Before PND you would have to go to each force to ask for the information and there would be possibility you would not identify that criminals were committing cross boarder criminality. PND uploads all of the data from each force into one searchable data base. There are still issues in that PND is primarily used by the traditional law enforcement agencies police, NCA, HMRC and Immigration and not by other government agencies.*

P12 said that PND is a real improvement that links all Forces and now bringing in more partners data;' Always concerning the PND P16 stated that:

> *The introduction of PND has created a 'one stop shop' for all criminal matters including Intelligence which has meant that all of the relevant material is in one place rather than approaching individual Forces for any intelligence they may hold on a particular subject;*

Regarding information technologies, P1 said that an intelligence database is supplied to each police force (minimum 43 systems) and all partners. The same participant analyses what kind of software GAIN uses, defining it *particular*, because it '*enables a better workflow of intelligence sharing ensuring that we have accountability and auditing on all the intelligence that is shared*'. They also explained that numerous GAIN agencies have existing Information Sharing Agreements (ISAs) with the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC), or as for to Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) with each other. However, they continue, '*there is no one overarching ISA that specifically enables information sharing between all GAIN agencies, but information sharing will only be undertaken where a valid legal gateway exists in order to meet legislative requirements*'.

Many of the agencies (revealed two of the Hub's employees) are able to search the information in the PND, but for those who cannot, at the GAIN Hub, three researchers carry out the search on their behalf and then submit the result back to the agencies. All GAIN referrals (coming from partner agencies and police forces) arrive at the administrator at the GAIN Hub, who inserts them into the system. The referrals are observed and evaluated, and a team helps process them: *'The vast majority of referrals are processed through the GAIN hub'* said P5.

P1 clarifies that the system used in the GAIN is called PAM (People Achieving More), which appears to work effectively. This system allows and has been specially developed to securely share Intelligence between police and partner agencies. It seems there was no particular system before. The participant said everything was done via email, *'which was quite long winded and quite difficult'.* However, PAM is also mentioned by P15, explaining how information is shared through this platform *'Improvements still need to be made as not all Partners access the information sharing platform (PAM)'.* The participant then later discussed that at present, information sharing also occurs via emails (in addition via telephone with examined individuals from organisations that are part of GAIN), consideration observed as well by P14, who said that *'Information/Intelligence exchange has speeded up the process to include an audit trail of the exchange to demonstrate effective management of data under existing legislative arrangements'.* P10 also stated *'speed via email. Joint shared software or hub software is the end goal.'*

As has been noted, one of the topics that appeared to be close to the participants was how technology significantly impacted information sharing. For example, P6 pointed out how technology allows data to be shared more quickly. As for the ability to exchange Intelligence (which requires reaching an agreement caused by relationships, trusts, lack of knowledge) in IT terms seems to be effective. P3 noted that the more government agencies access intelligence technology, the more crime-fighting will improve. Furthermore, P11 in the first Survey stated that from the Hub's point of view, there appear to have been several improvements *'Auditing too has provided a safety net and confidence to manage the flow of intelligence.'* By continuing, there is P9 who said that *'IT enables quick sharing of information. this can be enhanced by relying on GAIN membership as an official mark of confidence in partner's ability to deal with and manage Intelligence appropriately.'* P13 debated IT's role, saying that it *'also allows for the efficient and secure transmission of data on a global scale, as the GAIN also supports information sharing with non-UK agencies'.* Instead, P7 said, *'We are much better able to share information, Intelligence, not solely by IT developments but by managing data sharing standards and processes. There are issues with access to key databases like PND.'* Finally, P11 discussed security and operational matters:

> *if it means secure internet/messaging, encrypted VOIP call technology*
> *and the ability to present and discuss operational matters in a secure*
> *environment attended by a number of partner agency representatives*
> *then the improvement has been profound over the circulation of a*
> *tick-sheet back in the late 2000s. Auditing too has provided a safety*
> *net and confidence to manage the flow of Intelligence - certainly from*
> *the Hub perspective*

Participants' responses regarding the importance and development of IS, relate to one of the questions posed in the first survey when it was asked if information technologies have improved information-sharing practices in their agency. 90% of them agreed that technology positively impacted intelligence sharing. A further question was added for those who disagreed, which involved explaining how they prefer to share information. P8 response has been:

> *I think technology could enhance it - as previously mention*
> *incorporating more virtual element of any GAIN meetings if you are a*
> *National government agency it can be to attend some meeting could*
> *take a considerable amount of travel time*

It is not only technology that has a relevant importance in information exchange. The legislation has an essential role in sharing information as well. An exchange of information without a lawful basis does not exist, and this, says P5, *'should reassure people that their right to privacy is respected'*. The legislation allows sharing information knowing the integrity of the intelligence and support handling codes; understanding the legislation provides an exchange of information done for the right reasons. *'The laws are written well enough, I think, around sharing of information,'* says P6. From a legislative perspective, P15 explains how law enforcement applies the DPA and the GDPA *'Law enforcement uses Data Protection Act and GDPR to exchange with all Non Police agencies and would continue without GAIN. Partnership working is easier using the GAIN network.'* Although legislative restraints need to be followed, individual agreements for sharing intel are possible where appropriate, clarifies P16. Information is shared respecting the legal agreement.

If everything is justified and required legally, everything is more straightforward, as the latter participant explained: *'providing a legal reason exists for information exchange and that request is necessary, proportionate and justified then in most circumstances information sharing outside of the GAIN network is good.'* However, the participant also added that the real challenge is the *'timeliness on occasions of some of the responses.'*

However, it is also specified by P1 that information sharing sometimes can be problematic: people seem to want a written explanation about what can and cannot be shared and *'even*

sharing with from police force to police force, used to be very difficult because everybody held their intelligence within their own agency, within their own force region'. Therefore, sharing Intelligence often becomes complicated with some agencies, while it seems much more manageable with others. The difficulty lies in the protection of the Intelligence, as P2 clarified:

> *Some agencies are very, very good. The larger agencies, unfortunately, like HMRC Majesty's Revenue and Customs, are quite poor. They're very, very protective of their Intelligence, and rightly so we should be, but we as a police, held an awful lot of Intelligence as well, but we're willing to share back with them.*

P4 also specifies that IS is more complex with some agencies because they have confidential agreements and security processes that are not as good as others:

> *With GAIN and the other agencies, the trust is better with certain agencies than others, and I think that is down to either their relationships, how long we have been in contact with them for, and some allies on a personal basis. Others are based on their legal information sharing gateways. Some agencies, for instance, will share information on the basis that it could prevent and detect crime, and we will do that quite quickly and willingly. Other agencies such as the Health Service Department, Work and Pension, ones with lots of big data that we would like to get on to they've got confidential agreement, and security processes around those for the relationship there is not as good with others.*

Thus, some agencies (including the GAIN) will be faster and will certainly do it more willingly. *'We share as much as we can, and individual agreements sit behind it,'* replied P10, awareness observed by P3 in the interview. The big problem encountered, they said, does not concern trust between agencies or the technology linked to the exchange of information but rather the barriers that exist in an agency that allows or not the sharing. Everything is shared under the Data Protection Act. The main problem is to understand who is asking for that information, if it has a legal basis to do so, and if there is a law that provides, in that case, the sharing of information, as P5 said: *'GAIN Hub has achieved a lawful basis to share that information. That's what's been agreed'.*

Related to this concept, the participants encountered several challenges and issues and promptly clarified how the problems developed and what they are attributable to. For example, one of the challenges faced by P10 in collecting information from other institutions (that includes a member of GAIN and non-members) seemed to be having a different set of hoops for every

organisation, priorities and resources level; Different set of hoops for every organisation, different priorities, different resources level. P14 instead acknowledged the misinterpretations of legislation that allows legal sharing without the necessity of any specific MOU (Memorandum of Understanding), while P15 noted a deficiency in '*Service Level Agreements and willingness by some organisations to share. Lack of Legal Gateways and lack of understanding about DPA and GDPR by some organisations and Police.*' For P17, there is a concern regarding the security of the information or further dissemination (talking about agencies do not subject to tight information sharing policy). The possible relationship can be made with one of the problems already encountered by another participant, where they emphasised the lack of training in the sector. P26 discussed the unwillingness to provide information due to protocol and adopted systems (unless it directly influences their operation's area).

On the other hand, it can be found P12 expressing this comment on the exchange of information with essential agencies:

> *Govt agencies like DWP, HMRC & NHS have very strict local gateways which prohibits some sharing and if they can it takes many requests and time consuming. These core agencies hold the largest and most useful datasets as well which is frustrating.*

For several participants, the experiences in the collection from/sharing information with GAIN did not have a negative impact (or, in any case, no problems were encountered), while for others, there were numerous challenges along the way. P27 explained their answer, saying:

> *The GAIN network needs to be a larger network, or that certain individuals within government agencies that have the appropriate vetting have access to the databases, this would then free up the GAIN network to then actually get involved in some actual law enforcement and get other agencies to involved in investigations, and tackle at multi levels.*

This last comment is also linked to the challenges encountered by those directly involved with the Network and the GAIN's staff. For instance, P29, talking about issues encountered with the Network, pointed out: '*A refusal to disclose pertinent information held on police systems to assist my investigation that they are legally entitled to share, but wouldn't'*. In addition, P21 confronted most prolonged application processes with GAIN, specifying that other agencies '*are done on a simple DPA form'*.

The topic of trust is repeated below other characteristics. It seems to be a glue within the working environment, not only from a social perspective. For example, trust issues could be

related to information sharing, as showed by P1, which could conduce to a problematic relationship with other partners:

> *Information sharing outside of GAIN can be problematic […] without the trust and induction process that GAIN agencies go through, there is often reticence about sharing intelligence and all parties will want some more ISA despite there often being a legislative basis for requesting for information.*

It seems that the impact of trust is necessary when sharing sensitive data. As P1 stated*, 'the trust is there, but sometimes, you just have to remind people that […] they can share intelligence and information and they can trust each other'.* Some accentuated just like the trust is one of the positive aspects of working with GAIN as P15 said *'GAIN is a trusted brand and recognised in Law enforcement'.*

In order to understand in-depth whether the problems were related exclusively to the participation of the work with GAIN, in the second Survey was asked if the participants had experienced similar challenges in collecting from/sharing information with other institutions. 69.2% replied that the same problems were also encountered with other institutes. The participants' opinions regarding the cause of challenges as been presented heretofore. For instance, the answers showed issues linked to the legal part regarding the exchange of information, its risks, knowledge of the legislation, and experiences shared with the various agencies and organisations, including GAIN (with forms, database, most prolonged application processes). In the first Survey, another vaguely similar question was raised. It was requested to rate how the information-sharing experience outside of GAIN is perceived. Again, the percentage indicated a favourable majority. Those who have detected with other agencies during intel exchanges explained the reason behind their choice. P7, for example, wrote that there is a need to excel in communication and coordination *'As we do not have direct enforcement powers, we need to be able to influence others and to do that it is fundamentally necessary to excel at communication and co-ordination backed up by sound evidential advocacy'.* While P9 wrote: *'we are a young organisation but have officers with relevant experience and as important, enthusiasm to do the job and who understand the benefit of joint working.'* P12, as already observed, underlined the lack of awareness of the Network and all that follows.

The GAIN is mentioned several times when discussing external collaborations and sharing information. However, not only problems were encountered in the Network, as P13 explains, for example, '*Both law enforcement and other agencies have provided feedback that the GAIN has*

provided information/intelligence to support and progress investigations from sources that would not have ordinarily been available.' P24 instead underlines how much GAIN is an advantage to the detriments encountered *'Professional expertise is already sought during more challenging criminal investigations, GAIN are just a conduit to identify agency cross overs and Intelligence sharing'*
The result obtained from a poll in the second Survey that was asked to rate the information-sharing experience with GAIN revealed a favourable majority. However, some of the subjects listed what improvements should be made. For example, P17 wrote that it would be better to have *'Nominated agency points of contact with advanced security clearing and access to covert* data'. At the same time, P18 explained that they would help *'Additional resources within each Region to assist the workload of the GAIN Coordinators'.* The lack of resources was also emphasised by P21, who underlines how the GAIN is clearly under resources:

> *hence resistance to applications. We could hugely limit our demands upon them with access to PNC in particular ourselves. Repeatedly having to complete the full application process is laborious should be able to provide details once and then go in on back of that case for further data requests.*

P20 clarified how it would be preferable to have a single platform rather than using a series of forms and individual returns. At the same time, P19 wrote that they would like GAIN Coordinators to consider investigative options.

When it was asked if the participant agency's participation in GAIN improved information-sharing with other partners (outside GAIN), 90% of the answers showed that there was indeed an improvement. Those who answered negatively to the previous question were asked supplementary how information-sharing has not improved (letting to choose from different options). Unfortunately, even those who responded positively inserted an observation on the matter, thus making it impossible to understand which of these options negatively impacted. Simultaneously these choices are shown which of the possibilities conducted to an improvement.

The in-depth responses of the participants saw a further explanation of what the problems or improvements are. For example, P11 has criticised some individuals' lack of professionalism (not fully committed) in certain agencies despite professing support for the GAIN. On the other hand, P9 present the improvements made so far, highlighting how more experienced you become in sharing information legally, the more the agent will improve in that field, looking for those opportunities. The latter subject also indicated how the Network increases awareness and appreciation of what is brought to partners and organisations, generating a circle of collaborative working. Finally, P8 explained (as already displayed) the practices *'we assess and determine if we are justified, proportionate and legally able to share certain information with non-gain members'.*

Moreover, positive responses about relationships, further developments, and intel exchange have been observed. For instance, P15 recognised this concept emphasising how GAIN is recognised among law enforcement to share Intelligence legally with non-police agencies. While P12 wrote:

> Limited degree, but GAIN has sought to bring in new non-GAIN / LEA partners such as more charities & regulators & private sectors, eg. RSPCA, SRA, RHA (Hauliers). There is no national IT platform but simple a better relationship and trusted contact to share sensitive police/partner suspect names via a standard DPA data sharing form.

