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Evaluating Security Sector Reform in Timor-Leste: The Triad Hybridity Nexuses

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This paper provides a mid-term assessment of externally-led Security Sector Reform (SSR) during the United Nations (UN) led peacebuilding intervention in Timor-Leste. Despite initial difficulties, several core institutions, introduced by the UN, remain effective and were integrated into local practices. These initial security problems of the new-born Timor-Leste state, included the radical reconfiguration of the power balances within elites and an unfamiliarity with new approaches to security governance by the indigenous actors themselves. The lack of contextual knowledge and insensitivity to local political dynamics by external actors exacerbated these issues. Nonetheless, Timor-Leste has found ways to achieve some measure of political stability and physical security, both of which were always overarching goals of SSR.

Keywords security sector reform, community security, reconciliation, Timor-Leste, hybrid peacebuilding

Prologue

I returned to Dili in April-May 2019, where I had worked for a conflict prevention project from 2010 until 2013, led by the National Directorate for Prevention of Community Conflict (NDPCC), which falls under the auspices of the Secretary of State for Security in Timor-Leste. This project engaged in community-level conflict prevention, and our work centered upon the village of Comoro, located on the outskirts of Dili, which was a well-known epicenter of communal violence. I had returned to Timor-Leste because it had been almost 20 years since the "popular consultation" or referendum had been conducted in August 1999, which set the course of the state-building journey for an independent Timor-Leste. I thought two decades would serve as a good temporal milestone to review mid-term trajectories and the achievements of key post-independence peacebuilding endeavors. This time, with the support of Flavio Simoes, a former advisor to

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the Secretary of State for Security, I conducted field research in Dili and several municipalities (areas previously called districts).

I was interested in observing the security situation as it operated at the community level throughout the country and also in widening my understanding of how each community maintained its security, law and order and justice; key factors which I felt would reveal the fruits of the United Nations (UN) efforts for Security Sector Reform (SSR)—defined as "the enhancement of effective and accountable security for the State and its peoples" (UN 2008, para 17). A nationwide survey conducted in 2015 by the Asia Foundation (2016) indicated that, astonishingly, 100 percent of community leaders and, more surprisingly, 99 percent of the general public in Timor-Leste, indicated trust in the police. Based on my previous experience working with the NDPCC, one of the most serious challenges for SSR in Timor-Leste centered on nurturing public trust in the police, since they had been closely associated with the oppressive shadow of the Indonesian National Police (Belo 2014). Even after independence, abuse of power by the National Police of Timor-Leste (PNTL) was rampant and the risk of police power being misused by the political elite was also high in the early stages of state-building. With its links to various fraternal groups, including groups of hooligans and organized crime gangs, the police were largely considered to be as much a part of the problem rather than forming part of the solution.

Such problematic behavior by the police were the root of skeptical views towards the police as an organization among the general population and such behaviors damaged its legitimacy and credibility. These were further confirmed by my observations during a number of field visits that I conducted between 2001 and 2015 in various locations in the Dili, Cova-Lima, Ermera, Baucau, Liquca and Bobonaro districts. It was difficult, therefore, to believe that the police had been able to win the trust of both community leaders as well as the general public in the space of only a few years after the withdrawal of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) that was undertaken in December of 2012. According to Pauline Tweedie (Personal Interview with Pauline Tweedie, the country director of the Asia Foundation office in Dili, Timor-Leste, on April 30, 2019), such a miracle was due to the combined efforts of the police and the respective communities in pursuit of community policing, making use of a new initiative called the Community Policing Council (CPC), which was launched in 2015 as a vehicle to enhance the community-police relationship.

Introduction

As part of this special issue, this article has two main goals: firstly, it seeks to showcase SSR trajectories and records the achievements of both the UN and Timorese society. It does so by simultaneously revealing the presence of what

is actually a hybrid dynamic through which the Timorese society has adopted, adjusted or rejected the externally-led SSR. Timor-Leste, where the peacebuilding process was initiated over 20 years ago as a massive external intervention led by the UN, can offer an insightful perspective on the importance of approaching the multiple levels at play within a given society, ranging from the national/top state level to the grassroots/bottom of the societal level, the analysis of which is essential for understanding the comprehensive and long-term effects of SSR. This article attempts to assess the med-term impact of SSR as implemented in Timor-Leste. In so doing, it employs a triad form of hybridity—(1) exogenous/endogenous; (2) formal/informal; and (3) national/community—as an analytical lens. We argue that the triad hybrid interactions, in conjunction with the emergence of a more conducive environment within Timorese society, directed the tide of the SSR process, which, in turn, facilitated the rise of the Timorese version of security governance (for an extensive review of the political and economic development in Timorese society over the past 20 years, see the article written by Wallis and Neves in this special issue).

The following account is based on more than a decade of accumulated participant observation in the field (2001-15) and more recent field work conducted in April-May 2019. The findings of this article will hopefully contribute to the overall effort to evaluate peacebuilding in Timor-Leste within the Quality Peace framework (Wallensteen 2015), which explores positive conditions that prevent the recurrence of violence and move post-conflict societies beyond the mere absence of war. To assess the quality of peace emanating at the national and community levels in Timor-Leste in the last two decades, it applies the mainstream SSR framework, combined with a relatively new approach to SSR referred to as Community Security (CS). In this evaluative endeavor, this article analyzes and evaluates the dynamic processes of SSR through which local agencies, with or without external actors/resources, crafted, selected, and/or modified, voluntarily or otherwise, the ways and means to achieve the goals of SSR.

Among so many different tasks required for peacebuilding, why does this article focus on SSR? SSR is a process which aims to increase abilities to meet the range of security needs within societies in a manner consistent with democratic norms and sound principles of governance, transparency, and the rule of law (OECD 2007). It seeks to establish control of violence in a society, usually through reconstructing or reforming statutory forces such as the military and police. Political stability and physical safety constitute the two main pillars of peace in any given society and it is usually through SSR that these pillars are consolidated. Because of this critical function, SSR can provide an important measure for evaluating the quality of peace. Many existing studies on SSR, including those of mine (Uesugi 2014a; Howe and Uesugi 2016; Howe, Peou, and Uesugi 2021), analyzed the performance of the UN as a lead implementor, while local stakeholders were treated merely as subjects who either accepted or resisted

these external initiatives. Although local ownership has been claimed as a key approach to SSR (DCAF 2012; Donais 2008; Mobekk 2010; Gordon 2014), this perspective still focuses on policy and the performance of external intervenors, and a tension between the exogenous and endogenous approaches has been highlighted (Uesugi 2014b) and local resistance depicted (Mac Ginty 2008; 2011; Hellmüller and Santschi 2014).

