

THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF GENDER INTERVENTIONS:  
SOCIAL FORCES, KINSHIP, VIOLENCE, AND FINANCE IN  
POST-CONFLICT TIMOR-LESTE

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I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work that has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary education institution.

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis applies a structural feminist political economy analysis to explain the uneven outcomes from gender interventions promoting gender-equitable distribution of state resources, protection from gender-based violence, and women's economic empowerment in post-conflict Timor-Leste. Scholars of the "local turn" in peacebuilding, which arose in response to peacebuilding's failures in creating sustainable peace, have argued local cultures and institutions were more legitimate, authentic, and sustainable sites to build peace than international models. In contrast, I identify the emergence and continuity of an elite class coalition dominating the state, which relies upon a highly gendered allocation of resources and a concomitant shoring up of exploitative militarised and patriarchal gender relations. Hence, I argue the outcomes from gender interventions in post-conflict Timor-Leste have been shaped by the actions and interests of a dominant coalition of rural and Dili-based social forces, all members of the *Liurai-Dato* (King-Noble) class. I use qualitative data and extensive fieldwork to show how members of the *Liurai-Dato* class depend on gender and kinship for legitimacy, wealth, and continuity, which have mitigated against gender just outcomes for gender interventions.

Not only did the interventions take place in this setting of elite dominance, peacebuilders made concessions to elites and violent men in order to keep the peace, a tendency amplified by local turn approaches. These approaches to security have reinforced the valorisation of armed masculinity, associated most strongly with the dominant class, which have in turn justified the unequal distribution of state petroleum resources. As well, gender relations construct social relations through kinship, accumulation through brideprice, and the political economy of domestic violence, rendering legal and political reforms ineffective. Lastly, peacebuilding programs sought to use microfinance to empower women and grow the economy, but its main beneficiaries were the *Liurai-Dato* class, repeating patterns of accumulation and rule-through-debt established during Indonesian-era microfinance.



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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

ABRI	Indonesian	<i>Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia.</i> Republic of Indonesia Armed Forces during Suharto's New Order
ADB	English	Asian Development Bank
AMP	Tetun	<i>Aliança de Maioria Parlamentar.</i> The Parliamentary Majority Alliance
APODETI	Tetun	<i>Associação Popular Democrática Timorese</i>
ASDT	Tetun	<i>Associação Social-Democrática Timorese.</i> Timorese Social Democratic Association. Later FRETILIN
BCTL	Tetun	<i>Banco Centro De Timor-Leste.</i> Central Bank Of Timor-Leste
BKKBN	Indonesian	<i>Badan Koordinasi Keluarga Berencana Nasional.</i> National Family Planning Board
BNCTL	Tetun	<i>Banco Naçional Comercio De Timor-Leste.</i> The National Commercial Bank of Timor-Leste
BNU	Portuguese	<i>Banco Naçional Ultramarino</i> National Overseas Bank
BRI	Indonesian	Bank Rakyat Indonesia
CAVR	Portuguese	<i>A Comissão De Acolhimento, Verdade E Reconciliação.</i> Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation
CEDAW	English	1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CEP	English	Community Empowerment Project. A World Bank project in rural Timor from 1999-2002
CGAP	English	The Consultative Group to Assist the Poor. World Bank think-tank on microfinance and financial inclusion
CNRT	Tetun	<i>The Conselho Nacional de Reconstrução de Timor.</i> The National Council for the Reconstruction of Timor. A political party founded 2007
CPD-RDTL	Tetun	<i>Conselho por Defeza Republica Demokratika Timor-Leste.</i> The Council for the Defence of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste
CRS	English	Catholic Relief Services
DDR	English	DD(R)R Disarmament, Demobilisation, (Reinsertion) Reintegration
DNRS	Tetun	<i>Direçion Naçional Reinserção Sosial.</i> National Directorate for Social Reinsertion (DNRS)

DPR-D	Indonesian	<i>Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah.</i> Regional Representatives Council
FALINTIL	Tetun	<i>Forças Armadas De Libertação Nacional De Timor Leste.</i> The Armed Forces for the National Liberation of Timor-Leste
FI	English	Financial Intermediary. A financial institution making loans to an MFI
F-FDTL	Tetun	<i>FALINTIL–Forças Defeza de Timor-Leste.</i> The Defence Forces of Timor-Leste
FOKUPERS	Indonesian	<i>Forum Komunikasi Perempuan East Timor.</i> East Timorese Women's Communication Forum
FRETILIN	Tetun	<i>Frente Revolucionário Do Timor-Leste Independente.</i> The Revolutionary Front for Independent Timor-Leste
GAU	English	The Gender Affairs Unit under UNTAET
GDP	English	Gross Domestic Product
GMPTL	Tetun	<i>Grupo Mulhers Parlamentario Timor-Leste.</i> Group of Women Parliamentarians in Timor-Leste. Women's Cross Party Caucus
GPK	Indonesian	<i>Gerakan Pengacau Keamanan.</i> Literally “Security disturbance movement”. Indonesian armed forces term for anti-Indonesian forces FALINTIL
GRB	English	Gender Responsive Budgeting
HANSIP	Indonesian	<i>Pertahanan Sipil.</i> Civilian defence organisation. Militia
IFC	English	International Finance Corporation
IFI	English	International Financial Institution
ILO	English	International Labour Organisation
IOM	English	International Organisation for Migration
IMfTL	Portuguese	<i>Institut do Microfinansas de Timor-Leste.</i> Institute of Microfinance of Timor-Leste
INFUSE	English	Inclusive Finance for the Underserved Economy. The UNCDF / UNDP / Australian Aid project on inclusive finance in Timor-Leste
INTERFET	English	The International Force for East Timor
JSMP	English	Judicial System Monitoring Program
KUD	Indonesian	<i>Kooperasi Unit Desa.</i> Village Unit Cooperative. New Order Era Microfinance Organisation
LADV	English	Law Against Domestic Violence. The 2010 Law Against Domestic Violence. In Tetun: <i>Lei Contra Violensia Domestika</i>
MFI	English	Microfinance Institution

MSS	Tetun	<i>Ministra Solidariedade Sosiál.</i> Ministry for Social Solidarity
OMT	Tetun	<i>Organização Mulher Timorese.</i> The women's wing of the umbrella organisation of CNRT from 1998 and later the women's wing of Gusmão's CNRT
OPMT	Tetun	<i>Organização Popular Da Mulher Timorese.</i> Popular Organisation of Timorese Women. The women's wing of FRETILIN
NGO	English	Non-Government Organisation
NUREP	Tetun	<i>Nucleos De Resistencia Popular.</i> The nucleus of the popular resistance. The village-based resistance network leaders.
PKK	Indonesian	<i>Pembinaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga.</i> Family Welfare Movement
PNDS	Tetun	<i>Programa Nacional Desenvolvementu Suku.</i> National Program for Village Development
PNTL	Tetun	<i>Poliçia Naçional de Timor-Leste.</i> The National Police Force of Timor-Leste
PUSKUD	Indonesian	Centre for Village Cooperative Units
RENETIL	Tetun	<i>Resistência Nacional dos Estudantes de Timor-Leste.</i> The National Resistance of the Students of Timor-Leste
ROSCAS	English	Rotating Savings and Credit Associations
RT	Indonesian	<i>Rukun Tetangga.</i> Neighbourhood association
RW	Indonesian	<i>Rukun Warga.</i> Administrative unit
SEFOPE	Tetun	<i>Sekretaria Estadu ba Formasaun Profisionál no Empregu.</i> Secretariat of State for Vocational Training and Employment
SEM	Tetun	<i>Sekretaria Estadu Ba Apoiu No Promosaun Sosciu-Ekonomika Ba Feto.</i> The Secretariat of State for the Support and Socio-Economic Promotion for Women (2015-2017)
SEPI	Tetun	<i>Sekretária Estadu Promosaun Igualdade.</i> The Secretariat of State for the the Promotion of Equality (2012-2015)
SHG	English	Self Help Group (Microfinance Group)
STAE	Tetun	<i>Secretariado Técnico de Administração Eleitoral.</i> The Secretary for Technical Administration of Elections Department of State Administration
TBO	Indonesian	<i>Tenaga Bantuan Operasi.</i> Military operations' assistants in the Indonesian military
UDT	Tetun	<i>União Democrática Timorese.</i> Timorese Democratic Union. Timorese political party