Enduring the discussion made by P13 regarding the GAIN Hub, the participant wrote about the improvement on information access for those agencies that otherwise would not have the contacts or expertise to do so. Furthermore, the Hub, as clarified by P11, brought a considerable improvement in sharing information within and without involving other agencies. Meanwhile, P14 underlined the role of the GC by specifying how they establish relationships with organisations that can connect with other GAIN partners to fight detailed SOC investigations under controlled circumstances.

In the end, P7 clarified:

> The whole idea that other agencies have a key role to play in dealing with crime and SOC requires changes in attitude particularly at senior leadership levels where there is an understandable reluctance to take ownership of such issues within organisations that do not have the capability of dealing with it.

Therefore, there is a need to change attitudes specifically at senior leadership levels, declares the participant, *'as attitudes change and confidence in each other grows, this changes.'*

Furthermore, some participants identified possible improvements from the intelligence perspective. For example, P8 clarified how technology could help and improve some of the processes *'I think technology could enhance it - as previously mention incorporating more virtual element of any GAIN meetings if you are a National government agency it can be to attend some meeting could take a considerable amount of travel time.'*

It also appears that some changes have already been implemented within the system, even if it is not explicitly related to the GAIN Network. For example, P6 was introduced in one of the interviews MoRiLE 2020 assessment tool *'that enables partners to score to a consistent standard and assess crime groups they are investigating or other issues they are investigating, which enables national oversight to try and identify mutual areas of interest or where people can give*

support'. The partner considers this new introduction really positive. P7 also highlighted the use of MoRiLE *'Using MoRiLE has to be the top priority as we have a golden opportunity to use a standardized methodology to assess SOC'*.

From a legislative approach, P16 wrote, *'Providing a legal reason exists for the sharing of information and that request is necessary, proportionate and justified then in most circumstances information sharing outside of the GAIN net'*. Along with this matter, P9 additionally added: *'the process can be enhanced and eased by not looking for separate ISAs. a value of GAIN is that governance, including the Tiers, which enables expeditious sharing of information.'* Furthermore, according to P8, it would still be better to work to improve intel exchange, underlining that there are some reasons why some agencies outside GAIN information are not shared. However, the process and policy they have at the moment meet the requirements of the job. Ultimately, P29 suggest there is a need to hire people who understand the legal gateway for exchange intel: *'Remove blockers. If the application is justified, lawful and proportionate then provide the information requested. It is all data base information.'*

P15 clarified that it is necessary to ensure that partners have access to the information-sharing platform (PAM) (since not everyone can get into it at the moment). The latter participant would also like to see a central information-sharing agreement approved to cover all agencies. P11 explained a need to make wide-ranging access to PND, including uploading Intelligence (there are already steps forward to make PNC and PND available to more of the GAIN partners): *'Wider access to PND (including the ability to upload intelligence) will increase the intelligence picture available to those agencies and the police immediately and, by association […] those within the network without direct access.'* It would also seem that P23 would prefer to see in the future *'Greater access into the information through fewer databases, where law enforcement bodies are able to demonstrate a legitimate need for information then they should'*.

Aiming for better information sharing is needed within agencies. However, P2 clarified, *'I think it would take a major incident to happen in this country for automatic sharing of intelligence'*. P4 also agree to improve the ISI among the more prominent agencies. It would help, to have senior management who are more available and dare to share. *'We need to be able to articulate and explain how there's a level of risk around serious organized crime and organized criminality that crosses over into traditional policing,'* explains the participant. Even in this context, the subject indicates the need to promote GAIN's work and show its value to promote, encourage, and enable faster exchange of information. An improved system that takes less time, as P27 clarified, *'identify individuals in government agencies to have direct access to databases [...] intelligence*

needs to be shared and joint action taken against these large OCG's'. Another answer was *'It would be better of all of the IT systems from the partner agencies could communicate together, allowing instant network-wide intelligence searches'*. Automated dissemination is also suggested in this response. P7 answered, linked to the intel exchange and its system, *'Standardised data recoding and the use of accountable crawlers to search across databases (as opposed to a massive data warehouse)'.* P19 pointed out that information management and knowledge sharing could improve markedly among law enforcement, currently too piecemeal *'with so many areas trying to attract your attention, many of them not relevant to several roles'.* The participant also added *'Possibly an easy to find link on Police intranets so there is a handy guide/ reminder whenever we're considering them.'*

Finally, P14 suggests that in the future, they would like to witness *'within all agencies, both GAIN and nonGAIN members, Strategic acknowledgement and empowerment of staff to allow staff to share information within the existing lawful information sharing legislation'*.

5.2.6.1 Theme six: Summary

The last theme revealed the organisation's essence: Information Sharing and Intelligence administration quality. Information sharing requires systems that are suitable for collecting, recording, evaluating, and disseminating data efficiently. The Police National Database (PND) was introduced in the UK and significantly improved the intelligence-sharing process, uploading all data from each force into a searchable database, but traditional law enforcement agencies primarily use it. The GAIN Hub has improved information access for agencies that otherwise would not have the contacts or expertise to do so. It has also enabled the GC to establish relationships with organisations that can connect with other GAIN partners to fight detailed SOC investigations under controlled circumstances. Participants highlighted PAM's role as a system used to share intelligence between police and partner agencies securely. Improvements have ensured that all partners access the information-sharing platform (PAM).

The most important details to emphasise are the need for better information sharing within agencies, the need for senior management to be more available and dare to share, and the need to promote GAIN's work and enable faster exchange of information. An improved system that requires less time, automated dissemination, standardised data recording, and accountable crawlers is also suggested. Finally, strategic acknowledgement and empowerment of the staff are also recommended.

5.3 Summary of the Findings

The research question asked to what extent the police engage with partners to prevent and detect Serious and Organised Crimes. The findings suggested that the police appear to rely on support agencies to fight crime. As has been found, the example is the creation of the GAIN, conceived precisely to relate the police in partnership with other agencies. Several participants spotlighted the complexity of living in a globalised world, and it is difficult for the police to maintain an almost unique control. For this reason, it is well understood that the doors must be opened to collaboration.

However, the discoveries also revealed how the crime-fighting monopoly still resides almost entirely in the hands of the police. As ascertained, GAIN is an integral part of the police. The multi-agency supports intelligence sharing, disruption activity, and network development between the police and other partners. The value of collaboration as a turning point in investigations was remarked in the data, considering it a strength to which greater importance should be given. This revealed that the police turned to collaborators during the need.

The proposed changes from the participants were referred to the Network during interviews and questionnaires, are presented to improve the work environment, collaborations, and partnerships. P1 specified which changes could be implemented in the Network (which could benefit information sharing as well), identifying, for example, the necessity *'to Bring Everyone Together and Galvanise Others Behind Gain'* and *'to Clarify Core Focus and Set The Foundation for Standards'*. The participant also added concerns about *'Request to Develop the Gain Model in A Coherent Way,'* emphasising what was clarified in the previous themes, *id est* the acknowledgement of the network, with a need for a *'Recognition and to Build Confidence in Gain' brand.'* The last point described as the *'Request for Ownership and Trust Amongst Gain Members'*. The recognition is a topic retraced by P4, who expressed their opinion, saying *'the awareness of the GAIN Network still has a lot to develop'.* Lack of awareness leads to not very profitable relationships, which need improvement. It is not a lack of trust (the participant tells me), but precisely the fact that there is no awareness of the Network. It is also necessary to show the results obtained to the public through marketing, continue the interviewee without frightening the community and make the GAIN more visible since there is an absolute need for law enforcement, especially around the SOC. The communication strategy could improve the Network, explaining the risk levels around SOC and Organised Criminality.

According to P4, the link between the Police and the parliament should be presented. That will lead to having more chances for joint operations. It remains imperative to enhance, promote,

and encourage GAIN and its work. It will make the community feel more involved and secure; as the interviewee stated: *'we need to ensure we have a good communication strategy and media outlet that on social media architecture, we are sharing what good results we are achieving.'* The last answer seems to contrast with a statement made in one of the interviews where P2 said, 'I don't think it's necessary to publicise the GAIN'.

P3 suggested, on the contrary, a marketing campaign related to public relations. According to the participant, it would be appropriate for the public to see the GAIN in action to help the agency be recognised. At the same time, the community's positive perception of the Police, according to them, would increase. P6 seems to agree with this prospect. Furthermore, if the public could see the agencies working together (thus being clearer and showing the work done), the community would be more inclined to support the collaborative working network by understanding its value (even under an economic factor).A response from one of the surveys focused on a future expectation to promote the work accomplished P17 *'Sharing of the success stories and best practice in positive outcomes or disruptions'.* P20 follows, saying: '*I first heard about GAIN after seeing a presentation so I guess education to serious and organized teams in particular would be good'.* A further response by P22 also saw the benefit of advertising *'promotional work within rank & file in policing and government agencies.'*

Communication seems to be a fundamental starting point for P7 emphasising in the response: '*As we do not have direct enforcement powers, we need to be able to influence others and to do that it is fundamentally necessary to excel at communication and co-ordination backed up by sound evidential advocacy'.* According to P16, instead, GAIN should be more extensive to include some of the larger-sector agencies to use and share information materials available to them. GAIN should be accessible to other agencies and tackle OCG's across the board, writes P27, and to do so, the network needs to be wider

> *or that certain individuals within government agencies that have the appropriate vetting have access to the databases, this would then free up the GAIN network to then actually get involved in some actual law enforcement and get other agencies to involved in investigations, and tackle at multi levels.*

The participant also highlights the lack of visibility of the Network, suggesting that GAIN should do a roadshow and present what they can do *'the only reason i know about the GAIN network was because i was so closely involved in it'.* P29 remarked precisely the same suggestion: the roadshows add a more regular interaction with partner agencies. Similarities have been found

regarding the lack of visibility of the Network as well. P22 wrote that the credibility and knowledge of the GAIN should be increased within the Police. In comparison, P25 focused on improved Network advertising to a broader audience by promoting GAIN's work and benefits by participating in training days. Moreover, the latter participant added, *'More support from within my own organisation to be represented at these meetings on a regular basis.'* Related to this topic, P6 agreed that one of the improvements for the Network would be

> *refreshing the marketing around it, refreshing people's awareness and understanding of it making sure that partner agencies who have interest in these areas know GAIN exist, know the value of it and see the benefits of it in terms of people working together to deal with a problem that protects the public and serves the needs of the public.*

The point is seeing benefits in social interactions, of people working together to address issues that meet and serve the public's needs and protect the community. The expectation is to see (once the restrictions due to the pandemic are lessened) the GAIN tries to re-energise (with the partners). P5 showed another possible improvement within the GAIN in terms of Network expansion, specifically more personnel. However, it is better to recognise and improve something that all of us can see or think is not working at that moment. The interviewee also hopes the same system will be maintained. P2 expressed the hope of willing intelligence sharing between agencies in about ten years, emphasising the need for different perspectives of people who do not work in the environment, specifying how they do not have all contacts or skills (including knowledge). According to the interviewee, connections should be built between psychiatrists, psychologists, criminologists, and specialists within academia to fight and prevent crimes, including SOC.

Other participants have presented and reported proposals for potential improvement linked to the Network. For example, P13 was disappointed to see GAIN being considered undervalued, even though operating successfully. According to the employee, the National GAIN Hub deserves more influence and authority to *'provide more structure, accountability, and positive impact on the fight against SOC and OCGs.'* As we have already had the chance to comprehend in the Literature Review and emphasised by P13, law enforcement cannot deal with SOC alone as technology and modern society have managed to increase the effectiveness of criminals

> *to operate in all areas of business and their ability to launder their illicit funds. All areas of business and the community suffer from the effects of SOC, and all areas of business and the community are required to work together to mitigate the threat and harm.*

P9 also reports that GAIN seems recently moved from being led by the Police rather than

by Partner: *'the GAIN SOC tasking roll out is addressing that and leveling the field. offending in partners areas of responsibility can have more of a national impact than some police priorities. acknowledge that through challenge on behalf of partners.'* According to them, it would be appropriate for the GAIN Hub to move to the MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) model, including the virtual world *'resourcing requirements do not need to be full time but should be a minimum commitment.'* Finally, P11 specified that they would like to see the Hub "go" online in referral submission and administration. The explanation has been that this would make the management and quality of referrals easier, ensuring a safe space for partners to *'have informal discussions between themselves without having to pass everything through the (understaffed) Hub.'* On the other hand, P18 suggested continuing with training inputs as the GAIN already does, while P26 suggested a better transparency indication of how the Network works.

Lastly, improving relationships and new organisations is one of the key points the participants already dealt with and seems to have considerable weight to ensure that agencies can improve themselves. For example, P4 explained that they saw building relationships where there were none to make the exchange of information and collaboration activities more fluent. The latter participant also observed that *'There is a need for law enforcement, especially around serious organised crime.'* It, therefore, seems that there is a need for new organisations that oppose organised crime. Still, according to P2, a multi-agency can work anywhere but will always be part of government departments. Even in an answer given by P7, a proactive attitude in implementing changes within the sector can be seen to provide ample space to new agencies that play a crucial role in dealing with crime and SOC. These improvements are a sign of the benefits that the Network could develop in the long term and thus enhance limitations that are currently encountered.

Nevertheless, the results also indicated no significant associations in cooperation between civilians and police. Due to this historical period, it is a necessary piece of evidence to understand. The importance of community as support has not yet been identified as a possible option, relying on the same policing vision. Because it was initially believed that GAIN was a multi-agency of civilians who join forces with the police, it is essential to underline that also, in this case, there is no real support towards an outsider but always towards an insider. However, as has been noted by numerous participants, new angles of understanding are needed nowadays. Several benefits, including increased information accessibility by external and internal agencies, contribution to reducing operational cross-over, and challenges, such as difficulties in raising awareness of this network and its undervaluation, have been identified both by GAIN employees and the Network's

various partners and users.

