The Sovereignty of Context

Peacekeeping in the

Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste

Anna Powles

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the Australian National University

2008
Statement of Original Work

This thesis is the original work of Anna Rachael Powles

..........................................................

15 August 2008
Canberra
Abstract

It is a profound irony of peace support operations that, in the pursuit of peace, the people whose security is being sought are increasingly obscured in, and by, the process. Contemporary peace support operations are increasingly complex in mandate, seeking to rebuild societies and states in a manner that often further disenfranchises already divided populations and sequesters them to the margins of state-building activities. In the post-conflict or post-war transition period, external intervention can paradoxically compound divisions entrenched prior to and during conflict through a failure to engage local populations and to understand and address local-level dynamics of peace and security. This reflects two crucial and central paradoxes of intervention between, on one level, peace support operations and civilian populations; and, on the other, international security norms and the everyday politics of civil conflict. Through an analysis of the peacekeeper-civilian dynamic, this study explores why and how civilian populations are marginalised through and by the process of intervention. The dual concepts of the sovereignty of context; and a context-based understanding of peace and security are advanced as central to successful peacekeeping. Building upon in-depth field-based analysis of two contemporary peace support operations in the Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste, this study seeks to illustrate that a culture of non-engagement prevails to the detriment of the success of the missions. This study advocates a reassessment of civil-military relations to include genuine participatory engagement.
Contents

Abstract......................................................................................................................................iii
Table of Contents........................................................................................................................v
Map of Solomon Islands............................................................................................................ix
Map of Timor-Leste....................................................................................................................x
Abbreviations.............................................................................................................................xi
List of Plates............................................................................................................................xiii
List of Appendices...................................................................................................................xiv
Acknowledgements..................................................................................................................xv
Preface.....................................................................................................................................xvii

1. Introduction...................................................................................................................1
   1.1 Engaging Strangers..........................................................................................................5
   1.2 Conflict, Context and Knowledge...................................................................................8
   1.3 Security in the Absence of Peace......................................................................................11
   1.4 Case Studies, Definitions and Method.............................................................................14

2. Peace Operations and Local Populations...............................................................25
   2.1 Local Populations and the Literature..............................................................................28
   2.2 Civil Conflict and Contemporary Peace Operations.......................................................40
   2.3 The Complexities and Dynamics of Post-Conflict Peacekeeping.................................43
   2.4 Civilians at the Centre....................................................................................................47
   2.5 Conclusion......................................................................................................................52

3 Solomon Islands: An Uneasy Peace...........................................................................55
   3.1 The Tensions: 1998-2003...............................................................................................56
   3.2 The Early Peace Process and Intervention....................................................................65
   3.3 Marginalisation and Militiarisation: The Dynamics of Conflict....................................70
   3.4 Operation ‘Helpem Fren’: The Arrival of the Mission..................................................75
   3.5 Conclusion......................................................................................................................88
List of Interviews.........................................................240
Map of Solomon Islands

Courtesy of the Australian National University Department of Cartography, 2007.

Map of Timor-Leste
Courtesy of the Australian National University Department of Cartography, 2007.
### Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AusAID</td>
<td>Australian Agency for International Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADF</td>
<td>Australian Defence Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFP</td>
<td>Australian Federal Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIMIC</td>
<td>Civil-military cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIMCOORD</td>
<td>Civil-military coordination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIMPIC</td>
<td>Civil-military-policing cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPE</td>
<td>Complex Political Emergency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FALINTIL</td>
<td>Forças Armadas de Libertação Nacional de Timor-Leste (National Liberation Forces of Timor-Leste)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F-FDTL</td>
<td>FALINTIL-Forças de Defesa de Timor-Leste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FPU</td>
<td>Formed Police Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRETILIN</td>
<td>Frente Revolutionária do Timor-Leste Independente (Revolutionary Front of Independent Timor-Leste)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLF</td>
<td>Guadalcanal Liberation Front</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GNR</td>
<td>Guarda Nacional Republicana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRA</td>
<td>Guadalcanal Revolutionary Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDG</td>
<td>International Deployment Group (AFP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDP</td>
<td>Internally Displaced Person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INGO</td>
<td>International Non-Governmental Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTERFET</td>
<td>International Force in East Timor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPMT</td>
<td>International Peace Monitoring Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISF</td>
<td>International Stabilisation Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITF</td>
<td>Intervention Task Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFM</td>
<td>Isatabu Freedom Movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JTF 631</td>
<td>Joint Task Force 631</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEF</td>
<td>Malaita Eagle Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MMF</td>
<td>Malaitan Ma’asina Forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPC</td>
<td>National Peace Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NZAID</td>
<td>New Zealand Agency for International Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NZDF</td>
<td>New Zealand Defence Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PIC</td>
<td>Pacific Island Country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PIF</td>
<td>Pacific Islands Forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PNTL</td>
<td>Policia Nacional de Timor-Leste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPF</td>
<td>Participating Police Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAMSI</td>
<td>Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RDTL</td>
<td>Republica Democratica de Timor-Leste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSIP</td>
<td>Royal Solomon Islands Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIPS</td>
<td>Solomon Islands Prison Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SI</td>
<td>Solomon Islands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIG</td>
<td>Solomon Islands Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TPA</td>
<td>Townsville Peace Agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UDT</td>
<td>Timorese Democratic Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNMIT</td>
<td>United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNPOL</td>
<td>United Nations Police</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Plates

1. Graffiti depicting weapons and war, Honiara. Powles, 2005........................................61
2. Graffiti welcoming RAMSI, Honiara. Powles, 2005...................................................77
4. Gang graffiti in a western (loromonu) neighbourhood, Dili. Powles, 2006.............113
5. Anti-Australian military graffiti at the Airport IDP Camp, Dili. The slogan states in Bahasa Indonesian: ‘Australian Military Keep Out From The Land of Timor-Leste.’ Powles, 2006........................................................................................................179
7. A damaged Australian Federal Police vehicle following an ambush at the Airport IDP Camp, Dili. Powles, 2006........................................................................................................186
9. AusAID-sponsored disarmament project in Central Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands. In exchange for weapons, the villages received sporting equipment. Powles 2004......212
10. An Australian Defence Force armoured personnel carrier in downtown Dili. Powles, 2006.........................................................................................................................212
11. T-shirt marketed to RAMSI personnel. Produced unofficially by a local (entrepreneurial) t-shirt printing shop in Honiara, the print-run was short-lived after allegedly being discouraged by RAMSI. Powles, 2004.................................218
List of Appendices

1. Anti-Australian leaflet produced by the Democratic Party (PD) during the 2007 elections. PD was opposed to the ISF being utilised to capture Alfredo Reinado, Timor-Leste, 2007.................................................................219


3. “Key Messages For Malaita,” Leaflet distributed in Malaita, Solomon Islands, by the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands, following the drawdown of the military force, 2004.................................................................223

4. “Your Guns Will Be Found,” RAMSI Poster, Honiara, Solomon Islands, 2004....224


7. IDP Camp locations in relation to security ‘Hot Spots,’ Dili, 2006..........................227
Acknowledgements

During the course of my doctoral studies I have been fortunate to spend extensive time in the Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste through periods of both peace and instability. As any field researcher well knows, it is the daily interactions with people on the street, a taxi driver, a cigarette seller, women in a market place, which provide the richness to academic analysis. In this study, I have endeavoured to reflect the voices of the many Solomon Islanders and Timorese who patiently and candidly shared their personal experiences with a stranger. Without their stories this research would be the poorer for it and I am extraordinarily grateful.

Throughout the course of this research I interviewed many peacekeepers in the field. These conversations took place in bars, patrol cars, street corners, barracks and living rooms in the Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste. These men and women willingly gave their time despite the constraints of their work and the difficult and stressful environments in which they operate. I am extremely grateful for their enthusiasm for the project, and for their insights and frankness.

At the Australian National University in Canberra, I would like to thank my supervisors Dr Robert Ayson, Professor Desmond Ball, and Mr Greg Fry. Greg Fry inspired me from the beginning of my thesis both in his own work and his unfailing commitment to what motivated this research. Des Ball provided invaluable direction on the research and writing process. Rob Ayson has been the stalwart behind this project and shown unflagging support, patience and intellectual guidance. I wish also to thank the family of Sir Arthur Tange and the Australian Department of Defence for the bestowment of the Sir Arthur Tange Defence Scholarship which enabled me to pursue this research.

My family and friends have supported and encouraged me throughout my studies despite my lengthy absences. I thank my parents, Michael and Dale Powles, and my brother, Jonathon, who provided immeasurable support. I thank my dear friends, Stephanie Koorey, Hazel Lang, and Ween Thompson, who provided advice and laughter based on their own academic journeys. Lastly, to Ze, thank you.
Preface

A September morning in Dili. Ten houses belonging to loro’sae (easterners) had been burnt down in the bairro (neighbourhood) of Bebonuk. By afternoon it was estimated a further dozen were destroyed. Groups of loromonu (western) youths from the neighbouring community continued to threaten the villagers with katanas and rama ambons—the traditional sword and barbed dart—and loro’sae (eastern) youths countered the attack with rocks. The nervous Bombeiros (fire-fighters) struggled in the smouldering ruins and eventually gave up.

The arrival of the Australian Federal Police (AFP) in two patrol cars dispersed the fighting youths into the alley ways of the neighbouring western-dominated village. Men, women and children, emerged from their homes and shelters and stood expectantly on the roadside. Some families took the opportunity to load up their cars or trucks and leave. The AFP did not, however, venture far from their cars and nor did they ask many questions. Unable to speak Tetum, Portuguese or Bahasa Indonesian and without an interpreter, they were incapable of asking questions. Less than fifteen minutes later, they drove away to a chorus of the same question.

‘Why have they left?’ asked a woman. ‘They [the attackers] will just come back,’ said a man standing in front of the burning embers of his home. An elderly woman cradling her bleeding head refused to leave her home in case of attack either at the outskirts of the village or at the hospital itself. The one prospect of security, however temporary, had withdrawn. ‘You should leave here,’ the AFP officers told me as they drove away, ‘it’s not secure.’ As dusk fell, the fighting resumed. By morning, four truckloads of loro’sae families had left. By the end of September 2006, most of the loro’sae families in Bebonuk had sought refuge in camps or gone to the eastern districts.
Introduction

It is a profound irony of peace operations that, in the pursuit of peace, the people whose security is being sought are increasingly obscured in, and by, the process. Contemporary peace support operations\(^1\) are increasingly complex in mandate, seeking to rebuild societies and states in a manner that often further disenfranchises already divided populations and sequesters them to the margins of state-building activities. In the post-conflict or post-war transition period, external intervention can paradoxically compound divisions entrenched prior to and during conflict through a failure to engage local populations and to understand and address local-level dynamics of peace and security. This reflects two crucial and central paradoxes of intervention between, on one level, peace support operations and civilian populations; and, on the other, international security norms and the everyday politics of civil conflict.

The sovereignty of context concept offers an alternative lens through which to analyse peace operations. The term refers to the distinct nature of each conflict and peacekeeping environment and the importance of understanding local dynamics in order to avoid a one-size-fits-all approach to peace operations. The cases of the Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste\(^2\) which are explored in this study illustrate the need to consider the sovereignty of context as a central factor in enabling more effective engagement between peacekeepers and civilian populations—ultimately leading to more appropriate and context-specific peacekeeping missions.

---

1 There has been an extensive effort to clarify and classify peace operations depending upon mandate. Under contemporary United Nations Security Council-mandated peace support operations, peacekeeping is referred to as 'peace enforcement' due to the granting of Chapter VII powers authorising robust rules of engagement (particularly the use of force) as compared to earlier peacekeeping missions. The term 'peacekeeper' is used throughout this study to refer to both military and police peacekeepers.

2 This study uses the three names of Portuguese Timor (c.1500-1974), Indonesian-occupied East Timor (1975-1999), and Timor Leste (2002) in accordance with the chronological (and political) periods of Timorese history. Timor-Leste (Portuguese for East Timor) became the official name of the state following independence and is the name most commonly used by Timorese themselves. The Tetum translation 'Timor Lorosae' is rarely used and holds uncomfortable connotations following the politicisation of regional identities in mid-2006 between the eastern and western districts of the half-island state.
Introduction

Engagement between peacekeepers and civilians is critical to establishing peace and security, and while this is accepted in normative terms, the practical dilemmas of engagement in post-conflict settings frequently overwhelms the ability, capacity and will of peace support operations to do so in a strategic manner. Relations between peacekeepers and local populations consist of complex and shifting dynamics. Engagement is influenced by socio-cultural attitudes, perceptions of conflict and, importantly, the causes of conflict, partiality and impartiality, legitimacy and credibility. Successful and constructive engagement therefore requires restraint, cultural sensitivity, and an understanding of context. Negative, even harmful, engagement, on the other hand, is epitomised by the sexual exploitation of women and children by peacekeepers, the trafficking of weapons, drugs and commodities, and the provision of direct military support to warring factions. By and large, however, engagement exists in the middle ground, neither overtly negative nor positive. It is a dynamic that has become neglected and marginalised despite the overwhelming need to the contrary. This failure to promote engagement and participation exists at all levels of intervention by peace support operations and is increasingly regarded as a critical but largely unaddressed fault line in institutional peace building. Examining engagement through the lens of civilian-peacekeeper relations therefore sheds light on a broader dilemma thereby situating this study within the relatively new literature on participation and peace support operations.

The principal aim of this thesis is to advance the concept of participatory engagement as the cornerstone of relations between peacekeepers and civilians though an examination of how and why civilians are marginalised in the pursuit of peace and security. In so doing, two interrelated themes which underpin the effectiveness of participatory engagement are explored and reflected throughout this study. First, an understanding of context is essential to the development of appropriate and 'context sensitive' responses to peace and security. This demands an understanding of historical, political, social and cultural dynamics in any given post-conflict context. Without such knowledge, there is a propensity to essentialise conflict and apply a one-size-fits-all approach to peacekeeping.

Secondly, the dual notions of peace and security have many interpretations all of which are dependent upon context. Law and order, the mandate of peacekeepers, does not necessarily equate to peace and security (nor is peace and security purely law and order) and to focus exclusively on law and order disavows the importance of giving agency to multiple perspectives on peace and security. An evaluation of engagement between civilians and peacekeepers
illustrates the importance of both themes and offers an alternative method of understanding, and responding to, the dynamics of conflict and peace.

In the study of peacekeeping, theory has rarely led the practice and, as a consequence, the development of the theory has been sequestered by the necessity to respond quickly to the explicit and acute operational challenges and failings. This study is located in the field of peacekeeping studies which draws upon literature from political science, international relations, military sociology, ethnography, development studies, and anthropology. The study of peace support operations is, by necessity, a multi-disciplinary exercise and this research suggests that therein lies its salvation. The study of peacekeeping, by the very fact that peace support operations must negotiate both global security and everyday politics, demands an interdisciplinary approach which combines the strategic nature of peacekeeping, with an international normative foundation and the ethnographic interpretations of localised conflict, peace and security. The interpretation and analysis of complex emergencies during the Cold War and early 1990s has been limited to case-by-case studies of ‘lessons learned’ and ‘best practise’ which did little to develop scholarship on peacekeeping and relegated the discourse to a subordinate position within the broader field of international relations.\(^3\) This inquiry also contributes to the literature on the development of peacekeeping doctrine by both militaries and the agencies responsible for the deployment of peace support operations, namely the United Nations (UN) Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Civil Military Coordination Section and the NATO Civil-Military (CIMIC) Centre for Excellence. Peacekeeping doctrine is still very much in the process of refinement\(^4\) and this research seeks to contribute a ‘ground-up’ perspective to the study of peacekeeping by emphasising the relationship between peacekeepers and local actors.

Combined with critical empirical observations based on extensive field research, this study therefore seeks to enrich the study of peacekeeping by building upon the existing literature thereby developing the practice of peacekeeping through a highly-nuanced understanding of the myriad of socio-cultural, political and economic dynamics that peacekeepers must traverse. This study offers a counter-narrative of peace support operations by examining the nature of marginalisation of local populations through an analysis of the dynamics between peacekeepers and civilians in Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste. The central factors which contribute to the


contradiction of peace support operations in seeking long-term peace and security are explored in two regional post-conflict settings. Informed by empirical research undertaken in Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste between 2004 and 2007, this inquiry offers a ‘ground-up’ approach to the study of peace support operations thereby contributing to an extensive body of literature which increasingly recognises the centrality of local populations within interventions. These themes are outlined in this chapter and explored in depth through analyses of the civil war in Solomon Islands (1998-2003), the intervention by the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI) from 2003, the breakdown of state and civil order in Timor-Leste in 2006 and the consequent deployment of the International Stabilisation Force (ISF) and the United Nations Police (UNPOL). Building on these chapters, both themes further support the investigation the latter chapters which examine the competing elements of the civilian-peacekeeper dynamic and what this, in turn, reveals about the paradoxical nature of peace support operations.

This inquiry offers an alternative lens through which to critique the success of peace support operations by examining the dynamics between peacekeepers and civilians and illustrates the importance of the everyday politics of both conflict and peacekeeping. While challenging conventional thinking that has informed and, to a degree, limited the doctrine of civil-military-policing relations, this research draws and builds upon the current debates within the literature on peace support operations which call for fresh approaches to peacekeeping’s poor record. Whilst recognising the importance of local participation, the existing literature by and large remains focused on conventional approaches to peacebuilding in post-conflict environments and the associated complexities. Such approaches have favoured a process of ‘pacification through political and economic liberalization’ by promoting the liberal democracy model through free and fair elections and the creation of a market-oriented economy as core elements of consolidating peace.\(^5\) The destabilising consequences of transplanting ‘Western models of social, political, and economic organization into war-shattered states in order to control civil conflict’\(^6\) has led to the search for an alternative paradigm for peacebuilding. In critiquing conventional peacebuilding approaches, Roland Paris advocates an ‘Institutionalization Before Liberalization’ (IBL) approach to peacebuilding, arguing that the foundations of effective political and economic institutions must be constructed before the introduction of electoral democracy and market-

\(^6\) Ibid.
Introduction

oriented adjustment policies. The core elements of IBL are (1) waiting until conditions are ripe for elections; (2) designing electoral systems that reward moderation; (3) the promotion of good civil society; (4) controlling ‘hate speech’; (5) adoption of conflict-reducing economic policies; and (6) developing effective security institutions and a professional, neutral bureaucracy. While the IBL approach does subvert the ‘top-down’ approach to peacebuilding by recognising the importance of context, the approach remains largely state-oriented and is potentially beset with the same pitfalls as the conventional methods of peacebuilding. It still demands an understanding of context and an emphasis on the local population (particularly those elements that may not be classified as ‘good civil society’) which is often lacking in even the most well-intentioned external peacebuilding efforts.

This research, however, contends that civil-military relations—a decisive element of interventions mandated to restore and uphold peace and security—are an equal determinant in the success of a mission. Civil-military relations lie at a critical nexus between local populations and peace operations and through the lens of civil-military relations, it is revealed how poorly external interveners understand the local conflict dynamics. At the core of the success of the peace support operation is the creation of a secure environment which fundamentally requires a nuanced and contextually appropriate understanding of peace and security. Intervening in a country through a peace operation means getting involved, one way or another, in a tangle of actions and reactions that needs to be understood and managed as best possible which implies understanding the logics and representations peculiar to different groups of actors. For that reason, this research views the relationship between peacekeepers and local populations as one of the central determinants in measuring the success of peace support operations.

1.1 Engaging Strangers

Interventions in post-conflict emergencies primarily seek engagement with local and national elites in the statebuilding and institutional peacebuilding processes. Far less attention, however, is accorded the civilian population at the village and community level. Although the central interaction between a civilian population and a peace support operation is invariably confined to

---

8 Ibid, 188.
Introduction

the establishment of law and order by international forces, it is through the relationship between civilians and peacekeepers that a greater understanding of peace and security can be determined and contribute to the effectiveness of the operation.

The marginalisation of the civilian population invariably occurs from the onset of conflict and continues throughout the peace process. Civilians, who are the most affected by war and are arguably the major stakeholders in peace, are frequently denied a voice in these processes as negotiations often revolve solely around belligerents, who, through recourse to violence against civilians, hold the most leverage in negotiations. Compounding the exclusion of non-elites and non-combatants, peace processes are usually framed without full consideration being given to the “smaller picture” or “local spaces” where conflicts are fought but which do not necessarily reflect the perceptions of external interveners. As scholars Fetherston and Nordstrom argued in their 1994 ethnographic study on United Nations peacekeeping, which remains applicable over a decade later, the focus and emphasis has by and large remained on the macro-level aspects of peacekeeping, despite that fact that peacekeeping interacts extensively within target communities and is therefore well situated to provide a connection between the macro and micro (community) levels of activity. Yet it is at the micro-level of conflict that peace and security is determined. The marginalisation of local populations by peace support operations is, however, increasingly receiving attention within the extensive body of literature which was previously pre-occupied with the norms and phases of intervention from the ‘politics of rescue’ to institutional peacebuilding. Underscoring the poverty of relying on conventional top-down conflict management, Fetherston and Nordstrom advocate a ‘bottom-up’ approach to peacekeeping which recognises the reality of conflict on the ground as those directly involved see it rather than by those who conceive peace support operations in the antechambers of international negotiations.

The failure of a disproportionate number of peace support operations to halt or slow a country or territory’s return to violence is progressively linked to the failure of the mission to

---

14 Ibid, 10.
16 According to research by Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, post-conflict countries have a nearly fifty percent likelihood of returning to violence within five years. See Collier and Hoeffler, ‘The Challenge of Reducing the
Introduction

adequately engage local populations in peacebuilding and statebuilding processes. For instance, the 2002 report by the International Peace Academy on ‘best practices’ of conflict prevention emphasised the centrality of involving local participation or, at the very least, ensuring that international and national efforts recognised local needs and capacity and promoted ownership of the process of peacebuilding. Initial discussions held on the creation of the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) also highlighted the need for ownership of the peace process and the challenge to:

Provide a context and create the space in which local actors can themselves develop the solutions they want. “Ownership” has several components and at least two groups of stakeholders. One is the government authority of the country / region in conflict, the other its population at large.

A 2005 report on the PBC noted that the ‘kinds of interventions likely to create ownership by local populations’ included the ‘provision of basic infrastructure and services, such as roads, water, electricity, basic health care and education,’ which were ‘key to gaining the sympathy of the locals to the efforts of the international community and motivating them to contribute their share.’ Moreover, as Ponzio contends, ‘peacebuilding will fail if not embedded in the local context and dynamics.’

The establishment of security and the process of statebuilding form the two, often concurrent, pillars or phases of peace support operations. The restoration and maintenance of security is the immediate task of peace operations and increasingly ranges from the cessation of fighting to reform of the security sector and the judicial system. This thesis explores the role of

18 Catherine Guicherd, Picking up the Pieces: What to Expect from the Peacebuilding Commission, (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Briefing Paper, December 2005), 4. The report by the United Nations High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, A More Secure World: Our Shared responsibility (New York: United Nations, 2004) recommended the creation of a Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) and a Peacebuilding Support Office (PSO) and endorsed by the UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, in his report, In larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All, (New York: United Nations, A/59/2005). Richard Ponzio points out that one of the original aims of the PBC, ‘to help states avoid collapse and the slide to war,’ was removed in subsequent discussions leading up to the creation of the PBC and the decision was made to focus solely on the ‘post-conflict’ dimensions of peacebuilding which ran counter to the growing pressures to place conflict prevention at the heart of the UN’s mandate. See Ponzio, The creation and functioning of the UN Peacebuilding Commission, (London: Saferworld, November 2005), 4.
19 Guicherd, Picking up the Pieces, 4.
20 Ponzio, The creation and functioning of the UN Peacebuilding Commission, 8.
peacekeepers in establishing peace and security thus enabling the broader task of institutional peacebuilding and statebuilding. Statebuilding, with its broad remit to rebuild state institutions, has until recently had greater currency within both academic and practitioner literature because of the liberal peace thesis which gives paramountcy to the role of democratisation and the market economy in ensuring stability. \(^{21}\) The fallibility of statebuilding is, however, directly related to the contest for security which is sought equally at the political and village levels. A re-examination of civil-military-policing relations offers an alternative framework to interpret conflict and intervention which is relevant on both a conceptual and practical level.

By focusing on the engagement between peacekeepers and civilians at the community level, this study illustrates the fluid and complex nature of the relationship between civilians and peacekeepers through an analysis of the dynamics, both positive and negative, that inform the understanding and consolidation of peace and security. The majority of critiques of civil-military-policing relations are primarily, and not surprisingly, concerned with the exploitation and abuse of civilians by peacekeepers and the failure of peacekeepers to protect civilians. \(^{22}\) While acknowledging the former, this study is primarily focussed on the everyday politics of peacekeeping and the conflict this both creates, and is informed by, at the village and community-level. In so doing, the dynamics of civil-military-policing relations reveal the disjuncture between how civilians are represented within the peace support operations literature and highlight how the conventional treatment of civilians as combatant, belligerent, or victim, fail to reflect the realities of civil war. Recognising the ability, and often necessity, for civilians to hold multiple identities creates a more nuanced understanding of the role of civilians in conflict and allows for a greater appreciation of civil-military-policing relations from both a conceptual and operational viewpoint.

### 1.2 Conflict, Context and Knowledge

The dual crises in the Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste are a reminder that to ignore context is at the peril of the intervention mission. The proposal by Australian Minister of Justice, Chris


\(^{22}\) Sex-for-food and gold-for-guns peacekeeping scandals have resulted in calls for tighter disciplinary standards despite the UN's zero-tolerance for crimes committed by peacekeepers. United Press International, 'UN: Peacekeepers need formal discipline,' May 30 2007, [http://www.upi.com/International_Intelligence/Briefing/2007/05/30/htm](http://www.upi.com/International_Intelligence/Briefing/2007/05/30/htm), accessed 01/06/2007. See also *Save the Children, From Camp to Community: Liberia study on exploitation of children*, (London: Save the Children, 2006).
Introduction

Ellison, in June 2006, that a RAMSI-style intervention should form the template for a future United Nations intervention in Timor-Leste reflected both a one-size-fits-all approach to intervention and the assumption that RAMSI itself was a success despite the Honiara riots three months prior which caught the mission off-guard. Interestingly, prior to April and May 2006, Timor-Leste (East Timor) itself was heralded as the poster-child for United Nations statebuilding. Two critics, Jarat Chopra and Tanja Hohe, who both served with the United Nation missions in East Timor, have, however, extensively described the failure of the successive UN missions to engage and include Timorese in nation building.

Of all the lessons that peacekeeping imparts, an understanding of context prevails as the critical determinant of the mission’s ability to engage in preventive rather than reactive security measures. This, by extension, enables a mission to contribute to immediate as well as long-term peacebuilding processes, in particular conflict prevention rather than purely conflict management. A 2003 report by International Alert which reflects the development mantra of ‘Do No Harm’ states that ‘conflict sensitivity,’ or understanding of context, is based on the following three tenets: (1) understand the (conflict) context in which the humanitarian actor or agency operates; (2) understand the interaction between the humanitarian actor or agency and the (conflict) context; and (3) act upon the understanding of this interaction in order to avoid negative impacts and maximize positive impacts on the (conflict) context and the intervention.

Knowledge of a conflict’s origins better prepares and enables a mission to navigate the complex and shifting dynamics of the post-conflict environment influencing the ability of the mission to operate effectively and thereby determine the overall success of the operation. An

---

23 ABC, The World Today, 2 June 2006. Ellison suggested that ‘the RAMSI template, if you like, is a very important way to go in nation building, and it demonstrates, I think, a format which can work in nation building.’


understanding of context reduces reliance on dubious assumptions about why a conflict has occurred and assuages the tendency to stereotype or caricature its protagonists, and those individuals and communities made vulnerable by the violence. As the Brahimi Report contends, ‘broadening and deepening its [the mission’s] local knowledge...is critical to implementing a comprehensive strategy for transition from war to peace.’

Without an understanding of context, peacekeepers cannot engage effectively with the civilian population and, conversely, it is only through increased and genuine engagement that such understanding arises. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, in recognition of the importance of conflict sensitivity, developed the *Principles for Good International Engagement In Fragile States* which stated as its first principle:

> Take context as the starting point: All fragile states require sustained international engagement, but analysis and action must be calibrated to particular country circumstances. It is particularly important to recognize different constraints of capacity and political will and the different needs of: (i) countries recovering from conflict, political crisis or poor governance; (ii) those facing declining governance environments, and; (iii) those where the state has partially or wholly collapsed. Sound political analysis is needed to adapt international responses to country context, above and beyond quantitative indicators of conflict, governance or institutional strength.

Understanding the context of a conflict correlates to an awareness that each situation demands a context-specific solution:

> Every conflict does have its own dynamic and there is no substitute for comprehensively understanding all the factors at work. Everything starts with having an accurate take on what is happening on the ground, the issues that are resonating and the personalities and local dynamics—political, economic, social, cultural and personal—that are driving them.

---

27 Brahimi Report, 16.
29 Evans, *Conflict Prevention: Ten Lessons We Have Learned*, 4.
For the international soldier or police officer, understanding the dynamics of a specific conflict sufficiently well to be effective during a deployment period of four to six months, is a difficult but not insurmountable, task. There is a widely-held attitude that ‘the last thing that a peacekeeper wants to know is the history of the region he is going into. It complicates the task of mediation, and obscures the immediate task, which may well be to deliver food or medicine.’ But this reflects a level of complacency that peacekeepers cannot afford. Peacekeepers are exposed to, and influenced by, perceptions and prejudices surrounding a conflict without an understanding of the context within which they operate. Peacekeepers, like humanitarian actors, can have a negative impact on the situation.

Moreover, peacekeepers are informed by past deployments which can negatively impact on their ability to relate or engage with the local population. For instance, many Australian and New Zealand soldiers and police officers who had served in either the earlier United Nations missions in Timor-Leste, or RAMSI, and who had been deployed back to Timor-Leste, sought commonalities and differences between the missions and which consequently informed and shaped their actions and behaviours. Moreover, the heightened force protection stance of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) was often attributed to ADF deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan despite the significantly lower security threshold in the Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste.

Knowledge of a conflict can be sought in three ways: (1) pre-deployment training if time allows; (2) taking advantage of the experience and knowledge of humanitarian agencies on the ground; and (3) engagement with the civilian population. In a fluid security environment such as Timor-Leste, members of the International Security Force (ISF) and United Nations Police (UNPol) admitted the weaknesses in their understanding of the conflict, but believed themselves to be hamstrung, not surprisingly, by the reactive (rather than preventive) nature of their operations.

---

31 This included making comparisons between Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste, such as in the case of an Australian Federal Police officer who told a roomful of Timorese government ministers and civil servants that ‘even in the Solomons, parents would not have abandoned their children.’ He was referring to an incident at the internally displaced persons (IDP) camp at the National Hospital. Under attack from the neighboring communities, the adults allegedly locked children into a room in the hospital and escaped out the back entrance. Other members of the ISF and UNPol who had served in Timor-Leste from 1999 onwards during the hopeful years following independence, only to return again in 2006, felt bewildered and frustrated by the violence. Confidential interview, 12 October 2006, Dili; Timor-Leste.
Introduction

1.3 Security in the Absence of Peace

One of the most fundamental mistakes of peace support operations is to assume that law and order equates to peace and security. Establishing and maintaining law and order is the primary task of a peacekeeping force and essential for the protection of civilians and the delivery of humanitarian assistance. Papua New Guinea's Minister for Internal Security (Police) Bire Kimisopa likens law and order to the 'hinge' on which a door hangs, stating:

You can talk about the roads and bridges, and you can talk about the social indicators and you can talk about the economy and interest rates and exchange rates. But without the hinge, the door will collapse.33

Law and order can, however, create a veneer, or façade, of security without addressing the underlying issues of a conflict which impact on long-term peace and security. Indeed, without an understanding of local dynamics, missions often fail to address the issues at the core of the conflict and, as a consequence, the outward appearance of law and order can overshadow deep-seated conflict dynamics. Inadequate civilian participation within the peacebuilding process has critical implications for long-term stability for it privileges external perceptions of security over local notions of peace. Oliver Richmond contends that the question of what peace might be expected to look like from the inside (from within the conflict environment) is given less credence than the way the international community and its organisations and actors desire to see it from the outside, and moderates searching for peace from within the conflict environment tend to expropriate Western models in their search for a solution.34

Whilst overt conflict has abated, both Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste currently occupy a state of uneasy peace. Despite the cessation of outright conflict in the Solomons and the appearance of state control (and, indeed, state-controlled violence) in Timor, there remains a disquiet in both countries. This undermines the notion that the transition from conflict to post-conflict is by any means a linear one and emphasises the need to re-examine how peace and security are shaped and re-shaped in the post-conflict environment. The causes of each conflict remain unaddressed and, as this study demonstrates, the respective peace support operations have

deceptively transformed the political and social landscape to such a degree that the conflicts themselves have been artificially frozen.\textsuperscript{35} This, in turn, has marginalised the civilian population and overshadowed the dynamics of the conflict. It is a mistake to assume that the undercurrents of conflict will not resurface in spite of the presence of a peacekeeping force. Indeed, in both cases, violence has spilled over, most notably during the Honiara riots of March 2006 and the ongoing community-level conflict in Timor-Leste since the arrival of the International Stabilisation Force in May 2006. Central to this study is the premise that peace and security are often intangible concepts rooted in the dynamics of culture and conflict, and which cannot be wholly addressed by the law and order mandate of peace support operations.

The anomaly between law and order and peace and security is certainly acknowledged by RAMSI. The United Nations Development Program report on \textit{Emerging Priorities in Preventing Future Violent Conflict}, states that RAMSI recognises that “order” is not the same as “peace” and that the absence of overt violence is not the same as the presence of active peace.\textsuperscript{36} RAMSI has, from the outset, stated that its role is to create the space within which conflict management and prevention can occur. In response to a Solomon Islands Government-sponsored report by the 2006 Review Taskforce which laid the blame for the failure of peace partially at the door of RAMSI (and the Australian High Commission), the then Special Coordinator for RAMSI, James Batley stated that:

\begin{quote}
RAMSI’s position has always been that one of the key roles is to help create a stable environment in which Solomon Islanders themselves can take forward the task of peace and reconciliation, at their own pace, in accordance with their own customs and traditions.\textsuperscript{37}
\end{quote}

The central problem of how to translate law and order into peace and security lies at the core of peacebuilding. It is, in many respects, a bridging of peacekeeping efforts and peacebuilding processes. In the words of a Solomon Islander living in the squatter settlements that emerged in the hills behind Honiara as a consequence of the civil war, ‘law and order is here but peace is not in our hearts.’\textsuperscript{38} Similarly, despite the ISF and UN’s insistence that the security situation had

\textsuperscript{35} On this general tendency, see Edward Luttwak, ‘Give War a Chance,’ \textit{Foreign Affairs} (July/August 1999).
\textsuperscript{38} Confidential interview, Honiara, Solomon Islands, 5 November 2005.
Introduction

stabilised, the reluctance of the internally displaced population in Timor-Leste to leave the IDP camps and return to their neighbourhoods or relocate to alternative transitional housing, reflected Timorese perceptions of peace and security enforced by decades of trauma during the Indonesian occupation. A common complaint amongst the peacekeepers was that the Timorese had heightened expectations of security which the ISF and UNPol simply could not deliver. An example of this was the request for police posts in each neighbourhood or *bairro*, similar to the police posts established during the Indonesian occupation of East Timor (1975-1999). Many peacekeepers could not understand that community demands for a return to Indonesian-style policing and security enforcement in actual fact reflected the level of trauma within communities experienced during the Indonesian occupation, in 1999, and again in 2006.

Understanding what peace means in a particular context means understanding what the conflict itself is about. Peacekeepers are in a unique position, at the frontline of the peace operation, to witness the multiple meanings that peace and security have in conflict and post-conflict settings. Moreover, ‘if peacekeepers bring with them a greater sensitivity to the historical and cultural specifics of a population at war, and support local level initiatives,’ the bridging of peacekeeping and peacebuilding, indeed of *security* and *peace*, becomes all the more viable.

1.4. Case Studies, Definitions, Method and Thesis Structure

Case Studies

This thesis examines the complex relationship between peacekeepers and civilians in two post-conflict contexts: Solomon Islands (2003-2006) and Timor-Leste (2006-2007). These cases were selected because although the Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste interventions are lesser known examples within the wider field of critical thinking on peace support operations, they allow for a rich analysis of civilian–peacekeeper dynamics not least because a high proportion of the Australian and New Zealand defence and police personnel had served in both the Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste. This investigation is therefore a comparative study of the two missions due to the critical differences in context and the ‘lessons learned’ which can be drawn for both

39 Confidential interviews, Dili, Timor-Leste, July-December 2006.
40 Ibid.
41 Ibid.
42 Fetherston and Nordstrom, *Overcoming Conceptual Habitus in Conflict Management*, 22. Local-level initiatives could include facilitating and providing a secure environment for peace talks.
43 Since the early 1990s roughly 70 percent of United Nations peace operations have been deployed in Africa which has in turn been reflected in the focus of the literature on peace operations.
Introduction

Australia and New Zealand as well as for the United Nations. The deployments offer an excellent opportunity to critically examine regional peacekeeping and UN peacekeeping concurrently, engagement with civilian populations, and how to coordinate that engagement with the diverse range of humanitarian actors and agencies.

The RAMSI intervention has been subject to considerable academic analysis primarily concerned with the political and security objectives and rationale behind Australia’s decision to intervene. Increasingly, the attention of the regional governmental forum, the Pacific Islands Forum, NGOs—Oxfam in particular—and a small group of scholars in Australia, New Zealand and the Solomon Islands, has focussed on the void between the mission, its mandate, and the local population thereby highlighting the long-held concerns of members of civil society in the Solomon Islands. This study contributes to the body of literature by giving voice to the perceptions and unease of the local population at the village and community levels where the dynamics between Solomon Islanders and RAMSI are most acutely felt.

By contrast, there has been no research conducted to date on the relationship between the Timorese population and the current peacekeeping mission since the 2006 intervention. The literature has focussed almost exclusively on the April and May 2006 political crisis and the consequent humanitarian emergency and political contest. The lack of attention paid to the engagement of peacekeeping forces and civilians from 2006 onwards may in part be due to the widely held belief in the success of the earlier Australian-led mission, International Force for East Timor (INTERFET) deployed in 1999. This study has chosen to investigate civilian-peacekeeping dynamics exclusively from the period of 2006 onwards. The scope of the study does not include the INTERFET case for two reasons: (1) as stated above, there has been no research conducted to date on the civilian-peacekeeper relationship since the 2006 intervention; and (2) the INTERFET mission was unique in its wide-sweeping popular support amongst the

---


45 The exception is a 2006 report by the local NGO Lao Hamutuk which was widely, and indeed unfortunately, dismissed due to the poor standard of research, including unsubstantiated allegations and a clear bias against the Australian forces.
Introduction

East Timorese population. This is due to the fact that INTERFET was seen as liberating East Timor from Indonesia. As a consequence of the widely-held view that INTERFET was a success, I argue that the Australian defence establishment did not critique civil-military relations or seek to further develop the doctrine. This study thus demonstrates that the legitimacy held by INTERFET was quickly squandered by the International Stabilisation Force in 2006. When the ISF arrived in Timor-Leste in May 2006, a significant proportion of the local population continued to regard the Australian forces as the ‘liberators’ of 1999. The considerable goodwill felt towards the Australians was soon lost due to a lack of understanding of the context on the part of the ISF and subsequent mistakes that were made due to this. In light of the difficulties faced during the 2006 deployment in regards to civil-military relations which were not experienced by INTERFET, this study focuses on the 2006 deployment.

The contexts of the Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste hold commonalities although it is important to not inflate these parallels. It is difficult to ignore, for example, the superficial indicators of conflict. There are strong demographic similarities between the Solomons and Timor where there is high population growth and a dominant ‘youth bulge’ combined with both poverty in real terms and the less visible and insipid poverty of opportunity—the lack of employment and education opportunities. Large numbers of disenfranchised and marginalised males with little to occupy their time can increase the level of crime, spill over into violent frustration or become pliable and easily manipulated by those desiring political or criminal gain.46 Any visitor to the capitals Dili or Honiara would observe the groups of young men congregating on street corners or at the market or outside a bar or gaming establishment. But herein lies the importance of context. The link between demographics and conflict is not a wholly organic one and is invariably determined by struggles for political control over land, resources, and the state coffers. Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste have starkly different histories of violence and the every-day politics of each crisis reflects these origins.

There are also striking similarities between the two missions to the Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste which further enhance their research value. Both peace support operations evolved into integrated missions where all facets of the operation from security, statebuilding, peacebuilding and post-conflict recovery are combined under one central operation. In both cases, intervention was at the behest of the host government once it became clear that it could not

---

46 Henrik Urdal, 'A Clash of Generations? Youth Bulges and Political Violence,' *International Studies Quarterly*, 50, 2006, 607-629. Urdal statistically analyses contemporary internal conflicts where there is a demographically high proportion of youth and a high prevalence of political violence arguing that the two are inextricably inter-linked.
resolve the law and order crises paralysing the countries. Accusations that state sovereignty was impinged upon or breached came much later. Furthermore, the 2006 case of Timor-Leste differs significantly in regards to context and the credibility of the mission. In both cases, the peacekeeping forces were deployed without the basis of a peace agreement between the warring factions and the state thereby further blurring the already complex post-conflict environment. Peace agreements, albeit frequently violated, do provide a degree of much-needed clarity for the intervening parties. As is discussed in Chapter Seven, in the absence of a peace agreement, it is critical that the operational mandate is clarified with all actors engaged in peacebuilding including non-mission related actors such as humanitarian agencies and, of course, the local population themselves. The lack of transparency that invariably exists as a consequence of an unclear mandate to all parties concerned can impact on the level of accountability attributed to peacekeepers’ actions.

Nor, in either instance, is there a clear timetable for withdrawal despite a consistent drawing down of forces in the Solomon Islands largely to offset Australia’s other deployments, including the 2006 deployment in Timor-Leste. While the rotation of forces between the two theatres contributes to the accumulation of institutional knowledge within, for example, the Australian Defence Force and the Australian Federal Police and their New Zealand counterparts, the absence of an exit strategy creates an indeterminate state or vacuum by which it is difficult if not impossible to measure objectives against an established timeframe thereby raising questions about accountability. The international context which informed both interventions also provided a degree of synchronicity between the Solomon Islands in 2003 and Timor-Leste in 2006. Certainly from an Australian strategic perspective, in both cases there was a strong sense of the interventions serving to prevent weak states from becoming failed states. The policy mantra of state failure underpinned both interventions which differed greatly from the rationale behind INTERFET and its successors. As will be discussed in Chapter Five, regional peace support operations are touted as a panacea to the problems which plague UNSC-mandated peace support operations. Regional missions are promoted as more effective as the peacekeepers are drawn from within the region and are therefore regarded as having a greater local knowledge of the history, culture and political context. Regionally-mandated operations are also considered to have

---

Introduction

greater legitimacy although as several African Union-authorised missions have proven, the principles of impartiality and neutrality are sorely tested.

In both cases, the missions are ongoing and it would be unwise to draw final conclusions regarding the success or failure of either intervention, although certain preliminary lessons can, nonetheless, be drawn. Nonetheless, although it is important to heed caution in applying lessons from one peace support operation to another, the notion of engagement between the peacekeeper and the local actor is by no means limited to context or conflict and the need to apply such practice is common across all missions. Both the Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste clearly demonstrate the consequences of failing to understand the local context and the impact of assumptions on marginalising the legitimate concerns of the people.

Definitions
The term 'sovereignty of context'—both the title of this work and its principal theme—refers to each conflict and peacekeeping environment being distinct in nature and the importance of understanding the local context in order to avoid a one-size-fits-all approach to peace operations. Despite broad commonalities between the Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste in regards to land ownership disputes, the breakdown of traditional village structures, political competition and so forth, the causes and outcomes of each conflict are equally divergent in nature. The common and unchallenged chorus of “it worked in Kosovo” and “we did it in Bosnia” heard amongst United Nations officials in downtown Dili reflects the ambivalence towards an active understanding that context-specific approaches to peace operations—approaches informed by the context as opposed to the desired outcome—are essential. For example, a context-specific or context-based understanding of peace and security reflects an understanding of what peace and security means to a particular individual or group in any given context, conflict, or situation.

The themes of participatory intervention and participatory engagement underpin this study. Here I draw on the scholarship of Jarat Chopra and Beatrice Pouligny who respectively argued for the engagement and inclusion of local stakeholders in peace operations. Participatory intervention relates directly to the sovereignty of context concept as engagement with local populations is fundamental to understanding the context in which missions operate. This in turn would enable the mission to shape its actions and desired outcomes on context-specific realities and requirements.

The increasingly complex nature of peace support operations over the last decade has resulted in a corresponding and equally complex typology of definitions. In this study, I have
Introduction

elected to use the generic terms of ‘peacekeeping’ and ‘peace support operations,’ with a broader explanation of the critical developments within peacekeeping and peace support operations offered in Chapter Two. It is important to note, however, that the peacekeeping operations discussed in this thesis fall into the category of peace support operations with ‘peace enforcement’ mandates authorising robust rules of engagement (referred to as ‘Chapter 6.5’ or ‘Chapter 7’ of the United Nations Charter which permit the use of force).

Two key concepts are used throughout this thesis. The first is civil-military cooperation, or CIMIC, informed by civil-military doctrine, and the second is ‘civil-military-policing cooperation,’ or CIMPIC, a term which has been borrowed from Raymond Apthorpe and Jacob Townsend,48 to describe the transition from civil-military cooperation (CIMIC) to include the role of civilian police or ‘police-keepers’ in peace support operations. Both terms refer to cooperation between peacekeepers and civilians on the one hand, and peacekeepers and humanitarian actors on the other hand. While ‘police-keeping’ has increasingly been at the forefront of post-conflict peace support missions, the CIMPIC concept is under-developed as a doctrine. For example, although ‘police-keeping’ is gaining considerable traction as an alternative to traditional peacekeeping, the Australian Federal Police to date has not developed a civil-policing doctrine. Moreover, conventional Australian CIMIC doctrine focuses on cooperation between the ADF and humanitarian actors with acknowledgment of the ‘hearts and minds’ component but no clear strategy for engagement. Where necessary, I distinguish between the two levels of cooperation and coordination: (1) between peacekeepers and the civilian population; and (2) between peacekeepers and humanitarian actors and agencies.

The cartography of peacekeeping concept explored in Chapter Five is an adaptation of what political geographers such as Brunn and Grundy Warr refer to as the ‘peacekeeping landscape’.49 This approach acknowledges that peacekeeping missions are not passive actors in the social and political contexts in which they operate and that the presence of peacekeepers does impact on conflict and peacemaking scenarios. By using the term ‘cartography of peacekeeping’ I have expanded the concept to include international humanitarian actors and agencies present in conflict and post-conflict situations as the interaction between peacekeepers, international

48 Raymond Apthorpe and Jacob Townsend, Submission to the Australian Senate on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Inquiry into Australia’s involvement in peacekeeping operations, 1 May, 2007, 5.
humanitarian actors, and the local population can have diverse consequences. This borrows from Kabutaulaka’s notion of the ‘crowded stage’ on which cooperation and competition occurs between multiple actors with multiple agendas often to the detriment of the goal of peace and stability. The cartography of peacekeeping relates to the sovereignty of context concept by revealing how external forces shape and impact local dynamics and highlights the importance of participatory intervention to ensure that local voices are not excluded from the complex processes of peacekeeping, peacebuilding and statebuilding.

Method
This study is based on fieldwork undertaken during successive research visits to the Solomon Islands between 2004-05 and Timor-Leste between 2006-08. In both instances, fieldwork was undertaken in urban and rural areas during periods of both instability and relative peace. Honiara and Dili were selected as the primary field sites for two reasons. First, both capitals were sites of extensive conflict and displacement. During the tensions, Honiara became a fortified Malaitan enclave on Guadalcanal for those unable to flee by ferry to Malaita. During and following the tensions, squatter settlements of displaced Malaitans sprung up in the capital and the hilly outskirts of Honiara. The 2006 crisis in Timor-Leste was largely centred in Dili, resulting in the capital, situated in the western half of the island, harbouring approximately 75,000 displaced easterners in camps throughout the city. Although approximately 75,000 easterners fled to the districts, fewer incidents of violence occurred in the rural areas whereas the internal displacement camps in the capital became frequent sites of violence and intimidation. Moreover, there was a significant international military and police presence in the Honiara and Dili. The close proximity of the peacekeepers, combatants and vulnerable communities provided a critical juxtaposition between the mission and key elements of the local population. The lack of engagement between these groups served to reinforce the paradox between international intervention and marginalised communities and groups.

The selection of field sites in Honiara and Dili was informed by the circumstances of the communities and groups. For example, interviews were conducted with community members in the Malaitan squatter settlements such as Borderline in the Honiara hinterlands and squatter camps such as Burns Creek renowned for its strongly anti-RAMSI sentiment. Interviews were also conducted in Guale villages affected by the violence such as Kakabano on the outskirts of

---

Introduction

Honiara. In Dili, interviews were conducted in the IDP camps labelled ‘high risk’ due to the high number of militants within the camp and the frequency and intensity of violence between the camps, adjacent neighbourhoods and martial arts gangs. Corresponding interviews were conducted in neighbourhoods throughout Dili where significant east-west violence had occurred. In both the case of Honiara and Dili, the respective missions were headquartered in the capitals allowing access to RAMSI, United Nations, and senior Australian and New Zealand defence and police personnel.

The selection of field sites outside of Honiara and Dili was often informed by accessibility and logistics. In the Solomon Islands several field visits conducted to Malaita and Central Guadalcanal were assisted by the Australian Defence Force, the Australian Federal Police, the New Zealand Defence Force, and the New Zealand Police. Aside from the logistical advantages of travelling by helicopter, 4WD, and to a lesser degree, on foot, accompanying the international security forces allowed me to interview peacekeepers prior or following operations and enabled firsthand observation of their interactions with communities. Separate visits were made to villages in Central Guadalcanal and Western Province without the presence of the international security forces. In Timor-Leste, field visits were conducted to IDP camps, villages and towns in both the western and eastern districts, specifically Tasi Tolu, Tibar, Liquica, Ermera, Metinaro, Hera and Baucau. On several occasions I accompanied Timorese government ministers and officials to conflict mediation meetings in the districts through which I gained a deeper insight of local politics. A deliberate decision was made to not travel with the international security forces due to strong local perceptions of partiality and bias on the part of the peacekeepers.

Local populations, international interventions and humanitarian communities embody a large and diverse range of actors and stakeholders. Interview subjects included village and community members, Internally Displaced Persons, members of civil society, the international humanitarian community, peacekeepers, Australian, New Zealand, Solomon Islands and Timorese government officials, UN personnel and regional bureaucrats. Additional empirical material was gathered during a research visit to the Pacific Islands Forum, in Suva, Fiji, in 2003, and as a member of the New Zealand Foreign Minister’s delegation to Palau, Marshall Islands, and the Solomon Islands in May 2004. Between 2003 and 2007 I also conducted extensive interviews with Australian and New Zealand government ministers, officials, defence personnel, and police officers in Canberra and Wellington.
Introduction

The nature of this research required an empirical and qualitative approach informed by social research methods drawn from the disciplines of sociology and ethnography. For the purposes of my field research, I used a combination of open-ended questions and participant observation to inform the qualitative findings of this study. Quotes from interview subjects are identified in italics. This study was approved by the Australian National University Human Research Ethics Committee prior to the commencement of field research. In many instances, interviewees requested anonymity due to the sensitivity of the subject matter and their professional or personal allegiances. Where necessary, I have omitted information and details which could identify interviewees and potentially compromise their safety or professional capacity.

Researching this subject held several limitations. During the four years that fieldwork was undertaken, it is worth noting that, for example, there was a distinct shift in RAMSI’s attitude and openness towards researchers in the Solomon Islands between 2003 and 2005. This was particularly apparent within the Australian Federal Police’s International Deployment Group following a saturation of research and growing criticism of the AFP’s deployment to the Solomon Islands. Such sensitivities carried over to Timor-Leste and often reflected internal frustrations within the organisation as well as external concerns over conduct. Moreover, conducting research in countries transitioning through conflict to post-conflict phases heralds a range of difficulties. Local informants, already facing daily personal risk, often fear further compromise when speaking to foreign researchers and yet often choose to do so despite risk of retribution. Such relationships must therefore be treated with considerable respect and navigated cautiously with the interests of the informant paramount. The personal safety of the researcher is also a consideration when undertaking field research in such circumstances. The impartiality of the researcher can be compromised or threatened as a consequence of broader political machinations. This issue arose in Timor-Leste following the arrival of foreign forces after the 2006 crisis and the neutrality of the Australian military and police personnel became increasingly questioned by domestic political parties and actors engaged in communal violence. Suspicion of Australian peacekeepers extended to Australian civilians (including those who ‘looked’ Australian and spoke English rather than Portuguese, for example). This created certain risks when conducting research in certain neighbourhoods or internally displaced camps where anti-Australian fervour ran rife.

This research draws extensively on primary material, including official open-source and confidential documents, and secondary material, including media reports, reports by
Introduction

humanitarian agencies and civil society organisations, the United Nations, regional organisations and independent think tanks. The principal contribution of this study remains, however, the empirically-grounded argument for engaging with local populations.

Thesis Structure

Building on the dual themes of conflict sensitivity and context-specific notions of peace and security introduced in the Introduction, Chapter Two examines the origins of contemporary peace support operations in relation to the demands and dynamics of civil war, reviews the current literature with a specific focus on the relationship between peacekeeping and peacebuilding and identifies the lack of consideration of local populations within the literature. This chapter also introduces the central concept of engagement as a framework for interaction between peacekeepers and civilians.

The case studies are explored in Chapters Three and Four. Chapter Three outlines the 1998-2003 civil war in the Solomon Islands highlighting the key characteristics of the conflict, the failure of the peace process, and the Australian-led regional intervention in 2003. Chapter Four examines the crisis of April and May 2006 in Timor-Leste examining the breakdown of the security forces, the displacement of 150,000 people, and the subsequent request for international intervention. Drawing heavily on empirical findings in both the Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste, the remaining chapters address three critical themes which highlight the civilian-peacekeeper dynamic. The order of the chapters reflects the phases of intervention by examining, first, the context in which peacekeepers operate; second, the need for conflict sensitivity; and third, the measures by which an intervention is deemed a ‘success’. Chapter Five examines the multitude of actors that co-exist in a post-conflict setting and argues that local populations can be further marginalised on this ‘crowded stage.’ The chapter examines the tension created between peacekeepers and humanitarian actors as a consequence of ‘mission creep’ and the increasing demand for--and resistance to--peacekeepers to engage in peacebuilding activities. This chapter then explores the geographical ‘reach’ of peacekeepers and the nature of deployment patterns and questions whether police-led operations have a greater ‘reach’ into the local population in view of the emphasis on community policing.