An interactive process between the external and local SSR agencies, through which externally-introduced SSR is shaped and fine-tuned with the local realities, must be clarified as local factors influence political stability and physical safety. The neglected roles of local agency and domestic power constellations have been identified as new perspectives on SSR (Schroeder and Chappuis 2014). From this point of view, local ownership for externally-led SSR is more likely to emerge when the "dominant coalition" of the local elites perceive that the reform initiatives can advance their political status vis-à-vis their opponents and enhance or preserve their privileges and vested interests (North et al. 2009; Albrecht 2015). Building on this new direction in research, this article attempts to capture such dynamism with the concept of hybridity (Mac Ginty and Richmond 2016; Schroeder et al. 2014). It explores how external intervention impacts the subsequent local activities for SSR and the quality of peace. Many third-party evaluations of SSR, as well as internal ones, have focused on its short-term effects at the national level or their assessment has focused mainly on the progress of the security sector in the capital. The impact of SSR on the political stability and physical safety in rural areas has not been extensively examined. Regarding political stability and physical safety, SSR evaluation should encompass not only the assessment of the top-down policy and its implementation, but also those policies emanating from the bottom-up, gauging their impact, respectively and in conjunction, on the local communities.

The process of SSR is not only long and extensive, but also it requires careful analysis of the causes of the conflict itself, and the nature of the governance and public institutions that need to be established to avoid the recurrence of violence. Methodologically, it is very difficult to argue for direct causal effects/relationships between what the UN has done in the past and what we see on the ground now (Hunt 2016). Therefore, the following is an attempt to compare what was initiated by outsiders and their plausible "contribution," not "attribution" (d'Estrée 2020), to the existing consequences in a wide spectrum of interrelated outcomes associated with SSR such as institution and capacity building, reconciliation, transitional justice and community policing. Before moving on to an empirical discussion, an outline of the theoretical framework of this study is in order.

Theoretical Framework on SSR

Mainstream SSR

SSR is essentially a process of reconstructing, reconstituting, or developing the security and justice sectors of a society. It is recognized as a priority in post-conflict peacebuilding and belongs to an emerging field of *security governance*. In this approach, non-traditional security agendas are taken into consideration in addition to traditional state-centric issues, and activities of non-state agencies, not limited to those of the state, are also included in efforts, structures, processes, and institutions to maintain security, law and order, and justice (Hänggi 2005). More specifically, in the context of post-conflict peacebuilding, security governance refers to relevant security arrangements at the national and sub-national levels encompassing non-state security actors (ibid.).

This view has been reflected in the dominant theory/model of SSR, emphasizing the holistic scope of the reform objects. SSR covers not only statutory security and justice actors (e.g. the military, police, intelligence agencies, and judicial and penal institutions) but also non-statutory actors (e.g. militias, vigilante groups and customary courts), as well as oversight and management by actors/institutions, both statutory (e.g. the parliament, ministries and ombudsperson) and non-statutory (e.g. civil society organizations, media and academia) (Uesugi 2014a). While it is often the case that statutory institutions are identified as the main object of SSR, non-statutory actors such as rebel groups, tribal chiefs, customary courts and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are increasingly recognized as key SSR stakeholders (Lawrence 2012; Donais 2017). Following in the footsteps of this more holistic approach, this article will shed light on not only statutory but also non-statutory actors, and discuss how these two entities interact with each other.

SSR is understood as existing within the nexus of development and security, which is itself based on the assumption that development and security are intrinsically linked and thus both approaches need to be coordinated with each other. This key feature of SSR—interconnectivity between security and development—can be found in the two objectives of SSR: effectiveness and accountability. It is this dual commitment to making security and justice sectors effective and accountable that distinguishes SSR from other types of security assistance such as "train-and-equip" (Sedra 2010; Mason 2016). The underlying assumption is that if domestically powerful security actors capable of overthrowing the government or overwhelming counterforces in society are not placed under proper supervision (democratic control and civilian oversight), they can themselves easily turn into security threats. Therefore, holding security actors accountable for their actions through establishing democratic governance of the security sector is of paramount importance in the mainstream approach to SSR

(Ball 2010).

Another important feature of SSR is its inherent political nature (Downes 2014). Since the development community is accustomed to providing technical assistance after an overall political settlement is reached between the conflict parties, there is a hidden risk that the political nature of SSR is overlooked. While there is often broad commitment to the need to reform the security and justice sectors, conflict parties tend to disagree on how such reforms should be implemented (DCAF 2019; Mason 2016), as they—both incumbent and insurgent—are often still operating under the logic of the "politics of survival" or continuation of hostilities in politics, which deprives the losers of their chance for a comeback (Peou 2018). For them, it is critical that their sources of survival, i.e., the armed forces, are kept intact, especially in the aftermath of civil war. Externally-led SSR can be deemed political interference because it may affect the power balance existing among the conflicting parties, which makes a narrow technical approach insufficient (Jackson and Bakrania 2018). Building on this premise, this article takes into consideration the politics of SSR and investigates how local political actors exercised their influence on the SSR process and later outcomes.

Community Security

In addition to the above-mentioned framework of the mainstream SSR, CS—also known as the second generation SSR (Jackson 2018; Sedra 2018; Dewhurst and Greising 2017)—is incorporated into the following analysis as an added value of this article. If SSR is understood as being an effort to address relevant issues and policies at the national level employing top-down approaches, CS can be categorized as being the idiosyncratic security arrangements effective in certain communities at the sub-national level, usually relying on bottom-up approaches. While SSR can also accommodate the sub-national level activities and CS does not limit itself to bottom-up approaches, constructive engagement of the two endeavors and interaction between the national and sub-national levels are essential for establishing effective systems of security governance in post-conflict society.

The concept of CS as a genuinely practical concern has been recognized and promoted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and a British based NGO, known as Saferworld. According to the UNDP (n.d.), CS is a part of SSR, and thus both pursue the same objective of addressing the causes of insecurity in order to improve the physical safety of the people concerned. They employ similar measures such as building the capacity of the police, strengthening accountable institutions and advocating human rights. A major difference between SSR and CS can be found in their emphasis and methodology. While SSR can be classified as primarily strategic and institutional endeavors, seeking to address essentially national security priorities, CS can be defined as

efforts focusing on tactical operations initiated at the grassroot or community level. SSR is often seen as a form of support from external agencies such as the UN and other donors, albeit with local ownership being seen as a key to successful SSR (Donais 2008). CS is understood to be a community-driven process of maintaining and improving law and order in a concerned community, including the establishment of effective community-police relations to enhance the security, trust, and protection of population, especially women (ibid.). Such activities, aimed at strengthening police capacities to adopt community-oriented and gender-responsive policing, are often classified as community policing, as in the case of Timor-Leste (Kocak 2018).