Chapter 6: Discussion and Conclusions

6.1 Introduction

This research investigates the weaknesses and benefits of a new type of commitment to sharing between law enforcement and third parties and the impact on the agencies of these new arrangements. It also evaluated the extent to which these arrangements offer unique opportunities for community engagement. To do this, a new intelligence agency called GAIN was examined as a reference, with the purpose of bringing together intelligence and investigation staff within the ROCU and other government agencies. In this chapter, the findings of the analysis are discussed. The first section will explain the weaknesses of GAIN, discussing the lack of data acquired during the three years of study and why it is relevant to the agency's recognition in UK territory. Afterwards, attention to possible marketing improvements for the agency will be emphasised. The following section covers some pathologies identified by Sheptycki within law enforcement agencies that exchange information applied to the GAIN regulations and framework. The last is devoted to the role of the police and the lack of community involvement in police enquiries. Finally, recommendations and directions for future research are presented.

6.2 Interpretation and Discussion of the Findings

6.2.1 Deficiency of personnel and recognition

It can be argued that the most significant data is a considerable lack of data. In three years of research, it was difficult to collect a substantial sample that could provide a broader viewpoint of the agency. It appears that GAIN fails to be recognised as it should in its sector, despite more than ten years of work in the field. However, even with evidence of the benefits (which will be discussed shortly) of using this agency for the exchange/acquisition of intelligence from those who have collaborated directly, GAIN seems to be more of an anonymous organisation in the eyes of the public and some of the force's employees.

As previously clarified in Chapter 4.2, GAIN expanded its activities to regional and national levels, including maintaining close contact with local agencies forces. Despite the numerous partners at their disposal, recognising their potential is still a struggle. As analysed in the data collection, not being recognised within the country was amply detected as a disbenefit from GCs. The consequence is the scarcity of information on what the agency can do, what it is looking for,

and the dissemination method. Indeed, there should be more awareness of GAIN and police priority areas, as one participant suggested. During the data analysis, examples were displayed by some participants who highlighted the effort of GAIN to make the agency known to third parties. However, there was also a visible absence of recognition by the agency, underlined by other participants. Few participants have suggested that a roadshow be implemented so that the GAIN can represent its value and regularly interact with partner agencies. Within the police, an increase in the credibility and knowledge of GAIN is needed. During the interview (Johnstone, 2004), Abbott explained how staff welcomed the series of roadshows to explain the code of conduct within the organisation. This was because it was beneficial for improving the effectiveness in the workplace. For GAIN, holding these road shows may enhance the credibility and visibility of the company. Additionally, participating in training days would improve the Network's acknowledgement of a broader audience by promoting the work carried out by the agency and the benefits encountered. Hence, the lack of information about the Network and the complexity of locating people aware of the GAIN most likely depend on the agency's knowledge deficiency. Ergo, reaching informed individuals within police forces or third parties was highly challenging, as explained in Chapter 2.

Second, the scarcity of data obtained through interviews and the survey proposed to GCs to explore the managerial structure of the GAIN and its background is a consequence of a lack of personnel. It is noteworthy to note a notable weakness of the agency, which, having to fulfil intelligence work at the national, regional, and local levels, has a significantly small number of Coordinators (an issue emphasised by GAIN's employees). Although it may be advantageous to rely on a limited set of individuals (for instance, being recognised readily by partners, establishing relationships based on more fruitful cooperation, and information flowing speedier), it appears to have the opposite impact in the case of GAIN. As they cover such a large geographical area, it is not advantageous for a few personnel to cover it. If their efforts pay off, they will be in greater demand, which will require the development of many more relationships. Therefore, the Network must be more prominent and incorporate staff so that work is adequate at the territorial level. In addition, budgets and resources must be sufficient to meet production costs. The lack of resources, funding, and staff not only does not help the network grow but also does not make the partners, or those who collaborate with the GAIN, able to work together suitably, thus encountering many more challenges. Therefore, it was necessary to collect additional material from partners to examine the GAIN and understand the impact of new agreements. Unfortunately, very few people who dealt directly with GAIN responded to this study. Acknowledging the impact of new agencies, such as GAIN, and identifying limitations and advantages sets a process of

improvement in motion.

However, this is only possible if all the parties are willing to cooperate. Consequently, collaboration is specific to agencies and conveys crucial information for understanding new forms of adaptation. Hence, it is necessary to argue the challenge in acquiring information about GAIN to be analysed in this research, realising that this struggle originates from a combination of factors that have not yet been detected by anyone else.

6.2.2 Public relations and Marketing

Research on GAIN networks is inherently limited because of the absence of agency information. This challenge led me to reflect on this organisation's lack of real promotion. The goal of the network is to improve the communication strategy. Poor advertising campaigns create a complex environment. Effective communication has always been essential for the public image of the police and for ensuring helpful knowledge of various departments and their proficiencies, even within the sector itself. Mawby and Worthington's (2002) study contends that the police are steered through marketing due to converging factors. Pressure is identified in the demands for success and competence, a growing technological culture that requires the capacity of the police to communicate successfully and demonstrate clarity and accountability. One of the biggest challenges encountered is police dissatisfaction, which affects the community and the general crime concerns that necessitate intervention. These demands require the police to invest in marketing to ensure their voice is heard, preserve stakeholder involvement, and engage with other organisations. Apart from the communication addressed to the public, in this case, consideration must be aimed at the possibility of presenting and promoting internally, for example, trying to enhance capabilities with which perhaps not everyone is familiar. Police services should focus on internal marketing. Managers will be better positioned to satisfy the demands and expectations of various groups if they educate internal stakeholders on the importance of marketing (Mawby & Worthington, 2002).

Most modern societies require organised policing, which is a necessary government service. They provide protection and safety, investigate violent and serious organised crimes, work on prevention, enforce laws and regulations, and assist the community (Thind, Mcmahon, & LeMay, 2022). The police, to maintain this status, must build a good relationship and reputation for this relationship to occur. To achieve this, they must focus on constructing an image through marketing. It is essential for the public image and the image that flows through the organisation's official channels. If, as in this case, a new multi-agency within the police department emerges, information must be exchanged for visibility. As has already been noticed during the analysis,

GAIN ensures that the agency explains its arrangements and acquires partners during several events. However, this does not seem sufficient. The broadcasting of information about what GAIN can do primarily increases recognition. Although it is not a company beyond the control of the police, it appears odd not to be able to obtain information about the agency.

Policing is rarely viewed through a marketing lens. Instead, it appears to be policing through conventional marketing strategies and market reputation lenses. In traditional marketing, these are manageable concepts and techniques that can change an industry or a specific brand's reputation. For example, Thind, Mcmahon, and LeMay (2022) emphasised the significance of word-of-mouth (WOM) in promoting policing and maintaining a positive reputation with the community and decision-makers. However, the effects of marketing strategies on police organisations are not often acknowledged because policing as an industry has not been largely investigated in marketing. Nonetheless, there is enormous potential to apply marketing tactics and strategies to policing to improve the reputations of police forces.

It should also be emphasised that a multi-agency such as GAIN must be identified better in law enforcement and outside ranks. GAIN needs a boost to acquire more partners, like any other arrangement. An information campaign is necessary for the network to be correctly recognised. For example, the advertising promotion of the NCA achieves this result by producing visible efforts of their achievements (i.e. posting their exploits on Twitter). It should be correct to specify that the two agencies perform distinct types of jobs. The mould they created is different, but the NCA is still an agency renowned throughout the territory and well-known among law enforcement.

Furthermore, enhancing a good communication strategy and (social) media outlets is crucial to promote and encourage GAIN and its work and to share the results. Presenting GAIN in a limited environment was insufficient. As the participants ascertained, it is necessary to excel in more active and detailed communication, which also applies to the network about what it stands for, what it can do, what it offers, and what results it can bring. During one of the participants' illustrations, it was established that GAIN brings together various agencies that will later become partners (to collaborate on different investigations), organising meetings where it is possible to share knowledge, experiences, and resources. Therefore, this is a valid proactive example of an excellent information campaign. If it is noticed positively, dealing with this sector more specifically is possible.

Finally, as some participants suggested, the marketing strategy to allow good advertising to the network could also bring the public closer. According to them, the community's awareness of

what the police do to combat crime and how the government responds to new crime-related insecurities will increase. If the public could witness agencies working together and showing the results of the work done, the community could be encouraged to support the collaborative working network by understanding its value. However, it is necessary to ensure that communication focuses on representing the approach and values shared with the public. People look to forces to protect society and norms; when threatened, they lose faith in their performance (Jackson & Bradford, 2009). The community may be much more involved in how the police handle these issues and the level of cohesion, relationships with the community, and shared values and morals. It is particularly valid where the relationship between the police and the community does not seem to be developed due to several factors, as analysed in the literature review section, but in particular, a lack of trust. Therefore, there is a demand to create a relationship with the public, and concrete construction requires outgoing representation. The police must encounter communities' variable reputational perceptions and a larger organisational culture that could influence the cost of policy initiatives through censure, lack of promotion, and budget allocation (Rivera-Cuadrado, 2021). Several obstacles and challenges, including those arising from police culture, must be confronted to enhance community relations and perform at their full potential.

Nevertheless, it must be stated that it is insufficient for the public to be aware of the positive signs of the efforts accomplished if they cannot be attributed to the right sector. The community must see what changes are approved, especially in law enforcement. This could make the public participate in its security and realise that a dialogue is being established between those who hold citizens' security control and the people. This is not sufficient to bring about changes. If positive, these changes must be emphasised as much as possible.

If the GAIN operates as it should, it must leverage its capacity and assets by promoting its work to inspire new organisations to do the same. Furthermore, it must promote higher inclusivity towards GAIN if it needs to be recognised. Unfortunately, its lack of visibility results in a lack of awareness of the Network itself, which is only known to those who use it. For instance, it would be appropriate to create an online platform that allows outsiders to interact with the Network to better understand its purpose, aims, and collaborations; why it is active; and what it provides. A network of this type, notably on the national scale, cannot be invisible. As a result, one of the steps to consider is increasing Network visibility, even with simple steps such as developing a website. Perception is as important as the function but should be communicated to be recognised.

6.2.3 Advantages classification and Sheptycki's pathologies

The data revealed that intelligence sharing is the chore on which GAIN concentrates and

participants underlined significant components. As a result, it is possible to discuss some crucial points regarding GAIN intelligence administration. To do so, a few Sheptycki pathologies (Sheptycki, 2004) have been examined, reflecting on GAIN employees' and collaborators' identified issues and benefits. Three points were found to be significant in this study for Sheptycki pathologies. These are, respectively, point 1, **Digital Divide**; point 2, **Linkage Blindness**; and point 8, **Institutional Friction**.

Digital divide = According to Sheptycki (2004), digital communication seems to be one of the vulnerable points in the police sector, particularly regarding the coordination of cross-border or institutional information flow. Since several information systems are in use within the police, the constant and uncoordinated upgrading of ITC systems is an enduring concern for all agencies involved in the police sector. According to a few participants, the introduction of the PND in the UK seems to have brought considerable improvements, combining intelligence across policing. Initially, to obtain the information, an agency had to go to every police force, and there was the possibility of not identifying the criminal. The PND ensures that all data are uploaded to a single searchable database.

Nevertheless, despite these benefits, the PND had not yet brought multiple agencies together. One of the participants' criticisms was that the main problem was the primary use of traditional law enforcement agencies (i.e. police, NCA, and HMRC), but not by other government agencies. Therefore, the crucial point is that this system has benefited the police but not other agencies. As already suggested, insiders and outsiders seem to have considerable influence. The division of police intelligence work is supposed to constrain and simplify access to information *on a 'need to know'* basis, but new perspectives in the scheme provide higher or less strategic access to different sources of data, and individual caution is thus moulded and restricted in various manners (Sheptycki, 2017, p.50).

Sheptycki examined how the police encourage conservation (*ergo*, it remains anchored in the professional tradition) and how it applies limited power within the organisational resources used to facilitate the task of the police. This includes one-way intelligence channels through which the police force filters information with an outside audience. It is emphasised that sharing information between intra-agency police-to-police differs from sharing information with non-police agencies because of the differences between insiders and outsiders.

According to the data collected, GAIN is mainly based on its collaboration with intelligence sharing, disruption activities, and network development. As a result, it is possible to observe that the GAIN's primary business is to streamline the work of exchanging and acquiring information for

all partners, helping those who cannot access the PNC and PND. Therefore, the GAIN Hub becomes operative for organisations that cannot use PND, searching on their behalf and presenting the result back to the agencies. This also means providing a digital system to unify and make intelligence more accessible. The GAIN system used to facilitate this information exchange is PAM, which is effective. This system allows and has been specially established to securely share intelligence between the police and partner agencies.

An interesting comparison is international cooperation within the Europol. According to Gerspacher (2008), the cooperative strategy feature emerged rapidly as Europol faced data-gathering challenges. It was discovered that some members were hesitant to share information for administrative and nationalistic primary motivations but also lacked the capability to contribute to the information-exchange framework. This concept can be related to GAIN. The Network was formed so that partners could work collaboratively on investigations and facilitate the exchange of information between multiple public and private agencies. Gerspacher (2008) continues this discourse by examining how centralised policy structures obstruct the flow of information, particularly when a specific intelligence application is received. For example, a local police agency may hold information, but because it has not been transmitted to the main structure, the data cannot reach foreign police agencies. As mentioned in Section 4.4, it is essentially the same concept that allowed the PND to be conceived, resulting in the creation of GAIN simultaneously. Many agencies would have to wait in long queues to obtain information if a collaborative approach did not exist. GAIN appears to have accelerated tempo and assistance.

In conclusion, technology has accelerated many processes by making it possible to exchange intelligence smoothly at the IT system level. Emails are still utilised (as underlined by some participants) but seem less favourable, antiquated, and problematic. The more the technology improves, the more communication between agencies is functioning and operational, and the more crime-fighting increases. Allegedly, the GAIN should focus its force on presenting the benefits of international exchange for all the agencies not included in the PND system. Despite this, it has been pointed out that intelligence sharing still requires reaching an agreement caused by relationships, trust, and a lack of knowledge, leading to talking about the second point.

Linkage Blindness = Another critical aspect to consider and has been the subject of concern within data collection is the regulation that makes the intel exchange possible. A question then arises: What is the primary objective when exchanging information between agencies?

