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## Security sector reconstruction in a post-conflict country

Lessons from Timor-Leste

Deniz Kocak



SFB-GOVERNANCE WORKING PAPER SERIES • No. 61 • OCTOBER 2013

DFG Sonderforschungsbereich 700 Governance in Räumen begrenzter Staatlichkeit - Neue Formen des Regierens?

DFG Collaborative Research Center (SFB) 700 Governance in Areas of Limited Statehood - New Modes of Governance?

## SFB-Governance Working Paper Series

Edited by the Collaborative Research Center (SFB) 700 “Governance In Areas of Limited Statehood - New Modes of Governance?”

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Kocak, Deniz 2013: Security sector reconstruction in a post-conflict country: Lessons from Timor-Leste, SFB-Governance Working Paper Series, No. 61, Collaborative Research Center (SFB) 700, Berlin, October 2013.

ISSN 1864-1024 (Internet)

ISSN 1863-6896 (Print)

This publication has been funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG).

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Deutsche  
Forschungsgemeinschaft

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## Security sector reconstruction in a post-conflict country: Lessons from Timor-Leste

*Deniz Kocak*

### **Abstract:**

Post-conflict missions by the United Nations are increasingly mandated to reform the security sector and to establish viable security governance organs in, often, collapsed states. UN missions in Timor-Leste, tasked with the build-up of local security institutions and forces from 1999 to 2005, were regarded by some as successful examples of externally-led security sector transformation in so far as they managed to establish a local police force and local security governance institutions. Yet, the breakdown of the Timorese security sector during violent clashes between newly created security forces in 2006 hinted at weaknesses in the externally driven implementation of SSR. The UN mission subsequently mandated to assist in rebuilding the dysfunctional security sector, was however openly challenged by growing local resistance towards external meddling into the highly sensitive domain of security, and simultaneously, by assertive local approaches to security governance. By tracing the UN mission's steps in performing SSR before and after the security breakdown of 2006, the paper explains inherent flaws in the UN's approach and expounds the Timorese' alternative approach. It will be argued that the UN failed to enforce its security governance model in Timor-Leste creating the way for an evolving local approach to security governance.

### **Zusammenfassung:**

Post-Konflikt-Einsätze der Vereinten Nationen werden zunehmend damit beauftragt, in fragilen Staaten den Sicherheitssektor zu reformieren und tragfähige Sicherheitsinstitutionen zu schaffen. Die mit dem Aufbau der lokalen Sicherheitsinstitutionen beauftragten Missionen von 1999 bis 2005, wurden lange Zeit als erfolgreiche Beispiele für, von externen Akteuren durchgeführte, Sicherheitssektorreform-Maßnahmen betrachtet, da sie es schafften, eine lokale Polizei und lokale Sicherheitsinstitutionen zu errichten. Der Zusammenbruch des timoresischen Sicherheitssektors während der gewaltsamen Auseinandersetzungen zwischen den neu geschaffenen Sicherheitskräften im April und Mai 2006, zeigte jedoch die Schwächen extern induzierter Sicherheitssektorreformen auf. Die folgende Mission der Vereinten Nationen, welche damit beauftragt wurde Timor-Leste beim Wiederaufbau des lokalen Sicherheitssektors zu unterstützen, sah sich jedoch einem wachsenden Widerstand seitens der timoresischen Regierung ausgesetzt, welche vielmehr eigene Vorstellungen bezüglich der Herstellung von Sicherheit durchsetzen wollten.

Die vorliegende Studie beschreibt die von den Vereinten Nationen bis zum Zusammenbruch des timoresischen Sicherheitssektors in 2006 durchgeführten Sicherheitssektorreform-Maßnahmen, und stellt anschließend systemimmanente Mängel des Sicherheitsgovernance-Ansatzes der Vereinten Nationen heraus. Zuletzt zeigt sie die Herausbildung eines alternativen, timoresischen Ansatzes der Sicherheitsgovernance auf. Es wird argumentiert, dass die Vereinten Nationen mit ihrem Ansatz der Sicherheitsgovernance in Timor-Leste gescheitert sind, und somit den Weg für die Entwicklung eines lokalen, timoresischen, Sicherheitsgovernance-Ansatzes geebnet haben.

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## 1. Introduction<sup>1</sup>

Over the last fifteen years, an increasing tendency has emerged to apply Security Sector Reform (SSR) type activities in post-conflict countries under UN auspices in an effort to solve the inherent problems of dysfunctional security sectors (Bernabéu 2007: 81). Furthermore, SSR has been recognized as a crucial element of post-conflict peacebuilding operations worldwide. Timor-Leste was long regarded as an ideal setting for UN-led peacebuilding and as successful examples of externally-led security sector transformation in so far as they managed to establish a local police force and local security governance institutions. However, the violent clashes between security forces in 2006 cast doubt on the stability of the newly established security system, thus drawing into question one of the mainstream policies of international approaches to security governance in post-conflict contexts. Furthermore, the UN mission subsequently mandated to assist in rebuilding the dysfunctional security sector, was openly challenged by growing local resistance towards external meddling into the highly sensitive domain of security, and simultaneously, by assertive local approaches to security governance and claims for local ownership.

The basic questions of the paper are; what approach to SSR was applied in Timor-Leste before and after the 2006 security crisis? Which aspects were successfully implemented, which failed, and why did they fail?

It will be argued, that standardised “toolkit”-SSR implementations and insufficient attention to the local context, led neither to a stable security situation, nor to a legitimate and civilian controlled security sector as the Western security governance paradigm advocates. Rather, externally imposed and misaligned policies led to unintended consequences in so far as local actors selectively adapted parts of the external SSR agenda while neglecting other parts. This outcome of partial resistance and adaptation on behalf of local actors is a critical point for further research on the possibilities and limits of SSR in post-conflict countries.

## 2. Security sector reform

*Security sector reform* (SSR) and *disarmament, demobilization and reintegration* (DDR) represent the main international strategies of regulating and reforming the security sector in post-conflict countries. As a dysfunctional security sector is a threat towards the populations of respective countries, SSR aims at disposing of dysfunctional elements and advocates for an effective and legitimate, democratic, civilian control of security sector organizations. Therefore, SSR encompasses the transformation of all relevant institutions, such as the police, the military, intelligence services, but also the ministries of Internal Affairs, Defence, and Finance, to assure non-partisan, reliable, and democratically controlled security forces (Hänggi 2004). A commonly cited definition by the OECD-Development Assistance Committee describes SSR as

<sup>1</sup> An earlier version of this article was prepared for the annual meeting of the International Studies Association (ISA), in Montreal, March 2011. The author would like to thank Fairlie Chappuis for her most valuable comments on the manuscript.

“[...] another term used to describe the transformation of the ‘security system’ – which includes all the actors, their roles, responsibilities and actions – working together to manage and operate the system in a manner that is more consistent with democratic norms and sound principles of good governance, and thus contributes to a well-functioning security framework” (2005: 20).

Main points of SSR are therefore the establishment of viable security governance institutions, which guarantee democratic civilian oversight over national security actors, the improvement of security provision by security actors, development of strong local ownership over the SSR process as well as sustained reforms of the security- and justice sector (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development 2007: 21). Although the United Nations Secretary General (2008) refers to a rather broad definition of the security sector, encompassing formal and informal security actors including the states’ institutions, customary institutions and civil society organisations, Bryden and Scherrer (2012: 13) maintain that this comprehensive SSR approach is rarely applied in the UN-mission mandates. As the OECD-DAC definition of SSR refers to a democratic model of security governance, SSR is by no means an impartial endeavour but carries a highly normative agenda based on international human rights standards and democratic governance (see Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development 2007: 21). Therefore, it must be stressed that SSR does not solely treat national security organizations in its reform attempts, but SSR is first and foremost a political task designed to transform all the formal and informal institutions and their respective dependent elements, that affect national development and political stability (Albrecht, et al. 2010: 84f, Schnabel 2012: 30f).

DDR on the other hand, is an important step to pacify former combatants in a post-conflict scenario. Generally, DDR comprises several steps, starting from the disarmament of combatants, the demobilization of combat units, and finally the reintegration of former combatants into civilian life. Some of the disarmed persons become engaged with the new- or reformed security forces and therefore have to pass a screening process. Important steps during the screening phase are the recruitment and vetting procedures. Vetting recruits for the police or the armed forces in post-conflict scenarios is necessary to assure their reliability and loyalty to the constitution (McFate 2010: 4). Operating the screening process improperly could lead to a politicized and partial security force and a fragile future security sector, since former conflict parties might establish power bases within the security sector (Bryden/Scherrer 2012: 11f).

Disarmed and demobilized former security actors, who do not enter the new security forces, should receive comprehensive job training, education, placement tests, and even psychological rehabilitation during the reintegration phase in order to overcome traumatic experiences (Bryden/Scherrer 2012: 6f, Jennings 2008: 328f). Bryden (2012: 217) also stresses the importance of coordinating reintegration process with the local communities in which former combatants will be integrated in order to avoid potential tensions. However, DDR processes take time. Therefore, the allocation of adequate financial means by external donors is crucial to guarantee a thorough procedure (McFate 2010: 7f).

Contemporary analysts increasingly advocate for a closer interaction or “synergy” between SSR and DDR due to the fact that the success of SSR depends heavily on an effective and timely process of DDR. Best practice models concerning the sequencing and scope of application in combining SSR and DDR have not been established in the policy discourse, which might be explained by the heterogeneous and individual contexts of the respective countries in question (Bryden/Scherrer 2012: 10,22f). Missing the short timeframe of transitional peace to conduct DDR and SSR in a tense environment may lead former combatants back to arms and reignite conflict (McFate 2010: 2, Vries/Veen 2010). Moreover, at exactly this stage it is important for international donors to prevent the emergence of disgruntled ex-combatants who may turn into “spoilers” (Stedman 1997: 6f), and non-state-security actors who could sabotage further SSR processes and pose a serious threat towards the monopoly on the use of force of the fragile post-conflict state. Forms of resistance may vary from covert to open resistance. While “inside spoilers” use a “strategy of stealth” (Stedman 1997: 7f): officially cooperating with external powers, they eventually undermine programs from a backseat position. Non-cooperation, non-compliance, and selective cooperation are other ways local actors can impede policy implementation or discriminate among externally imposed programs (Mac Ginty 2010: 403f).

Integrating key local actors into the DDR and SSR processes is crucial. As the future security sector of a country depends on institutionalization and the ownership of local actors, an integrated approach in the planning stage and the implementation stage of DDR and SSR is required (Bryden/Hänggi 2005: 37, Sedra 2010: 105f). However, neglecting local actors and the political context of the respective country could lead to an irrelevant SSR program which does not fit the realities of the country, and, at worst, to the alienation of non-state security actors. It should be pointed out, that local actors may play to their strategic strengths and influence the SSR process massively. Moreover, particular local actors may have divergent interests concerning SSR, and therefore manipulate the SSR implementation process to serve their respective interests by placing their political followers into the new security forces or security-related political organs (Bryden/Scherrer 2012: 12). A recurring topic is the disputed selection of local partners by international donors. Furthermore, an intervention by external actors always has a massive impact on the social structure of a country, and turns the external actor into just another power-broker among others (Egnell 2010: 48of). This means that the external actor is by no means a non-partisan actor because they make a clear statement by choosing a certain group of local actors to cooperate with (England 2009: 17f, McFate 2010: 6).

### **3. Security sector reconstruction in a post-conflict country**

In 1999, the then Indonesian president, BJ Habibie granted the people of Timor-Leste a referendum about the future status of Timor-Leste within the Indonesian state. After some delays, and with the help of the United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNAMET), the referendum was finally conducted in August 1999. Although the majority of the Timorese opted for autonomy, pro-Indonesian militias incited unrest, wreaking devastation to the extent that the UN Security Council mandated a multinational force to intervene and stabilize the security situation (S/RES/1264). The United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor

(UNTAET) thus assumed administrative control according to S/RES/1272. Several UN missions continued the stabilization mission, though no UN-missions prior to 2006 were explicitly mandated to conduct SSR in Timor-Leste.

### 3.1 PNTL - The East Timor Police Service

According to the UNTAET regulation 2001/22, which was based on the S/RES/1272, the East Timor Police Service (ETPS - later PNTL (*port.: Polícia Nacional de Timor-Leste*)) came into being in August 2001. Training and selection processes for police recruits, conducted by UNPOL, had already begun in early 2000 though. The rudimentary build-up of the local police was to be completed as soon as possible and for this reason, UNPOL resorted to recruiting Timorese who had served in the *Kepolisian Negara Republik Indonesia* (POLRI), the Indonesian police force during the Indonesian occupation of Timor-Leste. Despite existing reservations on behalf of the Timorese population concerning Timorese POLRI members, due to their history of repressive tactics and collaboration with the former occupiers, the UN relied on them and placed them in high positions of the new police corps (Peake 2009: 150). Furthermore, these former POLRI members, numbering about 400, underwent fast-track training of only one month before being admitted to the new police service, while the vetting and training processes for the other recruits were quite different. Selection of non-POLRI recruits relied exclusively on a Western questionnaire, favouring English-speaking candidates, rather than recruits with knowledge of several local dialects. Moreover, political allegiances played a role in the selection or rejection of recruits as local politicians influenced the selection process (Myrtinnen 2009: 24). The training for the non-POLRI recruits took three months at the police academy, followed by three to six months of on-the-job training mentored and accompanied by UNPOL officers. From the beginning, the recruitment procedures conducted by UNPOL departed from recruitment guidelines. Although the special treatment of former Indonesian police officers during the recruitment and training can be explained by the need for experienced police officers, the necessary vetting processes were not applied.

Beyond recruitment and training, the logistics and maintenance capacities of the new Timorese police force were poor, even after UNMISSET took control over the PNTL in 2002. And as Myrtinnen has argued, UNPOL was utterly overwhelmed with the task of providing security, leaving little time or capacity for simultaneously developing and training the PNTL (2009: 25). Due to the double burden, UNPOL did not manage to strengthen institutional capacity and development, or create the necessary self-concept for a constitutionally based police force acting in accordance with the rule of law. Instead the mission was characterised by “[...] inadequate planning and deficient mission design; unimaginative and weak leadership; and negligible Timorese ownership of the process” (Hood 2008: 65). In 2005 UNMISSET handed control of the PNTL over to the Timorese administration and downsized UNPOL’s presence in Timor-Leste. However, the inclusion of former POLRI officers had a detrimental effect on the fragile PNTL insofar as conflicts emerged between former POLRI officers and other recruits who were affiliated to the resistance movement or had suffered from the repression of Indonesian military and police forces during the Indonesian occupation. Moreover, the then-Minister



of the Interior, Rogerio Lobato, had strong political links to PNTL officers and used PNTL personnel for his own political and financial purposes (Bull 2008: 186, Simonsen 2009: 580).

The rampant politicization of the security sector in Timor-Leste since its reconstruction in 2000 and 2001 was alarming. While the new Timorese defence forces, the F-FDTL (*port.: Falintil-Forças de Defesa de Timor Leste*) was mainly filled with former FALINTIL (*port.: Forças Armadas da Libertação Nacional de Timor-Leste*) resistance combatants in the first recruitment phase, the PNTL had a high proportion of former POLRI officers within its ranks. Hence, political orientations and affiliations hardened within the respective security organizations to the extent that there was an insurmountable division between the F-FDTL and the PNTL. Furthermore, conflicts emerged between regional identity and political network affiliations; while the PNTL consisted of *Kaladis*, people from the western provinces of Timor-Leste, the majority of the F-FDTL recruited in the first round consisted of *Firakus*, people from the eastern provinces of Timor-Leste (Simonsen 2006: 590f). Subsequently, later recruitment phases, from 2003 to 2005, complicated the conflict patterns, as new recruits for the F-FDTL came from the western provinces, while new *Firaku* recruits joined the ranks of the PNTL. Thus, beyond the overarching institutional rivalry between the PNTL and the F-FDTL, new identity-based rifts emerged within the respective security organizations. The situation led to open conflict as inadequate mission definitions between the two rival security organizations have triggered several armed clashes between members of the PNTL and the F-FDTL since 2002 (Goldsmith/Dinnen 2007: 1098, International Crisis Group 2010: 9).

Ultimately, the pressure to succeed in establishing a working local police force resulted in an approach based on train-and-equip rather than the development of an effective and democratically controlled police institution. This fact contributed to the politicization of the PNTL. By disregarding the regional and political conflict lines in conducting recruitment and vetting the UN recreated existing cleavages within the security organizations and aggravated conflict.

### 3.2 F-FDTL - The New Timorese Defence Force

The unwillingness of the UN to train the former guerrilla forces and to integrate them into the security sector of the new Timorese nation was reflected by the fact that FALINTIL was not mentioned in the resolution 1272 of the Security Council. Rather, FALINTIL was perceived as a problematic residue of the twenty-four year struggle for independence; a view which neglected the popular support and legitimacy FALINTIL enjoyed, at least in the eastern provinces of Timor-Leste.

FALINTIL members were gathered in cantonment sites in preparation for a DDR process that had not been properly conceptualised. The forces held out in the cantonment sites for more than a year until in 2000 a plan proposed by King's College was adopted to establish a defence force in Timor-Leste. Without a clear perception of the role the new Timorese defence force would play, the recruitment process nevertheless began in early 2001 and was delegated

completely by UNTAET to the commander of the FALINTIL, Taur Matan Ruak, and his staff. The recruitment process was heavily criticised by political observers as the recruitment- and vetting process was biased towards men from the eastern provinces of Timor-Leste who were loyal to Ruak and the former rebel leader, Xanana Gusmao. Subsequently, about 650 former FALINTIL members entered the new Timorese defence force in February 2001 (Myrtinnen 2012: 230, Rees 2003). Remaining ex-FALINTIL combatants, who were not considered to serve in the F-FDTL or voluntarily waived military service (about 1308), were disarmed, demobilized, and reintegrated under the auspices of the “FALINTIL Reinsertion Assistance Program” (FRAP) of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) until December 2001 since DDR was not part of UNTAET’s mandate (Myrtinnen 2012: 230). The FRAP was considered successful insofar as the majority of the participants received training in soft skills, received payments, and returned to civil life. However, other ex-FALINTIL members who were not chosen to be part of the new F-FDTL because of their political alignment were disgruntled and formed several clandestine groups to oppose the government and the politicized army command (Colimau 2000, Isolados, AFC `75). These clandestine societies reportedly have strong links to organized crime (McCarthy 2002, TLAVA 2009). Moreover, FRAP had its limits in so far as it did not include all actual members, or veterans, of the FALINTIL. The neglect of the socio-political context, as well as a lack of local knowledge about guerrilla structures, led to the misinterpretation of the label “veterano”. In particular, women who served in the FALINTIL or supportive equivalent groups were excluded in the DDR process despite their crucial role during the independence struggle (Myrtinnen 2009: 10f, Myrtinnen 2012: 231,238).

The training for the newly established F-FDTL was mainly provided by external donors on a bilateral basis, whereby Australia and Portugal, among others, led the F-FDTL training from 2001. The twelve donor nations were grouped in the Office for Defence Force Development (ODFD), which was in effect subordinate to the Special Representative of the Secretary General of the UN, but operated with relative autonomy from other UN departments in Timor-Leste (Hood 2006: 71). The programme consisted of a 3-month fast-track program and was limited to training only. Attempts to establish viable democratic and civilian oversight over the F-FDTL and to improve institutional capacity were not made (Peake 2009: 151). Therefore, the decision-making authority concerning new recruits, the strategic administrative planning, as well as the task of defining the actual role of the F-FDTL lay in the hands of the Timorese military command and its affiliated political network.

In short, the UN played neither a significant role in the DDR process of the FALINTIL, nor did it significantly support the establishment and training of the F-FDTL. While DDR was delegated to the IOM, the UN failed to monitor and lead the vetting and recruitment processes for the F-FDTL. Moreover, both the UN and bilateral donors neglected the formation of robust and effective institutions, such as a democratically controlled planning staff, which caused an inexorable politicization of the armed forces in Timor-Leste. As a consequence, new recruits from the western provinces of Timor-Leste, who were linked to another political network clashed with senior officers and members of the rank and file from the first recruitment phase (Myrtinnen 2009: 22). The development of the Timorese armed forces was fully relinquished to

local actors. Although there was indeed local ownership from the beginning on, the emergence of the F-FDTL in domestic security matters indicated a development outside of the Western paradigm of security governance. Furthermore, the absence of a clearly defined role for the F-FDTL, as well as the rivalry with the UN-subsidized PNTL, made the F-FDTL an unpredictable force within a fragile new nation.

### 3.3 Assessment

UNTAET focussed its SSR efforts on training and equipping the local police while neglecting the build-up of effective institutions to ensure the accountability or effective organization of the local security actors. Democratic civilian control over the security sector in Timor-Leste was therefore not adequately implemented. Rees (2003) emphasises the exclusion of local actors from the planning, and the UN's indifference and denial of the problems within the F-FDTL's as main reasons for this failure. Relinquishing the task of oversight of the build-up and formation of the F-FDTL completely to the former resistance fighters' high command and politicised Timorese officials made problems of democratic oversight inevitable.

An obvious weakness of the UN in Timor-Leste was the lack of strategic planning before and during the reformation and rebuilding of the security sector. As “[...] UNTAET and UNMISSET did not possess an SSR policy or strategy” (Hood 2008: 63), they failed to implement democratic oversight over the security organisations, and missed the opportunity to incorporate Timorese politicians into the SSR process. Hence, the necessary local “ownership” for a sustainable, accountable and effective security sector was absent from the beginning. However, cooperative planning for SSR and an effective division of labour between the UN and the bilateral donors were without a concept and lacking in substance according to a UN security advisor (Interview, Dili, 26.07.2012). Differing practises of programming and funding were the outcome (Greener 2009: 48).

Furthermore, analysts explain the failure of the UN in SSR in Timor-Leste as a consequence of over-burdening the UN's competencies and capabilities. As there was no local police service in place after the intervention of INTERFET, the UN had the responsibility to train new local recruits and provide police services at the same time. A further problem was the heterogeneous composition of UNPOL since most of the deployed international police officers did not have any experience in teaching and instructing police recruits and lacked the necessary language skills. As a result, UNPOL officers relied on their individual policing experience in their home countries and tried to communicate them to the PNTL recruits. Since this ad hoc approach lacked any form of standardization, UNPOL's police training created confusion among the local police recruits rather than a coherent understanding of professional police practice (Interview, international security advisor, Dili, 13.07.2012). Moreover, neglecting the informal structures in Timor-Leste, including the resistance movement of FALINTIL, and hesitating to incorporate them into the UN-led reconstruction of the security sector, produced a radical rift between FALINTIL and the UN (Peake 2009: 148f). In fact, while Timorese officials were marginalised from the official reform process of the security sector by the UN, infighting between political

camps took place behind the scenes. Informal connections to groups within the security actors politicized and destabilized the already fragile security sector (Interview, international policy advisor, Dili, 13.06.2011).

### 3.4 The Collapse of 2006 and its Aftermath

In 2005, the UN reduced its presence in Timor-Leste due to the perception of overall stability. The United Nations Office in Timor-Leste (UNOTIL) focused therefore mainly on advisory and training tasks for the Timorese administration and the PNTL. However, Timor-Leste faced a collapse of its security sector when in April 2006 clashes began between members of the PNTL and the F-FDTL, as well as associated youth gangs and organized groups of armed civilians. The incumbent administration was not able to establish order, and the Australian-led “operation ASTUTE” of the International Stabilization Force (ISF), intervened at the end of May 2006 to end the violence. In August 2006, the UN Security Council mandated the UN Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT), according to S/RES/1704, to rebuild and reform the institutions of the security sector, to conduct and supervise a rehabilitation of the PNTL, and provide security with UNPOL. The tasks of UNMIT were specified and amended by a supplemental agreement, which focussed on the consolidation and reform of the security sector, especially the PNTL.

Again, UNPOL deployed about 1600 police officers from more than forty countries to maintain security in Timor-Leste and to train the local police force. The core of the PNTL training was the “Reform, Restructuring and Rebuilding”-program which encompassed the registration of the officers, vetting, additional training and mentoring as well as the concluding certification (Wilson 2012: 79). The vetting process aimed first and foremost at the identification and rejection of police officers who had committed crimes and acted unlawfully during the clashes in 2006. However, various suspected officers were freed without charge due to unsubstantiated claims and missing evidence. This was, on the one hand, a result of the inexperience of UNPOL officers in matters of criminal investigation and a lack of communication skills, and on the other hand, a matter of benevolent acquittals for the suspected officers, as Timorese government officials were not interested in the prosecution of PNTL officers (Lemay-Hébert 2009: 397-400). The start of the registration and the vetting procedure itself was slow due to insufficient UNPOL resources. Once again, UNPOL had a mixed mandate of policing Timor-Leste while also training and supervising the PNTL. Moreover, the mentoring phase of six months was reduced to eight weeks only, and finally, about 3110 officers were screened and certified in December 2007 (International Crisis Group 2008: 5-8).

In contrast to the previous missions, Timorese officials were included in the certification of PNTL officers. Therefore, the success of the RRR-program depended heavily on good cooperation between UNMIT and the Timorese administration. However, as a Timorese state official declared (Interview, Dili, 27.07.2011), the RRR-program eventually failed due to the fact that the Timorese officials did not like the program and therefore obstructed the process. In fact, relations were troubled by miscommunication and contradictory perceptions concerning the handling of police officers suspected of misconduct.

High turnover rates, a lack of professional expertise, a heterogeneous police body, and cultural as well as insufficient contextual knowledge among UNPOL officers also weakened the mission's chances of success. UNMIT's shortcomings resembled the mistakes that UNTAET and UNMISSET had made during their earlier missions (Lemay-Hébert 2009: 399, Peake 2009: 154-157). The vetting process after the security crisis in 2006 constituted a new beginning of the Timorese police. But, the ineffectiveness of the vetting itself, as well as the unwillingness of local officials to persecute suspect officers, undermined this important measure to reform the security sector in Timor-Leste.

This initial phase of UNMIT's activities was accompanied by the deployment of the UN-Standing Police Capacity (SPC) and the Security Sector Support Unit (SSSU) (Lothe/Peake 2010: 436). While the SSSU had the task of monitoring and reviewing the security sector reform process, and, if applicable, proposing modifications for further programs, the SPC served as a tool to strengthen relations between UN organizations and the Timorese administration, as well as to maintain the supervision of the PNTL's reform process (United Nations Development Programme 2008). Yet, despite the UN's positive self-assessments of the first ever deployment of an SSSU (Wilson 2012: 82f), evidence suggests that the unit had only very limited impact in the first years since most of its staff lacked the necessary contextual knowledge and linguistic competencies to be accepted by the Timorese as a serious partner (Interview, Timorese state official, Dili, 27.07.2011).

Despite the still fragile nature of the PNTL as an institution, repeated reports about unprofessional performance, and links between PNTL officers and politicians as well as criminal organizations, UNMIT began handing authority, back to the PNTL district by district from 2009 (Greener 2009: 52). UNPOL followed catalogue of requirements including that the district police be able to adequately provide security; that eighty percent of the officers within the district pass the certification process; and that the respective district police forces are sufficiently equipped and able to operate. Crisis Group (2009: 11f), however, criticizes the fact that there were no standardized indicators to determine whether a district fulfilled these requirements, and Della-Giacoma (2010: 9) notes that the handover process was merely an exercise in "ticking boxes" by the assessment teams rather than a thorough evaluation. The final handover of executive control of the PNTL's over the whole of Timor-Leste eventually took place in March 2011 (International Crisis Group 2013: 20).

Although the F-FDTL was one of the main initiators of the violent clashes in 2006, the UN failed once more to subject the F-FDTL to a robust vetting process. Hence, even after 2006, the F-FDTL was trained and equipped on a bilateral basis by Australia, Portugal, and other external donors, without a meaningful disciplinary review. The Timorese administration announced new recruitment rounds for 2006 and 2009, in accordance with the 2007 national strategy paper "Force 2020" (International Crisis Group 2010: 10f, Myrtinnen 2009: 30f). The "Force 2020" paper was intended to put forward alternatives to imported Western concepts of security planning, and to assert Timor-Leste's self-determination in matters of national security, according to the Chief Commander of F-FDTL (Simonsen 2009: 590).

An increasing tendency to claim Timorese self-determinism can be identified and connected to the mounting criticism of UN handling of the security sector review, or rather, the Western concept of SSR in Timor-Leste since 2007. The points of criticism were the insufficient police training by UNPOL; the questionable professionalism of some UNPOL contributor countries and their lack of expertise; the ad-hoc character of the SSR programs; and finally, that the UN continuously refused to provide training capacities for the F-FDTL (International Crisis Group 2010: 2-6, Pinto 2009). Further indicators of an increasing rejection of external SSR practices by the Timorese administration could be identified in the reluctance to prosecute suspect PNTL officers, and open objections to the vetting procedures. Instead Timorese officials argued that judicial prosecution would only fan resentment and conflict within society (Lemay-Hébert 2009: 400f). Simultaneously, there was a rise in self-confidence within the Timorese administration and the Timorese security organizations towards the UN (Myrtinnen 2009: 29). In two articles published online, Secretary of State for Defence Pinto came out openly against persistent UN paternalism concerning the application of security models in Timor-Leste. Pinto referred to the fact that Timor-Leste maintains international sovereignty as a state and therefore wants to pursue its own strategy of security management. With a reference to the establishment of the Joint Command in 2008 and its proven effectiveness, Pinto argued that Timor-Leste could adequately respond to security issues by pursuing a “Timorese way” (Pinto 2009, Pinto 2011). Although, as one senior PNTL officer argued in an interview (Dili, 07.07.2011), the police still needs to improve its capacity and therefore relies on external support in the police build-up, they do not want to be patronized and controlled by the UN but demand self-determination in the overall process of transforming the police institution.

Ultimately, UN security sector management and the additional bilateral involvement in security affairs, led to unintended consequences. Unintended consequences are, according to Daase and Friesendorf (2010: 8), a recurring topic in the area of external security governance. Furthermore, as Schroeder states, these unintended consequences often “[...] run counter to the initial aims of a specific policy” (2010: 88). In the Timorese case, “local ownership” of reforms within the security sector was desirable in so far as local agency allowed for implementation of the F-FDTL reforms without much resistance or input from the UN. In fact, the UN ceded responsibility for reforming the FALINTIL guerrilla completely to the local elites and bilateral donors. Subsequently, the F-FDTL High Command and affiliated local actors had the opportunity to select their bilateral partners to train and equip the Timorese armed forces without having to develop the legitimate and effective oversight institutions that would have prevented the politicisation of the security sector.

A chance to prove Timorese autonomy in matters of security occurred in 2008. As a reaction to assassination attempts made against the president and the prime minister in February 2008, the Council of Ministers declared a state of emergency and the formation of a Joint Command, composed of the F-FDTL and the PNTL. Although the PNTL was actually under the authority of UNPOL, the PNTL came under the command of the F-FDTL through the establishment of the Joint Command. This incident meant a loss of legitimacy for UNPOL, and the relationship between local security forces and UNPOL worsened (Funaki 2009). Despite the

relative success of the Joint Command and the surrender of the remaining rebels, the state of emergency was retained due to additional operations by the Joint Command against alleged illegal weapon arsenals. Finally, the operations and the state of emergency ended in May 2008 (Centre for International Governance 2010, Wilson 2009: 3-7). Following a return to normalcy, the administration announced the establishment of a new Centre for Integrated Management of Crisis, which would be integrated into the structures of the Ministry of Defence, and would become active in cases of internal security crises and natural catastrophes (Wilson 2009: 7f).

Yet unclear delineations concerning the areas of responsibility between the PNTL and the F-FDTL still persist, and it should be pointed out that the Joint Command's inauguration only added to this vagueness. On several occasions the combination of PNTL- and F-FDTL forces were reactivated in so called "Ninja Operations", which targeted organized crime and clandestine gangs in Timor-Leste in 2009 and 2011 (Centre for International Governance 2010). While the joint missions could ease existing frictions and rivalries between the security organizations, command structures and the division of labour for further Joint Command operations are still unclear and could fan new conflicts between the PNTL and F-FDTL (International Crisis Group 2010: 10f). The merger of the security organizations was, according to Wilson (2009: 12), not only a sign of Timorese sovereignty, but could also be interpreted as a blow towards the Western model of security governance. Furthermore, it seems as if the local actors "learned" the lessons – in contrast to the UN – as from 2006 onwards various Timorese actors from the administration and the security institutions tried to evade and mitigate the impact of UN-driven SSR programs. Notably, the merger of the PNTL and the F-FDTL during 2008, as well as further joint missions, blurred the boundaries between external security organizations and internal security organizations even more.

#### **4. Conclusions**

Implementing sustainable security sector reform and security governance in a post-conflict scenario requires highly trained personnel who have training expertise and can serve as role models for new recruits. The UN police contingent (UNPOL) however, consisted of individuals from more than 40 nations, which meant that there was a large heterogeneity within UNPOL concerning the level of professionalism and perception of policing. Despite the fact that a standardisation of professional skills of police contingents in a post-conflict scenario is crucial, since concerted missions require practised behaviour patterns, UNPOL failed to attain this level of cohesion (Myrtinnen 2009, Peake 2009: 148f). Furthermore, as Greener argues, despite attending a one-week-preparation-course for Timor-Leste, the majority of the UNPOL officers were not trained or skilled in instructing recruits or developing the police sector of a war-torn country. Moreover, UNPOL's human resources for dealing with Timorese customs, conventions, and languages, were not adequate to fulfil the mission successfully. Additionally, high turnover rates of UNPOL officers and a lack of knowledge transfer within the officer corps, prevented UNPOL from gaining experience and achieving its goals (Greener 2009: 49f, Peake 2009: 150).

The (re-)construction of the PNTL, and the neglect of the FALINTIL by the UN, was not adequately elaborated at the strategic level but instead rested on ad-hoc decisions. Organizing and training the PNTL as quickly as possible, led to blatant flaws in the recruitment and vetting process. As former POLRI officers received special treatment in training and promotion, a foundation for future friction and resentment within the police force was laid. Furthermore, the excessive demands of a mixed mandate in combination with the desire to attain quick results, led to a hollow and vulnerable police institution. According to Rees (2003), the decision by the UN not to monitor and manage the transformation of the FALINTIL into a national defence force was a fundamental mistake, which affected the further development of the Timorese security sector for the coming years. Giving the FALINTIL High Command too much leeway in forming a defence force out of former rebels, without monitoring the recruitment process, and without demanding the development of legitimate and effective control and oversight institutions behind the politicized High Command, was a grave mistake. Also, the delegation of the DDR process and its actual implementation were problematic insofar as various informal supporters of the FALINTIL, and especially women, were not included in the process.

The UN mission after 2006 did not differ much from the pre-2006 missions. Problems remained the same concerning the composition and the capabilities of UNPOL. Again, local political and cultural contexts were not considered (Greener 2009: 51). Furthermore, UNPOL struggled again with the mixed mandate of providing security while training and supervising the PNTL. As a result the institutions of the PNTL and the F-FDTL are still fragile, and a clear-cut role allocation for the security organizations has yet to materialise. However, “local ownership” by the Timorese administration has changed since 2006. The formation of the Joint Command and the exclusion of UNPOL during these operations indicated a clear shift from a client to a self-determined actor. However, the “strong government ownership for reform”, as Funaki (2009: 13) put it, led security sector governance to develop in ways that were contrary to the donors’ expectations.

It strikes the observer that the UN did not learn from the lessons of either its previous missions or the experiences of UNTAET and UNMISSET after 2006. Rather, the UN maintained the flawed PNTL training, conducted an ineffective vetting procedure, neglected PNTL institutional development, and furthermore, continued to ignore developments within the F-FDTL (Myrtinnen 2009: 33f, Wilson 2012: 74). As Peake (2009: 142) rightly notes, UNMIT was the second chance for the UN to implement, or at least, to lay the foundations for comprehensive SSR in Timor-Leste. While the (re-)building of security forces after 1999 enabled the UN to develop and implement second-generation SSR, the violent clashes of 2006 allowed for a further review of the security sector, yet the UN did not succeed in either case.



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