A perspective of CS can offer an additional function to SSR. According to Saferworld (Bennett 2014), CS is recognized as a bridge between the formal and informal systems, as well as between the national and sub-national levels. While the conventional approaches to SSR have primarily focused on the formal system of security provision, CS emphasizes the significance of shedding light on informal actors, arrangements and effects. In regard to this point, Saferworld defines CS as a people-centered approach that builds the capacity and willingness of communities, local authorities and security providers to address their own sources of insecurity (ibid.). CS provides a methodology that allows each community to define and implement reforms tailored to suit its exact needs and priorities, so that each community can find creative, collaborative and preventative solutions to security challenges (ibid.).

Due to this emphasis on local contexts and dynamics, CS often engages with bottom-up approaches; at the same time, however, because CS is also understood as being an important bridge that links reform efforts undertaken at the sub-national and national levels, a critical function of CS is to serve as a vehicle for harnessing capacities at different levels and addressing obstacles at all levels (ibid.).

A key perspective of the second generation SSR outlined in the above discussion as features of CS, will serve as a part of the theoretical framework used to assess the SSR process in Timor-Leste. By applying a triad hybridity lens, this article seeks to examine the interplay between exogenous and endogenous approaches, between formal and informal mechanisms, and between national and community (sub-national) initiatives. Before undertaking the main task, in the next section, a background to SSR in Timor-Leste will be presented.

Background to SSR in Timor-Leste

Major Security Challenges

To help facilitate our understanding of the circumstances in which a series of externally-led SSR projects were implemented, the security landscape of Timor-Leste will be outlined, with a focus on three key challenges within Timorese

society. The first challenge involved the relationship between the governments of Indonesia and Timor-Leste. The contested territory had been occupied forcefully by Indonesia since 1975, and the Timorese resistance movement was organized to fight against Indonesian rule, a situation which continued until Indonesia decided to withdraw from the territory after the referendum of 1999. Many atrocities were committed by the Indonesian security forces to suppress the resistance movement. A major point of contention has been the treatment of those who were strategically responsible for the massive human rights violations committed during the Indonesian occupation between 1975 and 1999.

The second challenge existed within Timorese society. This was a cognitive cleavage which emerged after independence between those who had devoted their lives to the liberation/resistance movement, sacrificing potentially their very lives (not to mention their future educational and employment opportunities), and those who were not active members of the resistance movement and who thus enjoyed a few educational and employment benefits during the Indonesian era. The former, known as the pro-independence residents, faced off against latter or the pro-integration residents who had collaborated with the Indonesian authorities, including illegal militias and public servants such as police officers. This division created major tensions in the 1999 referendum, and atrocities were committed by pro-integration militias against pro-independence residents in the aftermath of the referendum.

During the 1999 post-referendum violence, pro-integration factions fled to Indonesian West Timor, while some pro-independence residents were expelled forcefully from their homes. They became "refugees" in West Timor. Immediately after the 1999 violence, cross-border penetration by former pro-integration militias was perceived as a source of community insecurity in Timor-Leste, particularly in its western border area and Oecussi exclave. The presence of UN peacekeepers helped ease anxiety among the population who remained wary the illusionary shadows of former militias who remained in West Timor. Additionally, the confrontation between the pro-independence residents and repatriated ex-militias was considered to be a potential source of instability.

The third challenge, which was closely related to the second, arose in 2006 when those who had devoted their lives to the independence struggle felt that their dedication had not been sufficiently acknowledged nor rewarded, with their lives continuing to be difficult even after they had achieved independence. After the independence in 2002, the issue was framed as how to provide honors (recognition) and rewards (compensation) for the devotion of the veterans. Veterans were former members of the Armed Forces for the National Liberation of Timor-Leste (FALINTIL) and other clandestine groups who were meritorious contributors to the liberation/resistance struggle. According to the dominant narrative that exacerbated this internal tension, the bases of the FALINTIL were centered around the eastern part of the territory whereas people in the

western part of the territory were perceived to have largely collaborated with the Indonesian authorities during the resistance period. In this narrative, the pro-integration residents were categorized as the "Westerners" whereas the pro-independence residents were identified as the "Easterners." This social cleavage between "Easterners" and "Westerners" served as a fertilizing ground for the 2006 uprising of the "petitioners" who claimed that due to their background of being "Westerners" and not having served in the FALINTIL, they had been discriminated against in the Defense Forces of Timor-Leste (F-FDTL). This division within the military surfaced in 2006 and evolved into a major politico-security crisis that lasted for two years.

Several senior political leaders were involved in this crisis and exploited their clientelism with both the statutory and non-statutory forces, which resulted in the killing of 38 people, including the shooting of eight unarmed police officers by mobilized troops, and the displacement of 150,000 people from their homes (UN 2006; Sugito et al. 2020). Although the real physical violence was confined geographically to Dili, close to 15 percent of the population was displaced not only in Dili but also in other districts, which could have been a potential source of instability (UN 2006). Such a high number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) indicated the collective trauma among ordinary Timorese, which stemmed from a shared feeling of anxiety over unreconciled injustices and unfairness; between those who had devoted their lives to the resistance movement and who had been inadequately acknowledged. This setback is often registered as a failure of the early SSR initiatives led by the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET).

In the conventional literature on SSR, the first (strategic) and the second (societal) challenges have usually been placed outside the scope of SSR. It is the third challenge, which stemmed from defects of the security sector, that has been conceived as the main target of SSR. However, responses to the three layers of challenges will be examined in the following section, due to the way in which they have been closely intertwined with one another in the case of Timor-Leste as underlying contextual factors that have either constrained or facilitated the SSR process.

Transitional Justice

To address the first two challenges, the UNTAET set up the Serious Crime Unit under its auspices to investigate and file criminal cases such as murder and rape committed in 1999. Alongside the Serious Crime Unit, two temporal judicial/reconciliation measures—the Special Panels for Serious Crimes (SPSC) and the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation (CAVR)—were established (these measures are reviewed extensively in the article by Cross in this special issue). The less serious cases were handed over to the CAVR, which covered not only the atrocities committed in 1999 but also included other criminal cases

committed under Indonesian rule between 1975 and 1999, to seek alternative dispute resolution outside the penal code (Kent 2012).