Having clear rules that allow the exchange and, not surprisingly, understanding whether

both agencies can share. Sheptycki (2004) underlines how information sharing across the police in the UK is codified in Service Level Agreements (SLAs). The curious example he discusses was detected by the Benefit Fraud Inspectorate (BFI, 2001). According to the report, many employees were oblivious that information could be shared between the agencies. Linkage blindness, argued by Sheptycki (2004), is not reducible to the digital divide since technology is accessible most of the time. Personnel using information and communication technology at their disposal can overcome technical barriers to ensure that the relevant information is on the right hand, but *'horizontal flow in information hierarchies is often poor because most effort is directed at ensuring vertical flow.'* (Sheptycki, 2004 p.315)

The legislature plays a critical role in the Intel exchange. Information exchange without a lawful basis does not exist. To be used correctly, the legislation must be comprehended and well-known. Understanding the legislation provides an exchange of information shared for the right reasons. Data on intelligence sharing between GAIN and its partners have shown that although there is a regulation behind it, these acts are often not understood. As a result, there are difficulties in the arrangements between agencies or a lack of legal gateways to exchange information. Some agencies even hide behind the Data Protection Act to not disseminate data. There is a basic level of distrust; this appears to be the extent of non-cooperation in disclosing information. The main problem is understanding who requests that information and having the legal basis for exchanging/acquiring Intelligence. One of the main obstacles encountered among the participants was having experienced a lack of understanding of the legislation, which made information sharing with some agencies more complicated. Considerable attention was dedicated to the reluctance to divulge information and hide behind the DPA and the GDPR because there is a fear of sharing sensitive information due to a lack of understanding, training, or knowledge of the legislation; this concerns both the police and external agencies. Cooperation entails risks, which is why some people hesitate to share sensitive information with outsiders (Zivanovic, 2008). This is a variable to consider and certainly not underestimate for intelligence structures and agencies set up to combat crime, but there are certain risks to be taken because there is often no other option, especially if agreements allow such disclosures and exchanges. It is necessary to be aware of this and have the proper training to learn the rules, benefits, and risks.

Institutional Friction = Opening with Sheptycki's words (2004, p.320), it can be argued that *'As with most multi-agency work, intelligence-sharing is based on a collaborative rather than a command relationship.'* This argument is vital better to understand the functionality of GAIN as an Intelligence Agency. Sheptycki (2004, p.320) has described the 'institutional friction' as the

struggles of *'moving information across bureaucratic boundaries.'* This pathology has a structural origin and is not limited to inter-agency situations. Hypothetically, this difficulty could be considered a point overcome by GAIN. This multi-agency provides an exchange of information that helps in the operations of various partners. The aim is to ensure direct information sharing thanks to collaboration without excessive hitches. Bureaucracy and legislation are among the thorniest constraints in this sector. Once this challenge is overcome, the purpose of the partnership is to assist with several tasks. Overcoming friction, according to Sheptycki (2004), could depend on team size. An example of NCIS in the UK is also provided. At the time, NCIS was still active and combined with employees from approximately 25 different agencies in a multidisciplinary working environment. Even in a multi-agency like NCIS, the author explains that there seems to be a challenge in shifting information across the boundaries produced by intelligence labour. Consequently, intelligence has become a mere fricative production. The structure in which information moves seems to be affected by organisational passage. However, since GAIN focuses on sharing assistance between partners as an intermediary, it could positively impact this type of pathology. If the lack of staff within the agency is initially discussed and criticised, it seems beneficial since it uses its efficiency as a strength to move information more easily.

After reviewing these three pathologies, it is reasonable to wonder whether any genuine improvements have enhanced intelligence sharing over the years. Sheptycki (2007) argues that policing agencies constantly request more data. Since compulsive data needs and intelligence deficits coexist, intelligence networks are saturated in '*low grade noise'*, and intelligence professionals are trying to overcome 'information overload' difficulties (Sheptycki, 2007, p.495).

Further elements of Sheptycki's pathologies were not evaluated or analysed because the research would have needed an in-depth examination of the outcomes of several intel-sharing operations, which was unfortunately not applicable. On the other hand, the research revealed pervasive ambiguity and misunderstanding among police personnel about the premises of their jobs. A severe gap that should be remedied is not knowing or fully comprehending legislation and legal obligations for a specific purpose. Furthermore, employees should have comprehensive knowledge of what is and is not possible at the national level rather than merely in individual regions or organisations. Being overly careful is understandable only when there are no legitimate demands, but if the information is asked with awareness, worries and risks should be considered. Moreover, the latter is tied to another obstacle encountered by the participants in sharing information, which keeps the information valuable to others. Partner multi-agencies, whose purpose is to contribute and support improving work, should be able to assist each other

whenever feasible.

However, since it is not possible to give a concrete example of the situation, it can be only criticised that if the information is of any value that could speed up or change (in a positive way) an investigation, it is necessary to understand *why* the information is not released.

Therefore, it should be understood whether there is a problem related to that specific information or whether the agency requested it.

6.2.4 Police domination

As examined after the surveys and interviews analysis, GAIN is not detached from law enforcement, unlike initially considered, since there was no familiarity with this multi-agency. Simultaneously, GAIN is a part and partner of police forces. The true nature of this partnership, particularly in terms of power relations, is of great interest. It is noteworthy that the role assumed by the GCs is that of the *police staff*, thus expecting its characteristics. The police are one of the partners, but GAIN employees feel a part of the police family all at once. Gerspacher (2008, p.176) emphasises the importance of Interpol's notoriety in remaining what insiders relate to as a "*officers' club*." This reflection is comparable to the feelings of GAIN's Coordinators, who feel like members of the police family. The general concept and intrinsic culture of the police (training, points of view, regulations) are roughly the same.

Consequently, there is no objective disengagement from the police force, fuelling the main problem: police monopoly on the fight against crime, which may also be attributed to government regulations. Reflecting on this topic, this condition can be considered a *traditional continuation*. This original concept can be referred to as the struggle to introduce a new perspective into the work environment, particularly law enforcement. Steps are being made only in the direction of the police, remaining anchored to the century-old uniform tradition, perhaps scared of losing the monopoly of the fight against crime. The fact that GAIN coordinators are police staff located with police officers on the police estate suggests that the control of these arrangements lies with the police and is unsurprising. Historically, partnerships that include the police have been dominated by the bureau (see, for example, Gilling 1997; James, 2013 and 2016). Although a subject of great attention to scholars throughout the last at the turn of the last century (O'Neill and McCarthy, 2014), that interest seems to have fallen away as new, more pressing policing problems have come to the fore.

Fundamentally, resistance to change does not involve new and diverse perceptions outside the policing environment. The model always appears to be the same and cannot solve new

problems. Introducing more people with the same eyesight, more resources, and improved technology within a police system that has not kept pace with social change will not adjust the perspective.

Expectations, roles, and objectives are not always understood (Meyer & Mazerolle, 2014), especially if a new partnership is established and must gather and merge tradition and innovation. Knowledge-management specialists are aware of the need for organisations to become adaptable, and they should be committed to creating new relationships between employees and employers (Kelly, 2008). However, the role difference between GAIN employees and police employees is not that distinct since the police hire GAIN members. Holding on to a well-defined role helps to better understand the structure because it assumes the requested expectations once a role has been defined.

The strict cooperation between the Police and GAIN is probably one reason it seems to work together quite actively without too many obstacles. It was observed that being aware of the work culture or being an insider counts greatly. Therefore, feeling part of and understanding the system and work environment is essential for personnel. It is simpler to perform certain functions and sympathise with specific dynamics. However, this highlights the main problem: civilians are seen as outsiders within armed forces. It has been demonstrated that, compared to outgroup members, people prefer to experience personal costs to provide advantages to ingroup peers. (Balliet, Wu, & De Dreu, 2014). As stated by Choi et al. (2019, p.100, citing Yamagashi & Yamagashi, 1994), '*within police–civilian interactions, outgroup designations are often perceived as a threat'.*

Unfortunately, this negatively impacts outgroup members; in this specific instance, potential civilians could assist the police if the latter's mentality is not changed. Therefore, the duality between insiders and outsiders is relevant for comprehending the work environment, particularly policing, which might be described as being more close-minded.

In Chapter 3.5, the concept of insiders and outsiders has already been explored, between benefits and possible obstacles, but it is essential to utilise this notion further in this section.

The insider-outsider dichotomy is based on sociological and social-psychological approaches that discuss the merits of complying with the rules, norms of conduct, and dogmas connected with a specific organisation. Being an insider carries cultural solidarity and confidence while being an outsider results in several marginalisation (Crinson, 2008). The need to support ingroup principles (such as righteousness, responsiveness to threats, and anticipating interconnection in situations of distrust) all collaborate to relate ingroup recognition and loyalty to antagonism against outgroups (Brewer, 1999). Outgroup hatred does not have to be preceded by

ingroup devotion. Nevertheless, the same variables that foster ingroup emotional connection and loyalty in individuals also cultivate conflict and distrust through outsiders. Numerous discriminatory perspectives and behaviours are driven purely by the urge to encourage and establish rapport inside the ingroup. The concept of insider-outsider has been used to call attention to two distinct sources of threat. While in Crinson's research (2008), the outsider threats refer to a possible criminal 'infiltration', in this study, since we are dealing with an unfamiliar working environment in the policing sphere, the singular threats can be recognised as a threat to the tradition and skills typical of the police employment conditions. However, a threat has little to worry about since the participants highlighted that having an external perspective and different capabilities only brings about benefits.

Furthermore, what is identified as an insider threat is far more insidious, and the recommendation to limit this threat proposes an increased knowledge of culture and security within the company. An insider has a considerable advantage over an outsider. The first expertise blends perfectly with the culture within the environment, which also makes them part of the group and recognised as equal. Conversely, the outsider can express and integrate different knowledge and divulge unacquainted reality, which does not appear to be a natural part of culture when it collides with internal reality. This leads to a rivalry between being representative of a different reality through which innovative ideas may be merged on the one hand and resistance to legacies on the other (if it works, I do not see why to alter). Even though there has been much discussion regarding integration, in a far less noticeable manner, there is no awareness of the word integration that entails more than just accepting minorities inside a group.

It should also be understood that making them feel accepted and a part of the group is necessary. Actual and perceived inclusion in the company is significant, and organisations should address both to optimise the firm's productive capability (Stamper & Masterson, 2002). If the relationships are sufficiently close, prolonged interactions can be effective, even though there are generally more distanced relationships (Tausch et al., 2011). Hostility towards an external group causes stronger cohesion within the group, seeing the other as a possible threat (Allport, 1954). However, there is the possibility of being part of both mindsets, connecting one group to yet another. Including one does not necessarily exclude the possibility of forming a different group or mental state. Hostility means that the ingroup considers the outsider a threat to the group.

Nevertheless, an outsider can be considered a potential resource within a group, not to be underestimated, which might generate advantageous partnerships to be cherished. For a close relationship, there is a need to work carefully to build relationships based on trust and mutual support. It is more common to control than integrate into a work environment such as policing,

not because it is impossible to achieve, but rather as *forma mentis* (mentality). Consequently, it would be appropriate to instruct both outsiders and insiders of groups to cultivate an attitude open to other possible outcomes.

Although progress has been made in this area, this does not indicate that other collaborations are no longer possible. For example, considering a civilian who assists in police enquiry entails recognising the concept of experiences and capabilities that are not directly related to the police. This notion might be disputed (perhaps due to a shortage of training in the work field). However, this may be solved by including specialised training. Numerous university faculties provide criminological courses for various backgrounds, but the goal is to determine whether such competencies can be employed in the police environment. An intriguing perspective concerning the employment of civilians within the police and the obstacles related to this topic was given by Chess (1960).

In Chess's paper, a query arose about whether civilians should be employed by the police, trying to understand what factors would cause them to be employed, thus considering the possibility of seeing civilians as a resource. In this case, the problem that arises, considering the elements that could cause a lack of interest on the police's side in hiring civilians, is of a personnel nature. Chess lists possible obstacles that may obstruct the passage of civilians employed in the police force. For example, it is conceivable that some force members may feel that a civilian deprives them of the force of an assignment. This is a curious point for discussion, as it comes back to the most basic fear of being deprived of privilege. Establishing or ensuring partnership creation in which civilians support the police should not be seen as a nuisance but as an opportunity. Advantages that allow for different insights. Chess emphasises another obstacle to consider: antagonism towards the general public. Disillusionment and aversion towards the police force on the part of the public are noted, leading to an agonism towards civilians. The public, in general, and the press have often pressured police to look for deficiencies, leaping at the opportunity to highlight weaknesses. This hostile environment, under which the police conduct their duties, leads to inappropriate hostility against civilians. Therefore, it is necessary to observe a different expectation from that demonstrated by both parties. There must be positive and substantial action to implement the civilian-police relationship. Antagonism must be eliminated, and a sense of kinship must be cultivated. It is still necessary to remember that it is only possible to integrate civilians if they receive adequate and appropriate training, showing the opportunities available to them. Furthermore, it could add, at the same time, a need to consider the possibility of doing the same on the other side. The expectation is that the police will also be willing to welcome

individuals who do not have an insider mindset beyond their borders.

Moreover, by focusing on widening perceptions, it is clear how much there is genuine demand for fresh perspectives and unique experiences to progress. Caroline Simpson aimed to create a functional partnership that can assist a body (such as the Police) in persisting at the pace of crime evolving and expanding due to globalisation. Contrary to popular belief, the police need to rely on other entities to increase their workloads. Globalisation has facilitated the spread of organised crime across a larger geographical area. Consequently, it is unrealistic to believe that nothing changes over time.

On the contrary, the police force must confront various issues on a much broader scale, which requires adjustment to changes. Similarly, many companies face critical challenges when adapting their systems and management practices. Therefore, they face fundamental issues in transforming and becoming more adaptable. Consequently, it is essential to identify and adopt strategies, methods, and techniques that may be utilised to manage a heterogeneous organisation. Furthermore, flexibility necessitates agility and adaptability related to change, development, and innovation. Nevertheless, the stability and comfort of the considered adequate norms, behaviours, expectations, and perceptions prevent change, preferring uniformity, regularity, and homogeneity over diversity and adaptability. Therefore, it is necessary to create new attitudes, perspectives, and social behaviours by implementing training programs, strategies, and communication networks to promote and encourage adaptability, heterogeneity, and innovation (Bahrami, 1992).