Chapter Six builds on the overarching theme in this research of the need for conflict sensitivity and examines the relationship between civilians and peacekeepers addressing (1) the crucial problem of civil protection versus force protection and how this shapes both engagement and the relationship; (2) representations of civilians as either ‘victims’ or ‘spoilers’ which fails to
Introduction

acknowledge the dynamics of civil conflict; (3) and the categorisation of ethnic identities and how this is manipulated and misunderstood. Chapter Seven critiques the conventional measures by which peace operations are deemed a success and argues for the inclusion of local indicators of success and a re-evaluation of the notion that law and order equates to peace and security. Chapter Eight concludes the study by further advancing the argument that local populations are an integral component of peacekeeping. This chapter draws together the central findings of this research and proposes a re-evaluation of current methods of civil-military-policing relations based on a framework for engagement leading to greater effectiveness and the long-term success of peace support operations.
Peace Operations and Local Populations

The dramatic shift in the number and nature of peacekeeping and peace support operations during the post-Cold War period and the early twenty-first century has resulted in a corresponding proliferation of studies by academics and practitioners preoccupied with the central question of how to improve peace support operations in order to affect long-term peace and security. These deliberations have occurred against the increasingly altered geography of peacekeeping which has seen conflict spill over the traditional frontlines and involve civilians on an unprecedented scale as combatants or victims. The International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) concluded in its report, *The Responsibility to Protect*, that 'an unhappy trend of contemporary conflict has been the increased vulnerability of civilians, often involving their direct targeting.' An earlier report by the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict noted that 'in some wars today, 90 percent of those killed in conflict are non-combatants, compared with less than 15 percent when the century began.' The emergence of small wars and low-level conflicts with multiple and shifting borders has resulted in the displacement and

---


54 It is significant to note that although have armed conflicts decreased in number (for example, from 50 in 1992 to 30 in 2004) the impact upon civilians in terms of battle-related deaths and displacement has risen. See United Nations Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the protection of civilians in armed conflict*, S/2004/740, 2004, 2.

Peace Operations and Local Populations

dead of civilians, the involvement of non-state combatants and armed groups, and the need to develop a far more comprehensive approach to assisting emergent, fragile, and weak states break the conflict cycle.

Nordstrom and Fetherston observe that peacekeeping is well situated to provide a connection between macro and micro levels of activity yet the focus and emphasis remains very much on the macro-level aspects of peacekeeping. The peacekeeper-local population lens is therefore a means for framing and understanding the broader and equally profound issue of how peace operations interpret and engage conflict management processes. Given that peacekeeping interacts extensively within target communities, a re-orientation which integrates macro-level and micro-level activity is necessary. Nordstrom and Fetherston argue for consideration of:

‘the reality of conflict on the ground, not as the peacekeepers see it, but as the people directly involved see it. This bottom-up perspective is often overlooked or trivialised by peacekeepers who rely on traditional ways of dealing with conflict...the reality of life in a warzone ... underscores the poverty of relying solely on top-down conflict management.’

Direct and strategically-targeted engagement with the local population by peacekeeping forces offers an alternative approach to the traditionally state or state-level-oriented approach of peace operations. Increasingly it is recognised within the literature that local engagement in the statebuilding process is critical. Chopra and Hohe argue for ‘participatory intervention’ in which ‘space is provided for local voices to be expressed and for communities to get directly involved in the evolution of their own cultural or political foundations, as part of a gradual integration into the national state apparatus.’ Furthermore, Comfort Lamptey’s research in Liberia and Sierra Leone on the strengthening of strategic partnerships between United Nations peacekeeping missions and local civil society organisations during post-conflict transitions highlights the necessity of peace operations engaging with local actors at the level of civil society. Yet the majority of the local population remains outside, or excluded from, the statebuilding process. It is patently clear that civilian actors are the ‘missing link’ between the resurgence of conflict and the

---

56 Ibid., 10
establishment and maintenance of a viable and realistic peace\textsuperscript{59} however effecting change through the daily engagement of peacekeepers with local populations has proven ambiguous at best. At the core of this dilemma is the central question of this study: why do peace support operations marginalise local populations rather than meaningfully present local actors as a key dynamic and determinant in peace support operations?

The objectives of this chapter are twofold. The first aim is to demonstrate the influence of theoretical developments within peacekeeping literature and the contextual realities of peacekeeping itself on the evolution of traditional ‘old school’ peacekeeping missions to the multi-dimensional peace support operations of today. The second aim is to illustrate that despite new developments within peacekeeping studies which have identified the marginalisation of civilian populations, there remains a fundamental failure of engagement between those charged with establishing ‘peace and security’ and those challenging and challenged by its absence. This chapter is therefore divided into four sections each building on the initial arguments advanced in the Introduction.

The first section, \textit{Local Populations and the Literature}, reviews the current literature on peace support operations identifying and building on key conceptual developments which address the absence of critical thinking in relation to local populations in both the practitioner and academic literature. This includes an overview of two distinct approaches to peacekeeping—the theoretical and the practical, or policy-oriented, approaches—which have informed the study of peacekeeping and examines developments at both the scholarly and practitioner levels which seek to address the marginalisation of local populations by peace operations. This includes the introduction of key concepts into the debate: civil-military doctrine, the link between critical security studies and human security thereby creating what Chandler describes as a ‘people-centred approach’\textsuperscript{60} to peacekeeping, the development-security nexus, participatory intervention, and the notion of a social contract between peacekeepers and local populations.

The second section, \textit{Civil Conflict and Contemporary Peace Operations}, examines the origins of contemporary peace support operations in relation to the demands and dynamics of civil war and explores the complexities of peacekeeping in the post-conflict environment. The


third section, *The Complexities of Post-Conflict Peacekeeping*, examines the unique challenges of keeping the peace in post-conflict environments. The fourth section, *Civilians at the Centre*, introduces alternative means of examining the role of local populations in peace operations. The final section of this chapter concludes that the disjuncture between peace support operations and peacekeepers and civilians requires a reassessment of the value of engagement at all levels of intervention. Therein lies, this chapter argues, the paradox of peace support operations. How does both theory and practice effectively bridge the gap between peace support operations and local populations?

### 2.1 Local populations and the literature

The complex political and social landscape of civil war has resulted in the rapid adaptation of peace operations over the past two decades. By necessity, peacekeeping has rapidly evolved from ‘first generation’ traditional Cold War-style peacekeeping through to the multi-faceted contemporary ‘fourth, fifth and sixth generation’ deployments involving peace enforcement, peace maintenance and peacebuilding. These developments occurred fundamentally in response to perceived failures of traditional peacekeeping practices which, as the key international review of peacekeeping argued, treated ‘the symptoms rather than the sources of conflict,’ and therefore had ‘no built-in exit strategy’ and were ‘slow to make progress.’

The consequent developments within peace operations have resulted in the introduction of several critical dynamics which inform and shape the nature and conduct of missions in relation to civilian populations. As a result, practitioners and scholars of peace operations have sought to develop alternative frameworks with which to understand both developments on the ground and the means of response. While much of the literature—both academic and official—is oriented from a United Nations perspective on peace operations and peacekeeping, it does however inform the broader thinking on peace operations within which regional interventions such as the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) are situated. Although the predilection of scholars to focus on peacekeeping on the African continent is understandable due to it being the ‘coalface’ of operations, smaller and more cohesive integrated interventions like RAMSI have a great deal to offer the wider debate on peacekeeping. The literature on RAMSI is

---

61 Brahimi Report, 3.
explored in subsequent chapters of this study, however, it is important to state that one of the central issues raised by critics of RAMSI is the failure to engage the local population.

Contemporary scholarship on peace operations reflects the increased need for the development of highly nuanced conflict prevention and peace enforcement mechanisms. However, the daily dynamics of peacekeeping are such that it is an inherently reactive rather than preventative occupation as forces respond to the constant instability and fluidity of the post-conflict environment which can often result, paradoxically, in the marginalisation or overshadowing of the civilian population. As The Challenges Project Report on peace operations states:

the efforts of external actors will amount to naught if the people who must live with the consequences of success or failure...are not fully engaged in and committed to the peace. While much time and energy are spent on attempting coordination between international actors, enhanced efforts should be devoted to improving the partnership with the local population and national institutions.  

As a consequence, the proliferation of analyses on the “best practices” of engagement has spawned an industry of consultants in an attempt to create a ‘benchmark of engagement’ that can be translated across borders and contexts in the form of lessons learned. While the application of lessons learned from the broader practice of international intervention does have credence for local conditions, there is certainly no substitute for locally-learned and contextually appropriate approaches to peacekeeping. The assessment of what equates to ‘best practice’ is further compounded by the failure of peacekeeping mandates to truly reflect lessons learned from past engagements through the practical application of field-gained experience and knowledge. Rubin poses the following critical question in relation to state-building but it is of equal prescience to peacekeeping. He claims that 'studies of state-building operations often try to identify “best practices” without asking for whom they are best.'

This paradox is reflected in the academic and practitioner bodies of literature which fail to sufficiently acknowledge and meaningfully represent local actors as key dynamics and determinants within externally-driven peace processes. Whilst the current literature on peace

62 The Challenges Project, Meeting the Challenges of Peace Operations: Cooperation and Coordination — Executive Summary and Conclusions (Stockholm: Elanders Gotab, 2005), 12.
Peace Operations and Local Populations

operations broadly addresses the significance of the civilian-peacekeeper relationship in terms of consent and legitimacy it does not, however, adequately question the conventional assumptions which inform and influence the manner in which engagement is undertaken. Traditional analyses of peace operations have principally focused on the operational and institutional aspects of military intervention such as rules of engagement, the use of force, force structure and composition, and the application of mandates, with very little interpretation of these issues beyond the confines of the discipline.64 However, with its increasingly progressive focus, the field has introduced interpretive tools that challenge the absence of theory and the reluctance to engage with other schools of thought, in particular international relations and social anthropology. As such, it is an increasingly fertile ground for the development of new theories and practices in peacekeeping and peace support operations. Furthermore, using the framework of ‘warzone ethnography’ as an interpretative lens through which to critique peacekeeping, it is possible to situate peacekeeping within the broader processes of conflict management which, when subverted, sheds light on the impact of peacekeeping on micro-level conflict processes.65

In his treatise on the development of peacekeeping theory through the adoption of alternative conceptual and interpretive disciplinary frameworks, Paris notes that as a consequence of the proliferation of multi-dimensional peace support operations in the 1990s, the study of peacekeeping matured into a more explicitly theoretical enterprise, driven in part by the goal of identifying and explaining the conditions that make some peacekeeping operations more successful than others.66 The current debates within the study of peacekeeping whilst continuing to problematise peacekeeping and the appropriateness of its practices,67 are however, being increasingly informed by a number of scholars who are questioning the normative and ideological principles underpinning peacekeeping operations and contending that the ‘liberal peace’ being sought in the illiberal context of protracted civil war is inappropriate and potentially

Peace Operations and Local Populations

provocative. In enhancing greater understanding of peacekeeping theory, it is essential to elucidate the reasons why interventions are undertaken and conducted and the current practices of peacekeeping which serve to 'transplant the values and institutions of the liberal democratic core into the affairs of the peripheral host states.'

There exists a prolific body of literature concerned with peace support operations from both the theoretical and practical perspectives. This literature can be divided into two distinct parts in accordance with the phases of peace support operations. The first phase is undertaken by the peacekeeping force and is primarily concerned with the initial albeit enduring task of establishing a secure environment. This includes transitioning from a high-security threat environment to a law and order environment although the role, particularly that of the military component of a peacekeeping force, may reduce—or drawdown—once the environment is secure to include institutional peacebuilding tasks such as security sector reform. The second phase of peace support operations concerns the fundamentally more complex and long-term process of statebuilding or institutional peacebuilding. The two phases, or elements, are obviously not sequential but are inherently symbiotic. The statebuilding phase of socio-political engineering is heavily reliant on the maintenance of a secure environment and, likewise, peace and security—commonly viewed through the lens of law and order—is acutely dependent upon functioning elements of the state apparatus, namely the domestic security forces and the judicial system.

Within the theoretical and practitioner discourse on peace support operations, the critical relationship between peacekeepers and local populations has largely been grounded in military doctrine in the context of civil-military affairs or civil military relations. Civil-military relations

is regarded as essential operational practice but the concept is underdeveloped within military thinking and a paradigm shift is required to advance a more nuanced approach which is underpinned by greater emphasis on understanding of the local context and engagement with the local population. The doctrine of civil-military affairs or civil military relations is increasingly regarded as a cornerstone to operational success but this is a fairly recent phenomenon despite the centrality of the ‘Hearts and Minds’ approach developed during counter-insurgency operations throughout the Cold War period. Hills states that it was not until the end of the Cold War, however, that civilians became a significant influence on doctrine. This was evidenced by the centrality of consent and legitimacy in peace support operations doctrine—peace support operations themselves based on experience gained in counter-insurgency operations but designed to end conflict by promoting conciliation and therefore having expanded the military mission to include the coordination of operations concerned with civilian affairs. As a 2002 report into the challenges of peace operations states:

Nothing creates more misunderstanding, generates more emotion and results in more confusion in modern peacekeeping than the subject of civil-military relations; yet nothing, absolutely nothing, is more important to successful peacekeeping in the new millennium than the cooperation and coordination between the principal contributors to a peacekeeping mission, military and non-military.

There is, however, no one clear definition of civil-military relations although there have been significant efforts to define the principles and guidelines. In 2002 a report by the Swedish National Defence College noted that there was no single UN definition of civil-military cooperation. The most advanced definition has been produced by NATO and states that:

---


74 Hills, ibid, 10.


76 Ibid., 145.
The immediate purpose of CIMIC is to establish and maintain the full cooperation of the NATO commander and the civilian authorities, organisations, agencies and population within a commander’s area of operations in order to allow him to fulfil his mission... The long-term purpose of CIMIC is to help create and sustain the conditions that will support the achievement of Alliance objectives in operations.\(^77\)

Likewise, the ‘Hearts and Minds’ component of civil-military relations is highly controversial as it can involve a manipulation of humanitarian needs and activities for the purpose of intelligence gathering and force protection thus blurring the distinction between humanitarian (civilian) and military action.\(^78\) The emphasis on consent and legitimacy in current doctrine is in direct response to the increased involvement of militaries in Operations Other Than War (OOTW) which demand non-conventional enforcement measures. Military thinking, however, has not developed the paradigm of civil-military relations significantly beyond the traditional attitude that it presents little more than a logistical challenge.\(^79\)

Furthermore, as stated earlier, within the field of security studies, analyses of peace support operations have focussed principally on the operational and institutional aspects of military intervention with very little theoretical focus. The discipline has traditionally resisted the overtures of the burgeoning sub-field of critical security studies which has introduced interpretive tools that challenge the absence of theory and the reluctance to engage with other schools of thought, in particular international relations and social anthropology. The discipline of security studies, with its progressive focus on alternative security, is fertile ground for the development of new theories and practices in peacekeeping and peace support operations. Combined with critical empirical observations based on extensive field research, this research therefore seeks to enrich security studies by drawing upon the theoretical resources that these alternative discourses offer and thereby develop the practice of peacekeeping through a highly-nuanced understanding of the myriad of dynamics that peace support operations must traverse.


Peace Operations and Local Populations

Conceptual Approaches
Approaches to the study of peacekeeping and peace operations are thereby defined as having either a theoretical or practical approach with the former—the theoretical approach—lamented as overshadowed by the latter practical, policy-oriented approach. Peacebuilding scholar Roland Paris has argued that the current (and ongoing) preoccupation with practical operational issues prevents the study of peace missions from becoming a mature academic subfield. Despite considerable inroads into the field of peace operations (predominantly by Paris), Alex Bellamy has similarly suggested that peace operations are under-theorised and that the tradition of viewing peace operations through the lens of problem-solving theory has limited the scope of creative thinking and practice. Arguing from the position that there has been very little reflection about what peace operations reveal about global politics or the functions that peace operations fulfil within it, Bellamy argues that the problem is not that there is an absence of theory but that, as Paris himself argues, the literature on peace operations is too limited in its scope of inquiry and devotes too much attention to policy—both in relevance to and recommendations for. Yet as this study illustrates, it is through an analysis of the fundamentally practical nature of engagement between peacekeepers and civilians that the broader questions can be asked. Who, for example, is a civilian? How do perceptions of peace and security differ from context to context? What does peace and security actually mean? These questions have wider implications for the larger theoretical debates about intervention, sovereignty and the responsibility to protect.

Moreover, the approaches can be further broken down into the ‘critical’ approach and the more commonly utilised ‘problem-solving’ or ‘instrumentalist’ approach. The differences between the two lie in the nature of the normative assumptions of each and the relationship between theory and practice. The problem-solving approach, which is primarily concerned with the ‘development of practical strategies for conflict resolution and the management of armed conflict in the world’s trouble spots’, is predicated on a series of unexplored normative assumptions [which] are: ‘international peace and security is a moral good in itself; violent conflict represents a ‘breakdown’ of normal social relations; the great majority of people prefer

---

82 Ibid.18.
84 Bellamy, ‘The ‘Next Stage’ in Peace Support Operations Theory,’ 34.
Peace Operations and Local Populations

peace to war and need only be presented with ‘paths’ to peace; there is a direct link between international peace and good governance at the domestic level; and ‘good’ governance equates to Western-style statehood, democratization, neo-liberal economics and the existence of an active civil society.\(^85\) The problem-solving approach is essentially instrumentalist in its framing of peace operations theory and as a consequence overlooks the significant and influential fact that politics play a decisive role in the construction of peace support operations and that ‘the peace agenda is framed by the interveners rather than the human security needs of the targets and glosses over the long-term effects of relations between global cores and peripheries, within which peace support operations are only one type of intervention.’\(^86\)

By comparison, a critical approach seeks to base itself on an explicit normative foundation that ‘peace support operations ought to promote human security and/or emancipation’ and therefore ‘demand an interrogation of whether dominant approaches to peace support operations, guided as they are by liberal ideology, contribute to the promotion of human security.’\(^87\) Such an approach draws a distinct link between critical security studies and human security. Critical security studies is similarly concerned with the question of emancipation.\(^88\) Scholars such as Booth extended the definition of security to include emancipation.\(^89\) However as Stamnes notes, critical security studies has not been concerned with intervention as a process for emancipatory change.\(^90\) Stamnes advocates a critical security studies framework which asks ‘what were considered to be security issues in connection to the [UN] operation?’, ‘who was to be secured in the context of the operation?’, and ‘how was this to be done?’\(^91\) The human security concept dictates a shift from the conventional focus on the state as the central referent object to

---

\(^85\) Ibid, 19.
\(^86\) Ibid, 34.
\(^91\) Ibid, 165.
the elevation of the safety, security and needs of the individual or community. This broad interpretation of security advocated the securitisation of non-traditional threats, such as the environment, economy and health, thereby increasing their political value. However, within both the policy and academic domains, human security is widely conceived as being too broad and all-encompassing to be of any normative or practical use. Schwarz notes that the duality of the human security agenda in relation to post-conflict peacebuilding—which, on the one hand, sees the state (and particularly the military) as potentially threatening to individual citizens but, on the other hand, aims at strengthening the state in order to create strong and legitimate polities—is distinctly complex in nature.

This reveals a broader problem of peacebuilding. In the context of peace support operations, the usefulness of the human security agenda lies principally in its promotion of a people-centred approach. A direct link between a critical security studies approach and the concept of human security can therefore be drawn. Chandler observes that the new people-centred approach, concerned with how small states treat their most vulnerable citizens, is a fundamentally different approach to that taken by the UN prior to the 1990s, when international peace was seen to be guaranteed through protecting the sovereign rights of smaller states from encroachment and intervention by the major powers.

Bellamy contends that ‘if critical approaches are to provide a significant alternative to the dominant problem-solving theories, they need to begin by elucidating techniques of peacemaking, peacebuilding and peacekeeping that overcome the limitations of problem-solving theory,’ namely, ‘the portrayal of a particular historical narrative which obscures many of the unlearnt lessons, simplifies the genesis of peace support operations, and limits discussion of what role peace support operations ought to fulfil in global politics by focussing on the classification of the roles they do fulfil.’ Bounded by the principle of emancipation, the critical approach to peacekeeping theory supports the thesis that shifting the reference point of legitimacy from the international community or the state to local populations offers a means of establishing self-

---

determination within the peace process and serves to illuminate a theoretically under-explored evaluation of peacekeeping with significant practical implications for the conduct of peacekeeping.

It is therefore necessary to consider these approaches in order to identify the gap in the literature which this study aims to bridge. Underpinning this research are critical conceptual questions about the influences on how peace and security is viewed by both external forces and local populations and the impasse that is often reached as a consequence of a lack of understanding, manipulation and the multitude of shifting identities and perceptions in the post-conflict environment. By highlighting the critical—and potentially more practical—approach to peacekeeping, it is possible to address the pragmatic issues relating to engagement between peacekeepers and local actors. This in turn increases the chances of a mission’s success and the creation of the ‘space’ in which to strengthen long-term conflict prevention processes. This study therefore advocates an alternative approach to understanding peace support operations and, in particular, why peace support operations are flawed and often unsuccessful in the long-term, which addresses a central but commonly overlooked dynamic that exists from the initial phase of intervention: the relationship between peacekeepers and the local population.

Legitimacy, the Liberal Peace and Local Populations
At the heart of the debate surrounding peace operations are fundamental questions about the norms of intervention. That the study of peacekeeping has traditionally not engaged with the question of local engagement reveals a great deal about the normative imperatives that dictate intervention as a whole. The legitimacy of intervention has long been regarded as determined by the host state and/or the international community (ideally both) with the notion of consent being arbitrarily attributed to the local population. Moreover, as the norms of intervention become increasingly beholden to the notion of a ‘liberal peace’ and peace support operations scramble to reflect the statebuilding impetus of the interveners, the two have become increasingly entwined and ambiguous. Both discourses serve to illuminate the weaknesses in the other yet bridging the two does allow for a more progressive approach to understanding intervention and operationalising peacekeeping. It is inevitable that a discussion of one cannot preclude the other. The marginalisation of the local population—through apathy and ambivalence rather than malevolent intent—invariably reflects the rationale of the interventionists and the paradox between international security norms and the everyday politics of the conflict zone.
Peace Operations and Local Populations

The often liberal democratic values of the peacekeepers and peacebuilders therefore play a significant part in determining and dominating the kind of peace—or, as Bellamy writes, the 'predilections of the peacekeepers...set the peace support operations agenda.' These are often ill-fitted and ill-suited—being sought in contexts that necessitate a far more nuanced and empirically—grounded understanding of the sheer complexities of shattered peace. The rationale for intervention creates a series of assumptions and dynamics which in turn inform how peace support operations are conducted from their composition to mandate to outcome. This has become increasingly true with the advent of the statebuilding enterprise and the regression to strategic-driven military interventionism as opposed to humanitarian intervention following the failures of UN interventions in the early 1990s. Decisions to intervene and the manner in which intervention is operationalised (including the decision to withdraw or exit) are based on intersecting geo-political and national interests and, importantly, a succession of normative assumptions about conflict and peace which frequently do more to reflect the attitudes of the peacekeepers than that of the protagonists.

The nature of the peace sought through peacekeeping has evolved from the 'negative' peace supported by traditional peacekeeping which aimed to simply manage the conflict to the so-called 'positive' peace which sought to resolve the conflict. The terms 'negative' and 'positive' peace are commonly used to describe the evolution from the 'management' of conflict through traditional and inherently limited peacekeeping mandates to the 'resolution' of conflict through the comprehensive contemporary peace support operations. Richmond, in arguing that the nature of the peace being installed by UN operations is of a virtual kind, argues that negative peace primarily benefited regional and international actors rather than local populations. Positive peace, or peacebuilding, 'involves the elimination of the root causes and structures that have created the conflict that negative peace attempts to control,' however it similarly benefits external interests through the transplanting of external ideologies and structures. Moreover, the nature of peacekeeping is such that it cannot be divorced from the geo-strategic reasons why states choose to intervene and the form in which that intervention takes shape. Inhibited by its

98 Ibid., 31.
Peace Operations and Local Populations

own conventions concerning whether or not to intervene, intervention has failed to fundamentally transform the contexts in which it is practised thus questioning the inherent virtues of intervention against the development axiom of ‘Do No Harm’ which has found its way into intervention and peacekeeping discourse by way of the development-security lexicon of peacebuilding. It is of no coincidence that acts of intervention can have the converse effect of prolonging insecurity or inflaming conflict through a misunderstanding of the dynamics that led to the intervention in the first place and the intended or otherwise abuse of power and privilege that is accorded an intervention mission.

Moreover, Bellamy has argued that two additional disciplinary perspectives constrain and limit analysis of peacekeeping: the first perspective focuses solely on the United Nations Security Council; and the second perspective rarely explores the impact that the practices of states and international organisations have on the peace support operations environment, the self-images of peacekeeping, and the ‘techniques’ that are considered the most appropriate. Whilst perspectives certainly need to be adjusted to better inform the study of peacekeeping, the analytical gaze is not sufficiently lowered in order to provide a more fully-informed and nuanced understanding of the connection between peacekeeping at the international and local level. It remains that alternative and innovative approaches to peacekeeping are essential if the norms and practise of keeping the peace are to evolve and avoid the methodological pitfalls and conceptual constraints of intervention.

Invariably the peacekeeping agendas of those committing troops display the neo-liberal methodology of current peacekeeping operations which promote the socio-political and economic structures which can exacerbate the social and political alienation and disenfranchisement leading to the onset—or prolongation—of conflict. Here, Pugh’s deconstruction of peace operations from a critical theory perspective of world politics provides an alternative and useful framing of the global political context in which peace support operations occur. Pugh, who in earlier works has utilised disaster management theory as an interpretive tool for peacekeeping, argues that the evolution of peace support operations from traditional peacekeeping to the current peace

103 Bellamy, ‘The ‘Next Stage’ in Peace Support Operations Theory,’ 18. Pugh agrees, suggesting that ‘theorists of International Relations have paid little attention to how and why peacekeeping, peace support operations and related humanitarian relief missions are significant in sustaining a particular representation of global governance norms.’ See Michael Pugh, ‘Peacekeeping and Critical Theory,’ International Peacekeeping, 11, (1), Spring 2004, 39.
support missions and the merger with humanitarianism reflects and reinforces the structure of the world system, thereby promoting the globalization of that particular ideology of good governance—the 'liberal peace'—and served as riot control when resistance has been encountered.\textsuperscript{105} This is equally, if not more so, true of strategic interventions.

Whilst much thought and attention is given to the principle of legitimacy that underpins intervention and by extension peace operations, there remains a disjuncture between the discourse on saving strangers\textsuperscript{106} and the realities of peacekeeping forces engaging communities in building a peace they can live with. To do so requires another, alternative, form of legitimacy, one that is not solely concerned with legitimacy granted by the host state or, in the absence of the state, by the moral (or military) authority of the actions themselves (although these factors carry significant influence), but that which is based on legitimacy as conferred by the local population. The absence of positive engagement between the two groups of actors inhibits the ability of peacekeepers to develop an understanding of local dynamics, creates a sense of relative peace, or imperfect peace, on the part of the peacekeeper, based on external perceptions of security without a localised understanding of what peace really means in order for it to be sustainable. This is critical for two reasons. First, contemporary peace support operations are multidimensional comprising of military, police, and civilian components, with an extensive mandate and consequently a greater 'reach' into the host society thereby differing from traditional peacekeeping missions. It has therefore become increasingly crucial that the relationship between peacekeepers and local populations be given considerably greater thought. Yet, despite the very real and unfolding need to seek new paradigms and practices, the realities on the ground suggest that peacekeeping theory continues to be dominated by the legal and ethical mores underpinning the notion of state sovereignty and obligation.

\textsuperscript{105} Ibid, 53.
\textsuperscript{106} See, for example, the following works which are concerned with the degree of importance placed by the international community on the legitimacy of intervention whether humanitarian or military (or invariably both) in nature: Tony Coady and Michael O'Keefe (eds.) Righteous Violence: The Ethics and Politics of Military Intervention, (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2005); J.L Holzgrefe and Robert O. Keohane (eds), Humanitarian Intervention. Ethical, Legal and Political Dilemmas, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), Nicholas Wheeler, Saving Strangers: Humanitarian Intervention in International Society, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).
2.2 Civil Conflict and Contemporary Peace Operations

At the end of a decade saturated with internal wars, Mary Kaldor observed that the 'new wars' of the 1990s, which Durch refers to as the 'uncivil wars', were different from the wars of past. Three distinct but convergent features had emerged. First, wars were both the cause and consequence of the weakness of the state and its inability to maintain a monopoly over violence and territory. Secondly, non-state groups manifested in the form of private or civilian militias or militant groups capable of challenging the state or, alternatively, sanctioned by the state as unofficial and plausibly deniable paramilitaries and death squads. Thirdly, civilians accounted for the majority of 'battlefield' casualties and fled in extraordinary numbers as refugees across borders or as internally displaced caught in or between constantly shifting battlefields, with disease decimating populations at a rate that war had failed to do so.

At the intersection of war and peace, therefore, are not the peacekeepers but rather the civilians and it is from this group of often fluid, invariably complex, individuals and networks, that understanding, knowledge, and consequently legitimacy can be drawn. As Fetherston and Nordstrom point out:

the myth of war is of two contending sets of soldiers on a battlefield...Battlefields are set in the centre of civilian society, and it is difficult to distinguish between combatants and non-combatants. A flow of people move in and out of contact with war.

Cassidy offers further clarification of contemporary civil conflict:

Small wars are not big, force-on-force, state-on-state, conventional, orthodox, unambiguous wars in which success is measurable by phase lines crossed or hills seized. Small wars are counterinsurgencies, low intensity conflicts, peace support operations, and complex humanitarian

---

109 Fetherston and Nordstrom, 11.
Peace Operations and Local Populations

emergencies, where ambiguity rules and success is not necessarily guaranteed by superior fire power.\textsuperscript{110}

The ‘new wars’ thesis revealed two conflicting and competing themes which have subsequently become synonymous with civil conflict. First, the conflicts represented complex political emergencies\textsuperscript{111} requiring a more nuanced approach to the violent breakdown of state processes than humanitarian assistance necessarily provided for.\textsuperscript{112} Humanitarian assistance alone could not provide the solution to inherently political crises. Secondly, the conflicts emphasised the relationship between development and security, the ‘development-security nexus’, which in turn demanded a more nuanced understanding of conflict and post-conflict peacebuilding. While the development-security nexus has traditionally been understood as the creation of economic opportunities might reduce the likelihood of a decline or return to conflict, the term has subsequently been reversed to acknowledge that the provision of security is a precondition for political, social and economic wellbeing.\textsuperscript{113} The ‘new wars’ thesis does have its critics, however. Newman, for example, argues that the distinction between contemporary conflict and earlier wars is exaggerated and that the extent to which ‘contemporary forms of organized violence reflect new patterns in terms of actors, objectives, spatial context, human impact, and the political economy and social structure of conflict’ is questionable.\textsuperscript{114} Newman also argues the compelling point that ‘the tendency in the new wars scholarship to identify common patterns in ‘contemporary’ civil conflicts ignores important differences among them’\textsuperscript{115} which highlights the importance of context over commonalities in conflict.

The impact of the ‘new wars’ thesis and the consequent normative developments within security thinking on peace support operations have, however, been twofold. The deaths of


\textsuperscript{111} The term complex political emergency emerged in the 1990s as a ‘neutral metaphor for civil war’ thereby avoiding such labels as ‘ethnic’ or ethnopolitical’ conflict which detracted from the interlinking political, social and economic factors that cause conflict. Mark Duffield, \textit{Complex Political Emergencies-An Exploratory Report for UNICEF}, (Birmingham, School of Public Policy, 1994), 4, cited in Barry Munslow and Christopher Brown, ‘Complex emergencies; the institutional impasse,’ \textit{Third World Quarterly}, 20, (1), (1999), 209.


\textsuperscript{115} Ibid.
Peace Operations and Local Populations

eighteen United States servicemen in Mogadishu, Somalia, on October 3, 1993, weakened the resolve of the United States, in particular, and many members of the international community, to participate in peacekeeping operations.\textsuperscript{116} The emergence of the so-called ‘Mogadishu Line,’ gave the ‘misleading impression...that consent was somehow an absolute quality’ \textsuperscript{117} in intervention and represented the reluctance of Western states to take casualties in conflicts of little strategic value. Moreover, although the United Nations had initially enthusiastically engaged in post-Cold War peacekeeping, the UN’s failure to prevent genocide and ethnic cleansing in Rwanda in 1994 and the ‘safe areas’ of Srebenica and Zepa in 1995 displayed ‘member state complacency and great power indifference’ and eroded international support for the organisation.\textsuperscript{118} Patman argues that the ‘Mogadishu Line’ established a ‘new orthodoxy’ which shackled international thinking about internal conflict for much of the 1990s and presupposed a rigid distinction between classical peacekeeping and peace enforcement.\textsuperscript{119} As a result, the number of peacekeeping operations declined between 1994 and 1998 until missions were granted more robust rules of engagement under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter.\textsuperscript{120} Peace enforcement mandates resulted in an increase in United Nations peace support operations of a multi-dimensional nature. These ‘wider peacekeeping operations’, or ‘grey area operations’, were defined as ‘operations carried out with the consent of the belligerent parties but in an environment that may be highly volatile,’ or operations characterised by ‘limited consent.’\textsuperscript{121} This definition can be extended to peace operations conducted in civil conflict situations such as the Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste where the missions, respectively, had the consent of the host government but where belligerents (particularly non-state actors and armed groups) remain active, the environment remains highly volatile, and there is, as a consequence, limited consent from the local population.

\textsuperscript{119} Patman, ‘Beyond the ‘Mogadishu Line,’ 71.
\textsuperscript{121} Peter Viggo Jakobsen, ‘The emerging consensus on grey area peace operations doctrine: Will it last and enhance operational effectiveness?’, \textit{International Peacekeeping}, 7, (3), 36-56.
The broadening of peace operations must be viewed in the context of the widening of the security agenda which occurred in the early 1990s. The concept of security was expanded to include the human dimension thereby removing security from solely the military domain. Poverty alleviation, human development, protection of the environment, promotion of human rights of women and men are now included in the wider definition of security. Contemporary challenges of peacekeeping are not only to end hostilities and rebuild communities, but also to deal with the problems that led to the conflict. It is clear that lack of this broader view of peacekeeping and peacebuilding provides a breeding ground for conflict and instability. The lack of a sequential transition from conflict to post-conflict situations is similarly mirrored by the nature of contemporary peace support operations which also do not occur in a neat sequential process. Invariably, peacekeeping, peace enforcement, peace building, nation building, humanitarian assistance, and statebuilding are occurring simultaneously.

2.3 The Complexities and Dynamics of Post-Conflict Peacekeeping

Societies emerging from conflict face extraordinary challenges in their efforts to consolidate peace. Civil conflict creates and exploits a void in which occurs social upheaval and dislocation, the fracturing of communities and identities, the absence of the rule of law, the destruction of infrastructure and the environment, and the demise of the economy and the state. The ‘post-conflict’ environment is invariably dominated by a climate of fear and insecurity often similar to the atmosphere that existed prior to the outbreak of conflict. Linda Green, writing in the 1990s on the conflict in Guatemala, suggests that the ‘invisible violence of fear and intimidation’ has the ability to penetrate the social memory of a society and destabilise social relations by ‘driving a wedge of distrust between members of families, between neighbours, among friends,’ and dividing ‘communities through suspicion and apprehension, not only of strangers, but of each other.’ The dynamics that resulted in conflict have therefore not disappeared and can be easily reignited. The post-conflict context is an exceedingly difficult environment to navigate. In light

124 Ibid., 144.
of this, it is therefore critical that peacekeepers have an understanding of the context. As Lambach contends:

the idea has gained ground that each post-conflict situation is unique and must be understood on its own terms, paying particular attention to the historical and cultural setting. While this approach is to be commended for its sensitivity to local conditions, it goes too far in suggesting that post-conflict situations are fundamentally incomparable.\textsuperscript{126}

That said, the sovereignty of context cannot be ignored. In Timor-Leste, for instance, it was apparent that Australian peacekeepers (soldiers and police) who had previously served in the Solomon Islands, related their framework of understanding of that particular context to the current deployment in Timor-Leste. This did not always equate to an accurate perspective on the conflict. Moreover, it is questionable whether the notion of a post-conflict society is in itself a true representation of the dynamics that exist in the aftermath of war. Finnemore contends that ‘intervention lies at the boundary of peace and war’\textsuperscript{127} suggesting the transition from conflict to peace is a linear process. Conflict is not linear, however, and the period following the cessation of violence is best described as a period of, at best, provisional peace and at worst, a security vacuum. A central theme of this study illustrates this fact. The restoration of law and order does not necessarily equate to peace and security as perceived by the local population because conflict dynamics do not suddenly evaporate once fighting ceases or a peace agreement is signed or an intervention force arrives but rather are sequestered to the ‘margins’ or shadows of society. There are, as Junne and Verkoren argue, ‘few truly post-conflict situations. Conflicts become more or less violent, more or less manifest or latent, but they seldom stop altogether.’\textsuperscript{128} As Gareth Evans, the President of the International Crisis Group and former Australian Foreign Minister, surmised in a speech on conflict prevention:

There is not a straight line sequence between the anticipation of conflict and attempts to prevent it breaking out; the resolution of conflict, by negotiation or force, when it has broken out; and then

\textsuperscript{126} Daniel Lambach, \textit{Oligopolies of Violence in Post-Conflict Societies}, German Institute of Global and Area Studies, No. 62, November 2007, 6.
post-conflict peacebuilding. Rather there is a cyclical process in which each post-conflict environment contains the potential seeds of the next round of destruction.\(^{129}\)

Many of the conflict indicators remain in existence creating a state that resembles 'neither war nor peace.'\(^{130}\) Societies remain vulnerable to conflict—whether ongoing or latent—long after the war-fighting has ended and it is in this climate that peacebuilding measures have their greatest impact. The intersection, or nexus, between peacekeeper and local population, is critical to creating the space within which conflict resolution and management processes can be engaged and peace can be secured. The absence of such engagement and therefore understanding of local dynamics, creates a sense of relative peace, or imperfect peace, on the part of the intervenor, based on external perceptions of security without a localised understanding of what peace really means in order for it to be sustainable and contextually-specific. Moreover, as Lambach points out, international state-building efforts frequently construe post-conflict countries as ‘blank slates’, malleable entities that can be quickly and decisively shaped by a dose of well-intentioned social engineering.\(^{131}\)

The challenges derive from instability and insecurity both at the human security level and at the state or national security level. Achieving and sustaining peace in such circumstances is an intricate task of balancing multi-dimensional issues concerning humanitarian, socio-economic, security and law and order, and political factors, amidst a peace-conflict dynamic with frequent setbacks and reversals. Moreover, the nature of conflict is fundamentally altered from conventional warfare which peacekeeping forces are formally trained for. The quick cessation of violence necessitates the rapid deployment of foreign interventions to fill the security vacuum often to the detriment of local aspirations and agendas. In the immediate aftermath of conflict when peace-enforcement and peacebuilding converges, it is crucial that the exclusion of the local population is not further enforced by the task of establishing security. Externally-conceived and driven notions of peace invariably marginalise existing local conflict-management mechanisms thereby deepening the vacuum of insecurity through disempowering traditional structures and processes often already weakened by conflict. Interpretations and perceptions of peace further


complicate and inhibit the ability of a peace operation to impact long-term change and civilians caught in the cross-fire of international intervention are invariably pushed to the margins.

Situating the peacekeeper within this dynamic demonstrates the difficulties faced by peacekeepers. Deployed into complex environments with constantly shifting boundaries and territories, it is often unclear to peacekeeper navigating the everyday politics of the conflict zone where the war begins and ends. Civil wars by and large do not have a front line but rather a multitude of conflict boundaries that are formed and re-formed through violence in and between neighbourhoods and villages. Nor is it easy to distinguish combatant from civilian, enemy from enemy, good guy from bad guy. Moreover, due to the speed of deployment and inadequate pre-deployment training, peacekeepers are often inadequately prepared prior to deployment and lack an understanding of local politics and socio-cultural norms thus impeding their ability to interpret complex social networks where alliances can appear to quickly shift. The 2004 United Nations report *A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility* acknowledges the difficulties facing peacekeepers in post-conflict peacebuilding stating that:

> Unlike inter-State wars, making peace in civil war requires overcoming daunting security dilemmas. Spoilers, factions who see a peace agreement as inimical to their interest, power or ideology, use violence to undermine or overthrow settlements.

Once on the ground, peacekeepers are rendered even more ill-suited to respond to conflicts of this nature by the constraints and lack of clarity within the mission mandate. The mission quickly becomes reactive rather than preventative. As a consequence, the violence often merely recedes to the fringes of the mission only to swiftly emerge once the response times and capabilities of the mission have been measured.

### 2.4 Civilians at the Centre

Considered effort is now being given to how local populations perceive peace operations and, by extension, the impact that intervention has on societies and states emerging or transitioning from conflict. As Schwarz states:

---


Interventions are profound ruptures in state formation processes. The need to assess their impact is paramount, given that intervening often means becoming part of the local predicament. The international responsibility to protect must be seen in all its amplitude: it demands time, consumes resources and leaves no room for an easy exit strategy.134

There is an increasingly rich body of literature which addresses the need for Chandler’s ‘people’s-centred approach to peace support operations.’135 The paradox of intervention which can exclude local populations in the process is reflected in the academic and practitioner bodies of literature which fail to sufficiently acknowledge and meaningfully present local actors as a key dynamic and determinant within peace support operations. Whilst the current literature on peace support operations broadly addresses the significance of the civilian-peacekeeper relationship in terms of consent and legitimacy it does not, however, adequately question the conventional assumptions which inform and influence the manner in which engagement is undertaken. A ‘wave’ of literature has emerged since 2000 addressing the failure to include people following the failures of the peacekeeping operations of the 1990s. In reflecting that ‘a new understanding of the concept of security is evolving,’136 the United Nations Secretary-General’s Millennium Report We the Peoples stated that ‘No shift in the way we think or act can be more critical than this. We must put people at the centre of everything we do.’137 Chandler argues that the concept of empowering vulnerable people extends to the post-conflict state and the prioritization of conflict-prevention and peacebuilding:138 ‘strategies of prevention must address the root causes of conflicts, not simply their violent symptoms.’139 The Brahimi Report was first and foremost about institutional change within the United Nations and, most specifically, within the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. The Report stated that:

Effective peace-building requires active engagement with the local parties, and that engagement should be multidimensional in nature. First, all peace support operations should be given the

---

137 Millennium Report, We the Peoples, 7.
139 Millennium Report, We the Peoples, 16.
Peace Operations and Local Populations

capacity to make a demonstrable difference in the lives of the people in their mission area, relatively early in the life of the mission.\(^\text{140}\)

It also states that:

...it is the task of the operation’s peacekeepers to maintain a secure local environment for peacebuilding and the peacebuilders task to support the political, social and economic changes that create a secure environment that is self-sustaining. Only such an environment offers a ready exit to peacekeeping forces, unless the international community is willing to tolerate recurrence of conflict when such forces depart.\(^\text{141}\)

However, despite recognition that civilians are at the centre of intervention, peace operations invariably exclusively engage with civilians at the state or local levels of politics during statebuilding processes. The broader local population who are not participants within the political process remain marginalised from—and indeed, at times by—the intervention. One scholar who does seek to address this oversight in both literature and practice is French academic Beatrice Pouligny. Pouligny’s research examines how local populations perceive United Nations peacekeeping missions in El Salvador, Cambodia, Somalia, Mozambique and Bosnia-Herzegovina.\(^\text{142}\) Drawing heavily on sociological and anthropological theory, her work is a significant contribution to scholarly understanding of the impact peace support operations have on local communities. Through extensive empirical research which focuses at the community-level rather than political elites, Pouligny offers a ‘local interpretation’ of peace support operations and explores the roles that local actors and United Nations civilian and military personnel have within the peacebuilding process. In so doing, Pouligny found that local populations are frequently marginalised at all levels and processes of intervention.

Furthermore, in 2005-2006 the United Nations commissioned an important series of studies in three African states where UN missions were deployed to assess the popular opinions


\(^\text{141}\) Brahimi Report, 5.

of local populations towards the peace operation in their country. These studies canvassed a range of issues from security through to development and gave voice to the positive and negative impacts of the peace operations. The studies concluded that the UN missions held overwhelming popular support but did not adequately explore negative responses to the missions. The danger is that well-intentioned surveys will raise the expectations of local populations but have no further impact. The issue of how to translate popular expression into participation reflected through both policy reform and tactical operations on the ground remains, however, elusive.

The notion of participatory intervention provides one means of transitioning from local-level surveys to enhanced political inclusiveness. It is with some irony that one of the most useful lenses for interpreting the social contract between peacekeepers and local actors has emerged out of the critical discourse on peacebuilding and statebuilding. The term participatory intervention was first introduced into the increasingly blurred lexicon of peacebuilding and statebuilding by scholar Jarat Chopra. Writing on the failures of the United Nations Transitional Authority in East Timor (UNTAET) to adequately engage Timorese in the building of the Timor Leste state, Chopra argues that participatory intervention is an absolute and unconditional prerequisite to successful statebuilding and ‘stands in contrast to the practice in state-(re) building processes of relying on only international appointees or elites self-appointed as representatives of the people. Instead, the aim would be to include direct involvement of the local population from the very beginning of an international intervention, in order to ensure justice for the parts and that new governing structures resonate with local social reality.’

Participatory intervention is a complex task with its roots in the political, cultural and social fabric of society and is acutely related to the long-term success of an intervention and the prevention of further conflict. Chopra and Hohe argue that participation engenders an understanding of ‘why the population is engaged in strife and what fuels it. What drives villagers to take part in war?’ What can make them stop? Participatory intervention, which bridges the


145 Chopra and Hohe, ‘Participatory Intervention,’ 291.
Peace Operations and Local Populations

‘local-national gap’ and integrates ‘communities into the process of institution building’ must be recognised as integral to statebuilding—a lesson often learned through the consequences of its absence rather than for its achievements. It is essential to emphasise, however, that participation does not necessarily guarantee either legitimacy or peace (if achieving peace can be considered an extension, or by-product, of legitimacy and the social contract). However it creates the space in which the democratic process can incorporate and moderate conflict. Participatory intervention at the local or non-state level is one of many fluid and nuanced dynamics at play in the post-conflict environment and must be accorded equal significance and importance as issues of sovereignty and the legitimacy of intervention under international law at the state level are.

Defined broadly as the engagement or inclusion of local stakeholders from grassroots to government in the act of re-building the state, participatory intervention has been accorded cursory treatment by practitioners and policy-makers alike. First, participatory intervention is central to peacebuilding which must in itself be at the foundation of all state-building exercises as institution building alone does not address conflict dynamics. The second factor lies at the core of the mission’s ability to achieve and retain its mandate through the ensuring of legitimacy. In short, if the mission does not engage the people in the processes of state-building, including that of peacebuilding, its legitimacy, and ultimately that of the state’s, will be inherently weakened. Ensuring the inclusion of the local population in the activities of an intervention mission is conceptually defined as participatory intervention but operationally under-explored. Whether for reasons of political expediency or sheer inexperience, international examples of the failure of engaging the population of the ‘host’ country abound, the most significant being Timor-Leste during the period of United Nations administration, and it is unacceptable for past mistakes not to be heeded. The defence that each context is different, each case unique, has validity up until the point that the same mistakes are being repeated in another time zone, another conflict, at the expense of another population.

Participatory intervention offers a transformative approach to the theory of humanitarian intervention by exposing the methodological and empirical weaknesses and strengths of intervention in practise and emphasising the need to seek alternative ways to approach the dynamics of conflict and peace. The paradigm of participatory intervention is a critically under-developed approach to peace operations that offers an alternative to contemporary peace support operations. Borne out of the critical need for popular participation, the concept lies at the nexus

146 Ibid, 292.
Peace Operations and Local Populations

between peacekeeping and peacebuilding and casts a critical light on the relationship between the intervention mission and the local population and more broadly on the international community and zones of conflict. The relationship is even more acute in environments where positive peace is being sought. The negative peace of traditional peacekeeping relied little on local legitimacy beyond perceptions of neutrality and impartiality. At the conceptual core are the principles of accountability, transparency and legitimacy which serve as a measure of the level and nature of engagement between local actors and the mission in the process—indeed business—of peace and, increasingly, statebuilding. Although participatory intervention lays claim to origins within developmental theory it is fundamentally useful as a framework for engagement throughout all levels of the peace operation.

As provocative as it is to suggest that there are conceivable arguments contradicting the fundamental importance of engaging local populations and processes in the cessation of conflict, it must be asked why, if the consensus is indeed uniform, the practice remains inadequate? Whilst no thinking policymaker or peacekeeper would seriously dispute the notion that local ownership of the processes of conflict management is critical to peace, the gap between sentiment and reality remain considerable. So what is missing? First, the manner in which the operation is established must be examined. The failure to engage local populations in the peace process is one of the principal causes for the resumption of fighting. This is evidenced in Timor-Leste in 2006 where local populations felt excluded from the peace process and therefore had little invested in it. If peace and security is not ‘owned’ by the people whom it matters most to, there is a significant likelihood that conflict will resume.

Chopra’s proposed thesis of popular participation occurs within the realm of statebuilding, however, the concept is equally pertinent and transferable to earlier phases of intervention and is applied here from the initial decision-making stages of intervention through to the supposedly absolute but invariably far from definitive theatre of statebuilding. Participatory intervention is treated here as a two-tiered process active both at the inter-state or inter-agency level and on the ground—the business end of intervention. This is especially significant in respect to regional interventions or coalitions which are commonly lead by the regional hegemon and purport to represent the region’s collective security interests. In this instance particularly it is essential that participatory intervention be endorsed and enacted from the very beginning which means full and genuine cooperation between the participating states comprising the intervention mission and between the intervention mission and the local population. Ultimately, local participation translates into local ownership. The Responsibility to Protect report argues that
achieving local ownership is critical suggesting that otherwise ‘local actors will sit back and let the international actors take all the responsibility for mediating local tensions’\textsuperscript{147} Moreover, as the Report contends, ‘this process of devolving responsibility back to the local community is essential to maintaining the legitimacy of the intervention itself.’\textsuperscript{148}

2.5 Conclusion

Pouligny writes that, ‘understanding what happens ‘in between’—in the various exchanges among the actors, in the mediation between the micro and macro levels, between the small grassroots organizations and the NGOs, the political scene, and daily life—is probably one of the most important challenges for a peace process.’\textsuperscript{149} By revisiting the shifts within peacekeeping and peace support operations literature, this chapter has sought to demonstrate that despite significant paradigm shifts, the need to incorporate the role and perspectives of civilian populations remain marginalised within the literature. This chapter has reviewed the key theoretical developments within peacekeeping literature and the contextual realities of peacekeeping itself on the evolution from traditional ‘old school’ peacekeeping missions to the multi-dimensional peace support operations of today. This includes the introduction of key concepts into the debate: civil-military doctrine, human security, the development-security nexus, participatory intervention, social contract between peacekeepers and local populations, and a ‘people-centred approach.’

This chapter has also examined the changed circumstances of peace operations in light of the emergence of civil conflict and ‘new wars’ which create a series of dynamics and challenges in relation to the complexities of peacekeeping in the post-conflict environment. This chapter has highlighted alternative theoretical approaches to examining the role of local populations in peace operations through conceptual frameworks that prioritise local populations, such as participatory intervention and a people-centred approach to peacekeeping. I have argued that that despite the central consequence of these influences on peacekeeping being the identification of the marginalisation of civilian populations, there remains a fundamental failure of engagement between those charged with establishing ‘peace and security’ and those challenging and challenged by its absence. This chapter concludes that the disjuncture between peace support

\textsuperscript{147} Responsibility to Protect, 45.
\textsuperscript{148} Ibid.
operations and peacekeepers and civilians requires a reassessment of the value of engagement at all levels of intervention. Therein lies, this chapter argues, the paradox of peace support operations. How does both theory and practice effectively bridge the gap between peace support operations and local populations? The following chapters will explore the marginalisation of local populations through the cases of intervention in the Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste.
Solomon Islands: An Uneasy Peace

On 24th July 2003 a placard in Honiara welcomed the Australian-led regional peacekeeping mission with the words *Four years in Hell. Free at Last.* Solomon Islands had struggled through four years of civil war and lawlessness and had become caricatured as the Pacific region’s first ‘failing state.’ Yet in the words of former Solomon Islands Prime Minister, Solomon Mamaloni, the Solomon Islands was ‘a nation conceived but never born.’

Prior to the intervention in July 2003, the Solomon Islands’ state had become synonymous in official government discourse with transnational crime and, particularly, the potential for terrorism, infamously labelled a potential ‘petri-dish in which transnational and non-state security threats can develop and breed.’ When the intervention force arrived, the Solomon Islands had already endured four years of civil war between non-state armed groups, so it could be argued that the ‘non-state security threats’ referred to were in actual fact a poorly veiled reference to what is later more overtly stated: ‘they [weak and failing states] can be havens for terrorists.’ Thus the concern was not for Solomon Islanders per se, but rather the risk posed by a weak state. The conflict, characterised by civil unrest and lawlessness, was sparked by political

---

150 Confidential interview with member of the Australian Defence Force, Honiara, Solomon Islands, 7 June 2004.
discontent which erupted in fighting between rival militant groups from the islands of Guadalcanal and Malaita. The conflict displaced nearly ten percent of the population on of Guadalcanal and killed an estimated 250 people through both battle-related deaths and the indirect consequences of war as the conflict disrupted supply routes to remote health services.155

The capital, Honiara, on Guadalcanal, became an enclave for Malaitans with much of the fighting occurring in the environs and hinterlands of the city. Malaitans couldn’t get beyond Henderson Airport in the east, Kakabona in the west and Borderline in the south. By 2003 the nation was languishing in political, criminal and economic turmoil and the capital was brought to a standstill.

As noted in the Introduction, the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) was quickly lauded a success. However, as is examined in Chapter Seven, the Honiara riots in 2006 revealed, a fundamental gap existed between RAMSI and the local population. This in turn emphasised a contrast in perception between RAMSI and the local population over what constituted ‘peace and security.’ Quite simply, as explored in subsequent chapters of this study, ‘law and order’ did not equate to peace and security.

