

‘Legitimacy Work’ and Transnational Policing: Interpreting the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands

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Candidate's declaration

This thesis is my own original work except where cited.

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Abstract

This thesis aims to explore how transnational policing and statebuilding interventions work to construct legitimacy for themselves and for the states within which they intervene. To address this aim, my research focusses on a case study of transnational policing as the major component of the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) (2003-2017).

I use the concept of ‘legitimacy work’ to examine the construction of legitimacy through the discourses, narratives and practices of a transnational policing and statebuilding intervention in Solomon Islands. Adopting an interpretive lens for my research, I first examine how RAMSI worked to construct and sustain its own legitimacy for the purpose of consolidating its own power and authority. I then examine how the intervention, in partnership with local actors, worked to construct and confer legitimacy on local institutions, such as the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force (RSIPF). I use discourse analysis and apply an ethnographic sensibility to analyse RAMSI’s public communications, speeches and images targeting external and internal audiences. Key informant interviews and reflection on my own experience provide additional perspectives from which to critique official external and internal narratives of RAMSI.

I find that the concept of ‘legitimacy work’ provides a powerful approach to unpack the claims made for the legitimacy of RAMSI’s transnational policing and statebuilding activities. It also provides a useful lens for identifying how these claims evolved and focused increasingly on the legitimacy of RSIPF as the intervention matured. This thesis contributes a new perspective on how legitimacy is engendered in the context of intervention and addresses a gap in the literature by providing empirical details of how interventions deploy strategic narratives to build legitimacy for themselves and the institutions within which they intervene.

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Abbreviations

AC	Area Council
ADF	Australian Defence Force
AFP	Australian Federal Police
ASPI	Australian Strategic Policy Institute
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
BRA	Bougainville Revolutionary Army
BSIP	British Solomon Islands Protectorate
CO	Community Officer
CTF	Combined Task Force
DFAT	Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DFID	Department for International Development
EU	European Union
GLF	Guadalcanal Liberation Front
GPA	Guadalcanal Provincial Assembly
GRA	Guadalcanal Revolutionary Army
IFM	Isatabu Freedom Movement
IPMT	International Peace Monitoring Team
MEF	Malaita Eagle Force
MP	Member of Parliament
NGO	Non-government Organisation
NPC	National Peace Council
NZAID	New Zealand's International Aid and Development Agency
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PFF	Police Field Force
PIF	Pacific Islands Forum
PMC	Peace Monitoring Council
PNG	Papua New Guinea
PNGDF	Papua New Guinea Defence Force
PPF	Participating Police Force
RAMSI	Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands
RRU	Rapid Response Unit
RSIPF	Royal Solomon Islands Police Force
SC	Special Constable

SICA	Solomon Islands Christian Association
SIG	Solomon Islands Government
TPA	Townsville Peace Agreement
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
US	United States of America

Common terms in Solomon Islands *Pijin*.

<i>kastom</i>	Tradition or customary law, often equated with chiefly authority.
<i>wantok</i>	People with whom one shares a set of mutual social obligations. Literally translated as 'speaking the same language'.
<i>wantokism</i>	An institutionalised system of social obligations; usually to relatives or members of the same language or island group.

Key phases and leadership roles in RAMSI (2003-2017)

Phase	RAMSI Special Coordinator	RAMSI PPF Commander	RSIPF Police Commissioner	Solomon Islands Prime Minister
Phase 1: Intervention and stabilisation (2003–04):	Nick Warner (2003–04)	Ben McDevitt (2003 – 04)	Bill Morrell (UK) (2003-05)	Sir Allan Kemekeza (Nov 2002-Apr 2006)
Phase 2: Institutional strengthening (2004–05):	James Batley (2004–06)	Sandi Peisley (2004 – 05)	Shane Castles (Aus) (2005-06)	
Phase 3: Capacity development amid political volatility (2006–08):	Tim George (2006–09)	Will Jamieson (2005 – 07) Denis McDermott (2007 – 09)	Will Jamieson (Aus) (2006-07) Mohammed Khan (Fiji) (2007-08)	Snyder Rini (20 Apr 2006 – 4 May 2006) Manasseh Sogavare (4 May 2006 – 20 Dec 2007) Derek Sikua (20 Dec 2007 – 25 Aug 2010)
Phase 4: Partnership and Transition (2009–13)	Nicholas Coppel (Aus) (2011–13)	Wayne Buchhorn (2009 – 11) Paul Osborne (2011 – 13)	Peter Marshall (NZ) (2008-2011) Walter Kola (A/g) (SI) (2011–12) John Lansley (UK) (2012–13)	Danny Phillip (25 Aug 2010 – 16 Nov 2011) Gordon Darcy Lilo (16 Nov 2011 – 9 Dec 2014)
Phase 5: Police development and drawdown (2013–17):	Justine Braithwaite (Aus) (2013–15) Quinton Devlin (Aus) (2015–17)	Greg Harrigan (2013 – 15) Mark Ney (2015 – 17)	Ms Juanita Matangi (A/g) (SI) (2013–14) Frank Prendergast (Aus) (2014-17) Matthew Varley (Aus) (2017 – 19)	Manasseh Sogavare (9 Dec 2014 – 15 Nov 2017)

Sources: (Moore 2013; Putt et al. 2018; RAMSI 2017).

Chapter 1: Introduction

Mr. Jerol Kikolo's story:

...Chairman, before the ethnic tension, I was a normal person in the village like everyone else and was a church deacon at our local church and was also a community leader. I always worked hard and had no plans to be part of the uprising or to hurt anyone. I lived peacefully and continued serving the church and my community. Chairman, in 1999, some of the RSIPF officers sent in by the Government came to my community and shot in my village. Their action caused fear inside of every individual in our community and we had to move out to a safe area, and that was my turning point – because I saw that my life was not secure. The Government was not there to provide security for me anymore; as a church leader who was supposed to lead his congregation has to take some drastic measures to provide security for his people. We no longer had any trust for the Government; instead of securing us its citizens, it came around to threaten us with guns (TRC 2012, pp. 1077-78).

Nation-states fail because they are convulsed by internal violence and can no longer deliver positive political goods to their inhabitants. Their governments lose legitimacy, and the very nature of the particular nation-state itself becomes illegitimate in the eyes and in the hearts of a growing plurality of its citizens. (Rotberg 2003, p. 1)

The two quotes at the start of this introductory chapter share something in common – even though they originate from worlds apart. The first is a testimony from a former militant who describes how he lost trust in both the police and the government of Solomon Islands in the early period of the conflict that gripped his country from 1998-2003. The second quote, from the opening lines of an academic text, *Failed States, Collapsed States, Weak States*, outlines an institutionalist view regarding the causes and consequences of state failure. The common ground that unites them concerns the significance of trust and legitimacy in understanding the dilemmas of rebuilding institutions such as the police in post-conflict societies.

The aim of this thesis is to explore how transnational policing and statebuilding interventions work to construct legitimacy for themselves and for the states within which they intervene. In order to address this aim, my research focuses on a case study of the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) (2003-2017). RAMSI was a comprehensive police-led statebuilding mission. It was initiated in 2003 at the request of Solomon Islands Government (SIG), which in the aftermath of several years of civil conflict, found itself unable to maintain security or effectively govern. Australia, as the leading power in the region, assumed leadership of the mission. RAMSI has been Australia's most ambitious and expensive foreign intervention to date. It is estimated that RAMSI cost over AUD\$2.8 billion over the 14-year duration of the mission (DFAT 2017). A unique feature of RAMSI was its explicit design as a police-led mission. The mission is also of international significance, not because of Solomon Islands' global strategic importance, but because of RAMSI's alleged status as an exemplar of 'success' and 'best practice' among comparable statebuilding missions, such as in Iraq, Afghanistan or South Sudan (Reilly & Wainwright 2005).

The purpose of this chapter is to set the scene for my thesis by introducing Solomon Islands and outlining my research project. I begin with a general overview of Solomon Islands. Second, I describe the 1998-2003 conflict, referred to as 'the Tensions' by most Solomon Islanders. Third, I describe the international response and intervention that followed. Although this is familiar terrain to scholars of Solomon Islands and the Pacific, this section establishes the wider context for events analysed in more detail in subsequent chapters. In this section I also outline RAMSI's mandate, main phases and key events. Fourth, I highlight why RAMSI offers an ideal case study to examine legitimacy of transnational policing in an era of statebuilding. Finally, I outline the research aims and questions of the thesis and provide a synopsis of the following chapters.

1.1. General Overview of Solomon Islands

The sovereign state of Solomon Islands consists of an archipelago of approximately 1000 coral and volcanic islands (Figure 1.1). Solomon Islands was formerly a British protectorate from 1893 until becoming independent in 1978. The country shares maritime borders with Papua New Guinea to the west and Vanuatu to the southeast, incorporating an 'area of over 777,000 square kilometres, of which 96 per cent is sea' (Bennett 1987, p. 5). There are six main islands: Choiseul, New Georgia, Santa Isabel, Guadalcanal (the largest and host of the

capital, Honiara), Malaita and Makira and significant island groups, including the Shortland Islands, the Russell Islands, the Florida Islands, Rennell, Bellona and the Santa Cruz Islands. Several islands are isolated from any other part of the group by more than 200 kilometres of open ocean. Many of the main islands are rugged and mountainous, whilst others are low-lying coral atolls or even human-made islands, built over centuries within the shelter of lagoons. Solomon Islands' tropical climate supports a wide variety of food crops and rich marine resources (Bennett 1987, p. 2).



Figure 1.1. Solomon Islands (Source CartoGIS, ANU, 2019)

There is evidence of a long history of human settlement (28,000-45,000 years) resulting in rich human cultural and linguistic diversity, considered to be amongst the highest in the world (Kirch 2017). Some ninety five percent of Solomon Islands peoples are described as Melanesian, a category invented by European navigator Jules Dumont D'Urville in 1836, in order to distinguish both the people and the region from lighter-skinned neighbouring peoples and lands D'Urville categorised as Polynesian or Micronesian (Teaiwa 2014). An

estimated seventy-three indigenous languages are spoken in Solomon Islands (Jourdan 2013; Simons 2017). *Pijin*, a form of creole English, is now also widely spoken and originates from exchanges with whalers, missionaries, traders, labour traffickers and other Pacific Islanders recruited to work on plantations in Australia and Fiji during the 19th Century (Simons 2017).

These points are highlighted because the scattered geography and cultural and linguistic diversity of Solomon Islands have had significant implications for state formation, nation building and policing. These implications include what Herbst (2014, p. 3) describes as the fundamental challenge of how to "broadcast power over sparsely settled lands". Solomon Island's linguistic and cultural heterogeneity has also arguably constrained the development of a shared sense of national 'imagined community' based on common images, myths and language (Anderson 1987; Dureau 1998). Prior to European contact and colonisation by the British, communities were politically autonomous and self-sufficient but linked to other groups by land, marriage, trade, warfare and migration, within a complex socio-economic system based on notions of reciprocity and exchange (Bennett 1987; Dureau 1998; Nanau 2011). Political and social affinities were fervently local and to one's common kinship and language group (Dureau 1998). These localised loyalties continue to influence identities and behaviours in Solomon Islands today and are described by the contemporary *Pijin* term *wantok* (one talk) (see Nanau 2011 for a more detailed account of the Wantok system in Melanesia).

Indigenous social systems varied across the scattered communities of Solomon Islands. Many are patterned on what anthropologists have described as 'big man' systems, while others more closely resemble the chiefly systems observed amongst Polynesia (Bennett 1987). Relationships to land were of fundamental to social relations however landholding patterns varied. Some groups such as those on Guadalcanal observed matrilineal systems of land ownership while other groups such as on Malaita tended to observe patrilineal land ownership (Bennett 2002, p. 8). These distinctions and contestation over land were and remain an ongoing source of tension and conflict in Solomon Islands (Allen 2012). Power and authority were widely dispersed but within kin groups senior elder men were typically leaders in matters concerning security and much else besides. As I elaborate in Chapter 4, prior to European contact and colonisation social order and control alongside community cohesion was maintained and 'policed' by a variety of indigenous social and leadership practices.

During the 19th Century, the proximity of Solomon Islands to British colonies in Australia, increasingly brought the islands within Britain's sphere of strategic interest. Solomon Islands was a lucrative source of whales, sandalwood and later human labour. It also attracted the interest of Christian missionaries. In 1893, amid rising tensions with other colonial powers, the British claimed the territory as the British Solomon Islands Protectorate (BSIP). In 1896, a small colonial administration was established at Tulagi under the authority of a Resident Commissioner, Charles Morris Woodford. In 1897, Woodford was provided with 'eight native police' to support his administration of British justice (Great Britain 1898). Under increasing external control, indigenous social practices were forced to radically adapt but did not disappear. Rather indigenous and introduced European institutional narratives and practices coexisted or blended to produce hybrid forms of policing. An important overarching theme in my thesis concerns exploring how RAMSI's construction of legitimacy for policing practices was influenced by continuities with earlier policing practices during the pre-contact, colonial and post-colonial periods.

1.2. The Solomon Islands 'Tensions': 1998-2003

In late 1998, a small-scale and relatively low-intensity conflict broke out in Solomon Islands. In international terms the conflict was minor with approximately 200 conflict-related deaths recorded (TRC 2012, p. 3). However, the impacts within Solomon Islands were far-reaching. The causes and consequences of this conflict has already been the subject of several thorough accounts (see Allen 2013, pp. 56-60, for a useful review of key academic interpretations of the causes of the conflict; see also Fraenkel 2004; Kabutaulaka 2001; Moore 2004). As such, only a short account is provided here as background. Solomon Islanders refer to the conflict period at the 'Ethnic Tension' or simply, and as I will adopt in this thesis, the 'Tensions'. The causes of the Tensions and motivations of those who became actively involved are complex, multifaceted, varied between individuals, and changed over time (Allen 2013). However, a significant factor relates to a shared historical narrative expressed by people identifying as indigenous to Guadalcanal. Their narrative details grievances related to the actions and alleged crimes committed over several decades by settlers to Guadalcanal from Malaita. Malaitan labour migration to Guadalcanal had occurred from at least the 1920's but increased during the Pacific campaign of World War Two when Americans captured a Japanese airfield near present-day Honiara and preferentially recruited Malaitans, who made up around 60% of the Solomon Islands Labour Corps (Moore 2007, p. 223). Malaitan labour migration continued

post-war when the British colonial administration was transferred to Honiara and with the establishment of Solomon Islands Plantations Limited on the Guadalcanal plains in 1971 (ibid., p. 226). While Honiara drew immigrants from many different islands, Malaitans became numerically, economically and politically powerful in the new capital. Malaitans also became predominant in key institutions, including the RSIPF (Braithwaite et al. 2010, p. 21).

While ethnic identity was a key factor in the Tensions, it has been argued that that the ‘ethnic’ framing of the conflict is overstated (Allen 2013; Fraenkel 2004; Kabutaulaka 2001). Many of the major grievances articulated by people from Guadalcanal were directed towards the ‘sovereign Government of the State of Solomon Islands’ and resulted from perceived discrimination towards them by ‘the Police’ (GPA 1999; TRC 2012) and historic claims of injustice towards people of Guadalcanal. In 1999 political leaders from Guadalcanal, led by the Province’s Premier Ezekiel Alebua, raised a lengthy list of grievances dating back some decades. These were documented in the 1999 “Demands of the Bonafide and Indigenous People of Guadalcanal”. This document referenced an earlier and similar 1988 petition (Fraenkel 2004, p.251-256). It was signed by members of the Guadalcanal Provincial Assembly (GPA) and presented to Solomon Islands Government (SIG) in June 1999. They included that compensation be paid for alleged illegal occupation of customary land, cultural offences, and murders of people from Guadalcanal. They raised specific allegations of police ‘intimidation and harassment’ and failures of RSIPF to ‘investigate criminal activities by persons from other Provinces’ (Allen 2013; Fraenkel 2004, p. 203; GPA 1999). The ‘Demands’ and testimonies of those from Guadalcanal to the TRC are revealing of the deep frustrations that some Guadalcanal islanders held, related to the state, and the RSIPF. At one level, as I argue in Chapter 4, the Tensions can be explained in terms of a lack of police legitimacy.

Before the 1999 ‘Demands’ were even presented to SIG, a group of young men, allegedly encouraged by Alebua and others (TRC 2012, p. 221), had formed a militia; the Guadalcanal Revolutionary Army (GRA). The GRA rebranded itself as the Isatabu Freedom Movement (IFM) later in 1999, under the leadership of various commanders such as Harold Keke, a former police mechanic who became a notorious ‘war lord’ (Allen 2013; Braithwaite et al. 2010; Fraenkel 2004). The GRA/IFM succeeded in stealing weapons in a raid on a police armoury in Yandina on 10 December 1998. For the first time in the Tensions but in a pattern that would be repeated, stolen police weapons provided militants with the power to challenge

the state-based police force's monopoly of violence. These repeated raids, some with the complicity of RSIPF officers, contributed to a rapid deterioration in trust, confidence and legitimacy of RSIPF. In 1999, during a campaign by GRA/IFM of targeted violence, including numerous killings, beatings, property destruction and arson, there was a panicked exodus of Malaitans from the Guadalcanal plains to Honiara or Malaita. In Honiara vigilante groups of Malaitan men established patrols around town, allegedly with support of some police (Amnesty International 2000).

The police response to the illegal activities of GRA/IFM fighters was initially restrained and by some measures professional. However, the recently recruited British expatriate Police Commissioner, Frank Short, struggled to maintain control of a force he judged to be “under-strength, ill-equipped and still recovering from years of neglect” (Short 2013, p. 1). Paramilitary trained police units, the Police Field Force (PFF) and a Rapid Response Unit, were deployed to respond to attacks on Malaitans and commercial properties in rural Guadalcanal. While the police received praise from Malaitans, there were allegations of widespread human rights abuses against civilians from Guadalcanal (Amnesty International 2000; TRC 2012). The Malaitan dominance of the paramilitary elements of RSIPF exacerbated the situation (Braithwaite et al. 2010, p. 21). As Amnesty International reported, at the outbreak of the conflict an estimated “75 per cent of the country's 897 police [were] Malaitan” (Amnesty International 2000, p. 7). While many officers retained professionalism, others quickly aligned themselves with the interests of Malaitan victims from the conflict. Any support that Short initially had from within government circles was soon eroded and facing sustained criticism, Frank Short resigned in July 1999, to be replaced by Rererangi Rangihika, from New Zealand (Moore 2013).

Solomon Islands Government (SIG), under the leadership of Prime Minister Bart Ulufa'alu, was at a loss in terms of how to effectively resolve the situation (Fraenkel 2004). Faced first with demands for compensation from Guadalcanal militants, Ulufa'alu soon faced rival compensation demands from Malaitans for losses sustained during their evictions from rural Guadalcanal (Fraenkel 2004, pp. 81-2). As the situation worsened in early 1999, the Government appealed to the Commonwealth Secretariat to help mediate a solution. A former Prime Minister of Fiji (and former leader of the 1987 military coup in Fiji), Sitiveni Rabuka, was appointed Commonwealth Special Envoy and led talks resulting in the Honiara Accord of 28 June, 1999 (Allen 2013). As the dominant security and development power in the region,

Australia, in cooperation with New Zealand, had a leading role in facilitating discussions over how to resolve the crisis in Solomon Islands. Both countries, however, were quick to reject a formal request by Ulufa'alu made in April 2000 for armed police or peace-keepers on the ground (Braithwaite et al. 2010)

Skirmishes between IFM and RSIPF continued through 1999 and into 2000. By early 2000, a rival militia, the Malaitan Eagle Force (MEF) had formed. MEF announced their arrival with a raid on the police armoury in Auki on 17 January 2000 (Allen 2013). At least thirty-four high-powered weapons and ammunition were seized. While the MEF ostensibly formed to protect and avenge Malaitans, just as the GRA/IFM claimed to be fighting to pursue Guadalcanal interests, Fraenkel argues "both were stage armies used by marginalised elites in pursuit of political and financial objectives" (Fraenkel 2004, p. 78). There was evidence from the outset of close cooperation between the MEF and Malaitan members of the RSIPF. Blockades established on the outskirts of Honiara, were now jointly patrolled by RSIPF and MEF, police patrol boats were commandeered by MEF to strafe coastal villages, and further raids on police armouries resulted in large numbers of military style weapons reaching the hands of MEF militants (Fraenkel 2004).

By early 2000, the RSIPF to all intents and purposes appeared to have willingly conceded the monopoly on violence typically seen as the preserve of legitimate state police forces. The legitimacy and effectiveness of RSIPF was by now severely compromised with the organisation effectively fractured along ethnic lines. Some senior police who were not of Malaitan background faced intimidation and threats and were forced to leave Honiara (Ora interview, 2011). Others decided to stay at home. In early hours of 5 June, 2000, several senior police officers and MEF leaders announced the formation of a 'Joint Operation' between the PFF and MEF (Allen 2013; Fraenkel 2004). Seizing control of the central police armoury, and control of the national broadcaster, the orchestrators of what was widely viewed as a coup d'état announced that Prime Minister Ulufa'alu was under house arrest (Fraenkel 2004). Within days Ulufa'alu and several of his cabinet resigned under duress clearing the way for the election of a new Prime Minister. In the 'rigged' election which followed, Manasseh Sogavare, an MP from Choiseul, and leader of the Opposition was narrowly elected to the post vacated by Ulufa'alu (Fraenkel 2004, pp. 93-4). Despite the unconstitutional means by which he had come to the Prime Ministership, Sogavare's government was recognised by

Australia and other leading partners, who were eager to see stability returned (Allen 2013; Fraenkel 2004).

By the time of the ‘coup’, there had been an estimated 150-200 deaths (Braithwaite et al. 2010)¹, over 35,000 people were displaced, and the national economy had all but collapsed (Allen 2013; Fraenkel 2004). Many ex-MEF combatants were awarded ‘special constable’ status within RSIPF. Untrained and ill-disciplined ex-MEF forces now effectively ruled Honiara and could act with impunity. As lawlessness increased many residents living in Honiara from other provinces returned home. Further rounds of peace talks hosted by New Zealand and Australia during 2000 concluded with signing of the Townsville Peace Agreement (TPA) on 15 October 2000. Under the terms of the TPA, a small unarmed civilian International Peace Monitoring Team (IPMT), comprised principally of Australians and New Zealanders, was deployed to monitor the terms of the agreement including the demobilisation of militants and collection of arms (Fraenkel 2004). The unarmed mission was at best only partially effective in fulfilling either of these two key tasks (Braithwaite et al. 2010). Under the terms of the TPA, a local organisation, the Peace Monitoring Council (PMC), comprised of senior respected Solomon Islanders, and teams of rurally based peace monitors was also established. The PMC and IPMT cooperated to monitor and implement the terms of the TPA.

While the worst of the conflict seemed to be over, it was an uneasy peace. The ill-disciplined RSIPF lacked legitimacy following the direct involvement in the coup and behaviour of some police and special constables afterward. The unarmed and neutral IPMT had a clear mandate but no legitimate coercive means to enforce it. Some of the PMC monitors were well respected in their community and provided a valuable link with village elders. However, this was insufficient basis of legitimacy to deter renegade militants like Harold Keke, while IPMT and PMC held little sway over former militants engaged in criminal activities.

Fresh elections were held in December 2001 and judged, for the most part, to be ‘free and fair’ by international observers. The elections saw the People’s Alliance Party (PAP), headed by Allan Kemekeza, a former police officer turned politician, win the most seats. In the second stage of the election process, MPs elected Kemekeza as Prime Minister. While this brought a semblance of political legitimacy back to the SIG, Kemekeza and others within his Cabinet

¹ See Braithwaite et al (2010) and Allen (2013) for a discussion of conflicting figures related to deaths attributed to the conflict.

were closely linked with the MEF and widely suspected to be corrupt. Successful criminal prosecutions would later confirm many of these suspicions to be well-founded (Allen 2013).

During 2002 the peace process appeared to stall. While the situation in Honiara regained something approaching normalcy, Harold Keke, a key IFM leader, who was hiding out on the rugged Weather Coast of Guadalcanal, had refused to participate in negotiations or sign the TPA. Keke and his men continued to murder and harass civilian populations and peace-negotiators on the Weather Coast of Guadalcanal (Carter 2006). There was insufficient threat and little incentive for ex-combatants to surrender weapons while other parties to the conflict retained their arsenals. In Honiara, the conflict was supplanted by criminal lawlessness as ex-militants used their weapons and newly found power for personal gain (Fraenkel 2004). Local police and the civilian IPMT proved impotent against armed threats of this nature. According to one observer, “most Solomon Islanders treat[ed] the IPMT as a joke” (Carter 2006, p. 74).

Yet despite evidence to the contrary, Australian officials determined that the IPMT had fulfilled its mandate and terminated the peace-keeping intervention at the end of June 2002, devolving its remaining tasks under the TPA to local counterpart the PMC (Braithwaite et al. 2010). In October 2002, on the expiry of the TPA, the PMC was reconstituted as the National Peace Council (NPC). Its revised mandate included a greater focus on national unity and reflected the important realisation that other Provinces had largely been excluded from the peace process. As the NPC grew into this role encouraging progress was made in stimulating a national conversation on the importance of national unity and reconciliation. As Braithwaite and colleagues (2010) noted, this was crucial nation building work.

While the TPA had achieved some of its aims and provided a basis for further reconciliation and peace-building work, it did little to restore legitimacy, trust and confidence in key state institutions such as the police. Many senior police known to have participated in the illegal removal of the Prime Minister remained at their posts. All attempts to bring Keke and his men into the peace process had failed. Extrajudicial attempts to eliminate him had also been ineffective. Ten Kwaio mercenaries sent to kill or capture Keke had themselves been intercepted and killed by Keke and his men around July 2002 (Carter 2006). The mission was alleged to have been sponsored by senior government officials. Ongoing violence and terrorising of Weather Coast villages by Keke and his men in the first six months of 2003 resulted in an influx of people displaced from villages on the Weather Coast to Honiara (ibid).

All this served to undermine the legitimacy of Kemekeza's already tarnished government, which were manifestly unable to resolve the situation.

Despite some advances in the peace process, 2003-2004 saw Solomon Islands increasingly being represented as a weak, fragile or failed state in the Australian, regional and international media. While Keke remained at large and highly dangerous, ex-MEF, police officers and others illegally holding weapons, felt justified in retaining them. Authority, if not legitimacy, could be achieved with the power of the gun, and guns still ruled in Solomon Islands, even if open conflict between militias had receded. The murder of Sir Fred Soaki, an NPC Councillor and the highly respected first indigenous Police Commissioner of RSIPF, in February 2003, was a tragic set-back for the peace process. Soaki was shot in broad daylight in a restaurant in Auki by a former police officer (Fraenkel, 2004, p 150-4). A few months later, rumours of the murder of first one, then seven of the revered Melanesian Brothers or *Tasiu* by Harold Keke began to circulate and were later confirmed (Carter 2006). To further confirm negative portrayals of Solomon Islands, the country was facing economic insolvency (World Bank 2018a). Held hostage to unreasonable demands for compensation or other payments to ex-militants, Kemekeza's government was unable to pay or unwilling to prioritise salary payments for teachers, health care workers, police or other essential public services. Many key government institutions were barely functioning. When John Roughan (2002) the leader of a prominent civil society organisation, Solomon Islands Development Trust, claimed that Solomon Islands was on the verge of becoming the Pacific region's first failed state, it was soon picked up by other analysts (Wainwright 2003a, 2003b)

Behind the grim headlines, many Solomon Islanders were making considerable progress in the peace process. Within an active and developing civil society important work to facilitate reconciliation was conducted by peace monitors and councillors of NPC (Braithwaite et al. 2010, pp. 41-5), Women for Peace (Pollard 2000) and church-based organisations under the umbrella of Solomon Islands Christian Association. Targeted aid in support of community-level peace building programmes, like the Weapons Free Village campaign facilitated by NPC and the United Nations Development Programme, also played an important role. Within the RSIPF, a modest Australian-funded Law and Justice Institutional Strengthening Project aimed to improve capability and confidence in the force. The appointment of another British expatriate Police Commissioner, Bill Morrell, early in 2003, provided impartial leadership to a police force that remained severely compromised and distrusted by most of the population.

Yet despite many positive signals, most of those working actively for peace conceded that more robust support in the form of external intervention was needed (Braithwaite et al. 2010). Soon it would arrive.

1.3. The Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands: 2003 to 2017

Australia's approach to the conflict in Solomon Islands shifted quite dramatically in the first six months of 2003. In January, Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer, recited Australia's longstanding position when he declared in an opinion piece in *The Australian* that "it would be folly in the extreme" for Australia to intervene militarily in Solomon Islands (Downer 2003a). Just five months later (4-6 June, 2003), Downer and Australian Prime Minister John Howard met with Kemekeza and a small delegation in Canberra to sketch a plan to do just that. While Kemekeza had apparently requested the meeting to discuss the security situation in Solomon Islands, the fact that it occurred reflected that a major shift in Australia's position had already taken place.

The nature of the discussion also reflected a shift from an approach governed by the assumptions of 'peace-keeping' to one framed by the logics of 'statebuilding'. The events of 11 September, 2001 in the United States, the 2002 Bali bombing and rhetoric of the War on Terror, prompted Prime Minister Howard to adopt a more proactive and ambitious approach to the region (Braithwaite et al. 2010, p. 50). A policy paper by the Australian Strategic Policy Institute launched in June 2003, provided a template for a multinational effort, led by Australia which would address law and order and then "build capacity for effective government" (Wainwright 2003b, p. 5). Whereas the limited mandate of the unarmed IPMT allowed them only to observe, report and secure weapons, the new approach proposed substantial governance and security reforms within SIG institutions. Howard emphasised to Kemekeza that an 'all or nothing' package of assistance was on the table and that Australia's assistance was conditional on allowing inline advisors to work in SIG agencies to restore financial stability (Braithwaite et al. 2010, p. 51).

In Canberra, the mission was seen as a perfect test case for a new 'whole-of-government' approaches to Australia's priority challenges, bringing agencies such as the Australian Federal Police (AFP) and the Australian Defence Force (ADF) together with the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT),

and Departments of Finance and Treasury (Shergold 2004). Notably, while missions went to scope and consult in Honiara, the key conversations and decisions were made in Canberra and clearly reflected Australian ideas regarding how to ‘fix’ Solomon Islands. Senior Australian personnel brought regional experience and lessons from previous international policing engagements such as in Cyprus, Bougainville, Indonesia and East Timor informed aspects of the mission’s design (McDevitt 2006). This process limited the potential for local ownership and experience to inform the design process, potentially undermining the legitimacy of the approaches proposed from a local perspective.

In Honiara, an ‘Intervention Task Force’ was responsible for garnering support from Solomon Islanders, including Members of Parliament, and securing the necessary legislation to allow a foreign intervention to occur. In addition to communicating with the public, the Intervention Task Force worked to establish a clear legal framework and mandate thus establishing the legitimacy of RAMSI. In close consultation with Australian authorities, several hurdle requirements were established to ensure that the intervention could demonstrate strong local support and legality for its mandate as a source of legitimacy. SIG issued a *Policy Statement on the Offer by the Australian Government for Strengthening Assistance to Solomon Islands* (2003). In it, “SIG noted that the offer of assistance from Australia was made with due recognition of the sovereignty of Solomon Islands” (SIG 2009a, p. 19). This was followed by a formal letter of request by the Governor-General of Solomon Islands for Australia to intervene dated 3 July 2003. The following week, on 11 July 2003, Parliament of Solomon Islands agreed to a motion enabling legislation for the intervention. The *Facilitation of International Assistance (FIA) Act* was passed on 17 July 2003 and among other things bestowed full police powers on intervening forces. Clearing these legal hurdles helped to established a firm legal foundation as a source of local legitimacy for RAMSI within Solomon Islands. However, as noted above, there was still little opportunity provided for genuine participation by Solomon Islanders in determining the priorities or scope for the assistance to be provided.

The imprimatur of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) also served to build the legitimacy of the planned intervention. PIF Foreign Affairs Ministers issued a joint statement in Sydney on 30 June noting the proposed intervention was “in accordance with the principles set out in the Biketawa Declaration”, a regional security arrangement agreed in 2000 between PIF member nations to assist each other if requested (SIG 2009a, p. 19). This statement was crucial given

that it was decided not to seek a UN Security Council mandate for the intervention. Solomon Islands close diplomatic relations with Taiwan meant that China was likely to veto any Security Council resolution providing a UN mandate. This course of action also suited the Australian government's preference for a unilateral approach under its direct control.

The formal legal basis for RAMSI's presence and the legitimacy of its authority in Solomon Islands relied on three key documents: *The Facilitation of International Assistance Act 2003 (FIA Act)*, *The Facilitation of International Assistance Notice 2003 (FIA Notice)* and the *RAMSI Treaty* (SIG 2009a). Section 7 of the FIA Act granted executive policing powers to RAMSI's police. This included the proviso that "Armed forces and police members of the visiting contingent may exercise any powers that may be exercised by police officers appointed under the Police Act" (Section 7 (1)) and that "such force as is reasonably necessary to achieve a public purpose" could be used by members of a visiting contingent.

Members of a visiting police contingent were also "eligible for appointment to any office in the Police Force" (Section 8), empowered to "possess, carry and use arms in accordance with their internal orders or rules" (Section 9) and to "seize and destroy any weapons" (Section 10). Moreover, members of the visiting contingent would enjoy "immunity from legal proceedings in Solomon Islands courts and tribunals" (Section 17 (a)) and "any criminal and disciplinary jurisdiction" for actions committed by contingent members was relinquished to the relevant assisting country. On the one hand, these legal provisions for RAMSI's police and military provided a strong basis of legal legitimacy under both international and Solomon Islands domestic law for any actions required to fulfil a public purpose. However, the immunities and protections provided by these legal protections limited the accountability and civilian oversight of police, and thus constrained the legitimacy of the force. This contradiction is noted by some of the literature examining the legitimacy of interventions, which I discuss in Chapter 2.

While the powers given to "assisting countries" were far ranging, they stopped short of full sovereign authority over Solomon Islands. Section 23 of the FIA Act provided that "The Parliament shall be given the opportunity to review the international assistance notice every one year". This meant that any international assistance mission served at the discretion of a majority within Parliament and that the FIA Notice 2003 could be annulled by Solomon Islands Parliament. In principle, this preserved a strong element of control and sovereignty for

Solomon Islands Parliament. Yet in practice, even in the most contested period of the relationship between SIG and RAMSI during 2006-2007, there seemed little appetite for ending RAMSI. While aspects of the RAMSI may have been an affront to the national and individual pride of some Solomon Islanders, and interfered with the personal interests of some stakeholders, most recognised the benefits of the substantial improvements to security, law and order that followed RAMSI's arrival. In addition, as I show in later chapters there was also still a crisis of legitimacy in terms of public trust and confidence in the RSIPF's effectiveness, procedural fairness and capability. RSIPF also suffered unfavourably in comparison to RAMSI's well equipped Participating Police Force (PPF) (see below), which was perceived as more impartial and professional.

The final legal instrument governing and legitimating RAMSI was an international treaty between Solomon Islands and contributing countries² from the region, "concerning the operations and status of the police and armed forces and other personnel deployed to Solomon Islands", which came into force on 24 July 2003. In sum, these legal measures gave RAMSI a significant degree of authority and legitimacy to act in Solomon Islands. However, RAMSI's powers were limited. The mission did not assume full sovereignty over Solomon Islands. Effectively, it more closely resembled a model of shared sovereignty in which SIG delegated certain powers including the monopoly of legitimate coercive force to the forces of the visiting contingent (Barbara 2014). Significantly, the legitimacy derived from this legal framework was the legitimacy of a rule of law, which was perceived by some Solomon Islanders to be an alien institution. This was particularly the case for those aspiring to 'freedom' and a return to 'traditional' values who had become involved in the Guadalcanal uprising (Allen et al. 2013).

RAMSI was designed with three broad pillars reflecting its key objectives:

1. *Law and Justice*: included some assistance to the police (such as police housing and station refurbishment) and a focus on strengthening the courts, prisons and public law offices.
2. *Economic Governance*: entailed fiscal stability and financial management, as well as economic reforms aimed at improving investor confidence and stimulating growth.

² RAMSI's first contingent was made up of police, military and civilian officials from six Pacific nations: Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa and Tonga. The contingent expanded to include a total of fifteen Pacific nations (Putt et al. 2018).

3. *Machinery of Government*: involved strengthening accountability mechanisms, such as the audit office and ombudsmen, improving the functioning of parliament, provincial governments, and the electoral system and promoting public service reform (adapted from RAMSI 2017).

As detailed on RAMSI's official website, there were initially four major components to the intervention:

Office of the Special Coordinator: A senior Australian diplomat with the title of Special Coordinator had overall responsibility for leadership and coordination of RAMSI policies, strategies and relations with SIG, PIF and contributing Pacific countries.

Participating Police Force (PPF): The PPF were the lead operational component of RAMSI. Initially their role included executive policing roles but as the mission evolved they increasingly focused on capacity building, except when specialist skills or armed force were required. The Commander of PPF was accorded the rank and powers of Deputy Commissioner in RSIPF.

Combined Task Force (CTF): The military component of RAMSI, in early phases of the mission, provided protection and logistical support for the PPF. As the situation was stabilised the CTF was withdrawn as part of 'transition' in 2013.

Development Programs: A Development Coordinator was responsible for oversight of three main civilian development programs; the Law and Justice program; the Machinery of Government program; and the Economic Governance program (adapted from RAMSI 2017).

As the intervention evolved the contribution and significance of the above components changed considerably. For example, the CTF was the most visible component in the first months, but quickly scaled down as the security situation improved. The Development Program built gradually in the first years before being transferred to Australia's bilateral aid program in July 2013. The following description of five broad phases of RAMSI was adopted by the 'Joint Report by the Solomon Islands Government and RAMSI on the 14-year intervention' (SIG-RAMSI 2017, pp. 27-8) and provides a useful breakdown of the key

periods over the full duration of the mission. See Annex A for further details of the key individuals during these phases.

Phase 1: Intervention and stabilisation (2003–04)

Phase 2: Institutional strengthening (2004–05)

Phase 3: Capacity development amid political volatility (2006–08)

Phase 4: Re-energised partnership towards ‘RAMSI’s Transition’ (2009–13)

Phase 5: Police development and drawdown (2013–17)

RAMSI’s arrival early in the morning of 24 July 2003, with warships, military aircraft, and vehicles, marked a spectacular commencement of Phase 1 (2003–04) (see Chapter 5). Immediate measures were taken to establish basic security and law and order within Honiara. Joint police patrols of PPF and RSIPF commenced within one hundred minutes of the mission’s arrival (McDevitt 2006). In cooperation with NPC, a 21-day Weapons Amnesty was announced and saw the return of illegal firearms. Key ex-militant leaders surrendered within the first month, including Harold Keke. The RSIPF was purged of those police implicated in illegal activities during the Tensions, and many faced criminal charges. In terms of achieving its immediate goals RAMSI exceeded all expectations. However, the harder long-term work of institutional reform and rebuilding the legitimacy of the Solomon Islands state and key institutions had scarcely begun.

Phase 2 (2004–05) saw increased focus on institutional strengthening and capacity development activities. This included ramping up a Machinery of Government programme which aimed to restore some of the key accountability institutions within SIG (Fraenkel 2019). This phase was marked by some stability and cooperation from SIG. However, RAMSI officials and external observers fretted about the lack of ‘ownership’ and genuine partnership from SIG agencies (PIF 2005). Kemekeza remained Prime Minister and complied with most requests from RAMSI. Yet it was widely believed—and later proven—that Kemekeza had embezzled funds during the Tensions that had been intended for victims (Fraenkel 2004). RAMSI’s apparent reluctance to investigate Kemekeza in this period undermined the credibility of the PPF, a point I will elaborate on in Chapter 5. This phase also saw the first external review of the mission’s progress by the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), in 2005. This review provided what was arguably the first genuinely independent assessment of RAMSI’s progress. (PIF 2005). The report noted RAMSI’s achievements in restoring law and order and

promoting economic recovery but it also sounded notes of caution highlighting a lack of equal partnership with SIG and Australia's dominance of RAMSI. Many of the issues raised in this review came to a head in Phase 3. While it would take some time for the recommendations of the review to be implemented, the review process provided a foundation for greater involvement from the region in assessing RAMSI's progress.

In Phase 3 (2006–08) RAMSI faced the most difficult test of its legitimacy and resolve. With basic security established, the police force purged of most unwanted elements, the court system working effectively and the prison service functioning, RAMSI had chalked up considerable successes in its first two and a half years. However, increasing criticism from across the political spectrum was being levelled at RAMSI (Allen 2009; Fraenkel 2006). RAMSI's initial reform efforts had focused on the police but as intrusive efforts to reform the 'machinery of government' gained traction, there was increased resistance from some quarters. The dominance of Australia in all key positions was also resented, while increased cost of living in Honiara was also blamed on economic distortions from the intervention (ibid.).

The elections of April 2006 were supposed to consolidate the reputation of RAMSI as an unqualified success story. The Australian Government had funded a Clean Election Campaign and local community organisations campaigned strongly to promote electoral transparency, in the hope that the elections would mark the beginning of an accountable and competent government (Alasia 2007). The general election was held on 5 April 2006 and declared to be 'free and fair' by a team of 44 international observers (Alasia 2007, p. 172). But the work was only half done. Newly elected or re-elected MPs travelled to Honiara to elect a Prime Minister behind closed doors. The process was highly susceptible to the use of coercion or inducements to ensure support for a particular candidate and the trading of loyalties was common in the intense coalition-building process in a nation where loyalties to a political party were fluid. In these circumstances, despite the efforts put into the election process by leading donors, such as Australia, the final outcome proved to be beyond their control (Moore 2008).

The successful candidate was Snyder Rini, former Deputy Prime Minister in the previous government. Rini had a reputation for corruption and close ties to the logging industry and other business interests (ibid). The announcement of Rini's victory by the Governor General on 18 April 2006 was met with dismay and then anger by the crowd waiting outside

Parliament. RAMSI's PPF had not anticipated the potential for disorder, and by many accounts mishandled the situation (Kabutaulaka 2006a; Morgan & McLeod 2006; Wheatley 2006). Local efforts to talk the crowd down were not encouraged and the use of heavy-handed policing tactics including teargas may have made things worse. Several days of disorder followed when the political protest at Parliament House deteriorated into widespread arson and looting (Fraenkel 2006). The ordered, stable, peaceful environment established by the presence of RAMSI had unravelled badly and the perceived legitimacy of the PPF and RAMSI had been dealt a significant blow.

After just over a week in office and facing the likely loss of a no-confidence motion in Parliament, Synder Rini resigned. Manasseh Sogavare, already a vocal critic of RAMSI and Australia, was elected to his second term as Prime Minister, setting the stage for a difficult period for the intervention. Evidence of Australian meddling to try and prevent Rini's election as Prime Minister had emerged when an email from an Australian official was leaked (*The Age* 2006). Sogavare demanded a full enquiry into RAMSI's handling of the post-election disturbances. He also announced he was going to appoint a personal friend, Australian lawyer Julian Moti, as his Attorney General. This sparked a diplomatic furore as Moti was wanted in Australia by the AFP for alleged child sex charges. Sogavare responded to Australia's protests by declaring Patrick Cole, the Australian High Commissioner to Solomon Islands, *persona non grata* on 13 September 2006. In what was perceived as a direct affront to Solomon Islands sovereignty and while Sogavare was in Fiji, on 20 October 2006 the PPF and RSIPF raided the Prime Minister's office seeking evidence of Sogavare's complicity with the illegal entry of Moti to Solomon Islands (Wickham 2006). This further damaged a fractured relationship but also undermined broader support for RAMSI. When Australian-born Police Commissioner Shane Castles (who was seconded from the AFP and who had authorised the raid) was on leave over Christmas, he found himself declared by SIG to be an undesirable immigrant and was unable to return to Honiara.

Thanks in no small part to the so-called 'Moti Affair', by the end of 2007 the political legitimacy of RAMSI as a 'cooperative intervention' was under threat. However, RAMSI could still claim strong popular support. PPF continued to work with RSIPF and on the whole, elicited strong support and compliance from the public (Whalan 2013). In 2006, a national survey of Solomon Islanders was conducted and showed overwhelming support for the intervention (ANU Enterprise 2013). The 'People's Survey' was used as evidence that that

RAMSI and PPF still enjoyed popular legitimacy, even if their partnership with SIG was fraught. Australia continued to give Sogavare ample opportunity to contest the legitimacy of RAMSI by playing the ‘sovereignty card’ (Barbara 2008). On 13 July 2007, Australian Foreign Minister Downer took the extraordinary step of writing an open letter to the people of Solomon Islands, published in *The Solomon Star*, “to express Australia’s strong objection to the swearing in of Julian Moti, an Australian citizen facing serious charges in Australia, as Solomon Islands Attorney-General” (Downer 2007). Downer went onto directly challenge the sovereignty and legitimacy of the Sogavare government declaring “The Solomon Islands Government continues, through its actions, to damage the country’s reputation, both regionally and internationally” (Downer 2007).

The diplomatic standoff was not resolved until the change of both governments in late 2007. Howard was replaced by Kevin Rudd as Prime Minister following the November Federal election, while in Solomon Islands, Sogavare was replaced by Prime Minister Derek Sikua following a vote of no confidence in December 2007. Sikua’s first action was to approve an extradition request transferring Moti to Australian custody. In 2008, Australia’s relationship with the Pacific was reset with the announcement of a new Pacific Partnership Framework. Rudd used the occasion of a joint press conference with Sikua in Honiara to “herald a new period of mutual respect, mutual cooperation and mutual responsibility” (Rudd 2008). This coincided with growing regional oversight of RAMSI and a more determined effort to move towards an organisational capacity-building approach.

Phase 4 (2009–13) saw a continuation of efforts by RAMSI to work in partnership with SIG, guided by the *Partnership Framework between SIG and RAMSI (2009-13)* (SIG-RAMSI 2009, p. 9). Under the broader Law and Justice program (which included assistance to correctional services and the justice system) the goal for policing assistance was stated as follows: “*A Royal Solomon Islands Police Force (RSIPF) that operates effectively and independently of RAMSI*” [emphasis in original]. This goal reflected a state-centric model of policing focused at formal institutions. This is a point that I will return to in Chapter 7 and was further highlighted by the specific objectives which followed: Namely that, “RAMSI will work with RSIPF to assist it to:

- build community confidence in RSIPF
- build RSIPF capability, ethics and integrity
- build broad community crime prevention and problem solving capability

- improve RSIPF infrastructure and logistics
- develop a capable and effective fire service
- maintain border security.” (SIG-RAMSI 2009, p. 9).

Significantly, this phase saw concerted efforts by the intervention to learn and adapt, something that some observers highlighted as RAMSI’s greatest strength (Braithwaite et al. 2010; Fraenkel 2019). Key reviews during the period provided robust, constructive criticism of many of RAMSI’s transnational policing assistance efforts (Cox, Duituturaga & Scheye 2012; PPF 2009, 2011). These reports highlighted the unintended consequences of PPF policing approaches, including the unrealistic expectations of high-resource models of policing that could never be sustained, identified the very high ‘true cost’ of PPF’s policing models, and revealed flaws in the organisational capacity-building model adopted by RAMSI. In response to these reviews and the crisis in legitimacy during 2006-07, RAMSI’s public outreach capacities were enhanced while the scale of its statebuilding ambitions became more modest (Fraenkel, Madraiwiwi & Okale 2014, p. 83). Later in Phase 4 public outreach activities were increasingly focused on preparing the community for ‘transition’ – the process of bringing RAMSI development activities back under the Australian bilateral aid program, and resulting in the full withdrawal of RAMSI’s military component from the middle of 2013.

With the transition and withdrawal of the other ‘pillars’ of RAMSI, Phase 5 (2013-17) saw RAMSI focus entirely on police assistance from mid-2013. Guided by a jointly-agreed *PPF Drawdown Strategy 2013–17*, PPF’s operations saw a graduated reduction towards a planned exit in June 2017. The PPF continued the process commenced in previous phases of withdrawing from provincial posts. They also accelerated intensive training programs with the RSIPF to enable them to assume full responsibility in policing, and reduced its frontline policing in Honiara. Increased training and support focused on public order management and governance. The coercive capacity of RSIPF was increased in readiness for them to reassume their role as the legitimate holder of a monopoly of violence once the PPF had departed. First, in 2014 RSIPF were reequipped and trained in the use of options for exercising non-lethal force (e.g. batons, tear gas) (*Solomon Times* 2013). Later, in May 2017, following extensive consultations with community members, PPF commenced rearmament and training of a small section of RSIPF (SIG-RAMSI 2017). Additional infrastructure was also completed in the form of police housing and upgrades of provincial police stations. RAMSI’s messaging in this

period acknowledged and actively promoted the lead role taken by RSIPF in almost all police operations.

This final phase of RAMSI concluded with the withdrawal of the intervention amongst much fanfare and celebration on 30 June 2017. In a week of celebration many of the key leaders in RAMSI from Australia and other participating countries returned. While the mission had concluded, in the months leading up to its exit, RAMSI officials reassured the Solomon Islands public that new security partnerships between Solomon Islands and Australia would enable further assistance at short notice if ever required, thus reinforcing the stability and legitimacy of the Solomon Islands state. Matthew Varley, an Australian police officer, seconded from AFP, remained as Commissioner of RSIPF until the end of 2019, providing continuity (and Australian influence) in this key leadership role. The legitimacy work of RAMSI narrative also continued beyond the life of the intervention with significant work taking place to document RAMSI's 'success' and 'impact'. This included an Australian-funded Permanent Exhibition at Solomon Island National Museum in Honiara, while RAMSI's website, photo exhibitions and research reports communicated the impacts and legacies of RAMSI for policing in the Pacific (Knudsen 2018; Putt et al. 2018) to external audiences.