Despite some limitations, the participants drew wide attention to the benefits of collaboration that prevailed over the disadvantages. The partnership implies the possibility of using supplementary material, communication and coordination capability enhanced, assistance and specialist expertise, limiting costs, improving time speed for operations, and intel flow, but, above all, having additional and different points of view. Many participants expressed themselves by underlining how collaboration could reflect on the problems and needs of their partners. Even if it does not rely solely on trust, there must be intrinsic motivation to cooperate with the group's good (Buchan et al., 2011). There should not be any expectation to collaborate actively regardless, but by working together toward the same objective, considering solid and cooperative activities from both sides. The observation made by Balliet, Wu, and De Dreu (2014) underlined that people's cooperation demonstrates care for their outcomes and with other group members with whom they communicate and exchange knowledge. In addition, as can be observed, partnership benefits primarily rely on leveraging variations in knowledge and capabilities

between organisations (Crawford and L'Hoiry, 2019). Therefore, working together to achieve the same goal is fundamental to disrupting the SOC. Simultaneously, there is a better understanding of the opportunities that partner agencies can offer the police. For example, some participants emphasised how additional expertise and experience outside the police can improve the quality of investigations because different skills and competencies are also employed. In addition, alternative approaches can bring opportunities for innovation, thus increasing awareness of partners' roles and various limitations. Furthermore, in this specific case, because the study focuses on a multi-agency whose goal is to facilitate information sharing, it has been noted that software sharing is possible and advantageous.

Collaborative work has been studied previously in other case studies. For example, Barton and Valero-Silva (2013) agree that partnerships have clear advantages. Furthermore, as they discovered, there has been a reduction in the levels of criminality within local communities. They also detected a decrease in the demand for time and resources for the police and a positive message about the effectiveness of the police. Therefore, we come to a reality in which it is not possible to choose whether to use one's abilities for the police without feeling obliged to participate. A uniform is not the only means of achieving results in combatting crimes. Departments often turn to experts or university staff for research on the police to understand their weaknesses and strengths. In addition, the particular evolutionary process detaches from tradition, trying to bring novelties that can help and support the system and eventually become obsolete. Chess (1960) questioned how civilians could benefit from police forces. The query is of relative interest to the research, assuming the potential outcome of a multi-agency or civilian institution assisting and collaborating with the police.

Collaboration between law enforcement to fight SOC or other crimes is insufficient. Thus, new perspectives are required. If the same minds emerge from the same environment, what innovative acknowledgements can be attributed to this point? Instead, it would be the case to adopt new horizons to have a broader spectrum of ways to change the sector.

6.2.5 Are we discussing innovation?

After examining and discussing some of the characteristics of this new network, it might venture to remark that, on the one hand, a new commission was created to meet the needs of the police to be at the forefront of collaboration to fight crime, but on the other hand, no true innovation in this new arrangement has been confirmed. Therefore, following the data analysis, it would be interesting to compare them, which is explored below.

Reference has already been made to SOCA in section 3.3 of the literature chapter. However, the argument about SOCA needs to be revived when discussing innovation in GAIN. In Segell's study (2007), the SOCA's goal at the time was to gather intelligence on organised criminal networks operating in the UK. Harfield (2008b) observed that SOCA was requested to provide intelligence for investigation and prosecution to local policing while requiring intelligence for high-policing operations. This was a significant expectation duality for Harfield, underlying the belief that SOCA did not offer the same level of intelligence assistance as the NCIS. Furthermore, similarities can be found with the NCIS discussed by Abbott in his interview (Johnstone, 2004). According to Abbott, there was a need for an interagency organisation that included members from all agencies, posing no threats to any other. Instead, the NCIS solely managed criminal intelligence and did not conduct any investigations, gather evidence, or bring people to court. The NCIS was viewed as an intelligence coordination organisation and developed its intelligence. It assists all law enforcement authorities in their investigations. Thus, it can be noted why GAIN does not have the same function, but a similar function. GAIN, as a multiagency, has Coordinators from all over the country with diverse and equally related experiences under their belts. It is not seen by other organisations as a threat, merely acting as a support for other agencies. Thus, it relies on collaboration, data-sharing, and capabilities.

Moreover, comparisons can also be made with an institution such as SOCA. These directorates (explained in 3.3) seem to have much in common with GAIN's work. Information exchange and collection of SOCA are defined (Segell, 2007) as the first non-police law enforcement bodies, among other things. The last detail should be emphasised because neither of the two agencies is closely correlated, but they are always a part of it. As employees have mentioned, the GAIN defines as part of the same family as the police, despite not falling into the category of "officers." This last point is related to the fact that the SOCA did not have the authority to make arrests valid for the GAIN. These are primarily multiagency assistants. Another interesting feature is the secrecy surrounding SOCA. Segell affirms that despite having a website, its headquarters and 40 regional offices were not addressed (despite saying a direct contact point for the public was a post office box number.) Again, it seems that GAIN has some commonalities. The lack of recognition of the agency among the police is discussed in paragraph 6.2.1, but this comparison is clarified again. GAIN does not include any contact resources and does not have a website. Attempting to contact the agency is thus excruciatingly tricky unless an external person has direct contact with it or somebody is already aware of its existence.

It is also possible to say that an agency such as GAIN caters to what could be described as a specific clientele, and it is highly probable that the justification for its slight recognition is within

the sector. Only those who genuinely require this network will use it and acquire insights. Nonetheless, extending its identifiability to be noticeable if externals realise an example of this form would be appropriate. However, the argument remains anonymous among police and unaware of what could be a potential resource. Therefore, what has been discussed and observed is how these support agencies have similar intentions, situations, and provisions. Initially, these agencies were undoubtedly innovative of their kind.

Segell observed how changing the threats confronted by societies and individuals prompted the need to change the organisation's intelligence gathering and analysis culture. Opinion supported by Harfield, who noted how, with the establishment of SOCA, the government states that organised crime has evolved, becoming a problem further than the competence of traditional policing. However, as long as local police departments are responsible for dealing with organised crime, the UK reaction is based on attempting to adapt policing facilities designed for other policing features instead of addressing the issue of the organised crime itself. This transformation spawned a previously undiscovered public discussion of intel agencies.

At the time, SOCA was responsible for working in new and innovative ways while supporting traditional working practices in another sphere (Harfield, 2008b). The same can be said about GAIN. There is no significant innovation in the sector and only an invitation to collaborate. This new multiagency empowers the police and third parties by participating in traditional consistency. Once again, social transformation is emphasised here to identify problems regarding society's acceptance of how to proceed to confront them. This observation should help people realise that times change, and crime changes with them, even if the alteration is sometimes infinitesimally slight. The intelligence world's doors to collaboration are starting to open, partially making significance at the regional, sub-regional, and bilateral levels, but it is still unsatisfactory (Köksal, 2010). This tends to leave us with the option of proceeding down the same path or adjusting what could make a difference. A paradigm shift in this scenario would have been to establish a multi-agency system of civilians who supported local, regional, and national police agencies.

6.2.6 Recommendations for future research

This research aimed to understand new instruments and techniques for police forces to support their intelligence processes and investigations by employing external organisations. Future researchers studying the relationship with the community should decipher the possibility of tangible support to the police in combatting criminality and SOCs while investigating a new and

authentic multi-agency civil-based organisation to draw new conclusions. Access to support and collaboration with third parties provides a prolific environment for reducing crime-fighting timescales and ensuring that those not part of the uniform can be employed and serve the community. In addition, having alternative sources of collaboration can help the police acquire new perspectives in fighting crime and regain some legitimacy that has been lost over time. This study focused on the factors affecting the success of an intelligence network. In this sphere, these are the phases to be considered.

The first phase was to become familiar with the capabilities that could assist the police in the investigation processes and determine whether there is a place for civilians in these activities. We must not lose sight of the fact that the world is constantly changing and that we must adapt. The second step focused on quantifying and comprehending the relationships that emerged from GAIN's work. These relationships can be interpreted as variables that influence the success of intelligence and investigation. Finally, a system such as GAIN should be promoted in the most successful way possible, becoming familiar so that it is well recognised, reinforcing the idea of internal and external collaboration.

Departmental policy and regulation must address the need for adequate training on new internal and external support to more accurately identify the elements that allow it to operate as efficiently and quickly as possible. This is necessary for high command and other areas so that everyone is well acquainted. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate and understand how multiple agencies of this type do not have the same visibility as other agencies, even though they work in the same sector and produce relevant work.

Moreover, the GAIN network must promote the employment of new researchers and coordinators, as this could reinforce work within the multi-agency framework and increase its scope. Finally, because it has not been possible to determine a practical example of their work actively, conducting a more in-depth study to explore this matter to understand whether GAIN is functioning correctly and producing promising results is highly recommended.

Since the study focuses on uncovering a new multi-agency supporting the police and external stakeholders, further investigations on the structural organisation and subsequent collaboration levels are required. It would also be essential to accurately acknowledge the perceptions of employees and partners to fully understand how their standpoints affect the collaboration process and information-sharing management, especially if there are significant differences and internal conflicts between individual and organisational levels. Furthermore, this research focused on the UK geographic area, but future studies could explore different intelligence multi-agencies, considering larger geographic areas with different legislation and policies and their effect and

success on crime control, enhancing external validity. Finally, the next step in the research will be to investigate the ability to determine the effectiveness of the GAIN Network, attempting to determine how beneficial this network is to its partners, not only in terms of satisfaction but also in terms of practical operation.

6.3 Conclusions

This study aimed to investigate the success determinants of multi-agency collaborations with the UK Police, focusing on this initiative's procedural and relational components. The research outcomes examined themes generated during the analysis resulting from participants' replies to demonstrate the necessity of teamwork in the policing environment. The question posed was: *In the modern era, the police no longer have monopoly control of crime-fighting; therefore, to what extent does British policing engage with partners to prevent and detect serious organised crime?: A case study of the GAIN network.* The answer suggests the need to explore this topic further. Therefore, the findings should be considered exploratory, and further studies on the GAIN Network are required.

The police apparently continue to have a monopoly on crime-fighting; however, with the evolution of crime and society, there is an understanding of having more support in this domain. The variables examined indicate a proclivity towards collaborative work. This prompted the participants to discuss the many benefits discovered through various combined working activities and approaches to strengthen collaborations. Nevertheless, the results revealed the complexity of changing the working world, primarily dealing with law enforcement officers closed in the shell of a century-old tradition. Although there have been examples of improvements in the organisational realities of organised crime policing over the years, the policing of organised crime should be construed on a broader definition and not just in terms of 'police agency' activity (Harfield,2008b).

Through the participants' answers regarding collaboration and trust between co-workers, it was highlighted that it was not distrust that frequently brought some challenges to perform, as some have mentioned in interviews, but rather a deficiency in rules and regulations that contributed to possible downturns in collaboration. Furthermore, communication does not appear to have been impacted by significant innovation or disruptions but instead appears to have profited only a minor benefit from technological advancements. Indeed, thanks to PND, some tasks that required time and dedication could be accomplished more rapidly.

Limited by primary and secondary data, the results indicated that GAIN as a web connector between police and government agency partners does not impact the intelligence system as

much, although it appears to function in its overall sense. It is worth noting whether and how intelligence is shared between collaborating organisations in this context. However, it is not necessary to delve deeply into the modalities and implications of intelligence, which has already been extensively researched. As previously stated, this study focuses on individual cooperation mechanisms to understand how exchanges occur and whether they are favourable. Although the research was not designed to reach conclusions on the long-term effects of these new arrangements, the observed inter-agency cooperation may benefit information exchange, which would be difficult for some external partners to achieve.

This study discovered that collaboration is advantageous, using the GAIN Network as a model to understand intelligence cooperation.

Furthermore, establishing a new network has contributed to the admission that law enforcement requires assistance in some circumstances, implying that stakeholders benefit from bodies to support their tasks. This excludes the advantage of being a multi-government agency able to connect different partners, thanks to its research on the PND and PAM operating systems. To confirm this, a better analysis strategy is recommended with field research and practical examples of their work. The diagram below (figure 6) illustrates the data analysed and discussed.
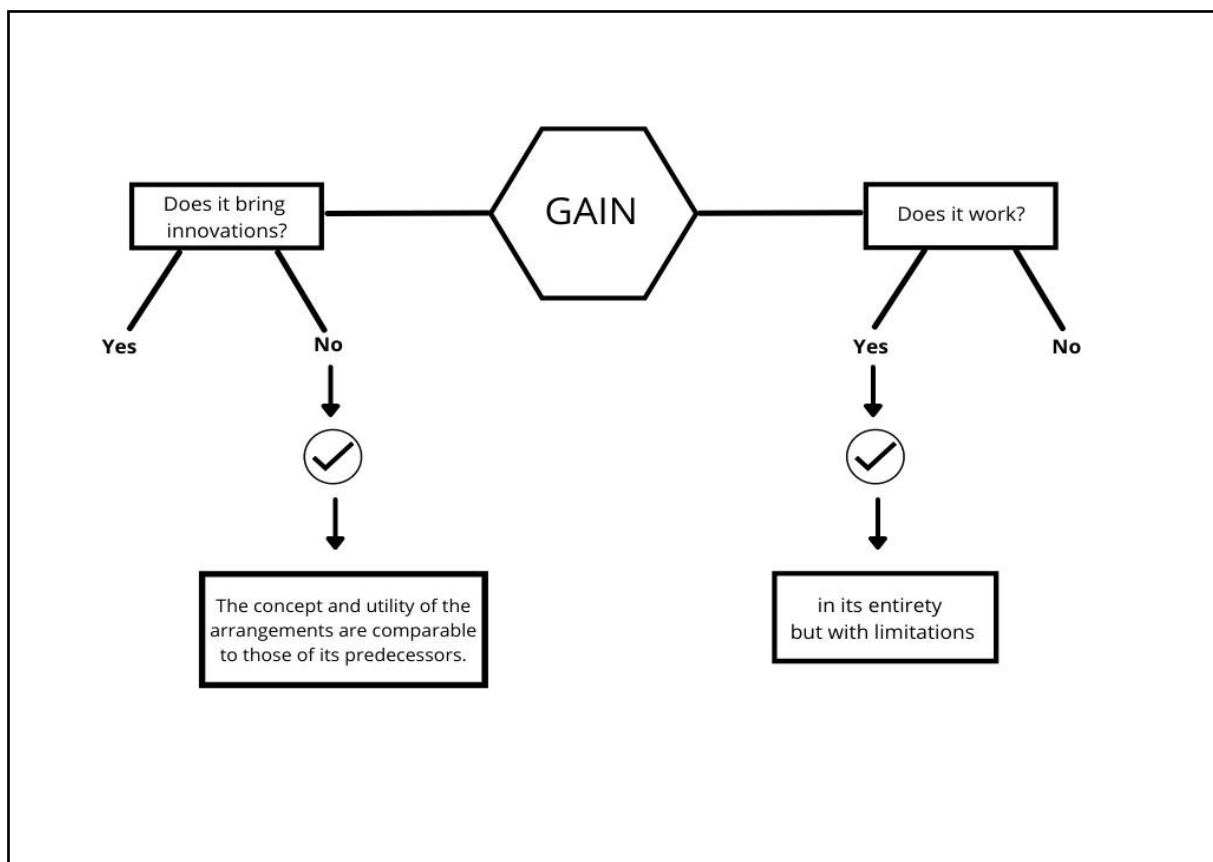

Figure 6. Summary of data analysis discussion

Given the scarcity of documentation and data in this specific situation, it can only be assumed that as a multi-agency, GAIN appears to work in its entirety, but not many innovations of this agency have been reported. The most significant weakness explored in this study is the unrecognisability of this multi-agency, which, as previously discussed, should provide change as soon as possible in order to have more significant advantages in the relationship with future partners. GAIN, as an organisation, functions on a technical level, but it is missing the communication within the forces to be recognised.