UNAMET	English	United Nations Mission in East Timor
UNCDF	English	United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNDP	English	United Nations Development Program
UNFPA	English	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	English	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNIFEM	English	United Nations Development Fund for Women. Replaced by UNWomen in 2010
UNOTIL	English	United Nations Office in Timor-Leste
UNMISSET	English	United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor
UNMIT	English	United Nations Integrated Mission in East Timor
UNSCR1325	English	UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security
UNTAET	English	United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor
UNWomen	English	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. Replaced UNIFEM in 2010
UBSP	Indonesian	<i>Usaha Bersama Simpan Pinjam</i> . Lit. Business Together Saving Lending. Microfinance Savings and Loans
USAID	English	United States Agency for International Development
VPU	English	Vulnerable Persons' Unit
ZEESMs	Tetun	<i>Zona Especial de Economia Social de Mercado</i> . Special Zones of Social Market Economy of Timor-Leste





# INTRODUCTION: THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF GENDER INTERVENTION

## 1.1 Gender Interventions as Fields of Enquiry

The study and practice of peacebuilding interventions have increasingly incorporated gender perspectives. Most prominently, the Women Peace and Security policy agenda, which began in 2000 with the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR1325), called for a gender perspective to be incorporated in all United Nations (UN) operations, decision-making, policies, and programs for peace and security. The growing linkages between gender and peacebuilding are related to feminist work in security studies and international relations. Such work has greatly advanced our understanding of war and peace, and their gendered dimensions. As a result, it is increasingly recognised that unequal gender relations mean that men and women do not experience war, violence, peace, settlements, and justice in the same ways. It is further increasingly recognised that women and men are targeted differently and experience different outcomes from peacebuilding. Moreover, after peacebuilding interventions, there are frequently substantial “gender gaps” and uneven distribution of power, resources, burdens, and violence across genders, classes, and geographic divides (Goetz and Jenkins 2016, Cockburn 2013).

In peacebuilding settings, one area of gender intervention arose from gender mainstreaming in peacebuilding and another area from stand-alone gender and development programs. Gender mainstreaming involves the incorporation of a gender perspective in legislation, policies, or programs, in all areas and at all levels (Hannan 2002). In the security realm it merges with development programming more broadly. This merging of gender, security and development has a corollary

in the integration of security and development in the rise of peacebuilding itself (Duffield 2001). The official rationale behind gender mainstreaming is to make peacebuilding more effective and sustainable, and hence build more stable societies and efficient economies. Post-conflict countries have been seen as sites upon which peacebuilders could “build back better”, including more gender equitable societies. The broad scope of gender mainstreaming in both security and development agendas leads this study to collect these under the term “gender intervention”.

Situating itself within the subfield of peacebuilding in international relations, this thesis applies a structural feminist political economy analysis to the case of gender interventions in Timor-Leste. The case of Timor-Leste is particularly instructive, as the country was subjected to very high levels of peacebuilding and gender intervention between 1999 and 2017. Peacebuilding interventions have had a sustained focus on gender and women’s empowerment. However, like peacebuilding interventions generally, gender interventions in Timor-Leste have had uneven outcomes. Outcomes have been uneven in terms of achieving the stated goals of the interventions, such as providing redress and resources to female victims of war crimes, or electing more women as village chiefs (Kent 2012b, 2016, Cummins 2011). Additionally, gender interventions have been characterised by uneven and disappointing outcomes when measured against the more ambitious goals of gender justice (Chappell 2016, Goetz 2007). Gender justice is “the ending of—and if necessary the provision of redress for—inequalities between women and men that result in women’s subordination to men” (Goetz 2007, 31). Whereas women’s level of participation in national politics in Timor-Leste is high by international standards, overall deep inequalities remain, with increasing inequality between rural and urban areas, and very high levels of violence against women across the country. Uneven outcomes after gender interventions and peacebuilding interventions are not surprising but warrant investigation.



## 1.2 The Scholarly Context

At the same time as the expansion of gender mainstreaming in peacebuilding, there arose a “local turn” in peacebuilding in response to peacebuilding’s failure to create long-lasting and equitable peace. Scholars of the local turn pushed against the notions that liberal interventions focussed on the rule of law, the creation of democratic institutions and liberal markets could fashion a sustainable peace (Richmond 2005, 2007). Hence, prevalent explanations for disappointing and uneven outcomes came to be most closely associated with the local turn in peacebuilding and its focus on an alleged incompatibility between international-liberal norms and “local” non-liberal norms and practices. This is seen to result, at best, in hybrid forms of governance, combining both international and local elements. Moreover, scholars of the local turn—using a bifurcated framework of local/international, and hybrids thereof—have argued local cultures and institutions are more legitimate, authentic, and sustainable sites upon which to build peace.

Explanations of uneven outcomes using local turn’s approach came to dominate the theory and practice of peacebuilding. Indeed, Timor-Leste, as a case study has come to be the *cause célèbre* of scholars of the local turn. Initially, this was in the context of the extensive and far-reaching peacebuilding and, of particular relevance to this thesis, in the subsequent years of peacebuilding, that the turn to the local found traction in the implementation of peacebuilding intervention programs in Timor-Leste. The implications of the local turn’s understanding of gender interventions are rarely explicitly drawn out, but nonetheless, there was an implicit idea that gender interventions under liberal peacebuilding frameworks are not appropriate for post-conflict societies, as I explore in detail in Chapter 2. It is also for these two reasons—Timor-Leste as a prototype of the local turn theories and because of the depth of gender interventions there, that this thesis uses Timor-Leste as a case study of the outcomes of gender interventions.

This thesis provides a rejoinder to the local turn in peacebuilding arguing that predominant explanations of peacebuilding's unevenness associated with the local turn are weak. They are insufficient because, first, scholars of the local turn conceptualise peacebuilding as a "clash" of liberal and local paradigms or a hybrid thereof. Consequently, local turn scholars leave contentious politics within intervened states or interveners under-examined, as Hughes (2009, 2015) as well as Hameiri and Jones (2017) have argued. This lacuna limits the local turn's explanatory power when factors beyond the interaction of "local" and "international" come into play, as they do very apparently in gender interventions. Second, such explanations are over-reliant on the slippery and analytically weak concept of authenticity. These explanations assume that domestic actors will automatically reject international interventions, as they prefer authentic tradition. Yet, some scholars of the local turn acknowledge that authenticity is constructed and malleable (Mac Ginty 2010). As Hughes points out, this act of construction means that the nature of indigeneity itself is contested in a variety of ways within local communities (Hughes 2015, 909). Third, and relatedly, when it comes to explaining uneven outcomes for women in post-conflict areas, a bifurcated framework of local/international elides gender and class power hierarchies within societies, family groups and households. But intra-kinship groups and intra-households are key sites of violent power struggles, militarised conflicts and domestic violence. Therefore, scholarship and peacebuilding practice relying on local turn frameworks are normatively problematic in providing justification, even a cover of legitimacy, to the continuation of highly unequal gender relations.

Fourth, prevalent explanations associated with the local turn in peacebuilding, when operationalised in practice, can have adverse outcomes for gender justice. To elaborate, some works have advocated a hybrid and translational approach to peacebuilding. In gender interventions, this can have unintended negative consequences. On the one hand, by relying on normative frameworks advocating authenticity—coupled with a pragmatic buy-offs of violent groups for peace—peacebuilders have inadvertently supported national and subnational groups who

can benefit from, and seek to maintain, hierarchies and patriarchal relations. Assumptions of local authenticity and their lack of analysis of local power relations make it difficult for peacebuilders to better interrogate the claims of their local interlocutors. This results in a paradox whereby, on the one hand, peacebuilders are pressed to fix deep problems with gender, rights, and women's empowerment, yet on the other, there is pressure to support groups whose interests lie in supporting patriarchal relations. Compounding this paradox is that implications of gender injustice have flow-on effects to areas as diverse as human development, education, rights, and justice and thus undermine building sustainable peace because injustices in these areas can drive society-wide grievances.