Through an analysis of the tensions between 1998 and 2003 and the subsequent intervention by RAMSI in mid-2003, this chapter seeks to demonstrate that two central themes of the conflict--marginalisation and militarization--underpinned both the initial violence and the post-conflict environment. The first section, The Tensions 1998-2003, provides an overview of the civil war. The second section, Failed Initiatives: The Early Peace Process and Intervention, examines efforts to restore peace before 2003, including the International Peace Monitoring Team. The third section, Marginalisation and Militarisation: The Origins and Dynamics of Conflict, critiques prevailing assessments of the root causes of the conflict through an exploration of the themes of marginalisation and militarisation. The final section, Operation ‘Helpem Fren’: The Arrival of the Mission, analyses the deployment of RAMSI and dynamics between Operation Helpem Fren and the local population.

3.1 The Tensions 1998-2003

Violence flared in October 1998 following the emergence of indigenous Guadalcanalese (Guale) militant groups who orchestrated a campaign of violence and intimidation on the northern Guadalcanal plains against migrant settlers from the island of Malaita which is overpopulated, under-developed, and lacking the fertile soil of Guadalcanal. Malaitans have a reputation as tough and hard working, forming the backbone of the labour force across the Solomon Islands, and consequently, usurping economic opportunities. The Malaita Ma’asina Forum (MMF), established in September 2003 to represent Malaitan interests, contends that Malaitans form the ‘backbone of the Solomon Islands economy, government, and security’ and despite forming approximately 70% of the labour force, have been ‘marginalized within the development process, hence feelings of loss, rejection and frustration.’ The MMF, led by Francis Mete, also argued that Malaita is regarded as a ‘renegade province and Malaitans are disenfranchised from the rest of the Solomon Islands.’

The call to arms was led by the Guadalcanal Premier, Ezekiel Alebua who, like other Guale leaders, was ‘willing to inflame Guale emotions, but presumably thought they could quench them again using the disciplinary power of the state when necessary. In this, they severely misjudged their people and the powerlessness of the state.’ Alebua’s grievances invoked the marginalisation of the Guale people as a consequence of the migration from other islands, particularly the pressures of urbanisation in and around Honiara, and demanded compensation payments amounting to SI$2.5 million for the murders of twenty-five men and women. At the political level, the root of Alebua’s—and other Guale leaders—discontent lay in the struggles for greater decentralisation of power and the control of shares and revenue from natural

156 During the 19th century, 50% of the labourers sent to the plantations in Australia (blackbirding) were Malaitans. During the British protectorate, Malaitans again dominated the workforce as plantation labourers. In post-independence Solomon Islands, Malaitans flocked to the capital, Honiara. It is noteworthy too, that the strongest labour movement and political challenge to the colonial administrators, the Maasina Rulu (Maasina Rule) emerged from Malaita calling for higher wages on plantations, respect for customs, and island self-government. Judith Bennett, *Roots of Conflict in the Solomon Islands. Though Much is Taken, Much Abides: Legacies of Tradition and Colonialism* Discussion Paper 2002/5 (Canberra: State, Society and Governance in Melanesia/Australian National University, 2002), 5-7.

157 Interview with members of the Malaitan Maasina Forum executive, 9 August 2005, Honiara, Solomon Islands. Although the MMF states it does not solely represent Malaitan interests, both the executive and rank and file membership comprise wholly of Malaitans and it is ‘very useful for Malaita because it enables Malaitans to engage with the Solomon Islands Government and all sectors of society.’ The MMF has been perceived as a secessionist movement.

158 Ibid.

resources. In this respect, the conflict was as much about the relationship between Honiara and the rest of the country as it was between competing ethnic groups. As Bennett notes, the creation of provincial government in 1980 had not led to an ‘appreciable improvement to the overall economy, efficiency or services, and Honiara still held the purse strings’ with many on Guadalcanal and other islands feeling ‘distance decay.’\textsuperscript{160}

The United Nations Development Program identified five inter-related root causes of the conflict in its 2004 report, \textit{Emerging Priorities in Preventing Future Violent Conflict}. These were the mismanagement of land, traditional versus non-traditional authority structures, access to government services, public resources, and information, the lack of economic opportunities, and the failure of the law and justice.\textsuperscript{161} At the social and community level, the root of the tensions, particularly in Guadalcanal and specifically Honiara, related to illegal squatting and use of customary lands, the commercialisation of land, rapid population growth and land pressure and poor management of urban growth (particularly around Honiara).\textsuperscript{162} As the following quote by a village elder in the Burns Creek community in Honiara reveals:

\begin{quote}
Within this one community, we have people displaced during the tensions and people who have been on the land before the tension. Many of the displaced went home. But then they found that they could not earn a living back home because all economic activities and all the basic services like health, good schools, etc are centralized in here in Honiara. So what happened is, they returned to Honiara, hoping to get a better life. Our major problem in this community is land. The land issue is serious. Authorities are looking at us as squatters. We have a lot of uncertainty and are waiting to hear what the Commissioner of Lands and the Guadalcanal people will say to us about our stay here. Some community members actually live on portions that they purchased and registered. The majority are just settlers, sitting on top of someone else’s registered land. Land is not secure for us.\textsuperscript{163}
\end{quote}

The disenfranchisement of Guale people from land and economic opportunities provided key political figures such as Alebu with the populist vehicle to challenge the central government. By effectively tapping into the acutely weak sense of national consciousness that existed outside

\textsuperscript{162} UNDP, \textit{Emerging Priorities}, 7.
\textsuperscript{163} Group interview, Burns Creek, Honiara, Solomon Islands, 9 October 2005.
elements of the urban elite, Alebua and others brought to the fore the overwhelming sense of origin and local identity which further reinforced a Guale perception of marginalisation. Being Malaitan was often sufficient justification for eviction and intimidation. As a community member at Burns Creek, a pre-dominantly Malaitan squatter settlement of approximately 2000 in Honiara, stated:

_Before the tensions, we enjoyed life…but during the tensions a criminal group called Black Sharks based in the West chased us out because we were Malaitans. We were innocent Malaitans but we lost our jobs and all our property…We were not involved in fighting but we felt the pain…Even those of us who lived outside of Guadalcanal became victims simply because we are from Malaita._\(^{164}\)

The refusal by the Ulufa‘alu Government in 1997 to accord the provincial government twenty percent of shares from the Solomon Islands Plantation Ltd (SIPL) frustrated the provincial leadership but it was the allegations of Malaitan violence that caused Guale discontent brewing since the late 1980s to boil over.\(^{165}\) These grievances, coupled with grassroots unhappiness about the loss of lands and economic opportunities, and a critical sense of injustice over the murders allegedly committed by Malaitans, provided Alebua with a potent platform when he became provincial Premier in April 1998. As Prime Minister from 1986-1989, Alebua had previously taken a moderate conciliatory stance towards Guale demands. However, in response to criticisms over his failure to act on compensation claims in 1988, Alebua promised to ‘lead a more forceful assertion of Guadalcanalese demands’\(^{166}\) and became one of the central protagonists for Guale compensation claims. In February 1999 the Guadalcanal Provincial Assembly submitted the ‘Demands by the Bonafide and Indigenous People of Guadalcanal’ to the government calling for decentralisation, constitutional reform, control of internal migration, clarification of the term ‘indigenous’ so as to prevent the sale of land title to non-customary landowners, greater revenue shares in resource allocation, the relocation of the capital, and compensation for the murder of

\(^{164}\) Confidential interview, Burns Creek, Honiara, Solomon Islands, 9 October 2005. Initiatives by the Burns Creek Peace Committee have highlighted the ongoing land issue including seeking to work with the Solomon Islands Government to find a peaceful solution. _Solomon Star_, “Burns Creek settlers in limbo,” February 1, 2006, http://www.solomonstarnews.com/drupal-4.4.1/?q=node/view/6755..

\(^{165}\) Moore, _Happy Isles in Crisis_, 105.

\(^{166}\) Jon Fraenkel, _The Manipulation of Custom. From Uprising to Intervention in the Solomon Islands_, (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2004), 47.
twenty-five Guale. A month later, the 'Petition by the Indigenous People of Guadalcanal,' furthered these demands. The Guale militants, initially called the Guadalcanal Revolutionary Army and the Isatabu Freedom Fighters, and later renamed the Isatabu Freedom Movement (IFM), allegedly represented landowners resentful of the perceived loss of traditional lands and economic opportunities to Malaitan migrants. The IFM emerged as a shadowy organisation more akin to a ‘coalition of militant factions,’ albeit a well-coordinated one, numbering anywhere between an estimated 300 and 2,000 including child soldiers and led by commanders Andrew Te’e, George Grey, Harold Keke and Joseph Sanga. Many of the combatants wore kabilato or loin cloths and, like Malaitan militants, carried magic amulets for protection. The IFM comprised a mix of criminal elements or opportunists and those who held grievances against the expansion of Solomon Islands Plantation Ltd, Gold Ridge Mine in central Guadalcanal, and the encroachment of Honiara’s urban sprawl onto customary lands.

Statements by IFM Commander George Grey in mid-1999 denote an unfettered belief in the righteousness of the cause. In June Grey claimed ‘We are willing to attack Honiara...and kill all the Malaitans, wipe them out, in just three hours. It will take us just three hours to do that.’ In August, in language steeped with animist imagery reflecting the belief that the land of Guadalcanal itself was rejecting the Malaitan presence, Grey further reiterated:

‘They [MEF] are all in town. They are living behind a fence. It is very easy to wipe them out. We are fighting a holy war. The trees are fighting, the stones are fighting and the women and children are fighting.’

---

169 ‘Isatabu’ is a traditional name for the island of Guadalcanal.
170 Warren Karle, Conflict in the 'Happy Isles: The Role of Ethnicity in the Outbreak of Violence in the Solomon Islands Monograph No.5 (Canberra: Australian Defence College, 2005), 2.
171 Moore, Happy Isles in Crisis, 115.
173 Magic and superstition play a strong role in the warrior culture of both the Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste. Amulets, traditional shell necklaces, and other objects such as tattoos are believed to protect fighters from harm.
174 Moore, Happy Isles in Crisis, 115.
175 Moore, Happy Isles in Crisis, 117.
176 Ibid.
The violence is depicted by graffiti on the outskirts of eastern Honiara in a collection of derelict and destroyed buildings whose walls are covered with representations of the war by Guale youth. Slogans like ‘Trouble in Little Guale’, and anti-Malaitan epitaphs such as ‘Mother Fuck Malaita,’ and ‘MEF Back to Arauko,’ are scrawled amidst crude drawings of guns, references to popular culture (often American rap) and explicit sexual imagery.\(^{177}\)

Following the refusal of one faction to sign peace accords in October 2000, a splinter group called the Guadalcanal Liberation Front was formed and led by Harold Keke establishing its stronghold on the Weathercoast in southern Guadalcanal and terrorising villagers in the region. Although the link between the IFM and the Guadalcanal provincial government appeared ambiguous, Alebua’s rhetoric was matched by militant activities and the provincial government represented the militants at subsequent peace talks.\(^{178}\) Moreover, the violence itself appears premeditated with alleged evidence that the militants began stockpiling weapons as early as 1996.\(^{179}\) A raid on the Yandina police station in the Russell Islands on 9 December 1998 secured a number of high-powered rifles but a subsequent shootout between police and the militants

\(^{177}\) Observations of author during field visits, Honiara, August-October 2005.
\(^{178}\) Fraenkel, *The Manipulation of Custom*, 47.
\(^{179}\) Tarcisius Tara Kabutaulaka, *Beyond Ethnicity: The Political Economy of the Guadalcanal Crisis in Solomon Islands* Working Paper 01/1 (Canberra: State, Society and Governance in Melanesia Project, Australian National University, 2001), 3. These weapons were largely World War II vintage .303s or homemade guns. The IFM’s limited fire power reflects their ability to spread fear and intimidation through rumour, often invoking superstition and black magic.
resulted in the retrieval of part of the arms cache and the death of Ishmael Panda and the wounding and capture of Keke and Sanga. Solomon Islands Police Commissioner Frank Short later reported Keke stated that ‘Alebua told us to do this.’

By mid-1999 the hostilities had resulted in the deaths of over 100 people and the internal displacement of an estimated 30-35,000. Predominantly Malaitan settlers fled the IFM-controlled rural areas and sought refuge in Honiara as the IFM ‘adopted a pincer movement strategy, moving towards Honiara from east and west and rapidly creating a sense of total siege as refugees poured into the town ahead of the militants.’ Catholic priest Norman Arkwright wrote of ‘a river of refugees flowing through Visale, Arugilo, and Kakabona along the west of Guadalcanal and into Honiara.’ An estimated 24,000 Malaitans fled to Honiara and approximately 11,000 Guale fled from the capital and the coast to the interior of the island. As a sixty-four year old Honiara resident from Malaita said, ‘we were running like dogs.’ The conflict impacted on all levels of society. As Daley Tovosia Paina records:

Youths were forced at gunpoint to join the militants... Babies are being born in the bush and cannot be vaccinated against deadly diseases... Food shortages are also being experienced because a lot more people have gone back to the villages. Mothers as primary caregivers forgot their fears and walked miles into town in order to buy or get food and medical supplies for their families and relatives from the Red Cross and other charity organisations.

By the end of 1999, the majority of displaced Malaitans had left Honiara for Malaita, swelling village and town numbers, igniting land disputes between squatters and the returnees, and creating substantial social strain. As a consequence many Malaitans returned to Honiara and established squatter settlements in and around the capital. In 2005 Renadi Rubbish Dump in eastern Honiara was inhabited by a community of North Malaitans who were repatriated to

---

182 Moore, Happy Isles in Crisis, 111.
184 Norwegian Refugee Council, Profile of Internal Displacement, 5.
185 Confidential interview, Honiara, Solomon Islands, 1 August 2005.
187 Norwegian Refugee Council, Profile of Internal Displacement, 5.
Malaita but who returned to Guadalcanal because, as a leading member of Solomon Islands civil society stated, there was 'no place in Malaita' for them.188 There have been subsequent, partially successful, efforts to repatriate the residents of Renadi Rubbish Dump back to Malaita. In October 2005 more than 30 families were repatriated to Malaita with housing materials, garden tools, food and financial assistance, funded by Compassionate Australia. In 2006, however, a number of families returned, stating that it was "too difficult to cope with life back home in Malaita."189

The origins of organised opposition Malaitan militant groups can be traced to early 2000 although in mid-1999 rumours had already begun circulating that military training camps had been established on Malaita and that a clandestine group called 'Red Cobra' had been formed.190 Disparate groups were active in 1999 and early 2000 setting up roadblocks on the outskirts of Honiara and waging a war of reciprocity--more often vigilantism--against the IFM and the Guale population resulting in approximately 10,000 residents of Honiara, mostly Guadalcanalese, fleeing to rural areas. What appears to have been a catalyst for the solidifying of the Malaitan cause was the failure of the national government following a march on parliament in November 1999 to address compensation claims for damages perpetrated by the Guale militia, a failure felt all the more intensely because the then former Prime Minister, Bartholomew Ulufa’alu, was himself a Malaitan.191

In January 2000 a group of Malaitans who had formerly worked on Guadalcanal plantations raided the Auki Police Headquarters in Malaita and were subsequently identified by Malaitan politician and lawyer, Andrew Nori, who later became their spokesperson, as the Malaitan Eagle Force (MEF).192 The raid, called 'The Spirit of Ramos' was allegedly in retaliation for the eviction of Malaitans from Guadalcanal, the failure of the IFM to lay down their arms, illegal Guale occupation of property abandoned by fleeing Malaitans, and the national government’s failure to pay compensation for loss of life and property, as laid down in the terms of the 1999 Honiara Peace Accord.193

188 Confidential interview, Honiara, Solomon Islands, 3 August 2005.
190 Fraenkel, The Manipulation of Custom, p.78.
191 Bennett, Roots of Conflict, 11.
192 Moore, Happy Isles in Crisis, 124. The raid was code-named 'The Spirit of Ramos' and the militants seized 34 high-powered rifles, a grenade launcher and ammunition.
193 Moore, Happy Isles in Crisis, 124.
The MEF closely resembled a paramilitary organisation with a single commander, Jeremy Rua, from Fataleka, and a coherent structure of units based on tribe or language group.\textsuperscript{194} The MEF numbered 150-300 combatants and was backed by Malaitan politicians, businessmen, and, importantly, Malaitan elements of the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force (RSIP),\textsuperscript{195} particularly the Police Field Force (the paramilitary wing of the RSIP) and the Rapid Response Unit (which was formed in 1999 in response to IFM activities and disbanded in 2003). This undoubtedly influenced the military structure and composition of the MEF. Indeed, Fraenkel has argued that the delay in the formation of a Malaitan opposition force was in part due to the preponderance of Malaitans in the RSIP (approximately fifty percent) and the ability of Malaitans to conduct operations against the IFM under official auspices, with the state, therefore, serving, de facto, as the opposition organisation.\textsuperscript{196} The relationship between the MEF and the state’s security sector gave the MEF unfettered access to weaponry and equipment. In 2000 the Australian-donated patrol boat, \textit{RSIPV Lata}, was mounted with a 50-millimetre cannon and used in a joint PPF-MEF operation to shell IFM positions and civilians in Tenaru, east of Honiara.\textsuperscript{197} To confuse matters further, the MEF and the PFF became increasingly indistinguishable wearing almost identical uniforms.\textsuperscript{198} This tactical advantage did not, however, translate into all-out battle success against the less well-equipped IFM beyond the outskirts of Honiara.\textsuperscript{199} Veteran Pacific journalist Mike Fields observed in June 1999 ‘village after village is empty. The GRA (IFM] have scored an impressive victory with barely a shot, rumour and paranoia did the rest.’\textsuperscript{199}

The origins of the two rival militant groups and their direct relationship with power struggles within Solomon Islands politics raises critical questions about the emergence of private militias and the state’s ability to ultimately control them. Both the MEF and the IFM served as ‘stage-armies used by marginalised elites in pursuit of political and economic objectives, both rallied a disenchanted and under-employed generation to serve as the rank-and-file and both

\textsuperscript{194} For example, the original five units were: Tiger Unit (Kwa’ae), Iron Eagle Unit (east Fataleka), Hunter Unit (west and central Fataleka), Rat (Kwaio), Lion (north Malaita), White Eagle (Sikaina and Lord Howe). The units from north Malaita were renowned for human rights abuses. Moore, \textit{Happy Isles in Crisis}, 127-128.

\textsuperscript{195} The RSIP was established at independence as an un-armed civilian police equipped with non-lethal equipment such as batons and tear gas.

\textsuperscript{196} Fraenkel, \textit{The Manipulation of Custom}, 78.

\textsuperscript{197} The Australian High Commission in Honiara protested on local radio in response to the use of the patrol boat against civilians, however, the Assistant Police Commissioner Wilfred Akao rather ambivalently stated he would ‘make some inquiries as to who authorized the use of the patrol boat’ . This was a stark reminder of the use of Australian-donated patrol boats and Iroquois helicopters by the Papua New Guinean Defence against civilians during the Bougainville conflict. ABC PM, “Australia protests use of patrol boat in Solomons fighting,” 7 June 2000, \url{http://www.abc.net.au/pm/stories/s137819.htm}.


\textsuperscript{199} Michael Fields, ‘Report from Vilu, off the main western road’ Agence France Press, 21 June 1999.
unleashed forces that proved subsequently difficult, even ultimately impossible domestically, to control.\textsuperscript{200} In the ‘post-conflict’ environment, what exist are the remnants—indeed, the rank and file—of these groups and the potential for the evolution into criminal networks often a far smoother transition than reintegration into a society of unemployment and few opportunities.

3.2 The Early Peace Process and Intervention

The peace process throughout 1999 and 2000 was a chronology of broken agreements between the militant groups and the central government. The Honiara Peace Accord (28 June 1999) and the Panatina Peace Agreement (12 August 1999) were facilitated by the Commonwealth’s special envoy, former Fijian Prime Minister, Major-General Sitiveni Rabuka. The Accord resulted in the deployment of the Commonwealth Multinational Police Peace Monitoring Group (CMPPG),\textsuperscript{201} led by former Fijian policeman, Savanaca Tuivaga, comprising of twenty-five unarmed Fijian and ni-Vanuatu police officers in October 1999 to monitor the disarmament of the militant groups and assist the RSIP in developing confidence building measures between the RSIP and Guale people through community policing.\textsuperscript{202}

Disarmament was highly unlikely in view of a critical decision made by the Solomon Islands Government to declare a State of Emergency in June 1999 during the peace talks which sanctioned (and escalated) the use of violence by the RSIP. As elements of the RSIP’s Police Field Force (PFF) and Rapid Response Unit (RRU) actively supported the MEF, the IFM refused to disarm, stating in September that they were not party to the Accord and therefore not bound by it. By early 2000 the Solomon Islands Government was facing its most significant crisis of legitimacy to date. Made impotent by its inability to reach beyond the roadblocks on the outskirts of Honiara, besieged by demands for compensation payments from both sides of the conflict, the Government was unable to peaceably resolve either provincial challenges to the state or control the social and criminal unrest. In May then Solomon Islands Prime Minister, Bartholomew Ulufa’alu, requested military and policing assistance from Australia. However Canberra—and

\textsuperscript{200} Fraenkel, \textit{The Manipulation of Custom}, 80.
\textsuperscript{201} In January 2000 the CMPPG was renamed the Multinational Assistance Group (MPAG) with a enhanced mandate to work with the RSIP in re-establishing law and order. In May 2000 the MPAG was to be doubled in size with the deployment of additional Fijian police, however, the May 19\textsuperscript{th} 2000 coup in Fiji prevented the Fijian contingent from being deployed. Following the June 5\textsuperscript{th} 2000 coup in the Solomon Islands, the MPAG was evacuated. See Martin Sharp, \textit{Australian Policy on the ‘Ethnic Tension’ in Solomon Islands 1999-2001} Paper for the ‘Solomon Islands Workshop: Building Peace and Stability, 24-26 October 2001’ State, Society and Governance in Melanesia Project, (Canberra: Australian National University) and Greg Fry, ‘Political Legitimacy and the Post-colonial State in the Pacific: Reflections on Some Common Threads in the Fiji and Solomon Islands Coups’ \textit{Global Change, Peace and Security} 12:3 (October 2003), 295-304.
\textsuperscript{202} Sharp, \textit{Australian Policy}, 3.
Solomon Islands: An Uneasy Peace

Wellington—declined to intervene due to force commitments in East Timor under INTERFET and in Bougainville, and a reluctance to engage without a discernible exit strategy albeit guised in the rhetoric of non-interference and respect for sovereignty.203

On 5 June 2000 the MEF—supported by Malaitan members of the RSIP—raided the RSIP armoury in Honiara (seizing an estimated 500 weapons) and kidnapped Prime Minister Ulufa’alu. The hostage-taking was inspired by events in Fiji a fortnight earlier when businessman George Speight and an armed group of ten men (renegade members of the Fijian military) held the Mahendra Chaudhry Government hostage on May 19th for fifty-six days ultimately overthrowing the government.204 The coup forced the resignation of Ulufa’alu on June 14th and the election on June 30th of a new government led by the Opposition leader, Manasseh Sogavare, of the Coalition for National Unity, Reconciliation and Peace, by a parliament clearly under duress with several parliamentarians who supported Ulufa’alu prevented from entering Parliament by members of the MEF. Kabutaulaka has argued that ‘fears of intimidation and reprisal silenced many who might otherwise have questioned the legitimacy of the events of June 2000.’205 Moreover, Sogavare’s promise to pay members of the MEF SI$200 million in compensation if elected suggests prior knowledge of the coup.206

Conflict erupted between the MEF/joint paramilitary force and the IFM.207 Following the coup, the RSIP became further factionalised and its paramilitary unit, the PFF, was increasingly directed by the MEF. On 2 August a ceasefire agreement principally aimed at disarmament was brokered by Australia and New Zealand aboard the HMAS Tobruk. The Townsville Peace Agreement (TPA) was signed on 15 October 2000, despite significant breaches of the

203 Based on confidential interview, Australian Government official, Canberra, 19 July 2003; interview with Greg Urwin, Secretary-General of the Pacific Islands Forum, Suva, Fiji 18 August 2003; interview with Vince McBride, New Zealand Government official, Palau, 2 June 2004; interview with Phil Goff, New Zealand Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, en route to the Marshall Islands, 4 June 2004. Australia consistently upheld this position until 2003 when it became politically expedient to view the weakness of the Solomon Islands’ state as a threat to the national interest of Australia.

204 See Fry, ‘Political Legitimacy and the Post-colonial State,’ 295.

205 Tarcisius Tara Kabutaulaka, A Weak State and the Solomon Islands Peace Process No.14 (East-West Centre, Centre for Pacific Island Studies, University of Hawai‘i: Pacific Islands Development Series, April 2002), 2-3. Despite the fact that the legitimacy of Sogavare’s Government was questioned by many Solomon Islanders, it received immediate recognition from Australia and New Zealand.


Solomon Islands: An Uneasy Peace

ceasefire.208 The TPA called for the creation of the International Peace Monitoring Team (IPMT)209 to support the Peace Monitoring Council in the implementation of the peace agreement. The mandate of the International Peace Monitoring Team included assisting with confidence building measures amongst the signatories of the TPA and throughout the wider community; the monitoring and reporting of breaches of the TPA; reporting to the Peace Monitoring Council on developments concerning the implementation of the agreement; and the receiving and monitoring of surrendered weapons.210 While the TPA achieved its aims of ending hostilities and providing a coherent framework for the peace process by establishing the Peace Monitoring Council and the IPMT, it was flawed in its exclusion of civil society from peace negotiations and the unrealistic expectations of proposed development and employment-creation projects on Malaita and Guadalcanal which would engage former militants in public works programmes in their respective provinces.211

Furthermore, a significant and critical impediment of the TPA was its failure to address the militarisation of Solomon Islands society. Under the TPA, the IPMT had two critical aims: 'to monitor, observe and report on acts that constitute crimes and breaches of human rights;' and weapons disarmament.212 For both missions the IPMT was wholly reliant on the compromised police force for which it was also mandated to provide the training and restructuring of. Moreover, the disarmament process, albeit not enforced, was critical in addressing the demilitarisation of the Solomon Islands. Placing the onus of disarmament on the militant groups reflected a series of competing factors at play in 2000. The self-disarmament clause of the TPA coupled with the manipulation of the compensation package, ensured the continuation of conflict but it is unclear how it could have been avoided without the commitment of an Australian--or most likely, regional--force.

Enforced disarmament was out of the question for several reasons. As stated earlier, both Australia and New Zealand were reluctant to put troops on the ground due to their over-

208 The Townsville Peace Agreement followed a succession of earlier attempts: the Memorandum of Understanding between the Solomon Islands Government and the Guadalcanal Provincial Government (13 June 1999); the Honiara Peace Accord (28 June 1999); the Marau Communiqué (15 July 1999); the Panatina Agreement (12 August 1999); the Buala Peace Communiqué (5 May 2000); and the Auki Communiqué (12 May 2000).

209 The IPMT comprised forty-seven unarmed police, military and civilian personnel from Australia and New Zealand with the subsequent addition of personnel from Botswana, Tonga, and Vanuatu.


212 Townsville Peace Agreement, 15 October 2000.
Solomon Islands: An Uneasy Peace

commitment in other regional theatres (namely, Timor-Leste and Bougainville). Moreover, it is
doubtful that the militants would have entered into peace negotiations which called for an
externally-enforced disarmament solution. The speed by which both the peace talks and the
agreement were pursued indicated a desire to prevent these other factors coming to the fore. As
noted, the failure to address the militarisation of Solomon Islands society, contributed
significantly to the promotion of a culture of compensation payments, often secured through
armed extortion and intimidation.

The inability of the IPMT, itself unarmed, to enforce disarmament made it rather
ambitiously dependent on the goodwill of the militant groups. Amnesty was granted to former
militants and those serving police officers in the Royal Solomon Islands Constabulary and
Paramilitary Force who had assisted either the MEF or IFM were allowed to continue to serve
without disciplinary action. The TPA also stipulated the restructuring of the police force and
approximately 2,000 ex-police and former militants were absorbed into the force under the
category of 'special constables,' a move which was fundamentally an act of appeasement and
enabled the combatants to legitimately retain their weapons and avoid the disarmament process.
The special constables acted beyond the purview of the Police Commissioner and the law,
enforcing compensation claims of aggrieved and corrupt parties and engaging in intimidation and
extortion. Shots fired at the home of Prime Minister Allan Kemakeza in 2002 raised the spectre
of a second coup which resulted in key financial officials fleeing to Australia. In 2002 and 2003
two prominent Solomon Islanders were murdered. In August 2002 Government Minister, Father
Augustine Geve, was allegedly killed by Harold Keke and in February 2003, Sir Frederick Soaki,
a former Police Commissioner, and member of the National Peace Council, was murdered in
Auki Hotel allegedly by Edmund Sae, a former police officer. Soaki’s murder was directly
related to the demobilisation as Soaki was an overseer of the demobilisation of the 800 special
constables.

The TPA called for the creation of the IPMT comprising of 47 unarmed police, military
and civilian personnel from Australia and New Zealand to support the Peace Monitoring Council
in the implementation of the TPA. The mandate of the IPMT included assisting with
confidence building measures amongst the signatories of the TPA and throughout the wider
community; the monitoring and reporting of breaches of the TPA; reporting to the Peace

to capture Edmund Sae fuelled the legend surrounding the fugitive. It was claimed that Sae would transform
himself into a dog and regularly enter Honiara.
214 The IPMT later included personnel from Botswana, Tonga and Vanuatu.
Solomon Islands: An Uneasy Peace

Monitoring Council on developments concerning the implementation of the agreement; and the receiving and monitoring of surrendered weapons.\textsuperscript{215}

David Hegarty, leader of the IPMT from February to July 2001, noted in 2001 that while the TPA was flawed it did achieve its fundamental aims. He suggested that the TPA succeeded in two major respects by ending hostilities and by providing a coherent framework for the peace process by establishing the Peace Monitoring Council and the IPMT.\textsuperscript{216} A central figure in Solomon Islands civil society disagreed. Reverend Terry Brown, Bishop of Malaita (of the Church of Melanesia) accused the IPMT of a ‘hands off’ attitude which, whilst acknowledging that the IPMT were unarmed, extended to evacuating IPMT personnel at the first sign of danger, stating that ‘it did not look very good when the IPMT just stayed in their houses during shoot outs—only to go down to the police station the next day to count spent cartridges and chat with those who did the shooting.’\textsuperscript{217} LeBrun and Muggah have stated that ‘the TPA is viewed as generating neither an adequate police presence nor an effective gun amnesty (because villagers simply hid the weapons).’\textsuperscript{218} Former Australian High Commissioner, Patrick Cole, suggests that this was due in part to the lack of political will to surrender guns and ‘make the tough decisions’ regarding governance and corruption.\textsuperscript{219}

By the beginning of 2001, lawlessness prevailed. The Solomon Islands Government was virtually bankrupt, with the closure of the country’s main industries, Gold Ridge Mine and Solomon Islands Plantations Ltd (palm oil) on Guadalcanal and the fish cannery in Western Province, as a consequence of the conflict.\textsuperscript{220} Foreign direct investment in the Solomon Islands plummeted, non-governmental organisations withdrew, and the Government was propped up by a Taiwanese economic assistance package which fuelled the culture of compensation payments, corruption and extortion in Honiara. In May 2003 Australian Seventh Day Adventist missionary Lance Gersbach was beheaded, which, as Australian journalist Mary O’Callaghan noted, raised

\textsuperscript{215} Townsville Peace Agreement, 15 October 2000, Townsville; Hegarty, \textit{Small Arms in Post-Conflict Situation—Solomon Islands}.
\textsuperscript{216} Hegarty, \textit{Monitoring Peace in Solomon Islands}.
\textsuperscript{218} LeBurn and Muggah, \textit{Silencing Guns}, 33. Over 3,700 weapons and over 300,000 rounds of ammunition remained in the communities following the 2002 amnesty and despite the ‘Weapons-free Villages’ disarmament campaign, see Carol Nelson and Robert Muggah \textit{Weapons Free Villages in the Solomon Islands: An Evaluation} (Geneva: Small Arms Survey, 2004).
\textsuperscript{219} Interview with Patrick Cole, Australian High Commissioner to Solomon Islands (2003-2006), Honiara, Solomon Islands, 18 August 2005. Cole was declared persona non grata by the Sogavare Government following allegations of bias during the 2006 elections.
the international profile of the crisis in a way that the deaths of dozens of Solomon Islanders had failed to do. By late 2002, an estimated 30,000 displaced had returned home, however, the security vacuum had deepened leading to an increase in 2003 of criminal and ethnic-related violence believed in part to be caused by the ‘special constables,’ many former militants, whose legitimisation by the government led to extra-judicial violence against the government and civilian population, and the activities by GRA militant leader Harold Keke resulting in the displacement of 1,500 Guale to the outskirts of Honiara.

3.3 Marginalisation and Militarisation: The Dynamics of Conflict

While there are multiple factors which led to the conflict in the Solomon Islands, the heightened sense of insecurity that existed in 1998 was heavily influenced by external dynamics. The militarisation of the Solomon Islands had its roots partially in the Bougainville conflict of 1988-1997. The Shortland and Choiseul Islands of the Western Province in the Solomon Islands archipelago lie approximately twenty kilometres northeast of Bougainville, previously known as the North Solomons Province. Close ties between the islands are based on kinship ties and cross-border trading or ‘traditional crossings.’ As Fugui observed, ‘the Bougainville crisis, especially its spill-over effects and its ramifications on the country’s northern border circa September 1992, took the country [Solomon Islands] and the Mamaloni Government by surprise.’ The response of the Solomon Islands Government was to increase its military capabilities. Following incursions by the Papua New Guinea Defence Force (PNGDF) into Solomon Islands territory in 1991 and 1992 in ‘hot pursuit’ of Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA) fighters, the Solomon Islands Government reinforced the police armoury with many of these weapons later falling into the hands of the MEF and IFM.

The impact of the Bougainville conflict at the non-state level in Solomon Islands proved equally influential and ultimately more damaging. The dynamics of the conflict on Bougainville

222 Norwegian Refugee Council, Profile of International Displacement, 6.
223 Ibid, 6.
225 John Moffat Fugui, unpublished manuscript, (Honolulu, 1997), 45.
Solomon Islands: An Uneasy Peace

resonated strongly in the Solomon Islands demonstrating that a small number of armed men could effectively challenge the state. During the nine-year civil war on Bougainville, civilians and combatants alike sought refuge in the Solomon Islands seeking medical treatment, food, sanctuary and weapons. Approximately 2,000 Bougainvilleans sought refuge across the border during the height of the conflict in 1992 exposing Solomon Islanders to the spectre of secession, particularly in the Western Province. Battle-hardened BRA fighters entered the Solomon Islands searching for caches of wartime weapons and contributing to, if not transporting, a culture of violence amongst a captive urban audience of marginalised youth. As Bennett has noted, ‘the Rambo of video-land showed a way to power,’ similar to the way of ramo or ‘vengeance men’ on Bougainville. Moreover, following the peace process on Bougainville in 1997-98, disgruntled militants took advantage of the growing unrest in Solomon Islands. Remnants of the BRA formed militia groups in opposition to Malaitans, such as the Black Sharks based in Western Province, supplying weapons, on occasion participating as combatants, and, as stated earlier, contributing to the militarisation of male culture in the Solomon Islands. The militarisation of the Solomon Islands is an overarching theme throughout both the conflict period and the RAMSI era and is discussed later in this chapter.

The causes of the tensions in the Solomon Islands are popularly attributed to ethnic divisions between the two largest islands in the Solomon Islands archipelago, Malaita and Guadalcanal. While significant overtones of identity politics existed, the war that unfolded had ‘long antecedents which can be traced back to the colonial years when the Solomon Islands was a British protectorate, and through the period since 1978 when the islands became an independent nation.’ Ultimately, the conflict had its roots in the policies of the British compounded by a weak state that, in the words of Tarcisius Tara Kabutaulaka, was ‘unable to maintain social control, ensure social compliance with official laws, preserve stability and cohesion, encourage

227 Bennett, Roots of Conflict, 8-9.
228 In 1968, uniting with British Solomon Islands was one of three proposals presented to the Papua New Guinean government (under Australian administration until 1975) by Bougainvillean parliamentarians, civil servants and students. See Douglas Oliver, Black Islanders. A Personal Perspective of Bougainville 1937-1991 (Melbourne: Hyland House, 1990), 183. The other two proposed options were full independence or to remain with Papua New Guinea.
229 Bennett, Roots of Conflict, 14 and 4.
Solomon Islands: An Uneasy Peace

social participation in state institutions, provide basic services, manage and control the national economy, and retain legitimacy.  

The tensions were initially and widely portrayed as ethnically motivated. Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer frequently referred to ethnic tensions as the cause of the violence. Amnesty International referred to ‘tensions between two rival ethnic groups.’ Similarly, the Norwegian Refugee Council in their 2004 report profiling internal displacement in the Solomon Islands attributed the violence to ‘ethnic tensions.’ Within the international media, the label of ethnic conflict captured the populist image of contemporary civil war and provided a simplified and superficial analysis of the violence. Domestically, the violence was also framed in terms of ethnicity. As Karle notes, prior to his forced resignation Solomon Islands Prime Minister Bartholomew Ulufa‘alu sought to explore the conflict between Guales and Malaitans in terms of ethnicity. Former Governor-General of Solomon Islands, Sir John Ini Lapli, was cited in the ASPI report referring to the ‘ethnic confrontations of 1998 to 2001 between some Malaita men and Guadalcanal men’ and suggesting that Malaitans ‘were victims of what appeared to be attempts at ethnic cleansing.’ This view consequently overshadowed the entrenched issues of land and identity, power and access to development which gave rise to the conflict. Indeed, the Solomon Islands Government referred to the tensions as ethnic-based in official documents, however, it also made the distinction that ‘the [current] law and order problem is unrelated to past ethnic tensions.’ The politicization of identity in the Solomon Islands by labelling the conflict as ethnic and focussing primarily on the two larger groupings of Malaitans and Guale served only to polarise communities and overlooked the involvement of

---

232 Kabutaulaka, ‘Beyond Ethnicity.’
238 John Ini Lapli, ‘A Solomon Islands Perspective’, in ASPI, Our Failing Neighbour, 32.
non-Malaitans and non-Guales in the tensions. Moreover, by focussing on ethnicity, identity has shifted from being a determinant in the conflict to being a central dynamic. The emergence of settlements on the periphery of Honiara have further entrenched the role of ethnicity in the conflict. As a community elder from Burns Creek explained:

'Burns Creek Community is a community born out of the ethnic tension as a people found difficulty as to where to settle after they were chased out from Guadalcanal by the rebels. Some of us are displaced people. We are called squatters and we have no opportunities to earn a living.\textsuperscript{240}

Moreover, the armed conflict that occurred during the period of 1998 to 2003 can neither be viewed in isolation from conflict that occurred in the Solomon Islands throughout pre and post-colonial history. Nor was there simply one conflict between Guales and Malaitan settlers, as has been commonly misrepresented outside the Solomon Islands but rather a series of conflicts, including that within Guadalcanal and between other language groups. The adoption of the term 'the tensions' to describe the period of conflict serves in part to avoid the distortion and simplification of ethnic labels, as well as distinguishing the violence from the cycles of conflict throughout Solomon Islands history. As Bennett states, the civil war further exacerbated the breakdown in traditional structures already weakened by the external influence of the Church, the colonial administration, and following independence, the struggle for power within the new administration\textsuperscript{241} The breakdown of the state had far fewer consequences for those in rural Solomon Islands than the weakening or breakdown of traditional structures. Moreover, traditional mechanisms for resolving conflict were unable to contend with the nature and level of violence that occurred during the tensions. The introduction of modern warfare dramatically challenged village power structures and the ability of traditional elders and community leaders to exert authority.\textsuperscript{242}

By the beginning of 2003 lawlessness had captured the country. During a visit to Honiara in December 2002, Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer had stated that Australia would not intervene directly\textsuperscript{243} and claimed that unless the 'Government and people of the

\textsuperscript{240} Group interview, Burns Creek, Honiara, Solomon Islands, 9 October 2005.
\textsuperscript{241} Bennett, \textit{Roots of Conflict}, 5.
\textsuperscript{242} Ibid.
Solomon Islands demonstrated a real commitment to addressing the problems facing their country, there would be a limit to further assistance from development partners such as Australia. In January the following year, Downer went further in saying that ‘foreigners do not have the answers for the deep-seated problems affecting the Solomon Islands,’ and that to send in ‘Australia troops to occupy the Solomon Islands would be folly in the extreme.' The foreign policy White Paper, released in February 2003, similarly stated that:

Australia cannot presume to fix the problems of the South Pacific countries. Australia is not a neo-colonial power. The island countries are independent sovereign states ... When problems are so tightly bound to complex cultural traditions and ethnic loyalties, only local communities can find workable solutions. Australia stands ready to help those South Pacific countries willing to help themselves by tackling the problems of poor governance and economic underperformance.

Irrespective of such clear reluctance to assist, in April Kemakeza requested assistance from Australia. On 5 June 2003 Kemakeza met with Australian Prime Minister John Howard in Canberra to discuss Solomon Islands' request for assistance. Immediately following the meeting, Solomon Islands Parliament passed legislation to authorise the presence of an external force, including the amnesty of Australian personnel from prosecution under Solomon Islands law.

On 30 June an emergency sitting of the Pacific Islands Forum Foreign Ministers meeting was held in Sydney and consensus was reached that the situation in the Solomon Islands called for a ‘concerted regional response’ and unanimous support was given for a regional intervention in accordance with the Biketawa Declaration. However, as Andie Fong Toy, Director of the Forum Secretariat’s Political, International and Legal Affairs Division, has subsequently stated, because the Solomon Islands Government requested assistance and the Australians wished to expedite the intervention, the Pacific Islands Forum Secretary-General did not follow all of the provisions of the Biketawa Declaration which outlined a series of steps to be taken, including regional fact-finding missions. Despite the prescient need to intervene, a sense of being ‘steam-rolled’ by Australia emerged throughout the region. As a Pacific Island

244 Ibid.
245 Alexander Downer, ‘Neighbours cannot be recolonised,’ The Australian, January 8, 2003, 11. Downer also questioned how long an intervention in the Solomon Islands would last and what the exit strategy would be.
246 Advancing the National Interest: Australia’s Foreign and Trade Policy White Paper (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, February 2003), 93.
participant in the meeting suggested, it was more about ‘brown faces at the table’ than genuine and equal regional participation in the intervention.

The formal request for assistance came from the Solomon Islands Governor General, Sir John Ini Lapli, on 4 July in a letter to Prime Minister John Howard. On 11 July, the Solomon Islands Parliament supported a motion endorsing the assistance package and on 18 July legislation was passed giving powers and immunities to military, policing and civilian personnel involved.

The rapidity of events from request to actual deployment indicated that substantial planning had already been underway in Canberra. In the words of then Australian Prime Minister John Howard, the purpose of the Australian-led intervention was to ‘arrest this downward spiral, which, if not addressed, could result in the total collapse of the Solomon Islands’ governance and sovereignty...A failed state would not only devastate the lives of the peoples of the Solomons but could also pose a significant security risk for the whole region.’ The policy reversal that occurred in Canberra was complete. Prime Minister John Howard cited domestic and international condemnation if Australia did not intervene, stating that ‘if we do nothing and the country slides into further anarchy...then it becomes a haven for evildoers, whether they’re involved in terrorism, or drugs, or money laundering...we will rightly be condemned, not only by the Australian people, but also by countries around the world.’ The potential for the Solomon Islands to become a ‘haven for evildoers’ underpinned the intervention. The fate of the Solomon Islands and its population therefore became of concern when the possibility of violence-terrorism and transnational crime—being exported from its shores. The ASPI report, Our Failing Neighbour, which had emphasised the threat of the Solomon Islands becoming a terrorist base provided the ‘justification and partial blueprint’ for the intervention.

249 Confidential interview, Suva, Fiji, 14 July 2003.
250 The Facilitation of International Assistance Act 2003 (Solomon Islands Parliament) came into force on 22 July 2003. On 24 July, the Status of Forces Agreement was signed in Townsville between the Solomon Islands, Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Tonga. See Agreement on the operations and status of personnel deployed to Solomon Islands, Townsville, 24 July 2003.
252 ‘Howard: ‘Solomons could have become haven for terrorists,’ Sydney Morning Herald, 23 July 2003, http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2003/07/23/1058853108927.htm. In a statement to the Australian Parliament, Howard declared that ‘If Australia wants security, we need to do all that we can to ensure that our region, our neighbourhood, is stable...That is why we have joined with the other nations of our region to lend a helping hand.’ See Prime Minister Hon John Howard, House of Representatives, transcript, 12 August 2003.
253 Moore, ‘Helpem Fren,’ 150.
3.4 Operation ‘Helpem Fren’: The Arrival of the Mission

In 2003 RAMSI landed at Red Beach in Guadalcanal where the American forces had landed in 1942. The comparison was symbolic. The Australian-led military and policing components of RAMSI filled a security vacuum laid bare by the civil war and the erosion of tradition and kastom yet, in doing so, has supported an uneasy peace to co-exist alongside the deep-seated resentments and grievances that spurred the conflict in 1998. Yet the impact of RAMSI on Solomon Islanders cannot be under-stated. Former Solomon Islands Central Bank Governor Rick Hou wrote in August 2003:

Since the arrival of RAMSI personnel in Honiara, there is already a very new kind of feeling and general positive and encouraging atmosphere around the country. Especially in Honiara, the public is now able to go about their normal business in an orderly fashion, with an air of relaxation and more freedom. In a short space of time, the rule of law appears to now be taking a hold. The town is now filled with more people, mostly attracted by the military and police activities (or what the public hopes to see) happening in Honiara.\(^{254}\)

RAMSI is a comprehensive and integrated police-led mission. At its core, RAMSI is a ‘state-building exercise’\(^{255}\) constructed around the three pillars of law and justice, economic reform and machinery of government. RAMSI constituted three phases, however, the focus of this study is on Phase I, or the commencement phase of the mission, concerned with the restoration of law and order.\(^{256}\) Despite officially ceasing on 31 December 2003, this phase in reality is ongoing. RAMSI consists of the military contingent, the Combined Task Force 635 (hereafter referred to as the CTF)\(^{257}\) and the Participating Police Force (PPF). Both elements come under the overall command of a civilian ‘Special Coordinator.’ However, as the former Commander of the third rotation of the CTF, Lieutenant-Colonel John Hutcheson noted, ‘the RAMSI approach was designed along single agency lines, with civil, police and military planning staffs not situated

\(^{256}\) Phase II is the consolidation of the rule of law, institutional reform and economic development and Phase III, with overlap from Phase II, focuses on development.
\(^{257}\) Operation Anode is the Australian Defence Force (ADF) contribution to RAMSI,
Solomon Islands: An Uneasy Peace

together ...the resulting ‘stovepiping’ of information and activity created significant interoperability issues."\(^{258}\)

![Graffiti welcoming RAMSI, Honiara, Solomon Islands. Powles, 2005.](image)

RAMSI’s peace and security mandate called for the restoration of civil order and disarmament and in this the mission had considerable success.\(^{259}\) The PPF were deployed throughout Solomon Islands with seventeen police posts established\(^{260}\) and accompanied on patrol by the CTF. The CTF Commander, Hutcheson stated in a briefing that the military’s role was not to restore law and order but to support and assist the PPF\(^{261}\). However, as Moore notes:

organising the surrender of firearms was relatively easy, given the show of military strength. Within weeks, almost 2,500 weapons, including some high-powered military weapons, and 300,000 rounds of ammunition had been handed in. Most of these were collected around Honiara and on Malaita, although 600 guns came from Gizo in Western Province. By late 2003, 3,700 weapons had been destroyed, their remnants now interned in a grassed mound on the ocean side

---


260 PPF and joint PPF-RSIP police posts are located in: Tulagi and Yandina (Central Province); Taro (Choiseul Province); Avu Avu, Isuna, Mbambanakira, and Tetere (Guadalcanal); Buala (Isabel Province); Kira Kira (Makira Province), Ato’ifi, Auki and Malu’u (Malaita); Tinggoa (Rennel/Bellona); Lata (Temotu Province); Gizo, Munda and Lofung (Western Province).

261 Briefing by Lieutenant Colonel John Hutcheson, RAMSI Military Commander, Guadalcanal Beach Resort, Honiara, 7 June 2004.
Solomon Islands: An Uneasy Peace

of Rove police headquarters, a visible memorial to the years of violence. Around 100–150 high-powered weapons remain unaccounted for. 262

With the PPF deployed throughout the Solomon Islands, more than half of RAMSI’s troops were withdrawn by the end of 2003, and most others left in early 2004.263

The Mission’s Mantra: Partnership and Engagement

It is of fundamental importance that a peace operation ‘explains’ its presence to the local population in the early days of the mission’s deployment. The actions taken in the first six to twelve weeks are critical to an operation’s subsequent credibility.264 Moreover, failure to convey the mission’s mandate can marginalise the local population from the objectives of the intervention. The messages that peace operations convey to local populations are therefore critical. The two central themes consist of explaining the mission’s mandate and ‘communicating the peace effort’ by making public the mission’s accomplishments. The Brahimi Report states that:

An effective public information and communications capacity in mission areas is an operational necessity...Effective communication helps to dispel rumour, to counter disinformation and to secure the cooperation of local populations. It can provide leverage in dealing with leaders of rival groups, enhance security of [United Nations] personnel and serve as a force multiplier. It is thus essential that every peace operation formulate public information campaign strategies, particularly for key aspects of a mission’s mandate, and that such strategies and the personnel required to implement them be included in the very first elements deployed to help start up a new mission.265

Invariably, however, the messages get lost in translation—both in a linguistic sense and due to the manner in which the messages are communicated to the public. The failure to adequately express the role and mandate of the peacekeepers gives rise to the forces becoming susceptible to allegations of bias, partiality and illegitimacy. A poor public information campaign can therefore

265 Brahimi Report, 25.
be as detrimental to the success of the mission as the behaviour of the peacekeepers themselves and in many instances, serves to offset any indiscretions and negative publicity that does eventuate. It must also be recognised that the message that a mission communicates to the population may need to subtly shift in accordance with changing dynamics on the ground, thus emphasising key issues in response to events. As the 2006 Oxfam report on RAMSI notes, ‘one of the greatest challenges for an intervention mission is the dual task of disseminating information regarding its mandate and protecting the mission’s reputation.’

As Abraham Baenesia, the head of the Solomon Islands Development Trust, stated, prior to the arrival of RAMSI, rumours and misinformation about the mission’s purpose and role had instilled fear and uncertainty amongst the population: ‘there is a need for explanation to the people that these people [RAMSI] are coming to help.’ As O’Callaghan observed in 2006, ‘RAMSI must get better, smarter and faster at getting its message out to all stakeholders. Right now the mission still has enormous support from the broad mass of Solomon Islands who genuinely and wholeheartedly appreciate the turn around in their lives that RAMSI’s deployment has wrought. But there is never an exhaustible supply of good will towards an intervention force.’ In 2005 a brochure was produced by RAMSI which reiterated the message of ‘A Partnership with the People of the Solomon Islands’ and that ‘RAMSI KAM FOR HELPEM IUMI’ (‘RAMSI has come to help you’). The brochure outlined RAMSI’s mandate and sought to counter allegations that RAMSI breached the sovereignty of the Solomon Islands by stating that:

RAMSI does not control government or make national decisions on behalf of the Solomon Islands...RAMSI is not trying to introduce any foreign systems or laws. RAMSI follows the systems and laws of the Solomon Islands...RAMSI is here to help the people and government of the Solomon Islands so that they can restore their own laws and systems which broke down during the tensions.

---

270 Ibid.
Solomon Islands: An Uneasy Peace

The brochure then 'communicated the peace effort' by outlining RAMSI's accomplishments such as the seizure of 3000 guns, 5000 arrests, and the removal of 400 police officers from the distrusted Royal Solomon Islands Police (RSIP). The brochure also broadly and somewhat vaguely addressed the question of an exit strategy, an issue which concerned many Solomon Islanders due to the lack of clarity surrounding it, by stating:

How Long will RAMSI Stay? RAMSI is a long-term commitment on the part of the contributing governments of the region. RAMSI programs are being implemented over many years. In the end, decisions on RAMSI's stay in the Solomon Islands will depend on governments of the region and the government of the Solomon Islands.271

The inadequate and poor distribution of the brochure obscured the message, however, and it is open to question how many Solomon Islanders, especially those beyond urban Honiara, actually saw it. Even in Honiara, the response of Solomon Islanders when shown the brochure, was one of ignorance. Few had any knowledge of it.272 Excluding the use of Pidgin on the front cover, the fact that the brochure was in English and not in Pidgin also raised fundamental questions about its ability to convey RAMSI's message to all Solomon Islanders and not just the elites. Awareness of RAMSI's mandate varied and was often influenced by underlying dissatisfaction towards the overall economic and social issues faced by many Solomon Islanders. The following three statements made at community meetings in differing parts of Honiara demonstrate the diversity of sentiments and the overwhelming sense of marginalisation experienced by disenfranchised groups within Solomon Islands society:

RAMSI presence in Honiara is good. Their mission is very clear to me—to provide the environment in which people can make peace between themselves. But the problem is when AID money is given through the government to assist with the peace process, it gets filtered somewhere else, under any peace regime. Assistance should come direct to communities. In this community, we have many broken relationships. We in this community have a peace plan. We have submitted copies to NPC, Police Commissioner, Government, etc. but nobody is talking to us

271 Ibid.
272 See Appendix 2: 'Helpem Fren,' brochure produced by the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands, 2005. Personal communication, Honiara, August-October 2005. The brochure was obtained from the coffee table in the office of the Special Coordinator of RAMSI.
about it. We do not have the money to enable implementation of the peace plan. Even money for
the peace process is filtered elsewhere. 273

RAMSI only did a good job with restoration of law and order. That’s all. We don’t trust them
because they work in strange ways. Eg. Immunity of RAMSI. That’s something we really hate...As
a young person, I do not support RAMSI. How can I support them? Where is all the aid coming
into this country while their presence is here? I have nothing to support them for. 274

However, the second central message by RAMSI which conveyed the mission’s mandate for
peace and security articulated in terms of law and order was far more visible. Prior to the
drawdown of the Australian military force in Malaita, a leaflet was distributed in an attempt to
assuage the concerns of many Malaitans that the absence of the soldiers would result in a return
to conflict and insecurity. The leaflet explained that the soldiers were ‘returning to our base in
Honiara because we have achieved our mission and law and order has returned to Malaita.’ 275
The leaflet goes on to state:

The RAMSI Police will remain in MALAITA for a long time to come. The military can still be
called for if their assistance is required. MALAITA is less than an hour from HONIARA by
helicopter. Patrols will still be ongoing so do not be alarmed if you see military personnel in the
future. 276

The final message of the leaflet contained an explicit warning to those who might have
considered the absence of the military force an opportunity to perpetrate crimes or violence,
staking ‘RAMSI has not and will not back down to criminals.’ 277 In Honiara disarmament posters
were equally unequivocal, stating ‘Your Guns Will Be Found. The Capability Is Here. Don’t
Risk Jail. Your Guns Will Be Found.’ 278 However, a military observer claims that a lot of the
villages on Malaita—where a large proportion of the guns were—did not know about the weapons

273 Confidential interview with community member, Burns Creek, Honiara 9 October 2005.
274 Confidential interview with community member, Gilbert Camp, Borderline, Honiara, 7 August 2005.
275 See Appendix 3: ‘Key Messages For Malaita,’ Leaflet distributed in Malaita, Solomon Islands, by the
Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands, following the drawdown of the military force, 2004.
276 Ibid.
277 Ibid.
hand back. The message of law and order was not lost on Solomon Islanders but it obscured the rest of RAMSI’s mandate:

To be honest the only thing we know about RAMSI is that they are police and they help to keep law and order. If there is anything else they are doing in the country, can you please clarify that for us, because we live like this and we don’t know what else they are doing. They patrol this community every 6-8 hours. They come in especially to arrest because crime rate in this community is very high. I’d say, 90-95% of the criminal activities in Honiara are in this community. That is why we have police patrols.