1.4. Research Puzzle, Thesis Aim and Outline

As the above overview of the conflict (Tensions) in Solomon Islands and RAMSI's subsequent intervention has shown, legitimacy had an important and wide-ranging role for a variety of actors in Solomon Islands. The legitimacy of RSIPF and SIG was severely eroded by the actions and inaction of both parties during the Tensions. A central puzzle this thesis seeks to explore is: how was the legitimacy of RSIPF and SIG restored to a sufficient level that RAMSI could exit. This is particularly puzzling given many accounts have noted that many of the policing activities undertaken by RAMSI in the first 3-4 years appeared to directly undermine the legitimacy of their key counterpart, the RSIPF. During this early period, and despite already having strong public support from the majority of Solomon Islanders, RAMSI invested considerable effort in promoting its own success, as an Australian-led and police-led initiative. This comes across strongly in the key texts that form part of the intervention's official narrative. Understanding why this was the case, how it destabilised RAMSI's relationship with SIG, and how it undermined the legitimacy of local institutions requires an

exploration of the relationship between legitimacy and narratives. This is because the importance of legitimacy for RAMSI's work is reflected in the narratives associated with RAMSI from its inception until its conclusion. What I refer to as 'legitimacy work' was among the most important functions of RAMSI's narrative.

RAMSI presents an opportunity to explore the gap between the meanings of trust and legitimacy of police and states as described by the two accounts that open this chapter. As we have seen, transnational policing, including the restoration of law and order, and rejuvenation of the justice system, was the lead component of RAMSI's statebuilding efforts. Moreover, support to policing was the most visible aspect of the mission's engagement with Solomon Islanders. RAMSI therefore makes a useful case study in order to explore legitimacy in the context of transnational policing. Recent work by scholars interested in peace operations (Gippert 2016; Gippert 2017a; Von Billerbeck & Gippert 2017; Whalan 2013, 2017), as will be discussed in Chapter 2, provide useful directions for future research but do not, in my view, do justice to the complex and multiple legitimacy relationships in a case like RAMSI. Specifically, by focusing primarily on the legitimacy of the intervention itself, this previous work neglects the contradictions and complexities between constructing legitimacy of an external authority and restoring legitimacy of local state or society institutions. This thesis provides a more nuanced account of legitimacy in intervention settings, which is largely absent in the current literature examining statebuilding and transnational policing.

In light of the above discussion I can now present the overall aim of my research:

The aim of my thesis is to explore how transnational policing and statebuilding interventions work to construct legitimacy for themselves and for the states within which they intervene.

In order to address this aim, my research focuses on a case study of transnational policing as the major component of RAMSI. Specifically, I use the concept of 'legitimacy work' to examine the construction of legitimacy by RAMSI through its discourses, narratives and practices. Adopting an interpretive lens for my research, I, first, examine how RAMSI worked to construct and sustain its own legitimacy for the purpose of consolidating its own power and authority as a provider of transnational policing assistance. I then examine how the

intervention, in partnership with local actors, worked to construct and confer legitimacy on local institutions such as the RSIPF.

To address these aims my thesis is comprised of eight chapters. In Chapter 2, I review literature on legitimacy, statebuilding, transnational policing, and local policing. This is in order to situate my contribution within critical literature that explores the legitimacy of peace- and statebuilding intervention. I argue that the multifaceted sources and complex role of legitimacy, including how legitimacy is produced in transnational policing missions, is poorly understood.

In Chapter 3, I present the interpretive analytical framework and research design underlying my exploration of RAMSI and legitimacy. Differentiating between the concepts of discourse, narrative and practice, I outline how these concepts provide a means for unpacking the situated meanings of legitimacy and how legitimacy is constructed in intervention settings. I bring an important additional approach by reflecting on my personal experience in Solomon Islands prior to and during RAMSI. I enhance my analysis with the explicit adoption of what Schatz (2012) has referred to as an ‘ethnographic sensibility’. Reflexivity and consideration of positionality helping me to navigate and identify multiple meanings of policing in Solomon Islands evident in a diverse range of narrative materials, as well as in contrasting local perspectives identified through key informant interviews (Appendix A).

In Chapter 4, I examine Solomon Islands’ historical, cultural and social context to highlight how this context influenced both perceptions of the state and practices of state-based policing. I show that this context continues to have significant, but often underappreciated, influences and legacies for the legitimacy of contemporary policing approaches in Solomon Islands. This has significant implications for the appropriateness of models of policing promoted by RAMSI and ultimately the prospects of success for efforts to strengthen state-based formal policing.

Returning to more recent events, in Chapter 5, I explore the legitimacy work conducted by RAMSI in relation to establishing the legitimacy of the intervention to external audiences, including Australia’s allies, the wider international community, regional nations and domestic audiences in Australia. I argue that RAMSI’s official and public external narratives are a key site where this ‘legitimacy work’ took place. Focusing on policing, I argue the official RAMSI

narratives play an important role in authorising, legitimising or delegitimising policing practices and institutions. I engage with four key themes which enable me to show the multilayered character and shifting dynamics of legitimacy during the intervention. Analysis of this external narrative also reveals the perpetually unfinished character of legitimacy work and aims to probe ‘invisibilities’ and ‘silences’ in the official RAMSI story (Wilkinson 2015).

Chapter 6 contrasts with Chapter 5 in terms of exploring internal legitimacy rather than external legitimacy. It focuses on how RAMSI’s internal narrative was presented to local audiences, first, to construct the legitimacy for the intervention, and later to rebuild the legitimacy of RSIPF and other institutions of Solomon Islands. The chapter also explores how RAMSI’s legitimacy was sustained and restored during a period of acute tension in the relationship between Australia and Solomon Islands (2006-2007). This is interesting in that it again highlights that legitimacy work is an ongoing process and that fraught relations can be restored given sufficient goodwill and a little luck.

In Chapter 7, my focus shifts from RAMSI’s official narrative to explore countervailing local perspectives on the appropriateness of the legitimacy work carried out by RAMSI’s strategic narrative. These local perspectives highlight the importance that many Solomon Islanders attach to models of policing that elicit a closer relationship between communities and the state. These local perspectives highlight the disconnect between the state-centric model of policing imposed by RAMSI, and the forms of policing desired by many Solomon Islanders.

Chapter 8 knits the arguments and conclusions of the preceding chapters together to outline a more nuanced understanding of how legitimacy is engendered in situations of transnational policing. I summarise how, over the course of the thesis, I have demonstrated that the concept of ‘legitimacy work’ provides a powerful approach to unpack the claims made for the legitimacy of RAMSI’s transnational policing and statebuilding activities. Legitimacy work also provides a useful lens for identifying how RAMSI’s claims evolved and focused increasingly on the legitimacy of local policing institutions as the intervention matured. This thesis contributes a new perspective on how legitimacy is engendered in the context of intervention, highlighting the key role that narratives play in this process. The notion of legitimacy work addresses a gap in the literature by providing empirical details of how interventions undertake work to legitimate themselves and local authorities through the strategic narratives they produce. The thesis highlights the importance of taking a multi-

layered approach to legitimacy in post-conflict settings and lends support to arguments for plural policing approaches in Solomon Islands which recognise and support linkages between non-state informal policing and the formal policing system.

Chapter 2: Legitimacy and Transnational Policing

Only a crisis – actual or perceived – produces real change. When that crisis occurs, the actions that are taken depend on the ideas that are lying around (Friedman 2009, p. xiv).

As outlined in Chapter 1, this thesis aims to explore how transnational policing interventions, as a form of statebuilding, construct and maintain legitimacy. To examine this, the policing component of the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) will be used to illustrate how legitimacy work is undertaken in the context of international statebuilding (transnational policing) interventions. The interpretative analysis presented in this thesis draws upon four main bodies of literature; legitimacy, statebuilding, transnational policing, and policing, which I review in this chapter. I argue that the multifaceted sources and complex role of legitimacy in post conflict and transnational policing contexts is poorly understood. Developing a better appreciation of legitimacy building processes in such settings is important in order to understanding how societies recover from conflict, and how transnational policing interventions may help or hinder this process.

First, I examine scholarship on legitimacy, focusing on two main strands of literature: the significance and source of legitimacy in relation to policing, and the importance of legitimacy for peacebuilding and statebuilding interventions. Second, I discuss statebuilding focusing on the liberal peace agenda and efforts to regulate governance in so-called ‘fragile’ or ‘failed’ states (Hameiri 2009, 2010, 2014; Richmond 2006, 2010, 2012). Third, I examine transnational policing and the problem of legitimacy. Fourth, I examine the concept of policing by engaging with critical scholarly literature assessing the merits and challenges related to the transfer of Western policing norms and practices to police institutions in developing countries (Ellison & Pino 2012; Hills 2012, 2014a, 2014b). By examining these

four bodies of literature, I highlight the importance of legitimacy for transnational policing and statebuilding, and draw attention to the complexity of legitimacy dynamics in post-conflict situations. I conclude the chapter by arguing that, to date, limited research has investigated how transnational and statebuilding interventions construct legitimacy, both for themselves and for institutions in the societies that they seek to rebuild. I argue a better understanding of processes and practices of constructing legitimacy – what I call ‘legitimacy work’ – is needed which incorporates multiple perspectives, given transnational policing unavoidably operates across multiple spaces, cultures and levels.

2.1 Legitimacy

Legitimacy is a central concept underpinning the analysis presented in this thesis. A growing appreciation of the “important role that legitimacy plays in ending wars and building peace” (Von Billerbeck & Gippert 2017, p. 273) has been reflected in recent contributions to academic work in peacebuilding and statebuilding. This work draws on a broader literature addressing the concept across a range of disciplines including criminology, political science and psychology (Bottoms & Tankebe 2012; Broadhurst & Bouhours 2009; Ciorciari & Krasner 2018; Gippert 2017a; Hurd 2008; Jackson 2018; Lemay-Hébert 2013a; Loader & Sparks 2013; Richmond, Kappler & Björkdahl 2015; Whalan 2013). In a general sense, the concept of legitimacy is understood as “the belief that authorities, institutions, and social arrangements are appropriate, proper, and just” (Tyler 2006, p. 376), or simply, the “belief by an actor that a rule or institution ought to be obeyed” (Hurd 2008, p. 30). Legitimacy, therefore is not an innate quality, but rather is intersubjectively constructed and subject to negotiation and contestation.

Bottoms and Tankebe (2012, p. 125-6) make a useful contribution to the literature examining the nature of legitimate authority. They elaborate on a three-fold typology of the nature of power exercised by people or groups in authority (see also Raz 2009, p. 128). This differentiates between (1) those who exercise naked power and do not claim to be legitimate but rather expect obedience through force, fear or self-interest; (2) “de facto authorities” who claim legitimacy but whose “right to rule” is not recognized; and (3) “legitimate authorities” who also claim legitimacy but who differ from the second group in that their claims are recognized by key audiences. While these are clearly ideal types and empirical realities are more complicated, this typology provides a useful tool for discussing differences between

colonial authority, post-independent government, RAMSI and local informal governance structures in Solomon Islands (see Chapter 4). Bottoms and Tankebe (2012, p.129) have usefully emphasised that “legitimacy needs to be perceived as always *dialogic* and *relational* in character” [emphasis in the original]. That is, legitimacy is produced in the context of an ongoing relationship and discussion between a power-holder (or power-seeker) and one or more audience(s). This relational aspect of legitimacy notion is taken further by Jefferson (2013, p. 248) who argues that “legitimacy is a product of ongoing entangled encounters”. For Jefferson the “struggle for legitimacy is constitutive of relations between institutions and simultaneously constituted by those relations” (ibid). Jefferson further suggests we need to move beyond thinking about legitimacy in “static terms of power-holders and audiences—implying possession and imposition” but rather explore the idea that “legitimacy is best understood through analysis of its production in practice” (2013, p. 249). This understanding of ongoing production of legitimacy in practice aligns closely with the idea of ‘legitimacy work’— the lens I use in this thesis to examine how statebuilding interventions *construct*, *sustain*, *transfer* and *confer* legitimacy in post-conflict settings.

Recent scholarship of the role of legitimacy in situations of post-conflict peacebuilding and statebuilding intervention has taken note of the relational and recurring nature of legitimization processes (Coleman 2017; Gippert 2017a; Von Billerbeck & Gippert 2017; Whalan 2017). These authors have also explored the non-binary and multi-layered nature of legitimacy audiences in post-conflict settings. A substantial focus of recent work has been to explore the need for interventions to gain legitimacy from a range of audiences. Summarising recent contributions, von Billerbeck and Gippert (2017, p. 277) highlight that there is a “proliferation of legitimacy audiences in conflict and post-conflict settings but that those legitimacy audiences are also exceptionally fragmented in their views on what constitute legitimate goals, actions, procedures and norms”. As statebuilding interventions represent a potential infringement of the international norm of state sovereignty they must be legitimated to key audiences within different constituencies, including international organisations, other states, and civil society. This includes political elites and citizens within intervening countries, as well as within the host country. This highlights the importance of legitimacy work for intervention authorities.

Legitimacy and the state

Transnational policing and statebuilding interventions such as RAMSI invariably draw on what has become known as an ‘institutionalist perspective’ in relation to ideas regarding legitimacy and the state (Lemay-Hébert 2013b). Within mainstream literature, the legitimacy of states is intrinsically linked with the legitimacy and performance of formal state institutions (Rotberg 2003). This follows the well-worn intellectual path established by Weber (1968) who noted the significance of ideal types or potential sources of legitimacy for the state including traditional authority, charismatic authority and rational-legal principles. He however gave prominence to rationally devised rules managed by bureaucratic institutions as a key source of legitimacy for sovereign states and their institutions. He also famously defined the ideal of the modern state as “that human community that (successfully) lays claim to the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical violence within a certain territory, this territory being another of the defining characteristics of the state” (Weber 1968, p. 78). A Weberian perspective has come to define what is commonly understood as an institutionalist understanding of the modern nation-state (Lemay-Hébert 2013b).

An inference frequently made based on an institutionalist understanding of the state, is that states that cannot control violence within their borders, such as in case of civil war, lack legitimacy or have ‘failed’. Theorising from this perspective, some scholars have argued that states lack legitimacy and risk failure when they are unable to perform normal functions of the state, such as providing basic goods to the general population including security, law and order, health and other essential services (Collier 2009; Rotberg 2003). For other scholars, such as Fukuyama (2004), the level of democratisation is a key determinant of legitimacy. Rotberg (2003, p. 1) spoke for the dominant institutionalist perspective in the international community when he argued that “[h]ow best to strengthen weak states and prevent state failure are among the urgent questions of the twenty-first century.” Other scholars have argued that the “possibility of states losing their sovereignty” should be considered when they lose control of “the agents of violence” (Herbst 2004, p. 309). While the loss of legitimacy of key state institutions, including state police organisations, is typically assumed to constitute both cause and consequence of state weakness, the precise dynamics of how legitimacy is lost and how it might be won back remains under theorised. I argue in my thesis that moving beyond the limitations of the state-centric institutionalist perspective requires a broader understanding of legitimacy dynamics in post-conflict contexts.

Chesterman (2007) argues that in post-conflict contexts, the legitimacy of state authorities and institutions, such as national police forces, is often in short supply. At the same time, the “stakes around legitimacy are particularly high” (Jefferson 2013, p. 248) due to various actors competing for legitimacy, as perceived by internal and external stakeholders. International recognition of a new government following civil conflict is often a prerequisite for funds from donors for reconstruction and development. Re-establishing state legitimacy, through measures including elections, security sector reform and statebuilding, is therefore a key priority for internal actors and external counterparts. In this respect, statebuilding interventions ‘succeed’ to the extent that they are able to re-establish the legitimacy of the host state and build the capacity of its institutions, including state police forces (Karstedt 2015). However, they must also, in the meantime, build, demonstrate and maintain their own authority and legitimacy as a temporary or transitional provider of security, basic services, knowledge and expertise (Von Billerbeck & Gippert 2017; Whalan 2013). As a result, maintaining and building legitimacy over the course of an intervention requires constant tacking back and forth, between an ultimate goal of building legitimate state institutions and an interim objective of ensuring any intervention is itself seen as a legitimate.

In acknowledgement of the importance that legitimacy has in post-conflict settings, there has been an increased interest in legitimacy by some scholars of peace building and intervention (Von Billerbeck & Gippert 2017; Whalan 2017). A significant section of this literature relates to international legitimacy of interventions. This is due to recognition that statebuilding interventions represent a potential violation of the principle of non-intervention enshrined in Article 2.1 of the UN Charter, which obliges all member states to maintain respect for “the sovereign equality of all its Members” (UN 1945). Infringements on state sovereignty must therefore be legitimated to key audiences within different constituencies, including international organisations, other states, non-government organisations (NGOs) and civil society, and politicians and the publics of intervening countries, as well as within the country subject to intervention. The international policy community has also identified legitimacy as an important issue for statebuilders to consider when working in fragile situations. According to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), donors involved in statebuilding should aspire to establish:

A virtuous cycle of legitimacy: Legitimacy aids the process of state building, and is reinforced as state building delivers benefits for people. The state’s ability to manage state-society expectations and state-

building processes is influenced by the degree of legitimacy it has in the eyes of its population. As such, legitimacy is both a means and an end for successful state building (OECD 2008, p. 2)

This implies that legitimacy operates across multiple levels. Indeed, as Travouillon (2019, p. 20) notes, “Every intervention needs legitimacy and authority in order to maintain local and international support and achieve its goals”. A recent focus of this literature has been on local perceptions of the legitimacy of peace operations (Gippert 2016; Gippert 2017b; Sabrow 2017). For instance, Whalan (2013, p. 200) claims “Peace operations work better – that is, achieve more of their objectives at lower cost – when they receive high quality local cooperation, rather than resistance or shallow compliance, when they are perceived locally to be legitimate”. Whalan makes a useful argument for the importance of considering how peace operations can be made more locally legitimate for the instrumental goal of seeking local compliance for increased operational effectiveness. While I agree that this is important, my research takes this observation further by exploring how, once legitimacy is achieved for an intervention, it is then *transferred* and *conferred* to state institutions, such as state police organisations.

Legitimacy and policing

In the context of legitimacy and policing there is a substantial literature that draws particular attention to the central role of police, as “the most visible symbol of state-sponsored coercive control” (Broadhurst & Bouhours 2009; Jackson 2018, p. 2; Jackson & Bradford 2009; Jauregui 2013; Loader & Sparks 2013; Loader & Walker 2001; Reiner 2010). As Jackson (2018, p. 2) observes, “the police have a great need for legitimacy, a particularly difficult time earning and maintaining it, and an easier time losing it”. Recent work on police legitimacy has highlighted that there are two main expressions by citizens that indicate that they consider the police are legitimate. The first is a sense of obligation or duty to obey and comply. The second is the expression of institutional trust. Jackson argues institutional trust relates to a public confidence that police are lawful and treat people fairly, that police values align with those of the general community and that police are usually effective. In states that are considered weak, fragile or failing, the legitimacy of formal police institutions is likely to be challenged in both respects (ibid.).

In much of the literature on police legitimacy, significant weight is given to the role of trust as component of, or a proxy for, legitimacy (Goldsmith 2005; Jackson & Gau 2015; Karstedt

2015). Trust in police relates to an expectation that police will act in a predictable and accountable way in the future, usually based on personal or vicarious experience of how they have acted in the past (Jackson & Bradford 2009). Goldsmith (2005, p. 444-7) highlights the direct relationship between trust in police and trust in government and the importance of trust in the context of police reform, arguing that “trust enables police legitimacy”, but also noting that in many post-conflict contexts or developing nation settings the absence of trust makes policing by consent impossible. Specific shared historical experiences, the relationship between police and society, political pressures on police and the repertoire of practices or policing technologies all have some bearing on the level of trust for police in a given society. Goldsmith (2005) argues that several practices and behaviours can significantly erode trust of police. These range from exhibiting attitudes of neglect or indifference towards the fulfilment of their duties, demonstrating incompetence and inconsistency, and various examples of malpractice, including accepting petty bribes or engaging in extortion. At the more violent end of the spectrum, Goldsmith identifies the use of excessive force and brutality as trust-eroding behaviours.

In post-colonial contexts, such as Solomon Islands, police may also suffer a deficit in trust and legitimacy given their historic role as a key coercive instrument of colonial order. This is based on the police’s association with state institutions, which may be perceived as alien and illegitimate structures imposed by prior colonial regimes and thus in competition with pre-existing sources of legitimacy and authority. Indeed, this competition between colonial authority and pre-existing sources of legitimacy and authority may very well be among the fundamental *sources of conflict*. This observation draws on recent ethnographic work in the Solomon Islands context by Allen (2013) and Akin (2013). This is a point I will explore further in Chapter 4. From this perspective, it is now important to consider the range of sources of legitimacy that are relevant to transnational policing intervention and the societies within which they intervene.

Sources of legitimacy

Claims to legitimacy can rely on a range of different sources. Institutional approaches to the state and legitimacy emphasise the importance of legal constitutional foundations of states and their institutions. They also focus on performance in terms of providing basic public goods (e.g. security and economic growth) and processes (democracy, accountability and human rights). However, even contributions to the orthodox institutionalist literature have belatedly

begun to recognise the importance of “legitimacy beyond the state” (Von Billerbeck & Gippert 2017). The OECD (2010, p. 48), for instance, notes a significant source of legitimacy is “anchored in traditions, religion, ethnic identity, nationalism or even charismatic leaders”.

A significant body of work has emerged related to the legitimacy of non-state and informal institutions ‘below’ the state, such as the literature on plural policing (Baker 2008, 2009, 2010; Loader 2000; Loader & Sparks 2013), and hybrid policing, security and governance structures (Boege, Brown & Clements 2009; Dinnen & Kent 2015). This forms part of a broader critique of state-centric conceptions of legitimacy and authority, and presumptions regarding ‘state fragility’, ‘state weakness’ and ‘state failure’. This critique draws attention to limitations of teleological models of state evolution and political development. It also highlights the lack of analysis of the distinct character and contested legitimacy of state and its institutions in countries established and sustained through colonisation and dispossession.

In the Pacific context, there are often strong arguments for moving beyond the state-centric approaches to institutional reform that have consumed most attention from scholars and the bulk of resources from donors. In the Pacific, as Boege, Brown and Clements (2009) point out:

‘The state’ often has little relevance to many people in rural areas. In countries like Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, or Papua New Guinea, non-state customary institutions that have their roots in the pre-colonial past of those places still play an important role in the everyday life of the majority of people and communities (Boege, Brown & Clements 2009, pp. 14-5).

Solomon Islands provides an important example of where alternative non-state or customary sources of legitimacy continue to be relevant to peoples’ lives. These are not exclusively based on pre-colonial ‘traditional’ sources of legitimacy, such as big men or chiefs, but also include non-state governance structures, such as church-based authority (McDougall 2008; McDougall & Kere 2011). Recalling from Chapter 1 that Solomon Islands remains a highly dispersed and predominantly rural society, it not surprising that penetration and service delivery by the state is inherently limited (Dinnen & Allen 2016). Non-state actors, including churches, communities, civic organisations, chiefs and other actors, fill the spaces where the state has withdrawn or never been prominent. Given the importance of non-state actors in Solomon Islands and similar contexts it is surprising that the key focus of most assistance to Solomon Islands has been firmly fixed on supporting state institutions through transnational

policing and statebuilding assistance. I argue that the relative neglect of non-state actors can be partly explained by situating RAMSI in the context of its ideological commitment to an international narrative of statebuilding, which I examine in the following section.

2.2. Statebuilding

In the 1990s and 2000s the concept of statebuilding emerged as major theme in Western donor policy and academic discourse. This reflected a wider convergence between security and development discourse and practice, a so-called ‘security-development nexus’, which also saw greater alignment between peacebuilding and security-led institutional reform objectives (Duffield 2001). A key aspect of statebuilding work has focused on donor-led efforts aimed at building liberal democratic institutions in so-called ‘fragile’ or ‘failed’ states through comprehensive statebuilding missions. The merging of liberal ideological assumptions regarding the ideal form of the state, with peace building ambitions, has been referred to as the ‘liberal peace’ project (Chandler 2004).

Statebuilding has been officially defined by the OECD (2008, p. 1) as “an endogenous process to enhance capacity, institutions and legitimacy of the state driven by state-society relations”. In reality however, much statebuilding activity has been driven by external actors, and as I show in this research, endogenous statebuilding processes, including those related to policing, are frequently neglected or undermined. A more realistic definition of statebuilding is “the support of external actors for the establishment of legitimate state institutions to provide security, public goods, and a regulatory framework for social and economic development” (Zaum 2012, p. 126). This reflects the institutionalist perspective which has been a leading feature of statebuilding initiatives.

Liberal institutionalist arguments in support of statebuilding efforts by the international community have been highly influential in policy circles. These argue that it is necessary for the international community to intervene to prevent state failure and address problems, such as insecurity, transnational crime and poverty associated with weak institutions in fragile states (e.g. Ghani and Lockhart, 2009; Collier, 2007; Fukuyama 2004; Sachs, 2005; Van Der Linden, 2001). The ‘liberal peace project’ describes efforts to reform and transform societies and institutions to encourage liberal values including democracy, free markets, and international systems of regulation to replace war as a means of settling conflict between states (Chandler 2010).

Liberal statebuilding has now been the subject of considerable critical scholarship (Bliesemann de Guevara 2008; Chandler 2010; Hameiri 2009; Lemay-Hébert 2009; Richmond 2014; Ryan 2011) and as such will not be covered extensively here. However, it is important to acknowledge that RAMSI was conceived and implemented at a time when enthusiasm for statebuilding was at its height and when the international community had rediscovered the linkage between security and development (Duffield 2001). The RAMSI intervention has aptly been described as “a major liberal-peace building intervention” (Dinnen & Allen, 2016, p. 78) and as reflecting “a determination to actively impose a liberal peace including through wholesale reconstruction of local institutions along good governance lines” (Barbara 2014, p. 398).

A key assumption of liberal statebuilding is that the provision of security to their own population is commonly understood to be among the most fundamental of the public goods provided by effective states (Loader & Walker 2001, 2007). In the post-Cold War period, the rights of individuals to be safeguarded from a range of threats has been championed as a new international norm within the frameworks of ‘human security’ (Chandler 2004; UN 1992). The creation of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty and formulation of what became known as the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine (ICISS 2001) created a new legitimation for liberal intervention (Bellamy 2003). R2P doctrine argued that a state’s sovereignty and the legitimacy of its government was conditional on fulfilment of its obligation to protect populations within a state’s jurisdiction. Policing support is a key component of R2P under Pillar II (Hawksley & Georgeou 2014). In 2005 the general principles of R2P were affirmed by Heads of State and Government in the World Summit Outcome Document (A/RES/60/1). However, the use of R2P as a source of legitimacy for “humanitarian intervention” remains contentious and its application has at times been problematic (Friberg-Fernros & Brommesson 2013; Mamdani 2010).

The apparent inability or unwillingness of some states to govern effectively and provide security for their population, has been used as evidence by some scholars to argue that such states are ‘weak’, ‘fragile’ or even ‘failed’ (Helman & Ratner 1992). The rise of failed states discourse and the emergence of the statebuilding paradigm was influenced by several prominent conflicts in the 1990s after the end of the Cold War. In particular failed peace-keeping efforts in Somalia (1992), the Rwandan genocide (1994-95) and secessionist wars in

the Balkans (1991-99) galvanized interest in what was previously a niche academic interest in state collapse and failure (Helman & Ratner 1992). When a small-scale conflict emerged in Solomon Islands in 1998, frameworks for understanding the conflict were borrowed from other contexts (Allen, 2013; Allen & Dinnen, 2010). Analysts peered through the lens of state failure, weakness and fragility to make sense of the crisis in Solomon Islands (Wainwright 2003b). As Matthew Allen (2013, p. 8-13) has noted, these explanations ranged from simplistic articulations based on “ethnic hatreds” adopted by the media to more nuanced accounts based on theories of “greed and grievance”, “resource curses” or uneven development.

RAMSI was established in the aftermath of, and was profoundly influenced by, the attacks of 11 September, 2001, in the United States. As consequence of these attacks, and with Australian support, the US launched military interventions in Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003) as part of a ‘War on Terror’. These military interventions were followed by ambitious and invasive statebuilding interventions. A new era of statebuilding interventionism aimed to address security threats to Western states at source by building liberal democratic institutions in so-called ‘fragile’ or ‘failed’ states. At this time of crisis, Western policy makers and analysts reached for what Milton Friedman (2009, p. xiv) referred to as the “ideas lying around”. Key concepts, including the notions of ‘failed states’, ‘statebuilding’, ‘liberal peace’ and ‘humanitarian intervention’, were grasped as ready-made conceptual tools to build a compelling narrative of statebuilding in the context of the War on Terror. An important aspect of this statebuilding narrative that I have not yet discussed in detail is the role of transnational policing in the context of security sector reform. In the next section I examine the role transnational policing in statebuilding interventions and the problem of legitimacy that such cross-border policing efforts face.

2.3. Transnational Policing and the Problem of Legitimacy

Transnational policing is essentially the business of importing and exporting policing ideas, norms and practices, as well as police professionals, across state boundaries. The parameters of transnational policing are broad and definitions remain unsettled. Examples of transnational policing practices range from international police cooperation through membership of international policing organisations, such as Interpol (Ellison & Pino 2012), to donor-led police institutional strengthening projects, to security sector reform in the context of post-

conflict interventions (Dinnen & Peake 2015), to capacity building or ‘police-building’ (i.e., the process of constructing, strengthening, renewing and reforming capabilities of police and police institutions) activities (Dinnen, McLeod & Peake 2006). One leading contribution to the literature focuses on “different forms of engagement by international donors, national governments, foreign police and law enforcement agencies in policing reform in the domestic policing agencies and programmes of recipient countries” (Goldsmith & Sheptycki 2007, p. i). Adopting this as my frame of analysis of transnational policing enables me to consider a range of aspects of policing assistance provided by RAMSI to Solomon Islands. While the clear focus of RAMSI was on support to ‘the police’, it is important to note there was some modest support to programmes providing a form of non-state policing (see Chapter 7 and Dinnen and Haley, 2012).

It should be noted that ‘police-building’ implies a focus on activities targeting the institution of ‘the police’ rather than on policing delivered by a broader range of non-state actors. While the term police-building is suggestive of a focus on capacity-building of police, its adoption in the transnational policing literature is substantially broader. Peake and Brown (2005) use the term to refer to “reforming and rebuilding a police system”. Goldsmith and Dinnen (2007, p. 1093) introduce an even wider range of activities under the term ‘transnational police-building’ to include: “a range of internationally assisted police-related activities in post-conflict, fragile and so-called ‘failed’ states”.

In post-conflict settings, a range of external or transnational policing initiatives including executive or in-line policing, police reform, or ‘police-building’ are increasingly viewed as essential components of international peace operations or statebuilding interventions. However, while securing development through the institutional transfer of Western concepts, models and practices of policing is one of the more remarkable innovations in contemporary political governance, it has only received limited attention by political scientists (Hills 2000). This is surprising given the revival of interest in ‘the state’ from the late 1980s by scholars and policy-actors and the key role attributed to policing in the formation of modern nation-states (Ryan 2011; Tilly 1992). Hills (2012) notes that while there is a wide literature examining the transmission of the values, concepts and practices of ‘modern’ policing between Western nations, that the transmission of these to developing nations is under theorised. A similar point is made by Severine Autesserre (2014) regarding the lack of research into the practices of intervention.

The centrality of formal police institutions to maintaining security and law and order in the modern liberal state is reflected in the emphasis placed on security sector reform within recent post-conflict statebuilding efforts in locations as diverse as Cambodia, Kosovo, Sierra Leone, East Timor, Iraq, Afghanistan, and, of relevance here, Solomon Islands (Richmond 2012; Ryan 2011). Ellison and Pino (2001, p. 1) argue that “policing and police reform cannot be divorced” from other forms of development assistance but also need to be considered within the broader context of globalisation. In a prominent version of this global narrative, the effective deployment of transnational police is crucial in the short term to the restoration of security, law and order, and peace in post-conflict states (United Nations 2000). Another similarity between policing and development assistance is their reliance on processes of institutional transfer. In the longer term, transnational policing assistance is intended to rebuild the capacity and legitimacy of sovereign states by assisting them to provide the valuable public goods such as security (Loader & Walker 2001).

Transnational policing programmes exist for a variety of motives but frequently, it is argued, combine “missionary idealism, humanitarian assistance and national self-interest” (Goldsmith & Sheptycki 2007, pp. 10-1). In this thesis, I build on Goldsmith and Sheptycki’s (2007) insight by showing in the context of RAMSI how intervention narratives and practices reveal both explicit and implicit motivations for intervention.

Significantly, transnational policing emerged as a key element of the common security agenda shared by many Western states (Goldsmith & Sheptycki 2007, p. 10) and has been shaped in recent decades by discourses reflecting perceptions of heightened risks of terrorism, transnational crime and forced displacement, arising from alleged state weakness, fragility or failure. Closely associated with this interventionism, transnational policing saw dramatic growth and was identified by many as a preferred modality for stabilising countries during post-conflict transitions towards the ultimate goal of liberal democratic government (Goldsmith & Dinnen 2007; Goldsmith & Sheptycki 2007; Greener 2009; Karstedt 2015; Ryan 2011; Sheptycki 1995). RAMSI was implemented during a key period of ambitious statebuilding and thus its narrative provides a useful way of exploring the tensions between external liberal peace building agendas and internal agendas related to peace-building and reconciliation.

In sum, transnational policing interventions and the broader statebuilding missions, within which they were increasingly merged (with RAMSI being a case in point), face a number of problems relating to legitimacy. First, unlike domestic police forces with either a mandate from the state, a local authority or community, police operating in transnational spaces work beyond the territorial borders and jurisdiction of the state of their origin (Hills 2014a, b). This does not relieve them of the need to claim legitimacy but it does imply the source of their legitimacy is likely to be different from domestic police forces. Second, those in authority within these interventions need to balance the legitimacy needs of the intervention versus the legitimacy and sovereignty of the host state. On the one hand, to be perceived as internationally and locally legitimate, those sponsoring or leading statebuilding interventions actively construct and rely on a narrative highlighting the weakness or failure of the host state and thus the need for intervention. On the other hand, to be perceived as ‘successful’, interventions require a narrative that highlights that the institutions of the host state are now restored and legitimate.

Thus, the ultimate goal of transnational policing, or statebuilding interventions, as I will focus on in this thesis, is not only to achieve legitimacy, local compliance or even operational effectiveness for themselves but rather to restore the sovereignty and legitimacy of the state within which they have intervened. To achieve the former does not necessarily imply interventions will succeed with the latter. Indeed, we know very little about how legitimacy is produced in intervention settings. Scholars have identified that legitimacy is important, both for statebuilding interventions themselves and for the states that are supposed to be built but the processes through which legitimacy is engendered remain opaque.

2.4. Policing and Legitimacy

The police, in the life of the state, are one of the basic links between the state and society, and they are fundamental to the state's efforts to maintain its power and authority. Police behavior is state power; the police make real, by what they do or fail to do, the intentions and interests of the state and of those groups that attempt to control the state (Marenin 1982, p. 379).

In the previous section I examined the importance of legitimacy to transnational policing. I now turn to consider the importance of legitimacy considerations for policing within and by

the state. This is of importance to my argument in this thesis because I wish to highlight that the construction of legitimacy by transnational policing interventions, such as RAMSI, did not take place in a vacuum but in the context of contested and entangled legitimacy relationships between a variety of actors and audiences involved in policing. These include formal state institutions and actors and informal non-state institutions and actors.

A first key distinction that needs to be made is between ‘the police’ as a “particular kind of social institution” and ‘policing’ as a broader social process involving and performed by a “diverse array of people and techniques” (Reiner 2010, pp. 4-5). Definitions of formal state ‘police’ describe a professional, state-controlled specialist institution consisting of personnel authorised with specific “legal power to arrest, detain, and charge on behalf of the state (backed, if necessary, by the use of *legitimate force*)” (Jones & Newburn 2002, p. 133 emphasis in the original). “Police can be described as an institution usually (though not always) given the right to use coercive force by the state within the state’s domestic territory” (Hills 2000, p. 7). While police are clearly an important provider of policing, it has been noted that in many countries formal state police forces are not the only form of policing provider. For many among the most marginalised populations in the world the police may not be the most significant provider of policing related services on a day to day basis (Baker 2008, 2010).

Some scholars prefer to reserve the term ‘policing’ for “explicit efforts to create visible agents of crime control, whether by government or by non-governmental institutions” (Bayley & Shearing 1996, p. 586). My usage of the term ‘policing’ reflects a broader conception as adopted by Reiner (2010, p. 5), namely that ‘policing’ includes “the set of activities aimed at preserving the security of a particular social order, or social order in general”. This broader understanding of policing is more relevant to Solomon Islands context where for many relatively remote rural communities it is rarely, if ever, the police who provide policing-related services. Instead, in Solomon Islands, as elsewhere in the Pacific, policing is provided by a variety of actors operating at different scales – local, national & transnational – with RAMSI being a case in point. These actors include both public and private, formal and informal, state and non-state, modern and pre-modern actors and processes sharing a purpose of crime prevention and maintaining, peace, security and social control (Baker 2008, 2009; Loader 2000; Loader & Walker 2001). The legitimacy of each of these actors is highly varied and situational. Policing in Solomon Islands is thus carried out through a “multiplicity of institutional forms” (Loader 2000, p. 324) and across different layers of society from the state

down to the local community (as discussed further in Chapter 4). As such, Solomon Islands, clearly inhabits what Loader (2000, p. 324) refers to as “a world of plural, networked policing”.

At the broadest level, the function of policing is maintaining a particular social order on behalf of those who are in authority. As Foucault (1965, 1977) and subsequent scholars have highlighted, societies are ‘policed’ and disciplined by a range of social practices and norms that are inculcated through the disciplinary regimes of education systems, judiciaries, prisons, health systems and bureaucracy. Technologies, such as closed-circuit television or even street lamps, also contribute to policing and encourage a measure of self-regulation or self-policing (Schivelbusch 1987). The role of religious beliefs and other social norms in policing social behaviour is also notable. This broader notion is of significance to my research project as it invites consideration of the role of other measures of social control in Solomon Islands where police, and the state, may have a limited presence.

In the context of Solomon Islands policing assistance has focused primarily on police-building RSIPF or direct service delivery by uniformed police from the Participating Police Force (PPF). Additional support to law and justice sector has also focused on the formal institutions of the criminal justice sector (SIG-RAMSI 2017). Far more limited and often incidental support was provided to transitional justice or reconciliation initiatives, informal community-based policing, or community development activities with a community security or safety dimension (Allen et al. 2013; Braithwaite et al. 2010; Dinnen & Allen 2016).

In Solomon Islands, as elsewhere, institutional or state-centric approaches to policing have dominated donor approaches to supporting police reform. However, the majority of providers of security in many nations are non-state actors. The insights developed by scholars like Hills (2000) and Baker (2008, 2009), drawing on the experience of African states, have relevance for the Solomon Islands context. Hills (2011) argues that recent focus on security function of police is misplaced. We should focus on ‘order’ rather than ‘security’ if we are to understand and meet the challenges of reconstructing post-conflict society. Hills emphasises the importance of stability and the countless mundane activities that create a sense of normalcy as equally or more important than a sole focus on institutional approaches to security sector reform and formal policing.

Whether the focus is on order or security, it is clear non-state policing providers play a key role in Solomon Islands. Yet these actors are often not highly visible, are poorly linked to state policing and justice systems, may lack skills and face other limitations in terms of their effectiveness. Just as formal police may abuse their position of power and authority, non-state policing providers may be vulnerable to similar problems including lack of accountability, conflicts of interest, or cultural, religious, gender or age-related biases related to offences or disputes. While these issues are significant, there is considerable optimism among some scholars and practitioners for the potential of nonstate policing. As Menkhaus notes:

However vulnerable these local systems of governance are, they have the added advantage of enjoying a high degree of legitimacy and local ownership, something that cannot be said of the inorganic, top-down state- building projects... that have not only failed but have undermined local polities in the process, leaving the country worse off than before (Menkhaus 2007, p. 83).

As we shall see in the Solomon Islands context, local systems of governance, such as chiefs, elders and church leaders, while often under-resourced, are regarded as preferred providers of many policing related services. This point is explored in more depth in Chapters 4 and 7.

2.5. Conclusion: Interrogating 'Legitimacy Work' in RAMSI

As the preceding overview of literature related to legitimacy, statebuilding and policing has emphasised, we know relatively little about how legitimacy is produced in intervention settings. Scholars have identified that legitimacy is important, both for statebuilding interventions themselves and for the states that are supposed to be built, but the processes through which legitimacy is engendered remain opaque. Recent literature has drawn attention to the importance of legitimacy in post-conflict intervention settings. However, the focus of this literature is on considering how peace operations can be more locally legitimate in the eyes of international or local audiences. This is relevant but provides only a partial picture of the complexity of legitimacy in intervention settings. This is because statebuilding interventions stated purpose is not to build legitimacy for itself but to restore legitimacy to the institutions of the state, which is the target of their attention.

Legitimacy is relevant to RAMSI as a police-led statebuilding intervention for three main reasons. First, as an international intervention, RAMSI required legitimacy from both external and internal audiences to secure support and compliance. Second, restoring the legitimacy of

Solomon Islands state institutions, with a particular focus on policing, was the core purpose of RAMSI. Third, a significant feature of policing in Solomon Islands is the presence of non-state providers of policing who draw on alternative sources of legitimacy.

My analysis of RAMSI's strategic narrative in this thesis highlights the key 'legitimacy work' this narrative performed and the dynamic way it responded to evolving legitimacy demands during the intervention for multiple legitimacy audiences. What I refer to as a 'legitimacy work' – the production of narratives and practices that focus on building and maintaining legitimacy – is I argue an important facet of the work of statebuilding interventions. Although there has been some consideration of how intervention narratives and communication strategies are used to generate legitimacy, either with domestic publics (Maley 2015) or from local audiences (Travouillon 2019; Whalan 2013, 2017), there has not been substantial empirical research examining what role narratives play in terms of constructing legitimacy for interventions and institutions.

The problem of legitimacy in relation to transnational policing, outlined above, means that those responsible for the intervention must develop an adaptive strategic narrative, as discussed in Chapter 5, that not only transitions from an emphasis on the weakness of the host state and the need for external intervention, to an emphasis on the strength, competence and legitimacy of host state institutions, but that also possesses sufficient resonance with relevant legitimacy audiences.

RAMSI is a useful case study to explore these questions for four main reasons. First, as a regional intervention, RAMSI required legitimacy from both external and internal audiences to secure support and compliance. Second, restoring the legitimacy of Solomon Islands state institutions was a central purpose of RAMSI. Third, a significant feature of policing in Solomon Islands is the presence of non-state providers of policing at the most local levels drawing on alternative sources of legitimacy. Finally, RAMSI official narrative provides a valuable record of the legitimacy work carried out by RAMSI over the course of the intervention.

Chapter 3: Analytical Framework and Research Design

I'm very much on the front foot, that's the way I police. Yeah, that's the culture I bring with me, more ways driving to achieve an outcome and probably sometime sooner rather than later. So, there's probably one thing that I've learned to do. And I've had – it's only cause and effect – that I've had to learn to do here is to actually become more patient with the situation (Patrick Veitch, interviewed in *Policing the Pacific* 2006).

The Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Island (RAMSI) represented a dramatic intensification in relations between Australia, Solomon Islands and other RAMSI participating countries. Suddenly, substantial numbers of Australian police and Solomon Islanders shared an intercultural encounter. Australian police comprised a significant proportion of the Participating Police Force (PPF); indeed, at one stage it was estimated that Australian police made up over two thirds of the total PPF contingent which fluctuated between 250-300 officers (AFP 2007). A small proportion of Australian participants in the intervention, primarily in leadership roles, brought recent experience gained from Australian interventions in East Timor, Bougainville or with the International Peace Monitoring Team (IPMT) in Solomon Islands. However, initially most Australian police officers lacked overseas deployment experience. Police officers from suburban Australian cities, like Patrick Veitch cited in the documentary, *Policing the Pacific* (2006), found themselves working closely with Solomon Islands police officers and communities in a dramatically different Melanesian cultural and policing environment. They were in effect thrust into the frontline of this cultural encounter and, like Veitch, 'brought their culture with them' (ibid.). To further complicate this intercultural experience, they were joined by police from other forces in the Pacific region who also brought along their cultures, styles and histories of policing (Putt et al. 2018). While such moments may be exceptional for the individuals concerned, they

represent the everyday reality of transnational policing. From contexts such as Sierra Leone, Kosovo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Cambodia, Bosnia and East Timor, transnational policing interventions, aligned with statebuilding and development missions, have involved interaction between diverse cultures, and policing practices and traditions. For my part, as an Australian aid official, on secondment to a local organisation, the National Peace Council (NPC) of Solomon Islands, during the first phase of the mission in 2003, I had a front row seat to observe the encounter between Australian police and Solomon Islanders. The attempt to understand this encounter, the transnational policing moment, and my own experiences, forms part of the motivation for this research. How can the legitimacy of transnational policing in the context of a statebuilding intervention like RAMSI be understood? What concepts might help to unpack these meanings?

In this chapter, I discuss the analytical framework and research design adopted in this thesis. The chapter consists of four main sections. In Section 1, drawing on some of the literature I reviewed in the preceding chapter of ‘legitimacy work’, and explain why this is significant to ‘transnational policing’. I also explain my use of the concepts of ‘discourse’, ‘practice’ and ‘strategic narrative’ and how each of these concepts provides a means for unpacking the situated meanings of legitimacy and exploring how legitimacy was constructed by RAMSI. Sections 2, 3 and 4 describe my research design. In Section 2, I discuss the rationale for and key features of an interpretive approach. I then explain why I consider the concepts of ‘discourse’, ‘practice’ and ‘narrative’ are useful in helping to develop questions to guide an interpretive analysis of the meanings given to transnational policing during RAMSI. In Section 3, I describe my positionality in relation to the study. Finally, in Section 4, I outline my methods, explain how I generated my data, and address ethical research considerations. Overall, this chapter provides the conceptual foundation for my research and explains why an interpretive account of a transnational policing intervention is useful. This argument is then developed through consideration of empirical analysis, presented in the following chapters, of different narratives of policing in the context of RAMSI.

3.1. Conceptual Framework: ‘Legitimacy Work’ and Strategic Narrative

Legitimacy is widely acknowledged to be important, but how does it happen? As noted in the previous chapter, drawing on a concept used in the organisational change literature, I use the idea of ‘legitimacy work’, (Landau, Drori & Terjesen 2014) to focus attention on the way that

meanings related to legitimacy and transnational policing are produced in intervention settings.

To analyse how legitimacy is constructed in the context of transnational policing missions in the context of RAMSI, I rely on three closely linked concepts – discourses, practices and narratives. In the following sub-section, I describe what I mean by these concepts and why they are central to my analysis. As discussed in Chapter 2, policing “relates to territory and population” and “is a set of philosophies as well as practices that seek to order human populations” by controlling spaces and the populations that live in or pass through them (Goldsmith & Sheptycki 2007, p. 3). But policing is also constituted within wider political discourses and more specific narratives. Such imperatives can be observed in public or elite discourses in terms of ‘risks’, ‘needs’ or ‘problems’, which are identified and used to legitimate the extension of policing beyond state borders or what we refer to here as ‘transnational policing’.

As noted in Chapter 2, transnational policing reflects the efforts of some (powerful) states to exert influence and control across borders. Like other forms of policing, transnational policing is constituted within specific discourses. The ideas and practices of transnational policing are shaped by a variety of discourses, norms, values and assumptions circulating at different levels from the most global to the most local. These discourses, and the norms, values and assumptions they reflect, are conveyed through everything said or written about a topic. As highlighted in Chapter 2, discourses relevant to transnational policing intersect with discourses pertinent to development, security and statebuilding. Significantly, transnational policing has emerged as a key element of the common security agenda shared by many Western states (Goldsmith & Sheptycki 2007, p. 10). It has been shaped in recent decades by discourses reflecting perceptions of heightened risks of terrorism, transnational crime and forced displacement, arising from the state instability, fragility or failure. Transnational policing practices are frequently conceptualised as an important part of the solution to these problems.

The observation that the practices of transnational policing are shaped by Western discourses around security, development and statebuilding, reflects a broader discovery by a range of social theorists that political power relations are maintained and reproduced through various discourses and social practices (Bourdieu 1977, 1990; Bourdieu & Thompson 1991; de

Certeau 1988; Foucault 1965, 1972, 1977; Giddens 1984). This work was instrumental in stimulating the so-called ‘linguistic turn’ – a major methodological focus on the role and influence of discourse in the construction of social reality and power relations across diverse aspects of social practice ranging from education (Fairclough 1992) to security studies (Buzan, Wæver & De Wilde 1998). Recent work on ‘everyday peace-building’ and attempts to define a ‘post-liberal peace’ by critical scholars, such as Roger Mac Ginty, Oliver Richmond and David Chandler, has similarly drawn considerably on the work of poststructuralists, such as Foucault, Bourdieu and de Certeau (Chandler 2010; Mac Ginty & Richmond 2013; Richmond 2010). In the following, I define my usage of the terms ‘discourse’ and ‘practice’ in relation to transnational policing and police-building discourse and practices evident during the RAMSI intervention in Solomon Islands.