Agencies fighting crimes should be more transparent in their intentions, particularly in managing facilities. It is impossible to change without communication, but most importantly, if the structures do not have the openness of thought to receive constructive criticism. Moreover, it is challenging to implement these changes without mutual trust. Why do new organisations be created with no further points of view in the field of work if not to answer the question of uncertainty rampant in postmodernity?

It has been observed that new forms of fighting crime are needed to counter the advent of social changes. However, do these so-called new organisations, created to counter the advent of SOC, define themselves as new (in training, skills, roles, and individuals), or are they merely a different response of the police forces contextualised in a global society under the politics of fear?

The ongoing establishment of support agencies in the same matrix provides food for thought. It appears that new collaborative support for the police is derived from identical backgrounds. Therefore, as much as they may innovate the sector with fresh partnerships, they seem un-pioneering in their terms. The participants' emphasis was mainly on providing ample scope for collaboration to solve crimes and combat them more effectively within a short time. The subsequent issue that this study attempts to highlight is the considerable dilemma of the consistent pattern of police support organisations which do not deviate from the mindset of existing law enforcement agencies such as the police. It is undeniable that globalisation has altered the world and its relationship (Schirato and Webb, 2003). It has been observed that with the transformation of crime due to technology and criminal attitudes, society's response is particularly active, but not in terms of the evolution of 'how' we could fight crime from a different perspective; it appears that there is a difficulty in shaking off the traditional continuations. This inevitably resulted in the fossilisation of the security state and the cultural apparatus, with the police identified as the only organisation capable of combating crime. Of course, the police are not excluded as a method of counter-crime, but external support with a new mentality on combatting crime would be one of the social transformations supporting the change brought about by globalisation.

After illustrating the UK's Network of Law Enforcement and some of the special auxiliary units established to support the police in their enquiries, it can be argued that something is missing: an authentic civilian (non-sworn) support organisation that has been recognised as a genuine external collaborator during the investigations. The police currently hold a crime control monopoly, with minimal active participation from the community, especially in serious and organised crime task forces. Subsequently, it will be interesting to articulate in the future whether establishing new support and partnerships involving the community today could be encouraging. The step taken in the direction of new governmental institutions, *a fortiori*, should be another step towards the realisation of new civilian organisations. This could lead the community to take an essential part in security and investigation, feel included, and consequently legitimise further law enforcement's authority without feeling alien, thus entering a circle of trust and mutual partnership.

As mentioned previously, trust and legitimacy seem to be pivotal points for cooperation. Evidence from Waddington et al.'s (2015) study suggests that police errors and failures can be condoned if trust is present, but mistakes can be perceived as arrogant if absent. This holds implications for those trying to develop policing practices that promote trust between those who have developed a 'motivational distrust' of the police. This misconception could be caused by people having high expectations (Myhill and Bradford, 2012) of how the police are supposed to and should perform their duties and becoming disappointed when reality fails to fulfil their expectations. The public is more inclined to endorse the police as an institution than individuals do with the behaviour of particular officers in specific situations. A focus towards a more process-oriented model of policing can lead to a significant increase in public satisfaction and cooperative behaviour believed to be associated with higher levels of trust.

Conversely, unsatisfactory contact with the police is strongly associated with lower confidence. Moving police policy towards a process-based model is difficult due to institutional barriers. Nevertheless, evidence (Myhill and Bradford, 2012) suggests that the public desires a police service that treats people with fairness, dignity and respect, linked to trust, legitimacy and cooperation. Police officers' fairness, openness and respectfulness can induce positive change in individual opinions. A shift to a more process-based model of policing may result in increased citizen satisfaction and higher levels of trust and confidence. This applies to the public's cooperation in police investigations in the passive and active spheres.

In addition, evidence has revealed that the community trusts more from the interaction between the non-enforcement police and the public than between the police and the public (Peyton et al., 2019). This review can solicit some important considerations. The community may

be more inclined to trust or accept a non-uniform individual than a police officer. It may often happen that a community considers the badge more than the person (Barker et al. 2008), and the public could perceive civilians as part of the community. Therefore, it could be debated that they may be perceived more as insiders than as outsiders. It is also likely that a constable is perceived as an outsider by the community of attitudes and perspectives that emerge within the group of law enforcement agencies. The uniform makes a member part of a group, and the perspective changes between members and those outside the group. The other side of the coin is that the community is likely to have more confidence in civilians because they are seen as group members. Consequently, they may be more willing to collaborate.

On the other hand, civilians may be perceived as outsiders within police force groups. This can be redirected to a group that is traditionally reflected in the uniform. This point of concern is perceived as an outsider within law enforcement, leading to internal conflicts rather than efficient cooperation. A civilian might well be a community member but may not be included as a member of the law enforcement group, for example. During the discussion about intra-agency occupational subcultures, Sheptycki (2004) illustrated that among intelligence analysts, there are frequently civilians in police departments who often struggle to move up the professional ladder. Analysts commonly remark that they do not receive the same level of recognition for the work that detectives had in the past. The friction between outsiders (or, as Sheptycki wrote, new arrivals) and insiders (old ones) sheds light on the operation of these institutions. This sub-category seems to be a variant of institutional friction, which can be eliminated in the long run.

Moreover, otherwise, the police officer could be part of the law enforcement group but not part of the community group because, as previously highlighted, once the uniform is donned, the expectation of role and status separates them from the civil public. Therefore, according to this scheme, separating the two groups also encompasses a knowledge dichotomy related to the distinction between insiders and outsiders. Based on this logic, we would have a more cooperative community by establishing its group members adhering to the police force as support without wearing a uniform. On the other hand, police must be prepared to accept external expertise without monopolising crime-fighting, thereby leaving themselves open to embracing outsiders into their group.

If interagency collaboration works (as evidenced by several examples in this study), creating an agency of civilians who support local authorities should not be a problem. The possibility of including civilians as support for investigations could help connect the community with law enforcement agencies and make the community feel heard and actively participate in the system. A contribution that could help develop and offer opportunities for those who cannot or do

not want to join the police or armed forces but who still want to contribute as active and engaged citizens in the fields of public administration, intelligence, or investigative services in this era of austerity for public services. Abbott explained he does not believe that professional roles currently require police abilities which can only be gained on the field, to becoming, for example, a scene of crime officer, a specialised intelligence officer, or a professional investigator. However, the immediate admission of individuals with specific abilities into police speciality areas is something he could envision and would welcome (Johnstone, 2004).

Considering the creation of various and new organisations by the government to combat various and new types of crime, the focal point is to have remained primarily centred on 'law enforcement without moving towards a different type of collaboration that could bring benefits such as acquiring different points of view in investigative and security matters. This might be useful given the growing number of young university faculty training students approaching criminological subjects. However, not all who eventually have to decide on their career path can find it easier to support the police in their investigations based on their educational background. A civilian outside of a university wishing to use their knowledge at the community's disposal to help the police in their work has few choices to help the community and fight or prevent crime. Some job positions opened as Civil Service Jobs provide, for instance, the possibility of becoming an Investigator or Intelligence Officer for the NCA, and in this case, it relates to the opportunity to work in combating serious and organised crime. Alternatively, there are job positions issued by the Home Office always addressed within the Civil Service Jobs to become, for example, the Director of Operational Capabilities Enforcement, Compliance & Crime, and Immigration Enforcement (job offers of this kind are published on the UK Government website in the Civil Service Jobs section). As Choi et al. (2019) point out, the interaction between police and civilians occurs through several channels, resulting in varying collaboration. However, this was insufficient.

The education of civilians in crime-fighting begins at universities. For example, some choose dedicated degrees in criminology. This reflects the desire to fight and prevent crimes, but more choices must be made in terms of career roles. Thus, it could be both innovative and compelling to create civilian support without any connection with the police but have the necessary education to assist the police and law enforcement with investigations. For example, according to Lumsden (2016), academics as specialists might ideally cooperate with the police to implement evidence-based reform following the College of Policing professionalisation agenda. Initially, civilians and constables might combine the two teams side by side, as in some work positions.

Therefore, what should be planned for the future? First, specialised classes that are more

targeted to specific subjects will be applied within the labour system to provide specialised support. However, the most appropriate and imperative change would be to allow the possibility of more employment opportunities for civilians in multiple agencies, such as GAIN, and perhaps in the future to create something similar, the template of which would be purely civilian, enabling those who do not want to be part of the police to be able to support investigations and intelligence.

No attempt has been made to undermine the figure of police officers or other similar categories. Instead, an attempt is being made to understand why it is still almost persistently sought to create agencies and support organisations with employees from law enforcement agencies, such as the police. For example, intelligence and support agencies such as GAIN, which do not aim to personally arrest criminals (because it is not legislatively mandated to do so) but aim to help its partners to facilitate their work and investigation, could be an excellent example for the establishment of a multi-agency that is intended to integrate civilians.

Initially, an agency such as GAIN could incorporate civilians who have no heritage as constables or law enforcement agents into its organisation. In practice, this would lead to an agency consisting of half former police staff or agents and half civilians straight out of university. This would provide a first step towards understanding the value of an individual without a police background. GAIN, in which employees' deficits are placed on a national territory as vast as Britain's, would, in this way, not only incorporate more coordinators to complement the existing ones but could also realise if the inclusion of civilians has any value within an Intelligence and Supportive task, such as that which already exists. However, this would only be meaningful if the possibility of formally recognised specialised civilian support could be generated in the future.

However, attention should be paid to the possibility that this work direction could initially lead to communication and trust issues between the two groups. The experience of constabulary is closely linked after their training in the academy to the street and their investigations. Therefore, it is conceivable that the bond of trust between civilians and police officers will not be established instantly, as it takes time to consider them as equal and to perceive them as part of the group. The relationship between officers and communities seems to be founded on mutual respect and trust between parties (Jackson et al., 2020). While this is true on a more general scale, it might be interesting to embed it from a business perspective. Building trust helps maintain respect and thus ensures that both can benefit. A proficient partnership would lead to satisfactory results in the police order maintenance role (Tyler, 2004), which originates from a legitimacy-based strategy. Gilmour (2007) identified the basis of every element of legitimacy in trust. According to Cook (2005, p.127), *'this factor becomes important in context such as business*

in which judicious risk taking can lead to better outcomes'. Tyler (2004) discusses the examination of the importance of legitimacy. The first level of analysis concerns daily interactions with police officers, while the second relates to the community, with people evaluating the characteristics of their community police force. It is also suitable to emphasise that the notions of trust and confidence in the police vary according to demographic factors (Murphy and Cherney, 2012; Kearns, Ashooh & Lowrey-Kinberg, 2020).

Therefore, it will have different ways of assigning trust or engaging in relationships based on behaviours undertaken. Quoting Jackson and Bradford (2010, p.8):

> *If the police demonstrate to citizens of diverse communities that they are effective, fair and aligned with local interests, then this not only makes the police more directly accountable. It also strengthens the moral connection between people and their police, thus encouraging greater civic participation and more active public engagement in domains of security, policing and the regulation of social and community life*

This may also apply to the working environment.

The police should ponder on the effect of current strategies to improve and develop community relations (Goldsmith, 2005; Sharp, Atherton and Williams, 2008), considering a close business relationship to have community and police side by side in the fight against crime. However, to develop attentive and practical strategies to change what is not beneficial, such as the lack of cooperation or constructing a respectable public image, it must be understood what the deficiencies are. Many studies focused on the decline in confidence in the police and the lack of cooperation following highly publicised acts of police misconduct (i.e., Brown and Reed Benedict, 2002; Brunson, 2007; Guzy & Hirtenlehner, 2015; Long et al.,2013; Owen et al., 2018; Panditharatne et al., 2018; Porter, 2021; Raines, 2010). However, little is known about how the police understand and attempt to manage the reputational consequences (Rivera-Cuadrado,2021). A complicated challenge now is to involve the community in fighting crime *with* the police, not just *for* the police.