Scholars working on gender and peacebuilding in Timor-Leste have, like the wider local turn, sought to account for the uneven outcomes of interventions. These scholars have used feminist, historical, normative, and legal approaches to describe and explain uneven outcomes in Timor-Leste (Harris-Rimmer 2010, Kent 2012a, Wallis 2015, Kent 2016, Charlesworth and Wood 2001, 2002). Some focussed on gender mainstreaming in the interventions themselves under the rubric of feminist security studies (Olsson 2009, Joshi 2005). Others used constructivist frameworks comparable to that of the local turn, suggesting uneven results from the interventions arise because of the disconnect between local norms, discourses, or cultures and liberal human rights (Hall and True 2008, Smith 2015b, a). Others still have recently looked at the intersection between gender and budget spending in the Timorese economy, but have left Timorese class structures unexamined (Niner 2016, Costa 2018). While building on this extensive body of work on gender and peacebuilding intervention in Timor-Leste, it is the contention of this thesis that this scholarship has tended to overlook the constitutive relationship between gender, kinship, and class. I argue the explanation for the uneven outcomes of gender intervention lies in the historically specific, co-constitutive structures of gender, kinship, and class.

### 1.3 The Case of Peacebuilding in Timor-Leste

International gender interventions in Timor-Leste took place within the broader frameworks of peacebuilding interventions and thus require some elaboration. The thirteen-year peacebuilding intervention (1999-2012) in Timor-Leste came at the end of twenty-five years of Indonesian occupation (1975-1999). In between these periods, starting in 1998, authoritarian rule by Indonesia's Suharto regime buckled under the pressure of economic collapse and massive public demonstrations. In this context, the crumbling Indonesian government faced increasing public pressure to resolve the question of Timorese autonomy. Autonomy was contested because the occupation of East Timor had been fundamental to the identity of both the Indonesian military and the New Order regime.<sup>1</sup> The disintegration of Suharto's rule gave rise to internal army-government contests, of which the Timor question was a part. At the same time, global governance institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), together with civil society groups, pressured the government for a variety of liberal democratic reforms. Under these pressures, interim President B. J. Habibie allowed the East Timorese to vote on whether to be an autonomous part of Indonesia or to become independent (Bourchier 2000). In the referendum, organised by the election observer mission, UNAMET, the people of East Timor voted decisively on 31 August 1999 to reject autonomy within Indonesia and pursue independence (Robinson 2003).

In the lead up to breaking from Indonesia in 1998-1999, and especially surrounding the August 1999 referendum, the Indonesian armed forces perpetrated war crimes (CAVR 2006). The Indonesian military also funded and directed Timorese militia to destroy infrastructure and commit war crimes, including mass killings and sexual violence (Robinson 2003). The vote for independence from Indonesia meant the Indonesian military and militia would lose jobs, money, land, and power. The

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<sup>1</sup> I use East Timor to refer to the period under Indonesian occupation (1975-1998) when it was the province of Timur-Timor, Indonesia, and Timor-Leste to refer to the independent country after 1998.

fear of material losses fuelled the rampage (Kammen 2016). Timorese militia, brutalised and fortified with drugs, alcohol and blood rituals, were sent on missions of violent destruction, amounting to crimes against humanity (Tanter, Ball, and Van Klinken 2006, CAVR 2006). During the same period, more than 200,000 Timorese, including pro-integration militia, fled or were forced across the border into Indonesian West Timor (Thu 2008, Downie 2007).<sup>2</sup> The election mission, UNAMET, withdrew haphazardly after UN staff were killed on the border with Indonesia, and was criticised for abandoning the Timorese (Nicol 2002).

Weeks later, on 20 September 1999, INTERFET, the Australian-led International Force for East Timor intervened in order to secure East Timor. Australia's leading role in the INTERFET was motivated by the threat of an arc of unstable, failing or failed states in Australia's near region that could pose transnational threats to Australia (Ayson 2007). During a 2007 lecture on diplomacy, the then Australian Foreign Minister Downer said:

Australia wants to be able to look to its North and its East and see strong, stable, prosperous states. States that lack good governance and face a bleak economic future are vulnerable to the damaging effects of transnational crime. They run the risk of becoming havens for criminal gangs and others who seek to evade the law. The presence of these people in a turbulent and chaotic neighbourhood would obviously not be in our interest (Downer 2007).

Australia participated in, led or supported interventions in Cambodia, Timor-Leste, Bougainville and the Solomon Islands (Ayson 2007). Australia's rationale for intervention in the Asia Pacific to contain transnational risks was also in the context of the United States' withdrawal from the region (Hameiri 2008). Australia was left to take the lead in managing interests in Cambodia, Timor-Leste, and the Pacific. Over the next 13 years, expensive, extensive, and far-reaching peacebuilding and statebuilding interventions were undertaken in Timor-Leste

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<sup>2</sup> Interview with a male ex-militia member from East Timor residing in West Timor, Indonesia, WT071, Timor Tengah Selatan, 31 March 2015. "We came here without any order from any government and no government will order us back".

(Ingram, Kent, and McWilliam 2015, Downie 2007, Chesterman 2004). These are listed in Table 2.1 on page 26.

#### 1.4 Research Design

This thesis seeks to explain uneven outcomes of gender interventions by evaluating three gender interventions: Gender Responsive Budgeting, the Law Against Domestic Violence and microfinance. At one level, the thesis assesses outcomes according to interveners' aims in each case. Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB), started in 2008 and aimed to make democratic institutions properly accountable to women. In this case study, the period after the 2006-2007 crisis and increased spending under CNRT is the most relevant period to study the outcomes of GRB. The Law Against Domestic Violence (LADV) aimed to create legal protections for women's rights to safety and security. It was lobbied for in the period leading up to independence, passed in 2010, and its implementation is an ongoing intervention. Microfinance aimed to make credit markets work to empower women economically. Microfinance has a long history in Timor-Leste as I show in Chapters 7 and 8, but the thesis especially examines the two decades between 1998 and 2018.

At another level, the study explains how the gender interventions worked in practice and evaluates their outcomes using the notion of gender justice as a yardstick. Gender justice is the cessation of gender inequality that results in women's subordination to men (Goetz 2007, 31). Its focus on redistribution, power, and material relations between women and men, allows the thesis to assess the distributional outcomes of gender interventions (Goetz 2007). Evaluating distributional outcomes means basically assessing which groups of men and women get what, when, and how from gender interventions. This necessitates describing the historical formation of groups, their interests, and contextualising distributional outcomes of gender interventions within the fiscally larger distributional outcomes of peacebuilding interventions. Finally, describing and

accounting for distributional outcomes after gender interventions requires an assessment of the distribution of violence. As such, the thesis also evaluates the gender justice outcomes of peacebuilding on violence against women.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS
1) What explains the uneven outcomes of gender interventions? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) How do the outcomes of gender interventions compare with gender intervention’s aims?</li> </ul>
2) How do the outcomes of gender interventions compare with the goals of gender justice? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) What are the distributional outcomes of (gender) interventions for different groups?</li> <li>b) What explains the high levels of violence against women in Timor-Leste?</li> <li>c) What have been the experiences of rural women of programs aimed to promote women’s empowerment?</li> </ul>

Table 1.1 Research Questions

By drawing on propositions from both structural political economy analyses of Southeast Asia and feminist political economy, this thesis develops explanatory analytical tools capable of providing answers to these research questions. As scholars of structural political economy in Southeast Asia have long argued, international actors are just one social force among many, and thus must contend with the contests between domestic social forces over power and wealth (Rodan, Hewison, and Robison 2006, Hameiri, Hughes, and Scarpello 2017). Historically, the outcomes of these contests in Southeast Asian states have resulted in the domination of oligarchic, authoritarian, and capitalist groups, classes, and class fractions. The state, on this view, is a social power relation, a structure between those groups with more power and less, and the state expresses the agency interests and ideologies of particular social forces, especially classes. Scholars applying structural political economy approaches to international interventions in the region have argued that contestations between historically-specific social forces shape outcomes of peacebuilding because these contests result in changes and continuities of the distribution and reproduction of political power (Hameiri, Hughes, and Scarpello 2017, Hughes 2009, 2015, Jones 2010).