Regarding the first challenge, the relationship between former adversaries, Indonesia and Timor-Leste, was treated as a strategic security concern for the newly-born state. Despite the UN attempts to push for retributive justice, bringing alleged perpetrators of human rights violation to justice, as seen in the establishment of the SPSC, the Timorese leaders decided to explore the avenue of restorative justice, emphasizing reconciliation with their former enemies. Although 391 individuals were indicted by the SPSC, three quarters of them remained in Indonesia and the government of Indonesia refused to extradite those indicted (UN 2005; Järvinen 2004). Hence, those who were brought to justice were mostly Timorese who had joined militia groups operated under the auspices of the Indonesian security force, and those who were strategically responsible for the atrocities were not put on trial. Under pressure from the international community, the government of Indonesia established the Ad Hoc Human Rights Court for East Timor in Jakarta, through which 18 members of the Indonesian Armed Force were indicted, all of whom were subsequently found not guilty (Cohen 2002).

On this point, the government of Timor-Leste prioritized its national security, which was defined by strategic interests for survival, over the welfare of victims of Indonesian occupation. As a result, the Indonesia-Timor-Leste Commission of Truth and Friendship was established in August 2005 to serve as a political mechanism to support national security priorities of Timor-Leste (Strating 2014). This diplomatic maneuver contributed to generating a conducive environment for SSR, as the government of Timor-Leste was able to keep the size of the military to a minimum, as well as to station its contingent away from both the western frontier with Indonesia and the political center. Moreover, those who lived in border districts no longer had to be troubled by the shadow of *ninjas* or an illusion of infiltration by the Indonesian forces and former pro-integration militias into their communities. This phantom did in fact reemerge later in 2009-10, to plague the traumatized population in the border areas when the domestic security situation had deteriorated due to the political turmoil in the capital (CIGI 2010; Myrttinen 2013).

To address the second challenge, regarding the existing division between former pro-independent residents and former pro-integration residents, the UN, together with the newly established government, launched a community-based reconciliation initiative called the CAVR, which focused on repairing broken relationships between the community and those who had committed atrocities under Indonesian rule.

In a CAVR's mediation session in Baboe leten village in Atsabe, a sub-district of Ermera, which took place on November 13, 2003, the public hearing process maintained the characteristic of a formal mediation, while at the same

time such a rational-legal format was accompanied by the indigenous perspective of a ceremonial ritual. The mediation session was held in an open public space where people were allowed to attend the hearing. In a customary *Nahe Biti*, it was the role of traditional elders and rational-legal authority to mediate the case. In the hybrid *Nahe Biti Boot*, formally known as the Community Reconciliation Process (CRP) adopted in the CAVR, it was a team of impartial mediators, not the traditional authority, that facilitated the dialogue (Kent 2012). Minor offences were dealt with by the CRP and forgiveness was granted to perpetrators in return for sharing truth, i.e., explaining to victims and/or their family members exactly what happened so that they could properly mourn the dead (Grenfell 2021) (this point is discussed in the context of ancestral spirits in the article by Winch in this special issue).

The CAVR remained fundamentally a feature of an externally-led top-down approach, since it was introduced jointly by the UN and the government of Timor-Leste. Although decorated with a façade of indigenous ceremony, involving traditional leaders, the CAVR was not a truly community-driven mechanism. It was a hybrid form of dispute settlement, in which a customary mechanism was integrated with a modern form of mediation. For victims, reconciliation was an established national policy set by the leadership, and these victims felt that they were compelled to forgive the perpetrators. Due to the lack of social safety nets, victims had to find their own ways to survive, while the perpetrators of minor offenses were welcomed back in their community without facing retaliation nor reparation. Even those who committed serious crimes such as murder and rape were released from jail after they had served their terms, which usually ran for three to four years (UN 2005).

The government of Timor-Leste did not have sufficient funding to provide financial support to the victims before the Petroleum Fund was established in 2005. In the beginning, therefore, no financial reparations were given to the victims for the damage incurred by atrocities committed between 1975-99. Material support from the government only came after the 2006 crisis. The government introduced the reparation scheme called *bolsa da mae* (which literally means the wallet of mother) that provided US$80 per year to a female-headed household, and a generous pension scheme for veterans (annual benefits ranged from US$2,760 to US$9,000 in 2011) (Dale et al. 2014). These reparation schemes provided financial help to the most vulnerable groups in Timorese society. Nevertheless, as exemplified in the amounts given to the veterans' pensions, the priority of the government was placed on salvaging or appeasing the veterans, who formed various non-statutory forces, since arguably, they still had the skills and means to potentially disturb the political landscape of the country. The needs of the most vulnerable groups such as widows, orphans and victims of sexual assaults were often neglected by the government. The task of caring for these victim groups was assumed by non-state actors. The Catholic Church and NGOs

provided both healing and material support, whereas traditional authorities and a customary dispute resolution mechanism at the sub-national level helped victims to come to terms with past tragedies by offering indigenous sanctions and healing of broken relationships, which helped to soften any revenge-seeking behavior and calmed the attitudes of such victims (for a supplementary role played by civil society, see the article written by Tanaka-Sakabe in this special issue).

In the literature, these transitional justice initiatives are usually not regarded as typical SSR activities. Nevertheless, the overarching and profound effects that these undertakings had on the SSR process cannot be neglected if one wishes to appreciate the overall impact of SSR on peacebuilding in Timor-Leste. These transitional justice measures set the premises for subsequent SSR policies and activities implemented in Timor-Leste, which is the topic of the next section.

A Mid-term Evaluation of SSR in Timor-Leste

In Timor-Leste, where a new state was being constructed under UN auspices, the institutions of a new military, police, civil defense institutions and four district courts and a court of appeals were established. In a nutshell, the UN was tasked with building institutions that would contribute to political stability. However, these same statutory institutions that the UN helped to develop also subsequently and contradictorily turned into major sources of political instability and tools for political maneuvers. In hindsight, this created a serious predicament in the security and justice sectors, and thus the UN efforts to develop an effective security sector in Timor-Leste have been often regarded as a failure. Nevertheless, in the aftermath of such a critical setback, the government of Timor-Leste, sometimes independently, and sometimes together with her bilateral partners, has actively tackled this impediment to SSR, identified as the third challenge to SSR in the previous section.