In the social sciences, at least for those scholars who have followed the ‘linguistic’ and ‘cultural turns’, ‘discourse’ has come to imply a bounded set of knowledge statements that mediate meanings, delimiting what is acceptable in terms of the meanings, assumptions or explanations related to a given topic (Fairclough 2013; Hall 1997, pp. 17-9; Scollon 2002). Discourses are not simply abstract processes but closely related to practices, institutions and events. Stuart Hall describes the term in the following way:

Discourses are ways of referring to or constructing knowledge about a particular topic of practice; a cluster (or formation) of ideas, images and practices, which provide ways of talking about, forms of knowledge and conduct associated with, a particular topic, social activity or institutional site in society (Hall 1997, p. 6)

Transnational policing activities, such as those which formed such an important element of the RAMSI statebuilding mission, clearly represent a “topic of practice, a cluster of ideas, images and practices” (Hall, 1997, p. 6), formed within specific discourses. But these ideas, images and practices are not only shaped by discourse but also contribute to discourse. RAMSI’s policing and police-building activities and practices were widely cited and represented as a ‘best practice’ example and an important contribution to an established and expanding body of international knowledge of transnational policing as a model of security sector reform (OECD 2004a). RAMSI was constructed within parameters and according to expectations defined by culturally dominant Western discourses connecting security and development through a process of liberal statebuilding but it also helped to reproduce and shape these discourses.

At the broadest level, I understand transnational policing discourse to include everything spoken, written, or otherwise represented about the topic through policy documents, academic contributions, media discussions, images, as well as the everyday conversations of practitioners and recipients of transnational policing intervention. In the case of RAMSI, while global discourses, such as those related to state fragility or failure, or the liberal peace, were important in providing the rationale for intervention, the model of policing and expectations of what knowledge, practices, ideas, behaviours, and images, were appropriate, were heavily influenced by understandings of what ‘good policing’ looked like based on Australian norms, practices and experience. Australian members of the PPF brought not only their culture but also their knowledge, practices, behaviours and narratives. While some Australian police brought experience and practices from other peacebuilding deployments such as in East Timor or Bougainville, it was primarily policing experience gained in urban Australian contexts that informed approaches to police reform and capacity development (Harris 2010). Similarly, members of other Pacific police forces deployed in the PPF, from New Zealand, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, also brought their culture, knowledge, practices and behaviours and narratives (Putt et al. 2018). But as the largest partner in terms of financial and numerical contribution, and with the senior diplomatic and police leadership roles reserved for Australians, it was Australian understandings that predominated.

The discourse of transnational policing is not only a discourse of and between interveners. Solomon Islanders actively demonstrated agency in bringing their own set of meanings and understandings to the question of what constituted good and legitimate policing in Solomon Islands and how RAMSI was or should contribute to good policing. Sometimes, as I show in Chapter 6, Solomon Islanders acted as ‘brokers and translators’ (Lewis & Mosse 2006), playing a key role in translating RAMSI’s strategic narrative and explaining the meanings of key concepts. Frequently, as I argue in Chapter 7, local perspectives were couched in terms of a nostalgia for policing practices of the colonial era, which were viewed as conducive to greater police legitimacy and stronger integration between non-state and state policing providers. These local perspectives about policing included elements that were strongly supportive of the intervention as well some that were highly critical. Admiration and gratitude for the role RAMSI had played in restoring law and order was sometimes accompanied with frustration that opportunities to institute deeper reforms in the political system had been missed. One of the striking features of local discourses related to policing is the prominence

of references to specific policing practices, whether of Solomon Islands police in the past, during the Tensions, or since the arrival of RAMSI, or of RAMSI PPF officers during the intervention. These representations of practices within local discourses provide a useful means of examining what policing means in the context of the RAMSI intervention.

Transnational policing is constructed within discourse but is implemented through a myriad of mundane everyday practices. At a simple level I understand practices as actions – the things we do. Transnational policing practices, include the practical activities, deeds, performances, tasks, material appearances, conduct, habits, spatial arrangements, that police, other actors and organisations follow in the implementation of transnational policing projects, policies, guidelines, regulations, ideas and discourse. While the analysis of discourses related to statebuilding, security and police-building is important, I argue that practices play an equally important role, and indeed cannot be separated from discourse or strategic narratives.

Practices are also symbols and a kind of language and are open to interpretation. The constant repetition of everyday practices has been identified as a key element in sustaining social relations and meanings (de Certeau 1988). In a non-policing context an everyday practice such as a ‘handshake’ can convey a range of symbolic meanings. It can represent a contractual arrangement, a business deal, a reconciliation between adversaries, a symbol of equality or of Western hyper-masculinity. Similarly, the myriad of practices associated with transnational policing and other forms of liberal statebuilding intervention can be read as a symbolic language and analysed for explicit and implicit meanings that support or undermine claims of legitimacy to various audiences. Everyday interventionary practices, such as the spatial arrangements of a press conference, the decision to conduct a police patrol by foot or in a car, to wear riot gear to a public disturbance or not, convey specific messages and can be analysed in terms of whether they enhance or undermine legitimacy. Consideration of the communicative power of practices and their contribution to discourses and narratives may be especially significant in Solomon Islands, where non-verbal communication forms a significant part of communication (Whitehouse 1994). Although transnational policing practices are structured by discourse, they also constitute an important part of discourse.

My use of the concepts of discourse, practice and narrative, is similar to the use of these concepts in recent critical scholarship applying ethnographic and interpretive approaches to examine the meanings of development, peace-building and humanitarian interventions. From

a methodological perspective, I have found the contributions of David Mosse (2005) and Severine Autesserre (2014) useful for considering the links between discourse, practices and narratives to better understand of how aid policy discourse and practice diverge and connect – often in unanticipated ways. Mosse’s (2005) ground-breaking ethnographic account of the planning and implementation of a rural development project in India highlights how notions of project ‘success’ and ‘failure’ are policy-oriented judgements that preoccupy the narratives of project and donor’ (Mosse 2005, p. 205). In other words, they are socially constructed for specific purposes which may not be materially influenced by realities on the ground or the views of those for whom a particular project was supposed to provide an outcome (Mosse 2005).

In this process of articulating between the disconnect of policy and practice, Mosse (2005, p.9) highlights the crucial, but often under-appreciated, role of ‘skilled brokers’ and ‘translators’ who ‘read the meaning of a project into the different institutional languages of its stakeholder supporters’. This term describes rather well the skilled facilitation of Solomon Islander journalist Dorothy Wickham and colleagues, on the RAMSI sponsor ‘talk-back’ show ‘*Talking Truth*’, which provided an important media platform for projecting RAMSI strategic narrative to internal audiences (see Chapter 6). It also describes the role of other Solomon Islanders within the political and bureaucratic elite who supported, or sometimes constructively challenged RAMSI aims, assumptions and its liberal democratic goals (see Chapter 7). Other important brokers and translators included expatriates with situated knowledge of the Solomon Islands context, who worked for RAMSI in various capacities. Yet the role of broker also has historical antecedents. In the earliest days of the British Solomon Islands Protectorate, the effectiveness of colonial police was enhanced by the knowledge of local culture, customs, terrain and environment brought by locally recruited police. Colonial officers (who also filled a role of brokers) were also most effective when they were able to effectively draw on the skills and knowledge of their indigenous police, area constables, or ‘chiefs’ and when they could speak and translate concepts into local languages (Akin 2013).

Autesserre (2014) also drew on ethnographic research and her own experiences and networks as an aid worker to examine the everyday practices, habits and narratives of humanitarian and peace-building interveners in Democratic Republic of Congo. Autesserre highlights the role that routine practices and habits play in constructing and perpetuating specific narratives about the country in question. The analysis of the narratives and practices of both interveners and

local populations plays a central role in her analysis. For Autesserre: “Simply put, a narrative is a story that people create to make sense of their lives and environments. ...they help shape the way we perceive the social and material worlds, and thus orient how we act upon our environment” (Autesserre 2012, p. 206). But there is more to narrative than making sense of our world. Narratives also have a powerful role in shaping our world.

Autesserre writes that ‘narratives usually include a central frame or combination of frames’ (Autesserre 2012, p. 206). According to Autesserre, these frames determine ‘what counts as a problem... and what does not’ (p. 206). They are not only social and mental constructs (for example, the idea of an ‘arc of instability’ to Australia’s north and east) but also ‘embedded in social routines, discourses, technologies, and institutions’ (Autesserre 2014, p. 34). Narratives also interact constantly with practice to produce powerful dominant narratives:

...frames and narratives make action possible: they authorize, enable, and justify specific practices and policies (...) while precluding others (...). These actions in turn reproduce and reinforce both the dominant practices and the meanings, embodied ... in narratives, upon which they are predicated...
...Over time, the narratives and the practices they authorize come to be taken as natural, granted, and the only conceivable ones (Autesserre 2012, p. 207)

Drawing on Autesserre’s work, I argue that statebuilding interventions like RAMSI are built on and made possible through particular discursive constructions, that frame the object of intervention in particular ways. These interventions rely on a dominant, yet evolving narrative, or more accurately, several closely related dominant narratives, to justify to various audiences why intervention is necessary and legitimate. Evocative labels and concepts, such as ‘failed states’ or ‘fragile states’, ‘arc of instability’, transnational crime’ or the ‘responsibility to protect’ are plucked from the wider discourses related to security, development and state building, and deployed in the dominant narrative(s) to strengthen and *legitimise* the case for intervention (Hansen 2013). Specific concepts, facts, objects and events are given particular meanings supporting the dominant set of narratives.

It is important to note that dominant narratives are neither static or singular. In the case of RAMSI the dominant narratives shifted and evolved over the 14-year period. The content and emphasis of RAMSI’s narratives related to the legitimacy of policing shifted over time and depending on the different actors presenting the narrative as well as characteristics of their audiences. However, as I show in Chapters 5 and 6, RAMSI’s external and internal narratives

pivot around central themes, relying on particular ‘truths’ or widely accepted ‘facts’, which ultimately, are interpretations based on a particular rendering of evidence. In Chapter 7, I draw on interviews to highlight that multiple alternative meanings and interpretations are present or possible when perspectives from outside the dominant frame are engaged. These perspectives challenge, contest or add additional dimensions to the dominant narrative presented by RAMSI. Examining these additional perspectives tell an important story which has implications for our understanding of RAMSI’s claimed legitimacy and success as a transnational policing and statebuilding mission.

As a major regional intervention RAMSI, and PPF, drew its membership from all 15 member countries of the Pacific Islands Forum. As a whole-of-government operation, at least on the Australian side, the intervention also brought a variety of government departments together (Shergold 2004). Inevitably, this diversity in experience, and organisational mandate and culture, has implications for how people spoke to and made sense of RAMSI’s narrative and transnational policing efforts. The multivocality within RAMSI’s own narrative requires some boundaries be set in terms of the focus of this research. The official external narrative that I present in Chapter 5 is weighted heavily towards an Australian perspective and draws primarily on Australian voices and texts as presented towards an external audience (including the Australian public and international community). The narrative that I present in Chapter 6 reflects the localisation, translation and presentation of this narrative to an internal audience in Solomon Islands, through RAMSI’s various community outreach activities and practices. The narratives that I present in Chapter 7 represent ‘local’ voices and perspectives. These are primarily the perspective of Solomon Islanders but also include a few expatriates who have earned the status of ‘locals’ by virtue of their long-term involvement and embedded relationship with Solomon Islands.

In the context of RAMSI’s policing efforts in Solomon Islands, the construction of a specific dominant narrative of the crisis in Solomon Islands being fundamentally about a problem with law and order, authorised, enabled and justified specific practices and policies. Namely, they legitimated RAMSI as a police-led intervention, accompanied by robust programmes aimed at economic reform and institutional strengthening of core elements of the machinery of government. As I will demonstrate in Chapters 5, 6 and 7, there were several dominant themes and competing narratives related to RAMSI’s transnational policing. These enabled specific

policing practices and police-building approaches to be applied to the Solomon Islands context.

While practices can be observed in the moment in which they occur, it is only through representations of practice that communication or analysis of such practices can occur. Meaning is bestowed on these representations through the construction of narratives. “Narratives order our world...[they] both enable and limit representation – and representation shapes our world and what is possible within it” (Wibben 2010, p. 43). The representation of transnational policing practices through speeches, policy documents, visual images, or spoken or video media programs on radio or television, and the use of these representations to tell a story, provide the link between discourse and practice. To the extent that these representations of transnational policing practices are strategically used to tell a particular story, they also contribute to challenging or maintaining relations of power. As Annick Wibben (2010, p. 43) reminds us “[n]arratives are profoundly political”. The political and strategic nature of narrative makes it a useful concept to deploy in exploring the meanings generated by the RAMSI intervention associated with policing. As the next section will argue, they are also open to interpretation.

Consideration of the multiple meanings conveyed by key terms or themes within RAMSI’s narratives is important to an exploration of RAMSI’s prominent claims of ‘success’ and ‘effectiveness’. From an interpretive perspective, value-laden terms like ‘success’, ‘failure’ or ‘legitimacy’ are likely to have dramatically different meanings to people or groups in different contexts (Lynch 2013). This consideration is largely absent from existing accounts of RAMSI. It is not my intent to evaluate RAMSI’s success or failure in terms of how effectively the RSIPF was trained or reformed but rather to explore how RAMSI constructed legitimacy through promoting itself as success. This invites consideration of RAMSI as an example of what David Mosse (2005, p.173-175) refers to a “regime of success”. By providing evidence of additional voices and perspectives, which problematise the claim that RAMSI can, and should be regarded as an example of ‘unqualified success’ in external statebuilding.

3.2 Interpretive Research Design

The *sine qua non* of interpretive research—the sensibility that is its hallmark and which makes it distinctive in comparison with other research approaches—is its focus on meaning-making: it seeks

knowledge about how human beings, scholars included, make individual and collective sense of their particular worlds (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow 2013, p. 46).

This thesis, and the empirical research presented in the following chapters, is written from an interpretive epistemological perspective. In this section I describe the basic principles of interpretive research, how it facilitates understanding, and why an interpretive approach that focuses on narratives is a useful way of analysing the legitimacy work of transnational policing narratives. Interpretive research has a long, if not always recognized, tradition within political science and is becoming an increasingly accepted approach to social research which challenges the basic assumptions of positivist research traditions (Lynch 2013; Shankar & Patterson 2001).

As the above quote by Schwartz-Shea and Yanow (2013, p. 46) highlights, the essence of interpretive research is a focus on meaning-making or sense-making, that is, “on how human beings, scholars included, make individual and collective sense of their particular worlds”. One of the most significant implications that arises from an interpretive perspective is an awareness that knowledge of the world is socially constructed. Interpretive research challenges the ontological foundations of positivist science. Positivist research is conducted from an ontological position that an objective reality exists, is governed by universal laws, and that knowledge of the ‘truth’ of that reality can be discovered and measured through objective research (Lynch 2013; Shankar & Patterson 2001). Positivist research typically aims to provide explanation of phenomena and events by identifying causes through experimentation, observation and deductive reasoning carried out by an independent researcher. Interpretivists, on the other hand, maintain that “[t]here is no outside, detached standpoint from which we gather and present brute data. When we try to understand the cultural world, we are dealing with interpretations and interpretations of interpretations” (Rabinow & Sullivan 1987, p. 7). According to Rabinow and Sullivan “both the observer and the observed are always enmeshed” in the “shared meanings, practices, and symbols” that constitute culture (ibid.).

From an interpretive stance, both the positivist and interpretive researcher are ultimately embedded in the context they observe. However, whereas a positivist researcher strives for objectivity and seeks to eliminate sources of potential biases an interpretive researcher is compelled to recognise and reflect on the implications of the situated nature of their

perspective for methodology, methods, and the nature of claims to knowledge made as a result of research. Meanings are assigned to events, practices, symbols differently by different people. Where a dominant set of meanings, or dominant narratives exist, these are likely to be constructed by those acting from within a privileged position by those with power: for example, elites, the government official, the Western scientist, the economist, the colonial anthropologist, the wealthy businessman, the newspaper man, the man... and communicated through discourse. “Dominant narratives ‘fill the gaps’ between existing forms of evidence and the conclusions drawn from them” (Lynch 2013, p. 18).

Interpretive approaches to social sciences offer the opportunity to challenge these dominant narratives and build an understanding of the human world and events which is rich in detail and open to exploring the multiple meanings that events, practices and objects hold for different individuals or groups. As Cecelia Lynch (2013) notes, developing a richer understanding of the social and gendered nature of power and the role of language in maintaining or contesting particular explanations is a key goal for interpretative research:

One of the main objectives of much interpretive research in IR... ...is to denaturalize dominant explanations, exposing them not as truth but as narratives that are discursively constructed, assigned particular meanings, and reproduced from partial or limited evidence and with particular stakes or purposes in mind, and to provide evidence that indicates the possibility of other articulations and meanings of the phenomena in question (Lynch 2013, p 14).

In Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7, I seek to unsettle and critically examine dominant meanings relevant to the legitimacy claims of transnational policing narratives. This requires attending to the additional meanings that lie outside of the dominant frame. From a slightly different perspective, drawing on recent literature on ‘strategic narratives’ (Miskimmon et al. 2017), this involves looking for and listening to what Wilkinson (2015) identifies as the ‘invisibilities’ and ‘silences’ produced by strategic narrative. Reflecting on Autesserre’s (2012) use of the concept of frames associated with dominant narrative and Wilkinson’s (2015) notion of silences and invisibilities within strategic narratives, has provoked some of the questions I explore in the subsequent chapters in relation to the RAMSI statebuilding and transnational policing mission. This includes asking: How does the historical and social context of Solomon Islands affect perception of the legitimacy of policing in Solomon Islands (Chapter 4)? What narratives were told about policing or law and order by RAMSI (Chapter 5)? What ‘legitimacy work’ did these narratives perform in terms of authorising, legitimising

or delegitimising policing practices and institutions (Chapters 5 and 6)? How did RAMSI's strategic narrative function to construct legitimacy for itself as an intervention (Chapter 5 and 6)? How was RAMSI's legitimacy maintained at times of acute tension in the relationship between Australia and Solomon Islands (2006-2007) (Chapter 6)? How did RAMSI's strategic narrative adapt and evolve as the intervention matured, and as the task of conferring legitimacy on Solomon Islands state institutions such as RSIPF assumed increasing importance? (Chapter 6). Finally, what do local perspectives reveal regarding the appropriateness of the legitimacy work carried out by RAMSI's strategic narrative (Chapter 7)?

A hallmark of interpretive research is the acknowledgment of the fundamental role that the researcher plays in the process of knowledge creation. The intimate relationship between interpretative researcher and subject is essential to the mode of enquiry but invites allegations that the product of such research lacks trustworthiness, validity, credibility, criticality, generalisability or rigour (Aradau & Huysmans 2019). Aradau and Huysmans (2019) refer to the process of 'assembling credibility' to describe the alternative means that interpretative scholars use to establish the validity and trustworthiness of their research.

Drawing on Dvora Yanow's (2004, p.15) work, I consider that interpretative research is a creative process of translation of meaning from one context to another. "Translation is affected and shaped by the translator, and both person and process shape the outcome". Building on the insights of linguistic theory, Yanow observes: "Translation requires expert, local knowledge of at least two settings and practices: one does not translate language per se; one translates meaning" (ibid.). So, our rendering of meanings from one context to another, from one language, discourse or narrative into another, from observed practices to text necessarily "entail an active grasping and transposing of meaning: the translator is not a passive conduit" (ibid.). This involvement and influence of the researcher, while unavoidable, should not be considered undesirable. But it does mean that the interpretive researcher is beholden to providing a more comprehensive account of his or her own involvement and positionality in relation to the research so that the implications of this role are visible to the reader to the extent possible.

This role of the researcher as a translator of language, knowledge or practices and the importance of 'being there' is self-evident in the case of ethnographic research. As Clifford

Geertz argued in his seminal essay, “Thick Description” describing the ethnographic process, “[t]he ethnographer ‘inscribes’ social discourse; *he writes it down*” (Geertz 1973, p. 19, italics in the original). Anthropological interpretation consists in “tracing the curve of a social discourse: fixing it into an inspectable form” (ibid.). Yet there is more to it than simply writing social discourse down. As anthropologist Roger Keesing, whose work focused on the Kwaio people of Malaita in Solomon Islands, highlights:

All talk is contextually situated, socially implicated. No talk, decontextualized as text, speaks for itself or through itself. All conversations are processes of co-creation, negotiation, the ongoing, contingent, defeasible co-construction of context and meaning. (Keesing 1985, p. 32)

If the researcher is so deeply involved and implicated in the co-production of meanings attributed to particular discourse at a particular moment in time, how can we be confident that a particular textual rendering is faithful to the context and content of languages and practices from which it is derived? Translation is never definitive and the meanings given are, as Keesing (1985) notes in the quote above, defeasible. There is no final word. The accuracy of a particular translation remains open to revision. The translator is always seeking to balance transparency and fidelity of the interpretation given. Accordingly, interpretative research gives space and weight to issues that might have a bearing on the translation of meaning. This requires explicit consideration of the positionality of the researcher and other devices to enable interrogation of the interpretations made. Providing sufficient ‘thick description’, or including sufficient data such as excerpts from interviews, or photographs, or other materials, to enable a reader to participate in validating the analysis data can help to lend credibility to the interpretations made (Harding & Whitehead 2013, p. 144).

Adopting an interpretive lens has significant implications for method. This relates to the choice and treatment of research materials to generate data and the way that data is used to generate knowledge claims. Interpretive approaches admit a wide range of research materials for examination applying the idea of ‘intertextuality’ to take sources and read across them to uncover new meanings, thereby exposing the ‘space-between’ knowledge and power in international relations’ (Lynch 2013, p. 22). In the following section I describe my own positionality and involvement in the research process.

3.3 Positionality and Research Origins: From Aid Worker to Academic

This research project had its origins in my close involvement with the Australian aid program to Solomon Islands during a pivotal period of its history from 2000 to the end of 2003. As a junior aid official, I was an ‘insider’ to some of the policy analysis, project management and decision-making processes and discourses within AusAID, as the Australian Government tried to make sense of the evolving and confusing situation in Solomon Islands. Initially, I spent two and a half years assigned to the Solomon Islands desk, in Canberra. I visited Solomon Islands in 2001 and 2002, accompanying consultants on project review or design missions in Honiara and rural locations in Malaita and Guadalcanal, during the uneasy post-conflict phase following the signing of the 2000 Townsville Peace Agreement. In April 2003, I was seconded as a ‘policy advisor’ to the AusAID-funded National Peace Council (NPC). After five and a half months with NPC, and following the arrival of RAMSI, I was reassigned to RAMSI as a ‘development advisor’ remaining in Honiara for two months. My involvement or ‘immersion’ in different aspects of Australia’s aid program and its efforts to support the peace process in Solomon Islands during a critical period was interesting, rewarding and enjoyable but it was also at times dissatisfying and puzzling. In a journal I kept at the time, I noted my confusion, frustration and growing sense that some of our aid efforts were misdirected, miscommunicated and misunderstood. The rhetoric of development practitioners, like myself, seemed partly to blame, as I noted to myself: “It is fashionable to consider that after a conflict, ex-combatants need ‘rehabilitation’ – unfortunately exactly what this long ‘foreign’ word means is rarely explained...” (*Journal Notes*, 4 June 2003). Lack of mutual understanding of context, concepts or even language resulted in the frequent “misinterpretation of words, events, even reality”, as I concluded.

I continued to explore the questions raised by my involvement as a development practitioner in Solomon Islands as I entered a new phase of engagement with Solomon Islands as a student, consultant and researcher. My experience in Solomon Islands provided a rich source of case material to explore in study towards a Master of Applied Anthropology at the Australian National University (2002-2008) and prompted me to undertake a second Master’s degree in the Anthropology of Conflict, Violence and Conciliation at the University of Sussex. In my dissertation at Sussex, I examined the relationship between Australians and Solomon Islanders over 100-year period relying on colonial archives, interviews former colonial officers and interviews with contemporary observers. I returned to Solomon Islands in October 2007 to complete a five-week consultancy, adopting applied anthropological methods, to lead a

‘participatory’ evaluation of UNICEF’s humanitarian response to the April 2007 earthquake and tsunami that impacted on villages in Western Province and Choiseul. Cumulatively, this collection of experiences in Solomon Islands were a key influence in my decision to start a PhD, informed the research framework I have adopted, and provided proximity and understanding of the context to inform the ‘ethnographic sensibility’ with which this research has been conducted.

The research perspective generated by relying on former experience in the field or organisation to contribute to research undertaken according to an ‘ethnographic sensibility’ has been aptly described by Hayley Henderson (2016) as an ‘insider afterwards’ perspective. Henderson describes two ways that insider experience may be used to inform subsequent research. The first involves reflection by former practitioners on their applied experience to contribute to knowledge. The second concerns the use of prior experience to inform the definition of the research questions and understanding of the research context (Henderson 2016, pp. 31-2). In both senses my experience as an insider has strongly informed and shaped my research.

My positionality has thus shifted from aid civil servant, to practitioner, to student, to consultant, to PhD researcher. With each shift my perspective and the context from which I have observed Solomon Islands also changed. But each position has also informed those which have followed. Recognising and valuing *a priori* knowledge of the research subject or field site, drawn from previous experiences or encounters, is fundamental to interpretive methodologies. Research problems come from somewhere and certainly, from a personal perspective, a research problem capable of sustaining my attention through long years of part-time PhD research, needed to be firmly attached to and derived from my personal experience. Research towards my Master’s degrees and PhD has also relied heavily on the networks, insights and in-country experience developed whilst an aid official. This enabled me to identify field sites and gave me access to informants that might have been harder to achieve without this prior experience. Drawing on my experience gained during three visits to Malaita (2001, 2002, 2003) including two visits to north Malaita, I selected Malu’u as a field site for a research trip in 2011. In this sense my background as an aid official in Solomon Islands has been a key research tool.

Other aspects of my positionality have influenced my research. My status as a white, educated, English speaking, Australian male placed me in a position of power in terms of granting me a level of respect. This helped me to gain access to interview elites such as Sir Peter Kenilorea, Solomon Islands first Prime Minister, and Sir Allan Kemekeza, Prime Minister during the first three years of RAMSI. It also is likely to have influenced at some level what they may have said or shared with me. The characteristics that helped me access some groups – particularly elites – may have created a barrier to accessing others. This may have been particularly so in a context where white Australian males were dominant in RAMSI and the PPF and sometimes feared or resented. As an Australian, I followed in the historical wake of 150 years of relations between Australians and Solomon Islands, relations which were frequently influenced by attitudes of racism and paternalism towards Solomon Islanders by Australians or by violence and oppression during the Black-birding and plantation era (Mahaffy 1909). I provide further historical context to these relations in Chapter 4. In some interviews, I felt there was initially some caution or suspicion but I found this lessened as I outlined my research topic and worked to build rapport with informants. I had anticipated that both PPF and Solomon Islands police would be guarded and defensive in their dealings. This ended up being far from the case. Both groups appeared enthusiastic to contribute to the research and were particularly interested in the historical aspect of the research. ‘We need this’ was a frequent comment, as I outlined my research interests.

Language was an additional barrier to accessing some groups. I did not use a translator but relied on the generally adequate levels of English language of police, officials and other informants – this excluded those Solomon Islanders unable to understand English. Communicating in *Pijin* provided an alternative for basic communication. While I was unable to speak *Pijin* fluently, I was able to understand it and with a mix of *Pijin* and English able to communicate effectively with most Solomon Islanders. Inevitably given the constraints of time and language my research does not claim to present the perspective of all Solomon Islanders. Some of the least powerful and most marginalised groups in Solomon Islands, such as rural women, youth and elders with limited formal education were not interviewed. I was also not able to visit more remote communities due to time constraints. I have however drawn on additional research including testimonies to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and Peoples Survey (2006-2013) to supplement findings where necessary.

My positionality has also therefore significantly influenced my approach and ability to generate knowledge. If there is a common element to the various positions I occupied and have described above, it is perhaps a sense of ‘in betweenness’. Initially, my ‘knowledge’ about Solomon Islands was acquired from reading diplomatic cables or reports on various ‘institutional strengthening’ or public-sector reform projects prepared by Australian Managing Contractors (AMCs) or briefings by, and informal conversations with, colleagues returning from the field. ‘Important’ knowledge trickled down, and reflected globalised development and security discourses related to the need within less economically developed nations to demonstrate ‘good governance’, apply ‘structural adjustment’ and ‘public sector reform’ as prescribed by the donor community and international financial institutions. Knowledge of aid effectiveness, or ‘what works, what doesn’t and why’ as one World Bank publication’s title expressed it (IBRD 1998), flowed from leading multilateral institutions and think tanks or from core government agencies. In the case of Solomon Islands, this ‘knowledge down’ also reflected the received wisdom associated with ‘failed states’, ‘liberal peace-building’, ‘statebuilding’, and ‘security-sector reform’. Lunch time seminars at AusAID brought in experts to share experience in ‘statebuilding’ roles in Afghanistan or specific ‘lessons learned’ from policy initiatives on various country programmes.

Exceptionally, one day as I sat at my desk, one of AusAID’s sectoral advisors, dropped by with a photocopy of an anthropological article by David Akin (1999) *Compensation and the Melanesian State: Why the Kwaio keep claiming*. In contrast to the clipped and cynical prose of diplomatic cables or tedious reporting from contractors, this paper introduced me to an alternative perspective, which drew on in-depth historical and anthropological research. Certain observations in Akin’s article unsettled the Western-centric, ahistorical, teleological, rationalist assumptions that seemed to inform the views of most officials within agencies like AusAID. For me, Akin’s paper not only disrupted the narrative of state failure and incapacity about Solomon Islands that I had been hearing but it made me question my own too-easy assumptions about the nature of states. For example, that states are assumed to work, function similarly, or are an important feature of people’s lives.

As I will touch on briefly in the next chapter, Akin claimed that from the Kwaio perspective, the national government of Solomon Islands in Honiara was just as alien an institution as the British Colonial administration had been. This was unsettling to me but had an explanatory power I could not deny. As Akin observed:

Many Malaitans see the government as a political adversary, and they continue to interact with it using strategies and concepts once employed to resist the Colonial administrations (Akin 1999, p. 38).

Gradually, I began to realise that the concept of the ‘state’, and related notions of ‘civil society’ ‘democracy’ ‘good governance’ were understood quite differently by Solomon Islanders. I also began uncomfortably to recognise the continuities between the projects of colonialism and of international development in Solomon Islands. An appreciation of what (Hönke & Müller 2012) refer to as the ‘entangled histories, global encounters and uneven power relations’ within situations characterised by ‘post coloniality’ (Hönke & Müller 2012) came gradually to inform my perspective of RAMSI as merely the most recent iteration in a longer history of transnational police-building and statebuilding.

In July 2001, I visited Solomon Islands for the first time to accompany a mid-term review of the Community Peace and Restoration Fund (CPRF) as the AusAID representative. CPRF was a project that aimed to engage communities and groups in community development activities in the hope that this would somehow consolidate the peace process. Since the alleged ‘coup’ on 21 June 2000, when Prime Minister Ulufa'alu was forced to resign (see Chapter 1), most Australian officials living or visiting Solomon Islands were subject to severe travel restrictions imposed by the Australian High Commissioner. This reflected the Australian High Commission’s anxiety regarding Solomon Island’s uneasy post-conflict and somewhat lawless status but was widely resented by many of my diplomatic colleagues who chafed at their virtual confinement to certain parts of Honiara. More seriously, it restricted the flow of information and knowledge ‘up’ from the ‘grass roots’ or the rural areas (where an estimated 83.8% of the population lived in 2001) (UNPD 2018), to development officials. Effectively, the everyday realities of the majority of Solomon Islanders were invisible to the aid programme. I felt fortunate therefore that I was permitted to travel more widely to rural Solomon Islands.

In contrast to the knowledge that filtered down within AusAID, I characterise knowledge from the field as ‘knowledge up’. In the process of visiting several project sites in urban Honiara, rural Guadalcanal and rural Malaita, my limited understanding of the Solomon Islands context was marginally increased. This ‘knowledge up’ impressed on me the real logistical, practical, cultural and political challenges facing Solomon Islands. It also made me realise just how

disconnected our aid program seemed to be in relation to the daily realities of the majority of Solomon Islanders who lived outside of Honiara. I certainly could claim no expertise after such a short visit. But I was beginning to learn how much I did not know.

One anecdote from this period crystallised for me the multiple meanings that aid projects engendered. In 2002, I arranged a workshop with ‘civil society’ or ‘grass roots’ leaders from Solomon Islands at the Australian National University. The workshop was facilitated by Ian Scales, an anthropology research student with long experience living in rural Solomon Islands. The discussion turned to AusAID’s support for civil society. During an animated and protracted discussion in *Pijin*, it emerged that the very concept of ‘civil society’ had been fundamentally misunderstood. While ‘we’ (AusAID) thought ‘civil society’ comprised of well-meaning but poorly resourced local non-government organisations, faith-based organisations NGO’s and ‘grass roots’ activists, Solomon Islanders were under the impression that ‘civil society’ consisted of two well-paid consultants based in Honiara working for the ‘Civil Society Network’ (Scales, Dinnen & Hegarty 2002). This represented just one example of the conceptual confusion that characterised many of the exchanges between Australian officials and Solomon Islanders. The challenges of ‘translation’ – of communicating complex concepts through the narrow windows of understanding provided by ‘gatekeepers’ or ‘knowledge brokers’ (King & Mason 2006; Mosse 2011) became increasingly apparent as I gained experience on the AusAID Solomon Islands Desk.

If in Canberra, I was relatively low ‘down’ in the pecking order within a large bureaucracy. In Solomon Islands the situation was reversed and I was relatively high ‘up’ in the social hierarchy. Initially, I occupied the privileged position of the expatriate aid official, with salary, vehicle, university education, and membership of the community of diplomats and other foreigners based in Honiara. Whether attending meetings with government ministers, aid contractors, or visiting rural villages, I was treated with a level of deference and respect which seemed bizarre. As a representative of the NPC, or AusAID, I could be garlanded with flowers, guided to sit in a seat of honour on a raised purpose-built platform and to observe performances.

Through such encounters, observations and conversations with Solomon Islanders, other expatriates, or colleagues, and informed by my post-graduate studies in Anthropology, rich contextual knowledge about Solomon Islands filtered up. I remained a stranger in a strange

land – but by developing an appreciation of the complexity and dimensions of its strangeness, I could try to ‘broker’ my limited knowledge in meetings in AusAID. Caught between knowledge down and knowledge up, I found myself negotiating, interpreting and translating between these narratives.

3.4 Methods, Materials, Ethics: How I did the research

To analyse the meanings associated with transnational policing as a part of RAMSI, I have relied on discourse analysis as my primary method for generating knowledge. This has involved exploring different levels of meaning contained in speeches, documents and images representative of RAMSI’s narrative. This analysis has been informed by what some scholars refer to as an ‘ethnographic sensibility’ (Schatz 2013). While discourse analysis and ethnography are usually conceived of as stand-alone methods there are grounds for arguing they should be combined. As Lisa Wedeen notes:

Discourse analysis, as opposed to a more natural scientific commitment to method, is scarcely conceivable independent of context; it relies ultimately on a sensitive, if not empathic understanding of the conditions under which a discourse is produced as well as of its effects in the world. Ethnography is one particularly good way of grasping a discourse’s effects. A discourse analysis is an especially effective way of identifying the implications of ethnographic work (Wedeen 2010, p. 82).

In his edited volume *Political Ethnography*, Ed Schatz (2013, pp. 3-5). notes the contestation that shapes debates about what ethnography is, and what it is not. Dissensus characterises discussion in cultural anthropology where ethnography emerged as a method in the early 20th century and Schatz finds similar contestation amongst the scholars contributing to his volume. Schatz identifies two core principles common within most political ethnography; 1) a degree of participant observation or immersion in a community through which knowledge is generated; 2) an ethnographic sensibility that seeks to understand the meanings attributed by the people under study to their political and social reality (Schatz 2013, p. 5). My research has included a degree of participant observation conducted during visits to Solomon Islands and some of the reflections based on my own ‘insider’ experience (discussed above). However, my findings are not based on long-term ‘immersion’ in ‘the field’ characteristic of ‘traditional’ ethnography. Instead, they are primarily generated by long term immersion in the ‘transnational space’ occupied by RAMSI and the narratives that seek to legitimise transnational policing. The ethnographic sensibility I apply here includes an empathic and reflexive commitment to trying to understand how different actors attribute meaning

differently. This is achieved by engaging with a variety of perspectives, historical and contemporary, local and international, through texts, images, videos and interviews to unpack what legitimacy means in the context of transnational policing as part of RAMSI.

As Lene Hansen (2013, p. 23) notes, while most discourse analysis has an ontological and methodological focus on spoken language and/or written texts, there are numerous other ‘texts’ that can be interpreted in terms of the meanings embedded within or conveyed. Material objects, such as war memorials, uniforms, the body language of individuals, or even the practices of states, can be read as texts. Practices related to the use of space or time, or embodied symbols such as tattoos, uniforms, dress codes, or dances, can ‘speak’ as loudly as words. The meanings attributed to them are, of course, open to interpretation. Photographs can be read as representations of a particular discourse and may support or contest a dominant narrative. In much of this, the practice of discourse analysis moves into terrain more commonly assumed to be the domain of ethnography and may utilise techniques such as participant observation or immersion.

In focusing my research on the legitimacy of transnational policing, a key question that emerges is: Where is a transnational discourse located? While Solomon Islands provides the key geographical focus for this study, the circulation of globalised discourses of transnational policing were not confined within its borders. The ‘trans’ nature of ‘transnational’ policing, and potential of discourses and narratives to travel, suggests that a more complex elaboration of the notion ‘the field’ and a multi-sited approach is required for this research. Reflecting this, fieldwork for this study took place across a range of sites in Solomon Islands, the United Kingdom and Australia. Mapping the overlapping contours of global discourses of statebuilding, security and development, and the intersection of all three of these discourses with a transnational policing narrative, in the context of RAMSI shows how the concepts and stories related to concepts like ‘security sector reform’ have the capacity to travel from London, Paris or Canberra, to Honiara, and in some cases back again (OECD 2004).

To gain insight into local perspectives I supplemented my text-based discourse analysis with field data gathered from Solomon Islands through a week of preliminary fieldwork in 2010 and four weeks of field work in 2011. Additional interviews were conducted with former colonial officials or former RAMSI officials in Adelaide, Coolangatta, Canberra, Melbourne and London. A full list of interviews is provided in Appendix A. In total, I conducted

interviews with 35 participants producing 50 hours of recorded interviews. My informants included two former Prime Ministers, four former and four serving police officers. Eight interviews were conducted with those I would characterise as local ‘elites’, reflecting their experience as current or former Members of Parliament, and/or current or former roles as senior government officials. I also interviewed three former colonial officers, six expatriates with experience working within or observing RAMSI, and three senior members of the PPF. The remaining four interviews were conducted with community members. Notes and observations on context and key remarks from both recorded and non-recorded interviews were recorded in field notebooks.

The use of a wide range of historical and contemporary materials and data representative of different narratives has allowed me to triangulate and compare between sources. But the amount and diversity of material available also presented a dilemma in deciding how to choose what questions to ask of which materials. As Lene Hansen (2013, p. 73) has observed “‘reality’ is always larger than the number of questions one can ask of it: to formulate a research project is therefore inevitably to make a series of choices”. Working from an interpretive perspective, the choices I have made have been guided by my experiences, knowledge and preferences and reflected my knowledge of Solomon Islands. They have also been determined by the nature of power relations in the context of a large intervention. RAMSI’s power, resources and authority were reflected in the volume and dominance of its texts (including documents and images) projected about RAMSI to construct its legitimacy and success. The perspectives of those outside of these dominant frames required individual interviews. Spatial considerations were also significant. A field site of Malu’u, in north Malaita was selected as it represents many of the challenges of rural Solomon Islands whilst still being within reach of Honiara. I had also been there before and had a reliable contact there, who was a former senior police officer. Contacts from previous experience in Solomon Islands enabled me to achieve access to communities and individuals more quickly than might have been the case if this was my first visit to Solomon Islands.

My interviews took place in a range of environments including formal workplace settings (Rove Central police station, Auki and Malu’u police stations, Solomon Islands Parliament House) and informal settings such as cafés or hotel lobbies or at the home of the interviewee. This allowed a conversational approach and reflected my understanding of the interview “a social event based on interactions between interviewer and interviewee” (Blakeley 2013, p.

168). As such, interviews were flexible, informal and unstructured, in line with what Blakeley refers to as “focused interviews” which she claims “provide the best possibility for gathering rich data from interviewees” while allowing the interviewer the flexibility to take contextual factors related to an interviewee into account (Blakeley 2013, p. 160).

Primary research conducted towards this thesis involving interviews and observations in Solomon Islands was carried out under a research permit issued by the Solomon Islands Minister for Education and Human Resource Development (8/7/11). My research was conducted in accordance with Australian National University’s Human Ethics Guidelines and with ANU Human Ethics approval (2011/605). Interview participants were provided with a plain language information sheet (Appendix C) and gave informed consent prior to the interviews. All participants were offered anonymity and the right to withdraw consent and information at any point. All efforts have been taken to ensure that these wishes are respected. While several participants provided permission for their names to be used, I have anonymised responses that have potential to be perceived negatively.

One of the striking features of RAMSI’s policing and police-building discourses and practices is the prominence of visual images in representations of the intervention. While volumes of reports, evaluations and academic articles have been written about RAMSI, it is the photograph as visual text that has dominated the public record. Official representations of RAMSI within Solomon Islands included images provided to local newspapers, pamphlets distributed to schools and community groups, and a photographic exhibition which toured the Pacific, including Australia and New Zealand, before finding a permanent home on display in Honiara. Externally, photographs were key texts in the representation of RAMSI as an example of statebuilding ‘success’ to the international audiences such as the OECD (see Chapter 5). Military and police magazines made more targeted use of the images for consumption by current and former police or armed services personnel, their families and the curious (for example see Hartigan 2017). Certain iconic photographs were recycled through various publications ranging cover photos from official reports to glossy photo souvenir books (such as Figure 5.2, p.110).

The importance of visual images to RAMSI’s strategic narrative parallels the representational practice of other liberal peace interventions. The use of visual images as texts to promote particular ‘strategic narratives’ has since been a significant feature of intervention in the era

defined by the ‘war or terror’ (Shepherd 2008). Shepherd (2008, p.213) highlights the importance that visual imagery has had for “claims to legitimacy and authority made by the Bush Administration in its conduct of the war [on terror]”. In the terms of my thesis, images do important ‘legitimacy work’. Images not only represent world politics as potent symbols, they make world politics (Hansen 2015). While the integration of visual approaches is in its infancy, some interpretive scholars have recently argued that student researchers who “utilize discourse analysis in their work should include the production and reception of images in their examinations” (Vuori 2013, p. 199; Weber 2008, p. 138). With this in mind, in the chapters which follow, I have made selective use of key photos and reference to other visual representations, in order to unpack the ‘legitimacy work’ they do for RAMSI’s transnational policing narrative.

3.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I have outlined my use of the notion of ‘legitimacy work’ and why I find it a useful means to examine the role of strategic narratives in constructing, maintaining, and transferring legitimacy in transnational policing. I also unpacked the concepts of discourse, practice and narrative as used throughout my thesis. The analytical approach of other scholars who have explored the everyday practices of development and peacebuilding interventions, and explored the role of brokers and translators in such context, provides an important foundation for my work. Drawing on an interpretive perspective, I have sketched how my own experience and narrative approach have informed my methodology. In the following four chapters I explore in more detail the narratives and practices of transnational policing that were evident in the context of RAMSI.

Chapter 4: ‘Unheard of Power’: The Historical and Social Context of Policing in Solomon Islands

... the people who have returned from Fiji or Queensland have brought back with them a profound respect for the majesty of the law. Thus, an old chief in Florida³ has gravely changed his name into ‘Polisimani’ (policeman), that functionary having been described to him as embodying the most unheard of power. (*The Argus*, Melbourne, 1 August 1883)

In this chapter I provide a historical and social perspective on policing in Solomon Islands to inform my study of how the recent RAMSI intervention constructed legitimacy for itself and Solomon Islands policing institutions. An understanding of indigenous or ‘traditional’ sources of power and legitimacy and the legacies of European influence, colonisation and colonial policing practices is important as these have shaped local understandings and interpretations of the legitimacy of contemporary policing practices. An appreciation of the historical and social context of policing in Solomon Islands is also useful for understanding how RAMSI first constructed legitimacy for its transnational policing and statebuilding activities, and then transferred and conferred legitimacy to local state institutions and in particular RSIPF.

This chapter is set out as follows. First, I look at historical sources of legitimacy for indigenous leadership, and practices of social regulation and control broadly analogous to ‘policing’. While much transformed and continually reinterpreted, ‘traditional’ sources of legitimacy continue to be evoked in the contemporary era as basis for power, authority and social practices, including non-state policing. This is particularly the case in rural areas where most

³ The Florida Islands, now more commonly referred to as the Nggela Islands of Central Province, are a small group of islands located between Guadalcanal and Malaita Provinces of Solomon Islands.

Solomon Islanders live and where state services are often conspicuously absent (see Dinnen & Allen 2016, p. 8). It is also evident in way that contemporary national political and economic systems are influenced by practices with pre-European cultural origins, such as the ‘big man system’, *wantokism*, and compensation-based dispute resolution mechanisms (Fraenkel 2004; Nanau 2011; Wood 2018). I argue that historical sources of legitimacy also influence the normative frameworks by which transnational policing practices are judged either to be legitimate or not. Second, I describe the early European influences on policing in Solomon Islands. These influences included early attempts at applying British justice through infrequent policing by British naval vessels, and the more sustained influence of various Christian missionary ventures. Third, I examine the influence of British colonialism from the formation of the British Solomon Islands Protectorate (BSIP) in 1893 until Independence in 1978. Fourth, I examine briefly the development and then the erosion of the legitimacy of RSIPF in the period between independence and the outbreak of the Tensions in 1998.

Overall, this chapter argues that the historical and social context of policing in Solomon Islands needs to be considered when examining the legitimacy work carried out by RAMSI. The material in this chapter builds on the introduction to Solomon Islands presented in Chapter 1 and lays a foundation for the consideration of perspectives on the construction of legitimacy for RAMSI and RSIPF in the following three chapters.

4.1 Historical Sources of Legitimacy and Indigenous Approaches to Policing

Contemporary concepts and practices of policing in Solomon Islands, and the perception of the legitimacy of these by Solomon Islanders, have been shaped by earlier indigenous leadership and authority structures, social codes and policing practices. While the social practices that preceded Western frameworks of policing, security, and law and order are undocumented, evidence from oral histories and contemporary practices suggests that Solomon Islands societies ‘policed’ themselves, relying on diverse, elaborate and evolving frameworks of regulatory social practices. While these social regulations or ‘rules’ are frequently understood as ‘customary law’, scholars, such as Goddard (2010, p.8) and Akin (2013, pp. 89-93), have noted that the conventional notion of “customary law” was itself generated by colonialism (e.g. through the work of Hogbin 1944). Hence, my interpretation of the meaning of past social practices as resembling ‘policing’ or ‘law’ need to be considered in this light.

Regardless of their actual antiquity, indigenous social and cultural practices aimed at regulating society were often understood to have been passed down from ancestral spirits – this was an important source of their legitimacy. This does not imply that they were formal or static codes of ‘traditional law’ but rather were flexible frame-works adapted to circumstances by community leaders (Burt 1988; Goddard 2010; Hviding 1996). As I noted in Chapter 1, the enormous social, linguistic and cultural diversity in Solomon Islands meant that in the past each kinship group had distinct social practices and systems of social regulation, that is ‘rules’ or ‘laws’ to regulate and give meaning to their societies. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to provide a comprehensive review of these diverse and complex social and cultural practices. Instead, in this section I highlight a few examples to illustrate that control within Solomon Islands societies relied on practices analogous to what we might now describe as ‘law’ and ‘policing’ and that these practices were enabled by diverse sources of legitimacy (Burt 1988; Hviding 1996; Keesing 1982; Keesing 1989; Kwa’ioloa & Burt 2007).

Practices of customary law played an important role in maintaining social order and regulating access to land and marine resources. For instance, Ben Burt (1988, p. 74-76) claims that amongst the Kwara’ae of Malaita, ‘*tabus*’ (‘*abu*’ in Kwara’ae language) had what might now be regarded as a legal function. Similar unwritten or oral codes among communities across Solomon Islands typically acted to reinforce the power and status of leaders (usually senior men) who were responsible for making and enforcing the rules as well as for negotiating penalties or payments for any infractions (Bennett 1987). In the relatively small, politically autonomous groups that characterised Solomon Islands societies prior to British colonisation, the perceived legitimacy of the system of law established was sufficient to enforce high levels of social control (Goddard 2010). In other words, rather than designating the task to specific individuals, in this sense communities policed themselves.