Likewise, the current study proposes that social forces play a more significant role in shaping outcomes of gender interventions than local/international divides or hybrids. Interveners find themselves embroiled in conflicts involving coalitions of domestic social forces. These coalitions do not correspond with a local-international divide. Extending this structural political economy by analysing extensive qualitative data, the study contends that post-conflict Timor-Leste has been dominated by a coalition of rural and Dili-based elites, united by their membership of the kinship-based *Liurai-Dato* (King-Noble) class. Therefore, the thesis argues it is essential to understand the origins, interests, ideologies, and actions of national and local Timorese social forces. This understanding should especially include Timorese dominant classes and class fractions, and the broader socio-political structures within which they are embedded, to explain their orientation towards gender interventions and hence their outcomes.

There are two reasons that extant structural political economy frameworks are, by themselves, inadequate for the present study. First, the study seeks to analyse gender interventions, which, as I explained, constituted a separate but overlapping area of peacebuilding intervention. Structural political economy explanations of peacebuilding have not yet explicitly examined the intersection of gender relations with the social relations between oligarchic, authoritarian, classes and class fractions. To encompass the empirical specificity of gender interventions, this thesis uses a synthetic explanatory framework: structural feminist political economy (FPE). The structural FPE framework synthesises a structural analysis of social forces in Timor with True's FPE of violence against women (True 2012). Using True's FPE framework to analyse the political economy of violence against women necessitates an analysis of the material power relations inhering in and causative to: the gender division of labour, of war and militarised conflict, and neoliberal globalisation (True 2012). This thesis expands True's framework to include a structural analysis of kinship. The addition of kinship is necessary in the Timor case for reasons I elaborate below.



The inclusion of kinship leads to the second reason that structural political economy explanations are necessary but insufficient to explain outcomes of gender intervention in Timor-Leste. Namely, political power and kinship relations overlap in Timorese class formation. The synthetic framework of structural FPE reveals the linkages between hierarchical gender relations and hierarchical class formation. In particular, it highlights the historical and material basis for gender relations and the role that gender plays in socio-political contestations between powerful coalitions over the distribution of power and resources. As such, the inclusion of an analysis of the power relations inhering in kinship thus opens the black box of what constitutes authenticity in social and gender relations. Most crucially to this thesis' explanation of the uneven outcomes of peacebuilding, my analysis shows how members of the *Liurai-Dato* class depend on gender and kinship relations for networks, legitimacy, wealth, and continuity. In that sense, gender relations and the social relations are co-constitutive. Moreover, it demonstrates how this overlap shapes the outcomes of gender interventions. Outcomes of gender interventions have been shaped by the actions and interests of the *Liurai-Dato* class seeking to uphold gender and socio-political orders.

My study argues that four factors have shaped outcomes of gender interventions. First, as outlined above, gender interventions took place in a setting of elite dominance. Specifically, this thesis identifies the emergence of an elite class dominating the state in Timor-Leste. Because of the overlap of kinship and class, the *Liurai-Dato* class relies upon a highly gendered allocation of resources and power, comprising materially exploitative militarised and patriarchal gender relations. Second, peacebuilders made concessions to elites and violent men in order to keep the peace, a tendency amplified by local turn approaches. These approaches to security reinforced the valorisation of armed masculinity, associated most strongly with the elite, which in turn justified the unequal distribution of state petroleum resources. Third, gender relations construct social relations through kinship relations, which also reproduce class relations. Aspects of kinship relations such as the accumulation through brideprice, and the political economy

of domestic violence, are important to the power of the dominant class, thus rendering legal and political gender reforms ineffective. Lastly, peacebuilding programs sought to use microfinance to empower women and grow the economy, but its primary beneficiaries were the *Liurai-Dato* class, repeating patterns of accumulation and rule through debt established during Indonesian-era microfinance.

#### 1.4.1 Methods and Fieldwork

The present study is grounded in an extended period of fieldwork in Timor-Leste and Indonesian West Timor, five months in each in 2015, as well as an earlier 5 months of fieldwork in Timor-Leste in 2011. For reasons of space and clarity, the fieldwork in West Timor informed elements of the thesis but does not comprise a separate case, nor is it referred to explicitly. The months of fieldwork there informed my understanding of brideprice, traditional dispute resolution and microfinance among sociologically and culturally similar groups of Timorese. Likewise, the fieldwork from 2011—a preliminary study—is referred to but does not constitute the bulk of the data used in the analysis (see Appendix for more details).

Thus the present study principally uses qualitative data from Timor-Leste collected in 2015. I collected a variety of data during the extended fieldwork: interviews, observations, newspaper articles, reports and brochures. Geographically, the sites for this fieldwork comprised Oecusse, Manufahi, and Dili, as indicated on the map below (Figure 1.1). The sites were chosen to reflect different rural and urban settings, class divisions, patrilineal and matrilineal groups, and different physical environments. Oecusse was also the site of high levels of gender interventions, while Manufahi had relatively fewer interventions. Oecusse was also undergoing a period of intensive infrastructure development. Dili is a necessary site in which to interview elites, government, and non-government workers. I stayed in field sites for weeks or months, boarding with Timorese families in both Dili and Manufahi, and living and working closely with

Timorese families in Oecusse, using Tetun for everyday communication and interviews.

The research was designed using feminist frameworks that draw attention to hierarchies and power in their methodologies (Ackerly, Stern, and True 2006). Feminist methods are also attentive to gaps and silences of data and include these in the research design (Reinharz and Davidman 1992). The wide-ranging, long-term fieldwork allowed in-depth interviews with elites and non-elites, with particular critical attention given to gender, class hierarchies and engagement with Timorese women's organisations (Nentwich and Kelan 2014, 132). Extended fieldwork living with Timorese families allowed me to be a participant observer in many important kinship events: weddings, births, funerals, death memorials, engagement ceremonies. During ordinary activities and extraordinary events, I observed who spoke, who ate first, who was deferred to, and asked why some people had authority and others did not, and why some people gave money and goods, while others received them (Kerstan and Berninghausen 1992, Fishburne-Collier 1988). Living with families and speaking both Tetun and Indonesian allowed me to move out of elite spheres and talk on frank terms with ordinary citizens. Marriage, kinship, and violence were the focus of many of my interviews and daily conversations where themes around structure, hierarchy, power, control and violence emerged (Reinharz and Davidman 1992). Living, working and celebrating with Timorese families provided a deep understanding of power and hierarchy, which are often hidden, and not apparent, aspect of life.

PLACE	TIMOR-LESTE	WEST TIMOR, INDONESIA	TIMOR-LESTE
PERIOD	May 2011 – September 2011	January 2015 – May 2015	June 2015 – November 2015
TOTAL TIME	5 months	5 months	5 months
NUMBER OF INTERVIEWS	18 interviews	75 interviews	80 interviews (Principal data used)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>173 INTERVIEWS</b>		

Table 1.2 Overview of Fieldwork



Figure 1.1 Fieldsites in Timor-Leste 2015<sup>3</sup>

#### 1.4.2 Data

Semi-structured interviews form the central, constitutive part of the thesis. Over the five months in Timor-Leste in 2015, I conducted around 80 semi-structured interviews with four main types of participant: national experts (national and district level, with some NGO participants); gender experts (international, national and local NGOs); local leaders (village and hamlet chiefs, spiritual leaders); and ordinary people with no links to local or national leaders (predominantly women). More than double the number of women than men were interviewed to ensure a variety of women’s voices were heard. Tables 10.2 and 10.3 in the Appendix summarise and provide profiles of the main informants cited in the thesis. An additional area of data collection was newspaper monitoring. In Timor-Leste, four months of newspaper articles were collected from *Timor Post*

<sup>3</sup> Reprinted from National Statistics Directorate, Timor-Leste Census of Population and Housing Atlas, 2000

(June to September 2015). Articles were selected if they concerned the themes of: gender, violence against women, local governance, NGOs, human trafficking, state resource distribution, corruption and microfinance.

A full description of fieldwork, methods and data are collected in the Appendix.