RAMSI also spread its message through the AusAID-funded ‘Talking Truth’ programme on Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation (SIBC) radio which reached a greater percentage of the population not least because Warner, and his successor, James Batley, both spoke Pidgin. It provided, as one commentator put it, ‘neutral, non-political forum in which ordinary people can question senior RAMSI officials and Solomon Island politicians...an entirely new experience for most local people.’ Fostering an environment of open debate was fundamental even if RAMSI’s message of partnership was regarded as lacking in credibility. Communicating the peace effort plays a fundamental role in conveying the mandate of the mission to the local population, and in this RAMSI was somewhat successful. Engagement between the mission and the local population has been a growing source of contention. Fullilove praised RAMSI’s ‘diligent and largely successful efforts to communicate with Solomon Islanders...an openness and humility which is entirely appropriate for an international mission’ yet as Allen notes, Solomon Islanders are conspicuously absent from the list of persons consulted during Fullilove’s interviews in the Solomon Islands. Indeed, many of the Solomon Islanders interviewed during field research indicated a frustration with the mission’s failure to engage with ‘ordinary people.’

---

279 Interview with Major David Moon, Australian Defence Force, Canberra, Australia, 28 March 2005.
280 Confidential interview with community member, Burns Creek, Honiara, Solomon Islands, 9 October 2005.
281 Michael Fullilove, ‘RAMSI and State Building in the Solomon Islands,’ Defender, Autumn 2006, 34
282 Fullilove, Testament of Solomons, 17.
283 Allen, Dissenting Voices, 195.
Mission Legitimacy and Legacy

In 2005 a senior RAMSI official suggested that ‘international assistance came too soon’ and that ‘Solomon Islanders did not realise how bad things were’. From the outset, RAMSI sent a clear message that the role of the mission was not to build peace itself but rather to create the environment in which peace could be negotiated. RAMSI sought to promote two central messages. The first was of a ‘partnership’ between the mission and the population of the Solomon Islands. This echoed the image of RAMSI embodying ‘cooperative intervention’ within the Pacific region and sought to establish the mission’s legitimacy and the consent of the local population. To set the tone of the intervention, on 5 July 2003, the day that RAMSI arrived in the Solomon Islands, Nick Warner, RAMSI Special Coordinator (2003-2004), gave a speech to the people of the Solomon Islands which emphasised partnership between the Solomon Islands and the force’s regional participants. Warner stated, ‘we, your partners in the Pacific,’ the subordinate but if necessary active role of the military long-term commitment, and the independence and sovereignty of the Solomon Islands. Two years later the message contained a subtle distinction. At a conference in Honiara, Warner stated that RAMSI was not infringing on Solomon Islands’ sovereignty but rather was returning sovereignty to the Solomon Islands. On the eve of his departure, Warner stated in a radio interview:

Since I’ve been here people have talked to me about the root causes of the conflict and when they talk about the root causes it seems to me that what they are talking about is ethnicity, internal migration and land. My position has always been that in this early phase the first year or so of RAMSI that we shouldn’t...we RAMSI shouldn’t get involved at trying to address the root causes of the conflict, because if we do as outsiders I think undoubtedly almost by definition we’ll get it wrong. Only Solomon Islanders can understand and properly address the root causes of the conflict.

The image of RAMSI was judiciously crafted from the corridors of Canberra to the streets of Honiara. Emphasised at each turn of the operation was its embodiment of, first, regional cooperation, and, secondly, as a model of ‘cooperative intervention,’ between states and, most
importantly, between the mission and the civilian population of the Solomon Islands. The language of the mission was carefully formulated to reinforce the acquiescence of Solomon Islanders—including their government—and rebut any criticisms of breaches of sovereignty and illusions of Australian hegemony.\textsuperscript{288} As stated, the intervention was cloaked in the legitimacy of the Biketawa Declaration, the regional crisis response framework whose Pacific Island Forum signatories supported and contributed to the mission but later came to question exactly how regionally-representative RAMSI truly was.\textsuperscript{289} A key finding of a review of RAMSI by the Pacific Islands Forum in 2005 found that the mission failed to adequately represent Pacific Islanders amongst its military, policing and civilian ranks.\textsuperscript{290} The Report documented perceptions of Solomon Islanders that RAMSI had a ‘minimal regional identity,’ and that it is a ‘predominantly Australian mission’ which is ‘controlled by Australia.’\textsuperscript{291} The Report recommended greater recognition of the skills that Pacific Islanders brought to the mission stating:

...the Pacific Islanders serving under the PPF (Participating Police Force) are well liked among Solomon Islanders. In our view this is because Pacific Islanders can relate well to the locals. We recommend that RAMSI take steps to make optimal use of this, particularly by supporting community policing initiatives as they have been shown to be very effective.\textsuperscript{292}

Furthermore, despite substantive and ongoing popular support for RAMSI, there was growing resentment towards the mission. Recognition of dissent, criticism and resistance amongst the local population is critical but often overlooked or belittled by RAMSI as emanating from only criminal quarters.\textsuperscript{293} The local bastardisation of the mission’s Pijin operational name, \textit{Operation Helpem Fren}, (Operation Helping a Friend) chosen to convey the sense of ‘friendship’ and ‘partnership’ between RAMSI and the civilian population, into \textit{Operation Arrestum Fren}

\textsuperscript{288}Such allegations did arise over time. Responding to accusations that RAMSI acted as a ‘shadow government, ’then Special Coordinator Nick Warner responded by stating [this is] ‘unfair representation of [the] situation... [this is] a partnership between RAMSI and the [SI] Government. RAMSI’s ability to sell achievements is better honed than SIG’s.’ Warner, Beyond Intervention conference, Honiara, 15 June.
\textsuperscript{290}Pacific Island Forum, Mission Helpem Fren, 2005, 10-11.
\textsuperscript{291}Pacific Island Forum, Mission Helpem Fren, 2005, 10.
\textsuperscript{292}Pacific Island Forum, Mission Helpem Fren, 2005, 11.
\textsuperscript{293}Interview with James Batley, Special Coordinator of RAMSI (2004-2006), Honiara, Solomon Islands, 15 August 2005.
(Operation Arresting a Friend) reflected the increasing anti-RAMSI feeling. This was evidenced by the shooting of Australian Protective Services officer Adam Dunning in December 2004. Dunning and other officers were conducting a routine early morning patrol in Borderline, in the hills above Honiara when a sniper using a military-style rifle (either an SLR or AK-47) fired six bullets, two of which hit Dunning. The site where Dunning was killed became known locally as ‘RAMSI Stap’ (literally meaning where RAMSI was ‘stopped’) on the local bus route. The local response to the killing of a RAMSI officer was almost one of apathy: ‘people don’t know of what use RAMSI is these days. After the shooting of the RAMSI officer, people no longer want to cooperate with RAMSI in giving information because they are fed up of RAMSI.’ The Honiara riots in April 2006 saw a further intensification of local criticism of RAMSI in response to the PPF’s failure to control the violence. This reinforced the growing sense that people were no longer ‘afraid’ of RAMSI.

There was a particularly strong perception that RAMSI, and Australians especially, were biased against Malaitans. This is reflective of the overall sense of marginalisation that Malaitans feel and manifested in a belief that RAMSI discriminated against them in favour of Guales. A common refrain heard was that Malaitans were targeted for arrest more often than other groups

---

294 Interview with members of the Malaita Ma’asine Forum executive, Honiara, Solomon Islands, 9 August 2005.
295 Group interview, Kopito community, Borderline, Honiara, Solomon Islands, 7 August 2005.
297 Interview with members of the Malaita Ma’asine Forum executive, Honiara, Solomon Islands, 9 August 2005.
and received poorer treatment at the hands of the police officers. The following statement explains the sentiment more fully:

The ordinary Malaitan people's perception about RAMSI is that they only came to arrest the Malaitan Militants. They arrested them left right and centre and threw them in prison. How about the Guadalcanal militants who started the tension? Why have they arrested only Harold Keke and the few followers? Where are the rest of the Guadalcanal culprits? That is why, we promise you, our people are not foolish. They can no longer tell you any secret. Because we see RAMSI as a one-sided affair, we are not willing to cooperate with them. It is difficult for them to take any more information from us, the ordinary people.

The perception of a RAMSI bias towards Malaitans was exacerbated by reports of armed rebel groups in the jungles of Malaita. The Malaita Separatist Movement, for example, was rumoured to comprise approximately sixty-six members, including fugitive Edmund Sae and mainly former members of the Malaitan Eagle force who claimed to have high-powered weapons. The rebel group stated that 'We see RAMSI as coming with ethnic hatred especially against Malaitans. We don’t want to see any Malaitan police go together with RAMSI especially Australian officers.'

The legitimacy of the mission, so carefully managed in its early days, not surprisingly became increasingly questioned by the mission’s ‘recipients.’ As Warner acknowledged in 2005, the need to maintain popular support and broad understanding [of the mission] was central to the mission’s success but as time passed that would be harder. The sense of dislocation that many Solomon Islanders felt from both their government and the intervention mission which seemed to promise so much took root in the disadvantaged communities in the hinterlands of Honiara. The attitude that RAMSI was ‘Roaming Around Messing Solomon Islands’ (a local adaptation of the mission’s acronym) began to prevail as Solomon Islanders increasingly came to recognise that despite the cessation of outright conflict, they were not benefitting substantially from the

298 Group interview, Kopito community, Borderline, Honiara, Solomon Islands, 7 August 2005. One claim was that ‘when Guale handcuffed [they are] in front and Malaitans in back [behind]’.
299 Group interview, Kopito community, Borderline, Honiara, Solomon Islands, 7 August 2005.
303 Others suggested dropping the ‘R’ in RAMSI as many Solomon Islanders perceived a lack of regional representation in the composition of the mission.
mission, and certainly not economically despite the signs of wealth in downtown Honiara—albeit all associated with the mission and its personnel. As one youth said:

_We don’t know what RAMSI is doing. The only thing we know is that cost of living has gone really high since RAMSI came in. I mean they are the advisers so whatever happens in the country’s economy is to be blamed on them. Every 3 weeks, new [AusAID] vehicles are coming in. Where is the money coming from? Is this the money meant to help Solomon Islands? What are these vehicles for? The money could be invested in Education, Health, etc._  

Moreover, as the following quote reveals, this had a considerable impact on the sense of legitimacy of the mission:

_The respect for and integrity of RAMSI has gone down by the day. Until the last 4 months, people were happy to wave to RAMSI when they drove past. Today, people are not interested. When RAMSI officers wave to people from their vehicles, people don’t wave back. Why? We have stopped trusting RAMSI. It’s not doing any good to our nation._

RAMSI has been lauded as a success since its inception. In 2005, Patrick Cole, the then Australian High Commissioner, observed that that there is ‘nowhere else in the world where you have seen a post-conflict society coming back faster.’ RAMSI frequently referred to an NGO survey conducted in the first week of deployment which gave the mission a 97% approval rating, with New Zealand Foreign Minister Hon Phil Goff stating in a visit to Honiara in 2003 that ‘everybody, opposition MPs, government, NGOs, expats living here, have talked to us about the difference in atmosphere, the greater confidence that people have today in Honiara and the Solomons because of the deployment.’ Yet increasingly academics have begun to reflect the concerns of Solomon Islanders regarding the mission citing the constant turnover of RAMSI personnel and their inadequate command of pidgin and cultural awareness.
Solomon Islands: An Uneasy Peace

As the Honiara riots of April 2006 revealed, the perception held by RAMSI and its political supporters was at odds with the emergence of politically-generated mob violence in the Solomon Islands. Prior to the riots, Moore noted that while the Solomon Islands is ostensibly in a post conflict phase and buoyed by international support, the country could still return to violence if underlying problems are not addressed.\(^{310}\) Moore goes on to state that although the MEF and IFM no longer exist, they could be reinstated very quickly if needed.\(^{311}\) For example, in mid-2005 there were stirrings in north Malaita from a group calling itself the Malaita Separatist Movement, Malaitan talk of a Malaita Defence Force (which may well be fictitious), and in January 2007 there was a rustling among former Guadalcanal militants.\(^{312}\) Guns are rumoured to be buried close to Honiara, and illegal guns are still located on Malaita\(^{313}\).

The anti-RAMSI sentiment reflected genuine and deep-seated resentment towards the mission but was also a release valve for the ongoing frustrations of many felt towards the government over the degree of marginalisation the local population felt towards the representatives of authority in their country. As Wainwright noted in an external review of RAMSI, certain issues such as land tenure, reconciliation and the centralization versus decentralization which had been deemed outside the mission’s remit needed greater prioritisation in RAMSI’s state-building operation.\(^{314}\) However, greater engagement with the local population and an appreciation of the need to ensure the genuine participation of Solomon Islanders in keeping with RAMSI’s promotion of the mission as a ‘partnership’ are essential if such issues are to be addressed in a context-appropriate manner. Upon arrival in the Solomon Islands, RAMSI’s military and policing contingents faced minimal threats and as a consequence the relationship between the peacekeepers and the local population was not framed in terms of either peace enforcement or civil protection. It was, in most respects, a community policing context thus creating a degree of apathy and ambivalence on the part of RAMSI which translated into a false sense of security. The lines—and dynamics—of the relationship therefore became considerably more nuanced and subtle than would have been the case of outright violence. Moreover, engagement between RAMSI and the local population has been minimal perhaps due to the fact

\(^{310}\) Ibid, 150
\(^{311}\) Ibid., 150.
\(^{314}\) Elsina Wainwright, How is RAMSI Faring? Progress, Challenges, and Lessons Learned, Strategic Insight 14, Australian Strategic Policy Institute, Canberra, 2005, 10.
that there has not been any, with the exception of the Honiara riots, significant overt opposition to the mission.

For that matter, as Moore states, RAMSI has never involved the Solomon Islands Government in any regular review of its operations. The only substantial external review so far has been from an eminent persons group sent by the Pacific Islands Forum in mid-2005, and it is an indictment of the RAMSI process, Moore argues, that the first consultations between the Forum, RAMSI and the government were not held until February 2007. Moreover, as Allen notes, the majority of external analyses of RAMSI fail to incorporate local perspectives on the mission.

While it is clear that local people conflate the policing component of RAMSI with RAMSI at large, Morgan and McLeod contend that the growing resentment towards RAMSI is influenced by the fact that RAMSI police personnel live detached from the community, that they are perceived as contributing little to the local economy (due to the fact that the majority of their food is imported) and that they do not understand how to interact with local people in a culturally appropriate manner. Prior to the April riots which saw an outburst of anti-RAMSI sentiment, this resentment was manifest in the throwing of rocks at RAMSI vehicles and increased public expressions of disenchantment. However, it is important to state that many Solomon Islanders note that while improvements to the mission could be made, the continuing presence of PPF personnel is essential to the ongoing maintenance of law and order, and in turn, peace and security.

3.5 Conclusion

The case of the Solomon Islands provides a unique window into intervention. This chapter has sought to provide a contextual basis for this study’s broader analysis of peacekeeper-local population relations. Through an analysis of the tensions between 1998 and 2003, the failed peace processes, and the subsequent intervention by RAMSI in mid-2003, this chapter has emphasised the complexities of civil conflict in the Solomon Islands. Moreover, this chapter has demonstrated that the themes of marginalisation and militarisation were central to the conflict and currently underpin the post-conflict environment in which the RAMSI intervention seeks to

316 Allen, Dissenting Voices, 194-195.
317 Morgan and McLeod, Have We Failed Our Neighbour? 419-420.
318 Ibid.
establish law and order. The following chapter examines the case study of the 2006 intervention in Timor-Leste.
The crisis that occurred in Timor-Leste during the months of April and May, 2006, served as a mordant reminder of the fragility not of states—contrary to the discourse on weak or failing states—but rather of the state-building process itself. As the International Crisis Group noted, 'the political crisis that shook Timor-Leste in 2006 changed the perception of it from the UN’s nationbuilding success to a failed state in the making.'

Timor-Leste’s transition from self-determination in 1999 to independence in 2002 under the tutelage of the United Nations is now increasingly regarded as one of mismanagement and neglect in direct contradiction to the lauded success of Timor-Leste as the poster-child of state-building. The subsequent four years enforced a degree of political authoritarianism under Fretilin and reinforced the marginalisation of the Timorese population.

The crisis of 2006 did not begin on April 28, but was an expression of political struggles that pre-dated the Indonesian occupation of the territory in 1975 reflecting the vestiges of the 1974-75 civil war between Fretilin and the Timorese Democratic Union (UDT). At the societal and communal level, the crisis also embodied a second wave of 'self-determination,' or popular expression, amongst sections of the Timorese population, the majority of who experienced a poverty of opportunity, disenfranchisement from the state and frustration that independence had not changed their daily lives significantly, and were thus seduced and manipulated by identity politics.

The shooting of the President of Timor-Leste, Nobel Peace laureate Jose Ramos Horta and the attempted attack on Prime Minister, Xanana Kay Rala Gusmao on Monday 11, February

320 See Tanja Hohe, ‘Totem Polls: Indigenous Concepts and ‘Free and Fair’ Elections in East Timor,’ International Peacekeeping, 9, (4), Winter, 2002, 69-88. In her analysis of the 2001 Constituent Assembly Elections, Hohe argues that the 'Western-oriented electoral exercise has resulted in the indigenous values of unitary and hierarchical political authority reinforcing a one-party state. This should question electoral assistance as the ultimate way of creating popular participation and democratization.'Hohe, ‘Totem Polls,’ 69.
2008, served as a further reminder that the crisis remained unresolved. President Jose Ramos Horta was shot three times upon returning to his residence in Metiaut, eastern Dili. The alleged leader of the attack, rebel fugitive Major Alfredo Reinado, who met with Ramos Horta the previous evening at the residence, was killed during the incident. The attack on Prime Minister Gusmao’s convoy travelling from his home in Lahane, south of Dare, to Dili, took place half an hour after the attempt on the President. A state of emergency was announced by the Vice-President Vicente Guterres yet contrary to perceptions of a ‘repertoire of violence’ existing in Timor-Leste, the predicted outbreaks of street violence by supporters of Ramos Horta and Reinado did not occur. In the immediate days following the assassination attempts and the death of Reinado, a paralysing sense of fear and confusion as well as significant restraint prevailed.

The aim of this chapter is to demonstrate that marginalisation and exclusion have been a recurrent theme throughout Timor-Leste’s recent history. The first section, *Civil War, Resistance and Grievance*, provides an overview of the 1974-1975 civil war, the Indonesian invasion and occupation from 1975-1999, the International Force for East Timor deployed in September 1999, and United Nations statebuilding missions which administered Timor-Leste following the 1999 independence referendum, through the lens of civil war, resistance and grievance. The second section, *The Crisis of April and May 2006*, examines the events of April and May 2006 in Timor-Leste that led to the fall of the Fretilin Government led by Mari Alkatiri, the emergence and exploitation of regional identity politics through the east-west dichotomy, and the displacement of approximately 150,000 residents of Dili and the districts. This section emphasises that the crisis of 2006 must be situated in a broader context of rising discontent within the national security forces, ongoing political struggles which originated in the 1974-75 civil war and festered during the Indonesian occupation, and a growing sense of marginalisation amongst the population and dissatisfaction towards the FRETILIN Government.

The third section, *The International Stabilisation Force: Intervention and Unrest*, documents the deployment of the International Stabilisation Force (ISF) in May 2006 and the shift to a policing-led operation against the backdrop of ongoing low-level inter-communal

---


322 There is not a significant division between those who support Ramos Horta and those who supported Reinado. Ramos Horta was respected as the ‘old man’ or ‘grandfather’ who walked the streets during the 2006 crisis to mediate conflicts or even personally deliver rice to bairos or villages not receiving food. Reinado’s cult status amongst the youth did not impact on Ramos Horta’s popularity as a leader. As such, supporters of both men were saddened and confused by the events.
violence. The final section, *Displacement and Insecurity*, seeks, firstly, to demonstrate that the displacement—both forced and anticipatory (resulting from the lack of choice)—that occurred during and after the crisis reflects a continuum of displacement present throughout the Indonesian occupation and the violence of 1999 and which, significantly, should not be regarded as merely a consequence of conflict but rather as a dynamic within its right.323 Secondly, this chapter highlights the significance and uniqueness of the displacement dynamic as a critical determinant of engagement between peacekeepers and civilians. Displacement creates a series of conflicting and competing norms reinforcing regional identities and the politics of division which perpetuate the cycle of violence and thus further displacement. This chapter concludes by underscoring the significance of context, arguing that the violence that erupted on the streets of Dili in 2006 and which continued sporadically throughout 2007 must also be viewed in the broader historical framework of civil war, resistance and grievance.

### 4.1 Civil War, Resistance and Grievance

Timor-Leste comprises the eastern side of the island of Timor with Indonesian West Timor and the Timorese (Timor-Leste) enclave of Oecussi. Treaties between the Portuguese and Dutch signed in 1859 and 1904 established the borders allowing for Portuguese control of Oecussi for sentimental reasons as it was Portugal’s first landing site. After Indonesian independence in 1949 West Timor fell under Indonesian control with the eastern half of the island remaining Portuguese. The experience of marginalisation and exclusion is found throughout Timorese history. Following the arrival of Portuguese traders and missionaries in the fifteenth century, Timor-Leste was colonised by the Portuguese four centuries ago—albeit somewhat inconsistently and indifferently as Portuguese Timor was the furthest colony from the centre: Lisbon. The Carnation Revolution of 1974 in Portugal overthrew the fascist Salazarist regime and fuelled the impetus for decolonisation in Portugal’s colonies in Africa and the Malay archipelago, including the triggering of political organisation in Portuguese Timor on a scale unanticipated by Lisbon preoccupied as it had been by events in Guinea-Bissau, Angola and Mozambique.324 The political vacuum created by events in Lisbon resulted in the emergence of three political parties

323 Devant’s paper *Displacement in the 2006 Dili Crisis: Dynamics of an Ongoing Conflict*, offers an interesting analysis of the displacement phenomena linking it to historical patterns of displacement in Timor-Leste.

which would redefine the Timorese political landscape. In a colony that had no tradition of open political activity, the sudden emergence of parties led to fierce competition and physical fights.\(^{325}\)

The Democratic Union of Timorese (UDT), FRETILIN (Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor) and APODETI (Popular Democratic Association of Timorese) differed vastly in ideology and support base. UDT, comprising of the Timorese-Portuguese mestizo elite class, proposed phased decolonisation rather than immediate independence. FRETILIN’s origins drew on its association with the Social Democratic Association of Timor (ASDT) party which was established on 24 May 1974, and was driven by social and economic reform and sought immediate independence. FRETILIN’s popular appeal was consolidated in the ideology of mauberism, both a greeting, ‘my brother’ and a derogatory Portuguese term to describe the poor, but which facilitated the ‘Timorisation’ of the people and the authentication of the rural villager, not of traditional rulers.’\(^{326}\)

The origins of support for APODETI are less clear but it advocated integration with Indonesia and in doing so became a conduit for Indonesian subterfuge.

**The 1975 Civil War and Invasion**

In early 1975 FRETILIN and UDT formed a coalition to reconcile dual objectives for independence but by mid-1975 the coalition had broken down and a short but brutal civil war was fought and won by FRETILIN forcing tens of thousands of UDT supporters to flee across the border into West Timor.\(^{327}\) In July 1975 a law was passed in Portugal supporting Timorese self-determination and establishing a programme for decolonisation in keeping with UN policy. Diminished Portuguese involvement in the territory allowed FRETILIN to assume control between September and December but heightened Indonesian interest as well as ongoing pressure from UDT resulted in FRETILIN making a declaration of independence. On 28 November FRETILIN established the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste headed by Xavier do Amaral as President and Nicolau Lobato as Prime Minister.\(^{328}\) On December 4 three cabinet

---


\(^{326}\) Dennis Shoesmith, ‘Timor-Leste: divided leadership in a semi-presidential system,’ *Asian Survey*, 43 (2), 2003, 238-240. FRETILIN has come under heavy criticism in recent years for having abandoned mauberism in all but rhetoric.

\(^{327}\) A major factor that contributed to FRETILIN’s ability to quickly defeat UDT was that many of the Timorese troops in the colonial army supported FRETILIN. Estimates of casualties are between 1500 and 3000 with most of the losses on the side of UDT.

\(^{328}\) That day Indonesia occupied Atabae, approximately 40 km inside the Timorese border. Amaral was subsequently accused of being a traitor after he argued in 1977 that civilians should be allowed to surrender and he was replaced by Nicolau Lobato who was killed in 1978. International Crisis Group, *Resolving Timor-Leste’s Crisis*, Report no. 120, 10 October 2006, 3.
members who would reappear at the centre of the 2006 crisis—Mari Alkatiri, the economic and political affairs minister; Jose Ramos Horta, the foreign minister; and Rogerio Lobato, the minister for defence—went abroad to seek diplomatic support and buy arms.\textsuperscript{329} As the International Crisis Group report \textit{Resolving Timor-Leste's Crisis} (2006) notes, 'virtually all the key actors in the current crisis are or were once members of FRETILIN.'\textsuperscript{330}

On 7 December 1975 Indonesia invaded East Timor.\textsuperscript{331} FALINTIL (Forcas Armadas de Liberatalcao National de Timor-Leste), the armed wing of FRETILIN until its split in the 1980s, held ground for three years but retained heavy losses from 1977 onwards. By 1980 FALINTIL had been reduced from an estimated force of 27,000 to 700.\textsuperscript{332} The Indonesian invasion and the brutal twenty-four year-long occupation of Timor-Leste occurred largely with the tacit acquiescence of the international community. Without knowing that the occupation would last for almost a quarter of a century and result in the deaths of one-third of the Timorese population, in 1979 Noam Chomsky stated that:

> the people of East Timor are among the victims of the current phase of Western ideology and practice. Citizens of the Western democracies may prefer to avert their eyes, permitting their governments to make their essential contribution to the slaughter that continues as Indonesia attempts to reduce what is left of Timor and its people to submission. They also have it within their power to bring these horrifying crimes to a halt.\textsuperscript{333}

The 2005 report by the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation (CAVR), \textit{Chega! [Enough!] investigating human rights violations during Indonesian rule,} estimated that

\textsuperscript{329} ICG Report, \textit{Resolving Timor-Leste's Crisis}, 2.
\textsuperscript{330} Ibid, 3.
approximately 180,000 Timorese died during the Indonesian occupation either as a direct consequence of conflict or indirectly due to illness and hunger with an estimated 55% of the population displaced.\textsuperscript{334} Displacement, as Devant notes, was a key method of control by the Indonesians. Approximately 300,000 Timorese moved to Indonesian–controlled centres between 1978 and 1979 and a resettlement policy in the 1980s sought to remove populations from areas where the resistance was active and as a form of collective punishment, or hostage-taking of the population.\textsuperscript{335} Anticipatory displacement was also a mode of survival:\textsuperscript{336}

The full-scale Indonesian invasion of Timor-Leste on 7 December 1975 ... caused many to flee to the countryside, following those who had left earlier in anticipation of the attack. Such movements were repeated outside Dili, both in response to the actual presence of Indonesian forces and in the expectation that their arrival was imminent.

Some evacuations were spontaneous, others were organised by the Fretilin-led resistance. In a complex mixture of circumstances, many East Timorese who left their homes then found themselves caught between a fear of life under harsh Indonesian military rule and a resistance determined to keep them out of Indonesian control.\textsuperscript{337}

A secondary but no less brutal characteristic of Indonesian control was extreme gender-based violence. Timorese women were subjected to rape and forced birth control, and the dismemberment of pregnant women occurred throughout the occupation. As Franks wrote in 1996, ‘rape had now become formalised into the occupation strategy as a specific tool used by the Indonesian state to attack women, to weaken and destroy a whole community.’\textsuperscript{338} However, Timorese women played an integral role in the clandestine and guerrilla movement. Franks quotes Maria Braz in 1994 who states:

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{334} CAVR (2006), Executive Summary, 72. An estimated 84,200 died from displacement-related hunger and illness between 1974 and 1999.
\textsuperscript{336} Devant (2008), 22.
\textsuperscript{337} CAVR (2005), Chapter 7, para 3.4, 62.63.
\textsuperscript{338} Emma Franks, ‘Women and Resistance in East Timor:’The Centre, as They Say, Knows Itself by the Margins’,' \textit{Women's Studies International Forum}, 19, (1/2), 1996, 160. Franks argues that Timorese women have become eclipsed by the struggle of self-determination despite the suffering they endured and the integral role they played in the resistance movement.
\end{flushleft}
They [women] are an important element of support to the guerrillas — preparing combat rations; preparing uniforms and providing other accessories; [they have to be] the mother of the family and moral support for the guerrilla fighters; teach and prepare the new generation culturally. They have also taken up arms against the Indonesian occupation force. In the underground resistance, the woman is a better informer in the mountains, determined to get information to different outlets.339

Yet despite both the suffering and their active role in the struggle, Timorese women were marginalised, paradoxically, by the self-determination struggle itself which eclipsed the role that women experienced and undertook.340 The 1980s saw a resurgence in Timorese resistance. In 1986 FALINTIL, led by guerrilla fighter Xanana Kay Rala Gusmao,341 became the official national army of liberation following an agreement between FRETILIN and UDT to unite under the umbrella of the National Council of Maubere Resistance (CNRM), and the clandestine, or resistance, networks began a concentrated campaign of subversion and support.342 In October 1989 students began to demonstrate openly culminating in the November 1991 Santa Cruz massacre by Indonesian forces.343 The killing of 271 and injuring of 362 people ‘both cemented the national unity basis of the national resistance and hastened the rise of the civilian clandestine movement.’344

1999 and the Act of Popular Consultation

In 1996 Indonesian President Suharto ruled out any compromise over East Timor’s political status,345 refusing to grant the province special political status (dearah istimewa).346 However, a year later, the Asian financial crisis in 1997 created considerable domestic insecurity amongst the

339 Ibid., 162.
340 Ibid., 162.
341 Gusmao was captured by the Indonesians in 1992.
342 Franks, 166.
343 Video footage of the massacre was captured by Max Stahl and smuggled out of East Timor. The footage contributed toswaying public opinion, especially Australian, in favour of supporting East Timorese self-determination.
Indonesian population, and the emboldened student-led democracy movement weakened the Suharto regime sufficiently to force his resignation in 1998. His successor, President BJ Habibie, was more malleable, having ‘expressed the view that a new form of autonomy should be found for the troublesome province of East Timor.’ In December 1998, Australian Prime Minister John Howard wrote to Habibie advising that a new status for East Timor should be negotiated along the lines of the Matignon Accord that had resolved the future status of New Caledonia. Reliant on international goodwill and ongoing support from the International Monetary Fund, Habibie agreed under considerable pressure to international demands to hold a referendum to determine East Timor’s future. Almost a quarter of a century after occupation, the tripartite May Agreements were signed by the United Nations, Portugal and Indonesia in 1999, establishing the unarmed United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNAMET) to oversee the act of popular consultation held on 30 August 1999 under UN Security Council Resolution 1236.

UNAMET included 280 civilian police officers tasked with advising their Indonesian counterparts. Indonesia remained, however, responsible for security in the territory rendering the international policing contingent virtually impotent in the face of violence against the Timorese population orchestrated by Indonesian-sponsored militias.

In a climate of increased intimidation and violence, 98.6% of the population registered to vote and on 12 August 1999 78.5% voted in favour of independence, rejecting special autonomy within Indonesia. Prior to the ballot, Indonesian-sponsored local pro-autonomy militias were formed with the aim of intimidation and outright violence—supported and perpetrated by the Indonesian military—if the result should favour independence. The Indonesian military and local militias conducted a three week campaign in September called Operation Clean Sweep with the

349 Ibid.
killing of hundreds, possibly thousands, mass displacement, and the destruction 70% of the physical infrastructure (in Dili upwards 95% of the infrastructure was destroyed). The CAVR report states that following the ballot, Dili became 'the crucible of post-ballot violence and destruction.' An estimated 250,000-280,000 people were displaced or forcibly removed to West Timor. Following the clear result of the referendum and the post-ballot violence, UNAMET II was established and on 12 September Indonesia acknowledge its inability to manage the situation in East Timor and accepted the immediate admission of a UN-sanctioned international force.

**INTERFET**

On 20 September 1999 the International Force in East Timor (INTERFET) a multinational force led by Australia, was deployed to quell the violence. As stated in the Introduction, this study does not undertake an in-depth analysis of civil-military relations during the INTERFET period concentrating rather on the 2006 deployment which has not received a similar level of analysis and which differed greatly in the degree of popular support. However, it is important to note in the context of the 2006 deployment, the shift in peacekeeping that INTERFET represented and high-level of popular legitimacy that INTERFET held and which was squandered by the 2006 intervention.

INTERFET marked a significant shift in peacekeeping from military intervention to humanitarian intervention in contrast, for example, to the earlier UN missions in Rwanda and Somalia. The intervention was strongly couched in the emerging discourse of humanitarianism

---


353 CAVR (2005), Chapter 3, para 3.6, 421.

354 CAVR (2005), Chapter 7, para 3.6, 423, 489. By the end of 1999, roughly 125,000 had been repatriated.


357 The Indonesian military and police draw-down was accomplished by the end of October.

358 For critiques of INTERFET as a humanitarian intervention see Daniel Byman and Taylor Seybolt, 'Humanitarian Intervention and Communal Civil Wars: Problems and Alternative Approaches,' *Security Studies*, 13 (1), Autumn 2003, 33-78;
Timor-Leste: From Crisis to Disquiet

illustrating what UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan described as a ‘developing international norm in favour of intervention to protect civilians.’ INTERFET’s mandate revealed the shift to balancing peace enforcement with humanitarian objectives outlining its role as one of ‘restoring peace and security in East Timor, protecting and supporting UNAMET in carrying out its tasks and, within force capabilities, facilitating humanitarian assistance operations.’ Then Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer was explicit in his references to INTERFET’s humanitarian objectives stating that the ‘considerations that drove Australia to respond as it did to the post-election violence were essentially humanitarian’ and that the ‘humanitarian nature of our actions’ were ‘self-evident.’ One of the key differences between INTERFET and peacekeeping missions of the 1990s which were restricted in both mandate and military capabilities—for example Rwanda—was, as Philpott contends, INTERFET’s ability to match the humanitarian aim of bringing violence against the East Timorese to an end with the military means to achieve that goal. Furthermore, as Pureza notes, INTERFET ‘constituted a new step in the international community’s new tasks in post-conflict social reconstruction, rather than just a traditional peacekeeping or peace-enforcement operation.’ In this respect, INTERFET was significantly broader in mandate than the subsequent 2006 deployment which had a narrower peace enforcement mandate. Moreover, INTERFET holds particular significance to the Australian-led RAMSI intervention. INTERFET represented a ‘coalition of the willing’ which Australia was to replicate in the RAMSI intervention.

INTERFET was regarded widely as a success. Thakur argues that this was because, unlike missions elsewhere, INTERFET adhered to the principles later outlined in the Brahimi Report in 2000 in which UN operations, while striving to remain neutral, should subordinate the longstanding principle of neutrality between belligerents in favour of adherence to the principles

362 Philpott, ‘East Timor’s Double Life: Smells Like Westphalian Spirit,’ 144.
of the [UN] Charter and to the objectives of [the] mandate.\footnote{Ramesh Thakur, 'Cambodia, East Timor and the Brahimi Report,' \textit{International Peacekeeping}, 8 (3), Autumn 2001, 121.} The perception amongst the East Timorese population that INTERFET were ‘liberators’ contributed greatly to the ongoing popular support the mission received. Moreover, despite INTERFET’s mandate to ensure the disarmament and cantonment of FALINTIL, INTERFET’s primary concern was with disarming the Indonesian-sponsored militia.\footnote{Mark Knight and Alpaslan Ozerdem, ‘Guns, Camps and Cash: Disarmament, Demobilization and Reinsertion of Former Combatants in Transitions from War to Peace,’ \textit{Journal of Peace Research}, 41, (4), 2004, 506. FALINTIL were permitted to keep their weapons inside the cantonment areas.} Indeed, despite several tense incidents that occurred when FALINTIL personnel left the cantonment areas with their weapons,\footnote{Confidential interview, Sydney, Australia, 12 March 2006.} FALINTIL were allowed to keep their weapons during cantonment and therefore were not disarmed.\footnote{Knight and Ozerdem, ‘Guns, Camps and Cash,’ 506.} This sent a strong message to the population that INTERFET had drawn a clear distinction between the Indonesian forces and militias and the Timorese population, including the guerrilla army. Significantly, it was also not until the arrival of Sergio Vieira de Mello as head of the United Nations Transitional Administration of East Timor (UNTAET) in November 1999, that INTERFET’s rules of engagement were strengthened in the face of ongoing militia provocation and INTERFET was permitted to use lethal force if attacked.\footnote{\textit{Philpott, 'East Timor’s Double Life,'} 145.} For this reason, Thakur suggests, INTERFET ‘retained the people’s trust and confidence for its duration.’\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}} An external report similarly states that the ‘impressive achievement of the multi-national force in rapidly bringing about peace and stability created a platform for the establishment in October 1999 of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor.’\footnote{Ana Cutter et al, ‘Timor-Leste Conflict Assessment,’ The Center for International Conflict Resolution, Columbia University, and Fo Liman Ba Malu–Hakat Ba Oin, 31 July 2004, 12.} Ian Martin, the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) for the East Timor Popular Consultation and head of the UN Mission in East Timor (UNAMET) in 1999, and Mayer-Rieckh provide a more realistic assessment of INTERFET. Martin and Mayer-Rieckh state that INTERFET ‘was ultimately successful in restoring security for the East Timorese,’ succeeding in ‘avoiding lethal clashes with Indonesian troops, but it was unable to prevent some killings and prevent a final burst of property destruction by the withdrawing Indonesians and their militia allies.’\footnote{Ian Martin and Alexander Mayer-Reich, ‘The United Nations and East Timor: From Self-Determination to State-Building,’ \textit{International Peacekeeping}, 12 (1), 125-145, Spring 2005, 132.} Chomsky has further criticised INTERFET (and UNTAET) for its lack of action in preserving forensic evidence following the
militia violence. Indeed, the experience of INTERFET raises critical questions regarding the role of military forces in filling the public security gap and undertaking law and order functions which militaries are not necessarily equipped to do so. Moreover, the INTERFET experience was reflected in significant shifts in thinking regarding rules of engagement and civil protection. The UN Guidelines for the Development of Rules of Engagement (ROE) for UN Peacekeeping Operations in 2001 authorised the use of force ‘up to, and including deadly force, to defend any civilian person who is in need of protection against a hostile act or hostile intent, when competent local authorities are not in a position to render immediate assistance.’

As stated earlier, the triumphalism associated INTERFET overshadowed the intervention’s usefulness as a critical opportunity for lessons learned, particularly in the area of civil-military relations. This perhaps explains why the development of civil-military relations within the Australian defence establishment has not been prioritised in keeping with international thinking. This also resulted in the 2006 peacekeepers being under-prepared for the security environment that they faced. Attempts to redress this occurred in December 2006, six months after the initial deployment, when the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) sent a civil-military advisor to Timor-Leste as part of the agency’s East Timor Development Review to discuss civil-military coordination issues but not relations between the military and the civilian population.

As Jakobsen noted in relation to Kosovo, although INTERFET ‘faced a collapsed security triad...it did not have to contend with ethnic hatred and lack of cooperation and outright opposition from the parties.’ In 2006 the intervention forces faced a breakdown of the security

---


sector, a weakened and effective judiciary and penal system, communal violence with strong so-called ‘ethnic’ overtones, and strong opposition from the ruling political party and its followers. The legitimacy and popular support INTERFET had achieved and maintained throughout its deployment was quickly squandered following the initial deployment in May 2006 as the peacekeepers sought to navigate the complex and fluid security environment. As a Australian Strategic Policy Institute report stated, 'notwithstanding the gratitude of many East Timorese for our leadership of INTERFET...Australia should not take their goodwill for granted.'

UNTAET and the path to self-determination

On 25 October 1999 the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) was established under UN Security Council Resolution 1272. UNTAET had a sweeping mandate but faced serious challenges: the mandate provided neither guidance as to how to achieve independent statehood nor a political timetable for independence, and, crucially, the nature of Timorese participation was not clearly defined. The marginalisation of the Timorese during these critical years of nation and state-building has been documented by a vocal group of dissenters who argue that the UN’s international administration of East Timor failed to ensure the popular participation of the Timorese and which, inadvertently, reinforced authoritarian structures.

In August 2001 Constituent Assembly Elections were held and in her analysis of the election process, Hohe argues that the ‘Western-oriented electoral exercise has resulted in the indigenous values of unitary and hierarchical political authority reinforcing a one-party state. This should question electoral assistance as the ultimate way of creating popular participation

and democratization. A comprehensive review of UNTAET stated that: 'One oft-cited criticism of the planning process for East Timor was that Kosovo was used as a blueprint, and that the specific context and the wishes of the East Timorese were neglected as a result. By contrast, the UN's involvement in East Timor has been heralded as a success amongst the international community of state-builders. Foot argued that:

East Timor stands as a notable, relative, UN success but the circumstances were special: unanimous UN Security Council authorization of the operation, a clear objective and exit strategy, and peace-keeping forces ready at hand to play a pacifying role under robust rules of engagement.

On 20 May 2002 East Timor was officially renamed Timor-Leste and became an independent state under the FRETILIN Government led by Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri with Xanana Gusmao as President (a position which became little more than that of a figure-head, much to Gusmao's frustration). In 2003 the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative Kamalesh Sharma told the Security Council that Timor-Leste had made 'remarkable gains' and that progress had especially been remarkable in the areas of governance, open leadership, enactment of legislation, rehabilitation of infrastructure, responsible development planning and budgetary discipline, the country's regional integration, and, most importantly, commitment to democratic norms and personal freedoms. Sharma did note, however, that there were still areas of concern as the mission--UNMISET--looked towards the end of its mandate on 20 May 2004, such as the presence of criminal elements, an inexperienced police force, and a limited defence force.

It is clearly apparent, however, that democracy and open government did not exist to the degree that Sharma purported. The FRETILIN party's perception of its moral authority and right to govern marginalised opposition and in turn, the populace, can be directly linked to the crisis of...
Old political conflicts interacted with new tensions appearing after Independence. Mounting frustration over political exclusion combined with the frustrations over limited economic opportunity. Decades of resistance also created a high expectation in the Timorese that they would be involved in the process of nation-building. Indeed, the expectation of participation appeared to be at the heart of the compact between the people and the new Government and state. Four years later, there was strongly held perception that the governing FRETILIN party used its absolute majority in Parliament to centralise power and limit that participation. The choice of Portuguese as the language of Government further contributed to the sense of exclusion, particularly among youth educated in Indonesian.

4.2 The Crisis of April and May 2006

The International Crisis Group labelled the events of April and May 2006 the worst crisis in Timor-Leste's short history. Of the number of international reports and inquiries which sought to explain the events of 2006, the most significant of which was the Independent Special Commission of Inquiry for Timor-Leste which was:

tasked with establishing the facts and circumstances relevant to the violent incidents that took place in the country on 28 and 29 April, and on 23, 24 and 25 May. The mandate of the Commission includes clarifying the responsibility for the events, and recommending measures to ensure the accountability for crimes and serious human rights violations allegedly committed during the period.

The dismissal of approximately 600 soldiers from Timor-Leste's national army, the Falintil-Forcas Defesa Timor-Leste (F-FDTL), by Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri in March 2006 is viewed

---

387 COI, 19.
as the catalyst for the ensuing violence. The grievances of the ‘591 Petitioners’ led by Lieutenant Gastao Salsinha, ranged from unfair dismissals to discrimination and perceived prejudices against westerners by senior ranking officers from the east within the F-FDTL. Although the general ranks comprise fairly equally of westerners and easterners (with 56% from the east), approximately 85% of officers are from the east. Following the 2006 crisis, the proportion of westerners in F-FDTL dropped from 65% to 28%.

These events must be considered within the broader context of the long-standing political contest between the principal actors--Alkatiri, then Minister of the Interior, Rogerio Lobato, President Xanana Gusmao, and F-FDTL Commander Brigadier General Taur Matan Ruak--as well as competition and marginalisation between western (loromona) and eastern (lorosae) soldiers within F-FDTL and tensions between the domestic security forces, the F-FDTL, and the National Police of Timor-Leste (PNTL) all of which pre-dated the crisis of 2006. For instance, the origins of F-FDTL were a source of tension. The Timor-Leste Defence Force (FDTL) was created in February 2001 and renamed Falintil-FDTL (F-FDTL) after independence in 2002. Only 650 of the 1500 soldiers recruited were ex-guerrilla fighters. This created a sense of discrimination amongst FALINTIL veterans exacerbating their sense of marginalisation in a society where there were little or no employment opportunities, despite the efforts of cursory disarmament and reintegration programs, such as the FALINTIL Reinsertion Assistance Program. The east-west divisions in F-FDTL provided the basis for the emergence of regionally-oriented identity politics as a key dynamic within the crisis. The F-FDTL was divided into two battalions with Battalion I located in the east, initially in Los Palos from 2002-2006 and, following relocation, subsequently in Baucau with Battalion II, comprising of mostly new recruits, was based at Metinaro, the army training camp east of Dili. An internal UN report noted that:

---

391 The Petitioners have since split into three groups.
393 PNTL was created in 2001 with the UN retaining executive authority over policing until May 2004. The composition of PNTL, with 370 of the initial 2000 recruits having served with the Indonesian police (POLRI), has contributed to the divisions between the security forces. COI Report, 57.
394 For an overview of the origins of F-FDTL and the policy failures vis a vis reform of the security sector and the role of veterans, see Security, Peacebuilding and Reconciliation. Priorities and Proposed Sector Investment Program, Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, April 2006. See also Rees, Under Pressure, 2004.
395 ICG Report, Resolving Timor-Leste’s Crisis, 7.
There was widespread dissatisfaction in the central and western areas over the ethnic composition of the First Battalion, which was dominated by former combatants from the three eastern districts (where most of the fighting occurred and where FALINTIL was strongest).  

Furthermore, the review of UNTAET in 2003 had deemed that FALINTIL High Command’s control over F-FDTL recruitment and eligibility of DDR assistance had ‘created resentments that lingered on after independence.’ The defence force had long been identified as a potentially destabilising force in independence Timor-Leste. The King’s College London report, an Independent Study on Security Force Options and Security Sector Reform for East Timor, (2000) which examined the future of Falintil highlighted potential problems associated with the defence force in one of its recommendations, stating that:

East Timorese society is marked by a culture of violence and the militarisation of civil society. A future defence force could wield enormous power that is supposed to be used against external aggression. There are many examples where military forces can also be misused to subvert the political process and present an internal threat to the government and the citizens of the state.

A series of incidents between 2003 and 2005 further cemented the grievances of westerners as well as broader dissatisfaction within the force. In December 2003 approximately 42 soldiers (mostly westerners and including Vicente da Conceicao alias Railos, a key figure in the 2006 crisis) were discharged. In February 2005 further complaints regarding discrimination were presented to the President. The reduced circumstances of F-FDTL were in stark contrast to the

---

399 Railos, a former FALINTIL fighter, was from Liquica, in the west, and made the claim on Australian ABC’s Four Corners that Alkatiri had authorised the distribution of arms to civilians creating a hit squad to target FRETILIN opponents. Liz Jackson, ‘Claims E. Timor’s PM recruited secret security force,’ Lateline, 8 June 2006, http://www.abc.net.au/lateline/content/2006/sl65894l.htm.
400 ICG Report, Resolving Timor-Leste’s Crisis, 6. The soldiers subsequently complained of unfair dismissals, long travel distances (from their homes in the west which often resulted in soldiers being reprimanded for not returning on time from leave) and poor communications. A subsequent presidential commission report identified critical problems in the F-FDTL, including perceived bias in promotions, but the government did not act on the recommendations and discontent festered. Ibid, 6.
401 In September 2005 a US defence logistics support contract was cut and the army struggled to maintain the barracks and rations. ICG Report, Resolving Timor-Leste’s Crisis, 6.
increasing power of the PNTL. Minister of the Interior, Rogerio Lobato, with the tacit acceptance of Alkatiri, sought to create his own personal security force, better funded and equipped than F-FDTL, and comprising mostly of westerners. As a consequence, PNTL, an already weak albeit well-armed and politically-supported institution, became heavily politicized. A 2006 Human Rights Watch Report also documented widespread human rights violations by PNTL, an additional factor that heightened public distrust of the force.

On 23 March 2006 Xanana Gusmao gave a speech which is widely believed to have contributed indelibly to the crisis. Gusmao challenged the leadership and authority of Brigadier General Taur Matan Ruak (who was out of the country until 29 April) stating that the dismissals were unfair and indicating serious institutional issues within F-FDTL. But most significantly, Gusmao legitimised the concerns of westerners and suggested that if the internal problems of F-FDTL were not resolved, it would appear that F-FDTL was just for easterners who believed that only they had fought the war, and all the others, ‘from Manatuto to Oecussi’ were ‘militia’s children.’ This statement, perhaps taken out of context, solidified the east-west rift and provoked attacks on easterners. By 27 March, seventeen houses belonging to easterners in Dili had been burnt and easterners began to flee the capital. Statements by Alkatiri during this period that only FRETILIN could ensure stability raised suspicions that FRETILIN had provoked the rioting for political means and the violence that continued through 2006 and 2007 further entrenched this belief.

On 24 April 2006 demonstrations by the ‘591 petitioners’ led by Salsinha began outside the Palacio do Governo in Dili and erupted into an anti-government protest spreading throughout the capital, fuelled by groups of ‘spoilers,’ youths belonging to particular ‘gangs’ or ‘martial arts’ groups. Attempts by the petitioners themselves to control the crowd were futile and
PNTL were on the whole conspicuously absent. On 28 April, Alkatiri ordered the Acting Chief of F-FDTL, Colonel Lere, to deploy the army onto the streets to restore order. Regarded as ‘one of the most controversial decisions of the crisis’ the action was taken without consultation with the President or declaring a state of emergency, and was therefore probably unconstitutional. The deployment of the F-FDTL exacerbated tensions and enflamed the east-west dynamic. The F-FDTL had little experience controlling civil disturbances and under the command of Colonel Lere (a target of the petitioners’ complaints) was viewed as being pro-easterners. On 28 April five civilians were killed and over 100 houses burnt in the Dili neighbourhoods of Taci Tolu and Rai Kotu spreading panic and rumour across the city. As a village elder in an ‘eastern’ neighbourhood of Dili said: ‘This is worse than ’99...then you knew who the enemy is. Now it’s your neighbour’. Rumours of F-FDTL massacres, later established to be unfounded, spread across Dili. Shooting continued over the next twenty-four hours and joint F-FDTL Military Police and PNTL patrols were conducted throughout Dili from 30 April to 3 May. On 4 May F-FDTL returned to their bases in Metinaro and Taci Tolu, on the east and west outskirts of Dili respectively.

A key figure in the crisis was to emerge during this period. On 3 May, Major Alfredo Alves Reinado, the Commander of the Military Police, abandoned his post in protest over the killing of civilians. Reinado quickly became a cult figure with a strong popular support base amongst the youth. The legend of Reinado was assisted by the distribution of DVDs sold on street corners for US$1 which spread the image of Reinado as a defender of the people. For

---

409 The special response unit, UIR, created by Lobato, deployed only one squad. ICG Report, Resolving Timor-Leste’s Crisis, 9. Allegations that only western PNTL officers abandoned their posts was found to be unsubstantiated by the Report of the United Nations Independent Special Commission of Inquiry for Timor-Leste, 25. Early in the afternoon of 28 April, Lobato arrived at the PNTL Headquarters wearing a flak jacket and shouting ‘kill them all.’ PNTL records show that a F2000 machine gun and 2000 rounds of ammunition were signed over to Lobato. COI Report, 26.

410 ICG Report, Resolving Timor-Leste’s Crisis, 9; COI Report, 25. It is unclear as to whether Alkatiri authorised the use of force against the petitioners, ibid, 27.

411 ICG Report, Resolving Timor-Leste’s Crisis, 9.

412 This number is disputed with some factions alleging up to 60 civilians were killed.

413 Confidential interview with village elder, Dili, Timor-Leste, 16 August 2006.

414 COI Report, 28.

415 ICG Report, Resolving Timor-Leste’s Crisis, 9; COI Report, 29. Alfredo’s Group comprised initially of 17 MPs and 4 members of the UIR plus arms and ammunition. The ranks of Alfredo’s Group grew with the notable defection of F-FDTL Major Agusto Tara de Araujo (‘Major Tara’), also from the west, regular F-FDTL soldiers, and members of the URP PNTL unit. Reinado claimed loyalty to Gusmao and rumours have abounded about Gusmao’s influence over Reinado’s actions, particularly as a result of dinner held at Gusmao’s house where Reinado was present (Confidential interview, Dili, Timor-Leste, 12 August 2006.) The COI Report has found that there was no evidence Reinado’s actions were authorised by the President and that contact between the two men resulted from Gusmao’s attempt to contain and control Reinado. COI Report, 30. Reinado’s open allegiance to Gusmao compounded the rift between Gusmao and Taur Matan Ruak.
example, a DVD released in late 2007 portrayed two messages: it first showed Reinado and his men establishing an armed perimeter around the UNPOL building in Same, being shown through the UNPOL office by the Malaysian police commander, followed by Reinado, the man of the people, attending a cock-fight to a soundtrack of nationalistic Timorese music.