Broadly speaking, practices of social control in Solomon Islands, both pre- and post-European contact, were closely tied to patterns of leadership. Leadership was highly varied and continued to evolve during the colonial era and into the present (Allen 1984; White 1992). For instance, variations of Melanesian ‘big man’ systems of leadership were common in many areas (Keesing 1982). A ‘big man’ was a non-hereditary leader who derived his legitimacy from a combination of charisma and the status accrued from commanding resources gained through ceremonial exchange or warfare (Allen 1984). Other parts of Solomon Islands had

patterns of hereditary leadership, which more closely resembled chiefly systems. Hviding (1996) documents that among the people of Morovo Lagoon it was common for the first-born son of the previous chief to inherit the role, provided he had sufficient talent. Many groups combined elements of chiefly and ‘big-man’ systems, while more recently others have introduced ‘chiefs’ and ‘paramount chiefs’ where previously such roles are not believed to have been present (Bennett, 1987). Diversity across the region was the overriding pattern.

If any generalisation is possible, given the immense diversity of Solomon Islands culture and contexts, it is that leadership, and the legitimacy upon which the authority of such leadership was derived, were usually very localised. Only rarely did chiefs establish dominion over more than a few hundred people. This is significant for the arguments in this thesis as it highlights the dissonance between past structures of leadership and legitimacy which were very localised and current state-centric assumptions regarding leadership and legitimacy at institutional levels.

In many groups leadership was shared across a number of individuals. As an example, in Malaita, the Kwaio people “ideally had a triumvirate of leaders – a priest (northern Malaita *fataabu*), a warrior leader (*ramo*), and a prominent feast-giver (northern Malaita *ngwane inito*)” (Keesing 1982, p. 360). Adherence to laws were at least partly enforced by the ‘*ramo*’, the most feared and accomplished warrior within a descent group (Keesing 1982). The social role of the *ramo* included some functions not dissimilar to those of a policeman.⁴ In collaboration with other powerful individuals, such as those noted above, the *ramo* had a key role in “taking measures to maintain peace and impose justice within society” (Russell 1950, p. 7). Such individuals were perceived as legitimate administrators of punishment and sanctioned to exact payments of compensation for crimes or transgressions against customary laws and conventions (Akin 1999b; Akin 2013). Keesing (1982) suggests that ‘traditional’ authority structures integrated several sources of legitimacy including spiritual power, material power and coercive force. While these structures were severely disrupted with increasing European influence in the 19th Century, such ‘traditional’ sources of legitimacy continue to be valued by many Solomon Islanders.

⁴ And inevitably the reverse may also have been true. Indeed, in their history of the 1927 Bell Massacre, *Lightning Meets the West Wind*, Keesing and Corris noted that “Bell’s young police strongmen increasingly assumed the personality of the *ramo*” (1980, p. 67).

While a reputation for prowess in fighting was a source for perceived legitimacy and a potential route to status and authority in most Solomon Islands societies, in some groups this was taken to an extreme. In Roviana, in the Western part of the Solomon Islands group, leading head-hunting raids against enemy groups provided a means of accumulating and demonstrating *mana* – a form of spiritual and temporal power and an important source of legitimacy (Lawrence 2014). Capturing valuable objects and human skulls in warfare demonstrated ancestral favour and provided legitimacy to become a ‘big man’ or ‘chief’ (Aswani 2000, p. 40; O'Brien 2017). As I note later in this chapter, following the imposition of British law in the late 19th Century, erasing headhunting as a source of legitimacy was among the most urgent forms of legitimacy work faced by the first British colonial police in Solomon Islands.

This discussion of some of the sources of legitimacy important to indigenous systems of leadership and social control is of more than historical interest. Despite sweeping changes across Melanesia over the last few hundred years, the scattered geography and isolation of most Solomon Islands communities has meant that local forms of non-state or informal policing and dispute resolution have remained particularly important (Goddard 2010). Modern indigenous interpretations of historical policing practices have provided one source among many for ideas of how isolated rural communities can be policed, and how disputes and conflict might be resolved (World Bank 2018).

4.2 Significant European Influences on Policing in Solomon Islands

A variety of European influences represented a fundamental challenge to the legitimacy of ‘traditional’ sources of authority and the power of indigenous leaders and their laws. Judith Bennett (1987, p. 21-44) describes in some detail how the activities of European whalers, traders and missionaries disrupted indigenous social and economic systems and power structures. Introduced diseases decimated the population. Introduced religions up-ended belief systems and challenged power structures relying on the mediation of the spiritual relationship between ancestors and community members. “Black-birding”, that is the recruitment of young men to labour in Queensland and Fiji, or later to work on plantations in Solomon Islands, also had a significant impact on political economy (see Bennett, 1987; Moore 1985).

Many leaders and groups demonstrated considerable agency and adaptability in responding to external influences. Some leaders turned new opportunities, whether through trade, religion, or cooperation with Europeans to their advantage. Introduced religions were also adopted with increasing enthusiasm and indigenised by Solomon Islanders. However other elders and chiefs found their authority questioned and former practices of social regulation and control weakened, as Hogbin (1934, p. 250) observed:

[I]nstead of the old people being masters of the culture and looked up to by their juniors in consequence, today these juniors, owing to mission education and plantation experience, are more at home in the rapidly changing cultural environment. The older people are now often too bewildered to exert themselves. Men of twenty, instead of sitting at the feet of their elders, are apt to be scornful of old fashions and unwilling to spend their time cultivating the gardens of some ambitious relative (Hogbin 1934, p. 250).

From the mid-19th Century, Christianity became an increasingly important alternative source of legitimacy and authority. As mission stations became gradually more established they challenged the legitimacy of traditional systems of power and authority. As increasing numbers of Solomon Islanders recognised the benefits of Christian influence, which often included access to education, healthcare and material resources, others correctly perceived Christianity as an existential threat to their pagan beliefs and ‘traditional’ authority and social systems. However, pre-European sources of legitimacy were not completely erased. Indeed, a substantial body of literature attests to the resilience, endurance and adaptability of indigenous legal frameworks (Akin 1999a; Akin 2013; Allen 1984; Allen 2013; Braithwaite et al. 2010; Burt 1988; Fraenkel 2004; Hogbin 1934; Hogbin 1939; Keesing 1982; Keesing 1989). Later, as noted below, colonial authorities gave limited recognition to the jurisdiction of indigenous law, establishing ‘native courts’ to rule on minor infractions including offences against culture utilising ‘custom law’. As Akin (2013 p. 210-13) shows this ‘custom law’ was a reified, assemblage of ideas that colonial officers believed to be based on traditional norms and values. In the post-War era, Malaitan leaders developed their own concept of *Kastom* law in opposition to what they perceived as an alien British law and social practices. *Kastom* law is thus a modern construction, which reflects the active reconfiguring of ‘traditional’ social practices and their deployment to achieve contemporary political and ideological purposes (Akin 2013; Allen 2013; Goddard 2010).

Another important source of influence and interaction between Solomon Islanders and Europeans (predominantly those now settled in the Australian colonies) was the Labour Trade that occurred in the second half of the 1800s. A demand for labour in the Australian colonies resulted in the recruitment of Melanesian workers to clear forest and work in other manual roles in tropical Queensland (Corris 1973; Moore 1985, 2017). From 1860 to 1904, labour recruiters, or ‘black-birders’ as they were widely known, developed a lucrative but risky business whereby Melanesians were persuaded, or sometimes tricked, into selling their labour in return for wages, trinkets and other valuables, including guns (Moore 1985). While many Solomon Islanders were willing participants and were treated reasonably, in the worst cases young men were kidnapped, treated for all intents and purposes as slaves and subjected to poor conditions resulting in a high mortality rate (Moore 1985). Reports from well-connected missionaries of widespread abuses by labour traffickers resulted in calls for greater imperial control by a vocal civil society in London, Sydney, Melbourne and Auckland (Kolshus & Hovdhaugen 2010). These calls, along with the support of powerful liberal forces in British Parliament, eventually led to the establishment of anti-slavery laws.⁵ These acts established a legal framework that brought Solomon Islands within the jurisdiction of Imperial Britain (Bach 1983).

The imposition of British law established a fault-line between an alien British legal framework and indigenous norms and regulatory practices, which continues to reverberate in Solomon Islands today. At first the only means of policing the new British laws was the Royal Navy. This involved the random application of ‘commodore justice’ – the punitive, violent and largely ineffectual, use of practices including bombardment of coastal villages by naval commanders in response to alleged murders of Europeans and other crimes committed by Solomon Islanders (see Dinnen 2008; Lawrence 2014). Naval officers also investigated abuses and crimes committed by labour recruiters and traders, against Solomon Islanders. This was all described as “island police work” (Bach 1983, p. 126) but it was policing without legitimacy. Months could pass between an offence and punishment and lacking language or cultural skills; infrequent naval patrols only could rarely hope to catch an actual perpetrator. Compliance with British law was produced by force and fear, to the limited extent it was

⁵ In British Parliament this mission was realised through the Imperial (Kidnapping) Act, 27 June 1872. The act provided for the “Prevention and punishment for criminal outrages, an offence committed anywhere within His Majesty's Dominions”. Her Majesty's Naval Officers were given powers of “Detention, seizure, and condemnation of vessels” and there could be “No claim for damage by seized vessel” (Stevens 1950, p. 374).

achieved at all. The clash and conflict over values and meanings was acute (Ballard & Douglas 2017).

A newspaper correspondent's 1894 account of attempting to bring a murderer to justice reveals the challenges and injustices of extending and policing British rule in Solomon Islands.

The man who fired the fatal shot was well known to the chief man in the place, but when he was ordered to give him up he flatly refused, and so the only punishment that could be inflicted on the chief and people – who were all concerned in the crime – was to bombard the village. This was quickly done, but as all the houses are very slightly and rudely built, and very easily rebuilt, this punishment is not a severe one. It is impossible, by the way, to track a murderer in these parts, for an armed force would be necessary to penetrate the interior, and even if this were organised the criminal might hide within 50 yards of his pursuers and laugh at their failures. The only way is to make terms with the chief, and even if he willing to give anyone it is quite likely to be a slave instead of the right man. (The Mercury 14 June, 1894).

This incident foreshadowed some of the dilemmas that would face RAMSI PPF personnel over a century later. Without effective community relationships and a mediator on the ground, anything but the most arbitrary and ineffective application of punitive and alien justice was difficult.

Naval officers and their policing practices, appearance, behaviour and discipline provided a prototype for the first Solomon Islands police. The Royal Navy's duties included restricting proliferation of small arms, again presaging a later era of peace-building and weapons collection during RAMSI. Imperial narratives emphasised the role of the Navy as 'police', concealing the arbitrary and illegitimate violence that characterised many of their interactions with local populations (Ballard & Douglas 2017). For example, *The Argus's* correspondent aboard a recruiting vessel reported that "British men of war are recognised throughout the islands *as ocean police*" (The Argus, 1883; my emphasis), while the *Illustrated Sydney News* described the "yeoman service" of HMS Opal and "her duties as '*police of the seas*'" in ports including Solomon Islands and the Australian colonies ('Homeward Bound—Departure of H.M.S. *Opal*' 1890). But the reality of most attempts to police Solomon Islands by the Royal Navy was that it was expensive, illegitimate and ineffectual. Reluctantly, British authorities would come to see that some form of annexure or other imperial claim on Solomon Islands territories was necessary.

4.3. British Colonial Approaches to Policing 1893-1978

Far from being a story of colonial conquest, the creation of the British Solomon Islands Protectorate in 1893 was a story of colonial mission-creep by a largely disinterested colonial authority (Akin 2013, p. 36; Lawrence 2014, p. 140). *The Pacific Order* (1893) established the Solomon Islands group as a British protectorate. This legal authority was intended to provide a measure of legitimacy for British control but it clearly meant nothing to local people who were not consulted on whether or not they desired Britain's 'protection'. Any local observers must have wondered at the symbolism of 30 Union Jack flags hoisted around the archipelago (Lawrence 2014). Apart from this symbolic act, it would be several years before any effort was made to establish British rule.

Britain's annexation of the islands was motivated by security concerns. It was in particular a response to sustained pressure by the Australian colonies, who were anxious that Britain contain growing French and German influence in the Western Pacific (Bennett 1987; 2002). Britain had been reluctant to assume responsibility for administering Solomon Islands but now that it had done so, the firm expectation was that any administration should be self-supporting and not a financial burden to the Exchequer (Lawrence 2014, p. 140). Secretary of State for Colonies, Joseph Chamberlain, was of the opinion that "the work of developing and governing these Islands belongs to the larger Australian Colonies, who are both "able and willing" to undertake the task" (Chamberlain to Fairfield 21 April 1896 CO 225 50 12714, 1896). Chamberlain argued, "the proper course is to do just what little we cannot avoid doing" – a maxim some might argue, which characterised the official British approach for the ensuing eighty years until independence in 1978. This approach had implications for policing. Namely, most Solomon Islanders continued to rely on indigenous policing practices, and generally avoided the British colonial police.

In 1896, even a modest plea from the Acting Commissioner for the Western Pacific in Fiji for finances of £1000⁶ to support a British Resident Commissioner and establish law and order in the islands, invited a terse response from Chamberlain:

...The attention of the resident, he suggests to be devoted to (1) the suppression of the arms traffic (2) the development and supervision of local trade, and the control of the labour traffic (3) the education of the natives. These objects are no doubt all most admirable, but how the resident is going to do all this

⁶ Equivalent to approximately £134,000 today <https://www.in2013dollars.com/uk/inflation/1896?amount=1000>

with the assistance of 12 constables, amongst a set of the lowest savages in the Pacific who have no chiefs through whom control can be exercised, it is impossible to gather ('Chamberlain to Fairfield 21 April 1896 CO 225 50 12714' 1896)

Chamberlain's response was indicative of the presumption of racial superiority that characterised British colonialism at the time. It also raises some interesting points related to policing and legitimacy. While lacking political legitimacy, the colonial narratives nevertheless are permeated with attempts to legitimate British rule in terms of 'pacification', the mission to civilise the "savages", or in the example above, "the education of the natives". Despite Chamberlain's scepticism, the objectives to which he refers underline the nexus between security and development (as discussed in Chapter 2) – something that was of central importance to RAMSI's statebuilding efforts in Solomon Islands. It is also of interest, in light of the focus of RAMSI's later prioritisation of police-building, that from the earliest days of the protectorate, institutional policing (with a distinctly para-military hue) was seen as the key means through which development and security could be achieved. Chamberlain's remarks also draw attention to a particular conception of how policing should be practiced (i.e. through local chiefs) based on models of indirect rule imported from elsewhere in the British Empire. As Chamberlain appears to have recognised from the outset, the challenges of tying the disparate islands' languages and cultures together into a colony (and ultimately a state) were immense. Convincing local audiences of the legitimacy of Britain's laws and colonial project would prove one of the most significant challenges facing the new administration.

Attempts to police Solomon Islands entered a new phase in 1897 with the arrival of the new Resident Commissioner, Charles Morris Woodford (Lawrence 2014). Initially, Woodford was the only European officer and was without a police force, staff or resources. Any progress in establishing British law and order in the Protectorate was going to be slow. Woodford was reliant on the goodwill of the British Navy for transport, manpower, policing and protection and lacked any independent means to impose a monopoly of force over the scattered communities in Solomon Islands. Given the expansive geography, establishing direct control was never going to be a realistic proposition. For the overwhelming majority of communities, social regulation and control continued to be exercised through indigenous practices.

In 1897 Woodford received eight police from Fiji, recruited from the population of Solomon Islanders transported to Fiji during the Labour Trade. This small force was insufficient. Woodford complained in his first annual report that "the most pressing need at present is for

an increased police force, and the means of visiting the most distant parts of the Protectorate” (Great Britain 1898 p. 15). More importantly Woodford’s police force also lacked legitimacy. Of the several hundred autonomous communities across the newly established British jurisdiction, now known as British Solomon Islands Protectorate (BSIP), there was probably none who saw any reason why alien British laws should replace their own well-established indigenous ‘policing’ and social regulatory practices. The colonial authority led by Woodford, according to the typology introduced by Bottoms and Tankebe (2012) in Chapter 2, was at best a de facto authority. Despite the symbolic hoisting of flags, the rhetoric of ‘civilisation missions’ or ‘pacification’, local audiences did not recognise British right to rule Solomon Islands, hence the colonial enterprise lacked legitimacy.

Woodford’s most urgent task was to establish the authority of his new police force. This required the suppression and subjugation of alternative local sources of power and authority, and in particular the eradication of those sources of legitimacy derived from the headhunting economy. In 1898, an additional European officer, Arthur Mahaffy, was appointed to support Woodford (O’Brien 2017). Mahaffy’s first duty in the protectorate became that of a policeman. He was tasked with eradicating headhunting and imposing law and order in the Western part of the Solomon Islands group. Establishing security was a first step towards enabling a plantation economy to prosper. This, the administration hoped, would provide a source of taxation to generate the revenue necessary for the viability of the protectorate administration.

Mahaffy recruited 30 Solomon Islanders as police from Shortland Islands, Malaita, Savo, Isabel and Guadalcanal (Lawrence 2014; O’Brien 2017). Together with Woodford he took a sophisticated but violent approach to destroying the head hunter economy between 1898 and 1904 that focused on destroying the power and legitimacy of those local big men or chiefs who would not comply with British law (O’Brien 2017). Mahaffy implemented a policy of destroying the large ceremonial *tomoko* (see Figure 4.1 below) or war canoes (O’Brien 2017, p. 9). Without *tomokos*, it was more difficult for headhunting raids to be launched. However, not all *tomokos* were destroyed. Some *tomokos* were commandeered as police vessels. Other captured war canoes were prominently displayed by Mahaffy on the beach of his base on Gizo Island. Mahaffy was probably aware that to local people this display would have been perceived as a powerful symbol of the possession of *mana* and thus provided legitimacy to Mahaffy’s police and British administration (see Section 4.1 above and O’Brien 2017). Indeed, O’Brien suggests that “In the eyes of local people, Woodford and Mahaffy might have

taken on the personas of powerful ‘chiefs’ through their pacifying, and therefore warlike, activities and their resultant accumulation and display of Indigenous artefacts like canoes, skulls and shell valuables” (2017, p. 2). Solomon Islanders who worked as police for the administration also saw their personal status and wealth enhanced. Police uniforms, weapons, and the shell valuables accumulated following raids all worked to enhance the status of police, while retribution against historic enemies was probably even more important (O’Brien 2017).



Figure 4.1. Confiscated tomoko (war canoe) used by Solomon Islands police, circa 1909 (Thomas Edge-Partington collection, photographer unknown, courtesy of the Edge-Partington family).

In addition to destroying or capturing the prized *tomokos*, villages suspected of supporting head-hunters were razed to the ground and their gardens destroyed. Mahaffy targeted ancestral shrines, seizing skulls dedicated to the ancestors, which, importantly, embodied the warrior prowess and spiritual and temporal power or *mana* of leaders in a particular group (Aswani 2000). With their canoes seized, their ancestral shrines desecrated, and their villages and gardens destroyed, powerful head hunting ‘chiefs’ or leaders saw their legitimacy eroded and

power ebb away (O'Brien 2017). Head hunting declined because of the massive disruption to the economic and social systems which underpinned it. Once the costs of mounting and executing headhunting raids outweighed the benefits both to leaders and their followers, the economic incentive for headhunting was removed and the practice rapidly dwindled (Lawrence 2014; O'Brien 2017). The successful eradication of headhunting was a singular achievement of colonial policing and served to strengthen legitimacy claims of the colonial police and the administration more broadly.

The Australian press followed Woodford's efforts to impose British law in Solomon Islands with great interest, as the following newspaper article illustrates:

"HEAD HUNTING" IN THE SOLOMON ISLANDS - A PUNITIVE EXPEDITION.

Sydney, February 25, 1900

The steamer Moresby, from the Islands, brings news of a successful raid on the Solomon Islands head hunters by the Resident Commissioner, Mr. Woodford, accompanied by 20 native police. They approached the village of Kolokoinga unperceived and cleared it. One native was killed and five wounded. The native who was killed was the actual man who led the last raid. ("Head Hunting" in the Solomon Islands 1900).

These articles contributed to an imperial narrative of 'pacification' as the first step of a 'civilisation mission'. The promotion of Solomon Islands as an opportunity for economic development by enterprising capitalists also featured prominently in these articles ('Solomon Islands Affairs', 1903). Woodford's personal success hinged on making the Protectorate self-supporting at the earliest possibility. Positive media would encourage economic development and trade, enabling the collection of tariffs and taxes to support Woodford's administration (Lawrence 2014). But development required security, a theme that would be echoed by scholars and policy makers a century later in the RAMSI era. The communication of the success of Woodford's policing efforts in the media were a key element in an early narrative of 'success' of the protectorate administration ('Solomon Islands Affairs', 1903).

As the new colonial administration extended its control, a need for a more professional policing became evident (Lawrence 2014, p. 220). Expatriate District Officers recruited their own constabulary, but most lacked formal policing experience and many were quite young (Akin 2013, p. 37). One young officer, Thomas Edge-Partington, aged just 25, was sent in

1909 to establish a government station at 'Aoke (now known as Auki) on Malaita. He was assigned a force of around 25 'native police' but reported that large armed bands of Kwaio "have absolutely no fear of the Government" and "laughed at me when I went down to Fiu about a murder and took 17 [police] with me" (Akin 2013, p. 39). In a society where respect was accorded with seniority and legitimacy was derived from ancestral blessings, accomplishment in war and feast giving, the proud and fierce Kwaio saw no good reason why they should bow to the authority of a young Englishman.

Malaita, due to its rugged topography and fierce independence of groups, like the Kwaio, remained outside of effective government control for some time. In 1915, an Australian, William Bell was appointed as District Officer of Malaita and the task of pacifying Malaita fell to him. He took a personal hand in developing the capacity of the native police and trained up a cadre of To'abaita-speaking people from the north-west of Malaita, who were traditional enemies of the Kwaio people. These new police became intensely loyal to him, described by Corris and Keesing (1980, p. 66) as "a constabulary of his own Fast Guns" able to meet the *ramos* on their own terms and without the fear that crippled the police from other parts of Solomon Islands.

One key means of imposing the Protectorate's authority was taxation. In 1920, following the lead of some African colonies and other colonial Pacific territories, the administration introduced a native head tax. This tax, it was reasoned, would encourage natives into wage labour, thus supporting the plantation economy. Colonial authorities and plantation owners hoped this would increase the pool of labour available to work on plantations. The collection of this tax marked the extension of British rule and provided a key task for native police, including those under Bell's command in Malaita. But the tax was widely resented as unjust and provoked fierce resistance (Akin 2013). Bell had been vehemently opposed to introducing the tax in Malaita, but once the regulation was passed, he enforced it (Keesing & Corris 1980, p. 77). Collecting the tax provided an opportunity for Bell and his police to "demand and obtain submission, particularly from fighting men" in areas of Malaita that had not been subdued such as among the Kwaio people (Akin 2013, p. 45). The demand to pay the head tax was a fundamental challenge to local Kwaio leaders relying on indigenous sources of legitimacy and the symbol of the gun to exercise authority. The conflict between two authorities, one foreign and one local, each claiming legitimacy but based on different sources – British law versus indigenous law and authority – came to a dramatic conclusion. Bell was

assassinated in 1927, by a Kwaio *ramo*, Basiana, while attempting to collect the tax at Sinalagu. Details of this event and its far-reaching ramifications, including a terrible punitive massacre of innocent Kwaio villagers led by the British authorities a few weeks later, have been explored elsewhere (see Keesing & Corris 1980; Akin 1999, 2013). For the purposes of this thesis, I wish only to highlight that both Bell's murder, and the revenge massacre which followed, brought to the surface the conflict between competing sources of power and legitimacy and fundamentally different conceptions of law and order.

The 1920s saw other initiatives in governance in Solomon Islands. One solution to the problem of policing a widely dispersed population across a challenging topography with limited resources was to grant more autonomy and authority to Solomon Islanders. Following the example of 'indirect rule' established by Lord Lugard in West Africa, the British administration introduced a *Native Administration Regulation* in 1922. District Officers, such as Bell, appointed District Headmen, Village Headmen and Village Constables (Allen et al. 2013; Dinnen & Allen 2016; Keesing & Corris 1980, p. 78). These received a modest allowance. Their effectiveness and roles varied but in general they appear to have served as a "intermediary, information source, medium for official announcement, organiser of labour for the Administration and guide when arrests were to be made" (Keesing & Corris 1980, p. 78).

The new regulation formalised a system of patronage which had existed informally since the earliest days of the protectorate. Solomon Islanders were not passive victims or beneficiaries of colonial rule, but rather actively participated in supporting or resisting it. While some parties resisted the imposition of colonialism, other local actors actively cooperated with colonial authorities. Policing measures, such as attempts to apprehend murderers by Woodford and others, relied extensively on such cooperation. Often it was due to community persuasion and the leadership of community elders who wished to comply, or feared the consequences of not complying, with the white man's law, that criminals were persuaded to give themselves up. For example, in a combined Annual Report for 1903-1905, Woodford noted that an escaped prisoner was "brought back by the local natives the following day" (Great Britain, 1905 p.33). When the same prisoner escaped again a few days later "he was again arrested by the natives of Gela and brought back" (ibid.). Other authors have detailed the significant support that early efforts of pacification received from chiefs such as Ingava, in the Western part of Solomon Islands (O'Brien 2017). Ingava and other local actors appear at times to have skilfully used cooperation with the colonial administration to pursue local

agendas, such as eliminating their traditional enemies (O'Brien 2017). Fear of adverse consequences, such as having villages or crops destroyed, was also a powerful motivating factor for cooperation. Cooperation between community leaders and the British administration in policing matters sometimes demonstrated that at times it was possible for outcomes to be achieved that enabled both actors to retain sufficient legitimacy.

The size and strength of the Armed Constabulary increased steadily from 1897, except during the Great Depression when there was a slight decline. In comparison to Woodford's combined Annual Report for the years 1903-1905, in which he reported the total strength of the police at 32 men (Great Britain, 1905), "by 1919 it was reported that the strength of the Police Force stands at 92 of all ranks, one third of whom are stationed on Malaita" (Great Britain, 1919). By 1922, the constabulary had a strength of 153 men, with some Solomon Islander police sent to Fiji for training. By 1929 the Armed Constabulary personnel consisted of two sergeant-majors and 141 other ranks, with 11 warders working in the prison at Tulagi. The *Armed Constabulary Annual Report* for the year ending 31 December 1939 provides a snapshot of policing on the cusp of World War Two. At this time the establishment of the Armed Constabulary was 131. Acting Superintendent of Police Beveridge (1940, p. 2) reported that there had been "no difficulty filling vacancies as they have occurred during the year" and that "the District Officer of Malaita continues to supply the best type of recruit". The preference for Malaitans as police officers would ultimately lead to their dominance of the force, and the perception that the interests of Malaitans were better served by the police than those of other groups, providing a basis for later grievances leading to the Solomon Islands conflict (as outlined in Chapter 1).

With the outbreak of war in 1939, many police in the Armed Constabulary enthusiastically volunteered their services. The entry of Japan into the war in 1941 and its rapid advances through the Pacific saw Solomon Islands become a key battleground. Supervised by a handful of British and Australians, Solomon Islanders remained hidden in the bush as 'Coast Watchers' to report on enemy troop movements, playing a critical role in supporting the eventual Allied victory. However, the liberation of Solomon Islands from Japanese occupation 1942 was due to United States forces, whose material wealth seemed overwhelming to Solomon Islanders. Guadalcanal now became a major base for US operations. Over 2500 Solomon Islanders, mostly Malaitans, were recruited by the US as a Solomon Islands Labour Corps (Bennett 1987). The infrastructure developed by the Americans on Guadalcanal, was

so substantial that after the war, it was decided to transfer the BSIP administration from Tulagi to Honiara.

The war had long lasting impacts on the legitimacy of colonial authority. Prior to the war, the Protectorate administration had seemed omnipotent to most Solomon Islanders. Acts of fierce resistance, such as the murder of Bell and his policemen in 1927, were remarkable because they were the exception. But once the Protectorate administration had evacuated Tulagi in the face of the Japanese invasion in 1942, the limits of colonial power were self-evident. Plantation labourers were abandoned, unpaid, and left to fend for themselves. In contrast under the Americans, they enjoyed generous rates of pay, more egalitarian relations and the powerful example of Afro-American soldiers in positions of authority (Bennett 1987). Anti-British feeling was already fermenting and the benefits of collective political action was actively encouraged by some American soldiers (Akin 2013).

The credibility of the Protectorate administration was damaged by the war. Restoring and modernising the Armed Constabulary was a priority. British colonial authority was increasingly challenged by Solomon Islanders through political movements such as Maasina Rule in Malaita (see Akin 2013) and later the Moro movement on Guadalcanal (Allen 2013). Maasina Rule was badly misunderstood by colonial officers as a naïve ‘cargo cult’, but has more accurately been assessed by David Akin (2013) as a significant political and social protest movement. Akin argues that Maasina Rule was indicative of the rising political consciousness of Solomon Islanders and their agency in resisting the reestablishment of colonial rule. Resistance to colonial rule had always been present but Maasina Rule marked a turning point in terms of scale and organisation. A key aspect of the movement was the selective reinterpretation of ‘traditional’ cultural and social practices and customary laws, as *Kastom*. *Kastom* as Akin shows (2013 p. 209-13) entailed comprehensive social and cultural ideology that looked to local sources of legitimacy, to oppose the alien laws and structures of colonialism, which the Massina Rule movement viewed as illegitimate. While the movement was suppressed and its leaders arrested, the movement had successfully accomplished most of its goals (Atkin, 2013) and the demands for greater political power it generated would go on to shape relations between Solomon Islanders and the British authorities, as Independence became inevitable.

In the post-World War Two era, an increased emphasis on establishing a modern police force saw several British police officers recruited into the Armed Constabulary from the early 1950s and through the 1960s. These officers brought a combination of military and policing experience from across the British Empire. The military experience of many colonial officers further encouraged the paramilitary tendencies within the Armed Constabulary. Drills, marching, and military emphasis on discipline and appearance featured strongly in the training of police. The symbolic and ceremonial performance of a disciplined state police force wearing police uniforms set the police apart and above society, enacting a source of legitimacy as a key institution of the colonial state. In 1954, the Armed Constabulary was renamed and reorganised as Solomon Islands Police Force under a Queens Regulation (Moore 2013). As well as increasing in size, the institution increased its operational capacity with the introduction of a Field Force and a Special Branch Unit in 1964 (Moore 2013).

The post-war police interacted with structures of local government that were becoming more developed. The system of indirect rule introduced in the 1920s with government appointed 'head men', was augmented in 1940s with the introduction of Local Councils and Local Courts. These structures were further developed after the war and provided Solomon Islanders with limited autonomy and jurisdiction using 'customary law' over local matters (Moore 2013). Local Courts could hear minor cases dealing with criminal, civil, and customary matters but serious cases involving murder, rape, and incest were referred to district courts (Goddard 2010). These local structures provided an important point of local contact for police and a stronger link to the colonial administration for communities. Regular touring schedules served to maintain relationships and enhanced the legitimacy of the police, who were a visible symbol of and link with the colonial government. From the 1950s there was growing impetus towards encouraging economic and social development. However it was not until 1975 that self-government was established as a precursor to full decolonisation in 1978..

Some functions of the police at this time appeared to directly build their legitimacy and strengthen their relationship with communities. The role of police on rural patrols became significantly broader than simply enforcing law and order. In many instances police patrols were used to advise communities and report to government on local level community and agricultural development initiatives, ranging from cocoa and coconut growing, to health and hygiene promotion (Tedder 2008; see also Dinnen & Allen 2016). Field reports from Alan Lindley (personal communication, 2011) and James Tedder (2008) describe the role of police

patrols as an important interface between villagers and the colonial authorities during the 1960s and 1970s. Police patrols would travel on foot to remote villages and were usually accompanied by a ‘dresser’ able to render basic medical assistance to villagers (Tedder 2008). Area constables provided another conduit for information to and from the colonial administration on issues related to law and order, as well as other matters related to communities and their development.

From the 1960s, statebuilding initiatives gathered pace. British officials, under relentless pressure from the British Government and United Nations Committee for Decolonization constructed the key institutions of the Solomon Islands state rapidly in the decade preceding Independence (Smith 2011; Tedder 2008). By Independence in 1978 the institutional framework for an independent state had been constructed. However, outside of Honiara the state continued to have limited presence and weak foundations in Solomon Islands society. Instead indigenous governance practices, including self-policing, predominated.

Multiple layers of national and local government were established in the lead-up to and following Independence. Twenty-four local councils established in 1953 were amalgamated to eight by 1976, paving the way for provincial government system (Nanau 1998). As the lowest level of government Area Councils were established under the *Provincial Government Act 1981*. While Area Councils varied in their effectiveness, they provided a valuable linkage between local communities and provincial and state government and court system (Dinnen & Allen 2013, 2016). An important functionary of Area Councils was the area constable who was employed to enforce council regulations and to liaise with police for more serious matters. Area constables provided a valued link between the community and the state levels. In terms of this thesis, their role is also of interest as an example of a form of hybrid policing, which drew on legitimacy from essentially two different sources – their mandate from the state and their standing and relationship with local communities. This will be further examined in the section which follows.

4.4. Post-Independence Approaches to Policing

RSIPF had a key part in statebuilding efforts that accompanied Solomon Island’s transition to independent statehood in 1978. RSIPF was one of the few recognised symbols for a united Solomon Islands nation. In terms of formal state structures, they were the oldest and indeed

one of the only established ‘national’ institutions in Solomon Islands (Dinnen 2008). The ceremonial practices of drilling and parading were performed with pride by RSIPF and expressed a para-military model of policing taught by the British. Drilling and marching enacted not only the quality of discipline, but also a measure of unity, marching as one organism. As police, Solomon Islanders were expected to be impartial and forego *wontok* allegiances. This was important in order to develop and maintain trust and legitimacy in the force. Police were recruited from all provinces and some rose through the ranks on their merits. Solomon Islands first indigenous Police Commissioner Fred Soaki, for instance, was from remote Tikopia. However, in terms of total composition of the force there was an imbalance. The longstanding preference of the British Administration for recruits from Malaita was now a problem. In the newly independent Solomon Islands, the dominance of Malaitans in key state institutions was a major concern for those from other provinces and undermined the legitimacy of the RSIPF. Real and perceived biases in the provision of law and order by RSIPF would be a major grievance identified in Guadalcanal narratives justifying the resort to armed struggle and undermining the legitimacy of RSIPF (Allen 2013; TRC 2012). These biases were one important symptom of broader institutional decline that soon began to impact on the perceived effectiveness and legitimacy of RSIPF.

From an institutionalist perspective (as discussed in Chapter 2) this institutional decline placed Solomon Islands somewhere along the continuum between ‘weak’, ‘fragile’ or ‘failed’ postcolonial state (Rotberg 2003; Wainwright 2003). The deficit-based focus of the orthodox state failure literature and use of labels such as ‘weak’, ‘fragile’ or failed has been a key point of critique for the hybridity literature. As I explored in Chapter 2, this literature argues that there are inherent limitations to the institutionalist focus on what is not there. Rather, it is argued that a more productive approach is to describe states as they are, examining why they work the way they do. This draws attention to the complex entanglements between different traditions, institutions and practices described as “hybrid political orders” (Boege, Brown & Clements 2009). In the Solomon Islands context scholars have highlighted the strength and potential of a range of non-state institutions that have greater relevance and legitimacy for local populations in Solomon Islands (Boege, Brown & Clements 2009).

While accounts of state failure and institutional collapse draw attention to the loss of legitimacy that results from such processes, they rarely provide practical details of how legitimacy is lost. In the case of the RSIPF, some observers have noted an incremental loss of

legitimacy that was observable in everyday practices and behaviour. For instance, according to Alan Lindley, a former colonial police officer (whom I interviewed at his home in Adelaide), it appeared that standards of professionalism and discipline had started eroding in the force in the decade prior to independence (Lindley interview, August 2011). Lindley, who returned to Solomon Islands for Independence celebrations in 1978, considered that that institutional decline in RSIPF was already evident at this time. For Lindley, this was reflected in the way the police wore their uniforms, carried themselves, and carried out their duties. Lindley was unsure exactly “why the discipline went... Because the European officers left. But there were a couple of local chaps both of them Shortland Islanders who had been with me for many years and they kept discipline.... But then you see these blokes get old very quickly in the islands. And they left and there was nothing coming behind” (Lindley interview, 2011).

The early retirement of senior officers from the RSIPF and loss of their skills, knowledge and experience was an issue that also raised in interviews during field work in Solomon Islands in 2011. In response to cost saving measures during public sector reform programmes in the late 1990s senior police officers such as Lucian Konata were offered and took advantage of early retirement (Konata interview, August 2011). Valuable skills and leadership experience were lost in the period immediately before the outbreak of conflict, reducing confidence in the organisation, and its effectiveness and those aspects of legitimacy derived from being able to achieve policing outcomes.

In the wake of Independence, RSIPF was forced to operate in a more intensely political environment. Former Solomon Islands Prime Minister, Sir Allan Kemekeza, was a young police officer at the time of Independence, having joined RSIPF in 1972. When I interviewed him in August 2011, Sir Allan reflected on the challenges of policing in the post-Independence period. He stressed that the task of policing soon became complicated by politics. Rural patrols, for example, which had formerly been far removed from politics, had to cross multiple administrative boundaries following Independence. RSIPF encountered significant political tensions between actors competing for power at national, provincial and area council level (Kemekeza interview, August 2011). While this made policing more complicated, it emphasised the direct link between multiple layers of governance that police continued to provide in this period.

Area constables continued to be a key intermediary operating at the local level between communities and RSIPF through the 1980s and into 1990s. When this system worked well many disputes and minor crimes could be resolved directly at the local level by area constables in consultation with local courts, chiefs and other community elders (Allen et al. 2013). This reduced the number of criminal and legal cases referred to Honiara and helped to manage conflict in rural areas (Dinnen & Allen 2016; Goddard 2010). However, the abolition of Area Councils, and funding for area constables, in the late 1990s removed this local layer of governance and policing in most rural settings. It has been argued that the vacuum created by the removal of the Area Councils and the associated area constables was a contributing factor to the Guadalcanal uprising in the late 1990s (Dinnen & Allen 2016; Scales 2005).

The legitimacy of policing in Solomon Islands came under additional challenges from outside of the country. From 1988, conflict in Bougainville between rebels from the Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA) and Papua New Guinea's Government Defence Force (PNGDF) led to a security challenge on Solomon Islands maritime border. Both BRA and PNGDF violated Solomon Islands' sovereignty by crossing the border, the former for sanctuary and supplies, and the latter in hot pursuit of the BRA (Dureau 1998). In response, Solomon Islands opted to strengthen its own paramilitary capacity forming a Police Field Force (PFF) and purchasing military style weapons and equipment. The paramilitary posture of PFF, and its composition of younger police officers created a rift in RSIPF. Some older police whom I interviewed complained about the bad language and macho attitude of PFF (Ora interview 2011). As others have noted in regard to other young men in Melanesia, including the militants involved in the Tensions, (Allen 2013; Carter 2006; Macintyre 2002) influences from popular culture as depicted in videos such as *Rambo* were reflected in the attitudes and appearance of young men. Arguably, these influences were also evident in the practices and behaviour of younger PFF officers. Regardless of the cause, the increasingly aggressive attitude of some members of the PFF appear to have had an impact on undermining the legitimacy of the RSIPF (Allen 2013; TRC 2012).

Following Independence in 1978, the RSIPF, like other government institutions, faced considerable challenges and constraints. Specifically, for RSIPF, these included reduced resources available for policing, increased politicisation of the policing role and altered relationships between the state elites, police, and local communities, particularly as a result of increasing levels of resource extraction and associated disputes. Lucrative logging contracts

with Asian companies and discretionary powers of government ministers to waive duties or approve projects made key positions within government very profitable. This had implications for policing. Increasingly, the RSIPF found itself tasked to intervene to protect political and corporate interests and to act against local communities protesting against logging on their shared customary lands (Frazer 1997). Police were criticised for failing to investigate when an anti-logging activist, Martin Apa, was murdered in 1995 (Kabutaulaka 1998, p. 93). Police also faced criticism on Guadalcanal, where it was claimed that the RSIPF had failed to adequately investigate the murder of 25 people from Guadalcanal, allegedly committed over several decades by Malaitans (GPA 1999). Collectively, these events contributed to an erosion in the perceived legitimacy of RSIPF, according to some of those I interviewed and as further analysed in Chapter 7.

The reputation of RSIPF as a disciplined and impartial force was eroding due to political pressure at the same time inadequate resources were compromising its operational effectiveness. RSIPF shared this problem with other key state institutions. In the 1990s, despite extensive logging of timber resources, Solomon Islands remained heavily reliant on international aid. International concern was mounting that corruption and unsustainable resource use were becoming endemic in Solomon Islands (Larmour 1997). Solomon Islands was also under pressure to conform to external agendas aimed at promoting 'good governance'. Finance from multilateral banks (specifically the Asian Development Bank) in the late 1990s was conditional on adopting a stringent structural adjustment program. Policies linked to reductions in public expenditure saw the abolition of local area councils and the disappearance of area constables (as discussed above). This effectively saw the withdrawal of the state's policing presence from rural areas at a critical time. Direct assistance to policing was provided by the Commonwealth Secretariat who supported the recruitment of an expatriate Commissioner, Frank Short, in 1997. The RSIPF was identified as key target for 'institutional strengthening' by AusAID, with a team of advisers deployed under an Australian Government-funded Solomon Islands Law and Justice Institutional Strengthening Project in 2000. However, as events clearly indicated, these donor efforts to prop up Solomon Islands police institutions were too little too late.

I will not repeat discussion of the history of the 1998-2003 Solomon Islands conflict or Tensions here, since they were outlined in Chapter 1, except to note that by late 1998 events

had commenced that would soon spiral out of control. These events would complete the unravelling and erosion of the legitimacy of RSIPF.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the historical and social context of policing in Solomon Islands. There are several key points to draw from this analysis. The first is that policing, as distinct from police, has been a constant feature of Solomon Island's societies. Despite the creation of an institutionalised police force, associated first with the colonial administration and then with the post-colonial state, many communities continue to rely on local mechanisms for policing. These combined elements from past practices and earlier sources of legitimacy (e.g. connections with big-man or chiefly status) as well as taking advantage of new ideas and sources of legitimacy (e.g. church, civil society or business). The hybrid policing models that result vary in their effectiveness but are often perceived as more legitimate and more effective than state-based models of policing.

The need for legitimacy, as produced through constant interaction and relationship between those seeking authority and power and those whose compliance they seek, is an essential feature of human society. In Solomon Islands, varieties of legitimacy work have been performed by different actors jockeying for power and influence, and seeking the compliance or approval of different legitimacy audiences. For much, if not all of the colonial era, the British colonial administration lacked political legitimacy, from the perspective of lacking broad-based recognition by Solomon Islanders of their "right to rule". However, the colonial administration nevertheless engaged in legitimacy work. This was reflected in its justifications of colonial rule as 'pacification' or as a 'civilising mission', in the establishment of a British legal framework (e.g. *The Pacific Order*, 1893) and through the symbolic performance of Empire, from flag raising and parades, to brutal punishments inflicted on Solomon Islanders communities associated with crimes against British law. The colonial administration's legitimacy work also involved practices expressly aimed at destroying or subjugating indigenous structures of leadership and social control. However, the success of these efforts was severely constrained by the limited reach of the colonial state. Many local structures of governance have continued to operate because alternative state-based structures of policing, dispute resolution, and social control are absent. I consider this point further in Chapter 7.

Despite key moments of resistance, some colonial policing practices constructed at least a façade of legitimacy for colonial authority (Akin 2013). These frequently did so, not by erasing indigenous authority structures and sources of legitimacy, but rather by re-purposing them, integrating local structures with centralised policing institutions and by providing services seen as valuable by Solomon Islanders. Similarly, many Solomon Islanders actively engaged with colonial structures when it suited their purposes. Mediating the relationship between colonial authority as police officer, headman, area constable or interpreter, was in itself, potentially a source of legitimacy and power. Those able to broker effective relationships between two contrasting systems of authority could achieve status and other benefits if they fulfilled the role effectively.

As I have discussed above, during the early colonial period the power of the British administration relied on the reputation and ability of the police to use lethal force. Such actions highlighted the absence of legitimacy of colonial rule and of colonial police. After all, if local audiences recognised that colonial authorities had the right to rule, such violence would scarcely have been necessary. With a new focus on building a modern professional and disciplined police force after the Second World War, there was a gradual but incomplete transition towards what Bottoms and Tankebe (2012) refer to as *de facto* authority. For at least some Solomon Islanders, by the time of Independence, RSIPF may have been viewed as legitimate. This was reflected in the positive relationship that RSIPF appears to have had with some communities but it was always contingent and shifting.

This chapter has provided a historical and social perspective on the legitimacy of policing in Solomon Islands. In the following chapter I turn to much more recent events with the arrival of RAMSI in 2003.

Chapter 5: Constructing External Legitimacy: RAMSI as a Narrative of ‘Success’

Well, at the turn of the century the Solomon Islands were being torn apart by lawlessness, ethnic tensions, rampant violence...all that. Now... after 5 years of mounting conflict and coup, the government was near collapse and public institutions were in crisis. In April 2003, the Prime Minister... Sir Allan... Kemakeza, he requested urgent international assistance from Pacific neighbours... and that assistance arrived three months later in the form of RAMSI, the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands. And after 14 years, the Australian-led mission, it came to an end on Friday. Didn't get much attention but it's a big story... It's seen as a successful mission, having achieved the goal of restoring law and order to the Solomons. So, the question here is, how different is the Solomon Islands today and what does the future look like? (Switzer 2017)

Prelude: RAMSI Arrives

On the morning of 24th of July, 2003, I waited, along with what seemed like half of Honiara, for the arrival of the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI). Some hundreds of Solomon Islanders stood in the public viewing area on the roof of the airport terminal building. Inside the security fence, officials, media representatives and other ‘authorised persons’ waited on the tarmac, which still glistened from a shower of rain. A group of Guadalcanal ‘warriors’, representing the traditional landowners and dressed in ‘kabilato’ – a traditional loincloth worn by men and made of tree bark – and armed with spears, waited nervously, ready to issue the customary challenge to new arrivals. A large detachment of Royal Solomon Islands Police Force (RSIPF) officers stood smartly waiting in formation. In command of these, resplendent in his uniform and with his sabre ready for salute was the Commander of the RSIPF Star Division, James Kili. Finally, an aircraft approached.

The aircraft landed and taxied, and a large staircase was wheeled out. Australian senior diplomat and ‘Special Coordinator’ of RAMSI, Mr Nick Warner, emerged. He was followed by a procession of Australian Federal Police, and Australian Defence Force personnel. RAMSI had arrived (Author’s personal reflection, 2015).

5.1. Constructing External Legitimacy

The first task for Nick Warner, and RAMSI more broadly, on arrival in Honiara was not, as is commonly assumed, the reestablishment of law and order, but involved telling a story. Warner wasted no time in announcing the general contours of an early version of the official RAMSI narrative on his arrival. It was primarily through this narrative that the essential ‘legitimacy work’ required to justify RAMSI and achieve its various purposes was carried out. Immediately on disembarking at Henderson airfield, Warner stopped to address a large contingent of international media and a few representatives of local press who had gathered. Noting first his pleasure at being in Honiara, Warner then emphasised that RAMSI had come at the request of Solomon Islands Government, its Parliament and because the “Solomon Islands people invited us here” (Warner 2003b, p. 1). The intervention was a “Pacific partnership”, here to “give the Solomon Islanders a better life, a safer life, a more prosperous life”. In response to a question from a journalist, Warner took a moment to outline his immediate priorities: “The first priority for us [is] to go and see the Prime Minister and go and see the Cabinet, and immediately after that, indeed as that is happening, we will be working to restore law and order in Honiara”. In this brief tarmac media conference, Warner sought to establish a strategic narrative providing a concise story of why RAMSI was needed, what it would do, and above all, to establish the legitimacy of RAMSI as an external intervention in the domestic affairs of a sovereign state.

The purpose of this chapter is to use the lens of ‘legitimacy work’ to examine how RAMSI constructed legitimacy through its external narrative over the course of the 14-year intervention. My key premise is that the RAMSI official narrative was the main vehicle for this legitimacy work. However, I argue that the different meanings of legitimacy for RAMSI’s different audiences shaped how the RAMSI narrative was presented and perceived by various audiences. For the purpose of my analysis, I draw a basic distinction between RAMSI’s audience external to Solomon Islands and its audience internal to Solomon Islands. Many of the themes introduced in Warner’s first press statement would appear repeatedly in subsequent

speeches and other discursive representations of RAMSI. In this, and the following chapter, I demonstrate that these narrative themes were tied together with a core strategic purpose; namely, to construct RAMSI's legitimacy in the eyes of both external and internal legitimacy audiences as a police-led statebuilding intervention. This chapter examines key themes in the narrative as presented to external audiences, while the following chapters focused on internal or local audiences within Solomon Islands. This is not to suggest either of these audiences, external or internal, are homogenous groups or that those within these broad categories were inclined to make similar judgements related to the legitimacy of RAMSI. Inevitably, there was a diversity of opinion expressed regarding the appropriateness and legitimacy of RAMSI and its approaches and many of these opinions changed over time.