INTERVIEWEES	WOMEN	MEN
Citizens in rural communities	16	3
Leaders or members of village councils	5	5
People connected to the village or subnational leadership by close kin ties	7	2
Timorese gender experts	13	4
International gender experts	4	0
National or Subnational policymakers, experts, or NGO workers	4	14
International policymakers or experts	1	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>30</b>

Table 1.3 Identity of Timor-Leste Interviewees (2015) Gender Disaggregated

## 1.5 Structure of the Study

As mentioned above, the research questions and the explanatory propositions raised in response were used to analyse a specific set of gender interventions—Gender Responsive Budgeting, the Law on Domestic Violence and Microfinance. These three gender interventions are part of a larger set of fourteen gender interventions (for the complete list, see Table 2.1). The larger set of gender interventions comprised: gender mainstreaming in the United Nation’s missions and national institutions; gender quotas; work on conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence in the Commission for Truth Reception and Reconciliation (CAVR); new laws on domestic violence; funding to Timorese women’s organisations; microfinance; and, conditional cash transfers. The thesis covers all fourteen to varying degrees, but a detailed analysis of each of them is outside the

scope of this study. These three interventions—GRB, the LADV and microfinance form the core of the thesis. One reason for examining these three gender interventions is that gender mainstreaming (Joshi 2005, True 2009, Olsson 2009), reparations (Kent 2016) and political participation quotas (Cummins 2011, Ospina 2006) in post-conflict Timor have been covered in extant scholarship, while political economy aspects of gender remain little examined. The other reason is the analytical framework that material power is central to understanding outcomes of interventions. These three interventions deal directly with resources, violence and power, have significant material impacts on power and redistribution across Timorese society, affect large numbers of Timorese women and, have important gender justice outcomes. It is for these reasons that the three cases of GRB, the LADV and microfinance have been chosen.

Over the cases, three central themes emerge: control over state resources, control over women and control over local resources. The chapters draw out these themes, even as they focus in turn on the specifics of each gender intervention and the factors that have shaped them. In Chapter 2, I outline a synthetic framework to analyse gender intervention. The theoretical framework proposed in that chapter is that gender relations and class relations manifest and are contested by varying coalitions of social forces at different political scales. In other words, particular constellations of gender relations and social forces are different at the level of the state, family, or community. Referring to the first theme, at the level of the state, Chapter 3 provides a historical background and a deployment of the structural FPE analytical framework. It describes broadly the formation of the *Liurai-Dato* class through incorporation into the Portuguese military and bureaucracy. Control of the deeply gendered slave trade and tax system also benefitted this class. Male members of the *Liurai-Dato* class have justified their superordination over other groups through the valorisation of armed masculinity. Correspondingly, recurrent war and conflict magnified the socially constructed distance between men and women, arming men, victimising and denigrating women, particularly through conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).

Chapter 4 builds on this analysis of historically-specific social and gender relations to examine the gender intervention, GRB. Existing explanations for the successes and failures of GRB have not yet explored the political-economic context in which they take place (Costa 2018). I argue GRB takes place in a setting of elite dominance—and must be seen in the context of the *Liurai-Dato* class' monopoly over state resources. Under these circumstances, the substantial spending on veterans under Gusmão from 2007 onwards is seen as part of coalition building between city-based and rural elites. Elite control over state resources is quite patently justified by the valorisation of armed masculinity, which again magnifies the socially constructed distance between women and men.

Chapter 5 addresses the second theme of control over women, that is, it moves away from the level of the state to focus on gender interventions in family and gender relations. The gender intervention examined here is the introduction and implementation of the Law Against Domestic Violence. Chapter 5 shows how peacebuilders have—in line with the local turn but against the wishes of the Timorese women's movement—made concessions to male-dominated local authorities. This chapter outlines how the Law Against Domestic Violence, which took parliament ten years to pass into law, split both the *Liurai-Dato* class, and those working on the peacebuilding intervention along gender progressive and regressive lines.<sup>4</sup> Concessions to male power holders at the local level in a variety of areas, but particularly in traditional dispute resolution, have cemented village chiefs' and allied men's control over kinship. Supporting traditional dispute resolution in cases of domestic violence inadvertently supports a political economy of domestic violence.

Staying in the thematic area of control over women, Chapter 6 uses a structural analysis of kinship to explain how the exchange of women using brideprice lays the foundations of the *Liurai-Dato* class. The gender intervention of the LADV is thus contested by a coalition of class and kinship based interests. In that sense,

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<sup>4</sup> Interview with Timorese gender expert, ETo82, Dili, 8 June 2015.



Chapter 6 explains how gender relations constitute social and political relations in the Timor-Leste case. Brideprice was not targeted for reform by gender interventions, yet remains an area of profound gender injustice in Timor-Leste. Brideprice and marriage lay the foundations of the kinship system, and with it, the political economy of rural areas. Taken together, Chapters 5 and 6 show how gender interventions focussed on legal reform, firstly, come up against powerful interests, and secondly, cannot address underlying unequal material relations. Contestation and structural constraints change how gender interventions turn out in practice.

The third thematic areas centres on control over local resources, and the interrelationship of this with debt, power and neoliberal markets. The gender intervention, in this case, is microfinance. Microfinance has long been part of gender and development and subject to extensive criticisms. Chapter 7 shows how peacebuilders sought to empower women economically using microfinance. This intervention had the backing of the national elite, who reframed microfinance as a socially focussed, cooperative economy. Gender interventions for microfinance, however, overlooked the powerful legacies of Indonesian microfinance in Timor, especially the role microfinance played in consolidating rural elites' control over resources. Chapter 8 builds on this historical analysis of microfinance in Timor from 1975 to 2007. It argues microfinance on the ground has defied expectations of peacebuilders and not resulted in the expansion of inclusive finance, stronger rural markets and economic growth. Rather, microfinance in post-independent Timor-Leste has been another tool with which the rural-based sections of the *Liurai-Dato* class can accumulate and control scant financial resources. These resources strengthen rural elites' control of social relationships through debts and market monopolisation.



## CHAPTER 2. CRITICAL APPROACHES TO PEACEBUILDING AND GENDER

### 2.1 Introduction

Uneven outcomes after gender interventions are not surprising. There is an extensive literature on uneven, disappointing, or failed outcomes in gender and development (Cornwall 2007, Molyneux 2002, Chant and Sweetman 2012). There is also a substantial literature on the uneven or failed outcomes of peacebuilding interventions (Chopra 2002, Fukuyama 2004, Rotberg 2004, Doornbos 2006, Autesserre 2014, Ghani and Lockhart 2008). The rehearsal of these debates in this chapter provides the background to the theory and practice of gender interventions within peacebuilding in Timor-Leste over the last two decades. Most importantly, it allows me to set out my framework and argument explaining the uneven outcomes of gender interventions.

Of particular relevance to this chapter are three overlapping explanations as to why extensive and expensive peacebuilding interventions in Timor-Leste from 1999-2005 have had mixed results. These explanations are the dominant ones, and ones I seek to challenge in this thesis. This period includes the most extensive peacebuilding intervention under the UN Transitional Administration (UNTAET) (see Table 2.1 below). The first explanation for the failure of such extensive and far-reaching interventions was that the newly created state institutions lacked the capacity to control violence or enforce the rule of law and thus were unable to prevent the 2006-2007 political and security crisis in Timor-Leste (Goldstone 2004, 2013, Kingsbury 2008, 2012, Leach and Kingsbury 2013). The second and parallel explanation was Timorese political elites lacked legitimacy among the Timorese citizenry because of a long period of exile coupled with their closeness to

international peacebuilders (Kingsbury 2012, Richmond and Franks 2008). A third literature, the local turn, came to dominate explanations for peacebuilding's failures. The local turn scholarship, for over a decade, has built on these lack of legitimacy and capacity explanations to argue that more integration and understanding of local people, institutions, cultures, would make peace both more sustainable and legitimate (Mac Ginty and Richmond 2013, Richmond 2009). Like the local turn in peacebuilding, this thesis also moves beyond the inadequate institutional explanations. However, this thesis takes class and gender relations to be decisive factors shaping outcomes. To date, there has been little discussion about how a local turn in peacebuilding, with its emphasis on authentic institutions, cultures, and the "everyday", works out for women on the ground in Timor-Leste. As a result of these silences, scholars of the local turn elide the role that gendered power relations play in shaping intervention outcomes. Moreover, because of the emphasis and support for local legitimacy, those proposing a local turn in peacebuilding inadvertently justify and naturalise unequal gender relations.