Although Reinado met with the petitioners in Gleno, the main town of the Ermera District, shortly afterwards, the two groups did not merge. On 8 May, the so-called Ten District Movement, led by Major Tara, gathered in Gleno, with a petition which claimed that the east-west issue had been fanned for political purposes and criticising the government for failing to detain those responsible for the deaths on 28 April, and calling for the President to use his constitutional powers to disarm those carrying guns. The demonstration resulted in further violence and one UIR officer died. On 23 May, a clash between Reinado’s group and F-FDTL took place in Fatu Ahi, a few hours outside Dili, killing one F-FDTL soldier and two of Reinado’s men. On 24-25 May, petitioners, armed civilians from Rai Los’s group, and police officers from Liquica District (west of Dili), attacked F-FDTL in the hills above Taci Tolu and Tibar (on the western outskirts of Dili) with an estimated nine dead. Late on 24 May Taur Matan Ruak’s house was attacked by pro-Lobato (western) police led by the deputy police commander for Dili, Abilio Mesquita alias Mausoko, who claimed in August that Gusmao had ordered the attack. Tensions between the two national security forces escalated with rumours of an F-FDTL attack on PNTL and vice versa. F-FDTL armed over 200 civilians on 24-25 May and static positions were taken up around Dili.

On 25 May the situation took a dramatic and fatal turn. Several shootouts took place in Dili between F-FDTL and their armed civilian supporters, and PNTL, culminating in an F-FDTL assault on PNTL Headquarters. Despite Taur Matan Ruak negotiating the release of approximately 85 PNTL officers so the officers could be escorted to the United Nations Office in

---

416 ICG Report, *Resolving Timor-Leste’s Crisis*, 10; COI Report, 30. The demonstration was seen as an anti-government protest in the ten western districts which may have fuelled perceptions of a FRETILIN-Easterners union. At the second FRETILIN national congress on 17 May the petitioner issue was viewed as outright political opposition against FRETILIN, the Maputo Group within FRETILIN (FRETILIN members who were exiled in Mozambique), and Alkatiri. See ICG Report *Resolving Timor-Leste’s Crisis*, 11. This perception was compounded by the number of IDP camps which supported FRETILIN.


418 Ibid. Taur Matan Ruak had allegedly met with Alkatiri that day demanding that Alkatiri authorised either the arming of a reserve unit (belonging to former FALINTIL commander L-7, or Elle Sete, who had refused cantonment in 1999), or requested international assistance. Alkatiri apparently agreed to distribute arms to L-7 although both Taur Matan Ruak and Alkatiri deny that Alkatiri was involved in the decision. A formal request for assistance was also reluctantly signed by Alkatiri and sent to Portugal, Australia, Malaysia and the New Zealand. Ibid.
Timor-Leste: From Crisis to Disquiet

Timor-Leste (UNOTIL) building by UN Police (UNPOL), F-FDTL soldiers opened fire killing ten and injuring over thirty unarmed PNTL officers as they left the HQ. As the COI report describes:

Colonel Reis [the UN Chief Military Training Adviser] led the PNTL officers on foot from their headquarters towards the Ministry of Justice intersection. He was carrying the United Nations flag... A feeble attempt [by the PNTL officers] at singing the national anthem quickly died... When most of the policemen had walked through the intersection, one F-FDTL soldier appeared to be agitated and searching for someone among the police officers. The F-FDTL soldiers say that one of the policemen had made a rude hand gesture at them. Mr Malik [UNPOL Senior Adviser] attempted to speak with the agitated soldier, but the soldier sidestepped him and fired into the policemen. There was gunfire then from three corners of the intersection. The soldiers fired at PNTL officers already on the ground.419

Against the backdrop of continued violence throughout the city, the forward deployment of one hundred troops of a 1,300-strong Australian force arrived and Gusmao announced he was assuming control of security—on unclear constitutional grounds.420 The battle for political control that had underscored the events of April and May had surfaced. On 6 June a demonstration organised by Major Tara took place outside the Palacio do Governo calling for Alkatiri’s resignation. On 19 June an arrest warrant was issued for Lobato (who Gusmao had demanded be sacked as Minister of the Interior but who was appointed vice-president of FRETILIN)421 followed by Gusmao demanding Alkatiri resign or face dismissal because of his alleged involvement in the arming of civilians.422 On 22 June Gusmao made a second emotive speech in which he publicly denounced FRETILIN with a litany of examples of betrayal and dishonesty by FRETILIN’s leadership and the party’s abandonment of the ideology of mauberism and by extension, the Timorese people. Gusmao stated:

419 COI Report, 36-37. For more than a year afterwards, flowers and faded blood stains marked the site of the 25 May killings. A memorial has now been erected.
420 ICG Report, Resolving Timor-Leste’s Crisis, 12.
421 Lobato was subsequently arrested and charged in 2007 but health concerns allowed him to seek medical treatment in Malaysia where he remained.
The leadership of FRETILIN showed that the tears shed by the people are not their concern, are not their problem; even if the people die, it is not their problem. Their major concern is to stay in Government. The leadership of FRETILIN, due to their arrogance, only accuses other people and will not recognise that they also make mistakes. In their view, they made no mistakes because what they do has a single purpose—to rule. They think only of war to rule, because ruling gives them everything—money, good houses abroad, businesses that generate money for them and for their Party.423

Gusmao claimed that the FRETILIN government had violated the Constitution and was therefore illegitimate. Gusmao gave the following ultimatum:

Either you hold your comrade Mari [Alkatiri] responsible for this major crisis and for endangering the survival of our democratic Rule of Law, or I will hand in a letter tomorrow to inform the National Parliament of my resignation as President of the Republic, because I am ashamed of what the State is doing to its people, and I do not have the courage to face them.424

On 27 June Alkatiri resigned and two weeks later Jose Ramos Horta became interim Prime Minister although FRETILIN remained the dominant political party in the revamped caretaker administration.425 On 25-August the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) was established. Detained on 26 July, Reinado and more than fifty other prisoners walked out of Becora Prison in Dili. Reinado headed for the hills around Same and Aileu in the west and, despite attempts by the Australian SAS to capture him in March 2007, he evaded the international security forces and conducted an anti-government campaign with extensive popular support until his death on 11 February 2008 during a shootout at President Ramos-Horta’s residence.

423 Message by H.E. the President of the Republic, Xanana Kay Rala Gusmao, 22 June 2006, 10. Gusmao’s speech demonstrated the depth of bitterness and acrimony that existed between the political actors.
424 Ibid, 16.
425 This created significant problems. Communication between the FRETILIN government and the Office of the Prime Minister was poor at best and on several instances the FRETILIN-controlled government obstructed initiatives by Ramos Horta. This was particularly evident during attempts to resolve the IDP crisis and led to a lack of coherent policy on behalf of the government and considerable confusion and frustration amongst the IDPs.

The East-West Divide

The emergence of the east-west (lorosae-loromonu) divide has become subject of intense debate. Prior to the 2006 crisis, there is little evidence that such a division (as distinct from regional differences) existed between easterners and westerners. What is clear is that in 2006 it became a platform for political manipulation and agitation. The east-west division appealed to many disenfranchised youth and provided a platform for frustrations borne out of unemployment and the absence of opportunity. The following phrase, graffiti scrawled on a bathroom wall, epitomises this feeling:

Loromonu se mate hamlah. Lorosae se oho malun mate mohu.
(Loromonu die hungry. Lorosae die killing each other.)

The rapid emergence of regional identity as a key motivator for violence has a number of explanations. As a young Timorese youth worker observed, 'the east-west conflict was assisted by the lack of Timorese national identity and national unity,' stating that:

Lorosae and loromonu youths with little to look forward to bought into the east-west conflict. Traumatised and disenfranchised youth were easily manipulated by political figures who viewed the youth as a tool for unrest and instability.

427 Graffiti, Beach Road, Dili, Timor-Leste, 2006.
The notion of a pan-Timorese identity is based more on the ideal myth of a newly-independent nation (after hundreds of years of occupation) than a cultural or social reality. The divisive techniques used by both the Portuguese (for example, the Portuguese distinguished between the east and west by using the pejorative terms 'firaku' for east and 'kaladi' for west) and the Indonesians (the stationing of Battalion 744 in the West and 745 in the East, for example) were an attempt to 'divide and conquer.' This was compounded by perceptions that, during the Indonesian occupation, the West was more pro-integration and the East fought harder for independence. Hence in 2006, when regional distinctions were drawn prior to the crisis, many loromonu regarded F-FDTL as pro-lorosae due to the allegations of discrimination by the petitioners and many IDPs (predominantly easterners) chose to seek protection at Metinaro and Taci Tolu, the F-FDTL barracks on the eastern and western outskirts of Dili respectively. The COI report states:

The Commission has heard opposing views on the origin and longevity of the cleavage [between East and West]. On the one hand it is suggested that it is a totally new phenomenon, as evinced by the total absence of the issue in the thousands of testimonies collected by the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation. On the other, the Commission has been told that it is a long-dormant issue dating from the Portuguese era.

As a former analyst with the United Nations (UNMIT) mission observed, there were two distinct conflicts which occurred, albeit at times concurrently, and with the same political origins and with the same key actors and manipulators. The first conflict was drawn along east-west lines and the second conflict was between martial arts and ritual arts gangs. Each conflict had shades of the other. Gang involvement in the April-May crisis was not immediate, but as the east-west issue began to weaken, ‘political agitators began to recruit martial arts and ritual arts gangs.’ The face and nature of the violence reflected the involvement of ‘spoilers’, partly criminal in nature and partly manipulated by political elites. Many of the martial arts and ritual

---


429 Ibid.


431 Confidential interview with UNMIT analyst, Dili, Timor-Leste, 3 June 2007.

432 Ibid.

433 Ibid.
arts gangs had strong political affiliations (albeit sometimes shifting due to economic persuasion), and others were part of criminal networks involved in extortion and profiteering. Comments by youth worker Jose Sousa-Santos that ‘the kids are a very buyable commodity’ support such observations. The shift in the nature of the conflict from indiscriminate and random attacks to orchestrated violence became increasingly clear in the ensuing months. A key indicator that the gang violence was orchestrated for political purposes was the re-emergence of high-velocity weapons which were strategically leaked from state armouries. Rocks, *katanas* (traditional swords), *rama ambons* (steel barbed darts often with poisonous tips) and arson were the common ‘weapons’ used by youths involved in street violence. In late 2006, youths tired of being blamed for the violence began to demonstrate throughout Dili with banners proclaiming ‘*Lao Hamutuk Ba Dame*’ translated as ‘The Road to Peace in Tetum.’ The conflict had revealed a critical dynamic: a large unemployed youth population.

The third critical issue exposed by the conflict was the question of unresolved land and property rights. Harrington argues that property grievances underlie the east-west divide stating that ‘while perceived injustice regarding land and property... can be very dangerous, it becomes even more so when merged with issues unrelated to land’. Harrington describes the mobilisation of regional identities during the crisis as a phenomenon of ‘vehiclising’ in order ‘to carry out alternative purposes not per se related to such identities.’ The issue of land and property rights subsequently became a central factor preventing IDPs from returning home. The failure of the Timor-Leste Government to address the land and property issue, which includes

---

434 For an excellent analysis of the martial arts gangs see James Scambury, with Hippolito Da Gama and Joao Barreto, *A survey of gangs and youth groups in Dili, Timor-Leste*, (Canberra: AusAID), 16 September 2006. For example, KORK with a membership of approximately 10,000, and its origins in the clandestine movement, was officially affiliated with FRETILIN. PSHT, which originated in Indonesia, was allegedly linked to the Democratic Party (PD). See also Dennis Shoesmith, *Timor-Leste: Interpreting violence in a post-conflict state,* in Shoesmith (ed.), *The crisis in Timor-Leste: Understanding the past, imagining the future,* (Darwin: NT: Charles Darwin University Press, 2007), 23-33.


437 Personal observation, November-December, 2006, Dili. *Dame*, meaning peace in Tetum, is drawn from the Bahasa Indonesian concept of *damai* which translates as harmony and reflects the Javanese notion of harmony being the balance between human beings and nature. Violence therefore disrupts harmony.

438 According to Richard Curtin, adviser and author of the *National Youth Policy 2006* and ‘Viewing Young People as Assets in the Development Process: key findings of a national survey in Timor-Leste,’ 17 March 2005, the youth make up one quarter of Timor-Leste’s population which is estimated at 923,000.


440 Ibid, 18; Devant, 30.
claims dating back to the Portuguese era, the period of Indonesian occupation, 1999 and subsequently 2006, has contributed to the marginalisation of easterners.

4.3 The International Stabilisation Force: Intervention and Unrest

On 25 May 2006 a formal letter requesting assistance from Australia was signed by Gusmao, Alkatiri and Fransisco “Lu Olo” Guterres, President of the National Parliament, to ‘assist Timor-Leste in the restoration of security, confidence and peace in Timor-Leste including through assisting in re-establishing and maintaining public order.’ The International Stabilisation Force (ISF) comprised of approximately 2500 Australian and New Zealand soldiers and 1600 Australian and New Zealand police, the Formed Police Units (FPUs) consisting of Malaysian and Pakistani police and the Portuguese National Republican Guard (GNR). From the outset, Australia sought to take a leading role in the force, refusing to have the Australian Defence Force placed under UN command and control, although the Australian Federal Police contingent subsequently did fall under UN policing authority. Australia’s refusal to be ‘rehatted’ under UN command may have been influenced by the belief that the deployment was not seen as a long-term engagement. The Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade was viewed as believing that the ‘problem’ could be ‘fixed as rapidly as it developed.’

It was widely acknowledged by Timorese and internationals alike that the arrival of the peacekeeping force had prevented the possible outbreak of a civil war. In effect, the ISF created a demilitarised zone across Dili with the PNTL nonoperational and F-FDTL cantoned. The presence of the peacekeepers demilitarised the conflicts to a significant degree through the seizure of weapons caches and the forcing of guns off the streets—albeit concealed and retained for later use. At the beginning of June, then Commander of the ISF, Brigadier Mick Slater was quoted as saying:

---

442 Confidential interview, Canberra, Australia, 12 June 2007.
443 Informal interviews with various Timorese and international sources, Dili, Timor-Leste, July-December 2006.
Timor-Leste: From Crisis to Disquiet

Things are going very well. We have got just over 2000 troops on the ground and they are out there providing security, enabling people to start laughing and having a bit of a relax for the first time in several days.444

The ISF was limited, however, in its ability to completely halt the inter-communal violence and the continued targeting of eastern neighbourhoods by western gangs, as well as inter-gang conflict over territory and control of the population.445 Although the large initial commitment of troops by Australia and New Zealand was essential to prevent the situation from escalating between the F-FDTL and PNTL, once ‘guns were off the streets’446 it was clear that the nature of the civil unrest and communal violence necessitated a predominantly police-led mission but the international police, with the exception of the GNR, were ill-equipped to deal such violence. It was clear to many that the military had been pulled off the streets too quickly.447 ISF Commander Brigadier Mick Slater acknowledged that the violence necessitated the need for the military to adopt policing-style tactics rather than acting in a purely military capacity and reiterated the need for actual police by stating that ‘what we need are police who know how to do policing activity.’448

The ISF and subsequent deployment of UNPOL faced several serious operational challenges which limited the effectiveness of the forces in containing the unrest. The Australian military and Federal Police were to draw down as the numbers of UNPOL increased however there were frequent gaps between deployments. Although the UN Security Council resolution was passed in August 2006 authorising the mission, the entire UNPOL force was not on the ground until early 2007. Both the ISF and UNPOL were ill-prepared to either understand or resolve the violence and the manner in which it was perpetrated. This again highlights the importance of context. The politically-driven violence had strong elements of clandestine and resistance tactics formed and sharpened over twenty-four years of opposition to the Indonesian occupation. With the exception of those soldiers and police who had served in East Timor

445 For an excellent discussion of militia and gang control over populations, see Marie-Joelle Zahar, ‘Protégées, Clients, Cannon Fodder: Civil-Militia Relations in Internal Conflicts,’ in Simon Chesterman (ed), Civilians In War, (Boulder, CO: Lynne Reinner, 2001), 43-66.
446 Interview with Steve Lancaster, Commander of the Australian Federal Police International Deployment Group, and former Commander of the AFP IDG contingent in Timor-Leste from May-December 2006, Canberra, Australia, 12 July.
447 Ibid and interview with Major-General (Rtd.) Michael Smith, former Deputy Force Commander of INTERFET, Canberra, Australia, 8 May 2007.
448 ‘Brigadier rules out ‘kicking arse’ in Dili,’ ABC Online, 5 June 2006.
previously and who predominantly formed the first rotation of forces,\textsuperscript{449} the Australian military and policing forces also lacked critical language skills and local knowledge. Kirsty Sword, wife of then President Xanana Gusmao, publicly denounced the Australian forces in September for their lack of local knowledge and the impact this had on their operational effectiveness stating that 'It's difficult because a lot of these forces have very little local knowledge. They are not getting into the places where people live.'\textsuperscript{450}

Moreover, the lack of coordination and cohesion between the ISF and UNPOL was compounded by forces operating under separate command and control. The Australian and New Zealand defence forces refused to be 'rehatted' under UN command and control and remained a 'green beret' force in contrast to the UN 'blue beret' force. As the Chief of F-FDTL and former commander of FALINTIL, Brigadier General Taur Matan Ruak put it, having Australian troops and UN forces under different commands had failed: 'One says to go up and one says to go down. When dealing with a conflict there should be only one commander,'\textsuperscript{451} Although UNPOL had primacy over security with the military forces providing support if and when requested, UNPOL was frequently unable to control even the most low-level violence. A former analyst with UNMIT provided the following first-hand observations:

\begin{quote}
One night in February 2007 approximately 1200 youths fought a street battle in Bairro Pite [a central neighbourhood in Dili]. UNPOL could not get it under control and despite the ISF patrolling nearby, they were not called to assist and because that request was not made by UNPOL, the ISF could not actually stop and assist.
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
That same month, 50-60 youths armed with katanas [swords] were burning tires in Vila Verde [a neighbourhood adjacent to Bairro Pite]. Two Portuguese UNPOL officers attempted to clear the road block but were stoned by the youths. Two Kiwi [New Zealand] sections were parked up the road prior to the arrival of UNPOL and were unable to intervene until the request for assistance was received. Once the request came through, the New Zealand soldiers cleared the street and pursued the offenders into the back roads. It was possible, due to the speed of their response, that
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{449} Confidential interview, Dili, Timor-Leste, 13 December 2006.
the New Zealanders did not actually wait for the request but acted as soon as it became clear that the two UNPOL officers could no longer hold their ground.\textsuperscript{452}

A second critical issue related to the differing rules of engagement (ROEs) and approaches to the use of force between the ISF, UNPOL, and the FPUs. Contrasting ROEs ensured a higher degree of risk for both civilians and peacekeepers during the joint operations. Whereas UNPOL are authorised to fire warning shots, and the GNR are equipped with 'non-lethals' such as rubber bullets, if the ISF do engage, it is with lethal force. Such divergences could lead to confusion in the field if, for example, the ISF mistook warning shots for live rounds and responded according to their ROEs.\textsuperscript{453} The differing rules of engagement were exacerbated by a failure of coordination between the international security forces.\textsuperscript{454}

A third challenge relates to the mission's mandate as a police-led operation. Although the challenges of 'policekeeping' are discussed in greater depth in \textit{Chapter Five}, it is worth making a few key observations in the context of UNPOL's operation in Timor-Leste. The period of deployment of the full UNPOL force took just under six months. This created a 'security vacuum' as a consequence of the 'deployment gap' between the arrival of the Australian military and the arrival of the policing contingents which had significant ramifications for how the Australian forces were perceived. In situations where the nature of violence is best categorised as low-level civil unrest, as was the case in Timor-Leste in 2006 and early 2007, a policing response is better suited than a military response. Moreover, Australian peacekeepers were required to respond to civil disturbance incidents in lieu of a police presence. A Timorese youth worker, Josh Trindade summed up the frustrations felt by many as they witnessed the destruction of their homes by gangs: 'You sent troops here to watch houses burn ... [but] the Australians always arrived too late...they never try and defend us.'\textsuperscript{455}

Furthermore, as a consequence of the 'deployment gap,' the ability to expediently restore law and order and bridge the 'enforcement gap'\textsuperscript{456} was significantly weakened. This resulted in perpetrators not being arrested, a situation further compounded by the weak judicial system in

\textsuperscript{452} Confidential interview with a former UNMIT analyst, Dili, Timor-Leste, 3 June 2007.
\textsuperscript{453} Ibid.
Timor-Leste which acted as a 'revolving door.' The impact of this was to dissuade victims or witnesses to crimes to make formal complaints. Herein lies a convergence between operational issues and the need to engage with the local population in order to develop contextually-specific local knowledge.

The Loss of Legitimacy

From August 2006, the peacekeepers became unwilling and unwitting participants in the east-west dynamic and the political contest between FRETILIN and the other political parties. As an Australian major framed it, the 'Australians [were] used as another political pawn.' This heavily compromised local perceptions of the forces' neutrality and impartiality. The ISF sought to offset this by taking out advertisements in a local newspaper that stated 'The ISF is Neutral' and 'We do not favour any group or political party.'

Allegations of bias on the behalf of the Australian peacekeepers towards loromonu and the Portuguese GNR towards lorosae were part of a broader political destabilising agenda seeking to discredit the ISF. In August the Australian commander of the policing contingent, Steve Lancaster, said he was 'concerned about some rumours of international police taking sides, supporting one group over another.' The 'deployment gap' that existed as a consequence of the slow deployment of UNPOL also contributed to the perception that Australian troops supported loromonu. The ICG Report notes that:

Many in Dili in 2006 faulted the international forces in their first few months on the ground for being too slow to respond to calls for help and too lacking in good intelligence to prevent attacks or identify perpetrators. The perceived slowness to respond, when most of the attacks in the

---

459 The perception of a Portuguese GNR bias towards lorosae, and by extension Alkatiri and FRETILIN, was similarly unfounded but found favour amongst those seeking to polarise and politicize the international forces. Factors such as the GNR using Baucau International Airport in the east rather than Dili International Airport in the west, and the stronger Portuguese colonial and linguistic influence in the east as opposed to the more widely spoken Bahasa Indonesian in the west loosely contributed to the perception. See ICG, Resolving Timor-Leste's Crisis, 16 for other contributing factors.
460 Confidential interview, Dili, Timor-Leste, 8 October, 2006.
461 Jerry Norton, 'International police in East Timor neutral — commander,' Reuters, Dili, 14 August 2006.
Timor-Leste: From Crisis to Disquiet

capital were led by loromonu youths, reinforced perceptions that the Australians were partial towards the latter, in line with an anti-Alkatiri stance.\textsuperscript{462}

Moreover, as the following example illustrates, the conduct of policing itself contributed to the perception of an Australian pro-loromonu bias. Responding to an attack on the Jardim IDP Camp (an ‘eastern’ camp opposite the sea port in central Dili), Australian Federal Police (AFP) officers entered the camp to question those IDPs involved in the battle and take witness statements. The attackers from the surrounding ‘western’ neighbourhoods had melted away into the back streets. The IDPs could not, however, understand why the AFP had not pursued the gangs of western youths which had attacked the camp and perceived the inaction as evidence of Australian pro-loromonu bias.\textsuperscript{463} Allegations that the Australian military had prevented wounded IDPs from leaving the camp to seek medical treatment compounded the situation.\textsuperscript{464}

In October Australian forces increasingly came under attack from gangs.\textsuperscript{465} Comments made by the Commander of the ADF, Brigadier General Mick Slater, that the ‘ADF are the biggest gang in town,’\textsuperscript{466} did little to help local perceptions. For many on the street, the allegations of bias had currency and were reinforced by a series of key incidents. In October 2006, Brigadier General Taur Matan Ruak claimed to have been mistreated twice at an Australian military checkpoint in Taci Tolu when he was asked for identification. Taur Matan Ruak accused the Australian forces of taking sides in the conflict, called for an investigation into the behaviour of Australian troops, and criticised the peacekeepers’ inability to control the violence and Australia’s refusal to operate under UN command.\textsuperscript{467} Then Commander of the ISF, Brigadier Mal Reardon, responded to the allegations by stating that the Australian troops were conducting themselves in a neutral and impartial manner and that the anti-Australian sentiment

\textsuperscript{462} ICG Resolving Timor-Leste’s Crisis, 19.
\textsuperscript{463} Personal observation and communications, Jardim IDP Camp, Dili, 1 September 2006.
\textsuperscript{464} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{466} Cited in UNMISET briefing, Dili, Timor-Leste, September 2006.
\textsuperscript{467} Anne Barker, ‘Anti-Australian sentiment felt in Dili,’ ABC AM, 28 October 2006, http://www.abc.net.au/am/content/2006/s1775713.htm. A week prior to Taur Matan Ruak’s comments, the COI report was released in which it was recommended that Taur Matan Ruak face charges for distributing weapons to civilians during the crisis (COI Report, 51). Taur Matan Ruak claimed that the COI Report had failed to put the violence of 2006 into a ‘political context.’ Breaking silence for the first time since the crisis, he alleged that the violence was politically motivated, aimed at overthrowing the FRETILIN government, dissolving parliament and establishing a government of national unity. Murdoch, ‘Australia has failed: Timor army chief.’
Timor-Leste: From Crisis to Disquiet

was ‘orchestrated’ and ‘developed specifically to target us’ [Australians]. In an interview with the Australian newspaper *Sydney Morning Herald* the same day, Taur Matan Ruak’s comments were somewhat less provocative than his earlier statement, stating that the reason he was asking for an investigation so that the ‘prestige of the Australian force can be recovered’ although he maintained his position that the Australian forces had failed because six months after their arrival, Dili still ‘looked like a cowboy city.’

The anti-Australian sentiment had clear political origins and was widely believed to be driven by FRETILIN. Resentment against Australia amongst FRETILIN was especially high as a consequence of the Timor Sea negotiations and in 2006 conspiracy theories abounded of Australian involvement in the removal of Alkatiri from office. Indeed, Australia’s quick deployment of troops in May was seen as evidence that Canberra was already looking to intervene in Timor-Leste. Major Michael ‘Mick’ Stone argued that ‘certain people tried to use us as a scapegoat. It gained some traction in small parts of the community.’ In November that year, the President of the Parliament, Francisco ‘Lu Olo’ Guterres was reported as saying that the Parliament was receiving daily complaints by Timorese civilians against Australian soldiers to which Prime Minister Ramos Horta responded by condemning the allegations as a smear campaign.

Outright anti-Australian sentiment came to the fore in March 2007 when the Australian forces were requested by the Timorese Government to capture Alfredo Reinado. The operation in Same failed to capture Reinado but heightened perceptions of Australian bias—albeit in this instance against loromonu. This demonstrated how quickly perceptions can shift in a context

---

468 Ibid.
469 Murdoch, ‘Australia has failed: Timor army chief.’ That month, the President of the Parliament, Francisco ‘Lu Olo’ Guterres called for Australian troops to be replaced by UN forces. ‘Top E Timor MP demands troops out,’ *The Australian*, 31 October 2006.
470 ICG *Resolving Timor-Leste’s Crisis*, 19.
472 Anne Barker, ‘E Timorese campaign against Aust troops,’ ABC Online, 1 November 2006. Suggestions that anti-Australian sentiment was also driven by Portuguese elements had its roots in early statements made by, for example, retired Portuguese General Alfredo Assuncao, former chief of staff of the 2000-2001 UN mission in Timor-Leste, who described Australia as ‘the main enemy of the country [Timor-Leste].’ The General claimed that ‘what interests the Australians most is oil and gas. So what better way to control these enormously rich resources than to be physically present and control the country’s political system.’ ‘East Timor’s main enemy Aust: General,’ ABC Online, 24 June 2006, http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200606/sl1670775.htm. For a discussion of Australian involvement in Timor-Leste following the crisis see Bob Lowry, *After the 2006 crisis: Australian interests in Timor-Leste*, Strategic Insights Paper, Australian Strategic Policy Institute, Canberra, November 2007.
473 Message To The Nation Regarding The Situation Of Alfredo Reinado, President of the Republic, Office of the President, Palace of the Ashes, Dili, 26 February 2007.
such as Timor-Leste where, after decades of heightened insecurity and trauma, conspiracy and rumour often shape truth. The Democratic Party (PD), which has a strong support base amongst the youth, distributed leaflets during the 2007 election campaign claiming an Australian invasion of Timor:

*When We Fight For Our Justices, You Fight For Our Oils! When We Fight For Our Future, You Destroy Our Hopes!*\(^{474}\)

It is clear that only months after their deployment, the ISF had not achieved or maintained the widespread popular support and goodwill that was the legacy of INTERFET. But it must be noted that the security environment and the complexities of the civil unrest were dramatically different from 1999. Unfortunately, as argued earlier, Australian civil-military doctrine had not developed further. The ISF intervention was therefore ill-prepared to contend with the significantly altered circumstances of Australia’s second intervention since 1999 in Timor-Leste. The lack of emphasis on engagement with the local population was compounded by the lack of local knowledge and contextually-appropriate responses to the violence. Participatory intervention, in its most basic form, necessitates engagement between the forces and the local communities and the ISF did not pursue engagement, either due to apathy, ambivalence or arrogance. This has a secondary but no less significant impact of further marginalising elements of the Timorese community from which the ISF could have drawn its support and established a centre of gravity.

### 4.3 Displacement and Insecurity

By the end of May 2006, after a month of civil unrest, an estimated thirty-seven civilians had died and an estimated 150,000, or 15% of the population, was displaced in Dili and the districts. As the ICG Report noted, ‘Dili remained highly polarised and physically segregated with makeshift camps for the displaced, most of them lorosae, dotted around the city.’\(^{475}\) Fifty-six IDP camps housed approximately 67,916 displaced people and a further 78,431 IDPs had fled to

\(^{474}\) See Appendix 1: Anti-Australian leaflet produced by the Democratic Party (PD) during the 2007 elections. PD was opposed to the ISF being utilised to capture Alfredo Reinado, Timor-Leste, 2007.

\(^{475}\) Ibid.
the districts. Of those that sought shelter, approximately 30% had had their homes destroyed or looted and rendered uninhabitable. The issue of land and property rights emerged as a central issue that, comparable to the issue of security, prevented the return and reintegration of IDPs. The Ministry of Public Works and the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) of the Ministry of Interior found that 2,000 houses had been burnt or destroyed during the crisis, and it was estimated that an additional 100-200 had been burnt or damaged subsequently. A humanitarian crisis began to unfold. As Australian Federal Police Commissioner, Mick Keelty, stated ‘You see the displaced people—the challenge is to normalise [security] as quickly as possible because the social and economic challenges are hard enough without these security problems.’

Devant argues that displacement and conflict in Timor-Leste are dynamics of social change that have existed throughout the Indonesian occupation and the period of militia-perpetrated violence that followed the 1999 referendum, thereby establishing a continuum of violence that resurfaced in 2006. IDP camps became focal points for violence between lorosae IDPs and the surrounding loromonu neighbourhoods. The engagement of the Australian forces with IDPs was disparate. In late August 2006, the Australian Federal Police disbanded the small unit tasked with liaising with IDPs, returning the officers to general duties. The Australian civil-military cooperation section (CIMOC), in response to the strong anti-Australian feelings rife in the Airport Camp, began a series of ad hoc meetings with camp management and IDPs to foster better relations. However the meetings did not continue, probably due to the rotation of ISF personnel and the shift in perception towards IDPs.

Moreover, a central dynamic of the IDP camps related to their affiliation with political parties, martial arts and ritual arts gangs and the national security forces. The Airport Camp, for

---

476 These figures are based on UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) estimates of 13 June 2006 and it should be noted that the numbers of IDPs have fluctuated and that a standardized registration of IDPs was not undertaken by UNHCR during the initial period following the crisis. The lack of accurate data caused many problems for the delivery of services to the camps, such as food distribution. It is worth stating, however, that the Australian military conducted their own assessment of IDP numbers. Confidential interview with member of the International Stabilisation Force, Dili, Timor-Leste, 3 August, 2006.

477 Statement made by the Minister of Public Works at the Council of Ministers’ meeting, Palacio do Governo, Dili, 22 July 2006.


479 Devant, Displacement in the 2006 Dili Crisis, 7.

480 This is particularly true of the Airport Camp, Jardim Camp and the Obrigado Camp, opposite the United Nations compound housed in Obrigado Barracks.

481 Comments made by AFP Officer Danielle Woodward, Dili, 30 August 2006.

482 Personal observations, Airport IDP Camp, Dili, September-October 2006.
example, had close links with the martial arts gang, KORK, F-FDTL, and FRETILIN. Jardim Camp was allegedly affiliated with former FALINTIL Commander Oan Kiak\(^{483}\) and the gang ‘12-12,’ an unofficial reserve unit of F-FDTL. Metinaro Camp and the camp at Port Hera, both based in F-FDTL grounds, were heavily influenced, if not ‘run’, by F-FDTL.\(^{484}\) Attacks on the camps also revealed the affiliations of the gangs involved. In an attack on the Obrigado Camp in September, PNTL tear gas canisters were found inside the camp.\(^{485}\)

Over the following year and a half, the numbers of IDPs reduced significantly to approximately 20-25,000 in Dili and 30,000 in the districts. Secondary displacement occurred as large numbers of IDPs left camps due to attacks on the camps. After consistent attacks in August and September on the Obrigado Camp (opposite the United Nations compound), 2,300 IDPs fled to other camps or other destinations, including the eastern districts. In other cases camp numbers increased, with an assessment of the Tibar Camp (comprising of three sites on the western side of Dili District and the only camps that housed westerners) by UNHCR and Oxfam revealing that IDP numbers had steadily risen.\(^{486}\) Many IDPs remained in camps because of the poor security environment and the perceived lack of coherent options provided by the government and the international community. For those IDPs who had returned home or relocated to the districts, there were ongoing security concerns and a deep frustration over incoherent government policies on compensation and the ‘right of return.’ The movement of IDPS to the districts exported the conflict outside Dili as discontent grew between the IDPs who received food aid and other services, and the communities who felt the strain of an increased population but did not receive assistance from the government. The IDP crisis therefore created a second layer of division and conflict between communities and IDPs over access to resources and services that extended beyond the initial east-west rift.\(^{487}\)

The circumstances of urban displacement within Dili hastened an urgent need to facilitate the return and reintegration of IDPs. Urban displacement and the emergence of urban-based IDP camps created unique social and security dynamics both with the camps themselves and

---

\(^{483}\) Kiak is the nephew of L-7, Cornelius Gama.

\(^{484}\) Anti-Xanana and anti-Horta feelings ran deep at Metinaro reflecting the popular belief that the east-west issue was a smokescreen and the violence was actually directly targeting FRETILIN members and supporters. Personal observation, Metinaro IDP Camp, east of Dili, 25 September 2006.

\(^{485}\) PNTL has close links with the martial arts gang, PSHT. Confidential interview with UNMIT analyst, Dili, Timor-Leste, 3 June 2007.

\(^{486}\) UNHCR/Oxfam Joint Assessment of Tibar sites: Ismaik, Matadouro, and Tur Lon, 31 September 2006. At that stage the camp contained approximately 4,720 IDPs of mostly ‘western’ origin. In late 2007 it was observed that the population of Jardim Camp had increased by 35%.

\(^{487}\) Tensions arose in Baucau, in the east, between IDPs and households over access to water in late 2006.
throughout Dili. Within the IDP camps there existed a paradoxical climate of insecurity and power, creating a situation of entrenchment and intractability which served to diminish prospects for a realistic and viable resolution. The impact on the daily lives of IDPs and Dili residents had tragic consequences in a number of cases. Access to the National Hospital was reduced due to the presence of the IDP camp in the hospital grounds and frequent attacks occurred on those seeking medical services thus discouraging many from seeking medical help.\footnote{On two occasions infants died in childbirth at Jardim Camp due to the mothers’ refusal to leave the security of the camp. The option of creating a ‘safe corridor’ were raised but never acted upon. Comments made during a public meeting of the Protection Working Group held at the Ministry of Labour and Community Reinsertion, Dili, 17 August 2006.} In other instances, hospital ambulances refused to attend incidents for fear of attack. In one case, the body of a murdered IDP (from Obrigado Camp) lay on the pavement for seven hours in the heat of the sun while alternative transport was negotiated.\footnote{Personal observation, Obrigado Camp, Dili, 15 October 2006. Eventually ‘Dr Dan’ an American doctor who ran a clinic in Bairro Pite agreed to collect the body. Australian Federal Police investigation units were refused entry to the camp by the IDPs due to the perception of Australia’s lack of neutrality and an investigation team comprising of New Zealand and Russian nationals was created. Better engagement by the Australians could have prevented this situation.} Movement across Dili was also restricted for members of martial arts and ritual arts gangs who were reluctant to enter the territory of an opposing gang for fear of retribution.\footnote{Confidential interview with youth worker, Dili, Timor-Leste, 2 August 2006.}

Security was the primary concern of IDPs and the ongoing insecurity was underpinned the decision by many displaced in refusing to return to their homes or neighbourhoods. The IDPs and receiving communities sought a ‘security guarantee’ from the Government and the ISF resulting in the development of ‘police posts’\footnote{Project ‘SER’, Selective Enforcement to Restore Public Security And Facilitate the Resettlement of IDPs, United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT), 12 October 2006.} in bairros (neighbourhoods) similar to those that existed during the Indonesian occupation. This request revealed an interesting dynamic regarding the heightened sense of security and militarisation that exists in Timorese society which had carried over from the trauma and insecurity experienced during the Indonesian occupation. The slow establishment of police posts throughout Dili due the deployment gap and the incremental deployment of international police forces resulted in the emergence of ‘popular security’ groups—community-based alternatives which also had its historical roots in the resistance movement and, later, militia.\footnote{Community meeting, Beto, Dili, Timor-Leste, 27 August 2006.}

From June through to August 2006 the Joint Task Force 631 (JTF / ISF) had became actively involved in seeking a solution to the IDP crisis through engaging with the Timorese
Government and the international humanitarian community. For instance, the head of the CMOC unit, Colonel Brian Cox, sat on the high-level inter-agency working group tasked with resolving the IDP crisis. The JTF CIMIC Concept for IDP Reintegration recognised that IDPs would not return home without the restoration of basic security and intended to convey five central messages: that IDPs needed to return home for the country to move forward; IDP camps are difficult to provide security for without the normal community structures that support positive law and order outcomes; the return to the traditional village structure to support security and stability is paramount; that IDPs are creating inequitable distribution of food, water, sanitation and health support; and that the longer IDP camps remain, the harder it will be for IDPs to return home. It was widely recognised that the JTF had a vested interest in assisting in the resolution of the IDP crisis and the concept paper fed into discussions between the Timorese Government and the international humanitarian community. Involvement of the ISF dwindled from late 2006 onwards reflecting the level of frustration felt by the ISF who increasingly began to question the legitimacy of the IDPs claims of ongoing insecurity and their inability to return home.

The Timorese Government's response to the IDP crisis, the 'Simu Malu e Fila Fali (meaning 'Mutual Acceptance' and 'Return ') policy for return and reintegration, staggered along until the end of 2006, hindered by shifting government policy, a reluctance amongst many government departments to engage in the process, a level of security mismanagement on the part of ISF and UNPOL, and a lack of coordination between the international NGOs. The lack of consistent and coherent Government policy compounded the situation and a battle of brinkmanship resulted between the IDPs and the Government. Despite a series of threats to close camps or withdraw services thereby forcing people out, the IDPs were not assured return and reintegration packages (such as financial assistance to rebuild their homes) or a security guarantee.

The camps had become a 'safety valve' for many against ongoing or potential violence, for example during the presidential and parliamentary elections in 2006. By early 2008, the IDP

493 Colonel Brian Cox participated in the inter-agency working group meetings from July-September 2006. JTF CMOC involvement diminished after Cox's departure, thereby underlying that civil-military relations is largely dependent on personalities. Cox's successor became increasingly frustrated by the ongoing IDP crisis.
494 CIMIC Concept for IDP Reintegration, Concept Paper, Joint Task Force 631, Dili, 20 June 2006. Involvement of the ISF dwindled from late 2006 onwards reflecting the level of frustration felt by the ISF who increasingly began to question the legitimacy of the IDPs.
496 The international humanitarian community was placed in a particularly difficult position and the majority continued distribution of services despite becoming targets themselves.
crisis remained unresolved and the Government responded by cutting food rations in an attempt to ‘force’ the IDPs to leave—the issue of course being that many IDPs had nowhere to go.497 Many IDPs refused to take the halved quantity of food. Two IDPs in Dili’s Motael Camp, Jacinto Guterres and Liborio Maia, were quoted by a local newspaper as saying respectively:

We became displaced because of the crisis created by the government. We are victims. If the government does not want to look after us, we are ready to die here.

The prime minister said the people have suffered too much already. Then, why are we suffering now? Prime Minister Xanana Gusmao lied to us. We don’t have homes or belongings. We live here like foreigners. If you don’t want to help us, let us die here then.498

4.5 Conclusion: Timor’s Disquiet

Marginalisation has existed as a recurrent theme throughout Timorese history. This chapter has demonstrated that the marginalisation of the Timorese population by both external (including the ongoing peacekeeping force) and domestic forces has long-standing roots in centuries of colonialism, occupation, civil war, resistance and grievance. This sense of exclusion has continued throughout the period of United Nations administration and under the former FRETILIN and the current Alliance of Parliamentary Majority (AMP) governments. This chapter has also shown that the displacement has further exacerbated the dynamic of marginalisation by creating parallel conflicts within Timorese society beyond the east-west dichotomy and therefore must be viewed as a dynamic in its own right rather than as a simple consequence of conflict. Timor’s history of civil war and clandestine resistance, the emergence and manipulation of regional identities, the martial arts and ritual arts gang culture, and the presence of IDP camps in the area of operations have all presented fundamental challenges to the international security forces.

Moreover, this chapter has highlighted how international security forces inadvertently became part of the conflict dynamic and lost considerable neutrality, and by extension

497 Marciano Luz, ‘IDP’s refuse to take half rations: authorities say OK,’ The Dili Weekly, 14 February 2008, 3. The Government reduced the rice ration from eight kilos to four kilos and the bean ration (the main source of protein) from three kilograms to one and a half kilograms per person. For an excellent reflection on the IDP stalemate, see the International Crisis Group, Timor-Leste’s Displacement Crisis, Asia Report No. 148, 31 March 2008.
Timor-Leste: From Crisis to Disquiet

legitimacy, as a consequence of their failure to effectively engage with the civilian populations. The dynamic between displacement and violence—and the close proximity of IDP camps to security ‘hot spots’—created a unique challenge for the peacekeepers. Moreover, the culture of non-engagement by the international security forces resulted in a failure to engage effectively with the civilian population which in turn has created an additional level of marginalisation as explored in the following chapters of this study. Furthermore, this chapter has underscored the significance of context by arguing that the 2006 crisis and the civil unrest that continued sporadically throughout 2007 must be viewed in the broader historical framework of civil war, resistance and grievance. The attack on President Jose Ramos Horta and Prime Minister Xanana Gusmao in February 2008, like the Honiara riots of 2006, revealed the notion of the post-conflict environment is potentially unrealistic and that despite the veneer of security that the international security forces were able to establish, the undercurrents of the crisis prevailed. As the Solomon Islands case-study demonstrated in Chapter Three, the lack of local knowledge and contextually-appropriate engagement on the part of the ISF significantly hindered the mission in fulfilling its mandate of establishing and maintaining peace and security following the April and May 2006 crisis. The following chapter examines how local populations are marginalised as a consequence of tensions between and within peacekeeping forces and humanitarian actors in the post-conflict environment.
The contemporary post-conflict environment is characterised by a multitude of external actors cooperating and, at times competing, for the peace dividend. The behaviour and activities of peacekeepers, humanitarian agencies, government development agencies and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) inform and reshape the socio-political landscape through the pursuit of diverse and often uncoordinated agendas. The post-conflict environment therefore becomes defined by coexisting layers of action between the 'security space' and the 'humanitarian space'. These two spheres of intervention frequently collide over issues of cooperation, coordination, and the security versus humanitarian mandate. The tension this creates has a significant impact on not only civil-military relations but also on the local population which can find itself further marginalised by the process of intervention as external actors seek to negotiate the 'post-conflict space' thereby introducing new, and at times divisive, dynamics into an already fractured political and social context. As Maley correctly states, intervention ‘changes the political and social landscape by introducing new actors, influencing the value of positional and distributional goods, fostering warlordism, splintering political identities and [has] a negative

499 For example, the UN agencies OCHA and IOM, the conflict recovery and prevention divisions within agencies such as UNDP, and the ICRC.
500 For example, the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) which engage either through direct bilateral programs or sub-contract development projects through NGOs. Bilateral engagement also occurs at the in-country level with embassies using their discretionary funds to support and promote peacebuilding activities, such as the Norwegian Embassy in Timor-Leste which in 2007-2008 sponsored research into the martial arts groups.
501 For an insightful critique of humanitarian relief, see Robert Glasser, ‘Why we need to look hard at the NGOs’ flaws,’ Europe's World, Spring 2008, 150-155. Glasser cites the UNDP estimate that there are now more than 37,000 international NGOs in operation, Glasser, 150. The terms ‘humanitarian agencies’ and ‘international NGOs’ are used interchangeably unless otherwise specified. For instance, not all international NGOs deliver humanitarian assistance focussing instead on long-term grassroots development.
The Cartography of Peacekeeping

impact on trust, social capital and the character of the society. An undesirable but common consequence of humanitarian intervention is the marginalisation of the local population if local participation is not carefully sought. At worst it can contribute to conflict dynamics by creating or exacerbating divisions and negating local-level, or grassroots, peace initiatives.

Building on the discussion in Chapter Two that analysed the complexities of peacekeeping in the ‘new wars’ context and case studies explored in Chapters Three and Four, the aim of this chapter is to demonstrate that local populations can be further marginalised by the bevy of international peacekeeping and humanitarian action that occurs often simultaneously but rarely cohesively in the post-conflict environment. Drawing on the discipline of political geography, this chapter introduces the concept of the ‘cartography of peacekeeping’ as an alternative analytical framework through which to interpret the socio-political and geographical dynamics of external intervention in the post-conflict context. It does so by critiquing the external actors in the post-conflict environment and evaluating their impact on the local population. Through employing the cartography of peacekeeping lens, new levels of marginalisation of the local population are revealed.

The first section of this chapter explores the geographical ‘reach’ of peacekeepers and the nature of deployment patterns. The cases of urban displacement amidst ongoing conflict in Timor-Leste and the much-ignored and maligned communities of Borderline in the Solomon Islands are examined here. The second section critiques a relatively new set of actors on the post-conflict scene: the ‘police-keepers’. While acknowledging that the nature of violence in many post-conflict situations requires a policing, rather than a military, response, the assumption that police-led operations have a greater ‘reach’ into the local population in view of the emphasis on community policing is challenged. This section also examines the relationship between police and their military counterparts. Drawing on the example of the hunt for Solomon Islands fugitive Edmund Sae on Malaita, it is noted that a failure of cooperation between the two forces can have negative consequences for the local population. The third section critiques the dynamics of the cartography of peacekeeping. Using Kabutaulaka’s notion of a ‘crowded stage’, this section examines the inherent tensions that exist in the civil-military relationship as a result of a lack of coordination and cooperation between peacekeepers and humanitarian actors which can result in the marginalisation or exclusion of the local population. To illustrate this point, the *Simu Malu* case study is examined. *Simu Malu*, as stated in Chapter Four, was the policy for the return and

reintegration of the internally displaced population in Timor-Leste in 2006. While in principle led by the Timorese Government, the policy was largely driven by the NGO community and UN humanitarian agencies with significant involvement of the ISF and UNPOL during the initial development phase. The fourth section builds on the previous discussion by examining the tension created between peacekeepers and humanitarian actors as a consequence of ‘mission creep’ and the increasing demand for—and resistance to—peacekeepers engaging in peacebuilding activities. This section questions whether the evolution from peacekeeper to peacebuilder has not already occurred to a degree in light of peacekeepers highly visible role as the ‘face’ of the mission but cautions against a further devolution of the peacekeeper’s role due to the lack of international coordination that already exists in post-conflict environments. The chapter concludes by emphasising that the sovereignty of context is critical to understanding the dynamics between peacekeepers, humanitarians and local populations.

5.1 The Geography of Peacekeeping

The mission’s ‘reach’ or what political geographers refer to as the ‘peacekeeping landscape’ is a critical dynamic in evaluating the level and nature of engagement between peacekeepers and local populations. The peacekeeping landscape approach argues for the consideration of political and spatial perspectives on peacekeeping which recognise that ‘peacekeepers themselves are not passive figures in the political and human landscapes within which they operate.’ Moreover, peacekeeping can ‘alter landscapes and conflict scenarios.’ Despite this, the deployment patterns of peacekeepers have not been given due consideration at either the international or the local level. Gilligan and Stedman’s analysis ‘Where Do the Peacekeepers Go?’ attempts to redress this by examining where the UN deploys peacekeepers and concluded that there is a distinct bias towards Europe and the Western Hemisphere. Even less consideration has been given to the deployment patterns of peacekeepers in intra-state wars and post-conflict settings. Pouligny emphasises its importance:

506 Ibid.
...multidimensional peacekeeping missions are deployed more widely than classic missions – throughout the affected countries rather than solely at borders or front lines which increases the number and type of local social actors, most of whom are civilians, who directly interact with the missions. 508

The ‘landscape’ created as a consequence of peacekeeping cuts across and intersects with the geography of conflict shaped by shifting boundaries of war and the displacement of populations. This is particularly true of the ‘new wars’ which often result in the breakdown of the state, the emergence of informal security groups (some sanctioned by the state), the widespread destruction of infrastructure, and the death and displacement of civilians. Post-conflict environments remain shaped by these dynamics thereby presenting unique challenges to those who seek to navigate them. Conceptually, analyses of the deployment patterns of peacekeepers and the impact on local populations are informed by the ethnography of peacekeeping, a field developed by anthropologists and ethnographers in the 1990s. 509 For peacekeepers, understanding the operational context is vital to being able to move through areas of operation and engage with the local population. In turn, the environment can be equally shaped by the absence of peacekeepers. The question of where peacekeepers do not go—and why not—or cannot go, is of equal significance as the following examples from Borderline, in the Solomon Islands, and the Airport IDP Camp, in Timor-Leste, effectively illustrate.

Borderline: A study in neglect
The deployment patterns of RAMSI’s CTF and the PPF throughout rural Solomon Islands contrasts with the urban deployment patterns of the mission in the capital of Honiara. Whereas the PPF (with CTF support) established seventeen police posts throughout the nine provinces, the ‘reach’ of the PPF and the CTF in Honiara was considerably less. This included a lack of engagement in critical ‘hot spots’ in Honiara such as Borderline.

Borderline represented the resilience of those affected by the civil war and the impact of displacement and marginalisation. The predominantly Malaitan residents, including former

combatants or militants, were displaced during the tensions forming communities in the hills of Borderline, thus named as it formed the demarcation line during the civil conflict separating the Malaitan enclave in Honiara from rural Guadalcanal. The communities were a contrast of carefully tended vegetable gardens\(^{510}\) and disaffected young males drinking *kwaso*, the local home brew, and smoking marijuana. The majority of villages in Borderline had no access to running water, and children with skin diseases and protruding bellies reflected lack of hygiene and poor nutrition. These communities had received scant economic or developmental assistance despite their close proximity to Honiara. \(^{511}\) The Borderline settlements of Kopito, and Gilbert Creek, for example, had seen little economic or developmental assistance from RAMSI although down the hill in central Honiara the economic privilege of the mission was writ large. The influx of white Toyota Hilux 4WDs became symbols of economic and political power—the absence of which was starkly felt by those in Borderline and in communities across the Solomon Islands:

*Every 3 weeks, new vehicles are coming in. Where is the money coming from? Is this the money meant to help Solomon Islands? What are these vehicles for? The money could be invested in education, health.* \(^{512}\)

Isolated from the rest of Honiara, Borderline festered. In 2005 James Batley acknowledged that ‘these communities are falling into a policy hole’. \(^{513}\) It was in these communities especially that resentment towards RAMSI sprang up. Not surprisingly, elements of the mobs that rioted in Honiara in April 2006 were rumoured to have been recruited from these communities. The communities of Borderline felt distinctly marginalised by the minimal level of engagement they had with RAMSI’s military and police forces. Despite the murder of Australian Protective Services Officer, Adam Dunning, in December 2004, which occurred during an early morning routine vehicle patrol through Borderline and the fact that this area of operations was

---

\(^{510}\) Visual indicators are frequently used in refugee and IDP camps to gauge how well individuals and the population as a whole are coping psychologically with the stress and trauma of displacement. For example, the state of the tent can reflect the state of the mind of the inhabitant. A clean and well-ordered tent suggests the inhabitant(s) are coping better than a dirty and disorganised tent.

\(^{511}\) Observations based on field research conducted in the communities of Borderline, Kopito, Burns Creek, Matareo, Gold Ridge, and Gilbert Camp, Solomon Islands, July-September 2005.

\(^{512}\) Group interview, Gilbert Camp, Honiara, Solomon Islands, 7 August 2005.