RAMSI's external narrative relied primarily on key speeches,⁷ texts and images of the intervention. This material is triangulated against official texts, such as RAMSI reports, and with my personal reflections, key informant interviews, and academic and grey literature. Reflecting the interpretive orientation of my thesis, my interest is not so much on what the external narrative *is* but what it *does* (Andrews, Squire & Tamboukou 2013). On one level what RAMSI's external narrative does is tell the story of why, how, and how successfully, RAMSI was implemented. But on a deeper level, this external narrative can be read as a "legitimizing device", that is, a tool that does 'legitimacy work'. Embedded within RAMSI's external narrative is a particular understanding of the relationship between the state and the police. Adopting what Mumby (1987) refers to as a 'political reading of narrative',⁸ I demonstrate that the official narrative of RAMSI's police and statebuilding efforts is the product of, but also functions ideologically to "produce maintain, and reproduce power structures" (Mumby 1987, pp. 114-5). Thus, the story of RAMSI can be read as a strategic

⁷ Speeches by RAMSI Special Coordinator Nick Warner, and his successors, and other senior RAMSI, Australian government and political figures provide a resource for critical analysis. A record of key speeches from across the full period of RAMSI at RAMSI's website (www.ramsi.org). Other speeches were identified from Australian government archive sites such as <https://pmtranscripts.pmc.gov.au/> and <https://ministers.dfat.gov.au/archives>.

⁸ Mumby (1987) writes: "narratives not only evolve as a product of certain power structures, but also function ideologically to produce, maintain, and reproduce those power structures. Because of their embeddedness in the everyday practices of organizations, narratives are not easily perceived as legitimating devices—they often articulate an organizational reality that is accepted as "the natural order of things." By adopting a political reading of narrative, however, it is possible to demonstrate that story-telling is not a simple representing of a pre-existing reality, but is rather a politically motivated production of a certain way of perceiving the world which privileges certain interests over others" (Mumby 1987, pp. 114-5).

narrative that ascribes particular meanings and values to events, concepts and practices in ways that impose a particular set of liberal peacebuilding norms.

The argument in this chapter is developed as follows. In Section 5.2, I consider the legitimacy work of RAMSI's external narrative in the international context. This is in order to show the legitimacy work carried out to justify RAMSI was not an isolated policy response but was situated within international discourses, narratives and practices. In Section 5.3, I examine five significant themes that emerged from my analysis of RAMSI's external narrative. Analysis of these themes show the different and evolving way in which legitimacy work is done in the context of transnational policing. I also look beyond the frame of RAMSI's official external narrative to consider some significant silences, invisibilities and omissions in the external story. This is important because like all strategic narratives, RAMSI's strategic narrative can be read to uncover particular meanings and values to events, concepts and practices in ways that privilege the interests and values of certain groups, while silencing, delegitimising or ignoring the perspectives of other groups. Finally, in Section 5.4, I examine the implications of reading RAMSI's external narrative through the lens of 'legitimacy work'. Specifically, I show how investigation of legitimacy work in the context of transnational policing interventions, improves our understanding of how interventions construct and sustain legitimacy with external audiences. Ultimately, I conclude that a significant but unstated purpose of RAMSI's external narrative was to tell a story to reaffirm Australia's view of itself as significant regional power in the Pacific.

5.2 External Audiences and Legitimacy Work

As previously described, 'legitimacy work' is the work of constructing, maintaining, transferring and conferring legitimacy through the production of narratives and practices. It is an important practice of transnational policing interventions but is work that is never finished. Effective legitimacy work needs to adjust as situations evolve and circumstances change. It must also be tailored for different networks of stakeholders. Following other scholars, discussed in Chapter 2, I refer to these as 'legitimacy audiences' (Von Billerbeck & Gippert 2017).

The photograph on the following page depicts the moment of Warner's speech to the media (Figure 5.1). The image captures the notion of 'legitimacy audiences' visually and highlights

the intensity of international media interest in the moment of intervention. It also hints at a degree of competition between Australian government agencies involved in the mission, with separate photographers and media officers from ADF, DFAT and AFP competing for images and sound bites. Despite their whole-of-government collaboration during planning and implementation, these agencies still competed for funding and attention in Canberra. Until now DFAT and AusAID, had led Australia's relations with officials and the people of Solomon Islands but now these agencies had to share this role with the AFP and ADF. RAMSI was an opportunity to maximise departmental interests and prestige. The use of staff photographers by lead agencies like AFP suggests an attempt to present and control the narrative from specific agency perspectives. From this perspective every camera lens present in Figure 5.1 was a window to a specific legitimacy audience. In this moment, the important audience from the perspective of Warner and colleagues was not Solomon Islanders but rather the Australian public and the Australian politicians and senior bureaucrats whose reputations, to some extent, had been hitched to the success or failure of RAMSI.



Figure 5.1. Photo of Nick Warner and Ben McDevitt arriving at Henderson Airfield, 24 July 2003 (©Brian Hartigan, Australian Federal Police, used with permission).

This photo also captured a representation of some of RAMSI's key local legitimacy audiences. However, it is notable that in this image Solomon Islanders are to be observed only in the peripheries of the scene. At the back of the media scrum one representative of the Solomon Islands media is present, while in the foreground another holds a cheap camera optimistically over the heads of the international media to capture a shot. In the distant background, Solomon Islands police parade, all but forgotten. The marginalisation of local media in this image is symbolic of the substantial power differential that existed between external and local actors. As the intervention unfolded, ensuring strong support from local legitimacy audiences would become increasingly important but in this moment of inception it was the urgent timetables of the international media and their need for good sound bites and strong visual images that shaped RAMSI's early strategic narrative and daily practices.

There was also a range of other stakeholders for which different narratives were crafted and communicated as the intervention unfolded. These included other donors, such as those represented in the Organisation Economic Development Cooperation (OECD), multilateral partners such as United Nations agencies and international financial institutions, and regional partners including other member states of the Pacific Island Forum (PIF) contributing police, troops or other officials to RAMSI. These alternative audiences required different channels of communication and distinct versions of the official RAMSI narrative. Warner's speech to members of the PIF in Nadi on 17 June 2004 demonstrates how RAMSI's leadership deftly adjusted the official narrative to appeal to the interests of different audiences:

A few weeks ago, I visited a village south of Auki, on Malaita, to talk to the villagers about the work of RAMSI. We had with us a young ni-Vanuatu police officer, Glen Mahina. Glen spoke Solomon Islands pidgin perfectly and had been given responsibility by the RAMSI Police Inspector in Auki police station to improve community relations through regular village awareness meetings. Glen was able not only to communicate effectively to the villagers in pidgin but was able to reach them on another level by explaining our messages in terms that were relevant to the grass roots. He drew on analogies and symbolism that I would not have thought to use but which came naturally to him, and which resonated with the community (Warner 2004c).

Warner went on to highlight "the invaluable contribution being made by Pacific Island countries to Operation Helpem Fren" (ibid.). The PIF was a particularly important stakeholder as it provided the source of RAMSI's regional legitimacy. However, they were largely excluded from a meaningful role in the planning or early years of the intervention. This was a major criticism of the PIF Eminent Persons Group Review in 2005. This highlights the

divergence between RAMSI's official narrative of invaluable contributions by Pacific Islands countries and the reality of an operation that was tightly controlled by Australia and which overwhelmingly reflected Australian norms and expectations related to policing and the nature of the state.

5.3. Significant Themes in RAMSI's External Strategic Narrative

I examine five key themes below in terms of their role in making and perpetuating the external legitimacy narrative of RAMSI across the 14-year lifespan of the intervention. In keeping with the interpretive approach of this thesis (see p. 67) these themes were identified in the deskwork phase through an iterative and subjective process of engagement with the research materials – texts, images, audio-files and typed transcripts. My initial rendering of material focused on identifying material relevant to law and order and policing. These materials were then studied more closely to identify the most salient and dominant threads within RAMSI's narrative. Further choices to determine the themes I explore in this chapter were guided and filtered by my experiences and knowledge of RAMSI and Solomon Islands. These are as follows:

- 1) Establishing RAMSI's international legitimacy
- 2) Emphasising the 'failure' of Solomon Islands state and RSIPF
- 3) Focusing on criminality rather than conflict;
- 4) Prioritising statebuilding over peace-building; and
- 5) Presenting RAMSI as a success.

RAMSI's overall strategic narrative was never static. Rather, it fluctuated in correspondence with changing priorities and events in different phases of the intervention, as described in Chapter 1 (pp. 16-21). In the initial stages of the intervention (Phase 1) the first three themes came through more strongly, while later in the mission they received less emphasis. A focus on statebuilding (Theme 4) dominated the early ambitious Phase 2 period of the mission but received less emphasis later in the mission as the focus shifted to more modest goals of stability and exit. The fifth theme, presenting RAMSI as a success, was evident across all phases of the intervention, albeit with changes to what success meant over the duration of the intervention. This chapter explores the ebbs and flows of the overall narrative through analysis of these themes.

Theme 1: Establishing RAMSI's international legitimacy

Establishing the legitimacy of any coercive international interventions demands a narrative that explains why the infringement on a given state's sovereignty is necessary and justifiable. In justifying RAMSI to domestic audiences in Australia and the wider international community, Australian political leaders appealed first to the rhetoric of protecting Australian security interests from potential terrorism. This aligned Australia's policy and actions in Solomon Islands with statebuilding interventionary measures being argued for by the US administration in the context of the War on Terror in Iraq and Afghanistan (Kabutaulaka 2004b). A second aspect of this legitimacy work borrowed from the language of Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine, as discussed in Chapter 2, namely, that the "norm of non-intervention should yield to the principle of international responsibility to protect" civilian populations (Thakur 2002, p. 323).

In a speech to the National Press Club in Canberra, just four weeks prior to the arrival of RAMSI, Foreign Minister Downer, alluded to R2P by arguing that "[s]overeignty in our view is not absolute. Acting for the benefit of humanity is more important" (Downer 2003b). In establishing Australia's position in relation to the debate around state sovereignty versus responsibility, Downer framed its role as a "supportive friend" to Solomon Islands working in partnership with other Pacific nations to stabilise Solomon Islands through a "cooperative intervention":

Pacific Island countries are sovereign states. Ultimately, they must take responsibility for their own futures. Australia is not a neo-colonial power and we are sensitive to regional concerns about our role. But we will not sit back and watch while a country slips inexorably into decay and disorder... [...] Our task will be to look forward, to build a stable future within the framework of the Constitution and laws of Solomon Islands. Whatever we do will be at the express invitation of the Solomon Islands Government and in cooperation with our partners in the Pacific. If it involves intervention it will be cooperative intervention (Downer 2003b).

This narrative conveniently omitted to mention that earlier requests for Australian assistance had been rejected. The notion of cooperative intervention was an important claim to legitimacy and aimed to reassure external audiences that an Australian-led intervention would comply with international law and take regional sensibilities into account. Another key element of legitimacy work was situating the intervention within the domestic legal framework in Solomon Islands (see Chapter 1). Unlike military-led interventions in Kosovo

or in Iraq, which did not seek local enabling legislation, RAMSI was sanctioned by Solomon Islands Parliament through the *Facilitation of International Assistance Act (2003)* and operated under the terms of a treaty signed between Solomon Islands Government and the contributing nations to RAMSI. This entered into force on 24 July 2003, the day that RAMSI arrived (DFAT 2003).

For RAMSI, the construction of legitimacy was an ongoing project. External audiences were constantly reminded that the intervention had come at the invitation of Solomon Islands Government. Another strategy was to highlight the friendly and even neighbourly intention behind the intervention. This was clearly reflected in the Solomon Islands name for the intervention, “Operation *Helpem Fren*” and other references. Further legitimacy work included affirmation of the regional and Pacific nature of the intervention. According to Warner, speaking at the PIF Regional Security Committee Meeting in Nadi on 17 June 2004, the endorsement of the mission by Forum Foreign Ministers, as “a concerted regional response, as envisaged in the Biketawa Declaration” was crucial. Warner went on to explain:

In true Pacific style, RAMSI has been engaged in a partnership with the Government, Parliament and the people of Solomon Islands since the beginning of Operation *Helpem Fren*. Decisions are taken together, after discussion (Warner 2004c).

While this may have occasionally described the process of decision-making adopted by RAMSI, the intervention received criticism that it was Australian-dominated. At the request of Prime Minister Kemekeza, the PIF convened an Eminent Persons Group (EPG) to review RAMSI in 2005. While positive about RAMSI’s role overall and commending RAMSI for “its excellent achievements in restoring law and order and strengthening Government finances” (PIF 2005), the review report also remarked:

We heard concerns that RAMSI has a minimal regional identity and is perceived as a predominantly Australian assistance mission. Some Solomon Islanders said they felt that because RAMSI is controlled by Australia, it is not a regional mission.

Given that Australia provides many of the resources required by the PPF, it seems natural that it assumes a leadership role. However, we feel that there may be scope for this leadership to be more fully shared with the Pacific Islands contingent to give fuller expression to the regional identity of the PPF (PIF 2005)

The legitimacy of RAMSI faced its most difficult test in the years 2006-2008. The repercussions and recriminations that followed from the 2006 post-election riots and antagonism resulting from the Julian Moti affair (discussed in Chapter 1) were symptomatic of (and also contributed to) a seriously strained bilateral relationship between the governments of Australia and Solomon Islands. The dominance of Australians within PPF and indeed all elements of RAMSI did not help matters, as an Australian Senate Committee heard from expert witness, Andrew Goldsmith, in 2008:

...there is the perception—not just a perception, in this case—that Australians are running both the Royal Solomon Islands Police and the Participating Police Force, the PPF. It does not take any great observer of events there to sit back and say, 'It looks like there are a lot of Australians running both sides of the operation there.' In hindsight, that underlines something that one might want to think about if one were to do it again or something similar (Commonwealth of Australia 2008, pp. 236-7).

RAMSI working relationships with SIG sustained damage during the 2006-07 period but as it evolved and adapted it was able to successfully restore cooperation. Strengthening the *regional* aspect of the intervention provide a successful means to improve the perception, and sometimes the reality, that other member countries in the Pacific Islands Forum had some influence and control of the direction and priorities of RAMSI (Evans-Locke 2016). The PIF became a key intermediary providing both oversight and facilitation and in doing so, provided RAMSI an opportunity to reclaim legitimacy and goodwill that had been lost. In practical terms, Australian dominance of key roles did not change that much. And despite RAMSI's external narrative and the positive contributions made by Pacific Islands police, these officers were often assigned roles that Australians were not as good at, or viewed as less critical, such as community engagement or deployments to remote posts (Putt et al. 2018). Paradoxically, these roles were critical to establishing RAMSI's wider legitimacy within the community and in rural areas.

Theme 2: Portraying Solomon Islands state and RSIPF as 'failed'

The second theme that features heavily in the external narrative of RAMSI concerns the alleged failure of the Solomon Islands state and the closely related claim that key institutions, such as the RSIPF, had also failed. As I have described in Chapter 2, the global discourse of 'state failure' emerged in the late 1990s. Failed states were countries which appeared trapped in cycles of violence and unable to 'actually perform the functions that make them sovereign' (Ghani & Lockhart 2008, p. 4), such as providing some measure of security and basic services

to its population. The discourse of state failure provided a conceptual handle to justify intervention to ‘fix failed states’ or pre-emptively strengthen them to prevent ‘failure’ before it happened. Key aspects of RAMSI’s external narrative appear to have been borrowed from well-established scripts existing in the Western policy environment during the period in which RAMSI was conceived (Fry & Kabutaulaka 2008). The following quote from the Canberra-based Australian Strategic Policy Institute report, *Our Failing Neighbour*, is an excellent example of the state failure or collapse narrative being applied to Solomon Islands’ context:

In essence, Solomon Islands’ story is simply told, and its elements are all too familiar from troubled areas throughout the post-colonial world. The disparate ethnic and language groups drawn together for the convenience of imperial administrators. The parsimonious colonial rule, with little or no investment in the human, social and institutional capital needed for nationhood. The rush to independence on a timetable dictated from afar, resulting in poorly designed institutions of statehood. The weak post-independence governments with inadequate revenue bases struggling for legitimacy against older, more deeply rooted political and social traditions. [...] The rule of law collapsing, and the descent into corruption and criminality (Wainwright 2003a, p. 18).

The portrayal of Solomon Islands as a failed state played an important part in the narrative of RAMSI in terms of justifying why RAMSI was necessary and why it was in Australia’s national interest, as well as the interest of Solomon Islanders for Australia to intervene. A few days before RAMSI arrived in Honiara, Australian Prime Minister John Howard was interviewed on Australian current affairs program *60 Minutes* by veteran journalist Charles Wooley. Howard outlined the reasons for intervention. Demonstrating what some scholars have regarded to be his Realist approach to foreign policy (McCraw 2008), Howard made certain to highlight the national interest and security concerns in Australia’s region or “our patch” as a key rationale, and the language of “state failure” formed a compelling part of his justification for the intervention.

The Solomons is our patch. I’m sure the Australian people will understand if the Solomons becomes a failed state it is a haven potentially for terrorists, drug-runners and money launderers. We don’t want that on our doorstep. It is in Australia’s interest — forget about any other country for the moment — it is in Australia’s interest that the Solomons not fail. That’s why we’re going to get involved and that’s why we have significantly changed our policy. What we’re doing in the Solomon Islands represents a very significant change in policy (Howard 2003).

The narrative of Solomon Island's failure as a state, and the closely aligned failure of Solomon Island's police force, as presented in the Australian Strategic Policy Institute report, became the basis for the legitimacy narrative of RAMSI. This narrative of failure is further illustrated by an excerpt from a speech by Warner, speaking to an external audience at a National Security Conference, Brisbane, in March 2004, eight months after RAMSI's arrival:

If you can, imagine a country where hospitals, schools and medical clinics have simply ceased to function for a lack of funds, imagine a nation where public servants go weeks without pay – not surprisingly, some turn up to work, but many do not – imagine roads that are literally falling apart, public thoroughfares that are the preserve of drunks and thieves. Then, to complete the picture, add to the mix guns, ethnic tensions, rogue police, corrupt politicians and business people, and armed criminals. This is the nation that greeted RAMSI in the early hours of 24 July last year when the first elements of an Australian-led, Pacific peace-making and nation building operation began arriving in Solomon Islands (Warner 2004b).

The mental image invited from this grim, albeit partially accurate, description of pre-RAMSI Solomon Islands, also recalls another thought experiment, by Thomas Hobbes. Hobbes famously theorised that wherever humans were left to “live without other security than what their own strength and their own invention shall furnish them’ there would be ‘no place for industry... no arts; no letters; no society; and which is worst of all, continual fear, and danger of violent death; and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short” (Hobbes 1965, pp. 96-7). Channelling Hobbes, Warner painted a dire picture of a failing Solomon Islands state that perhaps reflected the experience of some Solomon Islanders during the worst phase of the conflict in 2001-2002 but was a stark contrast to the friendly airport welcome with which he was greeted in July 2003. Warner's (2004b) caricature failed to capture the complexity or diversity of Solomon Islands, even during the worst period of the conflict and its aftermath. This lacuna, a failure to describe what works in Solomon Islands or to share stories of positive local initiatives, practices or action, was a key feature within the dominant narrative of RAMSI. Alternative perspectives which challenge this narrative will be explored in Chapter 7.

Theme 3: Diagnosing Solomon Island's problems as criminality not conflict

The legitimacy work evident in the third theme from RAMSI's external narrative explains why a ‘police-led’ approach to the intervention was adopted. This was based on assumption that the primary problem in Solomon Islands was one of criminal lawlessness rather than unresolved conflict. In the initial period of RAMSI there was scarcely any mention of the

underlying grievances or structural factors that influenced the initial violent manifestation of underlying conflict between 1999 and 2000. Instead the official narrative goes to some lengths to frame those involved in the conflict as criminals motivated by greed rather than legitimate combatants motivated by grievance (Allen 2013). The extract from Warner's (2004b) speech above is a case in point. He describes a nation where "public through-fares are the preserve of drunks and thieves" and asks his Australian audience to "complete the picture...[by adding] to the mix guns, ethnic tensions, rogue police, corrupt politicians and business people, and armed criminals". Here, the deep-seated structural causes and legitimate grievances that ex-militants claim motivated their cause, as Matthew Allen (2013) documents, are entirely ignored.

For Warner and those he represented this was a problem for police not peace-builders and a case of criminality not conflict. While the point that militants and police did commit many crimes both during and after the conflict cannot be denied, this is not the complete picture as Warner's narrative implies. This is important because the tone and content of RAMSI's early narrative had important consequences for RAMSI's initial practices and approach. The understanding of the problems of Solomon Islands as criminality not conflict explains why opportunities to contribute to peacebuilding and conflict resolution at the local and rural level were often missed by an intervention that saw its role as strengthening a state policing apparatus not fostering alternative community-based policing, dispute resolution and peace-building initiatives.

At this point, it is worth drawing a comparison between the narrative projected to external audiences and that projected to internal audiences, as the theme of portraying the problems of Solomon Islands as criminality not conflict was a feature in both narratives. For example, in a speech to civil society representatives attending a workshop *Beyond Intervention*⁹, held in Honiara in June 2004, Warner (2004a) paid "tribute to the people of Solomon Islands and your clear sighted and steadfast commitment to seizing this opportunity to reclaim your nation from the thugs and thieves that held the country to ransom for three long years". Here again it was highlighted that criminality, not conflict, was the underlying causes of the problems facing Solomon Islands. This criminality framing emphasised greed over grievance. Specific

⁹ The *Beyond Intervention* workshop was arranged and facilitated by the East West Centre and aimed "to facilitate discussions, ideas, and strategies that will contribute to the ongoing efforts to build and sustain a stable, peaceful and developed Solomon Islands" (Kabutaulaka 2004a).

narrative strategies were adopted which encouraged a dichotomy between ‘goodies and baddies’. As Warner portrays it, the former were the “people of Solomon Islands”, the “man in the street”, the “woman in the village”, the “majority of Solomon Islanders, “teachers, nurses, public servants”. The latter were “thugs and thieves”, “militants”, “rogue police and criminal elements helping themselves to the nation’s wealth” (Warner 2004a). Framing the cause of the problems almost exclusively as criminality not conflict invited a specific set of solutions, legitimising a transnational policing approach. Thus, “the militants have been disarmed, the guns have been handed in, the police force has been purged” (Warner 2004a). The “successful return of law and order” was a basis to “restore the very functioning of the state”. Instead of “rogue police and criminal elements helping themselves to the nation’s wealth, it is actually being poured back into the government system” (Warner 2004a).

However, viewing the events in Solomon Islands through the lens of criminality ignores the factors that contributed to the conflict in Solomon Islands and environment of lawlessness which followed. In Matthew Allen’s (2013, pp. 178-88) detailed ethnographic study of the motivations of the young men involved in the 1998-2003 conflict, he highlights the importance of socioeconomic deprivation and local and imported cultural factors as influences on the behaviour of young men who engaged in violent or criminal behaviour. Labelling these young men as ‘thugs’, ‘thieves’ or ‘criminal elements’ invoked a level of moral judgement that precluded a more contextualised understanding of their behaviours. It also added nothing to our knowledge of the underlying issues that encouraged violent conflict and criminality in Solomon Islands.

The legitimacy work that justified RAMSI’s selection of transnational policing as the key strategy for assisting Solomon Islands was reflected in the early practices of the intervention. On 28 July 2003, four days after arriving in Honiara, Ben McDevitt was sworn in as a Deputy Police Commissioner within RSIPF. This gave him a dual role as both Commander of the Participating Police Force (PPF) and the second-most senior officer of RSIPF. In a joint press conference with Nick Warner, McDevitt indicated that addressing professional standards within RSIPF was likely to take the longest to fix. The task was complex and would, in McDevitt’s view, “take several years for the police force to be one of which Solomon Islands people can be proud of and one which people will have confidence in to be able to make a complaint and to have it investigated without fear or favor” (Warner & McDevitt 2003).

McDevitt (Warner & McDevitt 2003) highlighted that not all RSIPF were tainted by criminal activities and that a fair and impartial process would be taken to investigate officers who were alleged to have failed in maintaining professional standards. He was quick to highlight the dedication of some police officers, despite the weak state of the policing administration and budget situation, noting, “there are a number of very good police officers of the RSIP” and his amazement that some officers had continued to turn up to work despite not receiving their salaries. The importance of ensuring that police officers were paid and that the payroll was cleaned to removed “ghost employees” claiming a salary but not actually existing was used to support RAMSI’s comprehensive statebuilding approach. As McDevitt explained:

That’s one of the very reasons why this whole regional assistance package has gone beyond law enforcement and is doing things like cleansing the pay roll of ghost employees, some of which are police officers of course and some of which are across a range of other departments. So that is why we can guarantee that those officers who are actually turning up for work will be paid, they will be paid regularly, on time and with their full entitlements. I think that will have an immediate impact upon police officers in terms of turning out and doing a good job (Warner & McDevitt 2003).

The more immediate task for gaining control of policing was to firmly establish RAMSI’s monopoly on lethal force as a first step towards an end goal of restoring sovereignty and the monopoly of violence to the Solomon Islands state. McDevitt informed the press that Commissioner Morrell had issued a directive on Friday 25 July for “officers within the Honiara [area] who had unauthorised [weapons] at their homes to hand those firearms by 10 pm on Monday 28 July”. He went on to state that “any officer found with an unauthorised firearm at their house or elsewhere in their possession, they will be sacked from the police force and criminally charged”. This was key legitimacy work. Morrell’s directive worked to establish RAMSI’s role as the sole legitimate authority with the right to use coercive force in Solomon Islands. At the same time, the disarmament of RSIPF implied that it was a force that could no longer be trusted with weapons.

An important confidence measure was to ensure a visible police presence could be seen on the streets of Honiara. Specific practices were introduced to communicate RAMSI’s authority to the general population. Daytime and evening foot patrols by joint PPF and RSIPF officers were aimed at restoring public confidence in the police and targeting petty crimes including drunkenness, closing down illegal markets, and ensuring traffic regulations were obeyed. At

a symbolic level the joint patrols highlighted the cooperative spirit of the intervention. A photograph taken in the first few days of RAMSI is included below (Fig 5.2).



Figure 5.2. Royal Solomon Islands Police and Participating Police Force members conduct a joint foot patrol at Point Cruz in Honiara soon after RAMSI's arrival(© Brian Hartigan, Australian Federal Police, used with permission).

At a superficial level this photograph shows six police officers walking on a concrete wharf beside the *MV Isabella* with the ocean and several civilians in the background. Their demeanour appears relaxed but watchful. A closer look reveals elements to the image that hint at why it became to be a popular representation of RAMSI's policing and police-building. While all police have dark trousers and light blue shirts, slight differences in uniforms suggest different police services present. The central figure in the photo is the only Australian officer, as indicated by his shoulder patch with an Australian coat of arms. This Australian officer is half a step forward of the group and is the only officer holding a two-way radio; it seems as if he is leading the group. The remaining five officers appear to be Solomon Islanders, wearing berets or caps with the insignia of the RSIPF visible. The image provides a subtle but powerful contribution to the official RAMSI narrative of law and order restored, under the relaxed but professional leadership of an Australian-led transnational policing initiative.

This and similar images were widely used in publications documenting RAMSI's success including a report and photo exhibition 'Partnering for Peace' launched at the United Nations Head Quarters in New York in June 2012 (Australian Government 2012). This particular photo has continued to circulate and was recently used among other things, to represent the role of Australian police in promoting security in the region in a blog by the Commissioner of AFP on the contribution of "police-led diplomacy" to the development of the 2017 Australian Foreign Affairs White Paper (Colvin 2017; Hartigan 2017).

Summing up, an understanding of the problems of Solomon Islands in terms of criminality not conflict led to a strong, almost obsessive, focus on state-centric police institutional strengthening RAMSI's core statebuilding strategy.

Theme 4: Prioritising statebuilding over peace-building

As noted previously, ultimately the legitimacy of RAMSI depended on the intervention bringing about the conditions for the return of legitimacy to the Solomon Islands state and its key institutions. To this end RAMSI's narrative and practices reflected a focus on statebuilding involving institutional strengthening of RSIPF and other key government agencies rather than broader based peace-building across the whole of society. This was articulated most clearly by James Batley, RAMSI's second Special Coordinator in a speech to a Peace, Justice and Reconciliation conference held in Brisbane in March 2005. Batley outlined RAMSI's role in relation to both statebuilding and the overall peace process in Solomon Islands, stating that: "At its core, RAMSI is a statebuilding exercise". Batley went on to further define RAMSI's role in relation to the peace-building agenda noting that:

there are areas where we think it is critical that Solomon Islanders themselves take the lead, and are seen to take the lead. And these areas are precisely the ones that touch on fundamental issues of national concern: relations between the centre and the provinces, and relations between provinces themselves, issues of land use, issues of reconciliation and compensation (Batley 2005).

These were issues which were "at the heart of the nation's peace building agenda" (Batley 2005). As some critiques of RAMSI have noted, these also were the more difficult and challenging areas to implement effective changes (Barbara 2008). Batley (2005) suggested that "RAMSI has succeeded in creating an environment in which this national discussion can occur" and asserted that RAMSI was also "facilitating the peace-building agenda in a number of direct ways through support for and cooperation with bodies such as the National Peace

Council (NPC)” and other civic organisations (Batley 2005). But such claims overstated RAMSI’s support for peacebuilding. Soon after Batley’s speech the Australian-funded NPC was abruptly disbanded with little appreciation of the subtle but valuable role its activities had contributed to supporting dispute resolution and the restoration of the legitimacy of community elders through several of its programs (Braithwaite et al. 2010). As Wielders (2008, p. 143) notes: “Instead of a continuation of the broad peace process, and a focus on the root causes of the tensions, RAMSI has brought a focus on law and order, and the strengthening of institutions”. The work of NPC had indeed involved extensive and close cooperation with RAMSI and had been a significant factor in early successes, such as the collection of weapons, but this went largely uncredited and came at the cost of NPC’s ability to continue to facilitate a broader national dialogue (Braithwaite et al. 2010).

This local peace-building and nation building dialogue was partly silenced, or at least overshadowed, by the RAMSI intervention. For example, just a month prior to RAMSI’s arrival NPC facilitated a highly successful National Unity Summit (National Peace Council 2003). The summit was attended by provincial government, provincial police, village elders and chiefs, grass roots and civil society leaders, youth and school children. The event aimed to reinvigorate the national conversation and renew focus on peace-building and fostering a stronger sense of national unity across Solomon Islands. This broad grass-roots dialogue was unprecedented in Solomon Islands and if built upon had the potential to allow a more sophisticated locally-led national conversation to develop on how to take the peace process forward and develop a greater sense of national unity (Braithwaite et al. 2010). However, the arrival of RAMSI three weeks later entirely eclipsed local initiatives and the national unity and peacebuilding agenda.

RAMSI actually elevated the status of NPC during the first year of the intervention. NPC’s Chairperson, Paul Tovua, was seen as an ideal partner who combined the gravitas of an elder statesman with a sophisticated understanding of the peace process. NPC monitors were well placed to communicate with rural communities and ex-militants. But this came at the expense of NPC being allowed space to prioritise its longer term and deeper peace-building strategy of fostering national unity and reconciliation from the grass-roots up. In focusing so heavily on Tovua rather than also the voices and faces of other NPC councillors, civil society leaders and government, RAMSI unintentionally provoked jealousies and hostilities that were

probably a factor in NPC's demise.¹⁰ In 2006, SIG, under the leadership of Manasseh Sogavare and with the cooperation of AusAID, disbanded the NPC and the extensive network of monitors it had established through some of the most conflict prone communities in Solomon Islands. While NPC was thrust into the limelight, national government figures were kept at a distance by RAMSI, at least in the initial phase of operations. This did little to strengthen the perceived legitimacy of SIG, who, lacking RAMSI's extensive logistical resources, remained invisible in the eyes of the people.

Transnational policing and police-building was adopted as the pre-eminent strategy for statebuilding in Solomon Islands. In identifying law and order as the primary problems besetting Solomon Islands, RAMSI established a clear rationale for the police-led approach to the intervention. It also affirmed the primacy in RAMSI's view of state-led policing in Solomon Islands. As the situation stabilised, and following improvements in relations with SIG in 2008 following two years of diplomatic wrangling, RAMSI began to look to the future. Around this time there was a clear shift in RAMSI's external narrative to emphasise the increasing capabilities of RSIPF to exercise coercive force. They were not yet rearmed but by 2013, Special Coordinator Coppel was able to state in the widely read Australian *DevPolicy Blog* that:

RAMSI's military component will leave Solomon Islands in July/August 2013 sending a clear signal that Solomon Islands no longer needs an extraordinary intervention involving a foreign military force. They are leaving because their job is done (the last time the military were formally called upon to assist the police restore public order was in 2006). Today, the security challenges facing Solomon Islands, such as the risk of public disorder and family violence, are handled by the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force. The RSIPF are fully in charge of everyday policing. (Coppel 2013).

Coppel's perspective underscores the central role that formal state policing had in RAMSI's vision of a restored, secure and stable state. This was a vision of a state where stability was ensured by the presence of an effective state police force able to exercise a monopoly of legitimate violence. Fostering dialogue and creating the conditions to contribute to a sustainable peace did not feature heavily in RAMSI external narrative.

¹⁰ See Braithwaite et al. 2010 *Pillars and Shadows* (p. 41-45) for a more detailed account of how a key local peace-building organisation was dismantled to satisfy political and bureaucratic expediency in Honiara and Canberra.

Theme 5: Presenting RAMSI as a success

Arguably the most striking theme in RAMSI's official narrative is this final theme: the emphasis on telling the story of RAMSI's success. Early rhetoric from the first media conferences and speeches throughout the first year focused on quantifiable measures of activity. Like a new American presidency, RAMSI outlined its achievements in its first 100 days. Warner detailed how "RAMSI police have now established police posts in all nine provinces, allowing people to report crimes without fear, and creating an environment where reconciliation between communities can take place" (Warner 2003a). In partnership between RAMSI, Solomon Islands Government and the NPC "more than 3,700 guns, including more than 660 military-style weapons" had been collected and destroyed. "RAMSI police and the RSIP have arrested more than 350 people and laid about 600 charges for some very serious offences" (Warner 2003a).

In his speech to PIF members in Nadi, in 2004 Warner provided a long list of RAMSI's achievements.

RAMSI's highest priority was the re-establishment of law and order in Honiara. I am happy to say that we were able to achieve this very quickly. A nationwide three-week gun amnesty resulted in the collection of more than 3,700 guns, including 700 high- powered, military-style weapons. These weapons have been destroyed, and people are now confident to go about their normal business in Guadalcanal and Malaita, where guns had caused so many problems (Warner 2004c).

Other achievements Warner noted included the arrest and ongoing trial of renegade militant leader of the IFM, Harold Keke, the arrest of "over 50 former militants", the clean-up of the RSIPF including the arrest of 65 RSIPF members and the sacking of over 400 police; and the removal of weapons and disbanding of the paramilitary Police Field Force. Warner highlighted work done to improve police disciplinary procedures, recruitment and administrative systems. He also acknowledged work in other wings of government. This included the deployment of a team of advisers to stabilise the budget, improve revenue collection, control expenditure, ensure public servants were paid and improve delivery of critical services. Substantial improvement to the justice and prison systems were also detailed. Warner went on to outline why RAMSI had been so successful:

RAMSI has been a success because it was the right plan at the right time and we had the right team with the right approach with the right level of political backing, both from Solomon Islands and the countries of the Pacific (Warner 2003a).

Warner's emphasis of RAMSI's successes was echoed by subsequent Special Coordinators and numerous other officials or politicians asked to speak in relation to RAMSI. For example, James Batley, who took over the role of Special Coordinator after Warner, observed in 2005 that "[s]ince its arrival in Solomon Islands in July 2003, RAMSI has had considerable success in stabilising the situation, in cooperation and partnership with the government and the people of that country" (Batley 2005). The fourth Special Coordinator, Graeme Wilson declared in a speech in Kiribati in 2009 that "RAMSI has been the biggest regional success story under the Biketawa Declaration" (Wilson 2009). In the foreword of a 2014 publication launched by RAMSI to celebrate its first ten years, fifth Special Coordinator Nicholas Coppel wrote that: "By universal acclaim, the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands – RAMSI – has been a success". RAMSI's seventh and final Special Coordinator, Quinton Devlin (2017), observed in his final address that the mission had "been an unprecedented and highly successful exercise in regional cooperation, restoring law and order, and resetting national institutions". The retelling of the story of RAMSI's success is the most consistent theme in the official RAMSI narrative.

The declarations of success were not confined to RAMSI Special Coordinators. Speaking in Honiara in 2011, Richard Marles, Australian Parliamentary Secretary for "Pacific Island Affairs", in Julia Gillard's Labor government described RAMSI as an "unambiguous success. It is a success for the region and the global community. People see what's occurred with RAMSI as representing world's best practice in terms of intervention in a country with the support of the country's government and the country's people" (Marles 2011). Writing in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, at the conclusion of the intervention in 2017, former Australian Prime Minister John Howard rehearsed the script of a Solomon Islands "ravaged by lawlessness, violence and rampant criminality" before praising the success of RAMSI, noting that he regarded Australia's involvement in the mission as "one of Australia's and my governments, finest foreign policy achievements" (Howard 2017).

Of course, there are differences in the content and purpose of the many speeches given by RAMSI officials. RAMSI speeches and the narrative they projected were tailored for specific legitimacy audiences, such as other international donors, the Australian policy community, or

regional actors, or for Solomon Islanders. Variations also occurred as the intervention evolved to take account of changes in the operating context and stage of the mission. However, despite these nuances in messaging the shape of an overall narrative is evident. It appears that it was almost unthinkable to talk about RAMSI in any terms other than those which highlighted and focused on its successes. While this is not surprising, it is problematic, for reasons which will be outlined in Chapter 7.

In the days that followed RAMSI's arrival, the presentation of RAMSI's early successes to the media became a daily ritual. Press conferences held at Iron Bottom Sound, a former tourist resort in Honiara, updated journalists on progress. RAMSI officials were aware that international media interest would soon wane, and that early and visible successes were needed to win the confidence of the Solomon Islands public, the Australian public, and senior government officials and their political masters. For the senior officials charged with implementing RAMSI, careers might also be made or broken. Even junior officials assigned to the mission or working in related roles, like myself, had every incentive to exaggerate their contributions as successful. The next rung on the promotions ladder could, after all, only be achieved by a 'demonstrated ability to achieve results', a common selection-criteria for public service posts. There was also an imperative to justify the very high expenditure on the mission. Almost all stake-holders involved in implementing RAMSI, therefore, had a potential interest in highlighting, and at times overstating, RAMSI's successes. This provides good reason to examine these claims more critically.

Attempts to objectively evaluate RAMSI's success lagged behind implementation but provide a more nuanced perspective than the narrative projected by RAMSI itself. A Performance Framework was developed during 2005-2006 to measure country-level and program level objectives and outcomes. A key tool in assessing RAMSI performance was a county-wide 'People's Survey' which used a voluntary questionnaire-based survey to assess the perspectives of a representative sample of the Solomon Islands population. The People's Survey was piloted in 2006 and then repeated in most years until 2013 (ANU Enterprise 2013). Findings from the survey were used to report to Solomon Islands Government, the Pacific Islands Forum and RAMSI itself. The survey also provided a major source of data for RAMSI Annual Performance Reports between 2006 and 2013. The People's Survey was used extensively as evidence of the high levels of public support for RAMSI and to thus argue for its legitimacy. However, as Whalan (2013) notes, public support is not a sufficient proxy for

legitimacy. During the period of tense relations from 2006-2008, RAMSI officials used the People's Survey results to counter criticism by some local elites. This effectively pitted one local legitimacy audience against another. Regardless of whether the general public approved of RAMSI or not, the intervention required support of political elites to have any hope of achieving the end goal of transferring legitimacy back to Solomon Islands state institutions.

A United States-based consultancy firm, CAMRIS International, was engaged to assess RAMSI's performance against a performance framework and to produce the RAMSI Annual Performance Report for 2005/2006 (Olsen et al. 2006). This report noted that "the Solomon Islands Government/RAMSI partnership is making significant progress" across five broad areas: 1) security, peace and order; 2) public accountability; 3) public sector capability and capacity; 4) fiscal and financial management; and 5) growth across Solomon Islands. It highlighted significant improvements in security, public perceptions of improved law and order, and the stabilisation of government finances including significant increases in Government domestic revenue from "SBD258 million in 2002 to SBD625.9 million in 2005 and an estimated SBD688.1 million in 2006" (Olsen et al. 2006, pp. 2-6). However, the report highlighted considerable challenges including the fragility of gains to date, challenges of capacity building, difficulties in aligning with government objectives, and that despite considerable growth, many Solomon Islanders were excluded from economic gains. Overall, this report was considerably more measured in the claims of success than other texts and noted numerous challenges facing RAMSI in achieving the objectives it had set out for itself.

RAMSI's second Annual Performance Report for the years 2006/2007, was carried out by Australian consultants. It was somewhat more upbeat in tone and noted in the opening sentence of the report that "gains are being maintained and progress is being made across all the areas of its mandate" (Winter & Schofield 2007). RAMSI's third Annual Performance Report 2007/08 was more circumspect (Winter, Schofield & Duituturaga 2008). This reflected heated political tensions between Solomon Islands Government and RAMSI contributing countries which meant that questions related to RAMSI's role and legality dominated the dialogue. For the first time a Pacific Islander, a consultant from Fiji, joined the evaluation team. While on the basis of the 2008 People Survey that "support among Solomon Islanders for RAMSI's presence in the country remains high at around 90%" it noted that "Solomon Islanders are less likely than in 2007 to say their household financial situation is better than two years ago, or that it will be better in two years' time" (Winter et al. 2008, p. 23).

As RAMSI drew to a close, with the withdrawal of the police-led component at the end of June 2017 efforts were made to immortalise RAMSI's narrative of success. A week of celebrations and festivities were "organised by the Solomon Islands Government, with the assistance of Australia" (Davey 2017, p.), to note the occasion in Solomon Islands. RAMSI's own website provides an overview and links to key artefacts that preserve RAMSI's legacy. The website describes RAMSI as "an unprecedented regional experiment: one of the largest, longest and most ambitious multilateral security and statebuilding initiative ever mounted in the Pacific region" (RAMSI 2015). A dedicated webpage share links to resources documenting, reflecting and celebrating RAMSI's success. To further ensure that the historical record would remember RAMSI as a success, the mission "donated official publications and nearly 14 years of daily newspapers to the National Archives of Solomon Islands" and "added a wing and permanent exhibition to the National Museum of Solomon Islands" to permanently house the travelling photo exhibition originally commissioned to celebrate RAMSI's first ten years (RAMSI 2015). As RAMSI's webpage explains, it was hoped that this assemblage of materials would "capture RAMSI's partnership with Solomon Islands, and the views and voices of Solomon Islanders, RAMSI staff and regional leaders during this crucial period in Solomon Islands' history" (RAMSI 2017). While the historical record is enriched by the extensive documentation left behind by RAMSI, it is clearly a history carefully constructed to spin the story in a certain way.

5.4. Conclusion

In this chapter I have examined how RAMSI constructed legitimacy through its external narrative. This external narrative privileged the interests, values and norms of certain groups, including Australian officials and Solomon Islands elites¹¹, while delegitimising the interests and values of other actors relying on different sources of legitimacy to stake alternative claims to authority in Solomon Islands. By focusing attention on the structures of the state and on preferencing institutional models of policing imported from Western states. RAMSI drew heavily on Australian and New Zealand police organisation and practices. While there were important variations in the style of policing practiced by different forces within the PPF, an overall bias was toward policing approaches that were both state-centric and urban focused.

¹¹ It is worth noting that the interests of the Australian officials and Solomon Island elites were at times in conflict (2006-2007) and these instances required direct appeals to the Solomon Islands public

At the same time RAMSI's strategic narrative sometimes inadvertently acted to delegitimise the authority of non-state actors such as chiefs, churches, communities, and other non-state actors in a country where non-state actors have a prominent role in the provision of public goods, including policing, security and dispute resolution. This too, whether deliberate or unintended, represented 'legitimacy work'. Initially, efforts to construct a narrative legitimising RAMSI to external audiences required an emphasis on the failure of Solomon Islands and the lack of legitimacy of RSIPF. Later, however, extensive efforts were made to emphasise the growing capacity of RSIPF and this was projected through RAMSI's external narrative to demonstrate the intervention's success.

The narratives that comprise the official discourse of RAMSI come together around several key themes. One of the most important points of orientation of the dominant narrative is the discursive framing of Solomon Islands as a fragile, failing or failed state. The failing state theme legitimated RAMSI in the first instance, and second, it justified the character of RAMSI's long-term task, namely statebuilding. The second major theme evident in this dominant narrative, and one which was taken as symptomatic of the failure of the state, was the claim that the RSIPF had failed as a state institution. There is considerable evidence to support the validity of these claims. Each of these claims served to justify the need for and scope of RAMSI. The failure or potential failure of the Solomon Islands state provided a rationale for the intervention. The failure of RSIPF to stand up to and contain the threats posed by serious conflict and endemic criminality justified RAMSI's broad and ambitious scope and the lead role identified for transnational policing.

Finally, the key purpose of RAMSI's narrative was telling the 'big story' of RAMSI's success. RAMSI viewed its external audience as global in scope. Australia was keen to have its efforts noted by international stakeholders and staged multiple international photo exhibitions, produced a volume of reports and glossy publications, much of which remains available through the RAMSI website. While these efforts contributed to the success and popularity of the mission, they were conducted with a particular mindset which had important consequences. Unsurprisingly, the Australian intervention in Solomon Islands reflected assumptions derived from a state-centric approach to promoting security, peace, economic prosperity, and justice. This perspective reflects dominant assumptions in international relations, diplomacy and political discourse in Australia. These include that states are the main type of territorially bounded form of political and economic organisation (Greener 2011, p.30)

and that state-based professional police forces are necessarily the preeminent means of maintaining law and order. While these assumptions do not hold fast in the majority of communities in Solomon Islands this critical point was incidental to the purpose of RAMSI's external narrative. Ultimately, the point of RAMSI's external narrative was not to communicate a Solomon Islands perspective or even tell a story about Solomon Islands. Ultimately, this was a story about Australia, reaffirming and constructing the legitimacy of Australia's own institutions and its role as the region's leading metropolitan power. As one recent contribution to the literature on strategic narratives notes insightfully 'every nation needs a vision of itself and its role in the world' (Hanska 2015, p. 324). For Australia, RAMSI played an important part in constructing its vision of itself as a regional power in the South Pacific.

Chapter 6: Internal Legitimacy in Solomon Islands

Prelude: 'A message to the Solomon Islands people'

Just half an hour after speaking to the media at Henderson Airport after RAMSI's arrival on 24 July 2003 (see previous chapter), RAMSI Special Coordinator, Nick Warner, faced the cameras again. This time, Warner stood outside the Office of Prime Minister and Cabinet in Honiara, accompanied by Solomon Islands Prime Minister Sir Allan Kemekeza. Kemekeza welcomed Warner and the RAMSI contingent warmly, before outlining their role:

The men and women of Operation Helpem Fren will assist us to return law and order, to recover our economy and restore the lasting peace. The events that brought us to this place are not something we are proud of but we have recognised that the situation is beyond our control and that we needed to ask for help and guidance from our friends and neighbours. Now you have answered our call. To the Governments and people of Australia, New Zealand, Tonga, Fiji and Papua New Guinea, I say thank you on behalf of all Solomon Islanders, we will always be grateful. (Kemekeza & Warner 2003).

Warner then delivered a prepared speech. This touched on points already mentioned in his earlier statement to international reporters at the airport (see Chapter 5) but this time was clearly targeted at local audiences, as reflected in the title: 'A message to the Solomon Islands people'. Warner outlined why RAMSI was necessary before indicating the intervention's approach and priorities:

[F]or too long this country has suffered at the hands of a small number of militants and criminals who have terrorised Solomon Islands society, brought the country to its knees, and done a disservice to the reputation of Solomon Islanders as a good and generous people.

The men and women from around the Pacific who arrived on your shores today as part of the Regional Assistance Mission come at the invitation of the Solomon Islands government, and as guests of the Solomon Islands people.

[W]e are calling our involvement here Operation *Helpem Fren*, because that is what we are here to do. We are here as friends, to work in partnership with you, to restore promise to your country, to restore hopes for a better life to you and your children.

Our immediate purpose is to restore law and order in Solomon Islands. Our police will be working hand-in-hand with the Solomon Islands police to provide safety and security to the streets and villages and to get guns out of communities. Only then will conditions be right for the revival of the Solomon Islands economy.

The men and women in military uniform who you saw arriving today, and the ship that you see in the harbour, are here to provide support to these police efforts. But, should criminals seek to sabotage our assistance, endanger public safety, or prevent the police from doing their duty, the military will not hesitate to act.

The partnership that we begin today with Solomon Islands is a long-term commitment. The problems confronting Solomon Islands will not be fixed overnight. While law and order is being restored, we will work with you to bring stability to the budget, to rebuild the machinery of government, and to restore the delivery of essential government services to people. The conditions for economic growth and improved living standards will be put in place. (Kemekeza & Warner 2003, p. 6)

6.1. Constructing RAMSI's Internal Narrative

How did RAMSI construct legitimacy for itself and for the institutions of the Solomon Islands state with regards to internal audiences? The broad contours of RAMSI's external narrative, as I discussed in Chapter 5, went relatively unchallenged by external audiences. But what reception would RAMSI receive within Solomon Islands? Would the intervention have strong public support? Would Solomon Islanders see the intervention as legitimate and comply with its requests or would there be determined resistance? Would Solomon Islands police (RSIPF) be willing to "work hand-in-hand" with RAMSI police "to provide safety and security to the streets and villages", as Warner proposed? It soon became clear that there was strong support from the general public for the mission. Despite this public support, RAMSI invested considerable effort in 'legitimacy work', which I argue was a key function of RAMSI's *internal* narrative. This narrative sought to explain and justify RAMSI's presence and authority to Solomon Islanders. Initially, the focus was on consolidating the already high public support and establishing the legitimacy of RAMSI in the eyes of the local population. Later, as the mission matured, the focus shifted to transferring and conferring legitimacy on

Solomon Islands Government (SIG) institutions, such as RSIPF. This process was not linear. Rather it was a dynamic and contested process whereby RAMSI's legitimacy was at times challenged, restored, and sustained, while the importance of building legitimacy of RSIPF and SIG institutions was at times ignored, deliberately undermined, before becoming prioritised, and finally celebrated.