This chapter outlines a framework that has as its point of departure a thoroughgoing critique of the local turn literature. The reason for doing so is that firstly, the literature on the local turn dominates current explanations for uneven outcomes of interventions. Secondly, as I go on to explicate, the use of local turn-influenced programming had inadvertently mitigated against gender justice. For instance, the present chapter asserts that critical scholars using local turn and or hybridity framings have infrequently examined gender (McLeod 2015). Further, because their frameworks work from a dichotomy between local and international as an explanation for uneven outcomes, it can account for neither emancipatory, feminist alliances, nor gender regressive alliances, across international and local lines in gender interventions. Nor can approaches predicated on local/international dichotomies examine material or structural causes for uneven outcomes such as hierarchical social and gender relations. The structural feminist political economy framework outlined in the second half of this chapter provides

better analytical frames. Moreover, because of the focus on “who gets what why and how” out of gender interventions, such an approach shows in later chapters how a local turn framework inadvertently works to naturalise hierarchies, including those of gender, thus undermining progressive transformations. This chapter proceeds to outline an alternative approach to study gender intervention: structural feminist political economy. My approach draws together work on peacebuilding by Hameiri, Hughes, and Scarpello (2017), Hughes (2009) Hameiri and Jones (2017) with the feminist political economy of violence against women of True (2012). As such, my framework avoids reifying “national versus international” as analytical categories or causal mechanisms, instead examining class and gender power relations within and across those groups in order to explain the uneven outcomes of gender interventions.

## 2.2 Peacebuilding Interventions

Peacebuilding expanded and deepened in the two decades following the end of the Cold War, providing the global political backdrop to the intervention in Timor-Leste. After 1990, the number of UN peacekeeping operations increased. Initially, peacebuilding involved maintaining ceasefires, liberalising economies, holding elections and then leaving (Sabaratnam 2011, Paris 2004). Even more so after the September 11 2001 terrorist attacks, “saving failed states” was seen as a pressing global problem (Ghani and Lockhart 2008). On this view, the US, its allies and the “Global North” more generally, faced risks from intrastate and transnational violence in the form of terrorism, refugees, and other non-traditional security risks (Sabaratnam 2011, Helman and Ratner 1992, Hameiri 2010, 1). The “liberal peace” justified these peacebuilding interventions. The liberal peace is the hypothesis that liberal markets, democratic institutions and the rule of law are necessary to the maintenance of long-term peace, and the presence of one liberal aspect strengthens the others (Campbell, Chandler, and Sabaratnam 2011). The liberal peace was also seen as an obligation of the Global North to protect and promote human rights, liberal markets and liberal democracy (Richmond 2005). Without

liberal markets, democratic institutions and the rule of law, states would become “fragile” or “weak”. Yet, there was no straightforward way to implement the liberal peace through rapid liberalisation and democratisation. Thus, some scholars called for prioritising institutions of the state over democratic elections or liberalising markets, or what Paris (2004) termed “institutionalisation before liberalisation”.

In addition to concerns over the timing of peacebuilding interventions, international humanitarian concerns prompted a shift to more extensive peacebuilding interventions. In particular, the failure of peacekeepers to prevent the 1994 Rwanda Genocide and the 1995 Srebrenica Massacre resulted in recommendations for more extensive peacebuilding policies (Brahimi 2000, Williams and Bellamy 2007). International organisations, national agencies and militaries were therefore justified to intervene in other states, not only to provide immediate humanitarian relief but towards the attainment of longer term security and development objectives associated with the liberal peace. Therefore, the UN became increasingly willing to intervene in the governance and institutions of sovereign countries, in contrast to previous policies that supported state sovereignty, regardless of a state’s record on development or human rights (Chandler 2005).<sup>5</sup> Subsequently, peacebuilding took on larger projects such as election monitoring, demobilisations, suppressing public violence, writing new laws, building new institutions, training staff and establishing transparency and accountability measures. Because statebuilding became the primary means of implementing peacebuilding objectives, peacebuilding operations continued well into the post-conflict period (Hameiri 2010, Sabaratnam 2011).

The first period of peacebuilding intervention in Timor-Leste from 1999 to 2005, occurred precisely during the expansion and deepening of peacebuilding operations by the UN (see Table 2.1 below). The deployment of the International

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<sup>5</sup> Academics and policy makers in the early 2000s developed the ‘Responsibility to Protect’ (R2P) doctrine which argued countries ought to intervene militarily to protect people at risk of gross human rights abuses and war atrocities (Chandler 2012).

Force for East Timor (INTERFET) to stop the violence coincided with the publication of the Brahimi Report recommending deepening and expanding UN roles during peacebuilding (Brahimi 2000). After international forces had gained control over the territory, the UN Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) began. It was a large, expensive, and complex “transitional administration” mandated to control all aspects of the state—revenue, expenditure, military and police—to demobilise Timorese soldiers, conduct trials and imprison criminals. In distinction to most other peacebuilding operations in “failed states”, UNTAET had a mandate to fund, staff and design state institutions, not reform existing ones (Chesterman 2002, 2004). Subsequently, Timor-Leste has been subjected to very high levels of intervention. Since 1999, Timor-Leste has hosted six UN missions. Major projects and programs from other international organisations such as the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the World Bank, the International Labour Organisation (ILO), and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) ran concurrently with UN peacebuilding.<sup>6</sup> I discuss the roll out of security and peacebuilding, especially the effects of buying the peace, in more detail in Chapter 4.

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<sup>6</sup> UN family organisations active in Timor-Leste from 1999 to 2017 included the UN Development Program UNDP, UN Capital Development Fund UNCDF, UN Development Fund for Women UNIFEM (from 2012 UNWomen), and UN Population Fund UNFPA.

NUMBER	NAME	PURPOSE	ACRONYM	DATES
1	The United Nations Mission in East Timor <sup>7</sup>	Hold the referendum on autonomy	UNAMET	June 1999 – October 1999
2	The International Force for East Timor	The multinational Australian-led “peace enforcement” military intervention to restore law and order	INTERFET	20 September 1999 – 28 February 2000
3	The UN Transitional Administration East Timor	The UN civilian administration and peacebuilding mission	UNTAET	25 October 1999 – 20 May 2002
4	UN Mission of Support in East Timor	Administrative support; maintain law and order	UNMISSET	May 2002 – May 2005
5	The political mission of the UN Office in Timor-Leste	Support institutional development; police building	UNOTIL	May 2005 – August 2006
6	After the 2006-7 crisis, the UN Integrated Mission in East Timor	Assist Timor-Leste in overcoming the consequences and underlying causes of the 2006 crisis	UNMIT	26 May 2006 – 31 December 2012

Table 2.1 UN Peacebuilding Interventions in Timor-Leste, 1999-2012

### 2.3 Gender Interventions

As mentioned, peacebuilding interventions in Timor-Leste provided the context for extensive gender intervention. This section now gives the background of gender interventions in Timor-Leste to set up the discussion in later chapters. One area of gender intervention arose from gender mainstreaming in peacebuilding and another area arose from stand-alone gender and development programs.<sup>8</sup> I

<sup>7</sup> Table data based on Downie (2007), UNMIT (2008) and UNSCR (2012).

<sup>8</sup> Gender mainstreaming is an approach to policy that assesses the implications of legislation, policies, or programs for gender relations. It advocates for consideration of gender relations to be an “integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated” (United Nations ECOSOC 1997)



use “gender interventions” to encompass both types of intervention; counting fourteen gender interventions in total (see Table 2.2).