It is beyond the scope of this article to offer a comprehensive assessment of the complex SSR processes and various outcomes. The following account is an attempt to evaluate the mid-term impact of reform efforts undertaken by the UN and the government of Timor-Leste to address the three critical SSR challenges—the divisions between the military and the police, within the military, and between the police and the communities they serve—, employing an analytical lens that focuses on the triad hybrid nexuses.

Evaluation of the Exogenous/Endogenous Nexus

A seed for the division between the military and the police was rooted in the genesis of the two organizations, in that not all the FALINTL combatants were recruited into the military, whereas some former Indonesian National Police officers were recruited into the police. The decision regarding as to who

could join the military and who could be demobilized was made in a less than transparent manner; it was left in the hands of senior FALINTIL officers who were not affiliated with the leading political party, the Revolutionary Front of Independent East Timor (FRETILIN), but were loyal to Xanana Gusmão, who was the former commander-in-chief of the FALINTIL (Elias 2006). Although the FAILNTIL emerged originally as the military wing of the FRETILIN, during the resistance/liberation struggle, Gusmão split from the FRETILIN.

This gap widened as a result of the political rivalry which operated under the "politics of survival" between the FRETILIN and Gusmão. As senior military positions were filled with Gusmão loyalists, the FRETILIN government perceived it as a threat to its survival, and as a countermeasure, it started to invest in the police. This led to both the politicization of the military (Saramago 2011) and militarization of the police (CIGI 2010).

This politically induced division was exacerbated by the UN's SSR policy that concentrated its support on developing the capacity of the police, while the reform of the military was regarded as secondary and left to bilateral donors. Although the UN placed its emphasis on creating a professional and accountable police service, the FRETILIN government utilized the exogenous support to transform the police into a counterweight against the military, as seen in the creation of special units such as the Police Reserve Unit (URP), the Border Patrol Unit (UPF) and the Rapid Intervention Units (UIRs) within the structure of the police. The URP was set up as a counter-insurgency unit dealing with militia incursions from Indonesian West Timor (CICG 2010). The UPF is responsible for providing security, patrol, and management of the border areas facing the Indonesian Armed Force, whereas the UIRs are tasked with responding to civil disorder in urban areas (Human Rights Watch 2006). Due to the nature of these special units, they are heavily armed (CIGI 2010).

Carrying over the colonial legacy of Portuguese rule and 24 years of Indonesian dictatorship, the people of Timor-Leste have never experienced rule of law based nor accountable policing (Kocak 2018). Against this backdrop, the police modeled itself on the Portuguese police forces: one with a civilian character and the other as a more paramilitary-like gendarmerie force. These special units adopted the gendarmerie style of policing and were widely perceived to be a sign of the militarization of the police (Belo 2014).

By 2009, the police had grown to a strength of 3,168, with the URP having 80, the UPF having 240, and the two UIRs combined having 190 officers (CIGI 2009; Belo 2014). On the other hand, the military, with a maximum strength of only 1,500, were mostly located in the far eastern district away from the capital and equipped with automatic rifles. During the 2006 crisis, as anticipated, the FRETILIN government mobilized the URP as a countermeasure against the military (CIGI 2010).

As a result of the 2006 crisis, a change of government was realized in 2008,

and the new government invoked a series of localized reform activities of the two statutory forces, often accompanied by socio-economic measures. These post-crisis government initiatives successfully removed serious divisions within the military and between the military and the police.

First, in the aftermath of the 2006 crisis, all the "petitioners" (about a half of the military and mostly not affiliated with the FALINTIL, recruited under the UNTAET) were dismissed, which effectively eliminated the source of the internal division within the military. To fill the vacant positions in the military, the new government recruited 600 new personnel (92 officers, 157 sergeants, and 351 privates) (Government of Timor-Leste 2011). With this one move, one of the key initial SSR efforts led by the UN was effectively canceled, but the problem of the internal division was addressed effectively and the military became a more coherent and resilient organization. The entire force was brought under the formal control of Gusmão who became the Prime Minister in the 2007 election. His government did not forget to extend its support to those dismissed from the military, offering them monetary compensation of US$8000 (three years of back payment plus US$1500) (Kingsbury 2009; ICG 2013). This is seen to be part of the practice of "buying peace," as potential spoilers are given alternative means of livelihood in exchange for "burying the hatchet" (ICG 2013). Such socio-economic measures included: (1) a retirement payout for the "petitioners," along with two headline benefit programs for helping the displaced in Dili and recognizing veterans of the independence struggle; (2) introducing social-protection schemes and expanding the civil service; and (3) concluding major infrastructure contracts with potential spoilers (ibid.). The "buying peace" policy has brought a quick fix for serious problems, a much needed form of psychological closure to the daunting era of violence for a society devasted by conflict, and the chance to make a fresh restart for a brighter future. At the same time, this expedient solution was employed not only to appease frustrated spoilers but also to consolidate the power bases of political elites in the power center. While this can be viewed positively as a sign of local ownership, which crafted a local version of dealing with community security challenges, it can also be interpreted as a symptom of illiberal roll-back (Uesugi 2018).

Secondly, the new government sought to achieve reconciliation between the two security institutions which fought each other in 2006. Despite criticism from the UN, by merging the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Interior, the military and the police were put under the single leadership of Gusmão who was serving as both the Prime Minister and Minister for Defense and Security. This local initiative violated the organic laws of the military and the police enacted as a part of the externally-led SSR, which stipulated and stressed their functional separation. In addition, by establishing military/police as "combined commands" and organizing joint exercises and operations, the wedges which existed between these institutions seem to have been removed. Circumstantial evidence indicates

that this makeshift arrangement was terminated after the situation had stabilized, and the military has been placed back under the Ministry of Defense and the police under the Ministry of Interior. No serious institutional battle between the two statutory forces has been witnessed. It seems that both institutions are more resilient now to political intervention and more professionalized than before, as they have remained politically neutral in all of the past elections carried out in 2007, 2012, 2017 and 2018, and kept their allegiance to the democratically elected government, regardless of the party or parties which emerged victorious in each election.

The above account reveals that the UN's efforts in SSR were focused primarily on the national level security architecture. Although the presence of frustrated non-statutory forces not only posed a threat to national security but also caused anxiety in rural communities (Sugito et al. 2020), a mismatch between the exogenous and endogenous priorities prevented the UN-led SSR from addressing the issues of non-statutory actors. At the same time, however, through advocating various efforts aimed at addressing the issue of non-statutory actors such as Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR), community policing and the above-mentioned transitional justice initiatives, the UN sought to help the government to bridge at least part of this gap between the formal and informal, which is the subject of the following section.