In this chapter, I trace how legitimacy was constructed by RAMSI through the 'legitimacy work' performed by RAMSI's internal narrative. I show how at times the legitimacy of RAMSI was challenged by events and changing political dynamics. Analysing points of tension in RAMSI's internal narrative through the lens of legitimacy provides an opportunity to deepen our understanding of how interventions like RAMSI do 'legitimacy work' on behalf of themselves and the state institutions they seek to rebuild. I show that ultimately RAMSI's success depended on more than simply maintaining perceptions of the popular legitimacy of the intervention itself. It also depended on achieving broad acceptance of RAMSI's ambitious reform agenda from diverse internal audiences including elites. Later, when RAMSI was seeking to withdraw, RAMSI's success depended on persuading Solomon Islanders that the legitimacy of their own institutions, including the RSIPF, had been restored.

This examination of RAMSI's internal narrative is important because, just as RAMSI's external narrative was the vehicle through which RAMSI built legitimacy vis-à-vis external audiences (outlined in Chapter 5), RAMSI's internal narrative was crucial to the process of claiming legitimacy for the intervention and its policing models and methods. Later it was this internal narrative that was used by RAMSI to confer legitimacy on RSIPF and other SIG institutions ahead of RAMSI's exit in June 2017. While, as discussed in Chapter 2, scholars and policy makers have begun to acknowledge the complex and contradictory nature of legitimacy in post-conflict intervention contexts, it remains unclear *how* legitimacy happens, or how different understandings of legitimacy held by different actors, influence attitudes, expectations and outcomes in relations to policing (Gippert 2016, p. 523; Von Billerbeck & Gippert 2017). It has also been acknowledged by some scholars that there is limited research which contrasts the external and internal (strategic) narratives within a specific intervention (Coleman 2017). Given the prominence of the loss of legitimacy of state institutions within some accounts of 'state failure' (Rotberg 2003, 2010), it is puzzling that much recent work examining legitimacy has focused on the legitimacy of intervention rather than examining the full picture of "how political power is managed up to the handover to local control"

(Chesterman 2007, p. 6). If legitimacy is an important constituent of political power than it is important to better understand how legitimacy is transferred to local authorities.

I examine how legitimacy was constructed by RAMSI by analysing four key themes that feature prominently in RAMSI's internal narrative. I identify these from Warner's opening 'Message to the Solomon Islands' people above. They are selected as they facilitate exploration of the RAMSI's legitimacy work through its internal narrative across different phases of the mission. Like the external narrative I examined in Chapter 5, RAMSI's internal narrative is presented through key texts including speeches, reports and images. RAMSI's public website is a central repository for many of these texts and is available to both external and internal audiences and usually a primary audience can be identified (most clearly in the example that opens this chapter). However, it was not a simple case of translating the external narrative for a local audience, but a dynamic and dialogic process whereby RAMSI's legitimacy was variously accepted, contested, re-established and transferred over the course of the 14 years. RAMSI's internal narrative also required constant management and adjustment due to the intervention's unusual legal basis as a form of 'cooperative intervention'.¹² The provision for SIG to withdraw 'cooperation' or consent meant the legitimacy of RAMSI could not be taken for granted.

Specifically, by examining the internal RAMSI strategic narrative, with a 'legitimacy lens', alongside the external RAMSI narrative discussed in Chapter 5, I highlight the practical means by which legitimacy is constructed and maintained by RAMSI as an example of a transnational policing and statebuilding mission, and subsequently transferred to or conferred on local institutions. This process, and the challenges it posed, offers important lessons for ongoing processes of statebuilding and security sector reform elsewhere.

The rest of this chapter is organised as follows. In Section 6.2, I identify the main components of RAMSI's internal audience before using the notion of 'legitimacy work' to examine the specific role of RAMSI strategic narratives in building, maintaining and transferring legitimacy of policing practices. In Section 6.3, I examine four prominent themes within RAMSI's internal strategic narrative. These have been selected as illustrative examples to

¹² As detailed in the previous chapter, 'cooperative intervention' was a term introduced by Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer to emphasise that RAMSI was a response to a request for assistance by the Solomon Islands Government. By highlighting the cooperative nature of the intervention Downer cast doubt on 'if it is intervention at all' (Downer 2003b).

show how legitimacy work was performed through RAMSI's internal narrative and how the focus of this worked shifted over time. In Section 6.4, I consider the 'silences' and 'invisibilities' that are evident when we look beyond the dominant frame established by RAMSI's narrative. This identifies several questions to explore more thoroughly in Chapter 7 related to alternative conceptions of policing and legitimacy which offer the prospect of a more appropriate and multi-layered model of policing for Solomon Islands.

Finally, in Section 6.5, I conclude by arguing that in the context of RAMSI's internal narrative, RAMSI legitimacy work can be critically analysed in terms of three purposes: constructing legitimacy for the intervention; maintaining legitimacy of the intervention; and transferring and conferring legitimacy on Solomon Island's institutions, with a particular emphasis on RSIPF, as the mission transitions towards drawdown and exit. The findings in this chapter contribute new insights to the largely separate debates on strategic narratives and on legitimacy in peace operations. This is important because while scholars agree that legitimacy in peace-building, statebuilding or transnational policing interventions matters, the mechanisms through which legitimacy is produced are not well understood. This is an area that has not, to date, been extensively examined in the context of transnational policing, statebuilding or peacebuilding interventions.

6.2. Internal Audiences and Legitimacy Work

Before I consider the legitimacy work of RAMSI's strategic narrative as projected to internal audiences, the term 'internal audiences' needs some clarification. The distinction between 'internal' and 'external' audiences introduced in Chapter 5 is useful but poses some questions. Do international media reporting from Honiara constitute part of RAMSI's internal audience or an element of the external? And what of RAMSI personnel themselves? For the purposes of this thesis, my use of the term 'internal audience' refers to those who have interests that primarily reside within Solomon Islands. Even with this qualification, RAMSI's internal legitimacy audience was highly fragmented by factors including geography, gender, age, educational attainment, wealth and political and economic interests. A significant cleavage relates to the large majority (85%) of Solomon Islanders living in rural villages or compared to just 15% living in urban and peri-urban areas of Honiara and small provincial towns (Worldometers 2019).¹³ This rural-urban divide has significant implications for access to

¹³ These figures relate to 2003 when RAMSI arrived.

services including state-based policing, the justice system, education and information. Levels of each are substantially lower in rural areas.

A small but significant subset of RAMSI's internal legitimacy audience included the constellation of Solomon Islands 'elites', involved in politics, business, or government and, for the most part, resident in Honiara. Some elites had been directly involved in the Solomon Islands conflict, as militants, their spokespersons or supporters, while others were active as members of civil society, through organisations like the National Peace Council (NPC) or Solomon Islands Christian Association (SICA). The local business community, including a small but influential Chinese community, other expatriates, and the diplomatic community, also had a local interest in RAMSI's practices and policies. The personnel of RSIPF were another key audience. Given the diversity of these audiences and their interests, it is unsurprising that at times RAMSI's leadership, was challenged by the task of persuading these disparate groups of actors, each with unique and often competing interests, to comply and cooperate with its goals. While overall public support for RAMSI's presence was consistently high (Devlin 2017), at times RAMSI's legitimacy, legal authority and reform agenda was challenged by a small subsection of RAMSI's political class. This was particularly the case during the 2006-07 period, which was discussed in Chapter 1, and which I analyse further below.

In contexts of post-conflict and post-colonial statebuilding or state formation, legitimacy dynamics are complicated. Rather than legitimacy relationships existing principally between the state and its citizens, multiple actors are involved in making legitimacy claims derived from various sources to various audiences. Thus, as Kabutaulaka (2006b) notes, intervention settings, such as RAMSI, can resemble a 'crowded stage' with various actors and ideas¹⁴ jostling for legitimacy, power and audience attention. Not all actors (or ideas) can be successful. Local actors and discourses likely to be displaced or even silenced by external actors owing to the latter's control over resources, ability to set agendas, and project a specific strategic narrative(s) that privilege external knowledge and norms over indigenous knowledge and norms. RAMSI's almost exclusive focus on models of policing and justice provision centred around Honiara, rather than supporting non-state informal policing and justice

¹⁴ Tarcicius Tara Kabutaulaka notes that 'the term 'crowdedness', as used here, refers not only to physical crowdedness, but to intellectual crowdedness as well' (Kabutaulaka 2006b, p. 414)

provision is a case in point. It relies on an assumption that state institutions for policing and justice have greater legitimacy than non-state institutions (Dinnen & Allen 2016).

However, the assumption that the state is ultimately the most legitimate form of authority and provider of policing and justice services is contested in settings such as Solomon Islands. In Solomon Islands, as discussed in Chapters 1 and 4, the delivery of services since independence has as likely been provided by a church, international development project, or local ‘big man’, or politician through funds, either acquired legally, such as through Constituency Development Funds, or corruptly redistributed from the state through client-patronage networks (Batley 2015; Wood 2018). In some areas, perceptions of the state continue to reflect its origins as an alien and colonial institution (Akin 1999; 2013). In other areas, the marked withdrawal of the state, particularly since the abolition of the lowest level of formal government, Area Councils has resulted in rural communities relying on other non-state actors, such as Church leaders and chiefs, for resolution of conflict and disputes and to administer justice (Dinnen & Allen 2016, p. 83). These non-state alternative providers of justice rely on entirely different forms of legitimacy.

RAMSI’s internal strategic narrative had important ‘legitimacy work’ to do for the duration of the intervention, which as noted above, can be analysed in terms of constructing legitimacy of the intervention; maintaining legitimacy of the intervention; and conferring or building legitimacy of Solomon Islands RSIPF. From one perspective, construction of internal legitimacy for a ‘cooperative intervention’ that had been invited by a sovereign government and was welcomed by the majority of the population was relatively easy, and arguably, almost unnecessary. In stark contrast to international military-led interventions commencing in Iraq (2003) and Afghanistan (2001), it was clear from the outset that RAMSI was *already* viewed as legitimate by broad sections of Solomon Islands society. In addition to the formal request made by government, civil society groups and other stake-holders had been calling for a comprehensive Australian intervention and support to policing since at least 2000 (ABC 2013).

However, there were several reasons why ‘legitimacy work’ was required to build support for the intervention itself. First, while RAMSI planners hoped for a positive reception, the possibility that violent resistance from militants or criminals might be faced, could not be entirely discounted. Second, high-level agreement with state elites had resulted in RAMSI

being formally invited as evidenced in the *Facilitation of International Assistance Act* (2003) passed by Solomon Islands Parliament and a treaty signed between SIG and RAMSI member nations. However, it was unclear how widely an understanding of this strong legal basis had been shared within the general community. Third, while RAMSI had the capacity to use overwhelming force to achieve many of its objectives, this would have been costly and diplomatically disastrous. Ensuring strong legitimacy with internal audiences increased the probability that most local actors would comply voluntarily with RAMSI's demands, thereby, increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the intervention (Whalan 2013). Finally, the long duration of the mission, considerable flux in the relationship with SIG, and changing directions and priorities over this period meant that RAMSI's legitimacy could never be taken for granted. The need for 'legitimacy work' and adaptability was ongoing.

Warner's speech, commencing this chapter, provides an example of this initial form of 'legitimacy work' conducted through RAMSI's internal narrative. The orchestration of the joint media conference with Prime Minister Kemekeza, was clearly intended to confer the intervention immediate legitimacy. Despite its status as a 'cooperative intervention', RAMSI represented a major external intervention of police, military and civilians from neighbouring countries into the affairs of a sovereign state. The clear welcome by Prime Minister Kemekeza outside the Office of Prime Minister and Cabinet demonstrated that the intervention had the full support from Solomon Island's most senior politician and his government. But what of RAMSI's broader legitimacy in the eyes of the local population?

As a police-led intervention (albeit one which was, at least in its initial phases, firmly backed with military force and support), RAMSI's planning had involved considerable discussion on how the intervention might 'win hearts and minds' and 'communicate resolve' in Solomon Islands (Frewen 2005; McDevitt 2006). From a policing perspective, there were important topics and concepts related to restoring law and order, which required careful explanation and outreach to the population. From a statebuilding and development perspective, RAMSI invested considerable effort explaining their agenda for the reform of key state institutions and for restoring economic stability. As a regional and cooperative intervention, there was also key messaging around the importance of RAMSI's broad Pacific membership, and its close partnership with the SIG and other local actors. While the 'regional' aspect of RAMSI was often dominated by Australian interests, the Pacific Islands Forum played an increasingly important role in brokering the sometimes-tense relationship between Australia and Solomon

Islands. This role increased after 2007 once both Howard and Sogavare governments were replaced. It also provided a useful source of independent and constructive critique of the intervention (for example PIF 2005). As the intervention evolved both the content and approach to communicating with Solomon Islanders about RAMSI changed considerably. Nevertheless, the overall purpose of such communications, ‘telling the story of RAMSI to Solomon Islanders that RAMSI wanted to be told’ remained similar.

Legitimacy work was also required to maintain legitimacy for the intervention. Despite evidently having high levels of local legitimacy when it arrived, within three years, RAMSI faced a legitimacy crisis which threatened the intervention’s continued existence. Contestation and resistance to RAMSI’s broader institutional reform and liberal peacebuilding agenda, was led by a subsection of the political elite in Honiara, some of whom were openly hostile towards RAMSI’s statebuilding ambitions. The perception by some Solomon Islanders that RAMSI was ‘controlled by Australia’ (PIF 2005, p. 10) meant that RAMSI both ‘contributed to’ and was a ‘victim’ of the ‘souring of Australia-Solomon Islands relations in 2006’ (Devlin 2017, p. 1). This developed into a serious diplomatic row that dominated the period between April 2006 and December 2007. As described in Chapter 1, and analysed more fully elsewhere (for example see Dinnen & Firth 2008), the trigger for this crisis was the election of Snyder Rini as Prime Minister by Parliament on 18 April 2006. Public protests outside Parliament House followed the announcement of Rini’s victory. Some Solomon Islanders, not without reason, perceived Rini’s election to portend the continuation of an allegedly corrupt and inept regime. These protests soon degenerated into a full-blown riot, looting and widespread destruction over a two-day period focused on China Town. By most accounts, RAMSI PPF failed completely in its duty to anticipate the problem or maintain control of the situation once violence erupted (SIG 2008; Wheatley 2006).

RAMSI’s PPF were roundly criticised, by critics and supporters alike, for failing to foresee, prevent and control the public disturbances. It was further alleged that PPF had disregarded advice from senior leaders and RSIPF and that their actions had inflamed rather than calmed the situation (Kenilorea 2008; SIG 2008). Regardless of the ultimate reasons for the riot, a significant consequence was that RAMSI’s aura of legitimacy and unassailable coercive power was severely tarnished (Moore 2008). Security, law and order, as indicative of a ‘monopoly of violence’, were only re-established after the deployment of Australian, New Zealand and Fijian military and police reinforcements from the third day after the disturbances

had commenced. Rini was forced to resign a week following the riots to avoid the inevitable loss of a no-confidence motion in Parliament (Allen 2008). This paved the way for the election of staunch RAMSI critic, Manasseh Sogavare as Prime Minister (Chapter 1).

Questions of legitimacy and sovereignty lay at the heart of this dispute. While RAMSI often claimed that support from the general public remained high throughout the intervention (ANU Enterprise 2013), fundamental questions were asked of PPF and more broadly of RAMSI (SIG 2008, 2009b) in major inquiries launched by the SIG. These, together with the local media and parliamentary debates, provided a voice for the small but significant portion of the local audience who appeared to resent and contest RAMSI's authority and approach. Yet they also provided an opportunity for constructive criticism and identification of opportunities for RAMSI and PPF to improve their processes and relationship with SIG, RSIPF, and the wider community.

The period highlights the challenges that international interventions face in terms of constructing a strategic narrative that will persuade both external and internal audiences of the intervention's legitimacy. It also pointed to the inherent limitations of Downer's notion of 'cooperative intervention' (discussed in Chapter 5). While this distinguished RAMSI from contemporary unilateral international interventions (Fry & Kabutaulaka 2008), RAMSI's frequent claims to legitimacy based on positive public opinion polls, such as the People's Survey, miss the point that political processes, personalities and relationships matter (Leftwich 2005). Without support, not just from political elites, but those political elites elected into positions of *sovereign authority*, RAMSI's public sector reform and statebuilding programme was in serious jeopardy. This period is interesting not only in terms of examining why RAMSI's legitimacy came into question but also because it provides a rare example of how difficult relations can be overcome and legitimacy successfully re-established. This will be further explored in Section 6.4 on silences in the RAMSI narrative.

RAMSI communicated with internal audiences through a variety of communication practices and activities. This included symbolic and everyday policing and security practices as well as targeted communication activities. Reflecting its power, including command over a sizable public relations budget, RAMSI excelled at documenting itself. This was evidenced by the volume of reports, photographs, television programmes, videos, podcasts, Solomon Islands Broadcasting Commission (SIBC) radio programmes and its website, which provides an

ongoing and carefully curated record of RAMSI's official narrative (RAMSI 2015). RAMSI's narrative can thus be analysed not only through examination of key text and documents but also through discourse and narrative analysis of episodes of the SIBC radio programme, *Talking Truth*, other community outreach activities, including a travelling photo exhibition and community consultations (*Wokabot Toktok*). While many of RAMSI's communication practices were essentially one-way, community outreach and consultation activities enabled a measure of two-way communication. However, it should be noted that RAMSI usually exercised firm control over both the agenda and narrative in these 'consultation' exercises (Tovua interview, August 2011). One of the few places where vigorous debate by local political elites related to the legitimacy of RAMSI could occur unhindered was the floor of Parliament. Some local elites also proved adept at using the local media to voice criticism of RAMSI policies and actions.

In summary, this section has provided an overview of the scope of RAMSI's diverse internal audiences to show how RAMSI's legitimacy work was required to be nuanced and adaptive to both audience and circumstance. The wide range of communication practices adopted by RAMSI were important to conveying RAMSI's internal narrative. As we shall see in the following section, the nature of legitimacy dynamics, including the period of heightened contestation (2006-07) meant that 'legitimacy work' was an ongoing and everchanging feature of RAMSI's internal narrative.

6.3. Themes and Dynamics in RAMSI's Internal Narrative

In this section I explore the themes directly relevant to constructing, maintaining and transferring internal legitimacy for the police-led intervention and its goals, including ultimately, the ostensible restoration of sovereignty to the Solomon Islands state and its institutions. I identify four key themes which are prominent within RAMSI's broader internal strategic narrative. While these themes have been singled out for analysis, they intersected with each other and many other themes within RAMSI's overall internal narrative. These themes are nominated as they allow the discussion to illustrate the shifts in legitimisation strategies in response to the complex and changing dynamics across different phases of the intervention. This section highlights that RAMSI's internal strategic narrative was not just something that was presented in a static manner, but rather was constantly reinvented in order to respond to the on-going challenges of legitimacy across the phases of RAMSI. This is in

contrast to the external narrative which, as argued in Chapter 5, while still oriented around RAMSI's need for legitimacy, was intrinsically more stable and less contested. The four themes are:

- 1) Dealing with trouble: RAMSI's coercive power
- 2) Spirit of friendship
- 3) Policing partnerships
- 4) A long-term commitment

Theme 1: Dealing with Trouble: RAMSI's coercive power

The first theme concerns RAMSI's approach to using, or threatening to use, overwhelming force to minimise opposition to RAMSI's agenda. In effect, this message was communicated most clearly on the first day of the intervention, not by a press conference but through the sheer magnitude and scale of the intervention itself. Appearing silently before dawn on the 24 July 2003, the arrival of the Australian warship HMAS *Manoora* presented an "unmistakeable show of military strength" (Semaphore 2005, p. 1). The *Manoora* was soon joined by "patrol boat HMAS *Whyalla*, the heavy landing craft HMAS *Wewak* and *Labuan*, and the coastal minehunter HMAS *Hawkesbury*" (ibid.). Together with a fleet of eight helicopters and several Caribou aircraft the naval vessels provided RAMSI with unparalleled logistical capabilities and emphatically underlined RAMSI's coercive power and authority (ibid.). Descriptions and images of RAMSI's military support were carefully recorded by journalists and other witnesses, and rapidly disseminated to the wider population providing unequivocal evidence that RAMSI meant business.

Collectively, these military assets carried out important legitimacy work for RAMSI's internal narrative by symbolically communicating RAMSI's capacity to enforce a monopoly of legitimate violence to deal with any 'trouble' the intervention might face. In the first weeks this was also deliberate statement and application of the military doctrine of 'shock and awe', as adopted in Baghdad in 2003 with devastating effect. However, in Solomon Islands, the symbolic threat of force was enough (Bergin & Claxton 2015). Remarkably, not a shot was fired in order to achieve the intervention's key aim of restoring law and order within weeks of its arrival. As Colonel John Frewen, initial commander of RAMSI's military component, later reflected:

Much of the success of this operation depended on messages – on us communicating intent, ability and resolve while retaining public goodwill. In striving to maintain the almost universal popular support we were afforded on arrival, we placed particular focus on an information campaign with associated activities (Frewen 2005, p.44).

The communication of RAMSI's ability to deal with any trouble was intended to intimidate and prompt the surrender of ex-militants or anyone harbouring weapons or intentions to resist RAMSI. It drew on an understanding of power and legitimacy predicated on coercion, that is, the ability to force others to comply with authority through violence or the threat of violence, rather than acceptance and compliance by local actors based on perceived legitimacy (Whalan 2010, 2013). It seemed to work, but it was massive overkill given that general violence in Solomon Islands had dissipated prior to RAMSI's arrival and the quantity of resources were far beyond any level that might be considered sustainable over the longer term (Dinnen 2004). It has been argued that many of the gains made by RAMSI could have been achieved with far less muscle and expense (Fraenkel 2019; Hayward-Jones 2014). The tragedy of continued violence at the hands of Harold Keke and his followers, on the Weather Coast of Guadalcanal in the first six months of 2003, was an important exception and a major concern, but arguably this too could have been resolved with far less resources.

Within weeks of RAMSI's arrival, and without relying on inducements such as a 'gun buy-back' scheme, over 3000 weapons were surrendered. Former militants, including the notorious Keke, surrendered themselves to RAMSI PPF without violence and within weeks of RAMSI's arrival. Stolen vehicles mysteriously reappeared in their owners' driveways overnight. While the threat of coercion was undoubtedly a motivating influence, it was unlikely to be the only factor encouraging compliance. The visible presence of a disciplined force, contrasting with the perceived ill-discipline of RSIPF, sent a strong signal of RAMSI's capacity to enforce security. This confidence building measure meant that many of those holding weapons illegally no longer felt, or could argue that it was necessary to do so (Braithwaite et al. 2010). Most significantly, RAMSI's robust military force created the permissive security environment necessary to enable police to focus on their mandate, restoring law and order.

The strategy of rapid dominance was apparently successful, as indicated by the swift stabilisation of the security environment. With security re-established, RAMSI military components were quickly scaled back, although a modest level of in-country military support for PPF was retained until 2014. As a police-led mission and as the *Facilitation of*

International Assistance Act 2003 identified, restoring law and order was the primary ‘public purpose’ that had led to the extraordinary step of inviting an international assistance mission into the country. While this mandate provided a measure of legitimacy to the foreign police of PPF, it was on the basis of their outputs that RAMSI would claim strong local support as a basis for the legitimacy of the mission. This was highlighted by Nick Warner’s comments at a conference in Honiara in June 2004:

I believe that the majority of Solomon Islanders can see for themselves - that as that year has passed, as the militants have been disarmed, the guns have been handed in, the police force has been purged and many of those accused of serious crimes have been arrested or are subject to investigation - that RAMSI has gone a long way to keeping that original promise of helping you make your nation a safer, better place. I also believe that the majority of Solomon Islanders recognise that in doing this, RAMSI, rather than trying to infringe Solomon Islands sovereignty, is returning it to you (Warner 2004a).

RAMSI’s internal strategic narrative spent most of its early efforts focused on constructing legitimacy, as evidenced in Warner’s above comments. In this early stage RAMSI’s successes were presented as a key basis for its claim to legitimacy as perceived by local audiences. As will be seen below, constructing RAMSI’s legitimacy was relatively straightforward in comparison to the legitimacy work associated with maintaining legitimacy, or with the eventual transfer of legitimacy to RSIPF. These points are examined more closely in the theme ‘Police Partnership’ (Theme 3). However, prior to addressing these points, it look at the alternative meanings given to legitimacy based on relationship through the theme of a ‘spirit of friendship’ as counterpoint to this initial focus on coercive force.

Theme 2: Spirit of friendship

The spirit of friendship was the corrective to RAMSI’s strategic narrative’s theme of coercive force, in which RAMSI assumed, on behalf of the state, a monopoly of (legitimate) force. The message of friendship was embedded in the *Pijin* nickname for the mission ‘Operation *Helpem Fren*’, emblazoned on the sleeve of every member of the deployment, and emphasised in virtually every speech given by RAMSI officials to internal audiences. RAMSI’s leaders saw it as important that RAMSI’s internal strategic narrative ensure that the right balance between “communicating intent, ability and resolve while retaining public goodwill” and building a reputation for the mission and its personnel as “firm but friendly” (Frewen 2005, p. 44).

On 25 August 2003, not long after RAMSI's arrival, Australian Prime Minister John Howard, who had staked his own political reputation on the success of the mission, arrived in Honiara to bask in RAMSI's early success. The theme of friendship came through clearly in his joint press conference with Sir Allan Kemekeza:

This has been a model Pacific Operation. It's not just an Australian operation, it's a Pacific Operation. It has the very strong support of the Australian community because the Australian people believe that this is an area where we have a special role of assistance to play. They believe that we should help, our friends, our neighbours in the Pacific and that is a very encouraging thing from my point of view and something that I've communicated to Sir Allan this morning. Just two other points that I would like to make. The first is that what we have achieved over the past month is only the beginning. All will be lost if the gains are not consolidated by a resolute attack on corruption and a resolute determination to lift the quality of governance. They are absolutely essential. It would be easy to slide back if those two things are not done and if there is a sliding back in the future it would be much harder to summon the support for a further assistance (Howard & Kemekeza 2003, p. 2).

While the spirit of friendship articulated by Prime Minister Howard clearly informed RAMSI's approach at times, the notion of friendship bears closer scrutiny. Friends and family are important providers of assistance in times of crisis. The analogy that the nations of the Pacific were not just friends but 'family' was recycled through RAMSI speeches and other legitimisation artefacts. This recalled the text of the *Biketawa Declaration* (2000) used to legitimate RAMSI, which stated that "in time of crisis or in response to members' request for assistance, for action to be taken on the basis of all members of the Forum being part of the Pacific Islands extended family" (PIF 2000). Howard also used his speech to signal, as a powerful friend, that this assistance was not without conditions. He called for a "resolute attack" on corruption and to "lift the quality of governance" and warned against the dangers of "sliding back". This language evokes the sentiment of 'tough love' that characterised Australia and New Zealand's earlier paternalistic approach to disciplining Solomon Islands during the early 2000s. Friends, it seemed, were not above providing stern advice.

Yet only a few minutes later, when fielding questions from the international media, Howard (and Kemekeza) were asked to comment on recent calls made by the Solomon Islands' Opposition leader for Howard to pressure Kemekeza to resign to face allegations of corruption. Friends, it appeared, were also loyal. Howard stated:

The Solomon Islands is an independent sovereign country. I work with the elected Prime Minister. The elected Prime Minister is Sir Allan. I have found him a straightforward good man to deal with... But I will certainly not get involved in the domestic politics of the Solomon Islands, I'll stand aside (Howard and Kemekeza 2003).

To many in Solomon Islands, this looked like friendship, but more of the 'friends protect their mates' variety, than a 'resolute attack' on corruption by a powerful friend concerned to help another from 'backsliding'. It was not until Kemekeza was voted out of office three years later that he would face charges and jail time for corruption. RAMSI's apparent indifference related to Kemekeza's alleged crimes undermined the otherwise strong public support and legitimacy of RAMSI and the PPF and left them open to charges that they were protecting so-called 'big fish'. It also contrasted sharply with the response to the more difficult relationship with Sogavare in his second term as Prime Minister from May 2006 to December 2007, when Australian-Solomon Islands relations were at their lowest ebb, as discussed in Chapter 1 and earlier in this chapter. The raid on Prime Minister Sogavare's office, during the Moti Affair, was widely perceived, by RAMSI's friends as well as its critics, as an affront to the dignity of the office of the Prime Minister and to Solomon Islands' sovereignty. While broad public support for RAMSI remained solid, the raid represented serious transnational policing overreach. PPF's earlier failures in relation to preventing or controlling the April 2006 riots also represented a significant stain on PPF's claims of effectiveness, success and legitimacy. These dynamics highlighted that a different sort of legitimacy work was required and that a different model of friendship, based on less arrogant posturing by Australian politicians, was needed.

The spirit of friendship theme within RAMSI's internal strategic narrative was communicated not only in words but also through everyday practices and images. The generally benign security environment allowed relatively high levels of intermingling between interveners and host population. This is evidenced through a comprehensive photographic record on RAMSI's official website, photographic exhibitions and publications (RAMSI 2015). RAMSI personnel interacted with locals during sporting matches, community fun days, campaigns to prevent violence against women, concerts, marches, during community outreach events and through everyday interactions in cafes and on the street (Putt et al. 2018). During the day PPF officers could, in theory, walk through the communities within which they lived and worked. This level of interaction was undoubtedly higher compared to international-local interactions in higher risk statebuilding projects in active combat zones, such as Iraq and Afghanistan, but in

practice a high level of segregation between PPF and the Solomon Islands population was the norm.

While reviews indicated that RAMSI was well received and even that certain police officers (often those from other Pacific Island nations) were well liked by local communities, in practice, the relationship between Solomon Islanders and RAMSI personnel is better described not as ‘friendship’ but by what Nicholas Lemay-Hébert (2011, p.1827) refers to as the “bifurcation between the two worlds... of ‘international’ and ‘local’ ways of life”. A high level of security prevented the local population from entering RAMSI’s base at Guadalcanal Beach Resort, and conversely, discouraged PPF from leaving base, recalling the ‘bunkerisation’ of development and humanitarian missions observed by scholars elsewhere (Duffield 2010; Smirl 2015) in other international intervention contexts. Stark asymmetries in power, wealth, and resources led to local resentment, even though the positive contribution that RAMSI had made to restoring security was greatly appreciated (Allen 2009).

Specific practices created a visible barrier between PPF members and local audiences and undermined trust and legitimacy of PPF. RAMSI personnel had vehicles at their disposal, airconditioned accommodation, luxury foods flown in from Australia, generous ‘hardship’ allowances, tax-free salaries and numerous other benefits. Even those deployed to more remote provincial ‘outposts’ enjoyed a level of comfort that far exceeded local standards. While walking through communities could facilitate more effective relationships, many PPF members tended to drive with tinted windows drawn up and air-conditioning on. Most PPF socialised with each other and other expatriates. In Honiara most PPF were accommodated in the highly secure Guadalcanal Beach Resort on the outskirts of town. Non-police members of RAMSI were accommodated in hotels or in gated residences with security guards. Such practices served to separate RAMSI personnel rather than foster close friendships with local population or with RSIPF police. Many PPF officers were conscious of these barriers and some sought to dismantle them, but PPF regulations could be an obstacle. For example, Putt et al. (2018) reported that some Pacific Islands members of the contingent were frustrated that RAMSI rules prohibited them from accepting gifts of food from local communities working contravening local *kastom* practices of reciprocity as a basis for friendship and relationship. Frictions between personal and professional relationships and conflicting cultural norms at times complicated the intended ‘the spirit of friendship’ which RAMSI was conducted. This tension is also observed in Theme 3, ‘police partnerships’ which follows.

Theme 3: Police partnership

RAMSI's internal audiences were informed from Day 1 of the intervention that police from RAMSI would be "working hand-in-hand with the Solomon Islands police to provide safety and security" (Kemekeza and Warner 2003). The notion of 'partnership', like 'friendship', connotes approaches based on cooperation and reciprocity and a sharing of knowledge and experience based on a relationship of respect and equality. It was also used within RAMSI's internal narrative to invoke 'a principle of mutual obligation', such as when SC Batley addressed the new Solomon Islands Parliament in June 2006 (Batley 2006).

Yet for all the talk of partnership, it was an uneasy and unequal relationship which characterised the police partnership in the first years of the intervention (Putt et al. 2018). Awkwardly, many RSIPF officers working alongside their PPF counterparts were suspected to have been compromised by their involvement in tension-related crimes and other illegal activities, leaving the entire force tainted by suspicion. The reform of RSIPF resulted in over 400 police officers being arrested, dismissed, made redundant or retired within the first 12 months (ibid.). While this removed officers who had breached their obligations and was essential in order to restore public trust and confidence in RSIPF as an institution, it also represented a dramatic 'hollowing out' of experience from within RSIPF (Fraenkel et al. 2014; McDevitt 2006). Inevitably, it resulted in an atmosphere of suspicion, fear and uncertainty within RSIPF, undermining the potential for a meaningful relationship to be established between RAMSI and Solomon Islands police officers. I will return to this point in Chapter 7, where one of my informants recounted the corrosive effect that the air of suspicion had on the ability of RSIPF officers to do their job or meaningfully contribute their experience.

In 2005, at the request of Prime Minister Kemekeza, the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) sent an Eminent Persons Group to conduct the first independent review of RAMSI's progress. Their review and subsequent report provided an opportunity to take stock of what had been achieved and to identify areas for improvement. While the review team praised RAMSI for the great improvements in security and economic stability, they raised concerns related to Australia's dominance of leadership roles in PPF and the perception that there were two distinct police forces operating in Solomon Islands (PIF 2005). To address the first concern, PIF called for greater involvement of police including in leadership positions from the Pacific Islands contingent. The second concern relating to the perception and reality of two forces represented a more basic challenge to the legitimacy of RSIPF. PPF existed as an external police

organisation that was extremely well-resourced and highly trained. In comparison to PPF, the RSIPF suffered due to the extremely limited resources available to the organisation and limited experience and confidence of many RSIPF officers, most of whom had been recruited since RAMSI's arrival. The PIF report recommended "a process of transition to a situation in which, over time the RSIP [sic] would clearly take the lead" (PIF 2005, p. 6) .

Addressing this gap between the two forces became the priority focus of the policing component of the intervention from 2008 onwards. An Independent Review of PPF conducted in 2009¹⁵ noted the PPF's considerable success had resulted in 'unintended consequences' with 'negative implications' for capacity building of RSIPF:

The contrast between the well-equipped, efficient, highly motivated and exceptionally visible PPF officers in their PPF vehicles – land, sea and air – with the unarmed, ill-equipped and less visible RSIPF members was obvious at best and sharp at its worst... (Independent Review of PPF 2009, p. 31)

This lack of resources was a significant obstacle to RSIPF being able to operate effectively alongside their PPR counterparts in an effective partnership. This ranged from lack of protective equipment or the means of non-lethal force to handle disturbances to public order (including notably the post-election riots in 2006), the absence of more lethal force options (guns) to a lack of transport, housing and even the absence of petty cash in many police stations (a point I return to in Chapter 7). In many cases, the partnership between RSIPF and PPF was characterised by RSIPF's dependency on use of PPF equipment and vehicles to perform basic policing functions. The lack of resources resulted in a lack of capacity and effectiveness. This was reflected in community attitudes towards the RSIPF, as the authors of the Independent review report highlighted:

[E]ven the positive ratings for RAMSI and the PPF in the People's Surveys have a potential downside as they are accompanied by a relatively low rating for the RSIPF – *when, in fact, real success for the PPF would be to help the RSIPF achieve a high level of trust in the community* [my emphasis] (Independent Review of PPF 2009, p. 32).

The report recommended in the "interests of RSIPF capacity development" that PPF look for "opportunities to give credit to RSIPF, even when the PPF could rightly share the credit, to

¹⁵ This review was conducted under the auspices of the Pacific Islands Forum by a team of four comprised of members from Australia, Solomon Islands, Samoa and New Zealand.

ensure that the RSIPF can become a force that is trusted by the Solomon Islands community” (Independent Review of PPF 2009, p. 32). In sum, the observations of this report highlighted how RAMSI’s PPF, had effectively undermined legitimacy of RSIPF. It also provided some practical suggestions for how PPF could actively build legitimacy of RSIPF. The finalisation of Partnership Framework between SIG and RAMSI in May 2009 and other developments, indicated that momentum had already shifted toward an approach that would more effectively build and support RSIPF’s perceived legitimacy.

It was clear that just as PPF’s effectiveness, and arguably, its legitimacy had relied on its ability to use or threaten coercive force, that RSIPF would also need to be endowed with the skills and resources to exercise coercive force, with resolve and restraint. To begin with, the PPF supported RSIPF by re-equipping them with the means of non-lethal force (batons, shields, pepper spray) from 2012. It was only in 2017, after much consultation, that RAMSI supported the limited rearmament of sections of RSIPF. These practical and symbolic measures represented a significant step towards RAMSI transferring legitimacy to the RSIPF, as represented by restoring a mandate for RSIPF to once again be authorised and competent in the use of legitimate violence.

Within this theme of ‘police partnership’ there is a need to understand how RAMSI’s internal strategic narrative worked to restore the Solomon Islands state’s sovereignty, and RSIPF’s legitimacy. To further this understanding, it is useful to explore the contentious issue of rearming RSIPF because few steps to rebuild RSIPF’s legitimacy and the state’s sovereignty are more symbolic than the return of the police capacity for lethal force. As noted in Chapter 1, during the 1998-2003 conflict RSIPF’s inappropriate use of, and loss of control over, weapons had been issued contributing to a serious escalation in the conflict. This dramatically eroded public confidence trust in the legitimacy of the police. RAMSI disarmed RSIPF immediately on arrival. Removing RSIPF’s armed capacity ensured RAMSI’s military and PPF had a monopoly over legitimate violence. RAMSI’s armed forces were mandated to use force “to achieve a public purpose”. Ultimately this meant that sovereign power to take life, normally held by the state (Foucault, 1977), was effectively outsourced to RAMSI. From as early as 2007 elements within government urged RAMSI to rearm RSIPF as a symbol of the return of Solomon Islands sovereignty. This highlighted the symbolic importance that some national elites attached to the state having an armed capability and the capacity to exercise coercive, even lethal, force. However, substantial elements of the Solomon Islands community

were fearful that rearming RSIPF could lead to a return to violence and disorder. This highlighted the lack of legitimacy that RSIPF still suffered from, despite over a decade of assistance by RAMSI.

Faced with a clear division between different internal legitimacy audiences, RAMSI's leadership prevaricated on allowing RSIPF to rearm for several years. A first step included the re-equipment of RSIPF. This involved provision of protective equipment including Perspex shields, body armour and helmets, and the means of exercising non-lethal force to control situations of public disorder, such as batons and capsicum spray. The circulation of images of police on parade in full riot gear (Figure 6.1) reflected a new element in RAMSI's strategic narrative. RSIPF was now presented not as a failed police force but as capable and well-equipped force able to maintain security in all but the most serious situations. Legitimacy as measured in operational effectiveness and the ability to exercise coercive force was now being transferred from RAMSI to RSIPF.



Figure 6.1. RSIPF Rapid Response Team being inspected by Prime Minister Gordon Darcy Lilo, Rove Police Headquarter (RAMSI 2012)

This important aspect of legitimacy work deserves closer analysis as it reveals a number of issues. First, it highlights how intervention narratives including the use of images such as Figure 6.1 are utilised to try and construct legitimacy. Second, while strengthening the ability of RSIPF to maintain security and respond to public disorder effectively and with reduced risk to themselves by the provision of protective equipment was viewed as a positive development

it is worth considering unintended consequences of this development. What else did the reequipping of RSIPF with the means of ‘non-lethal force’ communicate? At a symbolic level the presentation of police in riot gear is suggestive of latent violence. It is a clear statement that violence is considered likely and that the police are prepared and equipped to engage in situations of physical confrontation. The image of muscular, heavily armoured Solomon Islands police, standing to attention as they are inspected by their Prime Minister Gordon Darcy Lillo, in 2013, unaccompanied by PPF personnel, signalled that Solomon Islanders are now responsible for their own security and that this element of sovereignty had been restored. It should be noted that there are other symbols in this image. The adoption of body armour and helmets is evidence of an external increasingly militarised model of policing. Body armour, visors and shields imply a level of intimidation and separation that is not present in RSIPF’s normal and unassuming police uniform (as pictured in the background in the top left of Figure 6.1). Shields may protect the police from missiles and aggression from the public but they also place a physical barrier between the police and the public. While they may support increased police ability and effectiveness to suppress violent riots, they may also undermine those relational forms of legitimacy that stem from closer contact and more personal relationship with the public.

The 2014 decision to rearm RSIPF with guns involved a more substantial process of public consultation, including traditional media and community outreach visits. This aimed to allay community concern that the rearmament of RSIPF may see a return to the conflict and disorder that had characterised the Tension years. The SIBC radio programme, *Talking Truth*, was seen as a useful means for informing and persuading a sceptical public. In August and September 2014, two lengthy *Toktok* (talk back) sessions of ninety minutes (*Talking Truth* episodes were usually less than fifteen minutes) were hosted by Solomon Islander radio host Johnson Honimae (*Talking Truth Episode 070914*, 2014). As Honimae explained, the program aimed to outline the process and rationale behind the government’s decision to rearm RSIPF. It was also an opportunity for the public to express their views or “*tinktink*” about “*this fela decision blo government for rearmament blo Royal Solomon Islands Police Force*”.

Honimae introduced a panel of four participants including Gabriel Manalusi, a “bigman blo RSIPF” and an AFP officer, Greg Harrigan, Commander of the PPF. Manalusi highlighted first, that the decision for Staged Limited Rearmament had been made by the SIG who had authorised the RSIPF and relevant SIG agencies to begin planning for rearmament in

partnership with RAMSI. Manalusi then outlined the reasons why RSIPF needed firearms. Most of these were directly related to the restoration of sovereignty to Solomon Islands, namely: to enforce law and order of Solomon Islands, protect communities' life and property, protect themselves, to fulfil the national security requirements of Solomon Islands, to provide protection to dignitaries, and to fulfil international requirements that all international airports have an armed presence. Finally, Manalusi highlighted that an issue relevant to many communities at this time was for the destruction of crocodiles.

Harrigan provided a detailed outline of the role of RSIPF in public order management situations, speaking to the need for police to demonstrate restraint in order to maintain public trust and support.

Police join to serve their communities, they join the police force to help people and there is nothing worse than when a police officer is confronted by somebody who is violent who wants to hurt somebody else or when there is a group of people who wish to be violent. So, in order to help the police force to manage that they are trained in a range of what we call use of force options. And the best use of force option is talking to people of course. And so that is what everybody would do first. The last use of force option would be to use a lethal firearm. And no police officer wants to be in a position where they have to use a firearm against somebody (*Talking Truth Episode 070914*, 2014).

As this section has highlighted, the rhetoric of a partnership between PPF and RSIPF featured prominently in RAMSI's internal narrative. Initially, this so-called partnership was conducted on a very uneven footing. Inequalities between resources made PPF a far superior force, and actively undermined community perception of the legitimacy and effectiveness of RSIPF. Later efforts to reverse this saw allocation of resources to RSIPF. However, these reflected the state-centric biases of RAMSI and bolstered RSIPF's coercive capacity without clearly improving the connection or relationship with community.

Theme 4: Long-term commitment

A central element of RAMSI's internal narrative was that "RAMSI is here for the long term. We will stay until the job is done and for as long as you want us" (Warner 2003a). Addressing Parliament in 2006, Special Coordinator Batley justified RAMSI's approach:

Finally, while RAMSI will of course not be here forever, RAMSI is still a long-term commitment. When putting RAMSI together, the countries of the region accepted that they could not do a quick fix. The

crisis that this country faced was a serious one, and it was not going to be solved overnight, or even in two to three years (Batley & Ash 2006).

In addressing the inevitable question of ‘How long will RAMSI stay?’, in the early phases of the intervention RAMSI’s leaders refused to provide specific timeframes. Batley noted the views of the 2005 Pacific Islands Forum’s Eminent Persons Group who had stated that “the tenure of RAMSI should be measured by the achievement of tasks rather than be time bound”. This commitment stood in sharp contrast to the short-termism that had characterised previous peace-keeping efforts, such as the International Peace Monitoring Team (IPMT) (2000-02), the three to five-year project-mentality that typified donor-led ‘institutional strengthening’ efforts in the late 1990s, or indeed the lack of priority given to Pacific affairs within Australia’s foreign policy over recent decades. This long-term commitment reflected the ambitious statebuilding agenda that defined the intervention’s goals in the first years of the intervention. To the extent that it underscored that RAMSI was serious and could be trusted to get the job done, this long-term commitment strengthened the intervention’s claim to legitimacy and public trust.

However, while the general public appeared comfortable with this open-ended time frame, RAMSI came under increasing pressure to set a firm exit date. Specifically, increasing pressure from members of the local political elite gained momentum with Sogavare’s second election in office as Prime Minister in 2006. In an interview on the ABC program *Insiders*, Sogavare declared, “We feel there now has to be some serious exit strategy”, also expressing concerns that not enough effort was being made to transfer responsibilities back to Solomon Islanders (ABC 2006). External events, such as the 2008 Global Financial Crisis, placed direct pressure on the Australian aid budget and meant that the open-ended timeframe and generous budgets that had characterised the first five or so years of RAMSI, could no longer be sustained. The intervention’s internal strategic narrative needed to perform a shift from ‘as long as it takes’ to ‘time to leave’. From around 2008, the language of ‘transition’ began to permeate all elements of RAMSI’s narrative. The first significant step towards this was the agreement of the Partnership Framework between SIG and RAMSI. This outlined an intent for RAMSI to transition out of areas where Solomon Islanders had attained sufficient capacity. While this agreement began an important conversation regarding an eventual RAMSI drawdown, it argued against “a blanket, arbitrary exit deadline” in favour of “jointly agreed indicative and conditions-based time lines” (SIG 2009c, p. 4).

Another key step that became a central aspect of RAMSI's legitimacy work now concerned a specific strategy of promoting the achievement and capacity of RSIPF at every turn. This presumably reflected an acceptance of many of the findings of the PPF Independent Review discussed in the previous section (PPF 2009). As RAMSI became increasingly preoccupied by the challenges of transition, legitimacy work to re-establish the RSIPF's legitimacy became a major priority. In almost every *Talking Truth* episode or speech with policing content, RAMSI officials went to considerable lengths to promote the successes of RSIPF. As an example, Acting PPF Commander Todd Hunter, on a *Talking Truth* episode in 2015, illustrates RAMSI's internal strategic narrative clearly placing RSIPF in the forefront, whereas PPF's role is secondary:

Well, initially I wanted to just start by congratulating the Commissioner and the RSIPF on their management of the significant events over recent times. Certainly, the national general election, the Christmas period, and then the new year period. What those events have shown is that the capacity and the capability of the RSIPF has improved significantly and they are in a position to take the lead, um, on these major significant events.... And the community should have confidence that they have a police force that is, um, servicing their needs (*Talking Truth Episode 110115* 2015).

Hunter went on, using similar language and phrases to other RAMSI officials and in other speeches or broadcasts to discuss future objectives stating that "all our activities and the underlying objectives of those activities will be to support the RSIPF in providing a police service that the people of the Solomon Islands have faith, trust and confidence in" (*Talking Truth*, 2015). RAMSI's long-term commitment provided an important aura of stability and confidence providing the space for a process of legitimacy building to take place in RSIPF over an extended period of time. This was reinforced by a commitment to future transnational policing support through the negotiation of a bilateral security agreement between the two countries "to replace RAMSI" signed on 14 August 2017 (DFAT 2017).

Summing up, in this section I have examined RAMSI's legitimacy work across four key themes. Collectively, this legitimacy work was carried out through RAMSI's internal narrative and associated practices to construct legitimacy for RAMSI, and later to transfer and confer legitimacy on RSIPF, and SIG more broadly. For the most part, this was important work and was done quite effectively through a public relations machine that became particularly effective following the period of 2006-07 when RAMSI legitimacy was most challenged. However, the inherent, and often hidden, biases in the state and urban centric

models of policing carried out by PPF dominated approaches to capacity building RSIPF contributed to important silences in the RAMSI narrative. It is to these silences that I turn in the following section.

6.4. Strategic Silences in the RAMSI Internal Narrative

It is not simply what is said within a narrative that is important. Strategic narratives only work if they are coherent. As a consequence, events, views, actors or facts that complicate a particular strategic narrative need to be ignored in order to maintain this coherence. The gaps, omissions and silences in RAMSI's strategic narrative are as revealing as those messages emphasised. Attempting to understand and listen for silences, the "judicious exclusion, as well as inclusion, of information" (Wilkinson 2015, p. 338), in strategic narratives provides a way to identify issues relevant to those marginalised from power.