The first gender intervention, gender mainstreaming of the UN peacekeeping operation, took place under the framework of the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR1325) on Women, Peace, and Security, from 2000-2002. Linked to this was the second gender intervention establishing the Gender Affairs Unit (GAU) within UNTAET (2000-2005), initially in line with CEDAW and later UNSCR1325. The third gender intervention created the Timorese national institution for gender equality, the Office for the Promotion of Women, which United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and UNWomen partially funded. The Office was responsible for gender mainstreaming in the Timorese government.<sup>9</sup> This Office became a central gender mainstreaming institution in the Timorese government.<sup>10</sup> The fourth gender intervention was the UNTAET’s creation of the Gender and the Law Working Group composed of East Timorese judges, prosecutors, public defenders, and civil society organisations. They aimed to conduct gender analysis of all UNTAET regulations and proposed legislation to aid in the gender mainstreaming process. The Gender and Law Working Group lobbied for a Law Against Domestic Violence (LADV) and a Women’s Charter to influence the design of the Timorese Constitution. Fifth, after female politicians won 26 percent of seats in the first elections of 2001 they formed the Group of Women Parliamentarians in Timor-Leste in 2002 (GMPTL – henceforth the Women’s Cross Party Caucus) (Ospina 2006). This grouping was formalised by parliamentary resolution in 2007 (Soetjijto 2014). The primary mission is to mainstream gender in the legislative process. The sixth gender intervention under the rubric of gender mainstreaming was the support of international interveners

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<sup>9</sup> Interview with UNWomen, senior manager ETo76, Dili, 6 June 2015.

<sup>10</sup> From 2012-2015 this office was called Secretary of State for the Promotion of Equality (SEPI). From 2015-2017 the Office was called The Secretary of State for the Support and Socio-Economic Promotion for Women (SEM).

to Cross Party Caucus and East Timorese Women's Communication Forum to lobby for the Gender Responsive Budgeting Resolution.

Gender interventions also proceeded under the broader rubric of women's human rights or gender and development. The seventh gender intervention I categorise here was the women's human rights approach taken by the Commission for Truth and Reconciliation (CAVR) (2001-2005). CAVR, tasked with investigating war crimes during the Indonesian occupation, made gender interventions by documenting experiences of female soldiers and *clandestinos*, victims of sexual and gender-based violence and women's experiences of war. CAVR recommended memorialising women's contributions and making reparations to victims of war (Kent 2016). Eighth—and characteristic of gender and development interventions globally—was UNTAET's support of the Timorese Women's Network in 2000, REDE Feto (Tetun: Women's Network). Rede Feto held the first Timorese Women's Congress in 2000 and wrote a Platform for Action for Women's Rights in Timor-Leste (2000). UN support from UNIFEM (later UNWomen), the GAU and UNFPA were crucial in supporting Timorese women's organisations such as the East Timorese Women's Communication Forum (FOKUPERS)<sup>11</sup> and Rede Feto with money, offices, staff, technical expertise, and access to transnational networks (Grenfell and Trembath 2007). In turn, Timorese women's organisations were often the implementing partners for gender interventions and provided political information, introductions, support, guidance, and access to communities for interveners. Ninth, GAU, Rede Feto and UNWomen lobbied, in the face of strong opposition, for the introduction of quotas for women in national parliament, discussed in more detail below. Tenth, Timorese women's organisations and the Cross Party Caucus, with the support of UNWomen lobbied for ten years (1999-2009) to introduce the LADV. The presence of women parliamentarians enabled the passing of this law.

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<sup>11</sup> Indonesian: *Forum Komunikasi Perempuan East Timor*. East Timorese Women's Communication Forum

Eleventh, the LADV guarantees funding a Special Victims Unit in the Timorese police force and specialised victims' services to provide support and protection to victims of violence. The twelfth gender intervention was international support for microfinance. Microfinance is primarily for women clients. Microfinance has been promoted by new banking regulations and forms part of the government's strategic development planning for a cooperative based rural economy. The thirteenth gender intervention was lobbying by Timorese women's organisations and UNWomen for quotas for women's leadership positions in Village Elections. Quotas for women and young people also formed part of the World Bank's participatory Community Empowerment Program in Timor-Leste (2000-2002). The fourteenth gender intervention is the conditional cash transfer for vulnerable mothers, the *Bolsa da Mãe*. Gender intervention in Timor-Leste thus comprises a wide variety of policies and programming.

Table 2.2 Gender Interventions in Timor-Leste 2001-2017

No.	GENDER INTERVENTION	LEGAL FRAMEWORK	TYPE OF INTERVENTION	AIMS	FUNDERS
1	UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.	UN Security Council UNSCR1272 forming UNTAET	Gender Mainstreaming	Mainstreaming in peacekeeping operations across four “pillars”: participation, prevention, protection and relief and recovery	UN Security Council
2	Gender Affairs Unit (GAU) within UNTAET (2001-2005)	CEDAW & later UNSCR1325 on gender mainstreaming	Gender Mainstreaming	To inform all peacekeeping components of the gender aspects of the mission; Bimonthly gender training to all new UNTAET staff (civil and military)	No exclusive funding envelope from UNTAET
3	National Office for the Promotion of Women (then SEPI, then SEM)	Timorese constitution, CEDAW (Timor-Leste accession 2003). Accession to UNSCR1325 in 2016	Gender Mainstreaming	Responsible for leading implementation of the LADV; Leading gender-working groups in each Ministry	UNFPA, UNIFEM (later known as UNWomen); Timorese government
4	Gender and the Law Working Group	-	Gender Mainstreaming	Gender analysis of regulations and proposed legislation by East Timorese judges, prosecutors, public defenders, and representatives of civil society organisations. The Women’s Charter (2001) to influence the Constitution	-
5	Cross Party Caucus (2007 onwards)	Parliamentary Resolution No.16/2007	Gender Mainstreaming	Gender analysis of regulations and proposed legislation and make recommendations to government	UNWomen technical support; Timorese government funding
6	Gender Responsive Budgeting	Resolution No.28/II 2009 requiring gender mainstreaming in the budget	Gender Mainstreaming	To ensure a gender perspective on all budget legislation; Issuing recommendations to ministries to make their budgets gender sensitive	Cross Party Caucus; UNWomen
7	Commission for Truth and Reconciliation (CAVR)	CEDAW UNTAET Regulation 2001/10	Gender Mainstreaming	To ensure women’s stories of the war were told and lobby for justice and compensation for victims of war crimes	UNTAET; CAVR

	GENDER INTERVENTION	LEGAL FRAMEWORK	TYPE OF INTERVENTION	AIMS	FUNDERS
8	Support to Timorese women's organisations	CEDAW, Beijing Platform for Action. Timor-Leste Women's Platform for Action (2001)	Gender and Development	Rede Feto: To enable information sharing across the Women's network. Lobbying for political empowerment. To make one out of every four candidates on the party list a woman	Rede Feto; UNTAET, UNWomen; Timorese government funding
9	Gender quotas in Parliament	Article 12 of the Law on the Election of the National Parliament No 6/2006	Gender Mainstreaming	To provide a concrete incentive for the political participation of women through their mandatory inclusion in the lists of candidates	-
10	Law Against Domestic Violence	CEDAW, International Convention on Civil and Political Rights, Convention on the Rights of the Child, Timor-Leste Criminal Code	Gender Mainstreaming	To establish the legal regime applicable to the prevention of domestic violence and set out the obligations of the State to provide protection and assistance to victims	Timorese Government and its ministries, led by SEM
11	Special Victims Unit (2001-2005 under UN; 2005-2017 under PNTL)	UNTAET police regulations; Law Against Domestic Violence (No. 7/2010)	Gender Mainstreaming	To provide police support and protection to the victims of gender-based and family violence in line with the state's obligations to its citizens	UNTAET; UNIFEM; Timorese Government; National Police of Timor-Leste (PNTL)
12	Microfinance (1999-2017)	Public Instruction No. 06/2010	Gender and Development	To increase women's participation in the local economy; to stimulate local economies; to provide livelihoods to vulnerable people, including victims of domestic violence	Timorese Government; Banking and Payments Authority of Timor-Leste; UNCDF; IFC; ADB
13	Gender quotas in village leadership (2001-2017)	Laws on Village Elections 2004, 2009, and 2016	Gender and Development	To increase women's political participation in village councils	The Secretary for Technical Administration of Elections (STAE); UNDP; World Bank; Pátria; UNWomen
14	<i>Bolsa da Mãe</i> (2008-2017) Mother's purse	Constitutional right to state support for the vulnerable	Gender and Development	Conditional Cash Transfer to vulnerable families with children to ensure school attendance and vaccination	Timorese Government; Ministry of Social Solidarity