It is also true that more careful studies should be conducted to explain why some of the reform strategies adopted by the police may or may not be effective, as has been highlighted by Rivera-Cuadrado (2021). This study attempts to observe police perceptions through the faulty reputations paradigm and how the interactions are viewed as essential instruments for influencing relations with the community, and proposes a mechanism through which interpersonal interactions are considered to obtain cooperation. According to Rivera- Cuadrado's findings, police officers have a variety of responses to "faulty perceptions." The logic of the faulty reputation paradigm influences officers' comprehension and expectations of social exchanges and

approaches. Various individuals' perceptions of the police may have influenced their interactions with the officers. Reputation is neither constant nor consistent. Instead, there was a complicated arrangement of reputations, and only some affected the policing goals. The police identified the issue of community-police relations as a result of people's misinterpretations rather than infrastructure problems, including employment, training, or accountability. The paradigm includes issues of who is considered a legitimate developer of an institution's reputation and public image and the reputation of those who create it. The study results reveal the importance of reputation work in policing and interactions among officers and members of the community. Some police officers realised that these interactions were beneficial. The trust between the two parties must work together. Legitimacy plays a significant role in society, shaping people's behaviour and creating a society based on compliance with the law. A society based on legitimacy means cooperation on the part of citizens, and this collaboration grows thanks to the public's feelings towards acceptable social behaviour (Tyler, 2004). From this, it can be discussed that, in this context, the pivotal role of legitimacy in the relationship between the community and police leads to cooperation. It is necessary to understand the level of trust to ensure efficient collaboration and how the partnership can be more proficient, and trust starts from an expectation. Some expectations are required in a working environment in which particular demands are imposed. Once the obstacle of mutual trust is surmounted, however, through these new types of partnerships, communities might be able to actively contribute to society by fighting crime. Therefore, it would be beneficial to initially incorporate civilians in multiple agencies, such as GAIN, created as external support to the police and partners, seeking to facilitate operations and, most importantly, offering fresh insights from existing ones. This would provide the right opportunity to have experience in the field to work alongside those with a different heritage and to simultaneously combine different perspectives. Innovating the area by incorporating non-uniform civilians might benefit a range of standpoints beyond law enforcement, and this consideration is still not pursued diligently.

Personal Reflection

This work is the pinnacle of a PhD journey that has allowed me to grow as an individual and as a researcher and made me realise all the challenges that we may encounter along the way and how we deal with them. In these years, I worked hard to organise my time efficiently, overcome high level of stress (due the Covid19 pandemic, data collection and the PhD work) and enhanced my skills to cope with great amount of work dictated by the limited information I could initially find

for this research, which slowed down the writing process.

On the other hand, I substantially increased my topic awareness and insight of policing, police culture, intelligence, information sharing, and partnerships. This learning process was constantly nourished by talks with supervisors and peers, as well as reading pertinent academic literature and directly talk with informed subjects. The knowledge I never experienced or had a comprehension on was overly exciting and at the same time challenging to acquire. It was hard to engage a culture and subculture so distinct from my direct experience. I was an outsider-outsider, which confronted me with certain complications in reaching my study participants. Nevertheless, this did not prevent me from gathering the data I need for the study. I discovered how exhausting and how rewarding it may be to achieve in an endeavour that appears insurmountable at first. Living and studying away from Italy offered me the occasion to engage with a new culture and to relate with people from vastly diverse backgrounds, making me grow in terms of personal identity and be aware of how many things we don't know about other cultures and societies and how much we can discover. This has allowed me to be aware of the limitations and benefits of being an outsider who, at the same time, although not being part of a culture, has managed to learn incredibly and use this knowledge in both personal and working life.

I have become the first person in the world to have the opportunity to explain this new multi-agency support that does not emerge in literature and has never been discussed, enabling me to have a straightforward and thrilling goal to achieve (regardless of the difficulties). Thanks to the data collection process in this thesis, I now fully appreciate how intensive and complex it is to plan and complete research. Furthermore, I have a practical understanding about strategies that should be used to engage with a sample in policing environment. The writing process revealed how much I studied and successfully accomplished during my Doctorate. It demonstrated that this would not have been possible without the involvement of a team of supervisors engaging in an inspiring environment at Liverpool John Moores University. I learned particularly valuable skills in the field of research, having the opportunity to interact with academics and other colleagues from various academic fields, which helped me better understand and have varied perspectives on how to approach the research.

Thanks to all the courses offered by LJMU and the experience fulfilled within workshops, conferences, and teaching course (3is), I had the opportunity to improve my communication and writing skills. Both these disciplines were not easy to achieve but with the hard work and the support I received, I was able to satisfactorily overcome a personal challenge since English is not my mother tongue. At the beginning of the PhD journey, it all seems very overwhelming, but thanks to the support of the Doctoral Academy, the days spent at the writing afternoons, all the

classes undertook to improve my writing, the opportunity to discuss with other PhD students research methods and different approaches, I had the opportunity to meet remarkable people that helped me and supported me and I was able to have a more complete and broader view of what it means create research and be a researcher.

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Appendixes

Appendix A

Research Survey Number 1°

Section 1

Participant Information Sheet for Public Service Participants (Police/GAIN) and Experts

LJMU's Research Ethics Committee Approval Reference: number 19/LCAPS/003.

Title of Study: *Helping the police with their enquiries: A critical analysis of formal 'civilian' support processes*

You are being invited to take part in a study. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the study us being done and what participation will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for taking the time to read this.

1. Who will conduct the study?

Study Team: PhD student Cristina Silvestri, email: c.silvestri@2018.ljmu.ac.uk, Supervisor Dr Adrian James, email: A.D.James@ljmu.ac.uk, Second Supervisor Dr Daniel Silverstone, email: D.M.Silverstone@ljmu.ac.uk Principal Investigator: Cristina Silvestri

School/Faculty within LJMU: Faculty of Arts, Professional and Social Studies - Advanced Policing Studies

2. What is the purpose of the study?

Based on a case study of the UK's Government Agency Information Network (GAIN), the research critically assesses the case for organised 'civilian' operational support for law enforcement agencies. In practice, this largely has been achieved by establishing a strategic agreement and by co-locating GAIN staff as coordinators in police Regional Organised Crime Units (ROCUs), which are intended to enhance a previously-limited regional capacity to combat serious and organised crime. In essence, the coordinators ensure that crime-related knowledge held within the police or in one Government agency that may be of value to another, is passed across in a lawful, timely, and useful fashion. In an era of austerity for public services across Europe, I want to critically assess the utility and ethics of these arrangements.

3. Why have I been invited to participate?

You have been invited because of your experiential knowledge of the GAIN network or of police partnership working more generally

4. Do I have to take part?

Taking part in the study is entirely voluntary and that refusal to agree to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which the participant is otherwise entitled. You may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which the participant is otherwise entitled. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. You can withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without it affecting your rights.

5. What will happen to me if I take part?

You will be asked to complete a web-based questionnaire which we estimate will take you 15/20 minutes. You may also wish to agree to a follow-up semi-structured interview to find out more about your approach. Should you wish to be interviewed, you will be provided with a separate information sheet and consent form.

6. Are there any possible disadvantages or risks from taking part?

The process is confidential and anonymised. I do not envisage that there are any meaningful risks attached to your participation though of course that is a subjective view and I will be happy to discuss that with you further.

7. What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Whilst will be no direct benefits to you for taking part in the study, but it is hoped that this work will bring new knowledge about partnership working and information-sharing.

8. What will happen to the data provided and how will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?

You will not be asked to provide any personal data in the survey. Unless you include identifying details, your participation is entirely anonymous. Please do not include such data in your responses.

9. Limits to confidentiality

Please note that confidentiality may not be guaranteed; for example, due to the limited size of the participant sample, the position of the participant or information included in reports, participants might be indirectly identifiable in transcripts and reports. Should this situation arise, I will work with the participant in an attempt to minimise and manage the potential for indirect identification of participants. I will keep confidential anything I learn or observe related to illegal activity unless related to the abuse of children or vulnerable adults, money laundering or acts of terrorism.

In certain exceptional circumstances where you or others may be at significant risk of harm, I may need to report this to an appropriate authority. This would usually be discussed with you first. Examples of those exceptional circumstances when confidential information may have to be disclosed are:

o I believes you are at serious risk of harm, either from yourself or others

o You pose a serious risk of harm to, or threaten or abuse others

o Under a court order requiring the University to divulge information

o The university is passed information relating to an act of terrorism

10. What will happen to the results of the study?

I will to publish the results in a PhD thesis and in journal articles

11. Who is organising the study?

This study is organised and funded by Liverpool John Moores

12. Who has reviewed this study?

This study has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the Liverpool John Moores University Research Ethics Committee (Reference number: 19/LCAPS/003).

13. What if something goes wrong?

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, please contact me and I will do my best to answer your query. I will acknowledge your concern within 10 working days and give you an indication of how I intend to deal with it. If you wish to make a complaint, please contact the chair of the Liverpool John Moores University Research Ethics Committee (researchethics@ljmu.ac.uk) and your communication will be re-directed to an independent person as appropriate.

14. Data Protection Notice

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Liverpool John Moores University will process your personal data for the purpose of research. Research is a task that we perform in the public interest. Liverpool John Moores University will keep identifiable information about you for 5 years after the study has finished.

Your rights to access, change or move your information are limited, as we need to manage your information in specific ways in order for the study to be reliable and accurate. If you withdraw from the study, we will keep the information about you that we have already obtained. To safeguard your rights, we will use the minimum personally-identifiable information possible.

You can find out more about how we use your information at by contacting secretariat@ljmu.ac.uk.

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15. Contact for further information

Dr Adrian James
A.D.James@ljmu.ac.uk
Dr Daniel Silverstone
D.M.Silverstone@ljmu.ac.uk
PhD Cristina Silvestri c.silvestri@2018.ljmu.ac.uk
Thank you for reading this information sheet and for considering to take part in this study.

Section 2

Participant Consent

I have read the information provided in Section 1 and I am happy to participate. I understand that by completing and returning this questionnaire I am consenting to be part of the research study and for my data to be used as described.

Section 3

Questions

1   Please tell me about your experience of working with the GAIN Network

2   What benefits/disbenefits has GAIN brought to your agency's information-sharing practices?

3   Do you agree that information technologies have improved information-sharing practices in your agency?

     Yes   ○

     No   ○

3.a   If you answered 'Yes' to the previous question. Please explain your answer

3.b   If you answered 'No' to the previous question. How do you prefer to share information?

4   Has your agency's participation in GAIN improved information-sharing with other partners (that is, others who are outside GAIN)?

     Yes   ○

     No   ○

4.a   If you answered 'No' to the previous question. Information-sharing has not improved because of (choose one of the below options).

     Human factors   ○

Process factors (including legislative issues) ○

Both ○

Other ○

4.a.i Please explain your answer

```
[                                                                    ]
```

4.b If you answered 'Yes' to the previous question. Please explain your answer

```
[                                                                    ]
```

5 How do you rate your agency's information-sharing experience outside of GAIN?

5.1 Not good at all vs Extremely good

1○ 2○ 3○ 4○ 5○

5.a Please explain your answer

```
[                                                                    ]
```

6 What kind of challenges do you face in collecting information from other institutions (that includes members of GAIN and non-members)?

```
[                                                                    ]
```

7 In terms of information-sharing, which of the following (choose all that apply) do you consider to be benefits of external collaboration?

The utilisation of expert/professional knowledge from outside of the policing world ○

The development of new skills and/or understanding ○

Aids in recognising cultural sensitivities around problems/issues ○

Enhances legitimacy through inclusivity ○

Helps to establish/build professional relationships ○

8 To what extent are the benefits of external collaboration you have identified, realised in your agency?

```
[                                                                    ]
```

9 What is the significant improvement you would like to see to your agency's intelligence practice in the context of information sharing?

```
[                              198                                   ]
```

Section 4

Final Page

Thank you for taking part in this study.

If you wish to be interviewed in order to deepen the researcher's understanding of some topics, please contact the researcher direct - c.silvestri@2018.ljmu.ac.uk

Appendix B

Research Survey Number 2°

Section 1

Participant Information Sheet for Public Service Participants (Police/GAIN) and Experts

LJMU's Research Ethics Committee Approval Reference: number 19/LCAPS/003.

Title of Study: *Helping the police with their enquiries: A critical analysis of formal 'civilian' support processes*

You are being invited to take part in a study. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the study us being done and what participation will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for taking the time to read this.

1. Who will conduct the study?

Study Team: PhD student Cristina Silvestri, email: c.silvestri@2018.ljmu.ac.uk, Supervisor Dr Adrian James, email: A.D.James@ljmu.ac.uk, Second Supervisor Dr Daniel Silverstone, email: D.M.Silverstone@ljmu.ac.uk Principal Investigator: Cristina Silvestri

School/Faculty within LJMU: Faculty of Arts, Professional and Social Studies - Advanced Policing Studies

2. What is the purpose of the study?

Based on a case study of the UK's Government Agency Information Network (GAIN), the research critically assesses the case for organised 'civilian' operational support for law enforcement agencies. In practice, this largely has been achieved by establishing a strategic agreement and by co-locating GAIN staff as coordinators in police Regional Organised Crime Units (ROCUs), which are intended to enhance a previously-limited regional capacity to combat serious and organised crime. In essence, the coordinators ensure that crime-related knowledge held within the police or in one Government agency that may be of value to another, is passed across in a lawful, timely, and useful fashion. In an era of austerity for public services across Europe, I want to critically assess the utility and ethics of these arrangements

3. Why have I been invited to participate?

You have been invited because of your experiential knowledge of the GAIN network or of police partnership working more generally

4. Do I have to take part?

Taking part in the study is entirely voluntary and that refusal to agree to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which the participant is otherwise entitled. You may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which the participant is otherwise entitled. It is up to you to

decide whether or not to take part. You can withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without it affecting your rights.

5. What will happen to me if I take part?

You will be asked to complete a web-based questionnaire which we estimate will take you 15/20 minutes. You may also wish to agree to a follow-up semi-structured interview to find out more about your approach. Should you wish to be interviewed, you will be provided with a separate information sheet and consent form.

6. Are there any possible disadvantages or risks from taking part?

The process is confidential and anonymised. I do not envisage that there are any meaningful risks attached to your participation though of course that is a subjective view and I will be happy to discuss that with you further.

7. What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Whilst will be no direct benefits to you for taking part in the study, but it is hoped that this work will bring new knowledge about partnership working and information-sharing.