These silences within the strategic narrative represent acts of de-legitimation and the direction of attention away from particular topics, events, individuals, communities, and alternative solutions. Major silences within RAMSI internal strategic narrative included the intentional, the unintentional and the unintended. They include not just what Wilkinson (2015) refers to as the "unsaid and unseen", but also what I identify as 'unthought and unfunded'. This is clearly evident in the manner in which certain approaches to policing, reflecting an Australian model of policing, dominated RAMSI's approach to policing and reform of RSIPF policing practices through 'police-building'. For the greater part of RAMSI's first decade, many of the recommendations for greater control and ownership by RSIPF, for models of policing and restorative justice more closely compatible with local cultural norms, and for greater recognition of the potential for community policing and blended approaches, fell on deaf ears, were unthinkable, or were given minimal official support, such as the Community Officer Pilot Scheme (Dinnen & Haley 2012; Fraenkel et al. 2014).

Instead, the policing model and practices adopted and promoted by RAMSI emphasised a Western, state-centric, resource-intensive, high-tech, professional approach to policing that stood in stark contrast to the approaches that had been developed through hundred years of colonial and post-colonial policing, or derived from an even longer history of cultural policing practices, in Solomon Islands. One significant role of RAMSI's strategic narrative, as directed towards internal audiences, was to normalise and explain the unfamiliar and novel, and to

establish legitimacy and acceptance for models and methods of policing that reflected the Western and state-centric mindset of those promoting them. The widely acknowledged dominance of Australian police in almost all of the senior leadership roles within PPF had positive and negative effects. While it meant that PPF was led by highly trained and experienced leaders, with a shared understanding of modern policing, it also imposed a silence and bias by restricting the cross-fertilisation of ideas from other policing environments in the Pacific and it diminished willingness to adopt policing practices more appropriate to the Solomon Islands context (Putt et al. 2018).

There were numerous other silences in RAMSI's internal strategic narrative. There was often a reluctance to reflect on the failures of RAMSI (especially 2006-07). Initially, the contribution of local actors such as National Peace Council (NPC) were inconsistently or not acknowledged (e.g. collection of weapons). The important role of NPC monitors in resolving conflict at the community level before it escalated to more serious criminal behaviours was also something that RAMSI seemed oblivious. And while many militants and some RSIPF officers engaged in serious criminal activity or human rights violations during the period 1998-2003, the focus on criminality and punitive approach to justice did a disservice to many young men caught up in the conflict. RAMSI officials were proud of the high number of arrests made in the first years of the intervention, but the official narrative makes no mention of the high numbers of young men, held on remand for months or years, and then found to be innocent of the alleged offences (Averre 2008).

Efforts to boost internal audiences' perceptions of RSIPF's legitimacy and capability became a major priority within RAMSI strategic narrative in the later phases of the intervention. In this, RAMSI also found it convenient to leave conflicting information 'unsaid and unseen'. Findings from the People's Survey (2006-2013) were used in RAMSI's external and internal narrative as evidence of strong public support confirming RAMSI's legitimacy. As an example, RAMSI's last Special Coordinator, Quinton Devlin remarked in a speech at the Australian National University in March 2017 that: "Impressively, however, RAMSI's popularity among Solomon Islanders themselves never wavered. While popular support for RAMSI was being measured (2006-13) it never dropped below 85% and I don't see any evidence that has changed over the last four years" (Devlin 2017, p. 2).

But the People's Survey did not provide convincing evidence of growing confidence in or enhanced legitimacy of RSIPF. Instead the 2013 Peoples Survey notes "a small decline in satisfaction with help received by RSIPF as compared with 2011 and 2013" (ANU Enterprise 2013, p. 44). The report was silent on the more dramatic decline in satisfaction from approximately 54% in 2010 to 40% in 2013. A similar silence is evident in responses to a question "whether treatment by the RSIPF is fair and respectful", which reflects a measure of procedural legitimacy often used by policing scholars to explore public perceptions of police legitimacy. The 2013 Peoples Survey highlights a "small decrease" (from approximately 31% to 29%) between 2009 and 2013 but makes no comment on the more dramatic decline between 2007 when 44% of respondents reported fair and respectful treatment by RSIPF, and 2013 when just 29% reported RSIPF as fair and respectful. While from an interpretive perspective, whether these quantitative measures really say anything meaningful about community attitudes to police legitimacy in Solomon Islands is questionable, the lack of attention and prominence given within RAMSI's narrative to those figures that suggested a deterioration in public confidence in RSIPF, appear to have represented an attempt to render these trends 'invisible' to avoid further undermining the confidence of the public in RSIPF.

One possible interpretation of this downward trend in satisfaction with the RSIPF, during the same period they were most intensively being trained by PPF, is that as RSIPF were increasingly militarised, re-equipped, rearmed, and trained in public order management, their relationships with communities may have suffered. Relying on the practices introduced by PPF may mean that RSIPF were less likely to use Melanesian skills of negotiation, instead adopting more aggressive or robust practices from PPF. Whether the above trends indicating declining confidence and trust in RSIPF continued after 2013 is open to conjecture as funding to conduct the Peoples' Survey was discontinued after 2013. Peoples' Survey findings were often used to reinforce RAMSI's strategic narrative and claims of success. Contrary findings complicated the RAMSI's narrative of increasing legitimacy of RSIPF. The cancellation of the Survey highlights RAMSI's ability to intentionally create a silence by directing funding and resources away from an activity that, despite flaws, provided RAMSI's internal audience with some opportunity to be heard.

6.5. Conferring Legitimacy: the Ultimate Task of Transnational Police-building

In Chapter 5, I argued that constructing external political legitimacy for RAMSI's intervention in the Solomon Islands was a critical first task for politicians and planners involved in making the intervention happen. Much of this important 'legitimacy work' was completed relatively quickly, and adhered to an international script based on the ideas and norms of the liberal peace project and discourses around state failure. The most prominent and enduring theme of this external narrative after the intervention was actually deployed was the story of RAMSI's success. While this narrative of RAMSI as a success was also emphasised within Solomon Islands, ultimately the orientation of the success story was outward facing, towards audiences in Australia, New Zealand, the Pacific region and internationally. In this chapter, by contrast I examined how RAMSI's constructed legitimacy with respect to internal audiences.

I have shown that the task of constructing legitimacy internally was more complex. The 'legitimacy work' carried out by RAMSI, through its internal narrative, first needed to produce and maintain legitimacy for the intervention itself. However, this was only the first stage in the process of constructing legitimacy. RAMSI secondly needed to transfer and confer legitimacy on Solomon Islands institutions, focusing on RSIPF in order to arrive at a point where the withdrawal of RAMSI could be reasonably justified, and peace and security could be sustained. While many scholars have examined how interventions build or lose political legitimacy for themselves, there has been relatively little analysis of the crucial process of transferring or conferring legitimacy on local institutions. This is important to understand as one of the significant reasons given for *not* intervening sooner in Solomon Islands was related to a concern around what an exit strategy might look like (Downer 2003a).

Due to the complexity of this task and in contrast to the relative simplicity of the external narrative, I have demonstrated that legitimacy work aimed at constructing legitimacy for RAMSI and Solomon Islands is evident across four key themes within RAMSI's internal narrative. This internal narrative was forced by dynamic context to be more nuanced, agile and adaptive in order to maintain coherence, as it encountered resistance from local political elites, changing circumstances, and the practical realities and constraints of policing and statebuilding in Solomon Islands. I have shown that just as 'legitimacy work' was a fundamental function of RAMSI's external narrative, it was a key purpose of RAMSI internal narrative.

In Chapter 7, I take this analysis further by examining local perspectives and counterpoints to RAMSI's conception of legitimate policing. By looking outside the dominant frame presented through RAMSI's external and internal narrative, Chapter 7 highlights the prevalence of multiple sources and meanings of legitimate policing in Solomon Islands.

Chapter 7: They don't practice

'Good Morning Sir': Local Perspectives on Policing

Field Journal Notes: 4/8/11: Truck ride from Bitama to Auki, Malaita.

After our boat trip from Silolo to Auki is aborted due to rough seas, I'm sitting next to 'David', a friendly young man from the 'end of the road' [near Sulufou¹⁶]. David is travelling to Auki to sell his 10 bags of cocoa. It has taken a week to fill them. He expects to get SBD 16/kg for each 80 kg sack or around SBD 12800.00 [approximately AUD1438.00¹⁷]. But due to the state of the road, his costs are high. SBD 100 for his fare and SBD 60 for each sack. If the road were good, it would only cost him \$40 per sack. David claims the police never come to Sulufou. This village has 'too many problems'. Especially 'kwaso'. Children as young as twelve are drinking it and their parents. 'It is bad. The police do nothing'. I ask him if he thinks RAMSI are doing a good job. He laughs. Before he can answer another fellow passenger answers for him, 'Not really'.

7.1. Making Sense of Policing in Solomon Islands

Behind romantic images of peaceful and idyllic village life in rural Solomon Islands, local people like 'David' (above) reported 'too many problems'. Rates of family and gender based violence across Solomon Islands are among the highest in the world (Ming et al. 2016). Research funded by AusAID and the World Bank as part of the Justice for the Poor (J4P) Initiative noted that substance abuse, including consumption of *kwaso* (a potent, and

¹⁶ One of the larger artificial islands built from coral blocks in Malaita's Lau lagoon over many centuries.

¹⁷ The Australian Tax Office list the exchange rate as 8.89 SBD: 1AUD for 30 June 2011.

sometimes deadly, distilled liquor), beer and marijuana, fuel violence and antisocial behaviour across most Solomon Islands communities (Allen et al. 2013). Disputes, grievances and conflict over control or access to land and resources are endemic, while tensions over local development projects are also common (ibid.). Rural Solomon Islanders face complex daily challenges in maintaining a livelihood, receiving basic services from the state, and staying safe. For communities at the ‘end of the road’, like Sulufou, the ‘law and order’ apparently so successfully restored by RAMSI since 2003 is not always evident. Instead, the majority of poor and rural populations in Solomon Islands, as in many other countries in the Pacific, rely on a constellation of alternative non-state providers for policing and dispute resolution (Allen et al. 2013; ANU Enterprise 2013; Boege, Brown & Clements 2009; Dinnen & McLeod 2009). The limited access to state-based policing is the daily reality not just for those in the Pacific but is also the experience of many people living in low- and middle-income countries, where state service provision is limited and non-state actors play an important role in maintaining order and security (Baker 2008, 2010).

In this chapter, I present local perspectives on legitimacy and policing in order to unpack some of the assumptions evident in the legitimacy work carried out by RAMSI through its external and internal narratives related to transnational policing. Consideration of local perspectives also provides an opportunity to probe further the silences and gaps that emerged from the analysis of RAMSI’s external and internal narratives. The local perspectives considered in this chapter are wide ranging and do not represent a singular narrative. Local judgements related to the respective legitimacy of formal state police versus informal non-state policing providers, appear to differ considerably from those of external actors. Drawing on local perspectives identified from interviews, I argue that RAMSI generally appears to have lacked a deeper understanding of the diverse meanings of policing and the multiple sources of legitimacy relied upon by different forms of authority in Solomon Islands.

Different understandings related to policing resulted in a major disconnect between the state-centric institutionalist model of policing reinstated by RAMSI in its post-Tensions reform of RSIPF, and the everyday, informal, community-led forms of (loosely defined) policing commonly used by local actors. RAMSI’s approach to policing reflected the neoliberal and institutionalist assumptions that characterised the wider statebuilding paradigm during the era that RAMSI was initiated. As I noted in Chapter 1, this focused on reasserting the authority, effectiveness and legitimacy of RSIPF (e.g. disarming and arresting militants, ‘the Tension

trials', purging the police force, developing RSIPF capacity development including for robust public order management). In contrast, community-led models of policing (or social ordering and control) in Solomon Islands highlight the importance of reasserting the authority of chiefs and elders, prioritise reconciliation, and value the contribution of non-state actors in resolving conflict and promoting security (e.g. church pastors, NPC monitors, community officers). The disconnect is important because the prominent claims of RAMSI success are undermined by the lack of synergy between the model of policing supported by RAMSI and the type of policing many Solomon Islanders indicate they prefer (notwithstanding the significant diversity in preferences depending on location, gender, age and the type of dispute) (ANU Enterprise 2013).

This chapter consists of three sections. Section 7.2 is the main section and is subdivided into four subsections related to specific themes that emerged from qualitative analysis of my interview material. These themes are introduced below and allow the perspectives of Solomon Islanders in relation to key aspects of legitimacy and policing to be presented and analysed. While I by no means claim these views to be representative of all Solomon Islanders, I have been able to triangulate these perspectives with existing material from the People's Surveys (ANU Enterprise 2013), Truth and Reconciliation Commission Reports (TRC 2012), and with research conducted by the World Bank's Justice for the Poor Initiative (Allen et al. 2013). The views presented in Section 7.2 have implications for the future of policing in Solomon Islands. Local perspectives support the view that the state-centric and urban-based model of policing promoted by RAMSI's policing assistance face limitations in terms of improving law and order at the local level in rural Solomon Islands. There is strong support for models of policing that make more effective use of local sources of legitimacy and authority including that of chiefs, churches and provincial government. However, in line with previous research findings (Allen et al. 2013; Dinnen & Haley 2012), my informants argued for improved linkages between the state and community level in terms of policing provision, rather than the replacement of state-based policing approaches. In Section 7.3, I conclude by summing up the key points of this chapter.

7.2. Local Perspectives on Policing and Legitimacy

Several key themes emerged strongly in my analysis of local perspectives gathered during interviews conducted during field work in Honiara and rural Malaita from 21 July and 9

August 2011 and my analysis of secondary sources, such as testimonies to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2012). Through iterative engagement with interview recordings and transcripts, threads of a local narrative were evident. Reflecting the subjectivity inherent to the interpretive approach I have adopted (see Chapter 3), these themes are derivative of complex and multiple local viewpoints. I argue they are important as they provide important points of contrast to the dominant legitimacy narrative projected by RAMSI.

- 1) History matters: Historical sources of legitimacy for police
- 2) Losing legitimacy: Local perspectives on what happened to RSIPF
- 3) Contested practices: Local experiences of transnational policing
- 4) Competing legitimacies and plural policing

Theme 1: History matters: historical sources of legitimacy of police

This subsection presents a local historical perspective on policing in Solomon Islands in order to identify practices that were perceived by my interviewees to be significant to the legitimacy of Solomon Islands police in the past. During fieldwork in Guadalcanal and Malaita in 2011, I began most key informant interviews¹⁸ by inviting informants to describe how the RSIPF were perceived prior to, or shortly after, independence. I was surprised by the enthusiasm with which this question was greeted. Without exception, Solomon Islanders I interviewed recalled or perceived the police of the past with respect and admiration and, arguably, an element of what some authors have described as ‘post-colonial nostalgia’ (Walder 2010). The ‘nostalgia’ that some older Solomon Islanders hold for colonial policing practices and governance structures in Solomon Islands has previously been noted (Allen et al. 2013; Dinnen & Allen 2013). I argue these recollections and interpretations are important because they speak to local understandings of police/policing and what it means in context. They also provide a benchmark, or local frame, against which the legitimacy of current practices is likely to be measured. Finally, the possibility that some historical policing practices were more effective in terms of generating greater legitimacy for state police by establishing better linkages between different layers of policing provision in Solomon Islands should not be discounted.

Based on the memories and perceptions of several of those interviewed, there were well-defined differences in behaviour and practices which distinguished police in the late colonial period and first years following independence, from contemporary RSIPF officers or their PPF counterparts. Many of these practices had a direct bearing on legitimacy perceptions and

¹⁸ See Appendix A for a list of interviewees and Chapter 3 for details of methodology and ethics.

contributed to the construction and maintenance of legitimacy. Some of the most salient points raised by those I interviewed reflect the importance of 1) *relationship between police and communities*, as reinforced by certain police practices, such as rural patrolling; 2) *discipline*, as reflected in police appearance, practices and behaviour; and 3) *administrative and logistical support*, as reflected in timely payment of salaries and allowances, efficient logistical and administrative systems to support a timely and effective police response.

One of my first interviews was with Wilfred Akao, a former Deputy Commissioner of Police Operations RSIPF. We met in a noisy café in Honiara frequented by government workers. Our interview began with some awkwardness. Akao was arrested and charged shortly after RAMSI arrived (Moore 2005) and sentenced in 2005 to two years in prison in relation to an incident in 1996 (*Regina v Anita* 2005). The crime was unrelated to the conflict but Akao's conviction was praised by the Australian PPF Commander and RSIPF Police Commissioner Shane Castles (*Pacific Islands Report* 2005). Since his release, Akao had been involved in church and youth work and stood as a candidate for North Malaita in the 2010 national elections (Wood 2014). I wondered whether Akao's experiences might have made him feel hostile or wary about talking to me as an Australian researcher, but our shared interest in the history of RSIPF seemed to break the ice and Akao appeared eager to contribute his story: "You are the first one to talk to me. From the first day of the Tension to the last I knew what was happening. I knew everything, but nobody... I display low profile. Ask me, I can help you. I know everything" (Akao interview 2011).

Relationship between police and communities

Akao enthusiastically recounted the history of the police from its establishment as an Armed Constabulary and described its role including to "assist the Colonial administrators, collect taxes and that sort of thing". An important function was to liaise with rural communities. Extended rural patrols were a key means of building a direct relationship between police and rural communities, and according to Akao, help link the people with government:

[T]hey are... the people who goes out to the country, and patrols by themselves walking and then they bring information about the people; what's affecting them... So, the police force in those days acted as a [conduit?] for the government ... And they went out and you know have good friendship with the people... establishing good relations with the community (Akao interview, July 2011).

Rural patrols continued to be a regular part of police duties after independence. While the origins of police patrols were closely tied to collection of unpopular head tax introduced in the 1920s, by the 1960s and in the 1970s, according to Akao, communities welcomed “police officers who came to solve their problems” and could report back to government on medical needs, food shortages, or criminal activities. As Akao explained: “The only way... to have some general idea of what is happening in the rural areas and the people is through police officers” (Akao interview 2011). Significantly, although this was not mentioned by Akao, police were assisted in this role by local mediators such as chiefs, village head men or Area Constables (as noted in Chapter 4). As noted in Chapter 4, the reports and memoirs of colonial officers support the portrayal of patrols as having a strong focus on service delivery.

Administrative and logistical support

Effective administrative and logistical support made an important contribution to the perceived legitimacy of the colonial police. Police also appear to have had a direct relationship with other areas of the administration. Dinnen and Allen (2016, p. 226) note the importance of service delivery and draw attention to the embedded nature of late colonial policing within local government and the overall administrative apparatus, “in stark contrast to the contemporary siloing of state institutions, including the police”. They argue further that: “Solomon Islands’ past experience is seen by many as an important source of insight into how devolved administration and service delivery, including policing, might be achieved in current times” (ibid.). The British colonial administration in Solomon Islands was minimalist and at times harsh but it was relatively efficient and predictable. It worked because Solomon Islanders were allowed to continue to rely on their own local (indigenous) policing and dispute resolution approaches for everyday concerns but could access a relatively efficient state policing and justice system when needed. Deputy Commissioner, Edmond (Eddie) Sikua, who I interviewed in his office at Rove police headquarters, had joined RSIPF in 1980, two years after independence but while the force was still led by British expatriate Commissioner John Holloway (see Appendix B, p.223). Sikua shared his positive impression of the police organisation inherited from the British:

I believe that for policing in SI the British I think left a well-structured police force, a police force that is well recognised because of their performance, because of what they do with the community. Probably as you know we have police from other countries coming in to even attend trainings in Solomon Islands. I think the way it was the police force is being built up to Independence it is of a very high standard and I believe [was one of the highest] in the region (Sikua interview, August 2011).

Sikua's praise of police force built by the British contrasts significantly with key contributions to the RAMSI narrative (for example Wainwright 2003a, b). While his personal interpretations may arguably be coloured by a degree of nostalgia, the colonial police force did evolve and adapt to Solomon Islands context, in the process developing some positive features. Solomon Islander police officers were poorly paid but could usually rely on timely payment of salaries and allowances, such as those received while conducting rural patrols. Mundane bureaucratic efficiency was an important factor in maintaining morale and the willingness of officers to endure the hardships and rigors of remote patrolling. As I will show later in this chapter, the lack of capacity to maintain basic systems was identified as a significant reason why the RSIPF had been unable to perform as expected. As Dinnen and Haley note:

Contemporary nostalgia for these past approaches in Solomon Islands does not reflect a yearning for a return to colonial subjugation but instead draws attention to how those systems, including their policing dimension, were capable of projecting their administrative power throughout most of the country, in a way that the postcolonial state has singularly failed to do. As such, these older systems are seen as a potential source of insight into how devolved administration, including policing, might be achieved in contemporary times (Dinnen & Haley 2012, pp.8-9).

There were however also significant structural problems with the force left in place by the British. At independence the structure of RSIPF was heavily dominated by Malaitan officers. In 2000, as noted previously, 75% of the force were estimated to be or have Malaitan ancestry (Amnesty International 2000, p. 7). This led to a perception, and sometimes a reality, that the RSIPF protected Malaitan interests ahead of those from other provinces. This was among the key grievances identified by those from Guadalcanal and a contributing factor to the conflict (GPA 1999). Another structural problem was that many Solomon Islanders serving in senior ranks were at or close to retirement age when independence was achieved. Later, during the 1990s when strong and experienced leadership was most required, other senior officers were actively encouraged to take early retirement. Lucien Konata, whom I interviewed in Malu'u, in North Malaita, related how he was encouraged to take early retirement:

Yeah it was funny a bit because I was supposed to apply for retire but the public service wrote to me and asked me about retiring. Yeah. But I was 46, at, 47 at that time. So, the public service wrote to me and said, "Oh hey. You. You are now within a retirement age. So, what do you think? You would like to have retirement now or what? Tell us". So, I turn around and say, "Oh yes. You are the employers.

If you think I am already in the retiring age, I would be too happy to go home now” (Konata interview August 2011).

While encouraging early retirement of senior police and other public servants made financial sense according to the logic of donor funded public sector reform programmes, it had damaging consequences in terms of draining the police and other key institutions of some of their most experienced personnel.

Discipline and impartiality

Another significant source of legitimacy for police was partly symbolic. The physical appearance of police in the Colonial era was commonly identified by my interviewees as a key distinguishing feature of the police force in the past when compared to the RSIPF during the Tensions or in the present. The formal police uniforms had an important symbolic role, highlighting the superior discipline of the police, compared with the general population. This was itself a source of respect and legitimacy for the police, as an interviewee described:

Okay, in terms of things that really changed now, yeah. It’s not like before, where there was a lot of respect for the uniform. Anybody who wears a uniform, they’re a person of really law and order, and you don’t need to have an arm [sic.] or a gun. (SIG official 'J' interview, August 2011).

Deputy Commissioner Sikua also described the appearance and role of the police during the Colonial era in similar terms:

You can still see the kind of police officer that you would require during that time, that the people want to see out there...disciplined, well dressed... you cannot be mistaken out there if you are in a group of people you can pick out which ones are police officers because they are neat, they stand out to be very smart and very fit looking.... Cos, I think every police officer will have to do patrols... they will have to go out and learn to live in the villages, live with the community and therefore the respect for police officers is very big... is enormous.... (Sikua interview, August 2011)

According to these perspectives the symbolic appearance of police “disciplined, well-dressed” and “very fit looking” (Sikua interview, 2011) was a source of respect, and by implication a source of legitimacy, for police. The importance of symbols in communicating authority and legitimacy is not limited to police in Solomon Islands. For example, blue flashing lights and Sillitoe tartan (the distinctive blue and white chequered pattern favoured by police in Australia) tend to elicit immediate compliance and respect from the general population.

Other informants highlighted the importance of other aspects of discipline including the perceived impartiality of police as contributing to the respect for police prior to independence. In one interview, Esau Kekeubata, a Kwaio chief and researcher, provided his impressions of the police from when he was child in the 1970s. In the past, “when they want to arrest someone, they go for it. They don't use favouritism. Because when they go, they go for it, whether you're *wantok* [a member of the same kinship or language group] or whether you are a relative, they get you out” (Kekeubata interview, 2011). This, he believed, contrasted sharply with the behaviours of contemporary police, who were considered susceptible to *wantok* pressures (reciprocal social obligations to preference one's kinship or language group). Other police behaviours also served to undermine their legitimacy:

When the Police come to our village he come just to sit down and eat “Betelnut” with people. Even some community thieves, what I mean is all our boys living in the community, even that time they give it to the Police. We want to eat half of the meat. They give them half of the meat. They say, “ah, that's fine!”. I can see the changes in my point of view. Even the Police start to realise and start to eat the stolen thing. And get involved in the criminal activities in my point of view (Kekeubata interview, August 2011).

The above excerpt is an example of a contrast between the positive impression of RSIPF police as they are remembered, and the negative impression of RSIPF as they were viewed at the time of my interviews. A key insight from these perspectives is that despite their lack of political legitimacy – after all the colonial police were a violent coercive agent of British imperial rule – colonial police were remembered by my interviewees with a respect – tinged with fear. This point is not a defence of colonialism. Rather it is intended to draw attention to the way that everyday practices have the ability to foster confidence, respect and compliance. While the colonial administration inherently lacked legitimacy, this did not stop them from seeking it. As identified by my interviewees, everyday practices were highlighted as contributing to perceptions that in the past, police were relatively effective. These included conducting rural patrols, demonstrating discipline, maintaining high standards of physical fitness and appearance. In contrast, in recent times many Solomon Islands have indicated that the RSIPF lacked the confidence of the wider community (ANU Enterprise 2013). In the following section I examine local perspectives on why RSIPF lost legitimacy.

Theme 2: Losing legitimacy: local perspectives on what happened to RSIPF

The loss of legitimacy of RSIPF appears to have been both a causal factor and a consequence of the Tensions. There are many references in RAMSI's external and internal narratives regarding the failure of RSIPF. Indeed, much of the rationale for RAMSI's focus on restoring law and order and on institutional capacity building of RSIPF reflects the belief that the state-based police institution lacked legitimacy. However, existing accounts of the conflict, or of RAMSI, do not directly explore how legitimacy was lost by RSIPF. Many of my interviewees were well-placed to provide an informed perspective on this question. When I asked my informants about when things began to change for the formal policing system, several interviewees identified the 1990s as a key period when the legitimacy of the RSIPF and the state itself began to erode. Conflicts over land and resource extraction led to the police increasingly being directed to take coercive action against communities. The logging industry was a major case in point. Following independence in 1978, some of Solomon Islands' new political leaders quickly recognised the potential for certain state institutions to be gamed to ensure substantial economic benefits would flow their way. Political corruption quickly became established as a feature of Solomon Islands politics (Fraenkel 2004). However, there was an important cultural dimension:

For politicians, what is regarded as corruption in the conventional sense is, in fact, the essence of survival. In a society where a Bigman's wealth is measured, not so much in what he accumulates as in what he distributes, it is important that a Bigman finds a means of acquiring wealth for distribution. Logging provides that means (Kabutaulaka, 2000, p.95).

Particular ministries, such as those responsible for Finance, Mining and Forestry, became lucrative sources of revenue for cabinet ministers. Under the leadership of three-time Prime Minister Solomon Mamaloni, who was himself director of a logging company, it became routine for bribes or 'gifts' to be paid for in return for licenses for logging (Bennett 2000; Dauvergne 1998; Frazer 1997; Kabutaulaka 2000). The scale of this corruption was also acknowledged by Joses Tuhunuku, a former cabinet minister under the reformist Billy Hilly government. In a 1996 interview with an Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC) radio program, Tuhunuku claimed he had been offered, but refused to accept, bribes to support the overthrow of the Billy Hilly government. He also described how bribery had become an entrenched feature of Solomon Islands politics:

In the logging industry bribing people is part of the industry. They have been bribing ministers of the Government. They bribe landowners. They bribe certain chiefs. They bribe our provincial ministers and so on. So, bribery is actually part of the logging industry and the reason is that most of these Malaysian logging companies that operate there, probably that is how they do business (Garret 1996).

When local community members opposed to logging protested and vandalised logging site infrastructure and equipment, the RSIPF were soon instrumentalised by those political elites with ties to logging. This had a direct bearing on perceptions of police legitimacy within the community, as Deputy Commissioner Sikua acknowledged during our interview:

So, after independence, ...probably real change came in when we had logging operations. This is when we start to see policing change from just normal community interaction and all that. I remember we had to be deployed to various logging camps to safe guard first government interests and then the logging companies... and I see the role of the police force, the PFF at that time, starting to change from being protectors of people to being protectors of government and government interests and the logging companies (Sikua interview, August 2011).

This reflection highlights how changing practices impacted on the relationship with communities with negative impacts for trust and legitimacy of police. Other changes in practices following independence also served to increase the barriers between the local population and the police. Sikua suggested that “soon after Independence... as roads and vehicles come in... patrols stopped going out to villages... we expect to go on vehicles... people use vehicles rather than walking and living in communities...” (Sikua Interview 2011). If Sikua is correct in his description of the changing expectations and practices of policing, once vehicles became more widely available, then the very limited network of roads, let alone paved roads, and their generally poor state of repair would have certainly impacted on the access of remote communities to police. This in part, he believed, explained why the police “did not hear anything about the Tension” until events had largely spiralled out of control.

Local informants also drew attention to the role of legislative changes following independence in weakening the RSIPF’s effectiveness and quality of relationship with communities. Area councils and the much-lauded area constables were abolished in order to promote economic savings but these also removed a platform of competition and criticism for central government, thereby, contributing more broadly to the ‘withdrawal of state’ from rural Solomon Islands (Dinnen & Allen 2016).

The official RAMSI narrative, which was described in Chapter 5, dismissed colonial police- and statebuilding efforts as inadequate, and even the memoirs of some colonial officials note that “Britain was mean in administering its Empire” (Smith 2011, p. 202). In contrast, the local perspectives highlight that significant gains made during the colonial period, particularly in the last decades before Independence:

So, as I’ve said, the Brits left a very simple and effective system of policing if you like. They have the chiefs and their area constables... then you have the RSIPF and align it with the magistrates... then the area constables also... accessible to local courts and we have access to local courts as well.. so, you have the work of the police aligned to a justice system right from down there to the really top level. (Sikua interview, August 2011).

As Sikua highlights in the above quote, in the latter phase of colonialism there were well established links between policing and justice providers. These links operated vertically between villages and the state and horizontally across local courts to produce a relatively effective system of policing. Sikua’s perspective is supported by academic research. For example, Dinnen and Allen argue that:

Despite its lack of political legitimacy, the colonial state was able to project its authority to most parts of the territory and while its goals remained modest it established a relatively efficient system of administration. By contrast, the postcolonial state has struggled with authority and capacity in particular, although it has always had the potential for securing a higher degree of legitimacy than its colonial predecessor. (Dinnen & Allen 2013, p. 224)

While this observation is highly relevant, it needs to be unpacked. Specifically, what is the relationship between political legitimacy and projection of authority? Sir Allan Kemekeza, who was formerly a policeman prior to his political career, argued that it was not *despite* but *because* of its lack of political legitimacy that the colonial state was effective in projecting its authority effectively over most parts of Solomon Islands (Kemekeza interview 2011). According to Kemekeza, in the days prior to independence, Solomon Islands was ruled by unelected officials who remained detached from local concerns. In comparison to the contemporary situation, politics was conspicuously absent. Thus, police on patrol, often under the supervision of an expatriate officer, could engage in a wide range of surveillance and development activities on behalf of the colonial state without interference from local, provincial or national politicians. After independence, police had to negotiate the complexity of multiple political fields occupied by politicians at national, provincial and area ward levels

juggling for status and influence over the allocation of scarce resources by the state (refer to Chapter 4 for details on the establishment and later abolition of the Area Council system). Kemekeza's comments echoed research conducted in neighbouring Papua New Guinea, where during the colonial era policing was supervised by a foreign white colonial official or *kiap*, who was regarded immune to the influence of local politics (Dinnen & Braithwaite 2009). Similarly, as Dinnen and Allen (2013) have observed, Solomon Islanders frequently expressed a preference for PPF police rather than RSIPF police, based partly on their detached and impartial relationship to local politics and conflicts and immunity from reciprocity and social obligations characteristic of *wantokism* in many Melanesian contexts.

The perspectives offered above, provide a more nuanced account of why the RSIPF's declined following independence. They suggest a gradual process of decline amplified by key structural changes, which hastened the erosion of legitimacy of RSIPF. The dominant narrative of RAMSI highlighted the failure of RSIPF as an institution and laid a significant portion of the blame for the criminal lawlessness that emerged after the Tension with significant involvement of elements of RSIPF. Testimonies to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2012) reflect some of these views and highlight the failure in security that some ex-militants used to justify why they took up arms. The following two excerpts from testimonies to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission are representative of a broader Guadalcanal narrative justifying involvement in the conflict due to the failure of RSIPF and the state more generally to provide communities with security.

...But I would like you to know of the pain we experienced that drove us to do what we did. We did out of insecurity. We actually felt like there was no future for us and our kids, at least in the hands of our government and in the name of development.

Mr. Francis Kennedy's story (TRC 2012, p. 1084)

...When the ethnic tension came about, all the people in the Solomons did not feel safe. Why? Because the very institute mandated to provide security and up hold law collapsed as well, and things become worse...

Mr. Charles Vangere's story (TRC 2012, p. 1079)

As Matthew Allen (2013) documents in his detailed study of the causes of the conflict, many militants framed their involvement as a conflict against the state or 'Government' rather than strictly ethnic conflict with Malaitans. This representation of their motives also comes across in some testimonies in the TRC:

... since we are not fighting against any province or island, but against the national Government of Solomon Islands for not addressing the issues of concern and the Bona Fide Demands of the Guadalcanal people. Whoever you are, especially the people of Malaita province who have been caught between. The fighting and struggle incited was meant for the Government... (TRC 2012, p. 1082).

As the RSIPF became more deeply drawn into the conflict, the weight of their resources fell towards the Malaitan side. Malaitan settlers forced out from the Guadalcanal plains reserved high praise for the actions of RSIPF in rescuing them (TRC 2012). Increasingly, police of Malaita background cooperated with the newly formed Malaitan Eagle Force to contain GRA/GLF attacks. Many non-Malaitan officers, particularly from Guadalcanal, left their posts and returned to their villages during this time. One senior RSIPF commander whom I interviewed was Aloysius Ora, originally from the Shortland Islands. Ora had temporarily been deployed to Western province in June, immediately before the 5 June Coup. After the coup he was prevented from returning to Honiara:

For me, 'Operation Cross-Roads' as a commander, stopped there. So I was not able to come back, because after phone... phone... lines came back... I was threatened by police officers. Bad language... plenty of things. They don't want me to go back. They will see me, they'll kill me, that was the language. So, that was the end of my operation. Seriously... that's uhm... that's officers I know very well, colleagues [names withheld] So, I received a letter from Police Commissioner. I should then look after Western Province and other sorts of provinces, two provinces. It was very sad... very sad... because police problem. Had we stayed together... as police officers and trusting each other, this thing wouldn't... shouldn't have happened. The people from outside managed to take control because police officers were involved. (Ora interview, July 2011).

While some RSIPF officers appeared to have been willing conscripts to the militant causes and criminality and brought the force into disrepute, many police remained uninvolved or played positive roles, evacuating populations at risk, and hiding weapons to prevent them being seized by militants (Ora interview, 2011). While the loss of legitimacy of the police cannot be disputed, there was a more complex story with many officers continuing to try to do their duty.

Theme 3: Contested practices: local experiences of transnational policing

RAMSI may have been the most dramatic transnational policing invention in Solomon Islands but it was by no means the first. From the first days of the Protectorate, policing practices and

personnel were transferred from Fiji, West Africa, and Britain's colonies in Australia, and adapted to the Solomon Islands context. And Solomon Islanders were sent overseas to observe and acquire training and new practices. As the tempo of decolonisation increased across the British Empire, there were increased opportunities for Solomon Islanders to attend training in the UK. This enhanced the legitimacy of RSIPF by upskilling Solomon Islander officers and exposing them to experience, skills and practices adopted across other Commonwealth countries who were facing similar challenges following or in the lead up to independence.

However, not all external practices served to enhance the legitimacy of RSIPF. According to Akao, this trend could be observed not just with the introduction of modern professional policing by PPF. It was also development he observed and viewed negatively when on training in the UK:

Well, our policing system was different from the police who came. Even when I was training in the UK, they were introducing these things Panda cars, Panda cars where you... very little presence on foot, on the streets and you use Panda cars. That makes a very big gap between the community and the police. Because no longer they see the police. They say "good morning" to them, and they say "hello", they feel the community, walking on the streets, now they only see cars. (Akao interview, 2011).

While Panda cars were not a feature of police in Solomon Islands, other former police officer supported Akao's view that foreign policing influences could be a corrupting influence on RSIPF. Lucien Konata, another former senior police officer, also pointed to the negative impacts of:

influences too from other forces... There are other forces that they don't really strict to discipline ... in some cases we go to get training from PNG and PNG are, even during those times, you can see cigarette butts here on top of the ... Here and also the police car. So that's improperly dressed for police officers and they can chew betel nut when they are in uniform. It's just, we don't allow that in the Solomon Island police force at that time and they spit everywhere. In the sink and everywhere in the office. Yeah. And so, things, yeah, they become, they grow into the Solomon Island police force. Maybe get it from somewhere.

Yeah. And even in England, police officers have beard and some long hair, which we don't really encourage that in the police force. You have to clean your hair neatly, you iron your uniform and dress up properly. Those things reflect a good disciplined organization. But just before I retired from the force I started to see some kind of slackness on all these small things. So just after I left the police force and there comes this tension. It broke everything down to the ground and the police force at that time, there

was no law at all. No police force and when they tried to recover from that, I think it will take some time I think. (Konata interview, 2011).

While the logic of transnational policing assumes that the institutional transfer of knowledge, norms and practices is unidirectional and positive for the organisation or individual receiving training or police-building, the perspectives above contests this view. Just as development or peacebuilding interventions have unintended consequences, transnational policing interventions can lead to the transfer of negative as well as positive practices.

The RAMSI intervention also brought substantial change in practices. However, it was not just formal training that was the vehicle for communicating the new model of policing being promoted by PPF. PPF officers both consciously and unwittingly introduced new habits, practices and routines. This led to a culture clash between the established or expected routines and norms of the RSIPF, albeit broken down, and the new routines and practices introduced by PPF, and which reflected the AFP's dominance of PPF.

In RAMSI's first year there was a 'purge' of RSIPF. According to Ben McDevitt (2006, p. 33), over 400 officers were removed from the force and "a total of 74 serving officers were arrested and charged with serious criminal offences" with some receiving lengthy prison sentences. Those who remained were the subject of substantial training or police-building programmes, but, at least initially, they were under considerable scrutiny by their PPF 'partners'. This had a direct negative impact on the RSIPF. William Akao was among the officers pushed out at this time and describes the negative impacts on the confidence of RSIPF officers that this scrutiny had:

Then again, we have situation where every police [officer?], every individual officer has to be scrutinised by a member of RAMSI. So how would you carry out your job effectively when you are in fear of being subject to dismissal or because you have applied cultural sensitivity here with your community and with your law and practices you are able to maintain and sustain the unity of the people in the community and such thing in applying that law. (Akao interview, August 2011).

The culture clash between an urban Australian approach to policing and the Solomon Islands approach to policing was also evident in public order situations. Whereas RSIPF officers would attempt to identify community leaders who could talk the crowd down, PPF were more inclined to try and disperse the crowd with more aggressive public order management

practices. This was best exemplified during the Honiara riots in 2006 when the PPF was accused of mishandling the situation and ignoring local advice on how to defuse it. During my interview with locally-based Australian journalist Mary-Louise O'Callaghan in 2011, she relayed the perspective of local RSIPF officers present at Parliament House who tried to dissuade RAMSI from applying riot control equipment and strategies:

When this thing was getting worse and worse, and then PPF already seemed to be exacerbating it, T, who was the clerk, went to R and said, "Can't you tell them not to bring in all this body armour with tear gas? It's just going to inflame the situation." She said... if they think they know what they're doing, we'll let them do it. (O'Callaghan interview 2011).

It took a major breakdown in diplomatic relations between 2006 and 2007, precipitated by these riots, and the election of Manasseh Sogavare as Prime Minister (as discussed in Chapter 1), before RAMSI made serious efforts to enable regional and Solomon Islands voices to contribute substantively to the partnership that was supposed to have existed from the beginning. The formation of the *SIG-RAMSI Partnership Framework* provided a process for increased alignment of priorities and ownership of decision making by SIG (2009). Greater regional involvement was facilitated by the PIF Enhanced Consultative Mechanism and other measures. Even then, early efforts in 2008-09 to develop a more effective working relationship between senior RAMSI advisors and their senior SIG counterparts were reported as 'disappointing' and often characterized by wariness and distrust (Fraenkel et al. 2014). This was partly a legacy of the fraught relations of the 2006-07 period.

Another interviewee identified Australian standards of human rights, workplace safety, duty of care as another area where the practices and approaches introduced by RAMSI clashed with local expectations and realities. While Australian government officials continued to use metrics like the "the incredible number of 6300 [arrests] on more than 9,100 charges" (Butler 2008, p. 272) as a sign of RAMSI positive contribution to the law and order situation, local elites closely involved in peace-building process were more circumspect:

[Y]ou cannot be arresting people forever, otherwise we can't be building the big prisons all the time now. We can't afford it, and to feed them with the quality of food now that they've introduced to in the police, too. It's the human rights, they must good three meals a day, da-da-da, whereas a hospital... Better than the hospital, you know, for the sick. That kind of thing, it's a bit too much up on the scale, so we need to limit it down. (SIG official 'J', interview, August 2011).

Some senior officers also appeared to resent the way that local approaches were dismissed and the way in which senior commanding roles were taken over by RAMSI, as Akao recounted:

But right now, all these commanding roles... by the headquarters. It's ok at the time because RAMSI has the resources, but what would happen if the RAMSI gone? It's not our fault, it's their fault. So, they shouldn't be enforcing their standards on us. They should make us enhance the situation.... And allow us to take control. That's what should be happening. We need to change those strategies, these strategies cannot work at this time. When you go, it won't work. (Akao interview, August 2011)

With the major investment in policing reform it was inevitable that existing policing practices and local ways of doing things would be closely scrutinised. As is common in organisational change processes, this frequently meant an approach of out with the old and in with the new. The opportunity to acquire new skills from experts drawn from Australia, New Zealand and elsewhere in the Pacific under RAMSI was welcomed by many RSIPF officers. Donor-funded training was an opportunity for individual and organisational development, a hearty lunch and a change from routine.

In 2011, around a third of RSIPF officers received formal or on the job training from the PPF (AusAID 2012). But capacity building trainings sometimes jarred with existing practices. Some older police officers appear to have found the different policing practices introduced by RAMSI unsettling. The following extract from an interview with an experienced police officer based in Malu'u, in North Malaita, exemplifies the anxiety experienced by some older RSIPF officers struggling to make sense of the new style of policing and everyday routines and practices promoted by PPF:

From my point of view, when the RAMSI arrive ...and to bring force back, ahhh... I don't want to sp..., put the criticism on the RAMSI but what I mean is... the system... how maybe that style of discipline... of the force in Australia might differ from the British Government... maybe... Maybe British government has placed... it's working force in a different discipline state or maybe the Australians are placing themselves in a different way of raising up the force [?]....

Now when I have seen when RAMSI arrive... if we say "Good Morning Daniel" that's all! Without paying attention... or with proper [respect] That's what I found difference... They don't practice "Good morning sir". ... although they've got commissioner's rank (RSIPF officer A, August 2011).

The different meanings attributed to different policing practices was evident of a deeper discord between how PPF and RSIPF police applied their different cultural backgrounds and experience to make sense of how different practices reinforced or undermined police legitimacy. This perspective highlights several important issues for transnational policing interveners. First, there is the issue of the unintended consequences, including for legitimacy, that result from interaction between different policing organisational cultures. Relatively minor everyday habits, culture and practices of interveners can be striking, and even disconcerting, for those who are the target of policing reform. In the example described by the officer in Malu'u, the lack of formality of Australians was symbolic of a deeper unease with new approaches introduced by Australian police and the declining emphasis on paramilitary styles of strict performative discipline as introduced by British police in the post-war period (as discussed in Chapter 4). An effect of this dissonance between the culture and practices of policing learnt from the British and those introduced by Australians and other members of the PPF was to undermine the confidence of older RSIPF officers.

Newly trained graduates from the Police Academy in Honiara brought skills and knowledge from a new curriculum developed by PPF advisors, and based on an Australian curriculum (Richardson interview, August 2011) but the reduction in training from six months to three months was frowned upon by some of the older officers I interviewed. RSIPF Officer C (Interview, August 2011) argued that longer police training was “needed to break down culture. Three months was not enough”. This seemed partly related to views on the importance of drilling as practice that imposed and demonstrated not just discipline but a sense of uniformity, marching as one organism, and relinquishing separate identities to one's *wantoks*. While Australian PPF officers appeared bemused by the affection that RSIPF police had for drills and parades, viewing them as anachronistic. As a former British colonial police officer, Alan Lindley, whom I interviewed in Adelaide in late August 2011, expressed, “... it's about discipline and acting as one”.

Other practices associated with communicating RAMSI's external 'success narrative', which was discussed in Chapter 5, shaped the practices of the intervention in important ways. One example, which I observed in my role as a policy advisor with the National Peace Council, occurred during the first few weeks of RAMSI. Together with senior RAMSI officials and a sizeable contingent of local and international media, we flew to Auki in a military aircraft to accept the ceremonial surrender of weapons by ex-MEF militants. The event was followed

by an elaborate lunch feast in a local community hall attended by local community leaders and politicians. However, due to the perceived urgency of transporting the foreign media back to Honiara in time to meet deadlines to file stories for the evening news in Australia, senior RAMSI officials skipped the lunch to join the first flight back to Honiara. As a junior official scheduled on a later flight, I remained behind but it felt awkward. Nothing was said but the potential for offence to be caused in a Melanesian social context where sharing meals was important was significant.

This incident was representative of a broader practice of ‘fly-in, fly out’ meetings with local communities. This allowed more communities to be visited and enabled senior RAMSI officials to get back to Honiara to continue other important work. However, it also reflected externally defined conceptions of time and importance. In this instance the need to portray RAMSI as a success with appropriate visual images to domestic audiences in Australia and New Zealand took precedence over the more Melanesian priority of building relationships over food, and demonstrating legitimacy through providing an impressive feast. At one level the commitment to consulting and visiting communities by RAMSI was impressive. It should also be noted that on other occasions RAMSI officials no doubt did stay for lunch. But it was clear that there was a clash of cultural values related to the value of time versus the value of building relationships. For example, Paul Tovua, former Chair of the NPC was dismissive of RAMSI’s approach to consulting communities, referring to it as just “go and come back”. This, he argued, was an obstacle to meaningful consultation and communication:

People here ..., they tend to shy away. Not only that, but if they're quiet, they feel that quiet, it brings their thinking. You want to give them that time to think and then come out with probably some good answers. Not necessary what you expected, but at least they give you something positive... My dealings, even at NPC before, we never just go and come back one day. It's always one, two, three days and even after a week, so that we go through all these things with them. In that way people get to understand and have a feel that you care for it. That's an important thing... To be one on their side rather than coming to them or, "This [person] is coming to attack me," this kind of conflict situation question and answer, that's usually not best thing (Tovua interview 2011).

In summary, the different experiences of transnational policing, and different cultural backgrounds of interveners and locals have a major impact on how meaning and sense is made from different policing practices. This is important for understanding how transnational policing interventions build relationships with community, and how the legitimacy of local

police is restored. Another significant area where these different cultural backgrounds and experiences is expressed, relates to issue of who and what is policed, to which I now turn.

Minor crimes: major problems

In the first years of RAMSI the problems experienced by rural areas were generally a lower priority. The establishment of 16 police posts outside of Honiara including four in trouble spots such as the Weather Coast of Guadalcanal meant RAMSI had a presence in every province in Solomon Islands until 2011 (Putt et al. 2018; RAMSI 2015). However, the impact of RAMSI's presence in rural areas in supporting the capacity development of RSIPF was determined by the level of commitment of specific officers which was highly variable (PPF 2009). This is significant because it suggests that there was not just a clash in culture and meanings, as argued above. Rather, just as significant for the legitimacy of transnational policing efforts was the clash in priorities around what it is that should be policed. PPF officers (predominantly Australian) were conditioned by Western frames of reference related to the relative severity of criminal acts. Matters considered grave concerns within Melanesian culture such as swearing, and infidelity were consequently not recognised as crimes by PPF. PPF frequently left intervention in these areas to the RSIPF, whose capacity to respond was often limited by operational constraints and a lack of resources. Instead RAMSI focused on what they perceived to be 'serious' Tension-related crimes. Some prominent Solomon Islanders, such as Manasseh Sogavare, were openly critical of RAMSI's "strategy [of] ...punishing those who have been forced by the environment created during the crisis to commit crime" (cited in Braithwaite et al. 2010 p. 67). The classification of some crime as *serious* and other crime as *petty* according to external frameworks and foreign priorities does not align with the lived realities, daily concerns, cultural values and local priorities of rural Solomon Islanders. Dinnen and Haley reported the everyday problems of rural women in an evaluation of the *Community Policing Pilot Programme* in an example from the Weather Coast:

Separate consultations with women shed further light on the sorts of problems encountered in the community. Alcohol (including *kwaso*, a homemade distilled liquor) and marijuana headed the list. Concern was also expressed about adolescent relationships, premarital sex, and teenage pregnancy (2012, p. 15).