\(^{513}\) Interview with James Batley, Special Coordinator of the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (2004-2006), Honiara, Solomon Islands, 11 August 2005.
referred to as the ‘the red zone’ \(^{514}\) by the mission due to the high level of crime and insecurity in the communities, the level of engagement was poor at best leading to observations by a community member in 2005 that ‘there is no RAMSI presence at all in the villages’. \(^{515}\) PPF officers did not conduct routine foot patrols through the communities thereby limiting the personal contact with the local population in a culture that highly values personal relationships. As a former RAMSI official remarked, ‘it is difficult to conduct community policing from the inside of an air-conditioned vehicle’. \(^{516}\) What is distinctly apparent is that after the initial deployment of RAMSI and the immediate emphasis on getting the mission’s message across, particularly in the context of law and order, the perception of the level of engagement and communication decreased. \(^{517}\) As the following statement by a member of the Kopito community in Borderline illustrates:

\[
\text{There is no more awareness by RAMSI like the first time they arrived. Because there is no awareness, people don't know of what use RAMSI is these days. After the shooting of the RAMSI officer, people no longer want to cooperate with RAMSI in giving information because they are fed up of RAMSI.}^{518}
\]

The culture of non-engagement on the part of the mission may have been in part due to the sense of ‘success’ experienced by RAMSI and the veneer of ‘peace and security’ the mission’s presence had established through the restoration of basic law and order. In what is known as the ‘100 Day’ article, Warner stated that ‘RAMSI’s immediate objective was the restoration of law and order. RAMSI police, working closely with the RSIP and supported by RAMSI’s military component, have helped bring back peace and respect for the rule of law. Solomon Islands is a much safer place than it was 100 days ago.’ \(^{519}\) Two years later, it was clear from empirical data gathered during field research for this study that the extent to which RAMSI engaged with the local population, particularly critical communities such as Borderline, was limited. Findings revealed that key communities remained marginalised from RAMSI due to a decrease in the level

\(^{514}\) Confidential interview with RAMSI personnel, Honiara, Solomon Islands, 13 August 2005. The “green zone”, Point Cruz and downtown Honiara, were deemed safe areas. The “yellow zone” referred to Chinatown - less safe than the green zone but not as insecure as the red zone.
\(^{515}\) Group interview, Kopito community, Borderline, Honiara, Solomon Islands, 7 August 2005.
\(^{516}\) Confidential interview, Canberra, Australia, 17 March 2006.
\(^{517}\) This opinion was widely expressed by the villagers in Borderline in 2005.
\(^{518}\) Group interview, Kopito community, Borderline, Honiara, Solomon Islands, 7 August 2005.
of engagement. The ramifications of this were twofold: the mission’s ability to gather intelligence was severely limited; and the legitimacy of the overall mission was questioned by those who understood emphatically that the restoration of law and order did not necessarily equate to the return of peace and security. RAMSI’s absence in these communities was acutely felt and the presence of an independent researcher emphasised this even further. As a youth from Kopito explained:

*Before RAMSI came, you would not have been able to come here. Now that RAMSI has come and law and order is here, you can come. But now RAMSI is too scared to come here. But you are here at night talking to us.*

### Airport IDP Camp: Enforced Disengagement

The unequal geography of peacekeeping is also acutely evident in Timor-Leste. In 2006, when the ISF and UNPOL were prevented from entering IDP camps in Dili by IDPs who questioned the legitimacy and neutrality of the Australian contingents, the ‘reach’ of the peacekeeping mission was automatically inhibited. Peacekeepers were, paradoxically, unable to protect the civilian population in the Airport, Jardim and Obrigado Barracks Camps. These were identified as ‘high-risk’ camps as they had become epicentres of violence due to communal conflict between elements of the camp population and the neighbouring communities and because criminal groups within the camp or associated with the camp held the population virtually hostage to their demands.  

Ideally, the IDP camps were demilitarised safety zones based on ‘the belief that civilians deserve protection because they are, in a sense outside the realm of conflict.’ However, the inability of the ISF and UNPOL to enforce and uphold the camps as safety zones directly challenged their effectiveness as peacekeepers and limited their ‘reach’ into the communities and the protection of the most vulnerable groups. IDP populations became increasingly marginalised and the suspicions that prevented Australian forces from responding effectively to violence associated with the camps further fed the perception of bias against easterners. This is an example of the fact that the failure to engage specific local actors or elements of society can become a divisive dynamic in itself.

520 Confidential interview, Gilbert Camp, Borderline, Honiara, Solomon Islands, 7 August 2005.
521 For example, the 12-12 group led by former Falintil commander Oan Kiak provided security for the Jardim Camp. The provision of security often also included the extortion of businesses nearby the camp.
The Cartography of Peacekeeping

The Australian forces faced the greatest resistance from the Airport IDP Camp, situated in what were once banana plantations across from the Dili International Airport. As a consequence of flooding inside the camp due to heavy rains and a bid to get closer to the international security forces on static duty outside the airport terminal, in late 2006 and early 2007 the camp’s population spilled over onto the grass verges in the airport parking lot (at one stage tents were erected in the actual terminal). The IDP population numbered an estimated 5,049\(^{523}\) easterners although the figure is disputed and difficult to accurately determine due to no formal registration process at the time the camp was established. The camp is predominantly aligned with FRETILIN, F-FDTL, and the martial arts gang, KORK (which as mentioned earlier is affiliated with FRETILIN and F-FDTL).

The impotence of the mission was displayed in October 2006 when fighting erupted between the Airport IDP Camp and neighbouring villages forcing the closure of Dili’s International Airport and Comoro Road, the main route leading to the Airport for a week.\(^{524}\) This weakened the mission in the eyes of both the ‘spoilers’ and the wider civilian population.\(^{525}\) The fact that the street battles were fought on the one kilometre stretch of road between Timor Lodge, the Australian Federal Police base, and the Airport cast considerable doubt over the AFP’s ability and capacity to control the civil unrest. Again, the mission’s ‘reach’ had been challenged and checked. The perception amongst the local population that the peacekeepers had no control over their area of operations further weakened the mission’s legitimacy and authority. This was particularly damaging in a society whose history of twenty-four years of clandestine resistance continued to inform and shape tactics used in the current conflicts.

The following example explicitly illustrates this point. In late 2006 coordinated violence broke out across Dili with the aim of measuring the response times, capabilities and patrol patterns of the ISF.\(^{526}\) The ISF responded to the violence by deploying the majority of the force’s

---

\(^{523}\) This figure is based on the number of food recipients according to OCHA, May 2007. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Distribution of Food to IDPs, as at 13 May 2007.


\(^{525}\) One incident in particular demonstrated the ineffectiveness of the AFP in handling the civil unrest they faced in Timor-Leste. AFP officers in riot gear took up position across the road (facing the Airport) securing one section of the road while a team of AFP officers entered the village of Beto, where much of the violence had taken place. Members of the PSHT martial arts group responsible for the attack slipped behind the AFP cordon, in a staggered, single-file formation, and retreated unseen (by the AFP) into the villages on the opposite side of Comoro Road. The PSHT members were easily recognizable in black martial arts uniforms with clearly identifiable insignia. Personal observation, Dili, 26 October 2006.

\(^{526}\) Confidential interview with member of the International Stabilisation Force, Dili, Timor-Leste, 21 October 2006.
armoured personnel carriers (APCs) onto the streets, a decision which was later viewed as a mistake as it became clear that the ISF had unwittingly ‘shown its hand’. This also revealed a misunderstanding of the context in which the violence was taking place and the inappropriateness of the mechanisms to counter what ostensibly was urban warfare.

5.2 Policing in Post-Conflict Zones

One of the most significant developments in peace operations is the shift to police-led operations. Increasingly, police-led operations are regarded as the model for statebuilding intervention. In 2006 Australian Federal Justice Minister Senator Chris Ellison advocated that the peacekeeping mission in Timor-Leste follow the model of RAMSI by becoming a police-led operation, stating that:

The RAMSI template is a very important way to go in nation building and it demonstrates a format which can work in nation building. RAMSI does demonstrate how your presence can change. Initially that was more defence-oriented and then it became more policing in numbers.

Papua New Guinean politician Sir Rabbie Namaliu, in advocating the predominantly policing response, made the following cautionary statement immediately following the deployment of RAMSI that:

It [the intervention mission] must also have a strong law and order focus. That is why the greatest possible involvement of police force personnel is vital. The role of the defence force members from Australia, New Zealand, and other nations, including Papua New Guinea, needs to be planned and managed with great care.

While much of the peacekeeping literature has focussed on the peacekeeper as a ‘soldier’ in the changing reality of the contemporary environment of peace operations, the police are more often than not at the frontline. Hayden outlines the argument for using police in post-conflict, non-war-like, contexts:

---

527 Ibid.
Issues such as restoring the rule of law, freedom of movement, and civil order, as well as normalising the political, economic, and social orders in a post-conflict environment, are far beyond the scope of the military component in a peace operation. The military is required to provide security for both pacification and stabilization, it is not the appropriate actor for institution or state building.530

This has dramatically changed the dynamic of peace operations and the nature of engagement with humanitarian actors and the local population. Within multi-dimensional peace operations, international police sit at the nexus between the military peacekeepers and the civilian statebuilding or peacebuilding activities. Moreover, the police are positioned at the critical juncture between the peace operation and the local population. As Apthorpe noted, 'policing, in all its various forms, is right between assistance and protection...where assistance and protection overlap.'531

The presence of ‘police-keepers’ in post-conflict peace operations has changed the cartography of peacekeeping in fundamental ways from a traditionally military exercise to including the restoration of law and order and community policing. The latter particularly has resulted in the transposing of additional externally-developed doctrine and practice into post-conflict contexts. It has also resulted in a potentially far greater ‘reach’ of peacekeepers which, as both the Solomons and Timor-Leste cases reveal, is not necessarily utilised. It is therefore necessary to challenge the various assumptions that accompany the widely-held perception that police are better suited to the conditions on the ground.

The Brahimi Report stated that the ‘demand for civilian peace operations dealing with intra-state conflict is likely to remain high on any list of requirements for helping a war-torn society restore conditions for social, economic and political stability,’532 and argued for a ‘doctrinal shift in the use of civilian police in United Nations peace operations, to focus primarily on reform and restructuring of local police forces in addition to traditional advisory, training and monitoring tasks.’533 Under UNSC mandates, peace operations with an institutional peacebuilding objective are often referred to as ‘Chapter VII and a half.’ Missions can transition to becoming a ‘police-led operation with military support’ once the security threat has deemed to have been minimised. In circumstances where there has been a severe deterioration of security,

530 Hayden, ibid., 3.
531 Professor Raymond Apthorpe, Hansard, 5 September 2007, 35.
532 Brahimi Report, para. 118
533 Ibid., para. 119
the peace operation may grant primacy to the international military force(s) for a designated period authorising the military to assume control and responsibility for the restoration of ‘peace and security’ as evidenced in Chapter Seven with the killing of the two IDPs at the Airport IDP Camp during the 72-hour period that UNPOL handed security primacy over to the ISF.

The transition to policing-led peace operations has been similarly reflected in regional interventions such as RAMSI and the ISF which both strongly emphasised the police’s role in the maintenance of security and the restoration of law and order. The rationale for the shift to police-led operations mirrors the change in the environment that peacekeepers find themselves in: low-level conflict and civil unrest. Moreover, in post-conflict environments where there has been a cessation of outright violence, filling the ‘public security gap’ is critical and one that military peace-keepers are not equipped or trained for. The restoration of law and order, security sector reform (national police force) and the rebuilding of the judicial system are central to creating the conditions for political, economic and social peacebuilding activities.\(^{104}\)

It is worthwhile examining the composition and authority of police-led missions for its complexity as this has direct consequences for the ability of the peace operation to fulfil its security mandate. Transitional international police contingents can comprise formed police units such as the GNR in Timor-Leste (established police units which are often paramilitary in nature and which are responsible for civil disturbances such as riot control), community policing and law enforcement units, and those tasked with capacity building and institutional reform of the national police and justice sector, including prison reform. Increasingly, international police are granted executive policing authority permitting detention, arrest and charging of suspects. In circumstances where there is a weak judiciary, this often results in a ‘revolving door’ effect where criminals are detained, charged and released within a short period of time thus discouraging victims of crime from seeking police assistance for fear of retribution. Peacekeepers (with executive authority) are therefore only as effective as the judicial system.

The success of international police forces in maintaining law and order is therefore largely reliant on an established and functioning judicial and penal system. Perito has argued that armed police with executive authority are a prerequisite for peace in post-conflict situations.\(^{335}\) In the case of the AFP in the Solomon Islands, the breakdown of the RSIP and the Solomon Islands judicial system was circumvented by installing an Australian commander of the RSIP, providing

\(^{104}\) RAND, ‘Establishing Law and Order After Conflict’ 13.

security for Rove Prison in Honiara, and placing Australian legal advisors within the judicial department. In Timor-Leste, however, the AFP was severely hindered as their practices were ‘reliant on a judicial system that did not exist’ and because they could not engage with victims, witnesses and the legal system due to language barriers. This is particularly pertinent due to the shift from security maintenance to rebuilding and training domestic security institutions such as the police. In doing so, international policekeepers are brought into direct contact with local communities and are faced with the challenge of rebuilding police forces which have collapsed, such as the RSIP in the Solomon Islands and the PNTL in Timor-Leste, due to the politicisation and criminalisation of the force, and which comprise ethnic and regional groupings which have been engaged in conflict against each other-such as the Malaitans and Guales in the RSIP, and easterners and westerners within F-FDTL and the PNTL.

The challenges that beset international policing contingents impact significantly on the ability of the mission to fulfil its mandate. The delay of a coherent police presence following the initial deployment of military peace-keepers can create a ‘security vacuum.’ Military peacekeepers are frequently deployed prior to policing contingents (as a standing force, militaries generally have the ability to deploy more rapidly than police who often have to be sourced from within peacekeeping donor states), however they are not trained or equipped to handle civil unrest and law and order problems. As Vice Chief of the ADF, Lieutenant General Ken Gillespie, stated in 2007 before an Australian Senate hearing:

536 Confidential interview with Australian defence analyst, Canberra, Australia, 12 June 2007.
537 Timor-Leste uses the Indonesian penal code written in Bahasa Indonesia. In 2006 the penal code began to be translated into Portuguese.
One of the issues that we had there at the time was not that the police were to look on; they were there to help us effect arrests...Many of the issues that we had in a law and order sense were about riot control or crowd control. That is not a military function; it is a police function. But we did not have that police function in the police contingent there.541

As a consequence of the ‘deployment gap,’ the ability to expediently restore law and order and bridge the ‘enforcement gap’542 is significantly weakened. The relationship between the peacekeeping force and the local population is automatically impacted by the security gap. As former Deputy Commander of INTERFET, Major-General Michael G. Smith observes, police-led operations have changed the face of civil-military engagement.543 As the Timor-Leste case study reveals, when the handover from the military to the police is too quick and the police contingent are ill-prepared to contend with the level and nature of violence, the military is required to step back into the security vacuum that has been created and undertake what is essentially a policing role. Hansen therefore argues for greater coordination between military and international policing contingents claiming that the shortcomings of each indicated that ‘neither was able to fill the public security ‘gap’ on its own’.544 The first commander of the AFP contingent in Timor-Leste in 2006, Steve Lancaster, stated before an Australian Senate hearing in 2007:

that was the first major lesson that we learned—to shorten the gap between the ADF and the AFP responses in areas like East Timor...we have to have the right tools to enable us to bridge the gap between an ADF response and a police response. You want to demilitarise that zone as quickly as you can. If the community look out their doors and all they see is military, they do not start getting that feeling of security and that we are on the right path.545

Moreover, international policing contingents are similarly hindered by the institutional cultures and legal backgrounds of the various police and policing units, inadequate or delayed logistical support (cars, radios, weaponry) as well as limited capacity and personnel. Local populations are not obtuse to perceived weaknesses on the part of the international police force and, as noted in

542 Oakley, Dziedzic and Goldberg, (eds) Policing the new world disorder.
543 Interview with Major-General (Rtd.) Michael G. Smith, Canberra, Australia, 8 May 2007.
the Timor-Leste case-study, will test the capacity and capabilities of the international police. Perceived weakness on the part of the police will also dissuade civilians from placing their confidence and trust in the police for fear that their security cannot be guaranteed. Hayden notes that in Bosnia, Kosovo, and East Timor, the ‘expectations of the local population towards the international community were very high. When CIVPOL could not meet those expectations and the local population could see the internal disarray of CIVPOL, respect from the local community was diminished.’

In 2006, the AFP were limited in developing a ‘response-based policing approach’ and were on occasion unable to enter violent areas of Dili due to poor logistical support in the form of radios and a lack of both patrol vehicles and personnel. This also impacts on the enforcement gap and can damage perceptions amongst the local population and humanitarian community of the police contingent’s ability to effectively establish and maintain law and order. Hayden states ‘cross-cultural issues in multinational peace operations are very sensitive, not only within and among the mission’s civilian and military components, but also between those components and the local population.’

Issues of accountability and legitimacy are further highlighted by the clash of cultures that invariably exists within international policing contingents, such as UNPOL, where, for example, in Kosovo and East Timor, ‘international police were virtually immune from personal arrest or detention…badly equipped police force made up of foreigners who do not understand the local culture, who are enforcing an ambiguous law and are virtually immune from prosecution.’

A Cop in the Market

Internal challenges aside, it is the gap between international police contingents and the local population which is in need of critical analysis. The absence of a police-keepers’ version of a civil-military doctrine frequently results in disparate and, at times, damaging engagement with humanitarian actors and the local population. International police often assume knowledge of how to engage with actors in spite of the vast differences between post-conflict and policing in


547 Confidential interview with defence analyst, Canberra, Australia, 12 June 2007.

548 In one instance a vehicle containing Australian and New Zealand humanitarian workers was ambushed in central Dili by western youths. An AFP patrol car vehicle was waved down due to the injuries sustained by one aid worker and the ongoing threat presented by the group of youths. The sole AFP officer apologised and stated he could not assist as he was by himself. Personal observation, Dili, 6 September 2006.


their own environs. Issues of civil protection can be overlooked or neglected which may, in certain circumstances have negative consequences. Apthorpe and Townsend call for the development of a civil-military-policing cooperation (CIMPIC) doctrine which ‘recognise(s) the important transitional role that police play in moving a situation from militarised conflict to socialised law and order’. The absence of an AFP civil-policing doctrine can be attributed to the assumption that because police officers undertake community policing duties in Australia they already know how to engage with communities. However, the notion that international police forces are automatically capable of effective community policing in downtown Dili or the backstreets of Honiara is flawed. Community policing in a country town in New South Wales is vastly different from community policing in a neighbourhood in Dili which has seen neighbours committing extreme acts of violence and vandalism against each other or in an IDP camp.

The cornerstone of the ISF’s strategy towards assisting the return and reintegration of IDPs was community policing. However without a contextually-appropriate civil-policing approach that informed community policing in Dili, it was unclear how the ISF would support the return and reintegration of IDPs. As an Australian defence analyst noted, the policing requirement in Timor-Leste is ‘a cop in the market not two guys in a patrol car.’ Similarly, Major David Moon, Officer in Charge (OIC) of the CIMIC Support Team for Operation Anode in the Solomon Islands was equally critical of the PPF. Moon argued that the PPF were ‘never out of their Toyotas’ and conducted what he referred to as ‘battlefield tours’ of Solomon Islands. This prevented the PPF from undertaking critical observation and intelligence-gathering tasks such as ‘checking the atmosphere’ for ‘combat indicators,’ including the streets emptying of children and women, which can indicate forthcoming trouble or violence and can only be assessed by ‘foot patrols and not by driving around in an armored vehicle with the

551 Raymond Apthorpe and James Townsend, submission to the Australian Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee Inquiry into Australia’s Involvement in Peacekeeping Operations, 1 May 2007.
552 Interviews with senior AFP IDG personnel, AFP IDG Complex, Madura, Canberra, 12 July 2007. The drafting of a civil-policing doctrine was under consideration but had not been ‘prioritised.’
554 As it transpired, the return and reintegration of IDPs did not take place until 2008 by which stage the Timorese Joint Task Force comprising of F-FDTL and PNTL were given responsibility for ensuring the safety of IDPs. The Joint Task Force was initially formed to capture Salsinha and his men following the shooting of Horta and the attack on Gusmao in February 2007. The Joint Task Force was renowned for human rights abuses. Personal communication, UNMIT official, Dili, 8 May 2008.
555 Confidential interview, defence analyst, Canberra, Australia, 12 June 2007.
556 Interview with Major David Moon, Australian Defence Force, Canberra, Australia, 28 March 2005. Moon is currently the Training and Doctrine staff officer at the Australian Defence Force Peacekeeping Centre and was the OIC of the CIMIC support team for Operation ANODE in the Solomon Islands from July to November 2003) in the Solomon Islands.
windows up.' However, as former commander of the RAMSI military contingent, Colonel John Hutcheson states, although from the outset of RAMSI there was a clear need to develop an extensive military policing program in order to provide a secure environment, the PPF did not wish to conduct a patrol system initially and because the CJTF 635 was mandated to support the PPF--the military had to abide.

Moreover, while Australian police drawn from the State forces certainly do have greater experience in community policing, the AFP International Deployment Group does not comprise solely of State police but also of Federal police who are predominantly criminal investigators who do not have community policing experience. In addition, the lack of language abilities and local knowledge amongst the international police dramatically hinders engagement with the local population. As Goldsmith states:

There is a structural limitation in training people for the field as to how much you can imbue in them when they have no background...we should be thinking about longer term cadres of individuals who are prepped or on standby for future engagements so that we do not have to teach them Pijin English in two days or teach them about Timor's culture in a week...How do you build trusting relationships when you cannot talk to the people?

Furthermore, Morgan and McLeod observe that although Solomon Islanders 'claim that they appreciate the return of personal security facilitated by RAMSI, they simultaneously bemoan the fact that the majority of socioeconomic factors that precipitated the crisis continue to plague their lives.' Further, while it is clear that local people conflate the policing component of RAMSI with RAMSI at large, there is growing resentment that RAMSI police personnel live detached from the community, that they are perceived as contributing little to the local economy (due to the fact that the majority of their food is imported) and that they do not understand how to interact with local people in a culturally appropriate manner.

Moreover, the personal commitment of police serving in post-conflict environments has also been questioned as a consequence of both RAMSI and the ISF deployments. The impetus for police to volunteer for international deployments can range from genuine humanitarian considerations to purely financial. As Moore notes, 'a few hundred Australian and New Zealand

557 Ibid.
558 Hutcheson, 'Helping a Friend,' 53.
559 Professor Andrew Goldsmith in Hansard, 20 August 2007, 57.
560 Morgan and McLeod, 419.
mortgages will be liquidated, and suburban homes will get long awaited extensions, courtesy of
gratuities earned in Solomon Islands.561 A poster on the wall of an office in the International
Deployment Group Headquarters in Canberra conveys certain truths underlying the motivations
for many security personnel in both the Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste. The poster is a mock-
up of the posters plastered around Dili and states:

Your Government has ordered you to cooperate. Australian and New Zealand men and women
will work with the people of East Timor to provide a more financially stable future for you
[Australians and New Zealanders] and your family.562

On the ground, this translates into an attitude of ambivalence towards policing. Furthermore,
community policing initiatives have not always been encouraged. In 2005 a Fijian police officer
within RAMSI’s PPF contingent sought to initiate community policing measures which would
also address issues of reconciliation based on his experiences as a senior police officer following
the Fiji coup in 2000. This included ideas such as a ‘clean up Honiara day’ and a peace and
reconciliation march. The police officer was informed that this was not part of RAMSI’s
mandate.563 The absence of contextually-appropriate community policing in turn directly refutes
the associated assumption that police have a greater ‘reach’ than soldiers. The incident at
Obrigado Barracks IDP camp in Dili—discussed in Chapter Four—where Australian Federal
Police were refused entry into the camp to investigate a murder demonstrates that the ‘reach’ of
the police is largely determined by the support and goodwill of the local population. The
perception of neutrality or legitimacy of international policing contingents amongst the broader
local population in post-conflict contexts where the national police forces are often politicised,
party to the conflict, and criminalised cannot be assumed. Moreover, because soldiers conduct
foot patrols they are more visible to the local population and have greater interaction with
civilians, particularly when accompanied by an interpreter.

562 Personal observation, Australian Federal Police International Deployment Group (Operational Response
Group) Headquarters, Majura Complex, Canberra, 12 July 2006.
563 Confidential interview with former Participating Police Force officer, Honiara, Solomon Islands, 23 August
2005. In frustration the officer resigned but remained in the Solomon Islands with a security firm.
The Cartography of Peacekeeping

The Military-Police Nexus

In a critique of RAMSI, Hutchison has argued that unlike the ADF which possessed proactive planning culture, the PPF were largely reactive in character and did not fully grasp the concept of an operation with multiple tasks as part of a wider campaign.\(^{564}\) Interestingly, this criticism was also directed towards the ADF. In 2003 the ADF conducted an ‘ultimately unsuccessful operation to capture fugitive ex-policeman Edmund Sae’ landing at dawn at the beach near the market in Auki, the provincial capital of Malaita.\(^{565}\) The operation was conducted by ADF commandos in full battle attire. As a result ‘the early morning betel-nut vendors at the market fled in fear, as indeed did most of the townsfolk.’ \(^{566}\) This was followed by a large number of regular soldiers who landed in the mangrove swamp adjacent to Auki.\(^{567}\) This had an enormously negative and traumatic impact on the local population who viewed the operation as a ‘large-scale and explicit invasion of the island.’\(^{568}\) Of considerable significance is the fact that the PPF station in Auki, also engaged in an ongoing operation to capture Sae, was not informed of the ADF operation.\(^{569}\) This revealed that, despite the centralised command structure within RAMSI, issues of territoriality prevailed over operational matters. The ability of the PPF contingent in Auki to conduct community policing, as well as investigative operations, was subsequently severely hampered by the ADF operation\(^{570}\) and marginalised the local population from RAMSI. In Timor-Leste, similar lessons were drawn from Operation Eightball (OP8B). OP8B was a combined UNPOL-ANZAC Battle Group (ISF) operation to disrupt potential politically-motivated violence between the first round of the Presidential elections in May 2006 and the announcement of the results.\(^{571}\) As a review of OP8B concludes:

OP8B highlighted some of the challenges facing military organizations involved in operations other than war in a post conflict environment. It reinforced the enduring need for an interagency approach to stabilisation operations and demonstrated the ability to achieve synergy through combined execution. It is unlikely that the need to be able to conduct these types of operations

\(^{566}\) Ibid.
\(^{567}\) Ibid.
\(^{568}\) Ibid.
\(^{569}\) Confidential interview with Participating Police Force officer, Solomon Islands, 9 August 2005.
\(^{570}\) Ibid.
will diminish in the near future and many of the themes raised in this case study will remain a constant. However every theatre will present its own unique challenges on the planning and conduct of such operations, often driven by the political and judicial environment outside the control of both the military and the police.\textsuperscript{572}

5.3 A Crowded Stage: Peacekeepers and Humanitarians

In the ‘post-conflict’ environment there are predominantly two types of external actors. The first, if military intervention has occurred, comprises the peacekeeping forces whose role is to prevent conflict, stabilise the situation and create a secure humanitarian space in which peace can be consolidated. The second group of external actors are the humanitarian agencies tasked with the provision of emergency phase relief and longer-term peacebuilding and reconstruction.\textsuperscript{573} The inability of this broad, diverse and complex set of players to conceive, plan and work together in managing a crisis and implementing a peace plan, despite the massive commitment of financial and human resources, is a major challenge in crisis management and modern peace operations today.\textsuperscript{574} As Kabutaulaka argues, this creates the effect of a ‘crowded stage’\textsuperscript{575} upon which a great deal of often uncoordinated action takes place and from which local actors are frequently marginalized.

Humanitarian agencies flock to war zones. If already in-country, international NGOs frequently diversify their development mandate to include emergency relief often irrespective of whether they have the capacity and experience. In doing so, humanitarian agencies occupy and shape the post-conflict environment in ways that can be either positive or divisive. At worst, this can contribute to conflict dynamics by creating or exacerbating divisions and negating local-level, or grassroots, peace initiatives.\textsuperscript{576}

\textsuperscript{572} Ibid, 17.
\textsuperscript{575} Kabutaulaka, ‘Crowded Stage.’
\textsuperscript{576} For example, following the Rwandan genocide, hundreds of small NGOs ‘jostled for space’ setting up ad hoc operations in refugee camps in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Tanzania-some of which turned into staging posts for armed factions and in the ensuing chaos, an estimated 50,000 refugees died from cholera. Glasser, ‘Why we need to look hard at the NGOs,’ 151. In response to an otherwise preventable humanitarian disaster, 400 NGOs and UN agencies established the Sphere Project in 1997 which launched the ‘Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response,’ which developed a set of universal minimum standards in humanitarian relief and raised the accountability of humanitarian agencies. The Sphere Project, Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response, Geneva, 2004. Major NGOs
In light of the role that humanitarian agencies play on the frontline of conflict, the debate over the impact of humanitarian action has proliferated, providing considerable reflection and insight into the negative as well as positive aspects of humanitarianism. Within development studies discourse, there is increased emphasis on locating humanitarian action within the appropriate responses based on the context so as to ensure that humanitarian assistance does not exacerbate rather than alleviate conflict. For example, the ‘Do No Harm’ Project developed by the Local Capacities for Peace network, identified the potentially destabilising impact that aid can have in conflict and post-conflict contexts and developed a framework to assess the impact of assistance. 577 In her critical work, Condemned to Repeat? The Paradox of Humanitarian Action, Terry argued that humanitarian action is paradoxical in nature as it can inadvertently prolong conflict. Terry cited the provision of humanitarian assistance to refugee camps whose population includes active combatants as an example of where humanitarian agencies inadvertently sustain conflict through feeding and housing belligerents, and where under international humanitarian law such camps are protected, thus providing a base from which to conduct military campaigns, thereby creating what Terry terms ‘refugee-warrior communities’ or ‘militarized refugee camps.’ 578 Yet despite the development of such literature based on lessons learned identified by practitioners themselves, humanitarian coordination and accountability in the field continues to pose serious challenges. 579 In Timor-Leste, humanitarian assistance was similarly plagued with such paradoxes as relief assistance became highly politicised. In 2007 allegations were levelled against the Timorese Government Ministry for Labour and Community Reinsertion, charged with the delivery of humanitarian services to the IDP population, that it was exchanging ‘rice for guns’ and using Nuno Soares, the leader of the martial arts gang leader KORK, to distribute the humanitarian-allocated rice. 580 This raised considerable concern for international humanitarian

Similarly established the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP), the Humanitarian Accountability Project and its successor, Humanitarian Accountability Partnership International.


579 Such as the ‘mayhem in the relief efforts that followed the Indian Ocean tsunami,’ Glasser ‘Why we need to look hard at the NGOs’ flaws,’ 151. Glasser notes that at one point, 400 NGOs were in Aceh ‘competing for resources, personnel and funding,’ the confusion caused mostly by ‘smaller NGOs with little or no experience in dealing with disasters.’ Glasser, ibid, 152.

stakeholders engaged in food security programs. Although no international NGOs were involved, the allegations did impact on the perception of NGOs involved in food distribution as neutral and credible actors.

Following the 2006 crisis, many international NGOs already operating in Timor-Leste became Site Liaison Support (SLS) to the 56 IDP camps which had sprung up throughout Dili. For those larger and more experienced NGOs such as Oxfam, the delivery of humanitarian assistance proved less problematic. However, a number of the smaller and less experienced NGOs struggled with their role. For example, the Australian NGO, AustCARE, and the Catholic agency, CARITAS, withdraw as SLS due to their inability to manage the complex demands associated with the IDP crisis. In the case of PLAN, their lack of experience in managing the Metinaro IDP camp (next to F-FDTL barracks east of Dili) resulted in violent repercussions for their national staff. The lack of coordination and experience amongst a number of NGOs allowed power struggles between IDPs to foster in the larger and more problematic ‘high-risk’ camps resulting in the emergence of a feudal culture where the election of camp management and food deliveries and access to services was controlled by a small group. As Krause and Jutersonke note ‘humanitarian organizations and foreign actors represent a significant political and economic stake for local actors.

Engagement between humanitarian agencies and the local population is a critical dynamic in the post-conflict environment. However it is equally shaped and influenced by civil-military cooperation—the relationship between humanitarian agencies and the peacekeeping forces. AusAID’s East Timor Development Review review’s objective was to consider relevant civil-military issues in the area of inter-agency cooperation, including to inform AusAID-ADF liaison in any future humanitarian responses. A subsequent meeting held in Canberra in 2007 between AusAID and Australian NGOs operating in Timor-Leste found that there were no civil-military coordination problems and little further action was taken.

However, the example of Operation Eightball (OP8B) demonstrates that poor civil-military coordination can have negative consequences for the local populations and for the relationship between civilians, humanitarian agencies and the peacekeeping force more

581 Statements made at humanitarian inter-agency public meetings, Dili, August-December 2006.
582 Ibid.
585 Personal communication, AusAID official, Canberra, 26 April 2007.
An internal review of OP8B found that a lack of 'situational awareness of the activities of other agencies [humanitarian] active in the Area of Operations' potentially could have had severe consequences. In this instance, a road block was placed on Comoro Road in Dili which disrupted a UN World Food Program convoy delivering rice to the Airport IDP Camp. As the review notes, 'in Dili there were still shortages of rice and the [WFP] occasionally has to deal with disturbances at distribution points, rice storage facilities and with the security of its rice convoys. The F-FDTL protect these vehicles and occasionally have to fire warning shots to disperse crowds that threaten to loot the rice.' The road block was lifted and the WFP convoy delivered the rice without incident but as the review states 'there are numerous worst case speculative scenarios that might have occurred had OP8B not had good communications.' OP8B demonstrated that 'activity from another agency that occurred within the AO significantly changed the complexity of the environment in a very short period of time without prior knowledge of either ANZAC BG or UNPOL.' This underlined the need for significantly tighter civil-military coordination. The review concluded that:

An adverse interaction with any of these agencies has the potential to have wide political and public ramifications that may affect public support for, or confidence in, JTF631 amongst the wider Australian and EM communities. The OA team believes that a consolidated understanding of the operations of these agencies would assist with the conduct of more effective JTF631 operations.

5.4 The Civil-Military-Police Paradigm

The post-conflict environment is increasingly dominated by a multitude of humanitarian agencies operating within a space that is secured by and through military force. The civil-military-police dimension of post-conflict peace operations has become increasingly significant as the intersection between military, policing and humanitarian space with the crowding of

---

587 Ibid, 9.
588 Ibid.
589 Ibid.
590 Ibid.
591 Ibid.
592 Ibid, 14.
humanitarian agencies into fluid security environments. As a consequence there is a considerable body of literature that addresses the challenges of civil-military-police cooperation and coordination. Less attention, however, has been accorded to the role that local populations play within this dynamic. As Moon states, 'militaries focus on NGOs, civil society and governments and are uncomfortable with communities even though that's where the legitimate power base lies.' It is critical therefore to consider how civil-military-police cooperation and coordination negatively and positively effects the development of a relationship between the peacekeeping mission and local actors.

While there have been substantial advancements in civil-military relations, these have predominantly been concerned with the relationship between peacekeepers and humanitarian actors. Critical questions over what current civil-military doctrine and practice reveals about attitudes towards 'peace and security' and how this impacts on the dynamic between peacekeepers and local actors have not been broadly addressed within the literature. Nor does the current civil-military paradigm attempt to bridge the gap between peacekeeping and peacebuilding despite the fact that the military component of civil-military relations both facilitates and supports peacebuilding activities. It is essential therefore to re-examine civil-military-police coordination in respect to the local population.

The relationship is one that is both symbiotic but also occasionally in conflict. Whilst analysis has been conducted on how to better coordinate the relationship between the civilian agencies and the military, insufficient attention has been accorded to the role of the local population within that relationship and how the actions of local actors impact on the dynamic itself. It is worthwhile noting that civil-military relations are informed and influenced by similar dynamics of misunderstanding, distrust and inadequate engagement. It is, needless to say, a critical relationship as coordination between all actors on the ground is important to achieve a

593 The conventional term is Civil-Military Coordination (CIMCOORD). However because of the shift towards police-led operations, I am employing Apthorpe and Townsend's term civil-military-policing to describe coordination and cooperation.

594 Interview with Major David Moon, Australian Defence Force, Canberra, Australia, 28 March 2005.


‘coherent international approach towards the local actors and populations.’\textsuperscript{597} This does not necessarily guarantee that local populations will not be excluded however it does lessen the negative impact of uncoordinated action.

The benefits of coordinated and close civil-military relations are tangible and fundamental to the ability of the military, particularly, to operate effectively and successfully in a post-conflict environment. The importance of peacekeepers in engaging with those closest to the people affected by the conflict is critical to the success of any peace operation\textsuperscript{598} and cannot be overstated. The advantage that this offers is access to local knowledge, real-time community level information and intelligence. By contrast, humanitarian actors view engagement with peacekeeping forces as a potential threat to their neutrality thus compromising their ability to operate effectively with the local population. In most instances, aid workers will choose credibility over cooperation. NGOs are in a privileged—and consequently risky position—of having access to communities, and therefore information, at a level that peacekeepers find it difficult to penetrate. Humanitarian agencies can become frustrated by the peacekeeping force’s emphasis on security threats and this requiring significant coordination and cooperation between the peacekeeping forces and the humanitarian agencies. Moreover, a multitude of challenges arise which hinder cooperation and coordination such as fundamental differences in organisation culture, mandate, resources, levels of authority, and experience.

Developments in the practise of engagement between military and humanitarian agencies are, however, extremely relevant to the engagement and relationship between peacekeepers and local actors because of the nature of the relationship between military, police, humanitarians, and civilians in post-conflict contexts. The 2002 Report by the International Peace Academy on ‘best practices’ of conflict prevention emphasised the centrality of involving local participation or, at the very least, ensuring that international and national efforts recognised local needs and capacity and promoted ownership of the process of peacebuilding.\textsuperscript{599} The critical question is how that can be achieved by peacekeepers successfully without subverting the primary security mandate and eroding humanitarian activities.


The Cartography of Peacekeeping

It is therefore argued that to establish a better understanding of civil-military coordination, it is essential to consider the role that the local population plays in the development and coordination of the civil-military-policing dynamic. Much of the literature refers exclusively to military and humanitarian actors\(^{600}\) whilst the supposed beneficiaries—civilians—are largely omitted from the discussion. As the relationship between military and humanitarian actors is highly complex and difficult to coordinate, this is not necessarily surprising. But it does impact on both a more nuanced understanding of the difficulties of coordination in post-conflict environments and, importantly, on the local population itself. One of the key considerations is therefore what impact does the civil-military-policing relationship have on the local population and vice versa.

The following section examines the two dominant and inter-related sources of tension between military and civilian actors in a post-conflict situation. First, the intersection—and, indeed overlap—between the peacekeeping landscape and “humanitarian space” and, secondly, the encroaching role of peacekeepers as peacebuilders.

Colliding Spheres of Action

One of the central tensions within civil-military relations is the collision between the military sphere and the humanitarian sphere. Most NGOs and humanitarian agencies agree that an appropriate military role is to help support the integrity of the “humanitarian space” through the provision of security. Creating “humanitarian space” can mean both space in a definable, physical sense (e.g., providing security for a relief convoy) and space in terms of a policy outcome (e.g., maintaining a clear distinction between military and humanitarian activities so as to promote the perception of humanitarian independence and neutrality).\(^{601}\) Yet the notion of a humanitarian space is highly contentious. It is increasingly recognised that humanitarian space is a misnomer and that the humanitarian principles of neutrality and impartiality, whilst undoubtedly fundamental guidelines for engagement, are unrealistic.\(^{602}\) Contexts such as Timor-Leste clearly reveal that the “humanitarian space” and the “military” or “security” space are not easily distinguishable. Understandably, NGOs view the encroachment of peacekeepers into the humanitarian domain as a threat to maintaining the perception of neutrality amongst the local populations.

---

\(^{600}\) See, for example, *Responsibility to Protect*, 61-62.


The Cartography of Peacekeeping

population. Distinguishing between the role of peacekeepers and humanitarian agencies is therefore critical.

In establishing the "humanitarian space", peacekeepers are, in effect, engaged not in state-building but in "stage-building". This is not without its own tensions as humanitarian actors are invariably operating—or attempting to operate—concurrently. Humanitarian actors are similarly engaged in corresponding efforts through the delivery of emergency assistance and peacebuilding initiatives. Humanitarian agencies hold divergent views on the appropriate military role in providing support to their protection efforts. One reason is that humanitarian and relief agencies strive to remain politically neutral in conflict settings, while peace operations deploy in support of a particular political aim. Military forces within a peace operation, on the other hand, will forgo such neutrality to support their mandate and may use force against spoilers whose actions undermine security or threaten the mission. Humanitarian organizations that work closely with peacekeeping troops therefore risk being targeted by groups that perceive them as aligned against their interests, especially since relief agencies may remain in a country long after peacekeepers or other military forces depart. NGOs thus have varying levels of tolerance for civil-military cooperation.

The civil-military-policing dimension of post-conflict peace operations has become increasingly significant as the intersection between military, police and "humanitarian space" has become increasingly undefinable with the crowding of humanitarian agencies into fluid security environments. As a consequence there is a considerable body of literature that addresses the challenges of civil-military cooperation and coordination. Less attention, however, has been accorded to the role that local populations play within this dynamic. Caught between—and often overshadowed by—is the local population. It is critical therefore to consider how civil-military-policing cooperation and coordination negatively and positively affects the development of a relationship between the peacekeeping mission and local actors. Nor does the current civil-military paradigm attempt to bridge the gap between peacekeeping and peacebuilding despite the fact that the military component of civil-military relations both facilitates and supports peacebuilding activities. It is essential therefore to re-examine civil-military coordination in respect to the local population.

603 Holt and Berkman, The Impossible Mandate ?, 39.
604 Ibid, 39.
605 This literature is predominantly concerned with CIMCOORD.
Mission Creep: Peacekeeper as Peacebuilder?

One of the most contentious issues in humanitarian circles—and military—relates to the issues of whether or not peacekeepers should undertake humanitarian, or peacebuilding, tasks. The concept of the peacekeeper as peacebuilder was advocated by former United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali in the 1992 treatise *Agenda for Peace* which proposed peacekeepers assume the role of peacebuilders on the grounds that soldiers have multiple identities, roles and relationships which are not left behind once entering a theatre of war and indeed can be complimentary. Boutros-Ghali argued that any conflict resolution endeavour has to take into account the fact that soldiers also have civilian identities, that civilians employ military means, that jackals profit by working both sides of the war, that militia evolve to straddle military/civilian distinctions, that personal notions of honour, revenge and violence enter into military action, and that military allegiances and aggressions enter into the cultural framework of society.

There exists reluctance—and agreement—at both military and humanitarian ends of the spectrum over the notion that peacekeepers can serve in a peacebuilding capacity. On the one hand, many militaries have remained resistant to the idea that soldiers should be engaged in activities that are not war-fighting or war-like activities and that the primary task of the peacekeeper is to secure and maintain the peace. On the other hand, the humanitarian community often challenges the notion that soldiers should be engaged in peacebuilding activities based on commonly held belief that soldiers do not even make good peacekeepers.

The tension surrounding mission creep was clearly illustrated in the case of JTF CIMIC involvement in resolving the IDP crisis in Timor-Leste. The response of the international humanitarian community to the initiatives by the CIMIC section of the JTF was mixed. Certain NGOs initially objected to the JTF’s involvement in the humanitarian coordination meetings claiming that the peacekeeping force was encroaching on “humanitarian space.” The concerns

---


607 Boutros-Ghali, *An Agenda for Peace*.

608 Ibid, 13.
The Cartography of Peacekeeping

raised by NGOs ranged from the conventional adage that ‘soldiers with guns do not make good peacekeepers’ to more specific and viable concerns over issues of civil protection.609 NGOs were justifiably concerned that the JTF was seeking a military-centric solution of the IDP crisis which would counter and potentially undermine civil protection principles.610 It is worth noting, however, that at no stage during the initial discussions around engaging the JTF in the humanitarian and Timorese government response to the IDP crisis, did the humanitarian agencies offer to conduct formal or informal training of the JTF personnel in civil protection and humanitarian principles.611 Moreover, within military circles, the CIMIC initiative was regarded in some quarters as an unacceptable example of ‘mission creep’.612 An uneasy but cooperative balance was achieved for a brief period following the crisis but this was largely due to key individuals within the CIMIC section and the humanitarian community thereby demonstrating that genuine civil-military engagement is a by-product of personal relationships rather than a well-developed and accepted doctrine.

Fetherston and Nordstrom argue that peacekeeping is the link between peacemaking and peacebuilding processes at the macro and micro levels and therefore peacekeepers are in the position to become actively involved in conflict resolution.613 Peacekeeping therefore can act as a conduit, a facilitator, between conflict and peacebuilding whilst retaining the ability to enforce a climate of security. Fetherston and Nordstrom contend that:

Peacekeeping...has the opportunity...and the responsibility, to engage in micro-level peacemaking and peacebuilding activity which facilitates links with existing systems...Peacekeepers can provide that much needed link, normally non-existent, between the macro and micro level initiatives...peacekeeping...has the potential to ensure that bottom-up processes are established, legitimised and facilitated.614

Much of the confusion lies in the lack of clarity around what constitutes peacebuilding on the spectrum of intervention. The evolution of peacebuilding occurred in the 1990s with the shift away from the classical Cold War peacekeeping to the multidimensional peace support operations of today. In the complex conflicts of the 1990s where the boundaries between war-

609 Statements made at inter-agency humanitarian emergency response public meeting, Dili, 27 July 2006.
610 Ibid.
611 Ibid.
612 Personal communication with JTF CIMIC officer, Dili, 28 July 2006.
614 Ibid.
making and peacemaking were blurred, peacekeeping and peacebuilding became closely interlinked. The 2004 International Peace Academy report on peacebuilding charts the shift towards peacebuilding stating that: 'between 1992-2001 the UN moved from a linear view of the transition from war to peace...to an integrated approach to conflict prevention, conflict management, and peacebuilding. It came to view peacebuilding as requiring the full-range of its capacities—military, political, humanitarian, human rights, and socio-economic.

The Brahimi Report summarises the distinction between peacebuilders (humanitarian actors) and peacekeepers in the following statement:

History has taught that peacekeepers and peacebuilders are inseparable partners in complex operations: while the peacebuilders may be able to function with the peacekeepers’ support, the peacekeepers have no exit without the peacebuilders' work.

Within the broader context of peace support operations, the civil-military-policing paradigm provides significant insights into the role of international military and policing personnel as conduits between peacekeeping and peacebuilding. It is noteworthy that the role of peacekeepers in the peacebuilding process is often raised purely in relation to the rebuilding of infrastructure and the provision of services in the immediate aftermath of conflict, an extension of responsibilities beyond security referred to as 'mission creep.' While intervention forces are often reluctant to engage in duties beyond their primary mandate of security despite the obvious benefits in terms of building relations with the local populations, military and policing personnel have the ability to influence the peacebuilding process directly through the fostering of trust between the local population and the peacekeepers.

---

616 Tshirgi, ibid., 3.
617 Brahimi Report, para 28.
618 Guicherd, Picking up the Pieces, 5.
5.5 Conclusion

While there have been substantial advancements in civil-military relations, these have predominantly been concerned with the critical relationship between the military and humanitarian actors. Critical questions regarding the underlying concerns about what current civil-military practice reveals about attitudes towards 'peace and security' and how this impacts on the dynamic between peacekeepers and local actors have not been broadly addressed within the literature. Intervention can, if not managed carefully, become an exclusionary process which marginalises local populations. Political geography offers an alternative socio-political framework with which to examine the chaos of activity which occurs in a post-conflict environment due to the multitude of external actors. The cartography of peacekeeping lens demonstrates that peacekeeping and humanitarian action often occurs simultaneously but rarely cohesively. Local populations are frequently caught in the middle of the chaos of intervention and, as such, can be overshadowed—if not marginalised—from, and by, the process of peacebuilding. This chapter has also challenged the notion that peacekeepers, and in particular police through community policing strategies, have a greater 'reach' into local communities. While acknowledging that the nature of violence in many post-conflict situations requires a policing, rather than a military, response, the assumption that police-led operations have a greater 'reach' into the local population in view of the emphasis on community policing is challenged. The lack of a civil-policing doctrine that is contextually-informed and appropriate hinders the ability of international police to effectively engage with civilians thereby limiting local participation in the intervention process.

Through a critique of the two dominant groups of actors engaged in post-conflict intervention—the security forces, or peacekeepers, and the humanitarian agencies—further marginalisation is revealed. Despite significant efforts to consolidate the relationship between the two through developments within civil-military cooperation, it is revealed that peacekeepers and humanitarian actors are frequently at odds. The tension between peacekeepers and NGOs frequently relates to the issue of 'mission creep'. Lack of coordination between peacekeeping forces and humanitarian agencies and suspicion of each others' motives can potentially impact on the local population as the JTF CIMIC involvement in the Simu Malu process and the OP8Ball

---

cases demonstrate. The sovereignty of context is therefore critical to understanding the dynamics between peacekeepers, humanitarians and local populations. Without an acute understanding of the operational environment, the tension between peacekeepers and humanitarians, and between military and police contingents, can have negative impacts on the local population and further marginalise them from the intervention process. The following chapter explores the challenges of civil protection.
The nature of contemporary conflict has had a profound impact on respect for civilian status and the safety and wellbeing of populations. Civilians are at risk of being caught in crossfires, targeted for reprisals, forcibly recruited, sexually enslaved or raped. The concept of civil protection remains, however, a particularly grey area within the literature and a fundamentally challenging and controversial issue for peacekeeping missions at the operational level. The debate about the desirability of the military taking on greater responsibilities for protecting and assisting civilians has raged for several years now. A central dilemma for military and policing missions is how to protect civilians whilst simultaneously ensuring the integrity and protection of the peacekeepers themselves.

Moreover, as the case of Timor-Leste demonstrates, how civilians are perceived by the peacekeepers has a considerable influence over how protection as a doctrine is upheld. Representations of local actors as either 'victims' or 'spoilers' prevail in post-conflict peace operations as a means for peacekeepers to understand—albeit superficially—the context in which they are deployed. Linear categorisations of civilians in post-conflict settings are useful only in as much that they offer a framework of protection: who needs protection from whom at any given time. Yet even then the line between civilian and combatant is frequently blurred thereby challenging the pre-conceptions about the post-conflict context as discussed earlier in this study.

Building on the previous chapter's analysis of the cartography of peacekeeping, this section introduces the social dimension of intervention by addressing the parallel issues of civil protection and the representation of local actors as either 'victims' or 'spoilers'. The aim of this chapter is to demonstrate that the protection of civilians is not a neutral exercise in peacekeeping

---

Dilemmas of Civil Protection

and is informed by both the dynamics of conflict as well as the perspective of the peacekeeper. The first section, *Victims or Spoilers? Representations of Local Actors*, examines the creation of the victim-spoiler paradigm and through a field-based analysis of displacement in Timor-Leste, illustrates how this informs civil protection. These representations, it is argued, are in part a consequence of the marginalisation of local populations by the influx of external actors and the imposition of external notions of conflict.

The second section of this chapter, *Dilemmas of Security: Civil Protection and Force Protection*, examines the twin issues of civil protection and force protection and the tension in balancing the two. The third section, *Securing Peace: The Imperative of Force*, analyses the use of force in order to ‘secure peace’ and introduces the argument explored in the subsequent chapter, regarding how peace and security is viewed by local populations and the disjuncture between local notions of peace and external perspectives. This chapter concludes that how local actors are perceived by peacekeepers can inform the level and nature of protection accorded civilians. This in turn reflects the necessity for a greater understanding of how a local population negotiates the post-conflict environment. Failure to acknowledge this marginalises the very people that peacekeepers are mandated to protect.

### 6.1 Victims or Spoilers: Representations of Local Actors

Peacekeepers invariably perceive local populations in the post-conflict environment through a dichotomy of ‘victim’ versus ‘spoiler’, ‘civilian’ versus ‘combatant’. This overt framing of local actors is largely accepted in cases where genocide, for example, has occurred (Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda) or in clear instances of state-sponsored belligerents targeting civilian populations (the Janjaweed in Darfur) however its limitations—and usefulness—are revealed by the examples of the Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste where the lines are not so easily drawn through society.\(^{622}\)

Peacekeepers are not wholly at fault here. The representation of local actors along such a linear paradigm is common throughout the literature despite the current emphasis on giving voice to local populations within the discourse on peace operations. The Brahimi Report classifies local populations in three ways: first, as civilian victims that require protection; second, as belligerents who threaten the mission and the local population (the civilian victims); and third, as spoilers

\(^{622}\) It is important to note that even in the relatively clear-cut examples provided here, the distinction between victim and aggressor does become murky in the case of reprisals.
Dilemmas of Civil Protection

‘aggressors and victims.’ Such clear delineations—and attributions—of behaviour ignore a critical dimension of conflict and post-conflict environments. Identities often shift in accordance with the need to protect and survive. The IDP (a ‘victim’ due to violence-induced displacement according to standard classifications) who picks up a rock or a knife and participates in a street battle outside his/her camp therefore becomes a belligerent, a spoiler, or even a combatant in the looser definition of the term. Indeed, does his/her participation in violence mean that upon returning to his/her UNHCR-donated tent (that has developed holes because the tents are not made to last as long as his/her displacement has), and when he/she receives his/her rations of rice, beans and oil from the World Food Program, he/she is no longer a ‘victim’?

Such situations are further complicated by inadequate definitions of combatant and civilian. Brough suggests that the distinction between combatant and noncombatant has lost its relevance in today’s world. Moreover the blurring of these definitions is a reflection of the ‘new wars’ which involve a wide array of non-state actors. As de Nevers notes, ‘the actors involved in today’s wars vary widely, as the neat distinctions between soldiers and civilians have eroded. The combatants in modern wars also include warlords, mercenaries, and children.’ Under the Geneva Convention combatant and civilian are defined, however, these definitions do not allow for the modern warrior who does not necessarily belong to a recognized army or insurgency and transitions from civilian to combatant. In accordance with the Third Geneva Convention (1949) which stipulates the treatment of prisoners of war, lawful combatants are defined as being commanded by a person responsible for his subordinates; having a fixed distinctive sign recognizable at a distance; carrying arms openly; and conducting their operations in accordance with the laws and customs of war. In the reality of the new wars, the distinction between combatant and non-combatant are less clear. On the spectrum of civilian violence, there exists a dichotomy between direct and indirect participation in organized or spontaneous violence.

The following example from Timor-Leste demonstrates this point. As the violence continued throughout 2006 and early 2007, IDP camps such as the Jardim Camp, the National Hospital camp, and the Airport Camp, which were deemed ‘high risk’ camps, became armed.

626 Article 4 of the Third Geneva Convention, 1949.
Dilemmas of Civil Protection

The population of the Jardim Camp, for example, swelled with the arrival of trouble-makers, gang members, and extortionists who held the vulnerable camp population virtually hostage. Contingents of young men were moved between the Jardim Camp and the Metinaro Camp (opposite the F-FDTL barracks in Metinaro, east of Dili), to bolster lorosae numbers during the height of the civil unrest in late 2006 and early 2007. This led to intense debate amongst the international humanitarian community about the definition of civilian and combatant and reinforced the growing perception amongst the international security forces that IDPs were trouble-makers.

