Institutionalising community policing in Timor-Leste

Police development in Asia's youngest country

Todd Wassel

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Report

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Key messages

- Community policing in Timor-Leste has developed from a combination of donor advocacy, existing customary practices and support within the PNTL.

- It has been a long-term evolution that has only recently taken formal shape.

- Community policing has been influenced by colonial experiences of policing, personalised politics, strong donor presence and widespread reliance on customary dispute resolution.

- While community policing has only recently been formalised, early results indicate some improvement in community perceptions of police.

Acknowledgements

About the author
Todd Wassel is Director for Safety and Security Programs at the The Asia Foundation in Timor-Leste. Queries about this research can be directed to him at: twassel@asiafound.org.

About the Asia Foundation
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Headquartered in San Francisco, The Asia Foundation works through a network of offices in 18 Asian countries and in Washington, DC. Working with public and private partners, the Foundation receives funding from a diverse group of bilateral and multilateral development agencies, foundations, corporations, and individuals. In 2013, we provided nearly $114 million in direct program support and distributed textbooks and other educational materials valued at over $10 million.

Table of contents

Figures

Boxes

Abbreviations

CIVPOL   United Nations Civilian Police

CNRT   National Council of Timorese Resistance

CPU   Community Police Unit

FALINTIL   Forcas Armados de Libertacao Nacional de Timor-Leste

F-FDTL   Falintil-Forcas Armadas de Defesa de Timor-Leste

FRETILIN   Revolutionary Front for Liberation of East Timor

MAG   Martial Arts Gang

NZPOL   New Zealand Police

PNTL   Polícia Nacional de Timor-Leste

SPO   Suku Police Officer

SVS   Suku Volunteer Security

TAF   The Asia Foundation

TLCPP   Timor-Leste Community Policing Program

TLPDP   Timor-Leste Police Development Program

UDT   Uniao Democratic Timorense

UNDPKO   United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations

UNMISET   United Nations Mission of Support to East Timor

UNMIT   United Nations Integrated Mission in East Timor

UNPOL   United Nations Police

UNTAET   United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor

USAID   United States Agency for International Development

Executive summary

As part of ODI's Securing Communities project, which aims to understand different models of community policing around the world, this case study examines the development of community policing policy and practice in Timor-Leste. As with the Securing Communities project more broadly, the focus is on the diversity of objectives, approaches and methods of community policing, the 'messy politics' of its development and what this means for those who aim to support this policing model. This second case study examines some key features of community policing policy development and practice in Timor-Leste.

The Timor-Leste case study reveals a unique process of development of community policing, which was influenced by historical legacies of occupation and resistance, unprecedented international involvement in state formation, brief but intense periods of crisis and instability after independence (such as the collapse of the police service in 2006), geographical limitations of a rural, isolated population and the cultural heritage of strong village-level dispute resolution mechanisms and customary justice. In recent years, police development has been influenced by the evolution of the political system and increased stability resulting from a more cohesive political settlement based on distribution of oil revenues, but also social inequalities between urban dwellers, who have greater visible access to the gains of independence, and the rural population, which is only now being connected to the electrical grid and other benefits of development.

In this context, community policing has struggled to take hold both as a policy and as an operational solution to insecurity. Intensive involvement by the international community in the development of the police service led to poorly coordinated support, with a variety of community policing models offered. The innate vagueness of the concept of 'community policing' and the different methods, definitions and policies applied by external actors combined with a highly fluid policy development process centred on personal interests and led to the creation of hollow institutions where local ownership of community policing methods was not supported.

It was not until the full withdrawal of United Nations Police and the handover of executive policing authority to the national police in 2012 that community policing policies and practice began to emerge through the lens of local ownership from a decade of international advice, study tours and assessment reports. Community policing as it stands today is just beginning to be applied in a consistent manner based on a defined national model and strategic plan.

Community policing in Timor-Leste today is a hybrid model of indigenous and international models. Structures are just being developed that emphasize the placement of police officers at the *suku* [village] level across the country. These officers are responsible for problem solving and working alongside customary authorities such as elders and village chiefs to resolve disputes locally, or referring crimes on to specialized units. At the same time, community security volunteers are being organized to support the police in maintaining security in remote areas and helping to reduce the cost of policing a rural population with limited staff and resources. The Timor-Leste model is a unique blend of collocation models such as the Japanese *koban* system, the former Indonesian Military Police model focused on intelligence gathering and problem solving models from New Zealand.

The analysis highlights that it is too soon to point to the results of community policing in Timor-Leste due to the drawn out policy process, which means that only recently has an institutional consensus developed around community policing. Significant challenges remain in implementing the new community policing strategy: these range from typical issues of resources, police capacity and training curriculums to more socially specific issues such as the balance and interplay between customary justice mechanisms and the formal justice sector; and the history of police-community relations in Timor-Leste. However, as the main objective behind community policing in Timor-Leste is to develop greater trust and confidence from the population through visibility,

engagement and professionalism, it offers the potential to help reform the entire police service away from a reactionary style of maintaining law and order to proactive citizen engagement centred on prevention.

For external actors looking to engage in community policing, this study shows the necessity of coordination amongst international actors, and of being willing to apply not just technical approaches but to recognize that police development is inherently a political process. It also speaks to the importance of building local ownership, rather than attempting to implement external 'best practice' policing models that can be harmful in terms of longer-term institutional and policy development. Factors found to be central in shaping the nature of community policing include the history of resistance and the legacy of positive and negative relationships developed during that time, state-society relations and the limited reach of the central government to a rural and isolated population, and the strong culture of customary authority and local dispute resolution. Understanding the tensions that exist between these factors and the interests they represent are essential to supporting community policing practices that approach citizens in an equitable, transparent and service-oriented manner.

1 Introduction

Timor-Leste is a country of 1,133,594[1] people, with deep cultural, spiritual and historical wealth, but also a nominal non-oil *per capita* income of USD594.50,[2] making it one of the poorest countries in the world. The police service, the *Polícia Nacional de Timor-Leste* (PNTL) has just over 3,500 officers, and is responsible for maintaining security in urban and rural areas, the latter of which are spread out across rugged rural roads, horse paths and in some cases during the rainy season, no paths or roads at all. Community policing in Timor-Leste is still in its infancy despite incorporating the concept and some practices since the PNTL's formation in 2002. To date, much of the work around community policing has focused on internal wrestling with defining it as a concept and accepting it as the model and philosophy of the PNTL. Standardized community police practices are only now being developed, and while most police officers have encountered the term, few citizens have heard of it, let alone understand its meaning.

Box 1: Securing Communities project

This is the second case study under the Securing Communities project, being led by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) in partnership with The Asia Foundation. This project aims to understand the different manifestations of community policing around the world, the factors that determine the unique shape that they take and what this means for relevant national and international actors.

The case studies were preceded by a background paper (Denney and Jenkins, 2013) which detailed the multiple definitions, objectives and models of community policing. It argued that in order to understand this diversity, it is critical to take account of a number of political features that shape the manner in which community policing develops. These features include:

- Histories of state formation;
- Evolution of the political system;
- State-society relations;
- State presence;
- Experience of conflict or emergency;
- Social cleavages and inequalities; and
- Cultures of protection and dispute resolution.

The purpose of this case study is to understand the development of community policing in Timor-Leste and why it has developed in its current form. The findings will help to build an understanding of how community policing develops under certain political conditions and the lessons that exist on how best to support community policing in such contexts.

Timor-Leste provides a unique study of how significant international donor involvement helped to influence but also delay the full implementation and formation of community policing in a post-conflict setting. It offers lessons on developing police services in the challenging political context of state building. In addition, there are interesting insights for community policing practice and the application of formal justice alongside customary traditions.

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[1] World Bank Timor-Leste country data, 2011. Available online at: http://data.worldbank.org/country/timor-leste.
[2] *Timor-Leste Strategy Development Plan 2011-2030: Version Submitted to National Parliament,* Government of Timor-Leste, 2011.

In section two, this paper describes the methods used to conduct the case study research. Section three describes the socio-political context that has helped to shape community policing in Timor-Leste. The fourth section details the three main security actors involved in community policing and their relationship dynamics. The history of how community policing developed as a policy is explored in section five. Sections six and seven examine what community policing looks like today, including its objectives and tentative results and the current challenges facing the institutionalization of community policing across the police service. Finally, the conclusion highlights the importance of understanding the complicated history of community policing development and the need to build an understanding of the politics of reform in any donor-supported efforts to build community policing.

2 Method

Timor-Leste was selected as a focus of research due to the extraordinary involvement of the international community and the heavy focus placed on police development early in the UN Administration. Timor-Leste presents a case study not only of community policing in post-conflict and fragile settings, but also of shifting tensions between international assistance and respect for national sovereignty and ownership during externally-led state-building.

This case study was undertaken by a researcher from The Asia Foundation (the Foundation) who manages the Foundation's community-oriented policing (COP) programme HAKOHAK *Polisia ho Comunidande* (Embracing the police and communities), which is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the New Zealand Aid Programme.[3] The case study is based on community policing research conducted for ongoing reports by the Foundation as well as specifically for the ODI Securing Communities case study. Field work was undertaken between May and December 2013, with interviews conducted with police officers, government officials, United Nations staff and international police officers working in Timor-Leste. Key person interviews focused on the National Community Policing Unit in PNTL Headquarters, and with district commanders and community police officers in the districts of Liquisa, Bobonaro, Aileu, Manatuto, and Baucau.[4] In addition, the Marine Patrol Commander was also interviewed in order to document community police practice in a specialized unit. The case study also draws on community focus group discussions conducted regularly between June 2012 and May 2013 during implementation of the HAKOHAK programme in the districts of Dili, Bobonaro, Lautem, and Baucau.

Finally, the research draws on survey data from the Foundation's 2013 community police perception survey, in which 3,106 respondents were interviewed in all 13 districts across three target groups the general public (1,891 respondents), community leaders (467 respondents) and the PNTL (748 respondents) (Wassel and Rajalingam, 2014). Particular attention was placed on interviewing a balance of male and female respondents; in focus groups, discussions with women were conducted separately.

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[3] At the time of writing, the HAKOHAK programme had staff in four PNTL stations in Aileu, Bobobaro, Manatuto and Baucau, and had helped the PNTL establish 36 Community Police Councils. Expansion of the programme is ongoing to Dili, Ainaro, Viqueque and Liquisa. For more on the HAKOHAK programme and The Asia Foundation's community police work in Timor-Leste, please see: http://www.asiafoundation.org/publications/pdf/644

[4] Timor-Leste is divided into 13 administrative districts, with Dili being the main urban center, with roughly 200,000 inhabitants, followed by Baucau. Each district is made up of *suku* (or village) as an administrative division made up of smaller *aldeia* (or sub-village). There are 442 *suku* in Timor-Leste, each governed by an elected body called the *Suku* Council, which includes a *suku* chief, all *aldeia* chiefs, and women, youth and veteran representatives. See Section 4 for more details.

3 Context

As set out in the background paper to the Securing Communities project, the very different contexts in which community policing emerge help to explain at least in part how and why community policing develops in the unique ways that it does. These different contexts are shaped by specific processes of state formation, political ideology, histories of conflict, state presence, state-society relations, social cleavages and cultures of dispute resolution (Denney and Jenkins, 2013: 24-31). In this section, the relevant factors affecting the development of community policing in Timor-Leste are examined. This provides the background of why community policing started developing in Timor-Leste in the first place and the consequences of past actions that affect present day policing. Timor-Leste's unique political context has shaped an engaged but initially institutionally hollow form of community policing. This context includes its history of occupation and resistance, state formation through substantial international involvement, fragile state-society relations due to institutional weakness compounded by geographical limitations of a rural, isolated population, brief but intense levels of crisis and conflict after independence, political settlement and the cultural heritage of strong village-level dispute resolution mechanisms and customary justice.

3.1 History of occupation and resistance

Timor-Leste is located in Southeast Asia, to the East of the Indonesian archipelago. The nation comprises the eastern half of the island of Timor, along with the enclave of Oecusse in Indonesian West Timor (see map in Annex 2). From the 16th century, Dutch and Portuguese traders slowly increased contact, leading to resource exploitation and eventually administrative control. Territorial division and consolidation between the two colonial powers was negotiated in 1913, with the Portuguese taking the East of the island and the Oecusse enclave (what is now Timor-Leste), and the Dutch controlling the West (now Indonesia).

The Portuguese remained in control until 1974, with the exception of three years of occupation by the Japanese during World War Two. As the Portuguese began to withdraw, political parties suddenly began to emerge, leading to fierce competition between the two main groups, the Revolutionary Front for Liberation of East Timor (FRETILIN) and the pro-Portugal, more conservative Uniao Democratic Timorense (UDT). The fighting between the two groups escalated into a full civil war in 1975 (ICG, 2006: 2) and the eventual birth of the military wing of FRETILIN, the *Forcas Armados de Libertacao Nacional de Timor-Leste* (FALINTIL), under the command of Rogerio Lobato, the highest ranking Timorese in the Portuguese military. FRETILIN was able to defeat UDT quickly, but established only weak control of the country characterised by intense fighting based on long standing grievances, clan feuds and personal grudges (CAVR, 2005: para 149).

In November 1975, FRETILIN declared independence. One month later, Indonesia, which had gained independence from the Netherlands in 1956, launched a full-scale invasion. The subsequent occupation by Indonesia from 1975 until 1999 was punctuated by consistent human rights violations including massacres, extra-judicial killings, starvation, torture, forced movement of populations, coerced sterilization of women, rape and imprisonment without legal redress (McCloskey, 2000: 4). During the occupation, anywhere from 100,000 to 180,000 people were killed (CAVR, 2005: 44). As the fighting and atrocities intensified, so did internal divisions within FRETILIN and FALINTIL. While many of these differences were subordinated to the common cause of fighting against Indonesian occupation, the rifts between prominent leaders re-emerged after independence. These grievances had devastating consequences due to the culture of hierarchical personalized leadership in Timor-Leste and the use of power bases to exact revenge and consolidate control. As political legitimacy in Timor-Leste is largely driven by participation in the resistance, grievances developed during resistance were almost guaranteed to carry over into democratic state-building (ICG, 2006: 2).

It was also during the period of occupation that the Timorese were subjected to a military-style police force. The model of control through placing a military police officer in each village to monitor and collect intelligence on the population would leave a legacy of distrust in police services as well as, ironically, community policing in the future.

3.2 State formation and extraordinary international involvement

Timor-Leste's police service, and subsequently its community policing policies, is a product of unprecedented international involvement at all aspects of the country's state formation, first by the United Nations and subsequently to lesser degrees through the development assistance programmes of individual donors. The experience is unique in terms of UN peacekeeping operations, with Kosovo the only other instance of full UN Administration. In 1999, the people of Timor-Leste (78%) voted overwhelmingly for independence in a UN-administered referendum. However, Indonesian withdrawal following the vote led to widespread violence, with the Indonesian military or militias destroying 70% of the country's buildings and infrastructure (CAVR: 627). The Indonesian withdrawal left virtually no functioning institutions, with most government officials, including the police, driven out of the country across the border by the Indonesian military or pro-integration militias (ICG, 2008).

In response to the vote, the UN Security Council established the UN Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) on 25 October 1999, which served as a transitional civil administration with full executive, legislative and judicial control.[5] Over 1,600 UN civilian police (known as CIVPOL at the time) were deployed between 2000-2002 and given the mandate of executive policing authority (Hood, 2006: 62).

The substantial attention that the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (UNDPKO) gave to policing was a unique development in Timor-Leste and, in theory, a positive one for police development. However, the mission was hindered by its large size and subsequent lack of international capacity and expertise to address the challenges faced by the emerging country (Conflict, Security and Development Group, 2003: 81; Marenin, 2005: 26). Added to this was a large contingent of disgruntled veterans who felt excluded from the process of both military and police formation. Veteran groups would become a key feature of the political landscape.

A police academy was established in Dili, and CIVPOL started training 1,700 recruits in a three- month basic training course. At the same time, 370 former Indonesian police were integrated into the new police force through an intensive four-week course. However, the quality and effectiveness of these trainings has been noted to be severely inadequate due to a lack of planning and competency by CIVPOL during the early years (UNDP, 2003). The national police service, the *Polícia Nacional de Timor-Leste* (PNTL), was established officially in August 2001 through UNTAET Regulation 2001/22,[6] but the training failed to develop operational and management structures and led to the development of personal rather than institutional authority (Wilson, 2010: 77).

On 20 May 2002 the country declared its independence. A follow-on UN mission was created, the United Nations Mission of Support to East Timor (UNMISET), which was tasked to 'assist with the development of a new law enforcement agency in East Timor.'[7] This meant that CIVPOL continued to maintain executive policing authority until handover to the PNTL on 20 May 2004. Following several critical reports of the UN's role in police development (UNDP, 2003; Conflict, Security and Development Group, 2003) and the departure of UNMISET following the 2004 police handover, new approaches based on technical expertise were initiated, such as the Australian-led Timor-Leste Police Development Programme (TLPDP). The early focus of the TLPDP[8] was on crime prevention and community safety, investigations and operations, training and development, administration, oversight and management. While the UN still played a small role in targeted assistance, together with other donor countries, the TLPDP provided the bulk of training from its inception in July 2004 until it was suspended following the crisis in Dili in 2006.

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[5] UN Transitional Administration in East Timor, UN Security Council, 25 October 1999.

[6] Although the current PNTL law, Organic Law No. 9/2009, Article 46, states the 27 March 2000 as the commemoration date.

[7] UN Security Council under Resolution 1410, 2002.

[8] The TLPDP program is still running as of writing and was reinstituted after the 2006 crisis.

3.3 2006 Crisis and PNTL Reform under UNMIT

Following independence in May 2002, the former FALINTIL commander, Rogerio Lobato, used his own veteran base to organize several thousand ex-FALINTIL to march on Dili. While the move was officially to celebrate independence, it established Lobato's position of power. Less than a month later, he was appointed Minister of the Interior and placed in charge of the police and local government (Rees, 2004: 49). Fanning discontent amongst veteran groups against the 370 former Indonesian police, he was able to open up police recruitment and ensured that those loyal to him were selected. The result was a significant element of the police service that was loyal to Rogerio personally (ICG, 2006: 5).

In 2006, the historical legacies of personal interests taking precedence over institutional strengthening of the PNTL and the constant struggle for power and resources at the highest levels of government led to the complete collapse of the police in Dili. The conflict and IDP emergency that followed left a profound impact on the development of policing. The bloody events of April and May 2006 exposed the fractured structure of the security sector and the ease with which factions were manipulated by the country's political elite (United Nations, 2006). The crisis began to escalate when the police were unable to control the April 24-28 protests by former-soldiers who had been dismissed from the army after petitioning for greater equality for 'westerners' in recruitment, promotions and disciplinary measures. The petition was based on long-simmering grievances by soldiers from the west that they were not treated fairly compared to those from the east (ISC, 2006: 6). Over the next month, the leadership of the PNTL deserted their positions, the Minister of the Interior allegedly distributed weapons to civilians, clashes erupted among the *Falintil-Forcas Armadas de Defesa de Timor-Leste* (F-FDTL) and between the police,[9] resulting in the deaths of eight police officers on 25 May and the PNTL themselves fractured and fought each other along factional lines (United Nations, 2006).

While the crisis was contained mostly to Dili, it spread there quickly. Opportunistic groups used the confusion to exact revenge for long-standing grievances, resulting in the burning of over 2,000 houses and over 140,000 people displaced in Dili alone. On 11 June 2006, the government requested a new UN policing mission that would include rapid reaction forces, policing in Dili and an institutional capacity-building and advisory team. The intent of the new mission was to maintain law and order and re-establish trust and confidence among the population until the PNTL could be reorganized and restructured (ICG, 2009).

On 25 August, the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) was established. Once again the PNTL lost executive policing authority. An UNPOL (the revised name of CIVPOL) contingent was established, comprising 450 international police officers in Dili and 640 beyond the capital.[10]

The UNMIT mission lasted five years, until December 2012, during which time tensions grew between the PNTL and UNPOL over policing authority. The tension was compounded by the assassination attempts on the President and Prime Minister in 2008. This led to new legal reforms that allowed the military and police to work together under a coordinating body during a state of emergency in order to hunt down the last of the rebels associated with the assassination attempts. This merging of mandates and execution was accomplished without the involvement of the UN or the executive policing mandate of UNPOL.

Under pressure to hand over authority by the Government of Timor-Leste, UNPOL began a phased handover whereby districts were assessed jointly by UNPOL and PNTL and then certified for resumption; the first was Lautem district in the East of the country, in May 2009. In December 2012, after helping to overseeing the largely peaceful presidential and parliamentary elections, UNMIT and its full contingent of UNPOL officers left Timor-Leste and the PNTL once again took over executive policing authority.

3.4 Political settlement

While the smooth elections were heralded by many as the result of PNTL planning and maturity, the reality may be more complicated, for Prime Minister Xanana Gusmao and his party, National Council of Timorese

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[9] The Timor-Leste military.
[10] United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste, United Nations Security Council Resolution 1704, 25 August 2006.

Resistance (CNRT), have been highly effective in helping to bring about stability by opening up the oil fund reserves.

The Petroleum Fund began to swell after production in the Timor Sea came online in 2004; as of February 2014 it stood at USD14.9 billion. Oil and gas currently provides 95% of all revenues and 80% of Timor-Leste's GDP (Lao Hamutuk, 2013). This money has provided the government with the ability to buy stability by increasing spending on goods and services, increasing contracts to local companies and moving money out to the districts through small scale contracts and infrastructure projects. The money has also been used to pay dismissed army petitioners from the 2006 crisis, incentivise IDPs to return home or resettle, provide pensions for veterans and put potential political rivals and spoilers to work through lucrative construction contracts (ICG, 2013: 6). Beneficiaries of the increased spending include a mix of an emerging business class with political connections and those with a potential or history of using violence against the state (ICG, 2013: 6).

Stability and a strong political settlement were further consolidated through the 2012 elections, when the Prime Minister and his party were re-elected with a strengthened mandate, but also more power concentrated in the hands of a few. Personality-driven politics is particularly strong in Timor-Leste, where the older elite's power is drawn from its experiences during the resistance. In the security sector, for instance, tensions within and between security forces are suppressed by consolidating power in a single political personality – the Prime Minister, who is also Minister of Defence. This may have been effective in maintaining stability to date, but masks the fact that deeper institutional arrangements for effective oversight and management have not been established (ICG, 2013: i).

3.5 State-society relations: limited reach of the state and reliance on customary structures

Despite growing oil revenues and the willingness to spend them on development activities and employment schemes, state-society relations remain relatively weak. The governance environment in Timor-Leste is highly centralized, with most political decision-making and development decisions being carried out by high-level government officials in Dili. While Timor-Leste is constitutionally committed to implementing decentralization, failure to realize it in practice since 2002, when debates and policy options began, has left a widening gap between the government and citizens in the rural areas.[11] While various community-driven development schemes have been implemented or are now coming on-line, they have focused almost exclusively on supporting small-scale infrastructure, either at the village level or through local businesses in urban areas. However, the reality is that 70% of the Timor-Leste population lives in dispersed rural areas and is dependent upon agriculture and fishing.[12] A lack of adequate transport infrastructure, seasonal rains that destroy existing infrastructure on a regular basis and minimal human and financial resources for education, health and security in rural areas mean that most citizens have limited access to state services.

The relative absence of the formal state in much of rural Timor is accompanied by a strong reliance on customary structures that fulfil dispute resolutions functions. Almost all interviewees indicated a link between individual security provided by the state and patronage and personal relationships. What this means in practice is that state-sponsored services are often only accessible to those who personally know a PNTL officer or other state representative. Overall responses to the security and safety issues facing most communities are provided by local leaders rather than the police. These can be hierarchical, which may perpetuate local power dynamics. They are oriented towards wider village and family cohesion, and not necessarily performed in the interest of individual justice for the victim or in accordance with either national or international rights. However, the customary forms are still the most accessible forms of governance in most remote areas and thus have a broad impact on state-society relations. These customary structures are set out in more detail in the following section as a key component of Timor's security structures, but their relevance is noted here as an important factor in shaping the way COP has developed.

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[11] As of February 2014, a Statute of the Structures of Administrative Pre-Deconcentration was passed by the Council of Ministers; however, the legal model for full decentralisation is still pending.

[12] 2010 Timor-Leste Census, available at: https://www.mof.gov.tl/about-the-ministry/statistics-indicators/statistics-and-census/?lang=en

This section has demonstrated a number of features that have strongly influenced the development of community policing in Timor-Leste. The history of occupation and resistance bequeathed a militarized style of policing, making it difficult to build trust between police and communities. Involvement in the resistance has become a powerful political tool and has ensured that veterans play an important role in national security. The extreme levels of international engagement in Timor's police reform has been critical in shaping the PNTL, but it has also slowed the development of locally-owned community policing, with executive policing authority held by the UN, rather than PNTL, for significant periods. The political settlement has strengthened, with CNRT solidifying its leadership mandate despite the continuation of high levels of personalization of power. Finally, state-society relations remain relatively weak, with the central state struggling to make its presence felt in rural areas. In these places, customary authority remains more relevant and utilized.

4 Security Actors and Cultures of Dispute Resolution

The multitude of security providers at the local level, both state and customary, is a major factor in the development of community policing in Timor-Leste. . Some of the key security actors and their roles are set out below.

4.1 PNTL

The *Polícia Nacional de Timor-Leste* currently compromises roughly 3,500 officers. It is one of the world's youngest police services, having been pulled together more or less from scratch only 13 years ago. In just over a decade, the PNTL has passed through two different UNPOL missions organized under two different organic laws, and has only held full executive policing authority for three of its 13 years.

While institutional structures have certainly been developed, they remain somewhat hollow. This is because the police service lacks consistent application of the processes and procedures that were built, frequently out of context, with international assistance. This situation has been compounded by community reluctance to engage with the police service. A number of interviewees indicated that they were afraid of being beaten by the police or threatened with a gun. In one study, it was found that the national public was four times more likely to identify community leaders, rather than the PNTL, as being responsible for maintaining security in their locality (Everett and Chinn, 2008). One interviewee explained that nothing happens when the police are approached; the case is just sent back to community leaders. In 2013, the responses about responsibility for maintaining security changed substantially, but not in favour of the PNTL. When asked the same question, respondents indicated they now consider 'citizens' to have primary responsibility for security in their area, at 51%, compared to the PNTL, with 19% (Wassel and Rajalingam, 2014). Despite difficulties in gaining the confidence of citizens, the police are among the most forward deployed civil servants, with stations in all sub-districts and frequent engagement with rural communities.

The PNTL has also struggled in terms of governance and coordination. Uncoordinated engagement from the international community, which has focused on training and equipping specific and specialised units, has led to a service whose units engage with the community in different ways. This disjointedness can be traced back to a lack of clarity surrounding the interpretation of the 2009 PNTL Organic Law, particularly in relation to community policing. The law does not designate a specific district-level community police unit as the previous 2004 law did; instead, it mandates that the 'PNTL shall have the characteristics of a community police'".[13] These characteristics were not subsequently defined, and led to some districts developing their own community police units, as they had before[14], with other commanders disbanding specialized community police officers.[15]

Interviews with community members in 2004 indicated a volatile relationship with the police. Yet by 2010, Baucau sub-district community leaders indicated positive relationships with community police officers, although community members reported incidents of abuse and threatening behaviour from other PNTL officers.[16] These results were mirrored in recent community focus group discussions conducted in Dili, Bobonaro and Lautem, in which community members listed the firing of weapons, violence and intimidation as routine problems with the

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[13] Article 1 (2), PNTL Organic Law No. 9/2009

[14] Prior to the 2009 Organic Law, the 2004 Law defined local level community police units.

[15] Group discussions with PNTL officers for conflict prevention planning for the Presidential Elections, April 2012; General observations of the author through implementing The Asia Foundation's Community Policing programmes across all 13 districts.

[16] 'Conflict Mitigation Through Community Oriented Policing Pilot Program', Focus Group Discussion Notes (2010), The Asia Foundation

PNTL, along with the collection of 'taxes' on illegal gambling centres.[17] Interviews with community police officers revealed their frustration over losing the trust and confidence of communities due to actions of other police units.

On a practical level, this context makes it difficult to develop constructive and regularized community-police relations. In many locations, community members interact with many different units and members of police, and they do not always understand the difference between them. This makes accountability more difficult, and can also frustrate relationships when police are asked about follow-up for actions taken by another unit about which they know little . Furthermore, 91% of police note that the resources allocated to them to ensure security is inadequate for the task (Everett and Chinn, 2008). Collectively, these factors do not incentivize the police to work closely with communities or to develop a service mentality.

On the positive side, a significant number of PNTL officers, specifically those at the District Commander level or higher up in headquarters, have received international training on community policing and other related topics. Much of this training is at a theoretical level and based on models that do not translate to the Timor-Leste context easily. However, some of these high capacity officers have, in turn, used their leadership positions to try to introduce community policing tactics or activities on their own initiative and without headquarters' budgetary support.

4.2 *Suku* Council

The Timor-Leste Government established the *Suku* Council system in 2004 (updated with new legislation in 2009)[18], and rolling elections took place across the districts of Timor-Leste in late2004 and early2005. There is one *Suku* Council for each of the 442 *suku* across Timor-Leste's 13 Districts and all council members are directly elected by eligible voting citizens of each *suku*. The council is headed by an elected *xefe suku*.[19] Other *Suku* Council members include all of the *xefe aldeia*,[20] representing each of the *aldeia* (sub-villages) within the *suku*, one elder, two women's representatives and two youth representatives—one man, one woman. In addition, one hereditary *lia-na'in*[21] is appointed by the *Suku* Council in their first meeting following election into office.

Despite 500 years of external rule and influence, communities have relied on *adat* (customary system of law and ritual)[22] and the authority structures associated with the *adat* system as the main order of daily life. The current role of the *Suku* Council is to act as a bridge between state structures and this customary system. As a result, the *Suku* Council, despite being created by the Timor-Leste Government, is not considered a part of the government and garners its influence from a mix of both traditional and modern forms of socio-political legitimacy (Cummings, 2011: 90).

The councils in general garner a high degree of influence and trust within the communities that elect them, and one of their main functions is in the resolution of disputes. In a recent national survey on community police perceptions, when asked who they would report a crime to if a police officer was stationed in their village, 47% of citizens responded that they would approach the *suku* chief and 38% the PNTL (Wassel and Rajalingam, 2014). This reliance on *suku* chiefs as the initial contact after a crime shows the central position the *suku* chiefs hold in maintaining the safety and security of their village. In practice, disputes are initially attended to by family-based traditional leaders through *adat*. As disputes become more complicated or irresolvable, *Suku* Council members are brought in to mediate through *adat*, with the police being the final resort.

In addition to dispute resolution, the *Suku* Council may also work with customary authorities (see below) in implementing *tara bandu*, a customary prohibition mechanism that is primarily used to regulate human-to-human interaction, human and animal interaction and human and nature interaction (Notaras and Wassel, 2013). *Tara bandu* can be implemented over small tracts of land, can involve a number of different communities that maintain traditional ties with each other, or (as in the case of Ermera district) can be implemented across an

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[17] Community focus group discussions conducted in August 2012 in Comoro, Dili; Mascarenas, Dili; Holsa, Bobanaro; and Com, Lautem.

[18] Organic Law No. 5/2004; RDTL Parliamentary Law No.3/2009 on Community Leadership and their Election

[19] *Xefe Suku*: chief of the *suku*, and of the *Suku* Council.

[20] *Xefe Aldeia*: chief of the *aldeia*, or sub-village. Member of the *Suku* Council.

[21] *Lia-na'in*: 'owner of the words'; customary authority figure responsible for interpreting customary law and resolving local disputes.

[22] Indonesian word for the sacred laws and belief systems on which local justice is based, and commonly used in Timor-Leste.

entire district. Implementing larger *tara bandu* costs a great deal, so in these cases it is now common for communities to seek donor support for the ceremonies; this raises concerns about their sustainability.[23]

4.3 Customary authorities

The influence of customary leadership on *suku*-level security and safety varies significantly according to the issue at hand. In general, they tend to complement rather than challenge local leadership exercised by the *xefe suku* and the *Suku* Council. For example, there are *lia-na'in* (customary leaders) across the 442 *suku* of Timor-Leste, who work together or individually to resolve local disputes via *lisan.*[24] They also work closely with the official *lia-na'in* on the *Suku* Council so that the work that they do in resolving local disputes complements the role of the *suku lia-na'in.* With insufficient state resources to deal effectively with the number of disputes arising in the community, the *lia-na'in* fill a vital role in maintaining communal order. As the interpreters of customary law and obligations according to *lisan*, customary authority figures also possess significant influence over community members' lives—impacting on individuals' and families' access to land, crops and inheritance rights, and also playing a strong role in maintaining 'correct' relationships between individuals, families and larger groups.

The potential contradictions between customary codes and individual human rights and the officially recognized laws of the country are ongoing concerns.[25] Some interviewees expressed frustration at the lack of power afforded to women and girls in traditional systems. However, *lisan* and the ongoing role of customary authority figures continue to be embraced by the majority of Timorese, particularly those in the rural areas, and are also actively relied upon by elected local leaders. This carries important political, economic and social implications for security and safety at the *suku* level.

In Dili, however, especially in areas where populations from around the country have settled, there is a gradual breakdown in *lisan* and customary authority (Scambary, 2006). This breakdown is due in part to the distance from traditional leaders, but also to the complex dynamic between groups associated with different spirit houses[26] and the inability to perform customary practices between groups. New forms of authority are emerging as a result, such as martial arts or ritual groups, based on traditional hierarchies, but without the customary laws that shape life in rural areas.

4.4 Relationship dynamics

It is precisely the nexus between the relevant security actors set out above – the formal state structures, customary and local leaders – where innovations around community policing have developed; this is explored in the following sections. The relationship between state and customary actors has also changed over time as the PNTL have strengthened institutionally, and customary authorities have adapted to modern liberal democracy. In The Asia Foundation's 2008 Community-Police Perception Survey, 86% of PNTL surveyed indicated they were involved in mediating disputes. However, in the 2013 survey this number had fallen considerably, to 37%. At the same time, according to respondents from the general public in 2013, 60% of all cases brought to the PNTL were referred to community mediation, where the PNTL played a role. Further, the PNTL were present at 58% of all dispute resolutions for the general public and at 72% of resolutions of disputes involving community leaders (Wassel and Rajalingam, 2014). It is clear that the PNTL still participates in local dispute resolutions, but many PNTL members have noted the lack of a mandate to perform mediations themselves, instead viewing themselves as security providers during customary practices.

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[23] Focus Group Discussion with *Suku* Council members in *Suku* Somalari, sub-district Baucau, conducted 17 December 2011

[24] In-depth interview with *lia-na'in* Arlindo Barros Taileto of *Suku* Bobonaro, sub-district Bobonaro, conducted 8 December 2011. *Lisan* is the traditional system of local governance. It has spiritual, political, economic and social dimensions and holds many practical implications for people's lives, even today; According to Dionisio Babo-Soares (2009), *lisan* incorporates local law and prohibitions, as well as social norms and morality, art, rituals and system of community leadership and governance.

[25] See: *Tara Bandu: Its Role and Use in Community Conflict Prevention in Timor-Leste*, The Asia Foundation and Belun, June 2013. Available at: http://belun.tl/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Tara-Bandu-PB-English.pdf; Hohe et al. (2003) *Reconciling Justice: "Traditional" Law and State Judiciary in East Timor*; Mearns, D. (2002) *Looking Both Ways: Models for Justice in East Timor*; and The Asia Foundation *"Ami Sei Vitima Beibeik": Looking to the needs of domestic violence victims,* Dili (2012)

[26] Spirit houses (*uma lulik*) are the basis of family clans, with each family/group tracing themselves back to a specific house.

Suku and *aldeia* chiefs, as well as customary leaders, can fundamentally affect police-community dynamics. It is hard to overestimate the importance of these actors, as they are almost always the first point of contact for community members who are victims of crime (Marx, 2014). This important role in society has meant that where *suku* or *aldeia* chiefs have been observed to be active on safety and security issues, they can often build strong relationships with the police and provide strong local leadership. This has, in turn, in some cases positively affected police-community relationships and improved the local safety and security environment. In other areas, where local leaders do not take a proactive role, however, interviewees noted a noticeable weakness in police-community relationships, with the police often not visiting particular *suku* due to the difficulty of engaging with local leaders.

Challenges remain, especially in the type of interaction between communities and the different PNTL units. There are a number of places where effective community policing units interact regularly with community members and local leaders such as *suku* and *aldeia* chiefs.[27] At the same time, within those same communities, relations with other parts of the PNTL may be varied – for instance, there might be Task Force members responding to incidents of violence and other police officers carrying out investigations into crimes committed, or Traffic Police conducting random inspections. In many cases these units have been trained in different ways, resulting in unclear mandates and varied behaviour.

Overall, the PNTL's role in society is still developing, and customary justice mechanisms are evolving in response to modern-day challenges such as urbanization and a shift in governance towards a liberal democracy based on the rule of law. In turn, weak community engagement and limited resources available to the police have prevented police from developing a more clearly defined and understood role in society, thus leading them to continue to defer to *suku* and *aldeia* chiefs on issues relating to security and justice, even if the traditional mechanisms are not always appropriate means of resolving certain security challenges.

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[27] This author has witnessed community policing principles being effectively employed in Liquisa, Aileu, Manatuto, Manufahi and Bobonaro, and has met many committed agents on the ground. However, personal initiative is not often supported in the current system due to administrative hurdles and backlogs.

5 Development of Community Policing Policy

The process of developing a community policing policy was influenced by international pressure, internal schisms and a lack of consultation with those responsible for implementing policing objectives and mandates. The result was an uncoordinated process which, until recently, had little definition or relevance.

It is hard to put an exact date on when community policing first developed as a national policy. However, from its establishment in 2001, the PNTL was heavily influenced by the structure of the UNPOL mission tasked with developing the fledging police service, and by the international discourse on and significant academic attention to community policing. In the beginning there was substantial influence from the Japanese development agency, JICA, on establishing the *Koban* system,[28] which was identified through an UNTAET study as an appropriate 'Asian' form of community policing, and one that was more culturally similar than western models (Pomerville and Wairoa-Harrison, 2000: 11). The *Koban* system, or 'police box', consists of a designated field office where a few police officers are always based, and who are tasked with being first responders to incidents and developing relationships with the community. Through the influence of donors, it was felt that any national police service needed a community focus in order to be considered 'modern'.[29]

The term 'community policing' was not mentioned in the 2004 PNTL Organic Law (the law establishing police authority); however, there was a Community Protection Unit charged with 'keep[ing] public peace and order in collaboration with the community structures and the local population'.[30] The lack of inclusion of 'community policing' seems to be due to translations between the Portuguese text and English. Stemming from the *Koban* research and visits to Singapore and Japan, the PNTL established 118 *suku* police posts between 2004 and 2005; these were intended to act as designated community liaisons.[31] The concept was also reminiscent of Indonesian times, when one police officer was assigned to live in each *suku*, under a strategy called BIMPOLA for intelligence gathering and surveillance purposes as well as public safety. However, in 2005, the then Minister of Interior, Rogerio Lobato, embarked on the rapid development of specialized police units and the *suku* police posts were abandoned in order to fill the ranks of the new units. One interviewee said that the move was seen as a personal preference as well as a political move. This was a significant shift away from a community-centred operational plan to a more militaristic style of policing that helped fuel the 2006 crisis.

Yet following that crisis, community policing was firmly back on the agenda, albeit in extraordinary circumstances – executive policing powers were again held by the United Nations. The 2007 change in government, the experiences and memories of the 2006 Crisis and the 2008 assassination attempts on the Prime Minister and the President all influenced the policy discussion on the structure of the PNTL and who should have influence over the process of determining it.

With the beginning of UNMIT in 2006, a Community Policing Unit was established in UNPOL HQ and 738 International Community Police officers (out of 1,227 total deployed to Timor-Leste)[32] were dispatched to all of

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[28] The *Koban* system is Japan's version of community policing, whereby small police posts are located within urban communities and police are responsible for daily life of residents in terms of peace and security, 24-hour operation, engagement in initial stage of all police activities, a base for police activities in co-operation with the community. This system is still being supported by the Japanese in Timor-Leste and most likely influenced, along with the Indonesian BIMPOLA model, the idea of *Suku* Police Posts contained in the 2009 Organic Law.

[29] Interviews with two UNPOL officers in service between 2008-2012

[30] Article 15 (b), 2004 PNTL Organic Law

[31] Interview with Joao Belo, former National Community Police Commander. 5 April 2013, PNTL HQ, Dili

[32] UNMIT website: http://unmit.unmissions.org/Default.aspx?tabid=12058&language=en-US, Accessed April 4, 2013

the districts. In 2006, an amendment to the 2004 Organic Law was passed, along with a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) that created a new structure of the PNTL at the District level to work with UNPOL. The Community Protection Unit was changed into the National Office of Community Policing.[33] Initially, community policing was seen as an operational strategy that could help to address concerns arising in the wake of the 2006 crisis and the concentration of IDPs in Dili. Community police training was organized by the PNTL and the Australian Federal Police (AFP) to reduce the potential for violent confrontations.[34] The concept took on a larger policy focus when a delegation of high-level PNTL officers and policy makers in the Secretary of State for State Security's office visited New Zealand to learn about its community policing practices. The result was an official governmental request for the aid of the New Zealand Police on community policing in 2007.

Community policing was further institutionalized in the IV Constitutional Government Plan in 2007, which sets out a policy to "[I]ntensify the ability of the community police to prevent conflicts and meet the needs of the citizens in terms of public security."[35] A reform and restructuring period followed from 2008 to 2010, which included a complete legislative revision of the PNTL Organic Law (2009).[36]

Early drafts of the organic law appeared to favour a more military style of policing, but came under vocal pressure from donors and UNMIT to include a community policing philosophy and unit. This was included, but in an *ad hoc* manner, and not integrated throughout all structures of the PNTL. In essence, community policing sits on its own, and this causes considerable confusion for implementation by the PNTL.[37] In addition, parts of the law were copied from other developed nations without consideration either of the country context or the development stage of the PNTL and the availability of financial and human resources associated with it.

As a result of these issues, the formulation of the law did not provide a clear definition or vision of community policing. This can partly be attributed to the variety of competing definitions within UNPOL that stemmed from the variety of countries UNPOL officers originated from and their different understandings of community policing. The stated objective of the UN police included, 'The adoption of a community policing philosophy throughout all operational areas of the PNTL' (UNPOL, 2008), but it was unable to reach consensus on a definition or operational activities that might have informed the legislative process.[38]

5.1 Policy in action

The PNTL Organic Law No. 9 was passed by Parliament on 18 February 18 2009. It repealed the previous Organic Law No. 8 (2004) and enshrined community policing directly into law. The law states that community policing is the guiding principle in the PNTL approach to policing, with preference for 'proximity patrolling'.

Yet while community policing is identified as a guiding principle, the 2009 Organic Law does not define what it is either philosophically or operationally. This lack of clarity has placed the burden of interpretation on the PNTL itself. Its success depends on the support for community policing in the political realm during different time periods and support by the district commanders responsible for its implementation. According to interviews with both insiders and observers, the community policing policy may have been left intentionally vague to satisfy the supporters of both camps (militarised versus community-oriented).[39]

As the policy set out that all PNTL officers would now become community police, some districts reallocated their dedicated community police officers to other areas, such as traffic or administration. The result was a lack of agreement about t the focus and agreed policy of community policing within the PNTL. At least one police district commander has questioned whether the law allows district commanders to implement community

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[33]   Interview with former UNPOL Community Police Unit advisor. 3 April 2013

[34] Interview with former adviser to the Secretary of State for State Security. 5 April 2013

[35] IV Constitutional Government Plan 2007-2012, p.67

[36] Law 9/2009, "Lei Organika *Polisia National Timor-Leste (PNTL)*"

[37] Interview with former Secretary of State for Security Advisor. 5 April 5 2012

[38] "I saw no change from before the 2009 law and after. The Community Police Unit continued to function in the exact same way. The only difference is that we moved our office into theirs once the law passed." Interview with former UNPOL Community Police Unit advisor. 3 April 2013

[39] Interview with former advisor to the Secretary of State for State Security.5 April 5 2013; Interview with Foundation Mahein Director Nelson Belo. 20 December 2012

policing themselves.[40] By placing the responsibility of implementing community policing with the district commanders (as most interpretations of the law understand it), the policy took away command and control functions from the National Community Police Unit, but created the possibility for more in-depth use of community policing principles by engaged district commanders (where they are interested in pursuing this – the opposite is, of course, also possible).
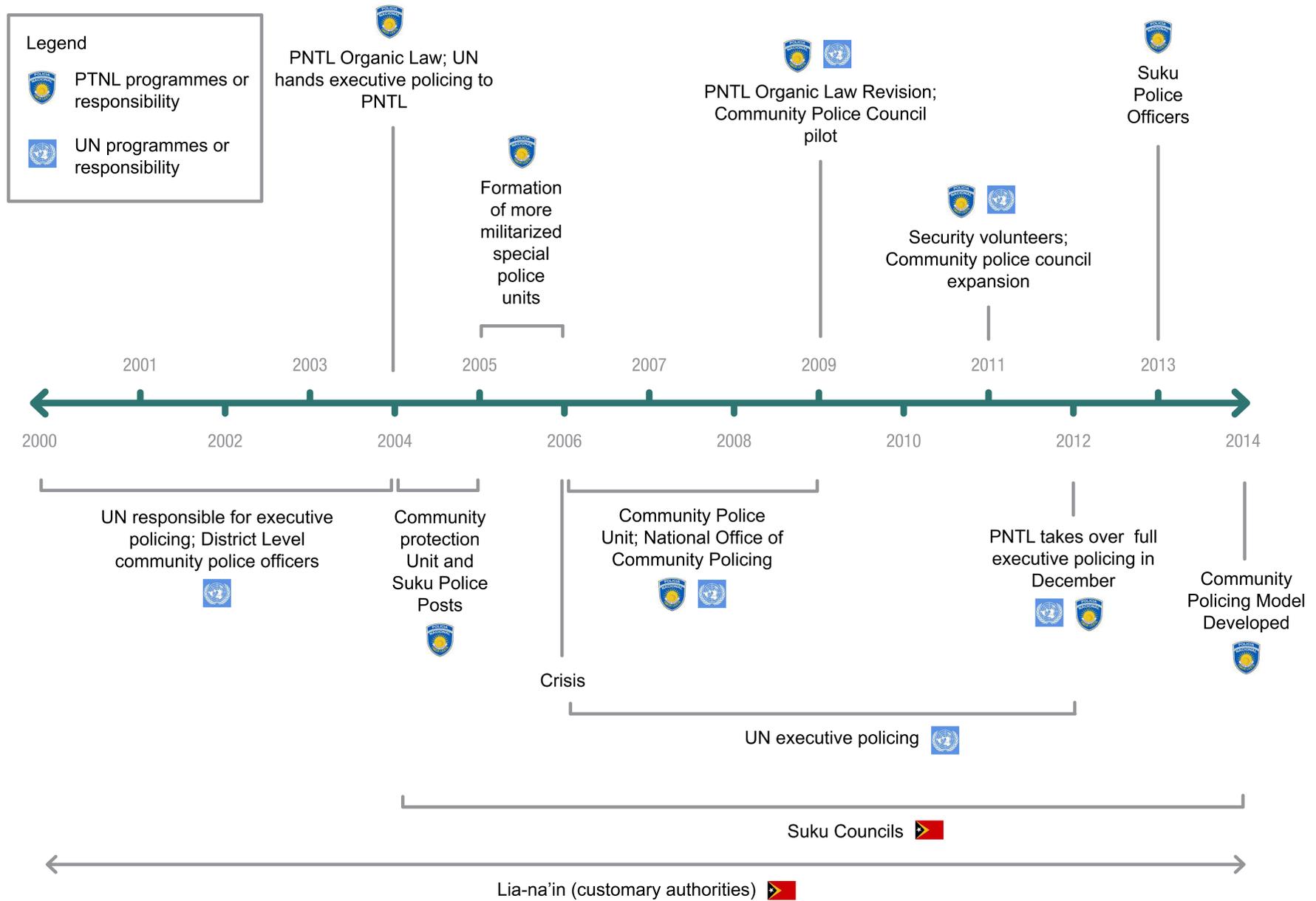
The police service in Timor-Leste continues to evolve, and through the assistance of donor partners and the initiative of individual district commanders, various community-oriented policing activities are slowly being implemented and refined. In 2012, the governments of New Zealand and Timor-Leste signed a bilateral agreement to support the development of community policing with the PNTL, to replace the assistance that was being provided through UNPOL. As 2010 threat assessments of potential riots over food prices and unemployment have slowly proved unfounded, the PNTL, and especially district level commands, are engaging more closely with communities based on frequent and increasingly vocal requests by citizens for greater consultation and involvement.

The V Constitutional Government continues to support the idea of community policing, and in its programme states: 'We will also continue to encourage the community policing model and we will maintain public stability and safety as key responsibilities of the PNTL.'[41] In 2013, the PNTL committed itself to developing a strategic plan that incorporates community policing and the development of a community policing model that will include specific guidelines and standard operating procedures. The PNTL CPU has also declared three priority areas. These include the deployment of *Suku* police officers (SPO) to all 442 *suku*s in the country; the development of security volunteers and the expansion of Community Police Councils (CPCs). The diagram below depicts the various stages of community policing and key events influencing it in Timor-Leste.

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[40] Interview with a District Commander. June 2012
[41] V Constitutional Government Program, p.66

Figure 1: Timeline of Key Moments in the Development of Community Policing in Timor-Leste

Legend

PTNL programmes or responsibility

UN programmes or responsibility

PNTL Organic Law; UN hands executive policing to PNTL

Formation of more militarized special police units

PNTL Organic Law Revision; Community Police Council pilot

Security volunteers; Community police council expansion

Suku Police Officers

2001 2003 2005 2007 2009 2011 2013

2000 2002 2004 2006 2008 2010 2012 2014

UN responsible for executive policing; District Level community police officers

Community protection Unit and Suku Police Posts

Crisis

Community Police Unit; National Office of Community Policing

PNTL takes over full executive policing in December

Community Policing Model Developed

UN executive policing

Suku Councils

Lia-na'in (customary authorities)

5.2 Evolution of community policing objectives

A complicated history of international assistance along with changing national governments that have responded to a variety of internal security concerns make it difficult to pinpoint particular objectives or definitions of community policing. Added to this complexity are the internal divisions inside the PNTL itself over the function and application of community policing over the years. However, it is possible to distil some variations. Overall, international donor assistance seems not to articulate a specific definition or objective of community policing, other than describing it as a normative 'good' in contrast to 'bad' military policing. A common thread throughout donor assistance is the desire to encourage local ownership of the concept and locally driven models of community policing. This assistance model is in slight opposition to the role the UN actually played through its executive policing authority and the development of the police service in the early years, whereby community policing was a major trend in policing and any modern police service should have it incorporated.

1999-2004
The UN missions UNTAET and UNMISET were focused on stability and development of the police service. Community policing was a part of these objectives and district level community police units were developed.[42] However, a body was not created at national level until late in their mandate and not as much attention was given to the development of systems and organizational structures that would support community policing as a holistic approach and organizational philosophy.

2004-2006
With the development of the first PNTL Organic Law and the UN handover of executive policing authority, community policing was seen through a law and order lens. Based on previous UN case studies, a more 'Asian model'[43] was founded on Japanese *Koban* principles (see next section) and the former Indonesian military police *BIMPOLDA* model, whereby the community policing goal was to be close to the population to monitor and collect information. This model was in contrast to problem-solving methods that were common in western models and the responsibility of all officers, rather than focused on those community policing officers mandated with specific operational objectives that did not extend to the whole police force, as was the case in Timor-Leste during this time.

By 2005, based on preferences in the Ministry of the Interior, priority in the PNTL shifted from community policing, with officers at the village level, to the formation of heavily armed specialist units. This is perhaps when the greatest distinction in respect of the objectives of community policing took place between the international community and the then Ministry of the Interior. International donors' community policing objectives moved towards an attempt to influence the character of the police service away from a military-style rapid response to a proactive prevention model that highlighted commitment to serving and integration with communities.

2006-2011
With the 2006 crisis and creation of the new UN mission, UNMIT, the development of community policing took a new turn and was given higher priority. Community policing was placed at the forefront of the UNPOL mission, with a specific community policing unit both in the district and at the national level, and with the task of developing a community policing model. UNMIT conducted a PNTL effectiveness assessment and found that while community policing was the philosophy of the PNTL, it lacked a clear definition and officers had various understanding of the term based on short courses provided by a variety of donors and NGOs. It was recommended that less emphasis be placed on specialized units and that a community policing philosophy be the framework for the deployment of PNTL resources, with all senior executives committed to the agreed philosophy (UNMIT, 2005: 25).

While the revised 2009 PNTL Organic Law included community policing as its explicit philosophy, it did not include a definition or any recommendation of what the model should be. This led to the New Zealand Government entering as a major stakeholder, with a specific community policing focus in UNMIT. While the

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[42] Interview with Joao Belo, former National Community Police Commander. 5 April 2013, PNTL HQ, Dili

[43] Term used by the UN case studies.

focus was on helping Timor-Leste develop its own model, the pilot project reflected the problem-solving nature of the New Zealand community policing model and not necessarily innovations around domestic models. Added to this, USAID was funding a pilot programme that focused on problem-solving at the village level through local power structures. The Japanese also continued to support training trips to Japan to help the PNTL understand the *Koban* system, although no specific programmes were developed in Timor to take the knowledge further. Despite the increased donor attention to community policing, it continued to operate at the fringes of the PNTL despite its explicit mention as the overarching philosophy in the 2009 Organic Law; while not dismissed, it was neither fully embraced nor defined.

2012 to the present

With the departure of UNMIT at the end of 2012 and the full resumption of executive policing authority by the PNTL, the objectives and definition of community policing began to change once again. The PNTL have accepted the philosophy that all officers are responsible for community policing and they have adopted it as their model, which serves as the basis for the 2014-2018 PNTL Strategic Plan. It is also one of the core strategic priorities in their 2014 Business Plan. A key PNTL objective is to have 'police and the community working together to promote mutual trust and active cooperation'.[44] This objective seems to be in line with those of current international donors: that community policing is about improving police-community relations as part of broader state-building efforts. It also supports commitments to local ownership, with the PNTL developing its own model of community policing. The PNTL has learned from a variety of donors over the years and is pursuing this objective with a hybrid model similar to the *Koban* system of placing PNTL in villages and the western problem-solving philosophy of helping to equip specialized officers with tools and methods to aid in the identification, prevention and resolution of small-scale issues.

The objectives of community policing now appear to have coalesced around a focus on strengthening the PNTL in maintaining security so that development can take hold. It is presumed that the best way for this to occur is through closer, more proactive relationships between the PNTL and communities. The PNTL has itself taken on an organization-wide obligation to support community policing based on its developing definition and operational model.

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[44] PNTL Business Plan 2014, p. 13

6 What Community Policing Looks like Today in the PNTL

After over a decade in which the international community has advocated for institutionalized community policing, 2013 was significant in that the PNTL developed its first overarching strategic plan in which community policing was defined and a locally owned model developed. Defining the model may help to put many of the questions about the 2009 PNTL Organic Law's intentions to rest. The 2014-2018 PNTL Strategic Plan is a significant first step, but it should be noted that further institutional change and greater refinement will be needed in order for the principles and operations of community policing to be integrated into all parts of the PNTL.

The strategic plan makes clear the philosophy of community policing and to whom it applies:

> *Our community policing philosophy is applicable to all members of PNTL. Community Policing does not refer to a particular department or section within PNTL. Instead it refers to our approach to our work both within the PNTL institution and between the PNTL and the community.*[45]

Community policing is mandated across the whole of the PNTL as well a within a specific unit, the National Community Policing Unit. It is responsible for developing policies, practices and training that assist the district commanders in implementing community policing, but has no operational control over individual officers in the field. PNTL-wide community policing is planned to be achieved through VIP:

1. Visibility (high visibility of police, creating community feelings of safety)
2. Involvement (community engagement, creating community feelings of inclusion)
3. Professionalism (professional responses, creating community satisfaction with the police service)

Based on the VIP strategy, the PNTL expects to see more active cooperation, however, it is not clear how they will measure this change as many of the indicators of success are not institutionalized data points collected on a regular basis. While the donor community does not have one agreed definition of community policing, it appears clear from the types of programmes implemented that their overall objective is to see the PNTL develop a proactive police service with a community rather than one that is military in nature.

As much of the innovation in community policing comes from the interaction between the PNTL and customary methods, a few creative district commanders are leading the way by experimenting with the national Community Police Unit to develop a menu of operational responses. At this point there is little consistency in approach and quality between districts, but it is hoped that this will be addressed as the PNTL becomes more familiar with community policing and shares information across districts. The key proactive community policing methods are set out below.

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[45] PNTL Strategic Plan 2014-2018, p. 6

Box 2: Community Police Councils

Community Police Councils (CPC) were first introduced to Timor-Leste in 2009 after the visit of the then CPU Commander Joao Belo to Bangladesh on a donor-sponsored trip. After seeing community councils working, he decided that the model would be appropriate for Timor-Leste and the PNTL. After an initial pilot phase, the program was scaled up to reach the whole country, with the PNTL as the primary implementers starting from 2012.[46] As of December 2013, 36 CPCs had been established and running for one year in the districts of Aileu, Manatuto, Baucau and Bobanaro. Additional CPCs were being established in Dili, Viqueque, Liquisa and Ainaro.

Community Police Councils are both a process and a coordinating body. Community and police are led through five days of dialogue, meetings, joint problem-solving and action planning. They identify and prioritize security and safety issues affecting their communities and then elect a coordinating body, which carries out targeted activities and monitors the security situation in their village. While the whole community is engaged with the identification of issues, the CPCs themselves consist of an average of seven community members and one police officer responsible for that village. In practice, the *suku* chief and the police are elected as co-chairs and there are representatives of women, youth, the church and veterans. The CPCs meet at least once a month and work with the community and the police to carry out their planned activities. The CPCs serve the dual purpose of helping to reduce specific security concerns as well as building relationships between the community and the PNTL to help facilitate the resolution of future security concerns.

In practice, the PNTL does not always attend the monthly meetings, and some CPCs are engaging with the PNTL more deeply than others. However, there appears to be a transfer of legitimacy to *suku* chiefs and the CPC to deal with more security issues at the local level due to the presence of the PNTL. As such, CPCs hear and resolve a variety of public safety concerns between regular meetings, such as fights, land disputes, theft and even domestic violence.[47] For instance, during the period of July-September 2013, the 10 CPCs in Aileu District resolved 31 disputes locally.[48] The PNTL officers involved in CPCs indicate a greater level of trust from community members and the ability to respond to incidents in a timelier manner due to better communication and information-sharing with community members.

Box 3: Security Volunteers

Security volunteers are being used by a number of districts to augment the lack of personnel and resources available to the PNTL. The character and mandate of the volunteers varies according to the districts involved, and the knowledge and skills of the particular district commanders. In Liquisa district, for instance, community-based *Siguransia Voluntariu Suku*, or *Suku* Volunteer Security (SVS), was initiated by the district commander to counter community instability caused by youth engagement in martial arts gangs (MAGs).[49] Lacking resources to monitor high-risk safety and security threats such as domestic violence and increasing rates of general assaults, the SVS was created, using youth and veterans in a volunteer capacity to help monitor and manage security incidents. Through SVS, the PNTL in Liquisa has become more responsive to domestic violence incidents, has greater engagement with MAGs and has been able to encourage the concept of local-level ownership of community security (Belo and Rajalingam, 2014).

The SVS in Liquisa was established in 2011 following a study trip to Japan that looked at the *Koban* system and the use of retired police officers to assist with traffic control and ad hoc community monitoring. The SVS uses a similar model, but incorporates youth with veterans acting as oversight, and has 130 members (five from each of the 23 *suku*).

The SVS is helping to define appropriate roles for community police partnerships between the customary and

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[46] The HAKOHAK program is implemented by The Asia Foundation and funded by USAID and the New Zealand Aid Program. While the concept, design and expectations originated from a donor-led initiative, it is interesting that the PNTL has taken on ownership of the idea and the method. The former CPU commander, Joao Belo, on numerous occasions has identified the project has his own idea, and CPCs have been formally integrated into the National Community Policing handbook.

[47] According to the Law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence, this is supposed to be processed through the formal justice system when the PNTL is involved.

[48] HAKOHAK Program quarterly report, The Asia Foundation, 31 October 2013

[49] For greater background on MAGs in Timor-Leste see: Scambary, J. (2006) 'A Survey of Gangs and Youth Groups in Dili, Timor-Leste: A Report Commissioned by Australia's Agency for International Development (AusAID),' 15 September 2006.

formal justice systems. Liquisa's district commander describes this evolution as beginning with the concept of '*nahe bit bo'ot'* (literally 'sitting on a big mat'), whereby disputed issues would be resolved, first through dialogue between individuals, families and community leaders. Today, with involvement from community and *suku* police officers, community policing has changed this process, so that decisions made through community dialogue are now enforced and monitored by *suku* police officers and the SVS.[50]

In Ermera, district local communities have developed a different version of security volunteers, called *kablehan*, which monitors and enforce the rules of *tara bandu*.[51] While the use of *tara bandu* is normally applied at village level, in Ermera district one *tara bandu* covers the whole district. The PNTL participates in the *tara bandu* as observers and providesassistance on organizing and maintaining security. While it is supportive of the *tara bandu*, the PNTL makes clear that it is not bound by these rules and instead is bound by the laws of Timor-Leste. Nonetheless, the community police in Ermera have worked closely with the *suku* chiefs on monitoring and compliance. The PNTL has also provided training to the *kablehan* to clarify their roles as well as explain their obligations under the law.[52]

The use of security volunteers can help to augment the low level of human and financial resources available to the PNTL to monitor some largely inaccessible rural villages. However, there remain a number of challenges that need to be addressed, such as guarding against vigilantism and proper training and equipping of volunteers.

Box 4: *Suku* Police Officers

One of the most ambitious and centrally driven community policing programmes to come out of the PNTL is the *Suku* Police Officer (SPO) initiative (Ofisial Polisu *Suku* in Tetum). In 2013, the PNTL General Commander approved the National Community Police Unit's strategic plan, 'Proximity and Visibility Policing Partnerships in Timor-Leste.'" The strategy includes the establishment of 442 *suku* police officers. This policy recognizes the need for the PNTL to get closer to the people they serve. Selected officers will be assigned to *Suku* Police Posts in future, as funds become available to create small outpost stations.

While the deployment and management of the SPOs are the responsibility of the district commanders, the national Community Police Unit is responsible for the overall design of the programme and training of the officers. In 2013, the CPU delivered training to 12 of 13 districts. Trainees were selected to be SPOs by their district commanders, and over the course of the three-day training were introduced to community policing skills to assist them in their new roles.

The component missing from the trainings was an official standard operating procedure for SPOs that defined their job function and routine tasks and responsibilities. Despite the lack of a defined structure, many district commanders have started implementing the programme and assigning officers to specific *suku*. The district commanders in Aileu, Baucau and Manatuto used the established CPCs as initial areas where SPO were assigned and used them as a model for the types of activities to be undertaken. In Liquisa and Aileu, the district commanders went a step farther and assigned a select few to live and work in their assigned districts based on the requests from *suku* chiefs and the high levels of insecurity within those communities.

The initial results of the SPO programme appear to be positive, especially with the step to assign specific police officers to one area. However, the challenge of increased decentralization in the context of a resource poor and administratively weak institution is substantial. The potential for police abuse or general non-compliance increases when PNTL officers have limited oversight, inadequate training and a lack of clearly defined roles.

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[50] Interview with PNTL District Commander of Liquica, Natercia Martins, September 2013

[51] *Tara bandu* involves the hanging of culturally significant items from a wooden shaft to place a ban on certain agricultural or social activities within a given area.

[52] "Tara Bandu: Its Role and Use in Community Conflict Prevention in Timor-Leste," The Asia Foundation and Belun, June 2013. Available at: http://belun.tl/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Tara-Bandu-PB-English.pdf

7 Community Policing Results

It is difficult to engage in a substantial discussion about the overall results of community policing in Timor-Leste due to the varied level of implementation different strategies over the past decade and the lack of statistical data. The current crime reporting data only includes crimes that are forwarded on to the Prosecutor General's office, with many indications of significant underreporting of crimes (Wassel and Rajalingam, 2014). The statistics also exclude incidents and any measures linked specifically to community policing.

The recent change in emphasis and priority placed on community policing means that it will be critical to track effectiveness in both community trust and confidence in the PNTL, as well as changes in the crime rate over the course of the new 2014-2018 strategic plan. This can only happen at a later date and with proper planning for monitoring of indicators and a functioning case management system.

However, there are some indications of community policing results to date from anecdotal and survey evidence collected by The Asia Foundation from 2001-2013 and through interviews with citizens living in areas where community policing pilot programmes are being implemented. In almost all areas where interviews took place, the general public and community leaders expressed positive feedback on community policing initiatives. In Aileu, one community leader who hosts a SPO in his village was very happy with the results and said that police response had increased and crimes reduced. In Manatuto, the district commander indicated that crime had reduced by 80% between 2012 and 2013 when community policing strategies were employed.[53]
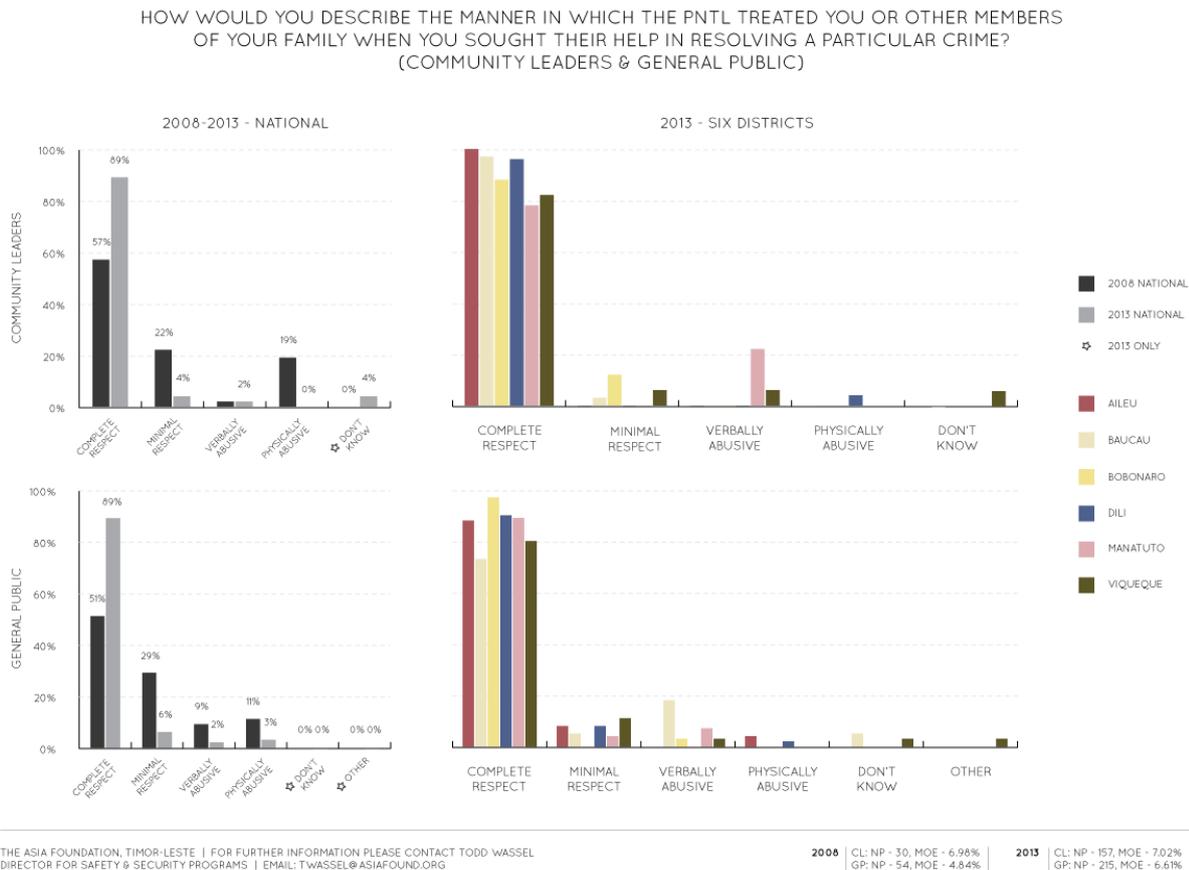
It should be noted that any changes in perceptions could be attributed to a number of factors and initiatives undertaken. As a result, the following figures should be taken as an indication only. Overall, 72% of citizens believe that the security situation has improved between 2012 and 2013. This confidence is higher than the improvements seen in 2008, when slightly more than half of the general public (53%) saw an improvement, and 41% said that it remained the same. Combined with perceptions that security is improving is a decline in the general public reporting of concerns about their safety and security. Combined, 64% of the general public surveyed said that in 2013 they were 'very concerned' or 'somewhat concerned' about their safety in their locality. This marks the first improvement in perceived safety since the Foundation began collecting information. In 2001, the reported number was 38%, in 2002 it was 50%, in 2004 it was 67% and in 2008 it was 73%.[54] Despite the reduction, these numbers still indicate a very high level of insecurity in the population. These figures may also have increased as citizens have become more aware of issues relating to safety and security.

There has also been an increase in perceived professional response by the PNTL (Figure 2 below). Members of the public that sought PNTL assistance reported being treated with full respect and professionalism by the PNTL in 2013 (89%), an increase from 51% in 2008. Regarding relationships with the PNTL, general public respondents (94%) and community leaders (92%) believe that the relationship between the PNTL and members of their community is good. In 2008, only 48% of general public respondents and 78% of community leaders felt the same way.

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[53] It is impossible to verify if community policing was the actual cause of this crime reduction.

[54] 2001 Elections Survey, The Asia Foundation; 2002 Elections Survey, The Asia Foundation; 2004 Law and Justice Survey; Everett, S. and Chinn, L.'A survey of community-police perceptions: Timor-Leste in 2008'. The Asia Foundation, 2008; Wassel, T. and Rajalingam, G. (2014) 'A Survey of Community-Police Perceptions: Timor-Leste in 2013'. The Asia Foundation

Figure 2: Public perceptions of treatment by PNTL

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE MANNER IN WHICH THE PNTL TREATED YOU OR OTHER MEMBERS
OF YOUR FAMILY WHEN YOU SOUGHT THEIR HELP IN RESOLVING A PARTICULAR CRIME?
(COMMUNITY LEADERS & GENERAL PUBLIC)

In 2013, a majority of PNTL (81%) claimed that 'community policing principles' are being applied in the locality in which they serve. This mirrors a growing shift in how the PNTL views citizens. In 2008, police opinions were split almost evenly, with 47% saying they consider citizens in the area in which they work as partners in combating crime and 46% saying they view the average citizen as someone to serve and protect. In 2013, these perceptions were 86% and 12% respectively, showing a greater reliance on community partnerships. Added to this, 77% of PNTL respondents in 2013 indicated that community policing is the responsibility of all members of the PNTL, while over one in five officers (22%) stated that it was only the responsibility of the PNTL's community policing unit to carry out community oriented policing. It is hoped that this figure will rise under the new strategic plan.

While crime data is not available to help evaluate the increased use of community policing principles, both general public (91%) and community leader (92%) respondents expressed 'great confidence' in the commitment of the PNTL to prevent crime in their communities. This is up from 2008 findings of 84% of the general public and 77% of community leaders (Everett and Chinn, 2008; Wassel and Rajalingam, 2014). However, interviewees also expressed some frustration with the PNTL. In community policing pilot areas, some SPOs do not perform their function well and rarely visit their assigned *suku*. Interviewees in these areas indicated a higher level of dissatisfaction with the police, as they now had higher expectations of the police, as opposed to areas where the police were not expected to visit. .

The overall perception indicators show a trend of increasing confidence in the PNTL and increased willingness of the PNTL to engage in community policing activities with communities. Moving forward, it will be necessary for the PNTL to develop its own community policing indicators and apply these against enhanced crime data collection in order to fully understand whether or not their new strategy is a success.

8 Challenges facing community police development

Community policing in Timor-Leste faces a number of challenges that potentially limit its ability to make a meaningful contribution to improved security and justice for communities and to reduce levels of insecurity. These challenges are operational in nature but also touch on the political nature of development within the security sector. There certainly are many other challenges, especially in such a complex area as law enforcement and national development, but the following areas are the most apparent and pressing.

8.1 Funding and Resources

Historically, the community policing unit and the various community police officers in the districts have been severely underfunded. Until recently, all community policing activities were funded out of the general operational budgets, which were themselves very limited and barely covered staffing and fuel costs.

A small supplementary budget provided by the President's office has been well received by the districts; however, there is still an enormous gap between their plans, the funds available and the ability to report on the usage of funds in an accountable and transparent manner. Cars and motor bikes continue to be a challenge, with some districts only having four cars to cover the whole area and to service all units. Conversations with community police officers routinely show that they have limited access to transportation, which affects their ability to visit communities in a consistent manner. The planned expansion of Community Police Councils and the outfitting of 442 *Suku* Police Officers carry with them a programme cost that could reach into the millions of dollars. *Suku* Police Officers will need transportation, communication equipment, housing, food allowances, access to training and general human resource support. The true cost of the programme will need to be quantified and then rolled out in a consistent and dedicated manner if it is to be effective for the communities and also motivate the officers responsible. It is unclear whether there is sufficient political support for community policing to secure such funding.

8.2 Community policing model and training

Significant strides have been made in developing the strategic plan and a community policing model. In order for the vision to be implemented consistently, however, the community policing model needs to be developed further, with operational components that have associated standard operating procedures and a systematic training curriculum. The current community policing training manual is drawn together from a number of international sources, learned either through in-country mentoring or through study trips abroad. While the manual is a good first step, further efforts are needed to refine the curriculum and to integrate the operational components into district commands.

Interviews with community policing officers in the districts and feedback after the national three-day in-service training programme in each district indicate a greater need not only for training, but for simplified instruction. Many officers commented that the lessons were too difficult or too theoretical. Part of this problem may stem from the fact that the lessons learned in the classroom had little correlation to the tools used on a day-to-day basis. For example, while the training programme introduced house-to-house visits, most districts had no such programme – not even a standardized form to use or a process for entering data.

Currently, 72 hours of community police training is delivered to new recruits. In the future, this training could be supplemented with an advanced course on community policing for mid-career officers and specialized

courses and knowledge such as problem–solving, which all officers, whether or not they are community police officers, would benefit from at various points in their career. The main challenge to this idea is in designing a curriculum to support the defined model of community policing and operational plans in each district and then delivering it to already commissioned officers.

8.3 Crime reporting and incident reporting

Currently there is a major gap between what is reported as a crime and the actual incidents that take place on a day-to-day basis. The Integrated Information Management System (IIMS) where all reported crimes are stored can currently only record crimes that are forwarded to the Prosecutor General's office. However, in the past year, 60% of all crimes reported to the PNTL by citizens ended up being resolved through community mediation; half of all incidents were never reported to the PNTL (Wassel and Rajalingam, 2014). Not only does this make it difficult for the PNTL to plan its resource allocation according to crime patterns and trends, but it also makes it difficult to evaluate community policing initiatives to determine their effectiveness in terms of crime reduction.

For example, in Manatuto district, the official crime rate has dropped from over 100 crimes in 2012 to under 20 in 2013.[55] However, the *suku* chief in just one *suku* of the 29 in Manatuto, recorded over 170 cases of domestic violence in his village between 2010 and 2013. Just 22 of these cases had been resolved as of September 2013.[56] In Manufahi district, recent reports indicate that there have been no crimes at all over the past year. It is clear that many incidents are resolved at the local level through customary practice or a hybrid of state and informal means. These incidents and their resolution need to be recorded in order to deploy available resources in a consistent manner and to track the effectiveness of community policing in reducing crime. Without such collection and analysis of data it will be difficult to show whether the new five-year strategy has been effective.

8.4 Rivalries between police units and loss of trust by citizens

One of the main objectives of the community policing strategy is to develop trust and active cooperation with the community. However, as noted in various focus group discussions and numerous interviews both within the PNTL and outside, community police officers are worried that the trust they develop is being destroyed by inappropriate behaviour from other units in the form of excessive use of force, inadequate investigation skills, lack of follow-up, criminal ties, gambling and corruption (among other issues).[57] Mainstreaming the professional response component of community policing across all units and ensuring proper discipline is maintained and officers are accountable for their actions is a major challenge ahead, and one that is not in the control of front-line officers themselves.

8.5 Customary practice vs. formal justice

While the small number of citizens with knowledge of the courts seem to have confidence in them (Marx, 2014), the majority of citizens still end up in some form of community resolution, and community leaders and elders continue to handle the majority of disputes (Wassel and Rajalingam, 2014). Community justice, however, is not standardized; it lacks procedures for testimony, witness protection and monitoring, and often does not conform fully to either constitutional or international human rights standards (UNMIT, 2009). Customary justice, by definition, is also heavily reliant on personalities rather than standardized norms and procedures, leaving opportunities for inconsistencies, abuse and gender-based discrimination. Yet citizens show a clear preference for engaging local mechanisms, a pattern that seems to be increasing rather than decreasing. Some of the reasons cited for this preference include accessibility, familiarity and the idea that practices are rooted in the culture and traditions of particular communities (UNMIT, 2012: 17).

One of the biggest challenges facing the PNTL, and the wider justice sector, is how to harmonize customary forms of justice with the formal system and, specifically, what role the PNTL plays in such a system. Local

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[55] Discussions with successive district commanders in Manatuto.

[56] Interview with *suku* chief, September 2013 (name and area withheld for privacy reasons). It was not clear exactly how each of these have been resolved, whether through the PNTL or community mediation.

[57] Interview with National Commander for the Community Policing Unit; Focus group discussion with district-level community police officers, 10 September 2013. Community Police Training for District Community Police Officers, May 2013

customary laws are usually focused on collective rather than individual rights and perform an important function of maintaining overall peace and social harmony in close-knit communities (Butt et al., 2009; Babo-Soares, 2004). However, in cases of domestic or gender-based violence, the victim and perpetrator are seen as equal parties who must usually pay 'sanctions' to resolve their dispute (Notaras and Wassel, 2013). This focus on social harmony risks undermining the law to facilitate resolutions. Current practices of mediating domestic violence at the *aldeia* or *suku* level (almost exclusively by men) provide few options for victims of gender-based violence to determine their own methods for resolution (UNDP, 2011: 16).

Legitimizing citizen access to local mechanisms certainly has a great number of benefits in reducing burdens on the prosecutor's office, judicial system, corrections and a host of structures supporting the justice system. However, with a diversity of customary practices across the country and a large gap in knowledge of formal laws, the challenge is to develop a system that not only upholds the rights of citizens, especially the marginalized, but also channels specific categories of crimes so that substantive justice and protection of rights is achieved, while also being accepted and utilized by communities themselves.

Conclusion

Community policing in Timor-Leste has a complicated history linked to international assistance and political tensions over sovereignty. It has been a donor-influenced policy and was included in the 2009 PNTL Organic Law as a compromise, but it lacked the political will to fully define it or to consider the implications it would have in the future through strategic policy guidance.

As a result, community policing was added into the PNTL framework as both a separate function and a guiding philosophy without a clear definition of either. This has caused considerable difficulty in its operationalisation. However, while the lack of clarity has delayed the commitment of resources inside the PNTL, it has also allowed the PNTL to develop the concept slowly and in step with its own evolving understanding of policing in Timor-Leste so that it meets the PNTL's own needs and blends local social practice with international lessons. The shift over time of decentralizing responsibility to the district commanders has allowed for a testing ground for different ideas and a growing number of senior staff who see community engagement as the only viable way to ensure stability. This appears to be an unintended positive consequence of the flexibility provided through a lack of clear policy directive combined with substantial international training.

For international actors looking to engage in community policing work, this case study reveals the importance of coordinating efforts around supporting locally driven definitions and concepts and building upon the progress that has been made. A thorough analysis of the political economy supporting and opposed to community policing is essential for understanding how change can be effected and for preventing unintended consequences arising from opposition to the overall goal of increasing the effectiveness of the police service through the increased trust and confidence of citizens.

Engagement in any security sector is often a risky prospect, especially in a post-conflict environment with a history of excessive force and human rights abuses by the police service. This speaks to the manner in which policing in Timor-Leste has oscillated between a militarized approach inherited from histories of occupation and resistance and community-oriented policing, shaped by international police assistance and customary dispute resolution practices. Donors should continue to view community policing as a possible response to reforming negative behaviours in the police service and encouraging positive public pressure. However, it should be noted that community policing alone will not change the incentive or disincentive structures for abusive police behaviour.

Despite 13 years of development, the PNTL is just beginning to codify its community policing model and apply it in a consistent manner. The PNTL has developed a unique hybrid model of community policing that takes lessons from international police services and blends them with local-level dispute resolution. Ideally, standardized trainings and operating procedures will follow, presenting the framework for engagement with verifiable indicators for the types of activities that are developed through consultations with communities.

As Timor-Leste continues to develop the effectiveness of state institutions, the growth of the PNTL and its developing links to traditional forms of authority will be essential to reducing state fragility. While still noticeably weak, the PNTL is rightly perceived to be one of the main security providers by citizens and is also one of the most visible arms of the state outside of urban centres. The PNTL has still not clearly established its role in society, however, and is, in many cases, not effectively engaged with communities. In the past year, only 12% of citizens reported any interaction with the PNTL (Wassel and Rajalingam, 2014). This distance undermines both its credibility and effectiveness, especially in an environment where the majority of the population identifies traditional leaders as having the most responsibility for maintaining local-level safety and security.

Community policing offers a potentially important tool through which to improve police-community relations, develop a model of interaction between the state and traditional leaders, strengthen accountability of the police to the citizens and generally improve the safety and security environment in Timor-Leste. In turn, improved policing should help strengthen the PNTL institution and position it to respond in a proactive way to security threats and thereby to limit insecurity nationwide. As yet, however, it is too soon to tell whether any of these desired objectives are being achieved – or are likely to be achieved – through Timor-Leste's community policing model.

It is interesting to note that community policing has suddenly become a priority within PNTL, despite over a decade of international police assistance advocating the approach. In the recent past, the top PNTL leaders and political elite were mainly concerned with strengthening the police as an institution and delivering a strong police service, and community policing was not seen as a particularly useful tool for doing this; the preference was for more militaristic discipline and command chains. This change could be the result of top PNTL leaders, including the operational district commanders, seeing the cohesive effects of a joint service orientation in the PNTL, as well as the practical response to providing proactive security services to an increasingly vocal population in rural areas. This marginalized rural population sees development and security gains being concentrated in Dili, with less consideration for ordinary citizens in rural areas. In essence, an agitated and insecure population poses a direct threat to hard-earned stability. Building trust and confidence between rural populations and the police is key to maintaining the development-oriented policy espoused by the current government in its slogan, 'Goodbye conflict, hello development'. Thus, the limited reach of a fragile state has also played a role in shaping Timor-Leste's community policing.

The development of the police, and by extension community policing, cannot be separated from the political-economy of a small number of political elites who trace their friendships, rivalries and political power to the resistance period: this remains a key factor shaping all elements of post-conflict life in Timor. The case study reveals an intense effort by the international community to contribute to a vague idea of 'community policing' without articulating an exact approach beyond the understanding of what it is not (i.e. a militarized police force), and competing national approaches between donors. Efforts to further assist in the development of community policing by the international community needs to take into account the lessons of previous incomplete or failed attempts. Of particular note is the need to avoid relying solely on technical approaches and to recognize that police development is inherently a political process. As seen during successive UN missions, without genuine political support, technical approaches will fail to gain the necessary traction and will ultimately lack sustainability. As such, programming requires a nuanced approach to developing local ownership through dialogue, consensus building and encouragement of key national actors. Developing political support and providing the space for local ownership and local definitions of community policing takes time, but it is also is the only viable strategy for sustainable reform.

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Annex 1: Interviews

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- Conflict Mitigation Through Community Oriented Policing Pilot Programme, Focus Group Discussion in Baucau, 2010, The Asia Foundation

- Community focus group discussions conducted in August 2012 in Comoro Dili; Mascarenas, Dili; Holsa, Bobanaro; and Com, Lautem

- Focus Group Discussion with *Suku* Council members in *Suku* Somalari, sub-district Baucau. 17 December 2011

- Interview with *lia-na'in* Arlindo Barros Taileto of *Suku* Bobonaro, sub-district Bobonaro. 8 December 2011

- Interview with New Zealand UNPOL Officer. 2008-2010

- Interview with New Zealand UNPOL Officer. 2010-2012

- Joao Belo, former National Community Police Commander. 5 April 2013, PNTL HQ, Dili

- Interview with former UNPOL Community Police Unit advisor. 3 April 2013

- Interview with former adviser to the Secretary of State for State Security. 5 April 2013

- Interviews with 3 PNTL Chief Superintendents

- Interview with Foundation Mahein Director Nelson Belo. 20 December 2012

- Interview with a PNTL District Commander. June 2012

- Interview PNTL District Commander of Liquica, Natercia Martins. September 2013

- Discussions with successive district commanders in Manatuto over the course of HAKOHAK Implementation

- Interview with *suku* chief. September 2013 (name and area withheld for privacy reasons).

- Interview with National Commander for the Community Policing Unit Boavida Ribeiro. April 2013

- Focus group discussion with district level community police officers. 10 September 10 2013

- Community Police Training for District Community Police Officers. May 2013

- Interview with high-level UNMIT official. April 2013

Annex 2: Map of Timor-Leste
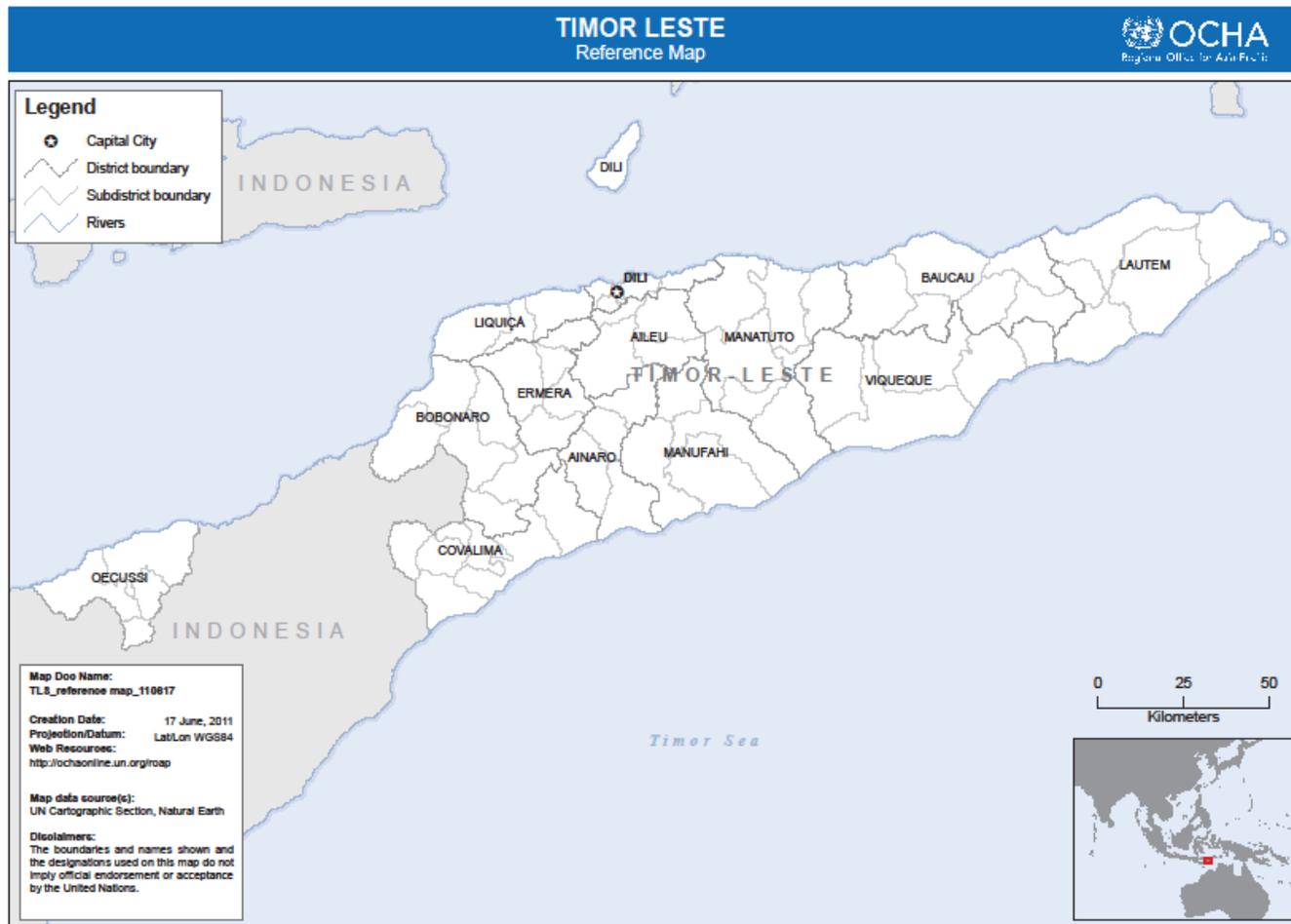
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