Lack of resolution of these matters was identified as contributing to conflict within communities as violence often spiralled from minor incidents to result in serious offences. Other commentators have provided additional evidence that the breakdown of justice at the local level often resulted from alcohol-fuelled violence and perceived transgressions against deeply held cultural values. Research by the World Bank's 'Justice for the Poor' (J4P) programme conducted extensive focus group and similar discussion with 86 communities in five of the six provinces in Solomon Islands (Allen et al. 2013; Dinnen & Allen 2016).

The most pervasive problem encountered was substance abuse and the consequent antisocial and illegal behaviours that typically accompany consumption. Substances of a variety of forms are consumed: *kwaso* (distilled alcohol made of yeast, sugar, and water), marijuana, homebrew, and store-bought alcohol, typically beer (Allen et al. 2013, p. 13).

The reasons why production and consumption of *kwaso*, homebrew and marijuana have grown exponentially since the late 1990s are manifold (Allen et al. 2013). The economic incentives for producing *kwaso* are substantial for those who have limited livelihood opportunities due to lack of education, unemployment or who are situated in areas 'at the end of the road' where transport costs associated with other forms of production are prohibitive. While lack of enforcement by police has been blamed, several measures to deter the production of *kwaso*, homebrew and marijuana have been implemented including increased fines. RSIPF Police Commissioner Peter Marshall, a senior New Zealand police officer, seconded to take charge of RSIPF (2008-2011), gave evidence to the 2009 Foreign Relations Committee Inquiry that "every day of the week people are being arrested and charged with *kwaso* related offences" although he conceded that 'police faced a difficult task' (SIG 2009a, p. 181).

It was not only police who faced a difficult task. In most communities, it was women, elders or chiefs who had to try to deal with the consequences of *kwaso* and other forms of substance abuse. In some rural Malaitan communities police officers were active consumers of *kwaso*, which made the task of elders in controlling substance abuse more difficult. Esau Kekeubata described vividly how difficult it was as a community leader to control community behaviour when police challenged local authority by participating in antisocial activities.

Even in my community some boys are smoking marijuana and also drinking *kwaso* as well. And also, a lot of police... even the police drinking *kwaso*. So as a leader, it's hard for me to control because I want to report it to the police but even the police is drinking the *kwaso*. So, it's really... uncontrolled for

me. I can't control it. Because even the police involved... You see... this is what happening in our days now. Actually, this is happening. And I can see in my eyes. The police drinking *kwaso* with the community boys... But the reason why I didn't report it to the higher body... because when I report it... I created the enemy, especially the police. It's a common practice here in the Solomon I should say. No. They just say 'just only blood.... blood you know... don't mind about it, because you are my blood.' (Kekeubata interview, August 2011).

The involvement of police in *kwaso* consumption not only undermined the respect and legitimacy for police it also directly undermined the traditional authority and legitimacy of chiefs and other community elders. The legitimacy and authority of community elders had already been substantially weakened as a consequence of the Tensions. During the pre-RAMSI era, militants and ex-militants directly challenged the authority of chiefs and other elders, emboldened by the power of the gun. Following the end of the Tensions, intergenerational conflict, while always present, appears to have been amplified by impacts of globalisation, the increased circulatory movement of young people between rural and urban areas, and youth cultural influences (Evans 2019). In some communities, chiefs too were involved in either the consumption or production of *kwaso* or both. The weakened legitimacy of traditional leaders was demonstrated by the failure of *kwaso* producers or consumers to follow rules set in place by chiefs:

We [the chiefs] are talking a lot and also we are trying to stop the people producing the *kwaso* but you know the problem is... even though we put the rule... strong rule against it, they don't want to believe it or follow the rule. Then the next thing is we have to report it to the police but when I report, when we report it to the police...and also the police they are also involved in drinking the *kwaso* . So, they just 'Ahh just a minor problem' 'Not a problem'... So that makes it difficult for us. Until the changes must come from the police or from the community. Both must be worked together before we finish it. (Kekeubata interview, August 2011).

Just as at the national and provincial government level Solomon Islands leaders lacked a reservoir of experience and skills to effectively manage and resolve the issues leading to the conflict, at the community level leaders had limited experience in managing the impacts of alcohol and drug use. One study examining how communities in Solomon Islands seek help for psychological issues highlights the challenges posed by alcohol and drugs. Community responses were often characterised by extreme avoidance and fear of those “mad with drink” or marijuana. There were “no established traditional responses at the community or individual level” (Blignault et al. 2009, p. 9).

PPF, in their early executive policing role, were pre-occupied with serious tension-related crimes of violence, rather than everyday crime. As the PPF moved into capacity development and advisory capacity, the focus shifted to institutional capacity development. Only ‘serious’ crimes, like murder, operations to capture weapons or fugitives, or large-scale civil disorder, were seen as problems requiring a PPF response. Yet, this stance needs to be considered in light of remarks by the Chief Justice of Solomon Islands, Sir Albert Palmer, highlighting that alcohol is the most common factor in the majority of murders committed in Solomon Islands (*Solomon Star* 2016). This view was also noted in the Justice Delivered Locally Research, whose authors observed: “Of six murders that had taken place in the north Malaita region over 2010–11, four involved assailants who had been drunk on *kwaso*” (Allen et al. 2013). Domestic or family violence also represents a major challenge in Solomon Islands and is often directly linked to alcohol consumption (SIG 2009b). More recent research (Evans 2019) continues to draw attention to the ongoing challenge of dealing with substance abuse – even within those communities with strong leaders who want to address the problem.

In summary, local perspectives highlight that many of the major problems in communities in Solomon Islands concern issues that, from a state-centric perspective, seem trivial. This highlights a significant cleavage between local perceptions of policing priorities and external perspectives. In the next section we will look at examples where community leaders seemed to have identified powerful local measures to minimise youth involvement in both social conflict during the tensions, and illegal or anti-social behaviours more recently.

Theme 4: Competing or complementary legitimacies? Linking community and state policing

With RAMSI’s focus clearly on institutional strengthening approaches around the goals of restoring law and order, stabilising government finances and re-engineering the machinery of government (as described in Chapter 1), local priorities were sometimes ignored. In particular, as Braithwaite et al. (2010, pp. 41-3) note, the significance of peace-building, nation-building and reconciliation appeared to not have been fully appreciated by RAMSI. RAMSI officials were, for example, reluctant to support the Truth and Reconciliation Commission despite strong local support for this process (Cox, Duituturaga & Scheye 2012, p. 23). The grassroots peacebuilding contributions of the NPC through a program which aimed to declare villages as Weapons Free and everyday conflict resolution activities by NPC monitors were underappreciated by some of my Australian colleagues from AusAID and DFAT who I recall

rather cynically dismissing these events as an opportunity for a feast and little else. This superficial perspective missed the cultural significance that giving feasts had within Melanesian society including enhancing the legitimacy of chiefs and elders who had seen their authority eroded during the Tensions.

A significant critical literature has highlighted the limitations of the state-centric lens that RAMSI applied to the problems in Solomon Islands (Allen et al. 2013; Blignault et al. 2009; Dinnen & Haley 2012; Goldsmith & Dinnen 2007; Peake & Studdard Brown 2005). This literature highlights that state-centric approaches to building police capacity within state institutions “tend to overburden the actual state institutions on the ground...and at the same time to underestimate the potential of non-state indigenous institutions and actors” (Boege, Brown & Clements 2009, p. 14).

Many of those I interviewed spoke in strong favour of ‘community policing’, although it was not always clear whether this meant the increased presence of police in the community, or more support for informal non-state policing approaches. One senior government official I interviewed argued that the approach could enable police to play a more active role in peace-building based on an approach more representative of restorative justice than the retributive approach promoted by RAMSI:

The community policing concept is very good. The police coming down to that level too, yeah, of understanding ... more into peace-building work as well. That's very important, that kind of approach. I think that's the way to go, that's the way to go. Work closely with the community, then the communities will do most of the policing for you, info, and it's much, much cheaper (SIG official ‘J’, interview, 2011).

The support for community policing offered by my interviewees resonates with a growing literature (discussed in Chapter 2) on non-state and plural policing (Albrecht & Kyed 2014; Baker 2008; Scarpello 2016). This literature questions the claim that criminal justice institutions, such as state police, prisons and courts, are the “lynchpin for legitimacy and ultimately political stability in transitional societies” (Karstedt 2015, p. 7). Rather stability emerges from a variety of actors, signals, symbols and mundane practices which according to (Hills 2000) may be more meaningful than institutional police reform in post-conflict environments.

Across Solomon Islands there are numerous examples of security and policing initiatives invoked by local communities to address their own concerns. Allen et al. (2013) describe in some detail the well-established ‘Tripod’ system in Isabel, which makes effective use of the different sources of legitimacy of the state, church, and *kastom*. The key body is the Isabel Council of Chiefs (ICC) comprised of the Provincial Premier (State), Bishop of Melanesia (Church) and Paramount Chief (*Kastom*). On Malaita, several interviewees identified situations where communities had taken responsibility for their own security, in the absence of an effective state policing response. For example, in Kilusakwalo, a substantial village of around 3000 people near Auki, which I visited in 2011, one informant recalled proudly how his village stayed clear of involvement in the conflict between MEF and GRA/IFM. Youth from the village were instead recruited into youth group which ‘patrolled’ the village to maintain safety and security (Village elder ‘K’, interview August 2011). This interviewee was also a strong advocate of community policing, stating his view that “Community policing is best for local areas like this yeah?”. He still saw an important role for RSIPF but noted:

Police station in Auki have to stay there but for go round the whole island they need community policing. Local people know who the criminals are and who is growing marijuana but if the police just stay in Auki they won’t know anything (Village elder ‘K’, interview August 2011).

Another possible alternative is suggested by a tentative experiment in community policing drawing on with a model of policing that had strong support from rural people and which recalled Colonial approaches to policing. Under a *Community Officer Pilot Scheme*, ‘Community Officers’ (COs) were appointed on a voluntary basis to provide a bridge between communities and the state (see Dinnen & Haley 2012, p. 11). Several PPF advisors had a key role in establishing the pilot scheme, which was established in 23 villages across nine provinces between late 2009 and August 2010. This initiative appears to have been well received by both communities and RSIPF, as noted in the following example in a 2012 review of the scheme:

The two RSIPF officers stationed at Avu Avu described the CO as hardworking and spoke enthusiastically about his work. They feel the CO’s role is important, and see it primarily as a liaison or bridging role, someone who extends his or her limited presence while also actively contributing to the resolution of small problems in the community (Dinnen & Haley 2012, p. 12).

The scheme was influenced by a similar scheme in Bougainville, earlier Solomon Islands local policing models such as the area constable, and the retained version of area constables which had been continued in Renbel province despite ending everywhere else in 1998 when Area Councils were abolished. Dinnen and Haley noted that:

A major strength of the current collaboration between the COs and the RSIPF, according to the officers, is that it extends police reach at little extra cost. This is interesting, as the COs face similar difficulties with transportation and, moreover, work on a voluntary basis. Evidently this has not deterred them (Dinnen & Haley 2012, p. 33).

This suggests that the COs were perceived widely to be a legitimate intermediary, not just by police but also by communities. As Dinnen and Haley note, some COs were chiefs, others were church leaders, and some were retired police. These appear to have given them strong basis of legitimacy from a range of sources allowing them to elicit community support for their role. Despite showing some promise and strong support from rural communities, this project did not receive sustained attention or support from RAMSI. While a few PPF advisors had a key role in setting up this project, it did not receive mainstream support and was discontinued.

The lack of support for this scheme provides further evidence that RAMSI and PPF were somewhat fixated by a state-centric framing of law and order. As such, the notion that a volunteer community officer might make a difference to crime reduction beyond the reach of the state may have seemed too far-fetched. However, the approach was watched closely by other development actors including the World Bank. In the years since the pilot project, there has been a steady expansion of community policing models that rely on similar intermediaries between informal and formal policing systems. Consideration of post-RAMSI initiatives is beyond the scope of this thesis but it is significant to note that initial evaluations of community policing efforts have been largely positive (World Bank 2018). RSIPF's (2017, p. 2) adoption in 2016 of a Crime Prevention Model which claims to be "underpinned by 'respecting and valuing of Custom, including the role of chiefs and other leaders, and culture, including *wontok* relationships" is suggestive of movement towards a hybrid model of policing assistance that articulates a clear role for non-state actors to link with formal state actors.

7.3 Conclusion: Policing Between the Village and the State

RAMSI's key objective of restoring law and order in Solomon Islands is widely claimed to be its most significant success and is a dominant element in the official RAMSI narrative communicated to both external and internal audiences. This narrative has often been proclaimed so loudly that local critical perspectives have been drowned out. Many Solomon Islanders express strong appreciation for the contributions made by RAMSI but are circumspect about how useful its contributions have been beyond arresting Solomon Islands' slide toward state failure. Specifically, as this chapter has shown, there are significant divergences in opinion related to what good policing looks like, what contributes to the legitimacy of state police, and how local non-state policing strategies can contribute to peace and security, prevent local disputes from escalating into larger conflicts, and link communities more directly to formal state processes. Positive perceptions or 'nostalgia' of some Solomon Islanders, related to the practices and structures of policing during the colonial era, have to an extent been validated by the renewed interest in applying similar principles to develop hybrid community policing structures in Solomon Islands.

RAMSI's effort to construct legitimacy for itself as a transnational policing intervention, and later for the RSIPF as a core institution of the Solomon Islands state, appears to have floundered in rural Solomon Islands. This is a concern given that many of the young men who played a pivotal role in 1998-2003 conflict were from rural areas on the Weather Coast, the most marginalised and underdeveloped area of Guadalcanal. In many other rural areas in Solomon Islands, communities report high levels of conflict, increasing 'family' or gender-based violence and crime (Ming et al. 2016).. In many cases this is due to relatively new problems such as substance abuse, particularly involving *kwaso*.

This chapter has probed local perspectives to examine dissonances between local understandings of legitimate policing and the between the external and internal narrative of RAMSI. This provides a more nuanced understanding of the multiple meanings that the concept of policing holds in Solomon Islands. For the rural majority of Solomon Islanders, it is non-state actors, such as chiefs, elders or church leaders, not police, who play the key part of regulating social order within communities. Despite the lack of legitimacy of imposed colonial rule, and its violent history, my interviewees considered that some of the practices of colonial police enhanced the relationship between the colonial state and communities. While then, as now, the state was unable to deliver a police presence in every community, linkages

were established through the system of indirect rule (see Chapter 4) which later in the post-independence period evolved into a system of Area Councils under Provincial governments. The abolition of this system in the late 1990s weakened linkages between the postcolonial state and rural communities. Scales (2005) argues this may even have contributed to the frustration and disaffection at the rural level, which contributed to the Tensions. Effectively, this eroded the legitimacy of state police, but it also undermined the authority of the community layer of governance who could no longer point to the threat of police action as a potential sanction against anti-social behaviour. Recent efforts to promote hybrid models of policing owe much to the examples of these earlier, well regarded models of policing.

Examination of local perspectives calls into question claims promoted by the official narrative that RAMSI was an outstanding success. The tendency of RAMSI planners and police to ‘bring their culture with them’ resulted in intended and unintended devaluing or silencing of local histories and knowledge practices. This is a point that has been observed in numerous other critical articles examining liberal peace- and statebuilding interventions (Hills 2000; Philipsen 2014; Richmond & Franks 2007; Richmond & Mitchell 2011). My analysis of local perspectives indicates that RAMSI’s dominant narrative has served to silence other narratives related to policing, statebuilding and peace-building in Solomon Islands. The very definition of ‘success’ in terms of RAMSI’s police institution building was constructed by external actors through the official and dominant narrative that I discussed in Chapter 5. Exploring local narratives of policing reveals that RAMSI’s ‘success’ in restoring law and order, strengthening policing institutions and building a sustainable peace is both partial and contested. This speaks to a recurring complaint voiced by many local critics over the duration of the intervention that RAMSI addressed symptoms rather than underlying issues and root causes of the conflict (Morgan & McLeod 2006).

Local perspectives reveal the importance of spatial, historical and political factors on both the construction and erosion of police legitimacy. They also draw attention to the significance of symbolism and everyday policing practices in fostering community trust and confidence. Solomon Islands geography has always limited the presence of the state including the police in the everyday lives of most Solomon Islanders. The practice of rural patrolling facilitated a linkage with communities that extended beyond policing to community development and was enhanced by local level governance structures including area constables. Strict discipline,

physical bearing and appearance, and other symbolic behaviours also were identified as contribution to positive legitimacy perceptions.

Local perspectives also highlight tensions between accommodating externally driven institutional reforms and maintaining a sense of historical organisational identity via a compelling narrative. Pride in the history of RSIPF offers a potential source for constructing future legitimacy if it can be suitably harnessed through ‘legitimacy work’ to inspire police in the current era to aspire to the values of discipline, impartiality, and duty, whether mythically or not, are perceived to have characterised the RSIPF in the past. In the final chapter, I look further to the future of policing in Solomon Islands, drawing on the analysis of legitimacy which has informed the empirical chapters of this thesis.

Chapter 8: Multi-layered Legitimacy and Implications for Policing in Solomon Islands

Having become “illegitimate in the eyes and in the hearts of a growing plurality of its citizens” (Rotberg 2003, p. 1), how do post-conflict states and their institutions become legitimate again? More specifically, how does transnational policing, undertaken as part of statebuilding interventions, contribute to the work of restoring legitimacy in states where confidence and trust in state institutions, such as police forces, is low? While the loss of legitimacy of key state institutions, including state police organisations, is assumed to be both a cause and consequence of state weakness, the precise dynamics of how legitimacy is lost and how it might be won back remains under theorised. Despite much scholarly attention given to examining the dilemmas of statebuilding, the problems of peacebuilding, and the paradoxes of transnational police reform, many fundamental questions remain related to the specific role of legitimacy in these processes.

This thesis has explored how transnational policing and statebuilding interventions work to construct legitimacy for themselves and for the states within which they intervene. In order to do so, I have deployed the concept of ‘legitimacy work’ in a novel way to examine how a transnational policing and statebuilding intervention in Solomon Islands managed legitimacy relationships with diverse audiences. I have argued that intervention narratives and practices have a crucial role as vehicles for legitimacy work in conflict and post-conflict settings. My thesis addressed a significant gap in the literature by providing an analysis of how interventions deploy strategic narratives to construct legitimacy for themselves and for the states and institutions within which they intervene. This contributes a new perspective on how legitimacy is engendered in the context of statebuilding interventions in post-conflict situations.

From a methodological perspective, this thesis provides the first explicitly interpretive analysis of RAMSI's transnational policing efforts in Solomon Islands. This approach has enabled me to bring an additional perspective to my analysis by reflecting on my personal experience in Solomon Islands prior to and during RAMSI, and especially my awareness of different actors' perspectives, priorities and understandings. The explicit adoption of what Schatz (2013, p. 5) has referred to as an 'ethnographic sensibility' has deepened my analysis. Reflexivity and consideration of positionality have aided my exploration of the multiple meanings of policing in Solomon Islands. These meanings were evident in official narratives represented by a variety of 'texts' and other materials including speeches, audio and video footage, and photographic material. Key informant interviews identified contrasting perspectives and alternative meanings (Appendix A). My long-term 'immersion' in the transnational spaces occupied by discourses and narratives related to RAMSI and its transnational policing efforts was also important. The analysis of this material through an interpretive lens has enabled me to denaturalise the dominant assumptions and to question the truth claims within RAMSI's official narratives. My interpretive approach has generated insights that move beyond the strictures of evaluating or critiquing RAMSI in terms of whether or not it been a successful example of transnational policing, or how it might have been more effective. Rather, in combination with the aforementioned ethnographic sensibility, my analysis has provided a deeper understanding of the multiple meanings associated with transnational policing in Solomon Islands, as revealed in RAMSI's official narratives and contrasting local perspectives. Additional key insights generated from my research are outlined below.

8.1 The Legitimacy Work of Intervention Narratives

Through this interpretive lens, I have used the example of RAMSI and the notion of 'legitimacy work' to explore how intervention narratives and practices operate to construct, sustain, transfer and confer legitimacy within the context of policing in Solomon Islands. As I described in Chapter 1, the SIG invited the Australian government to lead an intervention to assist in the restoration of law and order following several years of conflict (the Tensions). A key focus of this intervention (RAMSI) was to rebuild the RSIPF. RSIPF had long been one of the most central institutions and visible symbols of the Solomon Islands state, but by 2003 RSIPF had lost the trust and confidence of many Solomon Islanders. While RAMSI had high

levels of popular support from the public and civil society within Solomon Islands, I have established that legitimacy work played a key role in RAMSI's external and internal narratives. RAMSI worked hard to consolidate its claims to legitimacy. While I show that legitimacy work was a feature of RAMSI's narratives and practices throughout the intervention. I also demonstrated that there were significant shifts in RAMSI's narratives and practices over time. These shifts are reflected in the forms of legitimacy work that these narratives and practices conveyed. Importantly, my focus on legitimacy work highlights the opposing tensions that interventions face. RAMSI first had to construct and sustain its own legitimacy as a transnational policing intervention in order to carry out executive policing functions to restore law and order. This direct law enforcement role was premised on RSIPF's lack of legitimacy. However, RAMSI's longer term objectives demanded that legitimacy eventually be transferred back or restored within RSIPF. The *raison d'être* of statebuilding interventions, such as RAMSI, has been, after all, the restoration of legitimacy of state institutions – a point sometimes neglected within an academic literature that can become preoccupied with the legitimacy of interventions themselves (e.g. Gippert 2017; von Billerbeck 2016; Whalan 2013).

Following on from this, my thesis builds on critiques of institutional approaches to the role of legitimacy in statebuilding contexts (Lemay-Hébert 2009; von Billerbeck and Gippert 2017). While the importance of legitimacy is widely recognised, much of the statebuilding and transnational policing literature glosses over the specific reasons why legitimacy may be lost or how it may be won back. Key features of the institutionalist approach to legitimacy include an oversimplification that legitimacy is synonymous with functioning state institutions (Lemay-Hébert 2009) or that legitimacy can be reduced to the quality of a binary hierarchical relationship between state authority and citizens (von Billerbeck and Gippert 2017). My case study of legitimacy work in Solomon Islands context illustrates the more complex role of legitimacy in post-conflict settings. While I acknowledge in Chapter 2 the inherently dialogic character of legitimacy, as described by Bottoms and Tankebe (2012), I have shown that in post-conflict and post-colonial contexts (such as Solomon Islands) legitimacy is not just a matter of discussion between an authority and potential legitimacy audiences but is sharply contested. This contest occurs between different actors seeking power and authority but often drawing on different understandings of legitimacy.

I have argued that greater attention to context is critical to understanding how legitimacy is understood and constructed in post-conflict and post-colonial contexts. As I have demonstrated in Chapter 4, Solomon Island's historical and social context has shaped understandings of legitimacy and policing in important ways. Despite fundamental differences between the colonial statebuilding project and RAMSI – for one thing, the colonial state was imposed, whereas RAMSI was invited – there were important continuities. Under both forms of external authority, contestation between competing forms of social and legal order characterised the interaction between the formal state police organisation and informal community-level structures of governance (such as chiefs or church organisations). For example, during the colonial period, conflict between the colonial law and indigenous social regulatory practices or 'customary law' (later reinterpreted as *kastom* law) was one of the enduring features of resistance against the colonial authorities (Akin 2013). This contestation has continued to be feature of state/society relations in the post-colonial period as the work of Akin (2013) and Allen (2013) highlights. Despite broad acceptance of RAMSI's authority in the policing space, there were occasions where local mechanisms of dispute resolution drawing on indigenous cultural values clashed with robust public order management strategies by PPF. I have shown in my thesis that the role of police on the frontline of these conflicts has a strong bearing on public perceptions of police legitimacy. Specifically, I have also established through the presentation of a number of local perspectives in Chapter 7 that historical experiences of policing practices provided a benchmark by which the appropriateness and legitimacy of RAMSI's efforts were judged by many Solomon Islanders.

The local perspectives I have documented (Chapter 7) also highlight several issues related to the legitimacy of policing. These include how legitimacy is lost and which forms of legitimacy work may usefully restore it. As the only coercive instrument of state authority in Solomon Islands, (in the absence of a military) RSIPF has a vexed relationship with legitimacy. RSIPF's experience of losing public trust and confidence as an institution substantiates Jackson's (2018, p. 2) insight, that "the police have a great need for legitimacy, a particularly difficult time earning and maintaining it, and an easier time losing it". This raises a key question explored in this thesis, which relates to how institutions in post-conflict states earn or regain legitimacy. A core assumption which has informed the liberal statebuilding paradigm was that institutional transfer of skills and resources is key way for legitimacy to be restored. That is, legitimacy is transferred and conferred by external actors onto local state institutions through the practices of statebuilding. However, my interviewees highlighted the significance of

everyday practices, such as physical bearing, a neat and tidy appearance of uniforms, and of marching and drilling, as markers of respect, trust and authority. They also highlighted the significant role of culture, not only in relation to the linkage between informal community-based policing, but also in a comparison between local policing norms and the culture of policing that Australians brought with them. These cultural components of legitimacy deserve further examination in the literature.

Legitimacy work was a key priority for RAMSI from the time the intervention was first conceived. During the planning and first phase of RAMSI's deployment, RAMSI's legitimacy work, as reflected in its strategic narrative, was preoccupied with the task of affirming and sustaining legitimacy for itself. As an external statebuilding intervention within a sovereign state, RAMSI needed a clear justification of why it was there and what it was seeking to accomplish as a police-led statebuilding mission. This included deflecting potential criticism and the perception that RAMSI was a neo-colonial endeavour instigated by the region's largest metropolitan power, Australia. As I have shown in Chapter 5, a range of legitimacy work was evident in RAMSI's external narrative targeting international audiences. Examples of this legitimacy work included the framing of Solomon Islands as a 'failing state' and RSIPF as a 'failed institution'. This aligned RAMSI with contemporary liberal peace building and statebuilding discourses in the heavily securitised post 9/11 era, which argued in favour of external intervention to rebuild legitimate state institutions in failing states (Rotberg 2003; Fukuyama 2004; Ghani and Lockhart 2008). Additional examples of legitimacy work included the extensive efforts taken later in the intervention to promote the growing capabilities of RSIPF.

Although RAMSI claimed strong solid public support as evidence of the intervention's legitimacy, there was political opposition from some elites who expressed concern that Solomon Islands sovereignty was being unduly compromised by the intervention, or whose personal interests were threatened by some of RAMSI's governance reforms. This tension erupted into a full-scale political and diplomatic crisis under the Prime Ministership of Manasseh Sogavare during 2006-2007, as I detail in Chapter 1 and refer to in Chapters 6 and 7. While RAMSI's contribution to improve security and economic recovery in Solomon Islands was widely appreciated, more ambitious governance reforms of the 'machinery of government' and lecturing of Solomon Islands elites on the importance of rooting out

corruption, were seen as meddling at best and alleged to be blatant illustration of Australia's neo-colonial aspirations by some members of the local political elite.

Paradoxically, legitimacy work for RAMSI could be ambiguous or even 'negative' in terms of its contribution towards restoring legitimacy to RSIPF. In the early period of the intervention, RAMSI's efforts to construct its own legitimacy further undermined the status of RSIPF. As I argue in Chapter 5, RAMSI's deliberate presentation of RSIPF as a failed police force in need of "purging" made sense while PPF was in 'executive policing mode'. However, this narrative was incompatible with longer terms objective of institutional capacity building (as I noted above). Additionally, there were unintended measures and practices that delegitimised RSIPF. As I highlighted in Chapter 6, RAMSI's practices and its immense resources, played an important role in contributing to perceptions of PPF's superior effectiveness, responsiveness and professionalism. The better RAMSI looked, the more RSIPF suffered by comparison. Many Solomon Islands expressed a clear preference for RAMSI police rather than their significantly less well-equipped RSIPF counterparts. Perversely then, RAMSI's well-resourced policing presence inadvertently served to undermine or, at the very least, complicated the task of rebuilding, the legitimacy of the local (RSIPF) police.

My analysis, especially in Chapter 5, demonstrates that a major theme in RAMSI's external and internal narrative concerned the projection of a story of the mission as an 'unqualified success' in the domain of liberal statebuilding. The Australian government, as RAMSI's chief sponsor and architect, invested considerable effort in showcasing RAMSI as an example of statebuilding 'best practice' (see Chapter 5; p. 109; Australian Government, 2012). As I discussed in Chapter 2, this narrative was founded on certain institutionalist assumptions about the centrality of state and the role of state institutions, such as the police and justice system, in enabling the kind of liberal social, political and economic order that would foster peace, stability and development in Solomon Islands. RAMSI was presented as an exemplar of the kind of liberal peacebuilding intervention that captured the imagination of the international donor establishment from the late 1990s through the first decade of the new millennium (Chapter 2, p. 35). The policing approaches advocated by RAMSI reflected the habit of 'seeing like a state' (Scott 1998) and dominant assumptions that state-based professional police forces were the most suitable means of maintaining law and order. While these assumptions did not reflect reality in many communities in Solomon Islands, this critical

point was incidental to the purpose of RAMSI's external narrative. Overall, I argue that RAMSI's external narrative was not so much about communicating a Solomon Islands perspective. Rather it was as much a story about Australia, and Australia's role as a regional power in the Pacific.

An important consequence of RAMSI's narrative of successes was that it not only undermined the legitimacy of RSIPF, but also contributed to an erosion of support for RAMSI from key internal audiences, especially among elites. Matters came to a head during the second Sogavare period of government (as described in Chapter 1, p. 17-20). RAMSI's legitimacy was actively contested by a government keen to reassert Solomon Islands sovereignty. After this difficult period there was a notable shift in RAMSI's narrative. RAMSI adopted a more inclusive approach, adopting recommendations from earlier reviews, such as by the PIF, and allowing more space for Solomon Islanders and regional actors to shape and implement the mission's agenda. RAMSI's narrative was marked by an emphasis on the increased capabilities and performance of RSIPF, reflecting a more concerted effort to strengthen legitimacy of, and public confidence in, RSIPF. Correspondingly, RAMSI's role was increasingly represented as switching from an executive policing role to an advisory and capacity development role. Ultimately, too, RAMSI could not exit, or claim meaningful success in terms of restoring the legitimacy of Solomon Islands state and its institutions, without sustained legitimacy work to bolster RSIPF's seriously damaged reputation.

In sum, this analysis has contributed to the statebuilding literature because while many scholars have explored how interventions build or lose political legitimacy for themselves (as I have noted above and in Chapter 2), there has been relatively little analysis of the crucial process of transferring or conferring legitimacy on local institutions. This is important to understand because to be perceived by external and internal audiences as 'successful', statebuilding interventions need to be able to demonstrate that the institutions of the host state are now restored and legitimate. While RAMSI could more readily control the presentation of its external narrative, its internal narrative was forced by a dynamic context to be more nuanced, agile and adaptive. It encountered resistance from local political elites, changing circumstances, and the practical realities and constraints of policing and statebuilding in Solomon Islands.

8.2 Local Perspectives on the Legitimacy of Policing Practice

RAMSI's key objective of restoring law and order in Solomon Islands is widely claimed to be its most significant success and is the dominant message in the official RAMSI narrative. However, this narrative has been so loudly declared that local and external critical perspectives have often been overlooked. There is no question that many Solomon Islanders expressed strong appreciation for the contributions made by RAMSI. However, some Solomon Islanders expressed reservations about how useful and sustainable RAMSI's contributions have been, beyond arresting the slide toward state failure. As outlined in Chapter 7, RAMSI's impact and success in constructing legitimacy for itself and for the RSIPF was underwhelming in rural Solomon Islands. This is a concern given that many of the young men who played a key role in the Tensions were from rural, marginalised and underdeveloped areas of Solomon Islands, notably in south Guadalcanal and north Malaita. Instead, for rural Solomon Islanders, who form the majority of the Solomon Islands population, it is non-state actors, not uniformed police, who play the key part of providing social order within communities. As outlined in this section, local perspectives highlighted the central importance of relational aspects of legitimacy for effective policing.

My research supports a cautious reappraisal of the potential of some past policing practices. As I showed in Chapter 7, some of those interviewed reported positive recollections or expressed a sense of 'nostalgia' related to the practices and structures of policing during the colonial era. This reinforces my earlier claim related to the importance of historical social and cultural contexts in contributing to the lens by which legitimacy of statebuilding interventions are determined by audiences. Despite the inherent lack of legitimacy of imposed colonial rule, and its violent history, some interviewees considered that some of the practices of colonial policing enhanced the relationship between the colonial state and communities in a way which was low-tech and thus affordable and sustainable. While then, as now, the state was unable to deliver a police presence in every community, linkages and relationships across different layers of governance provided a form of what Loader (2000, p. 324) might recognise as "plural, networked policing" (see discussion in Chapter 2, p.40).

An important layer of policing in Solomon Islands is that which is provided at the most local levels, which provides crucial linkages between the state and rural communities. The local perspectives I presented in Chapter 7 supported the view that the removal of policing at the local level in the late 1990s significantly disrupted links between community and the state.

According to Scales (2005) this withdrawal of an already very limited state presence amplified frustration and disaffection in rural areas, and probably contributed to the Tensions. Specifically, the removal of Area Constables excised a valued layer of local level policing which was capable of resolving many local conflicts before they escalated, and which could legitimately escalate serious criminal matters to state authorities if required. As I argue in Chapter 7, the importance of such community linkages is evidenced by recent reintroduction of an additional layer of policing at the most local levels in the form of Community Officers and Crime Prevention Committees (RSIPF 2017). These initiatives illustrate renewed interest in the potential for various hybrid forms of policing, linking community-based initiatives with state-based approaches.

My analysis of local perspectives emphasise the need to examine how success is understood and highlights the importance of attending to the local historical, social and cultural context. This was seen not only at the national but also at community levels. Specifically, I have demonstrated that the tendency of RAMSI planners and police to ‘bring their culture with them’ resulted in both the intended and unintended silencing of local policing and knowledge practices. This included the delegitimisation of RSIPF knowledge and practices (for example how to engage with communities, or how to deal with public order situations). It also included a lack of recognition given to local practices of dispute resolution or informal policing. My findings support similar observations in respect of transnational policing interventions (Goldsmith and Dinnen 2007; Hills 2000; Philipsen 2014; Richmond and Franks 2007; Richmond and Mitchell 2011). That is, the dominant narrative of a statebuilding intervention, while justifying its presence and purpose, simultaneously functions to silence other important narratives related to policing, statebuilding and peace-building. By exploring these local narratives of policing, I demonstrated that RAMSI’s ‘success’ was both partial and contested. While RAMSI’s state centric and institutionalist approaches appear to have restored state security, local perspectives indicate RAMSI was less successful in restoring the relationships between different policing actors operating within different layers of Solomon Islands society.

8.3 Legacies of RAMSI and Potential Policing Futures

In this section I consider the legacies of RAMSI for ongoing efforts to support law and order and the legitimacy of the Solomon Islands state. As we have seen, RAMSI was conceived and deployed at the height of an era of liberal statebuilding characterised by ambitious, albeit, at

times, crude and mechanistic, attempts to reengineer post-conflict postcolonial states from the inside out. It was considered that statebuilding, entailing the rejigging of the ‘machinery of government’ and employing intrusive modalities of institutional transfer and reform led by in-line ‘advisers’, could restore security, and political and economic stability. RAMSI’s approach to reforming policing in Solomon Islands reflected the state-centric and institutionalist assumptions of this international statebuilding paradigm. It turned out that restoring security and getting back the guns was the relatively easy part of the mission and one that yielded quick and tangible results. The longer-term task of rebuilding the legitimacy of the Solomon Islands state and key institutions such as the RSIPF proved altogether more complex.

The more difficult challenge for RAMSI related to understanding the complexity and hybrid nature of state/society relations in Solomon Islands and the implications of these for policing. In this thesis I have argued that RAMSI’s approach neglected the multiple sources of authority and legitimacy relevant to maintaining social order in Solomon Islands. My focus on legitimacy work provides a new perspective on the entangled and hybrid nature of relations between different layers of policing. This was reflected in the dexterity that some actors demonstrate in blending and drawing on multiple sources of legitimacy. Thus, as I analysed in Chapter 7, some police described to me how their ‘chiefly’ heritage from the Shortland Islands enhanced their effectiveness as police officers. Conversely, community leaders who were not police described how they felt simple practices, such as provision of a ‘uniform’, enhanced their standing and authority in communities. Similarly, the effectiveness of some National Peace Council monitors was reported to be enhanced by drawing on pre-existing sources of legitimacy as respected elders within their communities. This was also the case with Community Officers, under the Community Officer Pilot Scheme (Dinnen and Haley 2012). Such nuances, while fundamentally important to resolving the conflicts that lie at the heart of state and society relations in Solomon Islands, have typically been overlooked by the state-centric approaches to police reform advocated by RAMSI.

RAMSI’s tendency to neglect the importance of informal policing practices within local communities risks being a damaging legacy of the intervention. While interventions on the scale of RAMSI in Solomon Islands are not likely to recur in the near term, not least because of their enormous cost, it is clear that the Australian Government remains strongly committed to institutional strengthening and governance reform in states in our region that are still described as “fragile”, “weak” and “lawless” (DFAT 2017, p. 32-3). This signals a clear

intention to remain engaged in transnational policing as a form of international assistance. The critical question is, what kind of engagement will be seen? RAMSI's experience illustrates the tendency for those designing transnational policing assistance to be trapped by their own limited imaginings of the concepts of policing and the state. The insights of this thesis challenge these limited understandings. In doing so, this thesis shows that future transnational policing engagement in Solomon Islands is likely to be most successful when it recognises that the state is not the only legitimate provider of everyday policing services. Rather than being viewed as an aberration or deficit, this should be viewed as a strength of policing in diverse and dispersed communities in states like Solomon Islands. It appears however, that within the current Australian policy environment, the framing of assistance remains focused on remedying perceived institutional deficits at the state level rather than on building upon the strengths and potentials of informal institutions and actors at the community or local level.

RAMSI has left a tangible and immediate legacy for transnational policing in Solomon Islands. Many objectives, practices and assumptions that characterised the approach to statebuilding and policing under RAMSI have been carried over into current modalities of assistance. Although RAMSI has ended, support for public sector reform and institutional strengthening activities have continued on a reduced scale. The Australian Defense Force withdrew from Solomon Islands in 2013 but remains at the ready to assist if requested by SIG under a bilateral security treaty signed in 2017 (Australian Treaties 2018). This assurance of the availability of coercive force is at SIG's discretion and provides a threat of force intended to deter or act quickly if needed. And while the PPF are no longer present, arrangements have been put in place for up to 44 Australian police seconded from Australian Federal Police to remain in Solomon Islands, in unarmed capacity building roles (Parliament of Australia 2017). The Commissioner of RSIPF up until the end of 2019 was also an Australian AFP officer seconded to RSIPF. Regular training and capacity building activities are provided to RSIPF both in Solomon Islands and abroad. Significant commitments to operational support and mobility including the updating of patrol vessels provided under Australian-funded Pacific Maritime Security Program, provision of vehicles and funding of police housing continue RAMSI activities under a new name.

The substantial level of ongoing transnational policing support provided by Australia raises issues in terms of RAMSI's overall legacy and its specific contribution to restoring the legitimacy of state institutions, such as RSIPF. First, the continued dependence on external

policing assistance and the security guarantee from Australia required post-RAMSI seems to imply that confidence and legitimacy of RSIPF has not been fully restored. Second, rather than being portrayed as an “unambiguous success” (Marles 2011) or one of “Australia’s... finest foreign policy achievements” (Howard 2017), it appears that RAMSI’s success as a transnational policing intervention does need qualification and contextualisation. RAMSI’s achievements and contributions in terms of restoring law and order and halting Solomon Islands economic decline deserved to be acknowledged but this should not be at the expense of critical reflection on its limitations. Third, the large amount of ongoing assistance raises a question of whether this assistance is more of the same, in terms of technical assistance focused overwhelmingly at the state policing institution, or whether Australia’s current assistance has begun to recognise the potential and importance of non-state provision of policing and related public goods.

8.4 Concluding Remarks: Multilayered Legitimacy and Policing

This thesis set out to answer a question and a puzzle: how do transnational policing and statebuilding interventions work to construct legitimacy for themselves and for the states within which they intervene? In response, I have proposed that external and internal narratives play a key role as vehicles for the legitimacy work done by intervention authorities to establish their right to authority. However, I have also argued that the concept of legitimacy work also describes the activities of diverse actors operating at different levels to claim legitimacy from key audiences in post-conflict and post-colonial contexts, like Solomon Islands.

Based on the analysis in this thesis, I suggest that greater attention to the role of legitimacy in transnational policing assistance is required in post-conflict and postcolonial contexts, such as Solomon Islands. This requires broader recognition by a range of policy actors, of the legitimacy, or the right to claim legitimacy, of multiple actors and sources of authority. These include not only intervention forces, but also the state actors or institutions that interventions purport to strengthen, as well as a wider range of non-state actors and institutions, such as *kastom*, operating at the local community level. By drawing attention, through the concept of legitimacy work, to the important part that intervention narratives and practices play in constructing legitimacy, this thesis has shown a possible route towards more sustainable and inclusive transnational policing assistance.

A conclusion that may be drawn from this thesis is that the solutions to the problems of policing, law and justice in Solomon Islands are unlikely to come primarily from transnational policing, no matter how well resourced, expertly designed, or well-intended. Fiscal constraints on the state's ability to adequately resource the RSIPF to a level where it could hope to sustain a policing presence throughout Solomon Islands makes it all but impossible for the RSIPF to meet the needs and minimum expectations of local communities scattered across the archipelago. Yet, it also seems unlikely that local communities in Solomon Islands on their own can generate effective, locally evolved solutions to the complex problems of crime, disputation and social disorder that have accompanied widespread impacts of globalisation on society and throughout the country.

A solution lies in further exploration and utilisation of hybrid models of policing informed by recognition of the importance of multiple sources of legitimacy across three broad and interconnected layers of policing; transnational, state-based and subnational or community-based. This entails a shift from a framing of transnational police reform based on deficit models to one that intentionally recognises and builds on local strengths. This would include actively learning from prior policing practices as well as supporting locally evolved community-oriented policing initiatives. Applying principles of subsidiarity and acknowledging that diverse contexts require diverse approaches is also crucial. This is not an argument against strengthening national policing capacity but rather an argument in favour of ensuring that communities have the resources to resolve problems locally when they can. The complex challenges and impacts of globalisation, if anything, demand more responsive, professional institutional policing presence in local areas when it is needed, but it is apparent that local providers can and do meet every-day policing needs, and that in contexts like Solomon Islands this is crucial to social stability and peace.

There are some promising signs of the emergence of a more nuanced and multi-layered approach to addressing the challenges of policing in the context of Solomon Islands. As I discussed in Chapter 7, recent efforts by RSIPF (supported by donors including Australia) to establish community policing and crime-prevention activities at the local level are examples of multi-layered approaches. These appear to acknowledge, at least implicitly, the importance of local sources of legitimacy for policing. Recent initiatives supporting the expansion of community-level policing, such as those involving Community Officers working in partnership with RSIPF at the state level, and with chiefs, elders and their wider communities

at the local level, presents a practical example of hybrid policing. The fact that these activities are led by RSIPF, but supported by international donors, demonstrates the possibilities for transnational policing to move beyond a purely state-centric approach.

In the international context, while the appetite for major statebuilding interventions, such as RAMSI, appears to have diminished, statebuilding work continues. Transnational policing reform will almost certainly continue to play a key role in this process. While the work of strengthening state policing institutions will inevitably continue to play a significant role, this does not imply that state-centric models based on institutionalist assumptions should dictate the form of assistance provided. Instead, if the experience of Solomon Islands and the transnational policing efforts of RAMSI can teach us anything, it is that communities themselves have a central role in providing and deciding what form of policing they require.

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Appendix A: List of Interviewees:

Serving RSIPF Officers (as of August 2011)

Deputy Commissioner Edmond Sikua, 8 August 2011

Constable 'A', Malu'u, 3 August 2011

Constable 'S', Auki, 2 August 2011

Senior Police Officer 'M', Honiara, 22 July 2011

Sergeant 'L', Honiara, 8 August 2011

Former RSIPF Officers

Chief Super Intendent, Aloyisius Ora, Honiara, 22 July 2011

Deputy Commissioner, Wilfred Akao, Honiara, 25 July 2011

Provincial Police Commander for Malaita Province, Lucian Konata, Malu'u, 3 August 2011

Sir Allan Kemakeza (Prime Minister Solomon Islands, 2002-06), Honiara, 6 August 2011,

Solomon Islander community members and officials

Sir Paul Tovua, Honiara, 8 August 2011

Sir Peter Kenilorea, Honiara, 29 July 2011

Joses Tuhunuku, Honiara, 21 July 2011

Edwin Suibaea, Premier of Malaita, Auki, 3 August 2011

'Mary' (Guadalcanal woman from Weather Coast, Honiara, 6 August 2011

SIG senior official 'J', Honiara, 9 August 2011

Village elder (Kilosokwalo village), 5 August 2011

Denis Lulei (former NPC Councillor, Isabel), 21 July 2011

Ashley Wickham, Canberra, 19 July 2011

Matthew Wale (MP for Are Are, Malaita), Honiara, 29 July 2011

Esau Kekeubata (Malaita Council of Chiefs/Kwaio researcher), Honiara, 27 July 2011

Ronald Fugui (Secretary to PM Danny Phillip), Honiara, 9 August 2011

'David' (Sulufou, Malaita), Auki, 4 August 2011

RAMSI or expatriate observers

Mary-Louise O'Callaghan, (RAMSI Public Affairs) Honiara, 29 July 2011, Melbourne 27 June 2019

Jeremy Miller (RAMSI Public Affairs), Honiara, 22 July 2011

Dan Evans (World Bank), Honiara, 21 July 2011
Tony Jansen (Kastom Gaden), Honiara, 17 July 2011,
Chris Chevalier, Honiara, 17 July 2011
Darren Boyd Skinner (PPF), Honiara, 29 July 2011
Jason Cresswell (PPF), Honiara, 29 July 2011
Rev. Terry Brown (former Anglican Bishop of Malaita), Honiara, 26 July 2011
Tony Richardson (PPF), Honiara, 29 July 2011
Kate Graham (Independent consultant), Melbourne, 3 December 2016
James Batley (former RAMSI Special Coordinator), Canberra, 20 January 2019
Alan Lindley (former BSIP colonial police officer), Adelaide, 26 August 2011
John Holloway (former RSIPF Police Commissioner), Coolangatta, 6 September 2011
Stuart Harbison (former BSIP colonial officer), London, 29 September 2011

Appendix B. RSIPF Commissioners 1974-2020

B.P. Roger Edwards	1974 – 1977	UK
John Holloway	1978 – 1982	UK
Frederick Soaki	1982 – 1995	Solomon Islands
Morton Sireheti	1995 – 1997	Solomon Islands
Frank Short	1997 – 1999	UK/Hong Kong
Rererangi Hika	1999 – 2000	NZ
Morton Sireheti	2000 – 2003	SI
William Morrell	Jan 2003 – March 2005	UK
Shane Castles	April 2005 – Dec 2006	Australia
Will Jamieson	Dec 2006 – May 2007	Australia
Mohammed Jahir Khan	May 2007 – May 2008	Fiji
Peter Marshall (NZ)	May 2008 – Feb 2011	NZ
Walter Kola (A/g)	Feb 2011 – May 2012	Solomon Islands
John Lansley	May 2012 – May 2013	UK
Ms Juanita Matangi (A/g)	May 2013 – Sep 2014	Solomon Islands
Frank Pendergast	Sep 2014 – Jan 2017	Australia
Matthew Varley	Jan 2017 – Dec 2019	Australia

Source: Moore, C. 2015 Solomon Islands Historical Encyclopaedia 1893-1978

Appendix C. Plain Language Statement

Information Sheet: Research on Policing in Solomon Islands

I am a doctoral student at the Australian National University researching the **history and development of policing in Solomon Islands from decolonization until the current time.**

I am interested to talk to and interview people who are able to comment about this topic. The people I hope to talk to include Solomon Islands and provincial government officials, former government officials; retired and current RSIPF officers; chiefs, village leaders, women and religious leaders; and international personnel working with or alongside RAMSI.

The objectives of my research are:

To record the history and development of policing in Solomon Islands from the colonial era up to the current time.

The outcomes of this research will:

- Better understanding of the history of policing in Solomon Islands, how it has contributed to the formation of the Solomon Island state, and how it has changed over the years.
- a PHD thesis (book) about policing in Solomon Islands which will be available for reference in ANU and Honiara library.

Purpose of interview:

The purpose of this interview/recorded interview is to get your view or stories about policing. If you agree to be interviewed it will take from 30 minutes to one hour. You can stop at anytime. You will not be paid for your help but I will be very grateful to you!

Confidentiality of your response:

Any information you provide is confidential and your real name will not be revealed unless would like your name to be used. The interview will be informal. I might take notes or record the interview. You can look at the notes or listen to the recording if you wish and a copy made available to you upon request. Any records will be securely stored and kept confidential, at ANU (except as required under law).

Informed Consent

You may refuse to answer certain questions, withdraw from the interview at any time, or request that material not be used. This research operates under the research ethics protocols of the University, and any questions or complaints can be forwarded to:

For further information about this research please contact:

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