Spoilers, as defined by Stedman in 1997, are ‘...leaders and parties who believe that peace emerging from negotiations threatens their power, worldview, and interests, and use violence to undermine attempts to achieve it.’ In a post-conflict environment such as Timor-Leste where martial and ritual arts gangs, and armed groups, contest territory and influence in a frequently violent nature, civilian populations are further marginalised by oligopolies of violence. Lambach argues that in a post-conflict environment, a ‘security market’ develops in which actors such as militia, warlords, or vigilantes, compete through violence to provide security in particular territorial or social spaces. Lambach argues that the concept of ‘oligopolies of violence’ is useful in that illustrates the ‘heterogeneity of violence actors as well as the unequal relationship between them.’ For instance, oligopolies of violence existed in Timor-Leste as a consequence of the conflict between martial and ritual arts gangs, and criminal gangs, in securing territory and influence over the local population following the security void created by the collapse of the PNTL and the cantonment of the F-FDTL. Keeping in mind that a gang member may also be an IDP protecting his family, the distinction between civilian and combatant is blurred. Moreover, in

627 Comments made at public meeting of the Protection Working Group, held at the Ministry of Labour and Community Reinsertion, Dili, 8 September 2006.
628 In early September UNPOL sought an extension of their mandate and authorisation from Prime Minister Ramos Horta to conduct Operation Serene which required entering the Jardim Camp and the potential use of force in a civilian ‘humanitarian’ area to ‘weed out’ the criminal elements. According to international humanitarian law, military or police personnel are not allowed to enter refugee or IDP camps. See Brough, ‘Combatant, Noncombatant, Criminal,’ for three criterion of what constitutes a legitimate combatant.
629 Comments made at public meeting of the Protection Working Group held at the Ministry of Labour and Community Reinsertion, Dili 28 September, 2006.
631 Lambach, Oligopolies of Violence, 7.
633 Lambach, Oligopolies of Violence, 7.
situations where it is extremely difficult to discern exactly who the spoilers are, peacekeepers are faced with having to make split decisions based often on insufficient information and a poor understanding of the context. The justification given by the ISF for the killing of two IDPs at the Airport Camp in early March 2007 was that the two men shot were ‘bad guys.’ They were also IDPs and as such protected under International Humanitarian Law.

The simplification of action and identity overlooks the fact that civilians co-exist in a ‘post-conflict’ environment where oligopolies of violence contest power, territory, and influence. This creates ‘complex networks of interaction that outsiders should be able to decipher in a minimal fashion at least.’ If mapped, these networks of interaction provide a fuller perspective. As Jones and Cater suggest:

Of particular salience in terms of the protection of civilians are the patterns that emerge in the relationship between belligerents and civilian populations – relations of protection, service delivery, extraction, and abuse – and that understanding how these relations vary, principally as the type of war and the objectives of the belligerents, provides a critical foundation for strengthening the architecture of international protection efforts.

The emphasis on civilians as victims also overlooks the degree of agency local actors have. The broad interpretation, Pouligny suggests, followed by intervention forces is mostly based on the figure of the victim—the civilian—passive, and seen as an unidentified mass. Yet as Fetherston and Nordstrom correctly point out, populations living in the ‘epicentres of violence’ develop conflict management techniques to mitigate the impact of war at the community level. The clandestine network in Indonesian-occupied Timor-Leste is a prime example of this, as is the emergence of ‘popular security’ groups following the 2006 crisis.

Moreover, Kent and McIntyre contend that civilians, who are most affected by war and are arguably the major stakeholders in peace, are frequently denied voices in these processes.

---

634 Confidential interview, Dili, Timor-Leste, 2 April 2007.
635 See Lambach, _Oligopolies of Violence in Post-Conflict Societies_.
636 Pouligny, _Peace Operations Seen From Below_ 86.
638 Ibid., 65.
639 Fetherston and Nordstrom, 12.
Dilemmas of Civil Protection

As ‘victims’, their interests are not wholly addressed under mandates to ensure minimum standards of human rights or civilian protection. Instead ‘formal peacekeeping agendas tend to acknowledge non-belligerents insofar as they are victims of conflict; civilians in need of protection, the most vulnerable members of the population, the women and children, the internally displaced and refugees. Redefining civilians as stakeholders in conflict, the authors argue, begins by examining their position within the various causes of conflict, how they became ensnared in the ‘conflict trap’ and ways in which the dividends of peace can be made to reach the majority.

However, as Pouligny argues, the few studies that have attempted to take account of those local dimensions have tended to confine social groups within fixed patterns of behaviour thereby marginalising local populations through well intentions—albeit misinformed ones. The negative categorisation of whole social groups and communities, as opposed to individuals (for example, ‘warlord’ Harold Keke in the Solomon Islands and ‘rebel fugitive’ Alfredo Reinado in Timor-Leste), can have an adverse affect on how peacekeepers engage with local actors thereby marginalising the very groups that need to be engaged with. This can be a failure of engagement by default. As an Australian UNPOL officer stated, ‘Timorese in t-shirts...can’t tell who is good and who is bad’

This was especially true of the displaced population in Timor-Leste. From the perspective of peacekeepers, the circumstances of displacement and the internally displaced themselves in Timor-Leste must be understood beyond the superficial narrative of ‘refugees, bludgers and criminals in tents’ and in terms of context and civil protection. However, despite the reduction of IDPs in late 2006 and early 2007, negative depictions of the IDPs became increasingly prevalent as the IDP crisis appeared beyond immediate resolution, and empathy diminished. The fact that groups of IDPs (for example at the Jardim and Airport IDP camps) were belligerents in the cycle of violence that saw camps and neighbourhoods pitted against each other in street battles, further supported the attitude amongst many peacekeepers that the IDPs were not ‘real

641 Ibid.
642 Ibid, 3.
643 Ibid.
644 Pouligny, Peace Operations Seen From Below, xi.
645 Confidential interview with Australian Department of Defence official, Canberra, Australia, 13 July 2007.
646 Confidential interview with an Australian UNPOL officer, Dili, Timor-Leste, 8 September 2006. This view of IDPs became increasingly prevalent amongst the international security forces as the IDP situation became entrenched.
This was compounded by the fact that a proportion of the IDPs who fled to the camps were able to take, or later retrieve, their belongings. The image of a UNHCR tent with a satellite dish was a constant source of both suspicion and mercurial amusement. Moreover, the markets which sprang up around the perimeters of several camps, such as Jardim, were not evidence of a refusal to leave the camp and return home (indeed if there was a home to return to and a community that welcomed their return). Rather they were a response to the localisation of violence which prevented easterners from travelling to markets dominated by westerners. This illustrates the creativity which often emerges in extreme circumstances which in the context of Timor-Leste reflects almost three decades of brutal occupation. In her study of interactions between external peacekeepers and local societies, Pouligny writes that ‘it should never be forgotten that the vast majority of community actors with which United Nations missions interact have also to live, to a large extent, in a setting of day-to-day survival, which obliges them to be inventive and adaptive.’

The perception of IDPs as belligerents or bludgers was perpetuated by allegations that that the ISF and UNPOL (Australians in both cases) were aggressively asking IDPs at the Airport Camp in Dili if they were ‘FRETILIN,’ ‘firaku,’ or ‘kaladi.’ The overt political and ethnic categorization of IDPs by the peacekeeping forces was inappropriate and reflected a widely-held attitude that the IDPs were trouble-makers rather than civilians in need of protection. This in turn inflamed the perception that the Australian peacekeepers were anti-easterners and, specifically, anti-FRETILIN due to a common belief that the Australian Government was a central figure behind the removal of Ala. Perceptions of local actors were also informed by the peacekeeper’s previous experience. It was apparent, as argued in Chapter Two, in relation to the sovereignty of context, that Australian peacekeepers who had served in the Solomon Islands related their framework of understanding from that equally distinct context to Timor-Leste. This included the concept of an ethnic war between two opposing groups (which even in the case of the Solomon Islands was not as clearly definable as was purported) to comments made by a frustrated Australian UNPOL officer who, when presented with the situation of parents leaving their children locked in a room at the National Hospital and fleeing during an episode of violence between the IDPs in the National Hospital and the neighboring communities, decried to an unimpressed and offended audience of government officials that ‘not even Solomon Islanders

647 Ibid.
Dilemmas of Civil Protection

would do that.\textsuperscript{649} The Australian attitude to the internally displaced population was starkly illustrated by the disbanding of the AFP’s IDP Liaison Unit in late August 2006 and the return of those officers to general duties.

Defining who the local actors are is fundamental to engagement. Walsh contends, however, that this is not a simple task:

...the non-state actor: militia chief, traditional elder, bandit, informal community leader, and the like. These individuals have to be identified and understood lest they remain invisible to the outsider. Their roles, motives, objectives, and the basis of their popular support must be determined as quickly as possible...Identifying them can be more difficult than imagined.\textsuperscript{650}

Moreover, allegiances are complex and can be multi-layered. For example, in Timor-Leste, a member of the PNTL may also be a member of the ritual arts gang, PSHT. Where, therefore, do his allegiances lie? To the state or to his gang? According to a young PSHT member, ‘PSHT first, family second, job third.’\textsuperscript{651} For the peacekeeper, this presents an inherently difficult decision. Is he or she dealing with a police officer, a gang member, or both?

6.2 Dilemmas of Security: Civil Protection versus Force Protection

A central dilemma of security in a conflict or post-conflict environment involves the balancing of force protection with the protection of civilians. The question of how to ensure civil protection whilst stabilising and maintaining security highlights central questions around not only force protection, but the use of force and the ability of peacekeepers to discern and understand the different and interchanging local dynamics. In the case of the Solomon Islands, there appeared to be a greater emphasis by RAMSI on a “shock and awe” strategy\textsuperscript{652} which was reflected in the high levels of force protection than on the issue of civil protection. While civil protection is increasingly viewed as a measure of success, how to ‘achieve’ this is only implicitly contained in mandates. The closest that the RAMSI mandate came to defining civil protection is its reference

\textsuperscript{649} Personal communication, anonymous, Dili, Timor-Leste, 3 September 2006.
\textsuperscript{651} Confidential interview, Dili, Timor-Leste, 13 December 2006.
\textsuperscript{652} Allen, Dissenting Voices, 195; Michael Fullilove, \textit{RAMSI and State Building in the Solomon Islands}, Defender, Autumn 2006, 34.
Dilemmas of Civil Protection

to the term ‘public purpose’ which is defined in the Facilitation of International Assistance Act passed by the Solomon Islands Parliament as:

the purposes of ensuring the security and safety of persons and property, maintaining supplies and services essential to the life of the community preventing and suppressing violence, intimidation and crime, maintaining law and order...653

In the agreement between the participating regional states Article 2 ‘Security Assistance’ states that forces may be deployed to the Solomon Islands to:

assist in the provision of security and safety to persons and property; maintains supplies and services essential to the life of the Solomon Islands community; prevent and suppress violence, intimidation and crime; support and develop Solomon Islands institutions and generally to assist in the maintenance of law and order in the Solomon Islands.654

By contrast, the Solomon Islands Government was clear in its approach to the protection of civilians by stating that:

Intervention should aim at the protection of all affected civilians without discriminating against certain ethnic groups, sects, or minorities...Intervention should be accurately targeted to avoid leading to escalation of the crisis or increasing the suffering of civilians.655

An emphasis on force protection can also have a negative impact on the ability of peacekeepers to engage with local populations. This can limit the capacity of the mission to gather intelligence and develop a deeper understanding of peace and security. For example, the Australian military barracks in Dili included Camp Phoenix, a compound in central Dili secured by razor wire and military sentries. Interaction with Timorese was limited due to the high level of force protection. By contrast, a section of New Zealand soldiers lived in "Kiwi House," a dilapidated former residence in Bidau Santana, one of the more troublesome neighbourhoods of Dili. Although a


654 Official Agreement Between Solomon Islands, Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Samoa, Papua New Guinea and Tonga, Townsville, Australia, 24 May 2003.

sandbagged guard post was positioned outside the house, it became a meeting place for community members, with children observed often perched on top of the sandbags.\textsuperscript{656} The New Zealand contingent’s presence was welcomed by the community and through daily interactions became accepted. As a consequence, access to information and intelligence was significantly increased, as was an understanding of Timorese culture and society. Graffiti on a wall opposite the house stating “Kiwis Are Champions” reflected the community’s sense of connection with the New Zealand soldiers which their Australian counterparts were less able to achieve due to a higher level of force protection. Moreover, as two elderly cheroot-smoking women indulging in their morning palm wine agreed, having the Kiwis live in the community made them feel ‘more secure than they had in a long time.’\textsuperscript{657} That said, New Zealand soldiers were not immune to a “show of force.” One of the Areas of Operation (AOS) assigned to the New Zealand peacekeepers in July 2006 was Becora, one of the toughest neighborhoods in Dili with a reputation forged on having resisted the Indonesian-backed militias in 1999. The New Zealand soldiers laid down their weapons, stripped off to the waist and performed the haka\textsuperscript{658} in the middle of Becora’s main road. The symbolism of the haka was not lost on the Timorese. This allegedly inspired Becora’s residents to disarm and hand in their weapons. What is significant about this example is that it reveals how critical it is to engage with traditional culture as a method of getting the message across.

A clear paradox has emerged which places peacekeepers in a quandary over force protection versus civil protection. As Holt and Berkman note, peacekeepers are being pulled toward more engagement in questions of governance, humanitarian action, and human rights, and pushed towards using more force in conflict zones. In both cases, the need to protect civilians is invoked as justification.\textsuperscript{659} Although all these activities are important and legitimate, given limited resources, there are tradeoffs within the continuum: doing everything may result in few things being done well and effectively; doing a few central tasks may be effective but insufficient to meet a mission’s objectives. In some situations, peacekeepers will need to choose between supporting “humanitarian space” and offering direct physical protection to a population in need.\textsuperscript{660}

\textsuperscript{656} Personal observation and Personal communications with New Zealand defence personnel and community members, Dili, 23 August 2006.
\textsuperscript{657} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{658} A Maori war challenge.
\textsuperscript{659} Holt and Berkman, 49.
\textsuperscript{660} Ibid., 49-51.
The Protection of Civilians

The concept of civil protection has only recently entered the discourse on peacekeeping and remains inadequately reflected in peacekeeping mandates. Conceptually, civil protection remains fairly nebulous in definition although it is broadly accepted as referring to the protection of civilians from insecurity whether as a consequence of human-inflicted or natural crises and disasters. Civil protection involves dealing with a broad range of threats to human security beyond safety from violence to access to food and non-food items, shelter, education, and medical treatment, for example. Peacekeeping forces are primarily concerned with the protection of civilians from violence, however, human security factors, albeit not necessarily mutually exclusive of peacekeeping objectives, are integral to peace and security. This is particularly apparent in contexts such as Timor-Leste where the presence of high numbers of internally displaced inhabiting camps throughout the capital, Dili, is contributing to communal and criminal violence.

Civil protection entered official peacekeeping doctrine with the first United Nations Security Council Resolution on the protection of civilians in armed conflict in 1999 (Security Council Resolution 1265 (1999)), followed by a second resolution in 2000 (Security Council Resolution 1296 (2000)) which collectively have formed the basis for civil protection in peace operations. Security Council Resolution 1265 (1999) called for all parties to a conflict to comply with international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law and to put an end to targeting of civilians, emphasising the responsibility of the State. Security Council Resolution 1296 (2000) stated that where appropriate peacekeeping missions would be given suitable mandates and resources to protect civilians under imminent threat, and sought to strengthen the United Nations


ability to plan and rapidly deploy peacekeeping personnel, including civilian police, civil administrators and humanitarian personnel.\(^{663}\)

Despite receiving recognition at the political level, the practical implementation of protection mandates remains insufficiently explored as one of the most challenging and potentially controversial elements of a peacekeeping mandate. Although the protection of civilians is projected as the primary objective of peacekeeping, intervention itself is determined by broader political objectives that ultimately underpin humanitarian outcomes. Furthermore, whilst it is widely recognised that the impact of failing to protect civilians has significant ramifications for the mission’s credibility and legitimacy, a more nuanced approach needs to be taken in exploring the consequences of a failure to protect. The Overseas Development Group’s 2006 report on military-humanitarian engagement defines six approaches to the role of the military in civil protection whilst asserting that such approaches remain contested and by no means comprehensive: (1) Protection as an obligation within the conduct of war; (2) Protection as a military means to stop mass killings; (3) Protection as a task within a UN-mandated peace operation; (4) Protection as providing area security for humanitarian action; (5) Protection through assistance / operational design; (6) Protection as the use of traditional force.\(^{664}\) What is of critical interest is the impact of the failure to protect on the relationship between the local population and the mission.

The impact of armed conflict on civilians goes far beyond the notion of collateral damage with targeted attacks, forced displacement, sexual violence, forced conscription, indiscriminate killings, mutilation, hunger, disease and the loss of livelihoods collectively painting an extremely grim picture of the human costs of armed conflict.\(^{665}\) The cessation of conflict does not provide a guarantee of safety against such violence as civilians in the post-conflict environment are equally vulnerable and indeed, often more susceptible, to violence. Often warring factions, militias, or state militaries are imprisoned or cantoned by the peacekeeping mission therefore leaving civilians as the obvious targets for attack by rogue elements. This is even more likely when elections are to be held as an outcome of a peace process as voters are coerced through violent persuasion to support one or other (or to boycott) party or candidate. The civilian population is

---


Dilemmas of Civil Protection

therefore used as leverage. In the fluid and complex post-conflict environment where overt violence can distract from what occurs beneath society’s surface, the manipulation of the civilian population by political, military, guerrilla or criminal elements is an exceedingly difficult dynamic to discern and dismantle.

Civilian deaths now account for the highest proportion of deaths in internal conflicts—whether directly or indirectly related to the conflict—although there remains no one clear criteria for calculating civilian deaths as a consequence of war as exemplified by the discrepancies between 19,000 and 172,000 civilian deaths in 2002 alone. Conflict categorisations such as the Uppsala Conflict Data Programme which defines an armed conflict as an armed confrontation between two parties, at least one of which is the Government or State, resulting in at least 25 battle deaths per year, do not reflect the scale nor pervasiveness of conflict, including the long-term instability that can arise as a result of destroyed infrastructure, food insecurity, loss of livelihoods and ongoing perceptions of injustice, thus perpetuating the conflict cycle. It is therefore not accurate to talk purely of battle deaths of combatants as the battle grounds of civil wars intersect with the daily lives of the civilian populations. Disease is the common successor to war and can cut a swathe through a population more effectively than a weapon, particularly amongst populations displaced or in camps with inadequate water and sanitation and medical assistance. Moreover, the distinction between combatant and civilian is at best blurred.

The 2001 report by the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS), The Responsibility to Protect, represents a discursive shift from the notion of an obligation to intervene to a responsibility to protect. It is a subtle dialectic shift that attaches moral weight, and as such, a moral authority, to the act of intervening in a state’s domestic affairs. Intervention, the Report states, is an ‘exceptional and extraordinary measure,’ and the ICISS panel’s aim was to establish criteria or guidelines under which legitimate intervention by

---

666 In the Democratic Republic of Congo, for example, between August 1998 and November 2002, 3.3 million people died from malnutrition and other diseases related to the war (see Human Security Report, 2005, 134).
the international community can and may take place and thus be more efficient. It is a significant
document in its placement of the notion of civil protection at the core of intervention. By locating
the responsibility to protect civilians first with the state concerned and then—if the state fails to
protect its civilians—on the international community, it suggests a continuum of responsibility
and by extension action. The report also emphasises the ongoing responsibility of the intervenors
to assist in rebuilding the state and in preventing further conflict. Central to the responsibility to
protect are the themes of: a responsibility to prevent by closing the gap between rhetorical
support for the prevention of conflict through showing tangible commitment to assisting local
efforts to address the root causes of conflict and its triggers,671 a responsibility to react to
'situations of compelling need for human protection,'672 through the use of coercive measures
(political, economic, and judicial) and, in extreme cases, military intervention; and lastly, a
responsibility to rebuild states through undertaking peacebuilding to build a durable peace
through the promotion of good governance and sustainable development.673

Conversely, the Report suffers from a number of key weaknesses. It provides little
indication of how the desires of the local population will be ascertained and speaks of local
populations purely in broad generic terms of protection and therefore as ‘victims’. Secondly, the
Report only addresses response and responsibility in instances of large-scale violence or
genocide with smaller conflicts, such as those explored in this study, failing to meet the ICISS’s
criteria based on severity and mortality rates. This is a fundamental oversight in light of the fact
that the majority of contemporary armed conflicts are low-scale, low-intensity, wars. The
response of the United Nation’s Secretary-General to the Report was released in 2005. In Larger
Freedom advances the notion of protection as an emergent norm stating that:

if national authorities are unable or unwilling to protect their citizens, then the responsibility
shifts to the international community to use diplomatic, humanitarian and other methods to help
protect the human rights and wellbeing of civilian populations…including enforcement action if
so required.674

It does not, however, explicitly state how peacekeeping missions can or should protect civilians
whilst addressing the concerns and capabilities of missions in providing force protection,

671 Ibid., 19.
672 Ibid., 29.
673 Ibid., 39.
upholding the stabilisation mandate, and ensuring a secure environment for humanitarian activities. There remains in the literature a grey area between the application of the concept of civil protection and the operational realities of the mandate. The Millennium Report observed that despite international resolutions, the brutalization of civilians, particularly women and children, continues in armed conflict, stating that:

Women have become especially vulnerable to violence and sexual exploitation, while children are easy prey for forced labour and are often coerced into becoming fighters...In the most extreme cases, the innocent become the principal targets if ethnic cleansers and genocidaires.675

The Brahimi Report states that:

The consensus that UN peacekeeping mandates be extended to protecting civilians in armed conflicts, and the demand that UN troops or forces, who witness violence against unarmed civilians should be presumed to be authorised to stop it establishes a very high threshold and necessitates the deployment of much larger military forces.676

The Brahimi Report proposed that mandates are enforced to ensure 'bigger forces, better equipped and more costly, but able to pose a credible threat deterrent, in contrast to the symbolic and non-threatening presence that characterizes traditional peacekeeping.'677 Ironically, this has created greater space between peacekeepers and civilians as force protection levels have increased composite to the level of threat deterrence. There are a number of key issues that emerge when considering the military role in providing protection: when and how to use force, proactive or reactive tactics in coercive protection, concerns over consent of local parties, the question of whom to protect where, and the potential challenge of transferring from a robust protection mission to a more traditional peacekeeping operation. Each of these issues poses potential dilemmas for troops in the field and should, therefore, be incorporated into the strategic planning and preparation for such missions prior to deployment.678

In the case of Timor-Leste there was little evidence at an institutional level to suggest that the ISF was prioritizing the doctrine of civil protection. Protection was viewed by the ISF in

675 Millennium Report, We the Peoples, 46.
676 Brahimi Report, 8.
677 Ibid, 9.
678 Holt and Berkman, 53.
Dilemmas of Civil Protection

military terms of security.679 This approach to protection meant that once the security threat was deemed by the ISF to be minimal, the peacekeepers could not comprehend why IDPs were reluctant to return to their neighbourhoods. Civil protection, however, allows for a fuller understanding of civilian needs within the broad spectrum of security threats. It is noteworthy, however, that efforts by the NGO community in early 2007 to inform military and police personnel of the principles of civil protection were received positively by individual members of the ISF.680 Unfortunately, many NGOs (including protection agencies) did not believe it was their role to educate the peacekeepers on matters of civil protection as it could, in the words of one NGO Country Director, ‘compromise their neutrality’ and they were ‘too busy anyway.’681

Force Protection

Force protection requires peacekeepers to uphold standards of security that ensure peacekeepers are not placed in unnecessary danger. Although not necessarily inherently at odds with civil protection, maintaining force protection can compromise the ability of peacekeepers to protect civilians. Moreover, levels and standards of force protection can differ vastly between forces and depending largely on assessments of the security environment. Unfortunately, force protection can place a barrier between peacekeepers and civilians thereby impacting on the level of engagement. An alternative viewpoint was expressed by Major David Moon, of the Australian Peacekeeping Center, who suggested that ‘force protection is about community confidence.’ As force protection is about information, community support allows access to information.682

An example of force protection overriding concerns for the protection of civilians can be drawn from the IPMT’s experience in Solomon Islands in 2000. Reverend Terry Brown; Bishop of Malaita (of the Church of Melanesia) accused the IPMT of a ‘hands off’ attitude which, whilst acknowledging that the IPMT was unarmed, extended to evacuating IPMT personnel at the first sign of danger, stating that ‘it did not look very good when the IPMT just stayed in their houses during shoot outs—only to go down to the police station the next day to count spent cartridges and

679 Personal observations drawn from weekly public meetings of the Protection Working Group, Ministry of Labour and Community Reinsertion, Dili, July-December 2006.
680 Email correspondence with the Country Director of an Australian NGO, 16 February 2007.
681 Confidential interview with INGO Country Director, Dili, Timor-Leste, 15 February 2008.
682 Interview with Major David Moon, Australian Defence Force, Canberra, Australia, 28 March 2005.
Dilemmas of Civil Protection

chat with those who did the shooting. Moreover, Amnesty International reported in June 2000 that following the attack on a Guadalcanal village by IFM and sustained fighting in the east of Honiara near the GLF-controlled area around the international airport, the Commander of twenty unarmed peace monitors reported that his men were leaving at the earliest opportunity. This led Amnesty International’s Heinz Schurmann-Zeggel to state ‘Given the apparent participation of Police Field Force officers in the paramilitary operation against Guadalcanal militants, the departure of the peace monitors would be a sorry loss for the protection of human rights’.684

Although it was entirely in accordance with the IPMT’s right to protect its personnel, irrespective of whether they were armed or unarmed, this example illustrated the impotency of the IPMT mission itself in its ability to fulfill its peace monitoring mandate. It also demonstrated the extent to which the debate on civil protection has subsequently developed. Three years later, Australian Federal Police members of RAMSI’s policing contingent, the PPF, maintained a defensive attitude which created perceptions of distance between the mission and the local population. Strong symbolism was attached to the AFP’s tendency to keep vehicle windows closed, remain in patrol cars and limit foot patrols. This hindered the ability of the peacekeepers to engage with communities in a society where personal contact—a smile, wave, a greeting, the removing of sunglasses when speaking to people—is highly valued and critical to establishing relationships from which intelligence can be gleaned. The force protection behaviour of RAMSI forces increased the sense of distance between the mission and the local population. The sight of Australian soldiers jogging with their rifles caused considerable consternation as well as a degree of amusement. A commonly asked question in Borderline was ‘why do they [the Australian Federal Police] not get out of their cars and talk to us?’685 The shooting of Adam Dunning in Borderline illustrates one of the central issues of force protection. This example illustrates not that less force protection would have prevented the incident but rather that the earlier failure of RAMSI to engage in areas such as Borderline placed the mission at a disadvantage during the investigation of the murder. The consequences of RAMSI’s neglect in fostering relations with the Borderline communities shaped perceptions of the mission’s legitimacy in the eyes of the villagers, limited RAMSI’s understanding and knowledge of local dynamics, and hampered intelligence gathering.

685 Group interview, Gilbert Creek community elder, Borderline, Honiara, Solomon Islands, 7 August 2005.
Dilemmas of Civil Protection

The issue of force protection was even more prevalent in the case of Timor-Leste. The Australian Defence Minister Brendan Nelson was quoted as stating that ‘if the life of an Australian soldier is being threatened or fired upon, they will use an appropriate level of force to protect themselves, to protect Australians, foreign nationals and innocent Timorese.’ Alternatively, the decision by Major Michael Stone, that ‘most of the time I didn’t wear a flak jacket and I never carried a gun. I think that had a positive effect on my role and perception and image within the community and it certainly helped with trust’ demonstrated the benefits of a low-key defensive posture. The AFP, however, felt particularly threatened and for good reason. In mid-2006, the AFP were called out to between eight and ten incidents per night which were ambushes. In one incident, the AFP were called out to the Airport IDP Camp, drawn in close to the camp’s gate, and ambushed. A crowd of IDPs stoned the officers and cars. Several officers were badly injured and the attack could have had tragic results without the arrival of the Portuguese GNR. The AFP’s inability to contain the civil unrest contributed to a perception amongst AFP officers of being under attack. In a separate incident, the deaths of two IDPs at the Airport IDP Camp in late October following a week of violence which resulted in the closure of the Nicolau Lobato International Airport in Dili were wrongfully attributed to the Australian defence force and the Australians were banned from entering the camp. Major Mick Stone appeared on local television and refuted the allegations in fluent Tetum: ‘They accuse the Australian forces captured two people last night, took them to the detention centre, beat them to death then dumped them on the beach. I can say right now to you—this information is not true.’ Nevertheless, a sign on the camp fence was erected stating ‘TARIK MILITÄR AUSTRALIA’ (Australian Military Keep Out).

---

[689] Ibid.
[691] Personal observation, Airport IDP Camp, Dili, 5 November 2006. The Australian forces had requested dialogue with the Airport Camp that week and offered to establish a ‘buffer zone’ of 20-25 metres around the camp.
5. Anti-Australian graffiti at the Airport IDP Camp, Dili. The slogan states in Bahasa Indonesian: 'Australian Military Keep Out From The Land of Timor-Leste’ Powles 2006.

In early 2007 this had disastrous consequences. In March, the primacy role for security was handed over from UNPOL who were unable to contain the civil unrest in Dili to the ISF for a period of seventy-two hours. During this period, a section of Australian soldiers responded to violence at the Airport IDP Camp and shot and killed two IDPs. This example illustrates the critical issue of soldiers engaging in a civilian environment. Under the Australian rules of engagement, lethal fire is the first response, as opposed to firing warning shots or the use of non-lethal weapons, such as rubber bullets. The ISF’s justification was that their APC (armoured personnel carrier) was being ‘pinged’ by *rama ambons* (steel darts) and rocks\(^{692}\) however it is highly questionable whether the level of force used was appropriate in accordance with the actual threat. Moreover, the incident raised concerns about the legitimacy of the action under international humanitarian law in light of the close proximity to an IDP camp.\(^{693}\) Although both ISF and UNPOL attended the weekly meetings of the Protection Working Group held at the Ministry of Labour and Community Reinsertion, they did not engage in discussions and frequently left after giving the security briefing.\(^{694}\) A frequent complaint amongst the NGO participants at the meeting was that there was too great a focus on security and inadequate attention paid to civilian protection issues. The prevailing issue for the peacekeepers was security as demonstrated by the high level of force protection but the enforcement and maintenance of security is also intrinsically related to civilian protection. Civil protection issues must therefore be taken into consideration by peacekeepers, particularly when operating in an environment such

---

\(^{692}\) Confidential discussion with ISF personnel, Dili, March 2007.

\(^{693}\) A UN human rights investigation was conducted into the incident but the findings were not made public and the issue was shelved. Confidential interview by telephone with former UN analyst, 13 March 2007. An internal Australian defence force investigation was conducted.

\(^{694}\) Personal observation from weekly public Protection Working Group meetings at the Ministry of Labour and Community Reinsertion, Dili, July-December 2006.
as Timor-Leste which required the ISF and UNPOL to frequently engage with local communities and IDPs as a consequence of violence and civil unrest.

The force protection attitude of the ISF, and the Australians particularly, was informed by experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan, albeit vastly different theatres of conflict than Timor-Leste—and Solomon Islands. As one observer of RAMSI noted, 'initial indications were, on August 4-5 2003, that the Australian-led peace-enforcement operation ... had begun well, with some of the rebel forces sensing that there was a stronger sense of purpose in the force than might have been the case before the “Iraq example”.' Yet as the following example illustrates, heightened force protection measures combined with the “shock and awe” approach of the ADF in Solomon Islands can have a negative impact on local perceptions of the mission. On 2 July 2003, Solomon Islanders thronged Henderson Airport on the western outskirts of Honiara to watch and welcome the arrival of the intervention force. According to one observer, the Australian Defence Force personnel adopted an aggressive stance from the outset, securing the airfield with weapons at the ready. When the Fijian peacekeepers emerged onto the tarmac and greeted the crowd with ‘Bula!’ the crowd erupted in jubilation. This difference in attitude—perceived or otherwise—towards the civilian population remained a pervasive factor throughout the mission.

Levels of force protection must therefore be measured against the need to engage with local populations in order to build relationships based on trust and, ideally, enabling intelligence gathering. This can in turn assist dramatically with the ability of the peacekeeping mission to protect civilians by knowing, for instance, where threats are likely to emanate from. However, heightened force protection can inhibit the ability of the mission to integrate into communities which in turn hinders the ability of peacekeepers to develop an understanding of local social and cultural dynamics. As an Australian military CIMIC specialist argued, the failure of RAMSI resulted from that fact that ‘the whole of command has failed to realize the importance of community in the areas of force protection and compliance’

6.3 Securing Peace: The Imperative of Force

The specific role of peacekeepers in protecting civilians remains contested and variable and there are a number of substantive questions which must be explored. Although peacekeeping is often

696 Confidential interview, former member of RAMSI, Honiara, Solomon Islands, 8 September 2005.
697 Confidential interview, ibid. Bula is Fijian for ‘Hello.’
698 Interview with Major David Moon, Australian Defence Force, Canberra, Australia, 28 March 2005.
Dilemmas of Civil Protection

conflated with the civilian tasks of peacebuilding, the actual peacekeeping component itself is becoming more coercive. Greater use of force therefore highlights the need to incorporate civil protection into peacekeeping. From a military and policing perspective, the ability to provide civil protection must be weighed against the need to ensure force protection— the safety of the mission itself. That pre-requisite coupled with insufficient numbers, poor local intelligence, the inability of civilian police to control and subdue violence, and, in the cases of multinational forces, the lack of a unified approach to security, creates a dichotomy which can render peacekeepers in the position of being unable to adequately protect civilians. This remains a critical dilemma in all peace operations: the importance of peacekeepers building trust with the local population in order to garner better intelligence with which to counter violence. The challenges of balancing the building of trust with the use of force against the same civilian population highlights the issue of the neutrality of peacekeeping forces. The Brahimi Report called for an abandonment of traditional neutrality on the basis that:

In some cases, local parties consist not of moral equals but of obvious aggressors and victims, and peacekeepers may not only be operationally justified in using force but morally compelled to do so.

What this statement does not acknowledge is that the identity of combatants and civilians can shift in keeping with the fluidity of civil unrest. Is a peacekeeper therefore able to distinguish between the ‘aggressor’ and the ‘victim’? During the INTERFET deployment in 1999, the distinction was relatively unambiguous in that INTERFET focussed its operations on the TNI and the Indonesian-sponsored militias in protection of the civilian Timorese population. The crisis and ensuing violence in 2006 and 2007 lacked such explicit characteristics.

How peacekeeping forces approach the concept of civil protection is equally ambiguous when definitions of who to protect from whom, and how to do it, are not clear. This is particularly the case in post-conflict societies where civilian combatants and spoilers are not easily defined and the imprisonment or cantonment of forces or militias does not necessarily remove all rogue elements. However, as an Australian military officer stated: ‘You as a

701 Brahimi Report, 9
Dilemmas of Civil Protection

peacekeeper do have freedom of movement to prosecute those spoilers.703 As noted, however, identifying who the spoilers can be an intrinsically difficult task if confidence has not been built amongst local communities enabling the gathering of intelligence. Moreover, how militaries address the issue of protecting civilians against non-state forces (including those with state support) raises serious questions about mission preparedness and capacity especially when missions are over-stretched, under-resourced and incapable of comprehensively protecting themselves let alone the civilian population they are charged with securing. This, in part, may explain why the term civil protection, broadly used throughout humanitarian discourse, has only gradually entered the military canon. NATO military doctrine, for example, addresses issues of civil protection tangentially by recognising that peace support operations may take place anywhere on a spectrum between peace and war.704 The United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations Handbook on United Nations Multidimensional Peacekeeping Operations addresses the issue of civil protection through stating that:

In specific circumstances, the mandate of a peacekeeping operation may include the need to protect vulnerable civilian populations from imminent attack. The military component may be asked to provide such protection in its area of deployment only if it has the capacity to do so.705

The critical point here is that the protection of civilians is not guaranteed as it is entirely dependent upon the mandate and the mission’s ability to do so. The UN Security Council Resolution 1296 (2000) establishes that:

The targeting of civilians in armed conflict and the denial of humanitarian access to civilian populations afflicted by war themselves constitutes threats to international peace and security.706

As such, Resolution 1296 recommends where appropriate peacekeeping missions are given suitable mandates and resources to protect civilians under imminent threat, including by strengthening the UN’s ability to plan and rapidly deploy peacekeeping personnel.707 However, it is not just a question of ensuring that the language of civil protection is applied to the mission

703 Interview with Major David Moon, Australian Defence Force, Canberra, Australia, 28 March 2005.
704 Holt, 'The military and civilian protection developing roles and capacities,' 2006, 57.
707 Ibid.
mandate but also whether or not the mission is capable of protecting civilians, a decision is calculated on the ground and depends upon a range of factors, from force capacity to the decision-maker’s interpretation of the risk to his or her troops. Civil protection tasks include a range of activities from the provision of security, providing humanitarian ‘space’ or corridors for humanitarian activities to take place, to protecting vulnerable populations in communities or displaced populations in IDP camps. A critical consideration for the mission is therefore its ability to protect civilians and provide force protection simultaneously. In highly fluid conflict and post-conflict environments, ensuring a secure environment can be an insurmountable task especially during the early and crucial phases of the mission when it is unclear who the combatants are and where the battle lines are drawn and redrawn. These challenges are further compounded during the all too common security vacuum which occurs during the transition from a military-led to a police-led operation when the complexity of the situation and insecurity often deepens against the backdrop of the mission’s lack of capacity to fulfil the task.

There is a significant impact on the mission’s credibility and legitimacy if it fails to protect civilians. Credibility and legitimacy are sought through popular support for the mission and as such the mission’s public relations—or public information campaign-targets the local population by conveying the mission’s messages and symbols of protection, in the form of posters, radio broadcasts, and the strongly visual symbolism of power through weapons. By contrast, failure to protect civilians against violence can be interpreted as a sign of partiality and loss of neutrality if one side of the conflict is not protected against the other(s), as well as a loss of faith in the ability of the mission to serve as protectors. This perception of the mission’s impotence invariably results in local actors taking security into their own hands through the formation of neighbourhood security networks,708 emboldens criminal elements to establish security extortion rackets,709 and deepens the security vacuum within which violence occurs. The end result is a critical weakening of the relationship between the mission and the local population which is extremely difficult to counter.

The legitimacy of the use of force is one of the underpinning tenets of the relationship between the peacekeeper and the local population. Beneath the pedestrian overpass in

---

708 Members of the Beto community in Dili announced their intentions to establish a neighbourhood, or popular, security force (and requested funding to support it) at a public *Simu Malu* meeting with Timorese government representatives, Dili, 6 August 2006. Popular security forces had sprung up around Dili following the April/May crisis.

709 The gang 12-12, which fell under the control of former FALINTIL commander, Oan Kiak, established a security extortion racket in central Dili, including ‘providing’ security to the Jardim IDP Camp, in 2006.
Dilemmas of Civil Protection

Chinatown, Honiara, the word ARMLAW is written in large black capital letters. Its meaning, that 'the Australians came to restore law and order in the Solomon Islands but they came with guns'\(^{710}\) is heavy with irony and reflects the profundity of cultural misunderstanding.

![Graffiti questioning RAMSI's heavily armed intervention, Honiara Powles, 2005.](image)


The very notion that peace can be achieved with the aid and instruments of violence (threatened or otherwise) is regarded by many in the Solomon Islands, and Melanesia more broadly, as paradoxical.\(^{711}\) It also indicates how conflict is perceived by the interveners and how this in turn has informed and framed notions of conflict management and legitimised the tools with which to do so. The irony, however, is further magnified. The very concrete the graffiti is scrawled upon represents a well-meaning externally funded infrastructure project that failed to take into account the cultural taboo that stipulates that it is offensive to ‘walk over heads.’ The overpass instead serves as a welcome respite from the sun and the rain and a canvas for political graffiti.

A youth speaking at a community meeting held in one of the squatter settlements in the hills behind Honiara in 2005, also expressed his concern about the influx of guns that accompanied the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands.\(^{712}\) A similar sentiment was reiterated by a former Guale policeman who fled Honiara with his family during the tensions

\(^{710}\) This is the interpretation given to me by a young Malaitan man, confidential interview, Honiara, Solomon Islands, 7 August 2005. It was confirmed in subsequent discussions with other Honiara locals.

\(^{711}\) This statement does not present itself as an established cultural norm but rather is based upon Personal communications with a wide range of Solomon Islanders from the various different provinces (predominantly Guale and Malaitan), men and women, the elderly and the youth, during periods of field research throughout 2003-2005.

\(^{712}\) Group interview, Kopito community, Honiara, Solomon Islands, 31 July 2005.
following victimisation at the hands of Malaitan members of the Royal Solomon Islands Police force. He questioned the impact that the overt displays of force strength would have on a society traumatised by gun violence and particularly upon the displaced and disenfranchised youth who had witnessed the power a gun can assure its owner of.\footnote{713} As Fetherston and Nordstrom note, if peacekeepers can control social problems by the use of a threat of arms, then social actors are rewarded for thinking that they can achieve their goals by the same means.\footnote{714} The “shock and awe” strategy of RAMSI in conjunction with the mission’s high level of force protection had a negative impact by raising the profile of weapons in a society seeking demilitarisation.

6.4 Conclusion

The protection of civilians is a critical and uncategorical measure of the success of a peace operation. Rwanda and Srebenica are pointed reminders of the failures to protect. However, the implementation of a mandate to protect is extremely difficult and is met with a number of obstacles. This chapter has argued that external perceptions of local actors impacts on the operational task of civil protection. In challenging conventional paradigms of civilians as ‘victims’ or ‘spoilers,’ it is argued that peacekeepers must develop a more nuanced and flexible understanding of the local population in keeping with the need for the identities of civilians to shift in accordance with the circumstances. Herein lies the importance of the sovereignty of context and context-based definitions of civilians and combatants. This chapter has also demonstrated that civil protection is a crucial measure of success, but challenges remain as to how to balance the protection of civilians with force protection. Moreover, force protection measures and the use of force by peacekeepers establishes a barrier between peacekeepers and civilians and inhibits engagement, thereby challenging the notion of the imperative of force in securing peace. The following chapter builds on this analysis by exploring how the success of peace operations is measured and the need to evaluate the success of a mission from the perspective of the population the mission is charged with protecting.

\footnote{713}{Personal communication with former Royal Solomon Islands Police officer, Honiara, Solomon Islands, 15 June 2004.}
\footnote{714}{Fetherston and Nordstrom, \textit{Overcoming Conceptual Habitus}, 18.}

Conventional methods of evaluating the success of a peace operation rely heavily on externally-driven measures which reflect the policy requirements of international actors and in doing so invariably fail to incorporate the realities or desires of the civilian population on the ground. As Pouligny observes, 'a peace operation is largely conceived in the ante chambers of international negotiations...and...that is where the 'crisis' to which the operation is supposed to respond is analysed and qualified according to parameters that often have very little to do with the local and regional context.'

Measuring the success of a mission through a 'local lens' offers an alternative means of gauging the mission’s contribution to long-term sustainable peace and by extension ‘leads to the redefinition of most notions and patterns governing the action of the international community.’

Local indicators of success in turn reflect the level of engagement between the peace operation and the local population. Neglecting local indicators of success contributes to the marginalisation that local populations frequently experience at the hands of international intervention. Yet the critical role that civilian populations have in contributing, indeed determining, the success of a mission continues to be overlooked. Even the Brahimi Report, the most significant review of peacekeeping operations to occur in the decade from the transition of traditional peacekeeping to the model of multi-dimensional forces, fails to examine the impact and experiences of local populations. This is a reflection of the ongoing marginalisation of the critical factor which determines the success of peace operations.

The aim of this chapter is to demonstrate that the measures by which peace support operations are judged excludes the perceptions of the population on whom it seeks to impose a peace. I argue that standard, albeit well-intentioned, measures of success such as the ‘democracy

---

716 Ibid., xvii.
calendar' leading to ‘free and fair’ elections, exit strategies based on elections and state or institutional building, and the fulfilment of mandate requirements to oversee a peace agreement, ceasefire or restore stability are in many respects ‘virtual’ indicators of success. Juxtaposed against these traditional benchmarks are the increasingly acknowledged issues of legitimacy and consent. However, even these measures of legitimacy and consent may merely define the relationship between the peacekeeping force and the local population and not necessarily reflect the ongoing existence of undercurrents of conflict which invariably continue to thrive, albeit in the shadow of the mission.

This chapter seeks to address both the disjunctive between external measures of success and local indicators and key factors which contribute to the mission as a potentially destabilising force thereby reducing its overall success. These factors are anchored in the context of the mission thus emphasising the sovereignty of context. The first section, Perspectives on Mission Success, examines standard measures of success with a focus on various criteria including mandates, the question of legitimacy and consent and the creation of a ‘social contract’ between peacekeepers and civilians. The second section, Local Indicators of Peace and Security, critiques the relationship between the peacekeepers and local population at a deeper level by challenging the measure of law and order as an indicator of ‘success’ and argues that local indicators of success must be considered in order to have a fuller and more comprehensive and realistic understanding of peace and security.

The final section, The Honiara Riots, examines the riots that occurred in the Solomon Islands capital in April 2006 in detail and argues that RAMSI’s inaction before the riots and the mission’s subsequent response to the riots demonstrated a lack of context-specific knowledge and a fundamental gap between the mission and the local population. This chapter concludes by arguing that external benchmarks of success are contrived by those who do not ‘live’ the peace the mission has sought to impose.

7.1 Perspectives on Mission Success
Measuring the success of a peace operation is inherently difficult. The central debate within peacekeeping is consistently concerned with how to increase the success of peace operations and how, in turn, to evaluate that success. Measuring the success of peace operations—and defining the criteria of success—has thus become a preoccupation of practitioners and scholars alike. The failures of peace operations in the 1990s, and the extension of peacekeeping mandates to include
The Measure of the Mission

peace maintenance and peacebuilding, has resulted in a series of reviews—discussed in Chapter Two—undertaken to determine where the United Nations was going wrong. As a consequence, the debate about the proper objectives and the best criteria for evaluating particular peacekeeping operations has consumed peacekeeping scholars but with little consensus having been reached. The pursuit of what constitutes a successful peacekeeping mission and how to tangibly define, and therefore replicate, those elements has resulted in the development of a host of questionable criteria by which to judge mission success.

Various attempts have been made by practitioners and scholars to develop a typology of success. Stuebner has identified five key principles necessary for a successful peacekeeping mission: first, the national interest of the host country must trump international interests; second, the peacekeeping mandate must be unambiguous (the absence of a clear mandate creates confusion over what is and is not allowed under the terms of the agreement, thus running the risk of making empty promises and creating false hopes); third, there must be unity of command; fourth, the force must have sufficient resources to complete its mission, as the absence of necessary equipment and personnel results in a totally ineffective force; and fifth, there must be a mutual desire for continued, long-lasting peace. Stuebner stressed that without commitment on the side of the warring parties, there will be no peace to keep, and without commitment on the part of the peacekeeping forces, they will not accomplish their mission.

Arguing along similar lines, the Challenges Project offers three methods of achieving success based on strategic, operational and tactical measures. Strategic measures include the ‘thorough assessment of a potential mission’; the creation of a ‘clear, credible and achievable mandate that matches the mission with resources’; the ‘selection of quality leaders to conduct the mission’; and an ‘adequate donor base’. Operational measures include a plan that synchronises the efforts across the many dimensions of the operation and the management of effective transitions of functions from one organisation to another, including ‘communicating the peace

---


719 Ibid.


721 Ibid.
effort’ by communicating the mission’s accomplishments, and establishing trust and confidence (consent building) with the host country’s officials and citizens. Lastly, tactical success would be achieved by carrying out the operational plans in a professional manner with well-trained and disciplined soldiers, civilian police and civilians.722

Adopting a slightly alternative stance, Bulloch suggests that success is ‘defined by the state of affairs which needs to be achieved by the end of a campaign’ 723 which supports the premise that success is defined by those imposing peace. Whether the ultimate objective is political or military, those who determine the success are rarely those who have to live with the outcomes. Indeed, Bratt argues that the criteria of success are rarely explicitly stated and peacekeeping operations have many objectives and that ‘depending on the vantage point from which it is assessed, the same operation can be deemed either a success or a failure.’ 724 Hence what may appear to be ‘success’ to external actors may indeed not reflect success in the eyes of the local population. That said, Bratt’s proposed criteria for measuring operational success—mandate performance; facilitation of conflict resolution; conflict containment; and limitation of casualties725—are innately conventional. As measures, Bratt’s criteria do provide an overall picture of success but they do not provide a comprehensive reflection of the state of peace and security on the ground. They literally do not tell the whole story.

The cases of the Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste reveal significant disparities between what is required to ensure success at one level and the realities of peace operations on the ground. For example, while centralised command under RAMSI in the Solomon Islands enabled a unity of command as the Timor-Leste case study has shown, the lack of central command and control mechanism between the ISF, UNPOL and the FPUs, resulted in confusion over rules of engagement which in turn impeded operations. The deployment gap that also occurred as a consequence of the slow deployment of policing contingents and inadequate logistics further exacerbated the ability of the mission to fulfil its public security mandate. Moreover, ensuring the fulfilment of the criteria, particularly in the area of mandate performance, raises the issue of accountability—and by extension transparency—on the part of the interveners. Chopra argues that:

722 Ibid.
724 Ibid.
725 Bratt, ‘Assessing the Success of UN Peacekeeping Operations.’
The Measure of the Mission

The idea of international accountability has not matured democratically, for it has not been subjected downwards to the will of a local population as a constituency. Just as international personnel are immune from domestic prosecution, so too the people of a territory do not participate in deciding on the nature of international actions. Nor are they in a position to demand transparency from or to ensure effectiveness of those who intervene. In this context, politically-driven and blunt declarations of ‘success’ are readily made, regardless of the actual—often dismal—results.726

As Chopra notes, once it became clear to the Timorese that UNTAET intended to depart after the Constituent Assembly elections in August 2001, the elections were predictably viewed as the exit strategy for the mission.727 In response, Lucas da Costa, the Rector of the Higher Institute for Economics and Management, addressed a letter to UNTAET with the support of political, religious, and traditional leaders, that challenged the UN’s claim of mission success based on peaceful elections. Da Costa argued that the elections occurred peacefully not because of functioning law and order but rather because of the discipline of the Timorese people. Da Costa called for a ‘reliably accountable international assessment to be conducted of the gap between UNTAET’s original mandate and the persisting debris of a nation unbuilt, the ruins of which the Timorese people would inherit while the UN presented itself as successful.’728 This, Da Costa countered, would be a breach of the international promise made to the Timorese people which was accepted in good faith—a breach of the social contract between the UN and the Timorese.729

7.2 Legitimacy, Consent and the Social Contract

The notion of a social contract between a peace operation and the local population is one means of analysing success and provides alternative standards of evaluating a mission’s performance. Mersiades proposes that a social contract based on legitimacy and operational performance act as a measure of determining the success of a mission.730 Mersiades suggests that the management of

726 Chopra, ‘Building State Failure in East Timor,’ 990.
727 Ibid.
728 Ibid.
729 Da Costa also called for the removal of the Transitional Administrator, Sergio Viera de Mello, to ensure that the assessment would be transparent. De Mello responded by rejecting Da Costa’s bid for a cabinet post. Chopra, ‘Building State Failure in East Timor,’ 994.
730 Michael Mersiades, ‘Peacekeeping and Legitimacy: Lessons from Cambodia and Somalia,’ International Peacekeeping, 12,(2), Summer 2005, 205-221. Knight and Ozerdem, for example, argue that disarmament, a
the peacekeeper’s legitimacy is the best tool for maximizing local actor consent and preventing active opposition to peacekeeping operations. He argues that whereas consent reduces opposition to peacekeepers, legitimacy has the additional benefit of providing a basis for generating local actor support. The latter, Mersiades suggests, increases the prospect of a successful peacekeeping operation in the following ways: peacekeeping resources do not have to be devoted to controlling the population; a cooperative population is more likely to volunteer intelligence to the peacekeepers; by establishing a moral basis for authority and political power, rather than force alone, legitimacy encourages a culture of non-violent political change which increases the likelihood of a successful peacebuilding effort; and a legitimate peacekeeping force is more likely to retain local support after a significant failure or error by the peacekeepers.

The Australian soldiers who arrived in Timor-Leste in 2006 rode the wave of legitimacy of their predecessors—the INTERFET troops in 1999 who were viewed by the Timorese population as liberators. An Australian soldier who served in INTERFET and returned in 2006 observed: 

No matter where you would go in this country there was an amazing warmth for the Australian soldiers. People would run from their houses out to the fences and wave and they never lost that energy.

That legitimacy was quickly squandered, however, through both the actions of Australian soldiers and the dynamics of the crisis itself which saw the ISF used as pawns in the east-west conflict. In one particular case, a member of the Australian Defence Force ordered an international member of the then Prime Minister Ramos-Horta’s staff to vacate his place in the queue at the ANZ Bank ATM in downtown Dili on the grounds that the Australians ‘had come to save you’.

The importance of securing legitimacy at the community level—as well as at the elite level—is therefore inherently significant in the context of relations between peacekeepers and local populations. However gauging legitimacy is intrinsically difficult. Legitimacy in a post-standard measure of success, should be approached in terms of a social contract as an alternative to the military-centred approach. See Knight and Ozerdem, ‘Guns, Camps and Cash’, 505-507.