Evaluation of the Formal/Informal Nexus

Governance and violent conflict are intimately related. Most occurrences of the latter are caused and sparked by failures in the former, while there is also a reverse causality at work, with conflicts pulling down governance and public institutions and structures. In Timor-Leste, unjust social and economic settlements and distribution of spoils caused discontent which then spilled over into the security realm, which, in turn, contributed to the eruption of a politico-security crisis in 2006. Veterans are informal security actors who took part in the resistance movement in 1975-1999. The veterans who either refused to join, or who were rejected from statutory institutions expressed their concerns and frustration, which turned into a major source of insecurity, as they became increasingly recruited by disgruntled veterans' groups (Leach 2017a). Addressing the legitimate claims of the veterans was considered to be an urgent priority by the local political elites, but this sense of urgency was not shared by the UN, which was preoccupied with the reform of the formal institutions.

The most salient SSR-related activity targeted at the non-statutory forces was DDR, through which reintegration of ex-combatants to civilian life was promoted. DDR was closely linked with the national level SSR activity of establishing the military and its recruitment process. Through DDR, a formal/informal nexus was created, which later surfaced as major evidence of existing cleavages not only in the security sector but also in all aspects of Timorese society.

During the transitional period between 1999 and 2002 (before the independence and enaction of the Constitution), the military was established in response to pressures from increasingly frustrated FALINTIL fighters who remained at voluntary cantonment in the Aileu district. The UN decided that only 650 of the former FALINTIL combatants were to be absorbed into the military, leaving more than 1,300 of them effectively being excluded (Rees 2004; CIGI 2010). For those who were not selected, two externally-led DDR initiatives were carried out. First, as early as 1999, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) initiated the FALINTIL Reinsertion Assistance Program (FRAP), through which 1,308 ex-combatants received an immediate cash payment to rehabilitate and facilitate their reintegration into civilian life (de Almeida 2017). Later, in 2002, the UNDP with support from the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET) implemented the Recovery, Employment and Stability Programme for Ex-combatants and Communities in Timor-Leste (RESPECT). While the FRAP's main beneficiaries were former FALINTIL soldiers, the RESPECT's scope of the beneficiaries was expanded and included not only ex-combatants but also vulnerable groups such as widows, orphans, and disaffected youth (ibid.).

FALINTIL veterans who were not included in the military were expected to be demobilized and reintegrated through either the FRAP and the RESPECT processes. Nevertheless, even after their formal DDR processes were completed, certain influential commanders such as Cornelio Gama, who was one of the commanders of the FALINTIL, continued to maintain their patron-client networks and formed non-statutory forces (Scambary 2019). As the veterans had identified themselves not as victims of war, but as heroes who fought to address social injustice, they were easily frustrated by the lack of improvement in the social situation (World Bank 2008). The issue of the veterans was exacerbated by the UN decision regarding the establishment of the police force. The UN recruited over 350 Timorese who were former officers of the Indonesian National Police (ICG 2008). In contrast, how to manage the discontent and the sense of marginalization shared amongst the veterans and their family members has been recognized by the government as the most urgent priority in post-independence Timor-Leste. The veterans issue was framed as a matter of social justice (World Bank 2008). Their services to the nation needed to be acknowledged and appreciated.

The first government led by Marí Alkatiri, however, was merely able to offer ceremonial acknowledgement and nominal appreciation to the veterans, as the state budget from independence in 2002, until the Petroleum Fund started in 2005, was solely dependent on foreign aid (on this point, see the articles by Daimon-Sato and by Simangan and Bose in this special issue). Substantial and monetary based compensatory measures for the veterans had to wait until the second government led by Xanana Gusmão, who allocated US$23.1 million (3% of the state budget) in 2010, $72 million (6% of the state budget) in 2011, and US$109.7 million (9% of the state budget) in 2012 towards veterans' affairs

(Kent and Kinsella 2015). The *Statute of the National Liberation Combatants* (Law 3/2006) was established on April 12, 2006, when the military's disciplinary troubles, in which approximately one third of the troops deserted their barracks, merged into what became known as the 2006 crisis. Although there was no direct linkage between the passage of the veterans' statute and the 2006 crisis, a series of government initiatives were implemented to address the issues related to veterans during this period. The Decree-Law 15/2008 entitled *Pensions of the Combatants and Martyrs of the National Liberation* is a case in point.

In addition to veterans, other non-statutory actors called the Martial Arts Groups (MAGs) existed in Timor-Leste. From the point of view of ordinary people, MAGs were seen as a major source of insecurity at the community level (Scambary 2019). MAGs have their origin in the clandestine movements, militias, or vigilante groups prevalent during Indonesian rule. Three major MAGs—PSHT, KORK and Kera Sakti—were considered to be serious threats to the community as they had ties with local power-brokers who would mobilize them at will to cause trouble. They emerged as a concern to ordinary people and became a potential risk to national stability (World Bank 2008).

Nevertheless, neither the UN nor the government of Timor-Leste could cope with the problems posed by MAGs for a number of reasons. For one, MAGs are widely accepted throughout the country and are even popular among certain elements in society because many of them are based on the indigenous linage and kinship relationships that are prevailing factors in all aspects of life in Timorese society. Furthermore, many leaders of the MAGs maintained close ties with political elites and senior leadership in the statutory forces (Myrttinen 2007), which made it difficult for both the UN and the government to address the MAG issues. After experiencing a series of internal security challenges, the above-mentioned three major MAGs were banned by the government in 2013.

With the introduction of the legal ban, together with the generational turnover in some of the major MAGs, the main source of community insecurity has transformed from MAGs to the anti-social activities of youth (Belun 2014). The main provocateurs in communal violence are males between 15 and 25 years old, and senior members of the MAGs are now assuming responsibility for cracking down on petty crimes committed by their junior members (Personal Interview with Serafim do Rego Mashedo, the Village Chief of Bebonuk, in Dili, Timor-Leste on May 1, 2019). As the focus of community security shifted from MAGs to youth, the government lifted the ban on the three major MAGs in February 2019, and they were allowed to resume their activities as long as they registered with both the Martial Arts Regulatory Commission and the Ministry of Justice (Government of Timor-Leste 2020). The introduction of the CPC, a new hybrid community security mechanism, combined with a new community policing policy under which one police officer is assigned to every village, have so far proven effective in dealing with the problems of youth at the community level.

Even though many of the frustrated youth are jobless, and community policing is not the right remedy for addressing employment issues, it has served as a means to bridge the gap that existed between the national level SSR policy and security challenges prevalent at the grassroots community level, which is the focus of the next section.

Evaluation of the National/Subnational Nexus

There were two waves that were intended to introduce community policing in Timor-Leste as a tool to bridge the national/subnational gap. The first one came during the initial five years of state-building under UN auspices (1999-2005). Although community policing practice was introduced by the UN, the local situation prevented the police from mainstreaming community policing in its strategy and practice (CIGI 2010). Of the 3,386 police officers, only three were allocated to each Community Police Unit in 13 districts, except for the Dili district, which had nine (UN 2012; Belo 2014).

The second wave of community policing came into being after Timorese society had undergone the 2006 crisis and after the assassination attempts on the president and the prime minister by rebels in 2008. Since 2009, the Asia Foundation has worked with the police to develop a Timorese model of community policing, and since 2016, has implemented the Community Policing Support Program with the New Zealand Police (Perry et al. 2019). Municipality Security Councils were established at the municipality level, in which the municipality president (former district administrator, equivalent to governor), the municipality police commander, and community leaders meet, discuss and coordinate together to ensure prevention of crime and conflict at the municipality level, in ways which affects the daily life and security of ordinary people.

The development of the largely positive perception of statutory forces by ordinary Timorese can be accounted for by the effective use of community policing. The relationship between the police and the community has improved, which has contributed to a sense of security in the community, and vice versa. One possible reason for this positive development in community-police relations can be found in the adoption of community policing as a national strategy by the police in the second wave (Government of Timor-Leste 2009). An environment conducive to such change emerged as a result of the political reconciliation between the two political leaders—Gusmão and Alkatiri—and also through addressing the concerns of veterans via the policy of buying peace. Before political reconciliation was achieved, the police were seen by the political elite as a tool for political maneuvers, and thus, the creation of a militarized police was envisioned by some political actors. After achieving political reconciliation, however, the government shifted its emphasis from establishing a powerful and militarized police force to creating a more public-friendly force ready to serve their community. This choice was made by the government with support

from bilateral donors such as Japan, Australia and New Zealand (Dewhurst and Greising 2017). While this shift did not materialize before the departure of the UNMIT in 2012, support for community-led policing started as early as 2009 (Personal Interview with Boavida Ribeiro, the PNTL Community Policing Commander, the PNTL Headquarters in Dili, May 6, 2019).

As pointed out at the beginning of this article, there has been a significant increase in the perception of community level engagement by the police, and an overwhelming majority of Timorese people now trust the police. At present, safety and security are no longer major concerns for ordinary people, especially in rural communities. According to *TATOLI: People Perception Survey July-August 2018* (Monteiro 2019), only 0.2% of the population answered that "provision of safety/security" should be the government's chief priority, and only 0.1% responded that the government should spend the majority of their money on the "provision of safety/security." When these respondents were allowed to give multiple answers as to the government's priority areas, "safety and security" received 26.8%, while "roads and bridges in poor condition" received 61.3% and "access to water and sanitation" received 51% responses, respectively. When asked what the single biggest problem was facing Timor-Leste at the national level, only 2% selected "safety and security" and 0.8% chose "access to justice." These results are one of the indications that, in Timor-Leste, perceptions of national and community security are largely positive and widely shared among the population.

A newly introduced dialogue platform called the CPC has played an instrumental role in improving the relationship between the police and the community, although in the above-mentioned survey no one identified the CPC as the most important government program that benefits all the people today (ibid.). The CPC is a hybrid forum and mechanism through which the police and the community they serve can come together to discuss, prevent, and resolve problems that arise within a given village. Under this scheme, one Suco Police Officer (OPS) is supposed to be deployed to every village, and all 452 villages in Timor-Leste have already received their OPS (Personal Interview with Boavida Ribeiro, the PNTL Community Policing Commander, the PNTL Headquarters in Dili, May 6, 2019). The CPC is headed by the village chief and its membership consists of village-level agents, the Suco Council including traditional leaders and other community leaders, together with a state agent, in the deployment of the OPS, who acts as the deputy. However, there are many shortcomings to the OPS. For example, Kocak (2018) makes the valid criticism that the OPS are both understaffed and ill-equipped. Not all the villages have a police station for their OPS, and even when they have a police station, their OPS are not necessarily stationed there all the time. Nonetheless, the OPS embedded in the CPC, advocates a basic philosophy of Timorese community policing called the Visibility, Involvement and Professionalism (VIP) approach and this allows the police to be more visible in the community and delegates to the community

members a shared responsibility for providing security for themselves (Personal Interview with Boavida Ribeiro, the PNTL Community Policing Commander, the PNTL Headquarters in Dili, May 6, 2019).

As of April 2019, CPCs were established in 246 out of 452 villages (ibid.). Because every CPCs are established on the Suco Councils which used to serve the dual functions of community dispute resolution and customary justice, they also offer a mediation service if requested by the parties concerned (Dewhurst and Greising 2017). This new scheme is in line with the traditions of Timorese society, as problems that arise in the community are solved, by rational-legal and/or traditional authorities, depending on the nature of the problem, through a customary process. The CPC, which includes the OPS as a representative of the state, is a "hybrid" mechanism and works as a quasi-formalized customary alternative dispute resolution process in conjunction with the formal judicial processes. According to the Asia Foundation report (Wassel and Rajalingam 2015), about 76% of reported crimes have been referred to the CPC, of which 67% were resolved through mediation by community leaders and 20% were settled through traditional means. This indicates that most of the problems would be dealt with in a quasi-formal manner. This hybrid or makeshift approach was adopted to fill the capacity deficit of the police as well as that of other formal judicial and legal means by formally delegating the responsibility to the community level authorities who have traditionally carried out such functions (for a detailed discussion on traditional justice and governance, see the article by Miyazawa and Miyazawa in this special issue).

An observer reported that "The lack of access to justice, compounded by the lack of adequate police response and investigative capacity, is a main contributing factor to the widespread reliance of communities on traditional or informal justice mechanisms" (CIGI 2011, 4). While the capacity of the police remains poor, it seems that the lack of access to formal justice is not the main reason for the prevalent use of customary justice mechanisms. Through several platforms of dialogue at multiple levels of Timorese society, local actors have been able to define and refine their needs and priorities, and have come up with effective means to prevent and address local challenges in their own ways; the manner of which cannot be easily identified with, nor defined by, the fixed lens emanating from Western liberal values and practices.