8. What will happen to the data provided and how will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?

You will not be asked to provide any personal data in the survey. Unless you include identifying details, your participation is entirely anonymous. Please do not include such data in your responses.

9. Limits to confidentiality

Please note that confidentiality may not be guaranteed; for example, due to the limited size of the participant sample, the position of the participant or information included in reports, participants might be indirectly identifiable in transcripts and reports. Should this situation arise, I will work with the participant in an attempt to minimise and manage the potential for indirect identification of participants. I will keep confidential anything I learn or observe related to illegal activity unless related to the abuse of children or vulnerable adults, money laundering or acts of terrorism.

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o I believes you are at serious risk of harm, either from yourself or others

o You pose a serious risk of harm to, or threaten or abuse others

o Under a court order requiring the University to divulge information

o The university is passed information relating to an act of terrorism

10. What will happen to the results of the study?

I will to publish the results in a PhD thesis and in journal articles

11. Who is organising the study?

This study is organised and funded by Liverpool John Moores

12. Who has reviewed this study?

This study has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the Liverpool John Moores University Research Ethics Committee (Reference number: 19/LCAPS/003).

13. What if something goes wrong?

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, please contact me and I will do my best to answer your query. I will acknowledge your concern within 10 working days and give you an indication of how I intend to deal with it. If you wish to make a complaint, please contact the chair of the Liverpool John Moores University Research Ethics Committee (researchethics@ljmu.ac.uk) and your communication will be re-directed to an independent person as appropriate.

14. Data Protection Notice

Liverpool John Moores University is the sponsor for this study based in the United Kingdom. We will be using information from you in order to undertake this study and will act as the data controller for this study. This means that we are responsible for looking after your information and using it properly.

Liverpool John Moores University will process your personal data for the purpose of research. Research is a task that we perform in the public interest. Liverpool John Moores University will keep identifiable information about you for 5 years after the study has finished.

Your rights to access, change or move your information are limited, as we need to manage your information in specific ways in order for the study to be reliable and accurate. If you withdraw from the study, we will keep the information about you that we have already obtained. To safeguard your rights, we will use the minimum personally-identifiable information possible.

You can find out more about how we use your information at by contacting secretariat@ljmu.ac.uk.

If you are concerned about how your personal data is being processed, please contact LJMU in the first instance at secretariat@ljmu.ac.uk. If you remain unsatisfied, you may wish to contact the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). Contact details, and details of data subject rights, are available on the ICO website at: https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/data-protection-reform/overview-of-the- gdpr/individuals-rights/

15. Contact for further information

Dr Adrian James
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Dr Daniel Silverstone
D.M.Silverstone@ljmu.ac.uk
PhD Cristina Silvestri c.silvestri@2018.ljmu.ac.uk
Thank you for reading this information sheet and for considering to take part in this study.

Section 2

Participant Consent

I have read the information provided in Section 1 and I am happy to participate. I understand that by completing and returning this questionnaire I am consenting to be part of the research study and for my data to be used as described.

Section 3

Questions

1 Have you interacted with the GAIN Network? (If you answer no, please go to Question 7)

Yes ○

No ○

2 Describe that interaction

```
```

3 What are the benefits to your work of using the GAIN Network?

```
```

4 Do you face any challenges in collecting from/sharing information with GAIN?

Yes ○

No ○

4.a If you answered 'Yes' to the previous question. Please explain your answer

```
```

5 Overall, on a scale of 1 to 10 (with 1 representing 'no use' and 10 representing 'extremely useful') how do you rate your information-sharing experience with the GAIN?

Please don't select more than 1 answer(s) per row.

Please select at least 1 answer(s).

No use	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Extremely useful

6   How could that relationship be improved?

```
[                                                    ]
```

7   Do you face any challenges in collecting from/sharing information with other institutions?

Yes ◯

No ◯

7.a   If you answered 'Yes' to the previous question. Please explain your answer

```
[                                                    ]
```

8   In terms of information-sharing, which of the following (choose all that apply) do you consider to be benefits of external collaboration?

The utilisation of expert/professional knowledge from outside of the policing world ◯

The development of new skills and/or understanding ◯

Aids in recognising cultural sensitivities around problems/issues ◯

Enhances legitimacy through inclusivity ◯

Helps to establish/build professional relationships ◯

9   To what extent have information technologies improved information-sharing practices?

```
[                                                    ]
```

10   In your opinion, establishing a support agency that works alongside the police will gain the community's trust and, at the same time, facilitate your work?

Yes ◯
No ◯

Section 4

Final Page

Thank you for taking part in this study.

If you wish to be interviewed in order to deepen the researcher's understanding of some topics, please contact the researcher direct - c.silvestri@2018.ljmu.ac.uk

Appendix C

Interviews Questions

This study adopted semi-structured interviews for data collection; as discussed in Chapter 2, the interviews were taken and recorded via Teams. Employing this qualitative method have increased the participants' responses. In this way, I could add supplementary questions to acquire additional information based on different experiences.

The inquiries designed in Interviews focused on:

- Work environment, structure and areas of operation.
- Relations with members of partner agencies.
- External collaboration and community.
- Interaction and experiences.
- Trust, role and challenges.
- Benefits and dis-benefits.
- Quality of information sharing.
- Impacts.
- Use and limitations of technology.
- Development.

Appendix D

Information Sheet

LIVERPOOL JOHN MOORES UNIVERSITY

Participant Information Sheet for Public Service Participants (Police/GAIN) and Experts

LJMU's Research Ethics Committee Approval Reference: *19/LCAPS/003*

YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS INFORMATION SHEET

Title of Study: Helping the police with their enquiries: A critical analysis of formal 'civilian' support processes

You are being invited to take part in a study. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the study us being done and what participation will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for taking the time to read this.

1.   Who will conduct the study?

Study Team: PhD student Cristina Silvestri, email: c.silvestri@2018.ljmu.ac.uk,
Supervisor Dr Adrian James, email: A.D.James@ljmu.ac.uk,
Second Supervisor Dr Daniel Silverstone, email: D.M.Silverstone@ljmu.ac.uk
Principal Investigator: Cristina Silvestri

School/Faculty within LJMU: Faculty of Arts, Professional and Social Studies - Advanced Policing Studies

2.   What is the purpose of the study?
Based on a case study of the UK's Government Agency Information Network (GAIN), the research critically assesses the case for organised 'civilian' operational support for law enforcement agencies. In practice, this largely has been achieved by establishing a strategic agreement and by co-locating GAIN staff as coordinators in police Regional Organised Crime Units (ROCUs), which are intended to enhance a previously-limited regional capacity to combat serious and organised crime. In essence, the coordinators ensure that crime-related knowledge held within the police or in one Government agency that may be of value to another, is passed across in a lawful, timely, and useful fashion. In an era of austerity for public services across Europe, I want to critically assess the utility and ethics of these arrangements

3.   Why have I been invited to participate?
You have been invited because of your experiential knowledge of the GAIN network or of police partnership working more generally

4.   Do I have to take part?

Taking part in the study is entirely voluntary and that refusal to agree to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which the participant is otherwise entitled. You may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which the participant is otherwise entitled. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. You can withdraw at any time by informing the investigators without giving a reason and without it affecting your rights.

5.   What will happen to me if I take part?

I will talk you through the process and give you the chance to ask any questions. The interview will take place at a venue that is convenient to you. In practice, that is likely to be at or near your workplace but ultimately the decision is yours. It will take around one hour to complete the interview. It is not anticipated that there will be a further interview. Essentially, your participation ends at the conclusion of this interview.

6.   Will I be recorded and how will the recorded media be used?

You are free to decline to be audio recorded. You should be comfortable with the recording process and you are free to stop the recording at any time. The audio recordings of your interview will be used only for analysis. No other use will be made of them without your written permission. Interviews will be recorded on a password protected recording device. As soon as possible the recording will be transferred to secure storage and deleted from the device.

7.   Are there any possible disadvantages or risks from taking part?

The process is confidential and anonymised. I do not envisage that there are any meaningful risks attached to your participation though of course that is a subjective view and I will be happy to discuss that with you further.

8.   What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Whilst will be no direct benefits to you for taking part in the study, but it is hoped that this work will bring new knowledge about partnership working and information-sharing.

9.   What will happen to the data provided and how will my taking part in this project be kept confidential

The information you provide as part of the study is the study data. Any study data from which you can be identified (e.g. from identifiers such as your name or role), is known as personal data. When you agree to take part in a study, I will use your personal data in the ways needed to conduct and analyse the information collected in the study and if necessary, to verify and defend, when required, its process and outcomes. Personal data will be accessible only to me. When I do not need to use personal data, it will be deleted or identifiers will be removed. Your consent form, contact details, audio recordings etc. will be retained for 5 years.

Responsible members of Liverpool John Moores University may be given access to data for monitoring and/or audit of the study to ensure that the study is complying with applicable regulations. The interview recordings will be sent to an independent company who will produce a transcript of the interview.

You will not be identifiable in any ensuing reports or publications. I will use pseudonyms in transcripts and reports to help protect the identity of individuals and organization unless explicitly confirm on the consent form that you would like to be attributed to information/direct quotes etc.

10.   Limits to confidentiality

Please note that confidentiality may not be guaranteed; for example, due to the limited size of the participant sample, the position of the participant or information included in reports, participants might be indirectly identifiable in transcripts and reports. I will work with the participant in an attempt to minimise and manage the potential for indirect identification of participants.

I will keep confidential anything they learn or observe related to illegal activity unless related to the abuse of children or vulnerable adults, money laundering or acts of terrorism.

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Your rights to access, change or move your information are limited, as we need to manage your information in specific ways in order for the study to be reliable and accurate. If you withdraw from the study, we will keep the information about you that we have already obtained. To safeguard your rights, we will use the minimum personally-identifiable information possible.

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16.   Contact for further information

Dr Adrian James

A.D.James@ljmu.ac.uk

Dr Daniel Silverstone

D.M.Silverstone@ljmu.ac.uk

PhD Cristina Silvestri c.silvestri@2018.ljmu.ac.uk

Thank you for reading this information sheet and for considering to take part in this study.

Note: A copy of the participant information sheet should be retained by the participant with a copy of the signed consent form.

Appendix E

Consent Form

LIVERPOOL JOHN MOORES UNIVERSITY
CONSENT FORM

Helping the police with their enquiries: a critical analysis of formal 'civilian' support processes

PhD student Cristina Silvestri, Liverpool John Moores University Faculty of Arts, Professional and Social Studies - Advanced Policing Studies

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information provided for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and that this will not affect my legal rights.

3. I understand that any personal information collected during the study will be anonymised and remain confidential

4. I agree to take part in this interview

5. I understand that the interview will be audio recorded and I am happy to proceed

6. I understand that parts of our conversation may be used verbatim in future publications or presentations and you may use my real name when using my data.

   OR

   I understand that parts of our conversation may be used verbatim in future publications or presentations but that such quotes will be anonymised.

Name of Participant   Date   Signature

Name of Researcher   Date   Signature

Note: When completed 1 copy for participant and 1 copy for researcher

Appendix F

Gatekeeper Information Sheet

LIVERPOOL JOHN MOORES UNIVERSITY
GATEKEEPER INFORMATION SHEET

Title of Project: Helping the police with their enquiries: A critical analysis of formal 'civilian' support

Processes

Name of Researcher and School/Faculty: PhD Cristina Silvestri, Faculty of Arts, Professional and Social Studies - Advanced Policing Studies

What is the reason for this letter?

You have been identified as the single point of contact (or gatekeeper) between your force/agency and the research team.

What is the purpose of the study/rationale for the project?

This research aims to assess the utility and ethics of the GAIN arrangements and to encourage greater understanding of the value of active citizenship in this milieu.

What we are asking you to do?

Please publicise my research to colleagues in your own force/agency either verbally or by email/note based on the information in the previous section. Please provide your colleagues with the participant information sheet and ask them to contact me directly if they want to participate. Please also assist the conducting of interviews in work time, in your workplace, by facilitating access for me and by arranging for participants to be given the time to participate in the research.

Why do we need access to your staff?

I am conducting doctoral research into GAIN. I want to draw upon the experiential knowledge of members of the GAIN network of its operation and of police partnership working more generally.

Will the name of my organisation taking part in the study be kept confidential?'

Your force/agency will not be identified in any output I generate.

What will taking part involve?

Your involvement is limited to publicising the research in your organisation and arranging the logistics of any interviews.

What should I do now?

Please sign and return the Gatekeeper Consent Form provided.

Should you have any comments or questions regarding this research, you may contact the researcher:
Cristina Silvestri, c.silvestri@2018.ljmu.ac.uk

This study has received ethical approval from LJMU's Research Ethics Committee 19/LCAPS/003

Contact Details of Researcher Cristina Silvestri, c.silvestri@2018.ljmu.ac.uk
Contact Details of Academic Supervisor Adrian James, A.D.James@ljmu.ac.uk

If you have any concerns regarding your involvement in this research, please discuss these with the researcher in the first instance. If you wish to make a complaint, please contact researchethics@ljmu.ac.uk and your communication will be re-directed to an independent person as appropriate.

Appendix G

Gatekeeper Consent form

LIVERPOOL JOHN MOORES UNIVERSITY
GATEKEEPER CONSENT FORM

Title of Project: *Helping the police with their enquiries: A critical analysis of formal 'civilian' support processes*

Name of Researchers: *Cristina Silvestri*

Please tick to confirm your understanding of the study and that you are happy for your organisation to take part and your facilities to be used to host parts of the project.

I have been asked to publicise research into GAIN to colleagues; to provide colleagues with a participant information sheet and to ask them to contact the researcher directly if they want to participate. I also have been asked to facilitate access for the researcher and to arrange for participants to be given the time to participate in the research

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information provided for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily. ☐

2. I understand that participation of our organisation and members in the research is voluntary and that they are free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and that this will not affect legal rights. ☐

3. I understand that any personal information collected during the study will be anonymised and remain confidential. ☐

4. I agree for our organisation and members to take part in the above study ☐

5. I agree to conform to the data protection act

Name of Gatekeeper: Date: Signature:

Name of Researcher: Date: Signature: