

## **Volunteer Police and the Production of Social Order in a Taiwanese Village**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper is an ethnographic study of a volunteer police force in a village in Southern Taiwan, focused on identifying the cultural motivations of its functional operations. By reference to a discussion of how this institution fits into a larger division of social control labor, I argue that we should understand it as an active and organic element within the cultural constitution of the state.*

### **Introduction**

This paper is an ethnographic study of a group of volunteer police in a Taiwanese village. Their organization is called a *Shouwang Xiangzhu Xunshoudui* (守望相助巡守隊) which could be translated as 'Vigilance and Mutual Assistance Patrol Team' (terminology discussed below). However, for the purposes of this paper I refer to it as a 'Civil Patrol Team' and use the acronym 'CPT'. The CPT as a formal institution can be explained by reference to a variety of different contexts, and in each context its significance appears in a slightly different light. For example, Taiwan's police discuss the CPT as an institution of 'civil power' (*minli*, 民力), understanding it as a subsidiary organ of the local police substation and thereby an integral component within the bureaucratic hierarchy of command that leads up to the National Police Administration within the central government's Ministry of Interior. However, at the same time, the CPT also receives money and operational oversight from certain elected offices of 'local self-governance' (township and village), political entities that are theoretically supposed to be prevented from exerting undue influence within the routine enforcement of law.<sup>1</sup> In tension with both of these governmental hierarchies, the formal constitution, internal administration, and ultimate concern for survival of the CPT as an institution are

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<sup>1</sup> That is (as discussed below), the CPT receives roughly equivalent portions of its annual budget from the Township Office (*Xiang Gongsuo*) and their local police precinct. Also, the village chief (an unsalaried position subordinate to the Township Office which is filled by village election) is automatically made a vice-chief within the CPT, giving him 'cadre' status and thus access to the decision-making meetings. Ambiguities and tensions between different sectors of Taiwan's governing apparatus have been amplified by democratization (Chin 2003).

entirely the responsibility of a local 'Community Development Association' (CDA or *Shequ Fazhan Xiehui*, 社區發展協會), an ostensibly 'non-governmental' organization that is administered on the basis of a representational system in which voting power is a privilege of shareholding (i.e. paying) membership. Finally, and of focal concern to this paper, the CPT is understood (primarily by its own members) as a direct agency of the 'locality' (*defang*, 地方) or 'village' (*cunzhuan*, 村莊), i.e. simply a social club emerging from the voluntaristic exercise of civic virtue.

From the standpoint of an anthropological observer, then, the genius of the CPT lies in its functional ability to selectively mix the institutional resources afforded by its simultaneous access to these various forms of license. Functionally, the CPT operates as first-responder to order-maintenance problems and exerts a certain latitude of discretionary control over how these problems are taken up into the police and/or political machinery. At the same time, as I will show in this paper, it serves as a mechanism for integrating political-economic interests within an idiom of disinterested, pre-political and non-economizing 'community'. Thus, without exaggerating the larger significance of the team, we can take it as an exemplary kind of practice for understanding the overall division of labor by which the social order of the village is reproduced.

As mentioned, a central feature of the CPT's particular engagement in this production is its self-conceptualization as an agency of an order that valorizes the 'village' as a natural unit of community. This suggests we consider the following questions: (1) what does it mean that this kind of police work is done by volunteers? and (2) what does it mean that the legitimacy of this police force is generated under the mandate of a *village* social order? This paper addresses these two questions by locating the CPT within the larger overall division of social control labor obtaining in contemporary Taiwan. As I describe it, the organizing basis for this division of labor is cultural. The functional niche or role of the CPT within the village is an expression of what Raymond Williams called a *structure of feeling* (Williams 1977), a culturally particular set of dispositions that animates engagement in the reproduction of social order. By reference to an ethnographic description of this institution, I will suggest that we take the poetic aspect of this structure of feeling as an expression of modern political order in a local Taiwanese vernacular form. Furthermore, I will suggest that studying the qualities of 'Stateliness' involved in the CPT's ritual production of social order might offer a useful way to investigate the substantive cultural foundations of the state itself.

Data for this paper has been drawn from three separate research initiatives, which were undertaken more-or-less simultaneously between January and September 2007. These included my own participant observation with the CPT, the contributions of graduate students in my course on social organization who conducted field studies of other civic groups in the village, and, finally, a nation-wide evaluation of Taiwan's community policing policies sponsored by the National Police Administration, in which I participated as an assistant researcher.

### **The Cultural Motivations of Police Work**

An ethnographic ride in a patrol car is a trip through a landscape of trouble. Physical and social geography, the regional calendar, weather, time of day, and

anything else of potential relevance are all taken up and assimilated to the exegetical space of street policing, in which they become the ostensible referents for a discourse of problems:

See, it's raining now, so the thieves will be out ... taking advantage of the noise cover and the empty streets ... and they *love* these student ghettos here, where nobody knows anyone else, where nobody knows who's taking what from whom... Are they our people (*zijiren*, 自己人), or what? (CPT Patrolman<sup>2</sup>)

Every new vista outside the car's window provokes another worried memory, another anxious possibility, 'And right here, this one time, there were forty foreign laborers, from two different factories they were, all drunk and fighting to kill...' <sup>3</sup> Inside the car, the route unrolls as a list of problems. This list is mnemonic for a typology of technologies of response and management, and this typology, in turn, organizes the distinctive blend of operational policy and folk wisdom that makes up 'police work' (Manning 1997).

As a representational or 'dramaturgical' genre, police work spins out narratives that (despite their characteristic emergence in disarticulate masses of anecdotes and homilies) ultimately wind up into a singular story: the story of society as a moral order. The singularity of this story is imagined. The ideals of order and coherence that define the problems projected onto the world outside a patrol car window exist *in potentia* only, as idealized visions of the harmonious good life. Police work rests, definitively, on cultural imagination.

It is the vehicle itself – literally the patrol car, figuratively practical activity mobilized as creative pursuit of an ideal – that manifests the culturally particular vision of police order as a material force structuring the actual conduct of social interaction. The actual order of society is shaped by cultural visions of order in-and-through the manner in which these visions are embodied in practice.

As ideology is channelled through the substantive reality of instrumental-rational practice, the clarity of society conceptualized as a telic moral order becomes clouded and fragmented. Ethnography encounters ideology obscured within a chaotic space of more-or-less consciously understood imperatives generated by actually existing arrangements between morality and power, legitimacy and force. The logic of police work is not transparent to its ideological motivations, for, as Weber pointed out nearly a century ago, the means-ends rationality that arises from the use of material force to moral ends is 'demonic,' irrational, and categorically impure (Weber 1958). To cite Weber in this context is to invoke a bedrock element in the mythology of modern, republican government. This is the modern ideal that the entire field of relationships between legitimacy and force *should*, somehow, be reconciled within a single agency. If a society can have an ostensibly objective moral order, then it can have only one. The rationale of the modern state is to serve as custodian of this ultimate harmony, guarding it against the degenerative conflicts that arise when 'lower' level concerns fail to rise to

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<sup>2</sup> Comment during patrol, evening of 9 August 2007. The reference to 'student ghetto' is a reference to an area of the village inhabited by about 1000 students of a nearby technical college.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

standards of universal good. The story of modern police work is thus normatively understood as a story properly told exclusively by the state. Where sub-state (private or parochial) organizations participate in policing, they are understood as agencies of *force* alone, the legitimacy of this force is not theirs to create. If they do happen to be possessed of legitimacy – that is, if they can be properly called police rather than vigilantes – then this meaning has been somehow derived from its singular source, the universal good of which the state alone is the ultimate custodian.

This modernist totality is a mythology, of course (Abrams 1988). Like classical studies of primitive religion, ethnographers of modern states find people producing their own social order through mystified rituals aimed at propitiating absent gods. State above, society below, and in between the rituals of police. From this perspective, an anthropology of the state begins with the meaning of these rituals to the people performing them, and then moves out to trace the wider institutional connections through which these rituals incorporate their common-practitioners into a social group possessed of a coherent cultural identity. And so, following this general methodology, I begin here to describe ethnographic materials revealing a locally compelling version of police ritual.

By examining this ritual as an active element in the wider reproduction of a meaningfully ordered society, we can confront the theoretically interesting question of how locally autonomous sources of legitimate force are routinely integrated into a political imagination that reinforces the unitary centrality of the state. We find the substantive motivations of this in the ritual practice itself, in the symbolic logic that makes it compelling to its practitioners. In listening to what Taiwanese volunteer patrolmen have to say about their own motivations, we find a stately force manifest in sentiments of corporate solidarity.

It's a sort of feeling... the feeling that, inside this group, there are no individual interests to be seen, no individual interests at all. In any other kind of group you have the so-called cliques, and when you have cliques then there are problems with the overall cooperation. But, on the Patrol Team, you see only silent dedication. It's a feeling of silent contribution. You don't get any friction, that feeling of grinding against one another, you don't get that. What you see is everyone suffering together, silently working. In the daytime we all have normal jobs, and then at night we sacrifice our evenings to come here and patrol, for the village, for the whole village... Other people won't do this work. Why not? Because you are always dealing with ignorant people. They find fault with you, they spit and criticize. But us, we brothers here, we co-workers (同仁), we just quietly endeavor. None of us haggle or argue over anything. We just quietly accept it. So, that feeling comes when some so-and-so is criticizing us, or whatever, and we are just quietly persevering in our contribution. In the beginning, the village, the *whole* village, all the villagers from the whole village, they didn't understand. And now they understand. Now they approve. Now they *support* us.

(CPT Patrolman)

Exploring these accounts of motivation reveals a discursive tropology of building community solidarity against various threats. In this, the volunteer police team appears to be animated by a relatively determinate repertoire of forms of care,

directed to the welfare of a community imagined to possess specific properties of corporate good. This conceptual/emotional structure, which might be described in aggregate as the 'spirit of the state', composes the cultural formation centrally at issue in volunteer policing. The community imagined is not the nation, however, but the village, the locality. And the people performing these rituals are not professional civil servants, but housewives, factory workers, shop owners: i.e. volunteers. Through their participation in patrol, these people find forms of agency that allow them to engage forcefully in the creative production of the village as a meaningful social context for their lives. One crucially important dimension of this agency is its capacity to shelter intimate relationships from exposure to legal institutions.

I have just detailed three features of the CPT's volunteer policing – village-level imagination, amateur staff, extra-legal values – which might be taken to imply that the CPT is 'outside' or 'beneath' or somehow otherwise not intrinsic to 'the state' *per se*. I believe the situation to be the opposite, however. We are closest to the essence of the modern state when we find it in the emotional structure of the relationship between its individual and collective subjects. From a vantage point in this emotional universe, legality is not always legitimate, and legitimacy is not always stately.

### **Vigilance and Mutual Assistance**

In Taiwan's early agricultural era folk custom was simple and honest, the residents of village and neighborhood were all intimately familiar with one another. Thus, the practices of 'Vigilance and Mutual Assistance' were quite prevalent. But with entry into the industrial age social custom has transformed: interpersonal relations are weakened, and we have all been turned into strangers no longer possessed of active mutual concern. Gradually, this has led to the degradation of the social order, qualitative changes in the environment, and such a variety of signs of chaos (亂像) that the lives of the community-public (社區民眾) are no longer secure. (Excerpt from the CPT's official account of its own formation)

In Taiwan the term *Shouwang Xiangzhu* (守望相助), 'Vigilance and Mutual Assistance,' is considered a *chengyu* (成語), an aphorism evocative of historically derived significance far in excess of its literal meaning. In the late 1990s, this aphorism was deployed in a government sponsored initiative to encourage the formation of a new type of civil organization as a participant in the overall shift of Taiwan's policing apparatus towards community-policing inspired reform. These organizations, the 'Vigilance and Mutual Assistant Patrol Teams' (referred to as CPT in this paper, sometimes called 'Neighborhood Watch' in criminal justice literature on Taiwan) were just the newest addition to a broad spectrum of more-or-less voluntaristic civilian adjuncts that have been integral to the island's modern police bureaucracy since its earliest inception under Japanese colonial rule a century ago (see Martin 2006). At present, the CPT shares its designation as a modality of 'civil power' with organized groups of Volunteer Police (*Yijing*, 義警) and the Civil Defense Force (*Minfang*, 民防). At the same time, however, the emergence of the CPT in the wider context of Taiwan's political liberalization marked something new: it was the first civil policing adjunct in Taiwan's history not

directly created and administered by higher level offices in the formal government bureaucracy.

The policies establishing the framework for the CPT allowed them to be constituted under auspices of one of three different agencies: the lowest-level elected representative of formal state government (i.e. borough chiefs in the urban areas, and village chiefs in rural areas), the management committees of corporately held high-rise apartment buildings, and the semi-NGO 'Community Development Associations' that emerged in the early 1990s under impetus of Lee Teng-hui's strategic reconstruction of grass-roots political institutions. The formation of Community Patrol Teams has proceeded steadily since their inception; according to NPA statistics the nationwide total grew from 9,509 teams (with 85,460 team members) in 2000 to 13,453 teams (with 146,737 members) by the end of 2006.

The team I studied was established in 1998 by a CDA (which itself was constituted in 1994), making it one of the two longest-established teams in the entire jurisdiction of the local police precinct (a jurisdiction which encompasses four townships, and about 12 teams). It has consistently been recognized as an effective and well-run team by the various government agencies that audit such organizations. In 2007 it had 22 active personnel, of whom 17 were male and five female. The median age of the group was 48 years old, the average age 47, and all but four members held regular full-time employment (all but three if being a housewife is counted as employment). More than half the members were employed as laborers in local factories, three worked in sales, two were shop owners (an auto repair shop and a jewellery store), and one was a full-time politician, i.e. the village chief. Perhaps the most interesting statistical detail about the membership is that slightly less than 60 per cent of the members of the team actually lived in the village where the team was established. This seems odd in light of the degree to which the village provides the hegemonic symbol of imagined community that structures CPT members' narratives of the meaning of their work. However, it simply indicates that 'production of locality as a structure of feeling' (Chatterjee 1998: 59) does not take territorial residence as a necessary criteria; all of the non-resident members narrated compelling personal connections to the village on the basis of kinship, co-worker friendships, or other intimate relationships to which territorial residence was immaterial.

The administrative organization of the team is a shallow hierarchy of three layers: a chief executive, the regular team members, and an intermediate layer of mid-level management. The chief executive is elected to a two-year term by a vote open to all team members, upon which he (all four chief executives have been male) is empowered to fill subsidiary management positions by appointment. These mid-level management positions include three vice-chiefs, six unit-chiefs, and a general secretary. Together, these ten administrative positions are classified as 'cadres' (*ganbu*, 幹部), and management decisions are made through consensus of all cadres at meetings presided over by the chief executive. Membership in the team is open to anyone over the age of 20 who is 'not an alcoholic' (this is written into the bylaws), and a three month probationary period is required before formal membership is granted. With formal acceptance, a new member is given two sets of clothing (one a uniform which looks exactly like a police uniform except that the patches substitute the word 'Patrol Team' for

'Police', the other a set of matching civilian dress clothes that all team members are expected to wear when attending public functions under team auspices) and enrolled in an insurance program sponsored by the Police Department, which covers accidents and injuries sustained while on patrol. They are also qualified to attend training which will eventually qualify them for a license as a member of the Civil Defense Force.

The core activity of the patrol team is nightly patrol. This is conducted between 11pm and 2am in a car painted to look exactly like a police car, complete with flashing lights. This work is organized as the rotating responsibility of six units, each of which ideally consists of four members under the direction of a unit-chief (chronic shortage of personnel means most units contain fewer than five people). The units take turns patrolling; thus each individual team member is expected to show up, uniformed and sober, to patrol only once every six days. In practice things are rather loose, people freely exchange shifts and sometimes don't show up at all (three unexcused absences are technically grounds for expulsion). Only the team chief comes every evening, to unlock the headquarters (housed in a community activity centre shared with the neighbouring village), bring over the patrol car, and generally make sure everything goes off in good order.

The major weight bearing down on the position of the chief has less to do with organizing patrol operations than it does with maintaining solvency. Posted (for the stated purpose of 'transparency') on a bulletin board at headquarters is a monthly statement of CPT finances, compiled by an accountant who volunteers with the CDA. According to this record, the team spends about NT\$ 10,000 per month (roughly US\$ 300)<sup>4</sup> on routine operational expenses such as gasoline, car maintenance, drinking water, etc. They host two annual recreational activities (a dinner banquet and a daylong 'self-strengthening' tourist outing), each of which costs between NT\$ 50-70,000. And they also purchase uniforms for new personnel and pay their membership fees for the CDA (all CPT members are automatically enrolled in the CDA). Together, this adds up to annual expenses of somewhere in the neighbourhood of NT\$ 330,000 or about US\$ 10,000.

Regular income for the CPT comes from a variety of sources, including annual donations of NT\$ 25,000 given by the CDA, somewhere between NT\$ 20-30,000 provided by the township government, and NT\$ 20,000 provided by the police bureaucracy (which also supplies team members with patrol insurance at no cost). This regular income amounts to only about NT\$ 70,000, or less than a quarter of annual expenses. The deficit is made up in two ways. One is through applying for government grants such as those of the 'Six Stars Project', which makes funds of up to NT\$ 110,000 available for specific items of community policing work such as holding neighbourhood meetings. The CPT has been successful in obtaining these grants (attributed to the assistance of the village chief, a seasoned veteran of the application process), but even with these grants there is still an annual need for at least NT\$ 150,000 in supplementary funds. These are collected through charitable donations.

The team collects several types of charitable donation. One category consists of small amounts of money team members themselves regularly donate in the course of covering sundry expenses. These are negligible compared to the donations

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<sup>4</sup> The exchange rate in 2007 hovered around 33 New Taiwan Dollars to 1 US Dollar.

generated by corporate donors and people who are 'hired' as 'consultants' (*guwen*, 顧問) for a two year period (running concurrently with the term of the chief) in exchange for a donation of at least NT\$ 5000. Official-looking 'contracts', suitable for wall display, are given to these consultants. The current chief has managed to recruit some 30 such consultants, and has also brought in a similar amount of donations from local businesses who did not ask to be recognized as 'consultants'. Together these donations will allow the team to break even during his term (i.e. preserve their current surplus of NT\$ 250,000).<sup>5</sup>

Becoming a consultant entitles one to ask the team to provide an honor guard at personal functions such as weddings or funerals. This sort of symbolic display is also routinely staged at local temple festivals (where the team provides the functional service of directing traffic) and during elections (when individual team members are paired with individual policeman to guard polling stations). However, these daylight appearances are intermittent; the focal activity of the patrol team is its nightly patrol, and it is in this patrol that the primary meaning of the team to its members is found.

Like the regular police, the CPT organizes its patrol through the use of patrol boxes. During 2007, the CPT under study maintained 27 patrol boxes. These were white plastic boxes bearing the words 'Patrol Box' in red letters, containing a small booklet in which, every night, a patrolman or patrolwoman is supposed write their name, patrol-team rank, the time, and the date. When these books were full, they were archived at HQ as tangible proof of services rendered, available for review by any agency with a qualified interest. The route driven between the boxes on a given night is left to the discretion of the driver. Visiting them all is required, but it is a point of explicit policy that the patrol routes should be unpredictable, with the intent that this makes it more difficult for people interested in intentionally avoiding the patrol to do so. Actual driving patterns almost always far exceed the territory mapped by the boxes, due to following the movements of suspicious persons or checking levees, trouble spots, construction sites, or any other variety of *ad hoc* concerns. At root, however, the basic architecture of patrol is defined by the boxes: they provide the formal definition of patrol as an activity (i.e. signing all the boxes is the minimal criteria for a complete patrol) and register the activities of the team as a permanent feature of the landscape.

The placement of the boxes themselves is a synthetic outcome of various forms of calculation. Looking at a satellite photograph of the village (Fig. 1), a clear pattern of three relatively distinct types of land-use is evident. Clustered at the south near the river is a typical nucleated village settlement (presently split in two by an administrative boundary). To the northeast of this, stretching along the provincial highway, is a cluster of factories. And in the northwestern region 'behind' these focal areas is a section of scrubland primarily given over to fish husbandry, although there are in fact numerous factories (many of them without addresses, or other forms of official registration) interspersed with the fish ponds.

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<sup>5</sup> It might be noted here that the regular police also use the practice of 'hiring consultants' as a system of collecting charitable donations. This is organized at the national level through a formally constituted institution called the 'Police Friend's Club', that is staffed by retired police officers and precisely shadows the bureaucratic hierarchy of the police. Further discussion of this organization will have to wait for a future article, however.

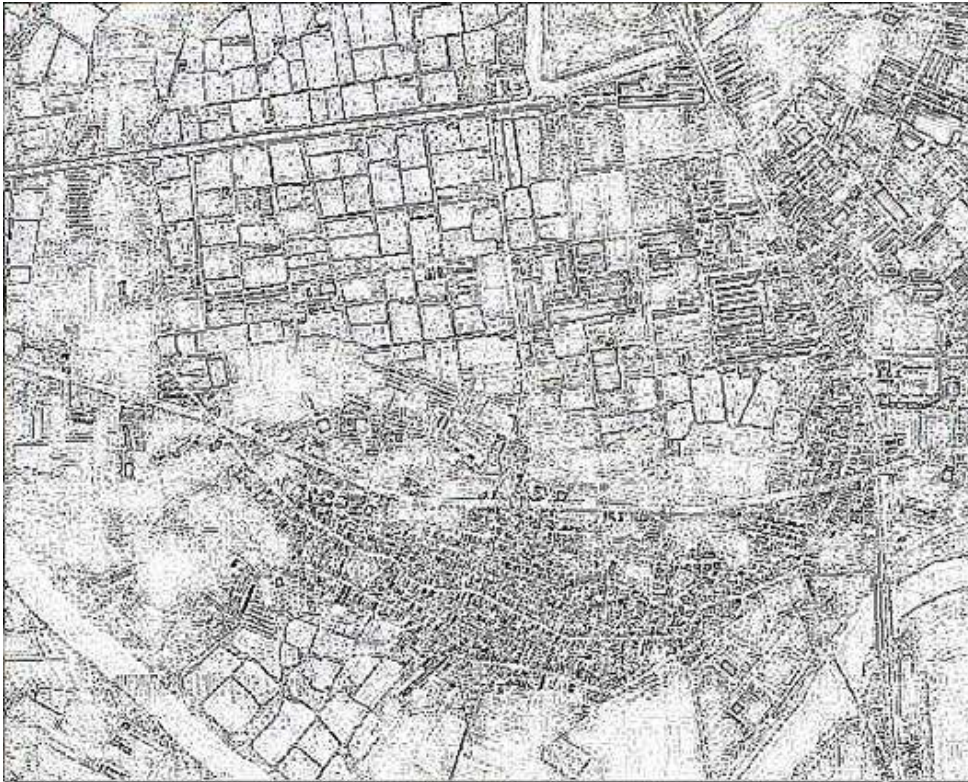


Fig. 1: Satellite view of the village

When the CPT was first established in 1998, the initial staff of administrative cadres selected sites for sixteen boxes with the goal (as they put it) of getting 'full coverage' of the village territory. These boxes were concentrated in the residential area. As the years went on, the practical financing of the CPT became explicitly attached to fundraising from 'consultants', and it soon became standard and explicit operating procedure to hang patrol boxes in response to donations. Thus the 11 boxes that have subsequently been added to the route have expanded the patrol into the factory district (in fact, into the factory districts of two neighboring villages). There is no sense that there is anything awkward about this; team members freely volunteer explanations of the sort, 'We hung this box here because the factory owner gave us NT\$ 50,000 for our new car.' Though it is obvious that favor is being exchanged, it is still interpreted by patrol personnel as a mode through which the factory owner is 'giving back' (*huikui*, 回饋) to the community, as their interest in the security of their own property bleeds out into the collective interest of the community in regional security.

The permanent presence of the boxes functions to mark territory and, like the practice of patrolling with the flashing lights turned permanently on (another feature shared by the CPT and the regular police), advertising the presence of a guardian force is understood as functionally effective in preventing crime. Patrol boxes are only one of many standardized registers for such prophylactic marking of space. Notably, in residential areas, the CPT and police patrol boxes often share the walls to which they are bolted with charms (*fu*, 符): strips of black paper emblazoned

with writings and symbols that constitute a spiritually efficacious power to ward off the forces of evil. One night on patrol, I asked the driver about the charms:

'They are issued by *Qingwang Gong* [the local temple], for the *raojing* [an annual ritual], you know, when the god goes out on patrol...' <sup>6</sup>, he said.

The god also patrols? 'Yes. Once every year. On his birthday'

The god patrols, like you patrol? 'No, no, no. [laughter] That's like, there are a lot of people, like, a parade... it's totally different.'

I mulled this over. 'OK, it's totally different,' I asked, 'So what is it that makes them both "patrol"?''

He paused in thought a moment, and then replied, 'They are both types of *care* (*guanhuai*, 關懷)'

### Structure of Care, Division of Labor

Suppose that everyone focuses only on their self-interest, well then the whole society, the whole, the total group, will just disperse, conceptually at least. So we [CPT] all constantly stress that we are the eternal volunteers. And at the same time we are giving we are also receiving, receiving a kind of happiness, a kind of joy. This locality, this hometown, it gives us a sort of platform on which to perform, where we can fully deploy the meager power of our individual selves... Suppose this institution did not exist, that there was no Civil Patrol Team. Then, naturally, we would not be here right now. We would just be one individual, another individual, another individual, and another individual, going back home to sleep... [But instead,] by participating in this public-interest activity (公益活動), in this group, we get this *sensation*. And when we are outside, then we know the *whole*, really the *beauty* of this whole place. (CPT Patrolman)

The substantive action of patrol occurs in the spaces between boxes. In my observations of this, the CPT exhibited an active voluntarism that contrasted sharply with the sorts of dispassionate obligation I have generally observed with formal police personnel in Taiwan. Particularly enthusiastic are the six 'original elders' (*yuanlao*) who have been with the team since its founding nine years ago. They are the functional heart of the group, serving as drivers and street-level commanders of the six patrol units. Patrol for them is a time for hunting down and cleaning up problems. They stop to move debris off roadways, check doors and gates left uncharacteristically open, ask children on the street what they are doing out so late, follow suspicious (i.e. 'not from around here') people, check levees during typhoons, shut off the headlights of parked cars, poke around construction sites and wastelands used as shooting galleries by drug addicts, and generally engage in a sort of all-purpose surveillance and social grooming.

The basic protocol of patrol involves a staff of three: one person to drive the car, one to ride in the passenger seat and take care of outside work (signing patrol

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<sup>6</sup> This is a temple to *Sanfu Qiansui* ('Three Houses, A Thousand Years'), AKA *Sanwang* (i.e. 'Three Kings'), who fall into the category of *Wangye* deities (sometimes called Plague Gods) common in southern Taiwan. The temple is a defining symbol of the village community; for example, it is pictured as the center of the Community Development Association's official logo.

boxes, etc.), and one to remain on standby at HQ as a fixed point of contact between the patrol car and police or village residents. During patrol, it is CPT policy to keep the car's engine running at all times and the door open anytime the passenger is outside of the car. Like most places in the world, the village has no great love of police, and the CPT has been known to encounter hostility expressed as unprovoked physical assault. Indeed, there has been at least one case of an organized attack on the team's headquarters. I had a milder experience of this hostility when I once unknowingly parked my car in a contested space next to the HQ, causing five or six members of the family owning the neighboring house to burst into the headquarters and direct a stream of verbal abuse towards everyone present until the car had been moved.

From this and other clues, it is quite clear that the collective subject which the CPT aims to represent is not a pre-constituted social fact. Indeed, it is precisely the process of overcoming forms of 'friction' (in the terms of an earlier quote) which degrades community solidarity where the primary satisfaction of patrol is generated. From this angle, we see ordering society as an always-on-going project, more habits of hygiene than structures of order. Thus, parallel to Steven Sangren's analysis of *ling* in Taiwanese popular religion (1987), it is the capacity to constructively mediate the disorder/order relationship that substantiates the 'spiritual efficacy' of the CPT. It is, of course, but one of many participants in the ordering process, a process that ultimately extends across the entire field of political action. Described in suitably broad terms, the political order of the village is an aggregate production under direction of a diverse class of vocational politicians who, if they are named collectively, are generally called *difang renshi* (地方人士), 'local elites':

These so-called local elites are just people who are a bit more enthusiastic about participating in community affairs: the temple management committee, the village or borough chief, the village secretary, the elected representatives, the ones who are routinely active in the locality. We should just say the local elite. There are even some with no formal status at all, no village chief status or elected representative status, nothing at all. But still, they like to participate in the backstage work [*muhou gongzuo*, 幕後工作]. That so-called backstage work is just, you know, the advisors [*muliao*, 幕僚] and, like people say, the 'column-pedestals' [vote brokers], the vocational participants in local affairs.

(Regular Police Patrolman)

These local elites have found a more-or-less institutionalized place in routine policing through their role as mediators of civil conflict:

When it's not too serious, a verbal disagreement or some sort of personal dispute, then we police are just there to mediate. But there are times when the people, both sides, neither one is willing to give! They don't necessarily always listen to us. So then we call the village chief, or some local elites, maybe some of the township councilors, and we ask them to come down to the scene... and they stand in an intermediate position, and they pacify the two sides.... When people see that the village chief himself has come out to deal with it, well then they just improve their posture a bit, you know. The emotions calm down. So, actually, the

[local elite's] role and the police role are, like, well when we [police] are dealing with a situation, some sort of dispute, if we already know both sides, then that's pretty easy to deal with. We just communicate directly with both sides, and calm things down right away. But when we don't know them, well, then there is no possibility that they are going to give us any face. Each individual is just going to insist they have their own reasons. So, really, then the role of the village chief is just that he knows both sides of the dispute. He is better placed as a bridge, to bridge the difficulties. (Regular Police Patrolman)

As discussed elsewhere (Martin 2007), Taiwanese police view their work in terms of maintaining a balanced relationship between law, reason and sentiment: they keep the peace through negotiating reasonable adjustments to the intimate order of community in respect of the abstract forces of legal institutions. Within this endeavor, the capacity of local elites to operate as what might be termed 'sentiment-brokers' makes them a valuable resource. And as we move beyond the sphere of formal police operations into the civil sphere of voluntary associations where the CPT exists, the relative significance of legal to sentimental values declines, and the core tropes of policing change accordingly. So, even as the CPT's operations resemble those of the regular police in working to mediate between the juridical order of law and the intimate order of sentiment, they become clearly distinguished from police in respect of their relationship to law. Their particular position *vis-à-vis* law is evident from several different perspectives. For example, from the perspective of the village chief, law enforcement is clearly not the only problem-solving game in town:

[How to respond] really depends on the precise nature of the problem. For example there are some things, well, like street fighting and such problems between the youngsters, they, they just go directly to some of the local gangsters (混混), you know, the 'local head-snake' (地頭蛇), the local big-man (老大) is just going to come out and solve those problems, those kind of criminal matters. But now, if you're talking about a violation of a regulation, like a traffic infraction or something, well then sometimes, sometimes they don't want us to get involved, because when regulations have been broken, and the police are writing up a citation... well, we are the ones who 'speak-sentiment' (說情). And we local village and borough chiefs, we elected representatives, we see those things, their nature, well, like suppose you are doing something you know is obviously wrong, or you aren't showing people respect. In that case we aren't going to 'speak-sentiment' on your behalf... Generally speaking, if it's something like a traffic infraction, then the residents here are definitely going to ask the village chief to come down and use a bit of influence (*guanshuo yixia*)... or at home, when a household has a domestic disagreement, then they will get the village chief to come look at the situation. And if there is something troublesome, then we can ask the police to come. Because, when it comes to the judiciary, there is a big difference between the police and the village chief. They are more inclined to believe the police. Because the village chief is embedded in human sentiment (受人情的包圍).

(Village Chief)

All agencies involved in the production of the village social order articulate their goals in terms that encompass distinct legal and sentimental dimensions. Within this, the CPT invokes a somewhat distinctive framing of the precise way that law is made relevant to this order. That is, CPTs consider themselves in the first place to be an agency of the community oriented by values of compassion (*renqingwei*) and mutual assistance. However, as a formally constituted enterprise, their work to these ends intersects with the activities of the regular police; it is through this intersection that their specific relationship to law takes shape. As the Chief of the CPT put it

Whenever the police need us, we help any way we can. And when we encounter a problem, we ask the police to assist us. Because we have no authority to enforce the law, it's necessary for us to ask the police to deal with that. That kind of police-civilian cooperation is simply necessary.

In an interesting inversion of the conventional idea that law and sentiment are antagonistic, CPT personnel use the register of law – and the technology of the file – as the basis for constructing a trusting relationship with police agencies:

We are the Civil Patrol staff, so naturally, well, we should mention here, those government agencies keep files of data on their personnel. They wouldn't just go to a villager they don't know! Like, if the person doesn't have a file inside their organization, if the organization doesn't have that person's basic information on record, then... to call on them for assistance? That's impossible! You know the saying, 'Raise a rat, it chews the bag [i.e. to cultivate the wrong people is to create trouble for yourself]', sometimes it's just like that. So, accordingly, all of us are staff with our basic data recorded in the Ministry of the Interior, or the National Police Administration, or the County Government... we are all registered, we are recorded in the internal register. Naturally they are going to call for us, they will feel more reassured, our data is already recorded in their superior agencies. They call on us for help, naturally they feel more reassured. When everybody is a stranger, and you call on someone to help, you will have the fear: if this turns out to be trouble, then to whom can you turn? The police units, they are also looking out for their own security. (CPT Chief)

The overt public identity of CPT as a social control agency is dramatized in symbolic practices that distance it from any law enforcement function. Their paradigmatic actions exemplify paternalistic concern: finding lost children, checking up on 'independent seniors' without filial offspring, taking food to the hungry on holidays, rendering assistance at traffic accidents, removing advertisements put up by predatory moneylenders, escorting drunks and women home. In self-description, they emphasize their relationship with the regular police as limited to providing assistance and surveillance, reiterating a claim that they have 'no authority to enforce the law'. This is not entirely true; Taiwan's law grants general authority to intervene in crimes in progress and, as we will see, the CPT does this regularly. However, what is behind the insistence that they have no legal authority is the nature of the way they articulate their own localized authority in relation to the 'higher authority' of the state. And it is in this articulation, I claim, that

we can see how a relatively *autonomous* local production legitimate force is presented as 'stately', and thereby made consonant with the overall reproduction of state authority.

As it 'goes over their heads' the enforcement of criminal law becomes an especially meaningful type of event in the community imagination, an event with the potential to either solidify or degrade community solidarity. Positive synergy emerges when state law and community sentiment are aligned. The paradigmatic site for this is civilian discovery and apprehension of thieves *in flagrante delicto*. Crowds of local residents mustered in seizing an unfortunate burglar is a staple of local news in Taiwan. As the chief of the local substation described it, 'those more populist problems (比較大眾化), things that directly impact public interests like stealing stuff or destroying property... that brings the general public out. That kind of stuff has a direct personal relevance to them.' At least three times in the history of the CPT under study, large groups of villagers assembled in the course of chasing down thieves. CPT members consistently identified those experiences as the purest expression of the energies of 'mutual assistance' that animate their foundational mission:

You only have to say that there is a thief somewhere, and then this kind of a solidary psychology arises [凝結的心態就起來了]. It's a kind of unique power of unity. Everyone is out searching together. Everyone comes out together to surround, to advance, to just deal with the situation, together. I have learned this, I have *felt* this... For example there was one time just before New Year's, oh we were so happy! The [electrical appliance] factory's burglar alarm went off, the phone call came, and we were all here [at HQ], so we deployed immediately... But, well, you know, it was not only our team that responded. The villagers too, when they heard that news, well 20 or 30 people all came out and went to go catch those [thieves]. And that, that has really achieved the meaning of 'Vigilance and Mutual Assistance.' You see something like that, oh, it is the most meaningful thing for us. The people, the villagers, it's like they already have achieved consensus, that all-encompassing 'mutual assistance'... And that is our purpose. Really, patrol is not the responsibility of the CPT. It is everyone's mutual responsibility. That is the goal we are trying to achieve. (CPT Patrolman)

But, just as alignment of community sentiment and criminal law generates positive synergy, so does their disjuncture create dissonance. Here is where the CPT's position as an agency fully 'embedded in human sentiment' finds its most direct confrontation with the police position as an instrumental agency of law enforcement. The bonds of human decency oblige CPT members to respect the interests of intimate associates discovered on the wrong side of the law. To manage these obligations, they draw on resources more subtle and sophisticated than the legal apparatus. The purest expression of this dynamic is found in their treatment of juvenile delinquents, for the patriarchal imperative to take care of the young provides an unimpeachable warrant for bracketing the law:

The most difficult thing we ever have deal with is the person from within our own village. Are you going take him, speaking truly here, are you really going to take him and *song* [送, to 'deliver' or remit to formal prosecution]? Are you really going

to *zhua* [抓, 'seize' or take into custody]? An arrest or prosecution is going make for hard dealing with his family, or the others, you know... There was one I recall, near around 17 or 18 years old, maybe 16, just a kid, a high school student, playing the little robber, you know, engaging in acts of thievery. And so we gave chase. And then we caught him... Now, what? You say you want to 'process' [*ban*, 辦, (the verb for processing a formal case)] this? You want to ask the substation to send someone? And the substation, say, hey this kid he's 'deaf and mute', ah, he's from a broken home, and you say you want to prosecute? The police, they take a long view [*kaolüde hen yuan*, 考慮的很遠]. And of course we are thinking way ahead too. Naturally, we are the ones best able to offer the kid some guidance; the ones like that, they need strong guidance. So we just give him some encouragement. Say, 'Hey, you don't need to be that way. If you're in need, if your belly is empty or whatever, just come down to our patrol HQ and we'll feed you some noodles. We'll buy you a meal.' And like this, naturally, it's just more likely that kid can become a person of proper standard [*biancheng yige zhengguide*, 變成一個正規的], a normal person. *That* is our primary objective! Not to say 'I am going to remit you to legal processing. When we deliver you to the courts we have achieved our mission.' We are not going to create those kinds of repercussions. So, the most difficult problem is just when we have caught one of our own villagers. You say you want to 'process' [辦] this? Truly, it can't be processed [真的辦不下]. You say you won't process this? That's no good either.

(CPT Patrolman)

The vision of social control expressed here is a process of guidance and correction, the production of people of proper standard through a patriarchal investment of care – feeding the hungry and offering guidance.<sup>7</sup> It is policing in its guise as positive engagement in facilitating the natural processes of human development, framed within an intimate order antithetical to 'processing' (*ban*) under the logic of legal institutions. This is not an idle theory. The *yuanlao* of the CPT all possess a sort of masculine charisma, made articulate through their 'war stories' and evident authority within the team, that draws adventure-seeking teenagers into their orbit. Several evenings were spent on patrol with 'interns' recruited from the wrong side of the patrol car's window.

Potential tensions exist between the idioms of policing provided by the CPT and 'law enforcement' *per se*. However, wherever these tensions become manifest, their intrinsic antipathy is contained within a sphere of explicit standards for human conduct. CPT enforcement is, in other words, a respectful and constrained space of 'exception' to law. It is very careful never to challenge the law's fundamental legitimacy; it is merely, respectfully, pointing out that perhaps the law is not *appropriate* to this particular situation. And, thus, the CPTs are not vigilantes; they are an *adjunct* to, rather than a contestant with, the state. They positively embrace the legitimate order of society under state authority. Within their embrace, they establish their own authority as caretaker of intimate community. And they exercise this authority through constructing a subordinate prophylactic barrier around sentimental relationships, managing the application of legal standards in a way

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<sup>7</sup> 'To feed without teaching is a father's error', *Sanzijing*.

that is appropriate to the defining ethos of the community as an intimate community made up of people of proper standard:

[This is a] *Locality* [地方]! We aren't, we don't count as, we aren't like a government organization. We exist *within* our own community, in the village where we were born and raised. And we Taiwanese, we have this basic common quality: 'mutual assistance'. Of course, as agricultural society turned into industrial society, and now into this high technology society, well the *renqingwei* [compassion, literally 'flavor of human sentiment'] has gradually declined. So naturally, we need to take this, take this so-called *renqingwei*, and make sure it's preserved, that everyone still 'mutually assists'. The people before, whenever they had trouble or difficulties, well their neighbors would just mutually assist. So, we are just performing this same kind of a mediating role [牽線的動作], just weaving the threads. Neighbors these days, they have nothing to do with one another. But then, because of some certain element, or when some certain thing occurs, then people will come out and cooperate. And then the elements are there, for working together dealing with things. (CPT Patrolman)

## Conclusion

This paper has described a village's volunteer police force, and identified the structure of care that constitutes its core motivations. This structure of feeling consists of a particular type of concern for the welfare of a population, conceived as an intimate community order maintained under patriarchal authority. Its heart is an image of the good society as something that must often be kept insulated from the jurisdiction of legal institutions. On the surface, this could be seen as suggesting the village CPT is a vigilante group, but it is not. Ethnographic studies of police have demonstrated how the instantiation of the ostensibly 'universal' aspects of state authority in particular situations is *always* an outcome requiring significant discretionary work on the part of local agencies. The potential paradox of this situation – enduring and universal authority entirely dependent on situational exigencies and *ad hoc* adjuncts – is resolved through a cultural arrangement. That is, as we have seen in the example of this paper, localized nodes of authority strive to imbue situations under their control with an expansive sense of peace and justice, to endow their particular technologies of control with an aura of 'Stateliness'. Through this, they actively knit the case-wise situations that fall under their realpolitical jurisdiction into a larger political order. Legal institutions and formal bureaucracy are simply two of many resources deployed in this aggregate productive process. The overall order of production is, however, ultimately cultural, and its core is the active work of localized agencies in creatively *translating* across the points of articulation the imagined ideals which assemble localities around a common center.

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