Conclusion

The initial mistakes by the UN in SSR caused serious damage to the wellbeing of the people of Timor-Leste, as evidenced by the way in which such defects within the security sector gave rise to the 2006 crisis and subsequent political instability. In particular, with regard to non-statutory actors, the UN's approach was

limited to short-term DDR projects, and it thus underestimated the long-term implications of veterans' issues in security governance. As a result, the UN was criticized for a lack of credibility and was gradually marginalized by its Timorese counterparts (Ferro 2011). Since the second electoral victory in 2012, the government led by Gusmão had begun to actively circumvent the UNMIT, as its presence was increasingly seen as irrelevant to maintaining both political stability and physical safety in Timor-Leste. Overall, security tasks were undertaken by an Australian-led International Stabilization Force and Portugal's National Republican Guard, and not by UNMIT. Although the UN suspended the policing responsibility of the government and authorized UNMIT to undertake interim executive policing, UNMIT was ineffective in resolving the problems posed by the rebel group that was alleged to have attacked and attempted to assassinate the president and the prime minister in February 2008.

Nevertheless, the above analysis of the trajectory of SSR indicates that the UN peace operations in Timor-Leste were able to navigate and support the Timorese leadership to lead a top-down SSR approach, in particular bringing a certain level of political stability and physical safety at the national level (Lemay-Hébert 2009). It seems that by 2012, the UN, together with key bilateral donors such as Australia and Portugal, as well as their Timorese counterparts, had at least overcome the majority of the shortcomings of the earlier UN intervention. After barely avoiding killing each other in the 2006 crisis, the "Generation of '75," who were prominent in the resistance movement against Indonesia and who still dominate the political leadership in Timor-Leste, such as Xanana Gusmão, Marí Alkatiri, José Ramos-Horta, and Francisco "Lu-Olo" Guterres, have agreed to change the rules of the game from "winner-takes-all" to "power-sharing" or "consensus democracy" as a transitional measure towards "Quality Peace" (Leach 2017b; Hasegawa 2013). The "politics of survival" has now become the "politics of democratic competition" (Howe, Peou, and Uesugi 2021). As a result of this new emerging political space, the UN intervention was able to lay the foundation for further development of the security and justice sectors in Timor-Leste, despite the various setbacks and the lack of immediate positive feedback. Since Timor-Leste's political scene has not experienced a major generational turnover, it is uncertain whether the existing rule will be renewed when the Generation of '75, who are largely all in their seventies, leave the political arena. Their departure may well unleash new power struggles among younger generations of Timorese elites.

In addition to the main targets of SSR, that is, both the security and justice sectors, the above analysis sheds some light on the nexus between these sectors and the political and socio-economic dimensions of peacebuilding in crafting a conducive environment for promoting and implementing SSR. It also underlines the continued efforts made by the government of Timor-Leste to follow through and adjust externally-led SSR to meet evolving needs on the ground. The above

case study of Timor-Leste indicates that, although the institutions and structures introduced by the UN were fine-tuned or rearranged by the government, some of the core foundational security governance frameworks remain effective, and are now integrated into indigenous customs and practices, thus creating a hybridized model of SSR.

In the case of Timor-Leste, one of the most undervalued efforts of security governance revolved around the socio-economic measures for veterans. The UN failed to address the feeling of victimhood shared among the marginalized sectors of the Timorese population. These sentiments of victimhood surfaced after various transitional justice measures were introduced, as they were geared largely towards criminal justice, as in punishing the perpetrators of serious crime, and not geared towards social justice, specifically supporting the livelihoods of victims who were mostly veterans and their family members (Howe, Peou, and Uesugi 2021). While the UN framed the issue of veterans from the perspective of short-term DDR, the government followed it up with much longer commitments in terms of socio-economic measures, which had a profound impact on security affairs both at the national and community levels. The community policing practice of juxtaposing the CPC and the OPS seems to have bridged the gap which stemmed from the lack of national level capacity in the statutory security and justice apparatus and the ground level reality, by legitimizing and supporting the existing local capacity.

The initial malfunctions of a newborn state, including the radical reconfiguration of the power-balance within the elites and the lack of mastery in new approaches to security governance on the part of indigenous actors caused early setbacks. These setbacks were exaggerated by the lack of contextual knowledge and insensitivity to the political dynamics on the part of external actors. Nonetheless, Timorese society has found a way, after a process of trial and error, to achieve political stability and physical safety within Timorese society, which always was and remains the overarching goal of SSR.

At the same time, the environment constantly changes, and the security and justice sectors need to respond to major circumstantial changes expected in near future. Two critical junctures will soon collide, when the Generation of ’75, in particular Gusmão, will retire from the political landscape, and also when the oil and gas reserves in the Timor Gap run out. While these changes in external conditions are not a typical focus of the existing theory/model of SSR, the mid-term elevation of SSR in Timor-Leste suggests that it is the effect of these contextual factors that has to be taken into consideration if one is to conceive an adaptive and everlasting SSR strategy that can make externally-led SSR sustainable and achieve the quality of peace. This article has sought to emphasize the need to shed light on these indirect factors surrounding SSR.

Epilogue

Let us go back to the initial inquiry. How and why were the police able to win the trust of community leaders as well as the general public in the matter of a mere few years following the departure of the UN mission in 2012? The above analysis has, it is hoped, demonstrated that the primary factor was not the enhanced capacity of the statutory institutions. Rather, circumstantial evidence indicates that it was in fact due to the improvement in the security situation itself. Why then, has the security situation improved even though the capacity of the statutory institutions remains at a low level. There are two possible explanations for this. First and foremost, political reconciliation between the two most senior political figures in Timor-Leste, Xanana Gusmão and Marí Alkatiri, was achieved after they have barely escaped the collapse of the newborn state in the 2006 crisis. The second reason is that by employing the policy of "buying peace," the government was able to address the key socio-economic injustices shared by the influential veterans. These factors interacted in ways which gradually saw an improvement in the security situation.

In terms of the politico-security field, the military/police joint operations successfully removed a source of insecurity in 2008. Through this process, a consensus emerged among the Generation of '75 that the notion of the politics of survival had to be terminated. The second factor was found in the socio-economic field. After the transfer of wealth from the Petroleum Fund began in 2005, the state budget was able to be doubled in 2008, which allowed the government the freedom to allocate financial resources to its "buying peace" endeavors, with pensions for veterans being one such initiative. While these factors do not seem to be related to the series of SSR activities undertaken in Timor-Leste, it was in fact such contextual factors as these which have promoted SSR and vice versa.

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