731 Mersiades, ‘Peacekeeping and Legitimacy,’ 205
732 Ibid.
733 Ibid., 205-206.
734 Major Michael Stone, ‘The Peacemaker.’
735 Personal communication with Chris Santos, legal advisor to Prime Minister Ramos Horta, Dili, 13 September 2006.
conflict context is intrinsically ephemeral and profoundly affected by the behaviour of the peacekeeping forces. Moreover, in protracted social conflict, the issue of communal legitimacy lies at the core of conflicts in failed states, and consequently also of peacebuilding missions.\textsuperscript{736}

Herein lies the importance of the relationship between peacekeepers and local population as a critical lens through which to understand, achieve, and sustain legitimacy. Moreover, the focal point of legitimacy needs to be expanded from the state to the local level in turn necessitating the re-evaluation of success from a purely state-centric perspective to a people-oriented perspective. This is epitomised by the perception amongst many Solomon Islanders that RAMSI supported the Kemakeza Government which lacked popular legitimacy. By extension the legitimacy of RAMSI was also under question:

\begin{quote}
Problem they [RAMSI] solved is law and order. We enjoy the presence of RAMSI in our community. However, we are still poor. Why we are still poor, even though RAMSI is here is that we still have the same corrupt people in government. May be when we have a new government with completely new people, things may change. For now, I don't want RAMSI to go back yet because of the law and order problems. \textsuperscript{737}
\end{quote}

The orthodox means of assessing legitimacy is by measuring the consent of the local population towards the peace operation. The fundamental lesson that emerged as a consequence of the troubled peacekeeping operations of the early 1990s was that the consent of local actors is crucial to the success of the operation.\textsuperscript{738} Without the consent of local actors, the ability of peacekeeping missions to fulfil their mandates let alone establish the groundwork required for long-term security is inherently limited. The absence of consent can range from passive resistance to the peacekeepers to active confrontation. Yet as Mersiades has pointed out, evaluating consent and then employing it as a measure of legitimacy has considerable conceptual and empirical weaknesses. In instances where the host government has requested the intervention force (in the cases of both the Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste, the invitations were sought by Australia) there is a widespread assumption that consent is an automatic cornerstone of a successful


\textsuperscript{737} Group interview, Burns Creek, Honiara, Solomon Islands, 9 October 2005.

\textsuperscript{738} Mersiades, “Peacekeeping and Legitimacy: Lessons from Cambodia and Somalia,” p. 205.
mission. But consent at the state-level does not necessarily equate to consent at the local level. Thus peace operations must carefully consider how representative ‘local actors’ are.

Dandeker and Gow, in their early work on social contracts as a means to peacekeepers’ achieving legitimacy argue that it is ‘neither sufficient, nor practicable nor conceptually appropriate to regard consent as the key to the effectiveness of peace support operations.’ A focus on ‘managing consent alone is simplistic and misguided’ and the principal requirement for complex UN multilateral military peace support operations in dynamic environments remains legitimation. While consent can be viewed as either active or passive neither necessarily equates to the legitimation of a peacekeeping force. Active consent indicates overt support for the mission while passive consent can simply denote the absence of active resistance. An extreme example of this is the Timorese population under Indonesian occupation. Few would argue that those who elected to ‘keep their heads down and get on with the struggle of everyday life’ were demonstrating passive consent and therefore the legitimation of the Indonesian occupying forces.

The Brahimi Report extends the basis for legitimacy by stating that that the bedrock principles of peacekeeping are a triumvirate of legitimacy consisting of not only the consent of the local parties, but also the impartiality of the peacekeeping force, and the use of force only in self-defence. Munslow and Brown suggest that the main difference between peace enforcement and war is impartiality with the key difference being that in traditional peacekeeping operations there is no designated ‘enemy’ and the actions taken are defined as coercive operations carried out to restore peace and a situation of chaos or between belligerent groups who may not consent to intervention.

As has been discussed in Chapter Four, the perceived lack of impartiality on the part of the Australian forces in Timor-Leste had fundamental implications for the ISF’s ability to operate effectively throughout Dili and damaged the mission’s legitimacy overall. This in turn raises the question of whether peacekeepers can realistically be perceived as impartial actors and if not, does this necessarily negate legitimacy? Can peacekeepers be partial to a process, or a population, and still be viewed as legitimate enforcers of security? The unique example of INTERFET in 1999 suggests that peacekeepers can lack impartiality due to a sense of obligation.

---

741 Ibid., p. 171.
742 Brahimi Report, 9.
and responsibility to a population, without any impact on the legitimacy of the peacekeeping force. Indeed, it was INTERFET's partiality that engendered widespread popular support for the mission. Furthermore, the link between the use of force--force protection--and the protection of civilians is a critical determinant of legitimacy and the use of unnecessary levels of force has a detrimental impact on the legitimacy of the peacekeepers. The relationship between the protection of civilians and the use of force as it relates to force protection (the protection of the peacekeepers themselves) is a perennial debate and was analysed in *Chapter 6*.

### 7.3 Mandates: The Final Frontier

What is patently clear from the criteria identified above is that the fulfilment of a mission's mandate serves as the central performance indicator. The trouble with mandates is that they are invariably broad in scope to ensure the flexibility of the mission's operations and thereby lack a degree of specificity that would in turn provide clearly delineated goals and objectives. As Chandler accurately points out:

*...extended peacebuilding mandates are taking the UN into new areas of direct political and social regulation, where the mission goals are much less clear than in traditional politically-neutral mandates.*

By extension, peacekeeping mandates have also lost a degree of clarity as they negotiate the political and humanitarian terrain of not only the integrated missions themselves, but also the context in which they are deployed. Mandates reflect a great deal which is *implicit* and therefore to a large extent difficult to measure especially by the decision-makers in New York or Canberra who are external to the process and, importantly, the context itself. While a primary mandate of the restoration of law and order, for example, may be achieved through the absence of guns on the streets, the actual establishment of peace and security for local populations is a far more complicated objective and therefore much harder to determine, let alone achieve, without consideration given to local perspectives. Because mandates lack transparency and clarity, as a standard measure of success, mandates fall short of reflecting the realities of context and instead provide a superficial and unquantifiable assessment of success.

---

The Measure of the Mission

Coherent mandates are particularly crucial in the absence of a peace agreement. As Pouligny notes, ‘in the absence of a peace agreement a multinational force can be seen alternatively, by one or other of the groups in conflict, as being possibly useful or hostile towards their endeavours.' This was clearly evident in Timor-Leste in 2006 where the lack of clarity surrounding the ISF's and UNPOL’s mandates—and the critical differences between the two—caused considerable confusion amongst the general populace (as well as the international humanitarian community) and resulted in confusion and allegations of favouritism of one group (loromonu) over the other (lorosae). For example, confusion over issues such as the authority to arrest contributed to the anti-Australian sentiment. Many Timorese could not understand why the Australian military could not arrest perpetrators of violence especially when, as was the case in the early days of the mission, the military were the first on the scene but the attackers had disappeared by the time the international police arrived.

The issue of how to ensure that mandates adequately reflect context and the needs of civilian populations is paramount. As discussed in Chapter Six, the extension of a mandate to protect civilian populations is increasingly common, however as was shown, that in itself does not necessarily guarantee that local voices are adequately engaged. While the protection of civilians is regarded as a important benchmark of success for a peace operation, such achievements cannot alone be considered as a measure of peace and security. The dynamics of the context itself must be considered before peace and security is quantified. This therefore demands a greater emphasis on context-specific local indicators of performance. Furthermore, timing and the ‘ripeness’ of the conflict are critical factors in the ability of a peace operation to be effective. As the following statement suggests, the relevance of context in determining the success of a peace operation cannot be ignored. It illustrates that peace operations can create a false sense of security by artificially freezing the dynamics of the conflict. The Challenges Project observes:

Suitable conditions for peace operations do not emerge overnight..."when peacekeepers go in they freeze the situation. If you freeze it too early or too late the mission is doomed to failure"...too early and the parties have yet to come to grips with the situation and may want to

---

745 Pouligny Peace Operations Seen From Below, 106.
746 Community meeting, Airport IDP Camp, Dili, 12 September 2006.
continue fighting regardless of a signed peace agreement. Freeze it too late and the deep hatred for the other side has hardened and there may be no hope for reconciliation. 747

Alternative measures of success must therefore be sought. As the immediate military success of a peace operation is built upon the ability of peacekeepers to positively engage with, and where necessary subdue, the local population, excluding local voices from an evaluation of a mission’s fulfilment of its mandate to establish peace and security is a fundamental oversight. Morgan and McLeod have argued

The success of state-building is measured largely against externally imposed criteria, with little room for the continuation of cultural and institutional norms that offend Western concepts of state and nation. While indigenous ownership is seen as fundamental to state-building, state-building initiatives such as the RAMSI intervention are typically evaluated against international benchmarks, rather than criteria based upon local circumstances and the long-term prospects for sustaining imported ideas and institutions. 748

A Flawed Peace?

Local population have to live with the peace that is measured and imposed by external interventions. However, that peace is potentially flawed if it does not accurately represent and reflect the context in which it must, ostensibly, thrive. Richmond argues that even contemporary peace operations which seek to establish peace rather than simply manage conflict reflect a ‘complex installation of peace’ based on a mixture of national interest formulations, political reform and humanitarian requirements. 749 This, he suggests, has created practices in which states (and organizations which profess to understand what peace is) are able to intervene in conflict in order to educate others in their ways of peace, without necessarily renegotiating the peace frameworks that have arisen from the recipients’ experience, culture, identity or geopolitical location. 750 Richmond concludes by stating that the question of what peace might be expected to look like from the inside (from within the conflict environment) is given less

748 Michael G. Morgan and Abby McLeod, ‘Have We Failed Our Neighbour,’ *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 60 (3), 413.
750 Ibid., p. 91.
The Measure of the Mission

credence than the way the international community and its organisations and actors desire to see it from the outside, and that moderates searching for peace from within the conflict environment tend to expropriate Western models in their search for a solution.751

The establishment and maintenance of peace and security in a post-conflict environment becomes focused on law and order and exit strategies as local populations struggle with expectations and the fundamental dichotomy presented by peace operations: that security from a law and order perspective—and the visible means to achieving it—does not equal peace. Furthermore, as the discussion in Chapter Two illustrated, the notion of ‘post-conflict’ is itself flawed. The term ‘post-conflict’ suggests the absence of forces or instruments of violence which is rarely an accurate depiction of any context in the aftermath of war. It is a distinctly ‘external’ notion based on the assumption that the post-conflict environment is a blank canvas upon which law and order—and “peace and security” for that matter—can be transferred or imposed. As Lambach suggests, ‘post-conflict societies have to be understood as distinctive spaces that follow their own logic, not just as an ‘in-between’ phase.’752

Underpinning these questions is the proposition therefore that the security sought by peacekeepers is a reflection of external perceptions of security rather than an embodiment of local, and thereby sustainable, notions of peace. Until it is actively acknowledged that law and order does not equate to peace and security, peace operations will continue to pursue a flawed outcome. It is clearly neither acceptable nor realistic to assume that the absence of war means peace. This in turn calls into account conventional means of assessing the success of missions and challenges the commonly accepted definitions, criteria and measures of legitimacy and consent.

Initiatives by peacekeepers to engage with civilians and communicate the message of peace and security can easily backfire if not carefully and sensitively navigated. An incident in the Dili neighbourhood of Bairo Pite, in September 2006, an area renowned for its frequent battles for territory between warring gangs as well as a stronghold of Alfredo Reinado supporters, illustrates this point. Australian military personnel drove slowly through the streets of Bairo Pite playing Jimi Hendrix’s tribute to American soldiers in the Vietnam War, ‘All Along the Watchtower,’ on loud speakers. The soldiers claimed they were playing loud music so as to encourage people to come and talk to them about ‘peace and security’ and the Australian

751 Ibid.
752 Lambach, Oligopolies of Violence, 5.

198
Defence Force's role in Timor. The reaction of the Timorese watching, particularly the older generations, was of concern and offense and consequently had the opposite reaction—no one wanted to approach.

The following sections of this chapter seeks to redress the absence of perspectives of local populations in measuring the success of peace operations by building on the initial critique of evaluating mission success through an analysis of three key dynamics that impact on the success of a peace operation: local indicators of success which challenge external notions of law and order; the case study of the Honiara riots in 2006 which revealed a fundamental gap between RAMSI and the local population; and the challenge of reconciling civil protection with force protection.

7.4 Local indicators of success and security

Local indicators of success are far more difficult to gauge than externally-determined ones because they require local knowledge and an understanding of the context. Quantifying success from the perspective of local populations necessitates a level of engagement between peace operations, peacekeepers and civilians which is largely absent. Moreover, it demands an understanding and knowledge of the context in which the mission operates, a quality which is also all too frequently lacking. Local indicators of success, and in turn, peace and security, reflect the complex and shifting dynamics of conflict as well as identifying new dynamics that emerge in the so-called 'post-conflict' setting. Using the measure of law and order as a definition of success and security reveals a fundamental paradox within peacekeeping. Law and order viewed from an external perspective fails to take into account conflict dynamics which invariably linger despite, and in spite of, the presence of peacekeepers. Although Bratt's identification of the containment of conflict as a performance indicator is extremely valid, once again it does not provide the whole picture of security.

The measure of law and order as an indicator of success must be challenged as it invariably does not equate to a sense of peace and security for the local population. A false sense of peace and security is equally as precarious as the absence of peace and security. As Collins and Weiss note 'there is no shortage of critics who complain that too much attention is given to

753 Personal observation and communication with Australian Defence Force personnel, Bairo Pite, Dili, 20 September 2006.
754 Bratt, 'Assessing the Success of UN Peacekeeping Operations.'
treating the most observable symptoms of war and then leaving the area at a time when the peace process is truly just beginning... Issues unresolved in the peace agreement can easily linger, fester, and erupt again. Local actors are acutely aware of the contradiction—or gap—between external perceptions and restoration of law and order and their own sense of peace and security. As the following statement made during a discussion held by the NGO Catholic Relief Services in Dili in July 2006 reveals, IDPs are extremely sensitive of the gap between externally-imposed law and order and local dynamics of peace and security:

Rebuild trust and good relations in our communities, because without it security forces will not be able to guarantee peace between us.

Local populations are therefore cognisant that peacekeepers can only do so much. This directly challenges the notion that local expectations of peace and security must be ‘managed’ by the mission. While to an extent this is true, this perception also further marginalises local populations from the critical role they play in peacebuilding. Indeed, addressing the contradiction between law and order and peace and security has implications for peace-building. Peace-builders have a vested interest in addressing the root causes of conflict, rather than merely the symptoms exposed by law and order, and there is growing acceptance that this cannot be achieved without involving local populations in the process.

Law and Order and the Sovereignty of Context

The sovereignty of context is the determining factor in understanding the paradox between law and order and peace and security. The need to consider local circumstances as suggested by Pacific scholars Dinnen, Hegarty and others is paramount if international interventions are to

---


be context-appropriate and effective. For instance in the Solomon Islands, scholars observe that RAMSI will ‘need to overcome their own [RAMSI’s] cultural preconceptions about social order and the nature of the state’ as ‘ignoring the importance of local circumstances will undermine this entire state-building mission.’\textsuperscript{758} The local population was also extremely aware of the fact that law and order alone was not sufficient to maintain peace and security. As the following statement illustrates, the enforcement of ‘fear’ by the mission was not regarded as sufficient to sustain peace and security, in turn reflecting local perceptions of the mission’s legitimacy. The speaker also highlighted widely-held concerns about the security vacuum that would exist following RAMSI’s departure:

\begin{quote}
Fear of RAMSI and the consequences are not sufficient to sustain peace. People should abide by law because they consent to (out of respect for the law) not because they are afraid – once that fear is removed with the withdrawal of RAMSI, what will happen?\textsuperscript{759}
\end{quote}

Morgan and McLeod question what the restoration of law and order actually means, suggesting that in the context of an external intervention, the creation of ‘law and order’ as understood by Western observers differs significantly to the restoration of law and order, as the peoples of Solomon Islands know and describe it.\textsuperscript{760} This includes the incorporation of traditional and customary methods of conflict resolution and mitigation. The cleavage between local and external (or imported) ideas about social order, Morgan and McLeod argue, is therefore significant.\textsuperscript{761} The imposition of external notions and practices of law and order can have an inadvertent but long-lasting impact on traditional social structures. In the Solomon Islands strong sentiment existed amongst the local population that RAMSI was ignoring local custom and thus weakening traditional community-based mechanisms for conflict resolution. An elderly Malaitan man quoted in the 2006 report by Oxfam titled \textit{Bridging the Gap between State and Society: New Directions for the Solomon Islands}, stated:

\begin{quote}
\textit{Morgan and McLeod, ‘Have We Failed Our Neighbour,’} 426.
\textit{758 Interview with members of the Malaita Ma’asine Forum executive, Honiara, Solomon Islands, 9 August 2005.}
\textit{759 Ibid, 419.}
\textit{760 Ibid.}
\textit{761 Ibid.}
\end{quote}
The Measure of the Mission

I supported RAMSI when they came in and took the guns. That has made us freer. But my complaint is they can’t come in and make laws for us. I listen to ‘Talking Truth’ on the radio— to me they are turning down custom and turning up law. That may trigger future conflict.”

This is of critical importance as custom and traditional authority had been challenged and weakened during the tensions. A female civil society representative in Malaita explained further:

Before we had a Chief and Headman in the village; we didn’t have men who steal, who kill or rape because everyone was frightened of the chief and Headman...The problem is now the structure has gone—we don’t have law and order, we don’t have Kastom...

The marginalisation of traditional authority by RAMSI undermined the critical role that chiefly structures played in conflict mitigation and resolution and revealed a singular and innately Western notion of law and order. It also raised the spectre of whom and what would ensure security once RAMSI left the Solomon Islands. This balance between the protection of civilians and the preservation and autonomy of custom created significant tension. A member of the Burns Creek community displaced during the tensions stated:

We want protection. But I don’t need RAMSI to come and help me with this. We have our chief system which is very good and we can solve our security problems through our chief system.

In RAMSI’s defence, the mission has never sought to promote itself as the panacea to the problems of the Solomon Islands. In response to a Solomon Islands Government-sponsored report by the Review Taskforce in 2006 which held RAMSI and the Australian High Commission responsible for the failure to consolidate peace, then Special Coordinator James Batley stated that:

RAMSI’s position has always been that one of its key roles is to help create a stable environment in which Solomon Islanders themselves can take forward the task of peace and reconciliation, at their own pace, on accordance with their own customs and traditions.

---

763 Oxfam Community Aid Abroad, Bridging the Gap, 11.
764 Group interview, Burns Creek, Honiara, Solomon Islands, 9 October 2005.
Moreover, the United Nations Development Program report on ‘Emerging Priorities in Preventing Future Violent Conflict’ stated that RAMSI ‘recognizes’ that ‘order’ is not the same as ‘peace’ and that the absence of overt violence is not the same as the presence of active peace. Yet the dichotomy remains. In the words of one Solomon Islander from the squatter settlements in the hills behind Honiara, ‘law and order is here but peace is not in our hearts.’

The case of the Solomon Islands also acutely highlights the question of what constitutes security in a post-conflict environment. Interpretations of security are therefore broader than the superficial (but nevertheless important) ‘guns off the streets’ perspective and incorporate all dimensions of human security. A statement by New Zealand diplomat Paul Ash, the Deputy Special Coordinator of RAMSI (March 2005-March 2007), that ‘peace is economic security’ supports the contextual reality that a large demographic of unemployed youth and young men is a catalyst for ongoing instability. But economic security alone is not peace. Major David Moon suggested that the RAMSI threat assessment of the displaced communities on the outskirts of Honiara did not match community perspectives of security and that RAMSI officials ‘need to go live with them and get a feeling of what’s going on.’ Moon argued that levels of insecurity within the community remained high and as a consequence the displaced population was ‘not being lured back [for example to the island of Malaita] by bags of rice and house starter kits.’ Furthermore, Morgan and McLeod observed that although Solomon Islanders ‘claim that they appreciate the return of personal security facilitated by RAMSI, they simultaneously bemoan the fact that the majority of socioeconomic factors that precipitated the crisis continue to plague their lives.’

The Honiara Riots

The riots that occurred in Honiara on 18-19 April 2006 (locally known as ‘Black Tuesday’ and ‘Black Wednesday’ respectively) directly challenged RAMSI’s position that law and order had been restored and in turn the success of the overall RAMSI operation which had been lauded as

---

767 Personal communication, Borderline, Honiara, 2 November 2005.
769 Interview with Major David Moon, Australian Defence Force, Canberra, Australia, 28 March 2005.
770 Ibid.
771 Morgan and McLeod, *Have We Failed Our Neighbour?* 419.
772 Allen, *Dissenting Voices*, 196.
The Measure of the Mission

‘thus far...one of the more successful state-building enterprises worldwide.’ On 5 April national elections were peacefully held however it was the subsequent prime ministerial elections of 18 April which provided the catalyst for the outbreak of violence. The three contenders were Snyder Rini, the Deputy Prime Minister in the previous Kemakeza Government, and suspected of corruption, former Prime Minister Manesseh Sogavare (elected after the 2000 coup amidst allegations of preventing opposition members from entering parliament to cast their vote) and the reformist Job Dudley Tausinga, supported by the Christian Fellowship Church. Rini was elected prime minister and the subsequent political contest can be viewed as a struggle between the new guard who supported political reform and the old guard, characterised by money politics. When Rini attempted to leave Parliament House, escorted by RAMSI officers, demonstrators stoned his car and forced Rini and the Australian police officers back into Parliament House. RAMSI officers responded with tear gas and twenty-five police officers were injured in the squirmish.

Rioting spread first to Point Cruz and then to Chinatown with Chinese-owned businesses and shops looted, burnt and destroyed. Morgan and McLeod note that Tausinga publicly opposed violence and urged people to respect the election of Rini. However the Director of Public Prosecutions alleged that in a speech to the crowd outside parliament, Charles Dausabea, former Home Affairs minister in the Mamaloni Government, incited the crowd to violence by saying ‘Mi fala lose nao, iu fala doim what nao iufala liken’ [We’ve lost, just go ahead and do whatever you want to do].

---


775 Morgan and McLeod, *Have We Failed Our Neighbour?* 420.

776 Ibid. Money politics dictated the outcome of the prime ministerial vote with politicians reputedly being paid between SI$25,000 and SI$60,000 for their allegiance. Moore, ‘Helpem Fren,’ 152; Michael McKenna and Mary-Louise O’Callaghan, ‘Purse, not policy, at play in Solomons,’ *The Weekend Australian*, 29-30 April 2006, 10.


778 Point Cruz and Chinatown are the commercial hubs of Honiara. The Chinese-owned Pacific Casino, reputedly a hive of money laundering and prostitution, was also torched.

779 Morgan and McLeod, *Have We Failed Our Neighbour?*, 421.

780 Reported in the Solomon Star, 26 April, 2006, and cited in Morgan and McLeod, *Have We Failed Our Neighbour?* 421.
The Measure of the Mission

The violence was not simply a ‘popular protest against a flawed system stained by corruption’ but reflected deep seated grievances about political decision-making in Solomon Islands which involved the mobilisation of cash to consolidate alliances, and excluded the participation of Solomon Islanders. The targeting of waku (the local term for Chinese) owned businesses revealed, at one level, the belief that ‘powerful local and international interests drive politics’ and at another level, the economic frustration felt by many Solomon Islanders and directed in large part to Chinese business owners.

To suggest, as analyst Michael Fullilove did in a radio interview that month, that ‘it is hard to identify the dog that doesn’t bark’ and that ‘there hadn’t been speculation on the streets of Honiara’ is categorically incorrect. In 2004 rising anti-Chinese tensions led to threats being made against a popular restaurant in the backstreets of Honiara, Nicky’s Fast Food, that ‘if RAMSI not here, it [would be] burnt down. When RAMSI go, Nicky’s go.’ Fullilove’s claim that law and order in the Solomon Islands was ‘sorted out’ suggests that the riots were some kind of anomaly which was clearly not the case.

This level of discontent was particularly prevalent amongst the youth and the unemployed in the hinterlands of Honiara where squatter settlements had sprung up following the tensions. In mid-2005 a youth interviewed in Gilbert Creek gave a prescient warning:

*We young people are very frustrated about everything around us. You see, we don’t have good opportunities, that is why you see us occupying ourselves with kwaso and marijuana. If you stop us, then what else is there for us? Something must be done about this. Jobs are hard to find. In fact, everything is four times harder than before. If this continues then something worse than what we see now will happen.*

As Fraenkel observes, the demographic and social indicators of conflict were present well before the tensions and more so afterwards:

---

781 Morgan and McLeod, Have We Failed Our Neighbour? 420-421.
782 Ibid.
783 Ibid. Local businessman Sir Thomas Chan, father of Laurie Chan, foreign minister in the Kemakeza Government, was rumoured to have bought support for Rini.
784 Michael Fullilove, ABC Radio, April 2006.
785 Confidential interview, Honiara, Solomon Islands, 9 June 2004. The fact that the portraits of the King and Queen of Thailand hung proudly over the counter in Nicky’s Fast Food did not dissuade those making threats.
787 Group interview, Gilbert Camp, Borderline, Honiara, Solomon Islands, 7 August 2005.
The Measure of the Mission

Back before the crisis-related exodus from Honiara in 2000-2001, urban disturbances in the 1990s had regularly been joined by under-employed youths hanging around aimlessly in Honiara (the notorious ‘masta liu’). Renewed expansion of squatter settlements on Honiara’s fringes, and the build-up of young and aimless street kids, had become notable features of the Honiara scene over 2002-6, and were always likely to swell the ferocity of even minor urban disturbances. 788

The Honiara riots were a watershed for RAMSI. They revealed what many Solomon Islanders and observers had been aware of for several years. The reaction to the riots, mired by confusion and over-reaction, revealed, as Australian journalist Mary-Louise O’Callaghan aptly put it, the vacuum that existed between RAMSI and the local population.789 Since the early halcyon days of the mission which saw impressive disarmament and the appearance of law and order on the streets, RAMSI had been lulled into a false sense of security. The murder of Australian Protective Services officer Adam Dunning in December 2004 had ‘shaken up RAMSI personnel’790 and resulted in the temporary increase of military and police personnel. However by April 2006, the numbers had been scaled back to sixty-three soldiers, the majority of whom were performing guard duty at Rove Prison in Honiara following the riot in late 2005.

The riots caught RAMSI off guard and exposed both the flawed notion of success attributed to RAMSI and the critical gulf of understanding between the mission and the local population. The clearly orchestrated violence that resulted in the destruction of Chinatown, in eastern Honiara, reflected social and political forces that RAMSI had underestimated and, to a large extent, ignored. As a Dateline documentary on the riots noted, ‘the violence showed evidence of preplanning, yet RAMSI had no prior intelligence, a sign, said critics, that the mission was losing touch on the ground.’791 The head of the Participating Police Force, Will Jamieson, stated publicly that there was no intelligence to suggest the kind of orchestrated violence that the police ultimately faced.792 But as Morgan and McLeod state, elements of the pro-opposition crowd were already armed with petrol spray and fire bombs, and that they quickly set to incinerating RAMSI vehicles after the initial skirmishes, thereby supporting the contention that key members of the opposition group instrumentalised violence for political gain.793

790 Interview with Paul Ash, RAMSI Deputy Special Coordinator, Honiara, Solomon Islands, 11 August 2005.
791 Dateline, Dark Days in the Hapi Isles, SBS, 17 May 2006.
793 Morgan and McLeod, Have We Failed Our Neighbour?, 423.
Fraenkel refutes the suggestion that the violence was pre-meditated and organised stating that claims that ‘trucks’ had delivered rocks, ‘water bottles’ and ‘firebombs’ to parliament prior to the riots were all false. Fraenkel contends that the violence was spontaneous: stones hurled at the parliament were readily available on the access road; the torching of the first RAMSI vehicle, supposedly with The Australian’s petrol-filled ‘water bottles’, was at least an hour and a half after the initial outbreak of the disturbances outside parliament; and that once the crowds veered down towards the town, numerous opportunist elements joined the melee. The use of tear gas on the demonstrators was also considered to have enflamed the rioters.

However, Australian police reportedly only resorted to the usage of tear gas approximately three hours after the commencement of the disturbances outside parliament with the Deputy Commissioner of Police Johnson Siapu claiming that ‘the violence and attacks on property at Chinatown and other areas throughout Point Cruz had commenced prior to the deployment of tear gas.’ According to the then Australian-appointed Solomon Islands Police Commissioner, Shane Castles, the timing was close; ‘by 3.15pm … a crowd in excess of 200 began ransacking both the Sunrise and Wings Supermarkets’, and ‘at 3.22pm non-lethal (CS) tear gas was deployed at parliament house.’ Fraenkel argues that claims that RAMSI tactics sparked the disturbances are overplayed and inconsistent. He contends that the usage of tear gas on the demonstrators at Parliament could not have exacerbated the riots, suggesting the timing alone reveals the inconsistencies in this claim: ‘If so, that was seven minutes later. It requires about five minutes to run, without stumbling, down the steep hill from parliament to Point Cruz. Hence, if this timing is correct, those fleeing from the CS gas outside parliament could only have joined the rioting in the town centre at around 3.27pm, twelve minutes after its commencement.’

The failure of intelligence on the part of RAMSI is reflected by the decision not to deploy additional troops to the Solomon Islands during the election period. This is in itself is surprising as elections are common catalyst for unrest and as Fraenkel has noted, hostile public reactions to election results were not uncommon (the 2001 election of Sir Allan Kemakeza, for instance) and ‘cautious preparation for disturbances accompanying prime ministerial elections, including

---

799 Ibid., 25.
deployment of officers to Chinatown, had previously been standard Royal Solomon Islands Police procedure. A former Solomon Islands Assistant Police Commissioner stated that 'It is a standard procedure for the disciplinary forces of Solomon Islands to be on alert during any national election, stepping up as parliament is convened for the election of the Prime Minister. Forces were usually deployed at Parliament House, on the approaches to Chinatown and for other key locations on a direct route from Parliament House. Such a strategy allows one to block or deflect riotous assembly as opposed to the riskier strategy of following it into Chinatown.'

The consequence of not deploying additional security resulted in, as O'Callaghan notes, the absence of an adequate military back-up for the PPF during the riots. This, O'Callaghan suggests, calls into question the risk assessment capabilities of the mission's joint intelligence group which determined that the sixty-three soldiers in-country at the time were sufficient and, moreover, did not make the decision to pre-deploy military personnel in support of the police. In light of the fact that the military's role in RAMSI is to support the police, it is extraordinary that the military were not present that day. Despite official statements to the contrary stating the 'outbreak was successfully contained by police,' the PPF were overwhelmed and under-prepared resulting in what many argued was unnecessary force. Following the riots the numbers of military personnel were increased to 430 and the PPF was increased from approximately 330 to over 450 and then Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer stated that he had no doubt that 'RAMSI and particularly the Australians will be able to restore order there.' However, it is questionable whether the reactive quelling of public disturbances actually constitutes the restoration of order. Certainly Australia may have successfully 'restored order there' in the short term, but if unaddressed, discontent will continue to fester, posing an ongoing challenge to the maintenance of social and political order. As O'Callaghan stated:

The scene of the April 2006 protests outside parliament where the predominantly Australian and New Zealand PPF officers could be seen acting in a seeming vacuum from both the mood of the

---

801 Solomon Islands born Mike Wheetly, the former Assistant Police Commissioner (National Reconnaissance and Surveillance) during 1992-2000, 'RAMSI Tuesday' wasn't due to Intelligence Failure,' http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/HL0605/S00401.htm.
803 Ibid.
806 Morgan and McLeod, Have We Failed Our Neighbour? 423.
807 Ibid., 425.
crowd and the senior ranking local RSIP officers present at the scene was a chilling illustration of the dangers of trying to rebuild someone else’s country without being steeped in understanding of that culture and the dynamics of that community.\textsuperscript{808}

RAMSI was directly criticised for its handling of the riots. The failure of intelligence, the lack of local knowledge, cultural understanding and linguistic skills, and the heavy-handed response meted out by the PPF, demonstrated the overall failure of the mission to engage with the local population at all stages of the operation. For instance, the PPF prevented Sir Peter Kenilorea, the Speaker of Parliament, and a senior and well-respected politician, from speaking to the crowd at Parliament, an action which if allowed to proceed, could have potentially diffused the situation substantially. Kenilorea accused the Australians of acting too hastily in their use of tear gas and stated that ‘They [the Australians] should [have] allowed time for us to keep talking to the protesters at the parliament house and not to use tear gas on them because it would simply aggravate the situation and it would simply take the parliament situation, or scene, out to the streets.’\textsuperscript{809} Australian Police Commissioner Mick Keelty defended the actions of the PPF by responding that he simply did not understand ‘why anyone would criticize, or even think to criticize, the work of the Australian Police in the Solomon Islands.’\textsuperscript{810}

The issue of whether RAMSI was a target during the riots has been largely refuted. Paul Jevtovic, the National Manager of the AFP’s International Deployment Group, claimed that he did not believe RAMSI itself was targeted but rather ‘emotions were running high in the aftermath of the election and got out of control.’\textsuperscript{811} Fullilove supported this by stating that the evidence indicated the riots were directed towards certain Solomon Islands politicians and that ‘RAMSI officers put themselves in the way of the violence in the course of trying to maintain order...RAMSI personnel are not perceived as foreign occupiers. The mission remains broadly popular amongst Solomon Islanders.’\textsuperscript{812} As Morgan and McLeod note, ‘prior to the April riots, this resentment was manifest in the throwing of rocks at RAMSI vehicles and increased public expressions of disenchantment. Many Solomon Islanders note that while improvements to the

\textsuperscript{808} Mary-Louise O’Callaghan, ‘RAMSI: The Challenges Ahead,’ Workshop Paper, Solomon Islands: Where to Now?, held at Australian National University, Canberra, 5 May 2006, 4.
\textsuperscript{809} Patrick Walters and Cath Hart, ‘Honiara torched by rioters,’ The Australian, 20 April 2006, 1.
\textsuperscript{811} AFP, ‘Rocks and renewal, 5.
\textsuperscript{812} Michael Fullilove, ‘Jigsaw that won’t fit,’ Sydney Morning Herald, 22 April 2006, 21.
mission could be made, the continuing presence of PPF personnel is essential to the ongoing maintenance of peace, law and order.\textsuperscript{813}

Whilst there is no doubt that RAMSI is supported by the general population, to ignore the clear warning sign that the Honiara riots provided would be detrimental to the mission. The riots revealed that despite the contention that law and order had been restored to the Solomon Islands, underlying conflict dynamics still ran deep. The riots signalled that the mission was out of step with the local population and that a deeper understanding of peace and security is critical to the overall success of the state-building operation. Moreover, the riots demonstrated severe inconsistencies in the mission's force protection capabilities as a result of poor intelligence.

\section*{7.5 Conclusion}

This chapter has demonstrated that the success of a peace operation is often measured from the perspective of those imposing the peace and therefore does not provide a complete and accurate representation of peace and security as experienced by those who 'live it.' While the orthodox measure of success—the fulfilment of mandate obligations—and the means for achieving it—based on legitimacy and consent—are critical benchmarks to evaluate success, it is imperative that local indicators of success are incorporated into the analysis. This includes recognition of the importance of traditional mechanisms of conflict resolution and mitigation which can be utilised parallel to conventional methods of law and order. Moreover, if the social contract is to be regarded as a measure of success, it must be understood in contextually-appropriate terms.

External measures of law and order as an indicator of 'success' must therefore be challenged as the restoration of law and order does not, as the Honiara riots in 2006 illustrated, necessarily reflect a deeper sense of peace and security. This in turn reveals the disjuncture between the external notion of a 'post-conflict' environment and the existence of ongoing dynamics of conflict on the ground. To that end, the Honiara riots also highlighted the extent to which the mission lacked context-specific knowledge. The riots revealed a fundamental gap between the mission and the local population and by extension the paradox between the mission's perspective on peace and security and the lived experiences of the local population. The failure to engage with local perspectives on peace and security further marginalises local populations from the mission and by extension the critical role that local actors play in the process, ownership and assessment of peace. How success is measured therefore needs to be re-

\textsuperscript{813} Ibid., 419-420.
evaluated. This is not an insurmountable task but rather one that requires patience and commitment to determine what the actual ‘peace dividend’ is. Or perhaps success could be measured in simpler terms. When asked how to evaluate the effectiveness of the military’s engagement with the local population, an Australian major responded: ‘Are you invited to community events?’\footnote{Interview with Major David Moon, Australian Defence Force, Canberra, Australia, 28 March 2005.}

Conclusion

The pursuit of peace in societies transitioning from conflict is fraught with challenges. Peacekeeping has sought to adapt to the complexities of contemporary civil war by evolving from traditional 'first generation' peacekeeping through to the multi-dimensional 'fourth, fifth and sixth generation' deployments with mandates of peace enforcement, peace maintenance, peacebuilding and statebuilding. As a consequence, intervention has progressively become more intrusive, assertive, and state-centric in the endeavour to establish peace and security in war-torn societies. Yet paradoxically, this has had negative repercussions for local populations. In seeking peace, intervention frequently marginalises the very people who suffer the greatest from its absence. This in turn perpetuates and compounds the cycle of marginalisation experienced by civilians at the village and community-level who have found themselves impotent in the face of external and domestic struggles for power. As a consequence of the prevailing culture of non-engagement between peacekeepers and local populations, peace operations negate the critical role local populations play in ultimately determining the success of the mission. Strategic and tactical engagement with local populations by peacekeepers thereby offers an alternative grassroots approach to the traditionally state-centric approach of peace operations.

Peace operations are mandated to establish security and rebuild state institutions as defined and measured by international standards and criteria. Intervention is therefore an innately external process which attempts to establish security in a context influenced by a myriad of fluid and complex local dynamics. As a consequence, local populations are frequently marginalised by the very process which seeks to redefine and reshape the socio-political environment. Balancing external objectives with domestic realities is an intrinsically difficult task and one which requires the engagement and participation of the local population. However, as the cases of the Solomon Islands and Timor Leste illustrate, in the process of implementing and achieving international
Conclusion

measures of success, peace operations inadvertently marginalise the local population due to a culture of non-engagement.

This study has advanced the concept of participatory engagement as the basis of relations between peacekeepers and civilians. Civil-military relations provides a critical lens through which to examine engagement between peace support operations and the civilian population by analysing competing interpretations of the fundamental issue of peace and security. In doing so, this study has highlighted the two fundamental and interrelated concepts, of: (1) the sovereignty of context; and (2) a context-based understanding of peace and security. Collectively, these two concepts underpin the importance of participatory engagement, the practical dilemmas of engagement, and the consequences of a failure to engage with local populations.

Firstly, the sovereignty of context reflects the importance of an understanding of the local environment in which peacekeepers operate. Local knowledge and appreciation of the socio-political and cultural context is essential to the development of appropriate and ‘context sensitive’ responses to peace and security. Knowledge of a conflict’s origins better prepares and enables a mission to navigate the complex and shifting dynamics of the post-conflict environment influencing the ability of the mission to operate effectively. Moreover, an understanding of context reduces reliance on dubious assumptions about why a conflict has occurred and assuages the tendency to stereotype or caricature its protagonists, and those individuals and communities made vulnerable by the violence. Without such knowledge, there is a propensity to essentialise conflict and apply a ‘one-size fits all’ approach to peacekeeping. From an operational perspective, an understanding of context determines the mission’s ability to engage in preventive rather than reactive security measures. Furthermore, without an understanding of context, peacekeepers cannot engage effectively with the civilian population and, conversely, it is only through increased and genuine engagement, that such understanding arises.

Secondly, it is critical that those seeking to create peace and security understand what peace and security means in a specific context. The dual notions of peace and security have many interpretations all of which are dependent upon context and are shaped by a multitude of factors such as the experiences of civilians throughout a brutal occupation and the failed expectations associated with independence. Does, for instance, peace and security hold the same meaning for Timorese as it does for Solomon Islanders? Understanding what peace and security means in a particular context means understanding the history of conflict in a given society. It also diminishes the tendency to view civilians as existing at either end of the moral spectrum—either
Conclusion

victim or combatant, good or bad, which fails to recognise the multiple and shifting identities civilians invariably hold in response to the everyday politics of conflict and survival.

Despite commonalities between the obvious dynamics and consequences of conflict as illustrated by the 'new wars' thesis, what underlies conflict is intrinsically rooted in context. Peacekeepers are therefore in a unique position, at the frontline of the peace operation, to witness the multiple meanings that peace and security have in conflict and post-conflict settings. Commonly, however, peace and security is equated to the presence of law and order. The establishment of law and order is regarded internationally as a standard, or benchmark, of success thereby privileging external perceptions of security over local notions of peace. Yet the danger of this assumption lies in the fact that law and order can create a veneer, or façade, of peace and security. Focussing exclusively on law and order disavows the importance of giving agency to multiple perspectives on peace and security. The underlying issues of a conflict therefore remain present in the post-conflict environment albeit artificially frozen by the intervention. As the cases of the Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste have demonstrated, internationally-accepted measures of success are inadequate representations of realities on the ground. It is only through engaging with local populations that missions can gain a nuanced understanding of peace and security.

At the strategic and normative levels, engagement with local populations is widely acknowledged as important to the success of a mission. Theoretical advances in the study of peacekeeping and intervention have identified that the failure to engage local populations lies at the fault-line between peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Yet despite significant paradigm shifts in the approach to peacekeeping, civilian populations remain marginalised in and by the practice of peace support operations. A clear disjuncture remains between peace support operations and peacekeepers and civilians. In order to advance the study of peacekeeping, this study has sought to bridge theory and practice by drawing on a range of concepts which advance the debate on participatory intervention. At one level, this includes expanding and enriching the study of peacekeeping and intervention by incorporating the concepts of human security, the development-security nexus and 'people-centred approach.' At another level, combining a more nuanced approach to civil-military doctrine by building on the notion of a social contract between peacekeepers and local populations offers an alternative approach to intervention by emphasising the importance of local engagement. Collectively, the two approaches subvert the state-centric approach to intervention and place civilians at the core of peacekeeping as determining factors in the success of peace operations. The rhetoric of strategic engagement is therefore challenged, and to a large degree negated, by the culture of non-engagement on the ground.
Conclusion

At the tactical level a culture of non-engagement prevails. The practical dilemmas of engagement in post-conflict settings frequently overwhelms the ability, capacity and will of peace support operations to do so in a comprehensive and participatory manner. Engagement is influenced by socio-cultural attitudes, perceptions of conflict and, importantly, the causes of conflict, partiality and impartiality, legitimacy and credibility. However, the everyday politics of peacekeeping is shaped by the intricate and shifting dynamics that inform relations between peacekeepers and local populations. The difficulties of navigating these dynamics against the ever-present backdrop of conflict is a challenge that demands patience and commitment. It is further complicated by the emphasis on force protection, logistical constraints, and the inclination to perceive civilians as victims or villains—a perspective which fundamentally diminishes the critical and central role that local populations play in influencing peace and security and ultimately the success of the mission. As the cases of the Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste illustrate, successful and constructive engagement requires restraint, cultural sensitivity, and an understanding and knowledge of the context in which peacekeepers operate. It also demands empathy with the local population and an appreciation that the basic needs and aspirations of a squatter in the Honiara settlements, an IDP in a camp in Dili, a villager caught between warring gangs, are not necessarily inherently different from that of the soldier or policeman. The boundaries of social and political conflict are simply drawn more harshly and in the absence of a functioning, government that is weak, belligerent or compromised.

In his treatise on the failure of state-building in Timor-Leste, Chopra advances the following proposition:

In light of events in East Timor, it is an open question whether we should seek to improve doctrinal concepts for international intervention to (re)build states. After the escalation of peace maintenance to the governorship category, there cannot be another degree of intrusiveness or increased scope of activity. The evolution of peace operations doctrine has reached a final point, perhaps a dead-end. Indeed, throughout the 1990s, theoretical breakthroughs were made consistently, refining what to do and how to do it, but the results have been poor or disastrous, particularly in comparison with the underlying assumptions and purposes of the intervention and the original articulations of mandates. What is certain at this stage is that—if there is a way forward—local populations require much fuller and more genuine integration in the variety of
international interventions. The need for a concept of ‘participatory intervention’ constitutes then, the next puzzle to solve.815

It is therefore essential that the theoretical underpinnings of intervention as a whole and peacekeeping as an instrument of intervention are revisited. It is starkly apparent that peace operations are failing to meet the challenges of contemporary civil conflict. The integration of local populations into the intervention process must be regarded as both a central objective from the outset and a measure of the mission’s success. On the continuum of intervention, civil-military relations lie at the nexus between the local population and the peace operation. The fundamental importance of engagement between peacekeepers and civilians is critical and cannot be subverted by an exclusive focus on law and order. The failure to engage with local populations has a detrimental impact on genuine peace and security and, consequently, law and order. It is critical that through recognition of the sovereignty of context, engagement is sought by peacekeepers. In doing so, local populations will be acknowledged as the central determinants of the success of peace operations and not just as the recipients.

815 Chopra, ‘Building State Failure in East Timor,’ 994-995.
11. T-shirt marketed to RAMSI personnel. Produced unofficially by a local (entrepreneurial) t-shirt printing shop in Honiara, the print-run was short-lived after allegedly being discouraged by RAMSI. Powles, 2004.
Appendices

Appendix 1: Anti-Australian leaflet produced by the Democratic Party (PD) during the 2007 elections. PD was opposed to the ISF being utilised to capture Alfredo Reinado, Timor-Leste, 2007.

When We Fight For Our JUSTICES, You Fight For Our OILS!
When We Fight For Our FUTURE, You DESTROY Our HOPES!

Australian FORCES INVASION IN EAST TIMOR
Appendices

Appendices

**LAW AND ORDER AND JUSTICE.**

Facts about RAMSI’s work with Law and Order:
- 3000+ guns seized.
- 5000+ arrests made.
- 7000+ charges laid.
- 400 police officers finished from RSIP.
- 100 police officers charged.
- Building new courts, repairing prisons.
- Strengthening Office of the Public Solicitors and Director of Public Prosecutions.
- Help the Leadership Code Commission, Ombudsman and Auditor General.

When RAMSI first came in July 2003, the Participating Police Force had a very direct role in restoring law and order. Part of that involved cleaning up the RSIP before reforming the force.

Now that the rule of law has been restored in Solomon Islands and the security situation is better and the reforms of the RSIP has begun, the PPF is concentrating on training and advising RSIP officers to do their jobs well.

New RSIP officers are currently being trained and recruited from every province. The force is being reequipped with boats and other assets so that it can work closely with the community to tackle crime at the grassroots.

But the PPF will be in the Solomon Islands for a long time yet, working in partnership with the police and people of Solomon Islands. They will stay in the Solomon Islands until the RSIP becomes once more a police force that the country can be proud of and everyone respects.
FACTS ABOUT RAMSI

- RAMSI’s mandate was given to it by the Parliament of Solomon Islands. All members of the national Parliament voted in favour of inviting RAMSI to provide assistance to Solomon Islands.

- This assistance was offered by Australia with the support of other countries of the region and was endorsed by the Pacific Forum.

- RAMSI currently included around 300 police officers (the Participating Police Force), 120 civilians and a contingent of military personnel.

- RAMSI personnel are working in every province in Solomon Islands.

- The Office of the Special Coordinator is responsible for the overall coordination of RAMSI’s work and for liaison and consultation with the Solomon Islands Government and other parts of the community.

RAMSI PRINCIPALS

- Special Coordinator
  Mr James Batley
- Deputy Special Coordinator
  Mr Paul Ash
- Commander PPF
  Ms Sandi Paisley
- Military Commander
  Major Darren Wright
- Development Coordinator
  Ms Catherine Walker
- Assistant Special Coordinator (Fiji Appointment)

Guidelines for RAMSI Personnel:

* All RAMSI officers must respect the people, the cultures and the laws of Solomon Islands.

* RAMSI does not tolerate misconduct by its officers and makes sure high standards of behaviour are maintained at all times.

* RAMSI will investigate any complaints of misconduct and will take appropriate action if misconduct is proven. In certain circumstances, such action may include court action.

How Long will RAMSI stay?

RAMSI is a long term commitment on the part of contributing governments of the region. RAMSI programs are being implemented over many years. In the end, decisions on RAMSI’s stay in Solomon Islands will depend on governments of the region and the government of Solomon Islands.

Office of the Special Coordinator
Email: specoord@solomon.com.sb
Phone (677) 25122
Fax (677) 25133
Appendices

Appendix 3: ‘Key Messages For Malaita,’ Leaflet distributed in Malaita, Solomon Islands, by the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands, following the drawdown of the military force, 2004.

KEY MESSAGES FOR MALAITA

- We are returning to our base in Honiara because we have achieved our mission and law and order has returned to MALAITA.

- The situation has changed significantly since RAMSI’s arrival; there is no requirement now for a permanent military presence on MALAITA.

- The decision to return troops to Honiara was made after careful assessment.

- The RAMSI Police will remain in MALAITA for a long time to come.

- The military can still be called for if their assistance is required. MALAITA is less than one hour from HONIARA by helicopter. Patrols will still be ongoing so do not be alarmed if you see military personnel in the future.

- RAMSI has not and will not back down to criminals.
Appendices

Appendices

Bibliography


ABC Online. 2006. ‘Brigadier rules out ‘kicking arse’ in Dili.’ 5 June.


Agreement on the operations and status of personnel deployed to Solomon Islands, Townsville, 24 July 2003.


Bibliography

Apthorpe, Raymond and Jacob Townsend. 2007. Submission to the Australian Senate on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Inquiry into Australia’s involvement in peacekeeping operations, 1 May.


Australian. 2006. ‘Top E Timor MP demands troops out.’ 31 October.


Bibliography

Barker, Anne. 2006. ‘E Timorese campaign against Aust troops.’ ABC Online. 1 November.


Berger, Mark T. 2006. ‘From Nation-Building to State-Building: the geopolitics of development, the nation-state system, and the changing global order.’ Third World Quarterly. 7 (1), 5-25.


Brady, Cynthia and David G. Timberman. 2006. The Crisis in Timor-Leste: Causes, Consequences, and Options for Conflict Management and Mitigation. USAID, 12 November.


Bibliography


Bibliography


Bibliography


Bibliography


Foot, Rosemary. 2003. ‘The UN system’s contribution to Asia-Pacific security architecture.’ Pacific Review. 16 (2).


Bibliography


Guadalcanal Provincial Assembly. 1999. ‘Demands by the Bonafide and Indigenous People of Guadalcanal.’ Solomon Islands. 4 February.


Gusmao, President Xanana Kay Rala. 2006. ‘Message by H.E. the President of the Republic, Xanana Kay Rala Gusmao.’ 22 June.

Gusmao, President Xanana Kay Rala. 2006. Speech at the Palace of the Ashes. 23 March.

Gusmao, President Xanana Kay Rala. 2007. Message To The Nation Regarding The Situation Of Alfredo Reinado. Office of the President. Palace of the Ashes, Dili, 26 February..

Bibliography


Bibliography


Bibliography


Bibliography


Leach, Michael. 2007. 'Xanana factor' the key to stability in East Timor.' *Canberra Times*. 27 June 2007.


Luttwak, Edward. 1999. 'Give War a Chance.' *Foreign Affairs*. July/August,


Morgan, Michael G, and Abby McLeod. 2007. “Have We Failed Our Neighbour,” Australian Journal of International Affairs, 60 (3).
Munslow, Barry and Christopher Brown, 1999. ‘Complex emergencies; the institutional impasse.’ *Third World Quarterly.* 20 1, 207-221.


Official Agreement Between Solomon Islands, Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Samoa, Papua New Guinea and Tonga, Townsville, Australia, 24 May 2003.


Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation. 2003. Doorstop Interview with Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer and New Zealand Foreign Minister Phil Goff. Honiara, Solomon Islands, 1 August.


Bibliography


UNMISET Issue Paper. 2002. ‘Institutional Tensions and Public Perceptions of the East Timor Police Service (TLPS) and the East Timor Defence Force (F-FDTL).’ November


Bibliography


Bibliography


Walsh, Pat. 2006. 'Timor-Leste's Mid Year Crisis.' 13 July.


List of Interviews (in chronological order)

3. Interview with Greg Urwin, Secretary-General, Pacific Islands Forum, 18 July 2003, Suva, Fiji.
7. Interview with Lieutenant Colonel John Hutcheson, RAMSI Military Commander, Guadalcanal Beach Resort, 7 June 2004, Honiara, Solomon Islands.
17. Confidential interview, 1 August 2005, Honiara, Solomon Islands.
18. Confidential interview, 1 August 2005, Honiara, Solomon Islands.
List of Interviews

26. Confidential interview, RAMSI personnel, 13 August 2005, Honiara, Solomon Islands
30. Confidential interview, former member of RAMSI, 8 September 2005, Honiara, Solomon Islands.
32. Confidential interview with community elder, Burns Creek, 9 October 2005, Honiara, Solomon Islands.
34. Confidential interview, 5 November 2005, Honiara, Solomon Islands.
35. Confidential interview, 12 March 2006, Sydney, Australia.
38. Confidential interview, Timorese youth worker, 2 August 2006, Dili, Timor-Leste.
40. Confidential interview, 12 August 2006, Dili, Timor-Leste.
41. Confidential interview, village elder, 16 August 2006, Dili, Timor-Leste.
42. Personal communication, Australian Federal Police officer, 18 August 2006, Dili, Timor-Leste.
43. Personal observation and informal discussions with New Zealand defence personnel and community members, 23 August 2006, Dili, Timor-Leste.
44. Community meeting, Beto, 27 August 2006, Dili, Timor-Leste.
47. Personal communications, IDPs, Jardim IDP Camp, 1 September 2006, Dili, Timor-Leste.
48. Personal communication, 3 September 2006, Dili, Timor-Leste.
49. Confidential interview, Australian UNPOL officer, 8 September 2006, Dili, Timor-Leste.
51. Community meeting with IDPs, Airport IDP Camp, 12 September 2006, Dili, Timor-Leste.
52. Chris Santos, legal advisor to Prime Minister Jose Ramos Horta, 13 September 2006, Dili, Timor-Leste.
54. Confidential interview, 8 October 2006, Dili, Timor-Leste.
55. Confidential interview, 12 October 2006, Dili, Timor-Leste.
56. Confidential interview, member of the International Stabilisation Force, 21 October, Dili, Timor-Leste.
57. Confidential interview, 2 December 2006, Dili, Timor-Leste.
List of Interviews

61. Confidential interview, July-December 2006, Dili.
62. Informal interviews, Timorese and international sources, July-December 2006, Dili, Timor-Leste.
64. Email correspondence with the Country Director of an Australian NGO, 16 February 2007.
67. Confidential interview, 2 April 2007, Dili, Timor-Leste.
68. Personal communication, AusAID official, 26 April 2007, Canberra, Australia.
69. Major-General (Rtd.) Michael Smith, former Deputy Force Commander of INTERFET, 8 May 2007, Canberra, Australia.
70. Confidential interview, UNMIT analyst, 3 June 2007, Dili, Timor-Leste.
71. Confidential interview, former UNMIT analyst, 3 June 2007, Dili, Timor-Leste.
72. Confidential interview, 12 June 2007, Canberra, Australia.
73. Confidential interview, Australian defence analyst, 12 June 2007, Canberra, Australia.
75. Confidential interview, Australian Department of Defence official, 13 July 2007, Canberra, Australia.
77. Confidential interview with INGO Country Director, 15 February 2008, Dili, Timor-Leste.
78. Personal communication, UNMIT official, 8 May 2008, Dili, Timor-Leste.