## 2.4 The Critique of the Liberal Peace

Confidence in peacebuilding declined after disappointing outcomes in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iraq, Afghanistan and, later on, in Timor-Leste. Concerning Timor-Leste specifically, the critique of the liberal peace gathered force after the outbreaks of violence in the 2006-2007 political crisis. The roots of the crisis, discussed in Chapter 4, lay in grievances over demobilisation and favouritism in recruitment to the military and the police, which were mobilised by politicians in intra-elite rivalry. The resumption of violence led some scholars to claim that peacebuilders had built a “failed” state in Timor-Leste (Goldstone 2013). More broadly in regard to Bosnia, Iraq and Afghanistan, Paris (2004) used a neo-Weberian framework to argue peace required strong institutions before the introduction of liberal democracy or free markets. Neo-Weberian institutional approaches, while critical, invariably explained uneven or disappointing outcomes for peacebuilding as resulting from a lack of state capacity to foster economic growth or control violence (Hameiri 2010, Lemay-Hébert 2009).

In contrast to capacity explanations, legitimacy explanations for uneven outcomes hinged on the apparent “ontological problem of whether the liberal peace is transferable into non-western or non-liberal polities” (Richmond and Franks 2009, 13). Crucially, scholars argued the lack of fit between Western and non-Western models led to uneven outcomes, including recurrent conflict and violence (Leonardsson and Rudd 2015, 833, Autesserre 2010). According to these scholars, interventions failed because they attempted to impose liberal principles that clashed with the norms, cultures, and institutions of societies subject to intervention (Duffield 2005, 314, Richmond 2007). Some authors claimed that peacebuilding was a colonial “empire-lite”, and thus, illegitimate (Ignatieff 2003). On this basis, critical scholars such as Mac Ginty and Richmond called for a “local turn” in peacebuilding to enable local institutions, agencies, ideas, and cultures to be able to “form peace locally” (Mac Ginty and Richmond 2013, 769-771). They and other scholars of the local turn suggested that international peacebuilders had ignored or devalued “the local dynamics of conflict societies” (Richmond 2011, 115).

The local turn in peacebuilding aimed to re-orient research from the international “high politics” to “everyday” local realities (Randazzo 2016, 1355). However, of particular concern was the interaction of international and local that scholars sought to capture in the notion of “hybridity”. For critical peacebuilding scholars, hybridity was “a state of affairs in which liberal and illiberal norms, institutions and actors co-exist” (Belloni 2012, 22). For a number of scholars, “the local” was a site or agent of subaltern “resistance, agency and autonomy” (Richmond and Mitchell 2012, 1). Such scholars focused on how “everyday” peacebuilding activated agency, including “verbal interaction, group interactions, group organisation, negotiation or networking, counter-organisation, narration or discussion of the policies in question” (Richmond and Mitchell 2012, 3). Therefore, the methodology of “critical localism” (Mac Ginty 2015) is qualitative, involving interviews (although, as I discuss later, these were often elite interviews), focus group discussion, often using narrative or discursive analysis. These methods mimicked postcolonial narrative and discursive analytical approaches, uncovering moments of “hybridisation”.

It was Bhabha’s definition that informed the theory of hybrid peacebuilding, where hybridity is an outcome of a “colonial encounter” between interveners and intervened (Peterson 2012, Richmond 2011, 116, Bhabha 2004). Postcolonialism is the analytical framework for cultural, literary, and historical works concerned with the relationships of knowledge and power between former colonies and European colonial powers (Mishra and Hodge 2005). Postcolonialism drew on post-structural or postmodern theory by “deconstructing” accepted views of language, culture, narrative, identity, and gender. Bhabha argued that post-colonial subjects use the language and discourse of the coloniser, termed “mimicry”, but with a crucial difference. This repetition of discourse, with a difference, then creates a hybrid discourse of the colonised, which is not repressive, but emancipatory (Bhabha 2004, Mishra and Hodge 2005).

In the peacebuilding context, Peterson maintained that hybridity was useful in providing a “clearer picture of the actual functioning of aid”, by centring on the interaction of local and international, not just on the peacebuilding missions themselves (Peterson 2012, 10, Mac Ginty 2010). However, although hybridity could be merely a descriptive term, a greater proportion of the critical literature used “hybrid peace” as a prescriptive goal (Millar 2014, 504). This was linked to ideas of the local being authentic. For example, Kumar and de la Haye (2012) argued integrating local cultural forms into “hybrid governance” ought to increase peacebuilding’s legitimacy and therefore its effectiveness. Some local turn scholars objected, saying interveners could not “engineer” a top-down hybrid peace (Mac Ginty 2010, Wallis, Jeffery, and Kent 2016). Nonetheless, in the Timor-Leste case, hybrid peace was prescribed in a large number of works (Boege et al. 2008, Boege, Brown, and Clements 2009, Brown and Gusmão 2009, Brown and Gusmão 2012, Brown 2012a, Cummins 2010, Cummins and Leach 2012, Mearns and Farram 2008, Richmond 2007). At the same time, interveners applied hybrid programming in Timor-Leste. Examples included hybrid court on war crimes (Burgess 2006, Reiger 2006), hybrid local governance (Brown 2012a, Brown and Gusmão 2012) and hybrid approaches to conflict resolution, including domestic violence (Kovar 2012, UNDP 2013) (a list of these is in Table 5.1 International Programs Incorporating Traditional Dispute Resolution). Thus, the critical local turn and hybridity, in dialogue with internal debates within intervening organisations, altered peacebuilding in practice, particularly those areas associated with tradition and authenticity, such as family, personal and cultural law and practice.

Adding support to local turn approaches was the significant crossover of personnel between academic and practitioner roles. Academics participated in workshops on transitional justice, for example, and wrote monitoring and evaluations of peacebuilding programs (Mearns 2002, Fox and Soares 2003, Trembath, Grenfell, and Noronha 2010, Grenfell and Trembath 2007). To illustrate, Chopra and Hohe



who both worked within UNTAET,<sup>12</sup> also published in academic journals, and prescribed a “participatory intervention”. They envisaged that only contentious and abusive local structures were to be “reinvented” by international peacebuilders (Chopra and Hohe 2004). In their view, in cases where local political structures are resilient and not grossly in breach of human rights standards, interventions should reinforce local political authority (Chopra and Hohe 2004, 299-302). As a result, later iterations of local government laws officially incorporated “local political structures” such as *lia nain* (Tetun: elder) into elected village councils (Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste 2009)

#### 2.4.1 The Limits of the Critique of the Liberal Peace

This section outlines problems with the local turn and hybridity. First, I argue it is an inadequate framework to explain uneven outcomes of interventions. These centre on definitional and methodological weaknesses stemming from a lack of attention to structural power and especially gender hierarchies. Second, and relatedly, the local turn’s reliance on ideas of authenticity, without attention to hierarchy, also lead to normative limitations on the discussion and disruption of class and gender relations.

First, the term “local” is slippery and contested. Across the critical literature, “local” could denote one or more of the following: a shorthand term for those subject to interventions (in this case Timorese citizens); a sub-national jurisdiction or area; a site of resistance and alternatives to the state and the international; and or, “cultural appropriateness” (Hughes, Öjendal, and Schierenbeck 2015, 818). This inability to capture what the local is creates problems for analysis. For one thing, as I explain throughout the thesis, to locate the reasons for intervention unevenness in the differences between a binary of local and internationals misses important social and political coalitions across these groups. In gender

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<sup>12</sup> Chopra worked for UNTAET as a District Administrator; Hohe worked first for UNAMET as a district electoral officer and then later a District Field Officer for UNTAET.

interventions specifically, a binary analysis overlooks political coalitions formed between gender progressive groups of international, national and ordinary citizens, and gender regressive groups' backlashes across these boundaries. Nonetheless, as Hughes, Öjendal, and Schierenbeck argue, "the local" offered some analytical purchase for critics of the liberal peace as a "reminder of the undemocratic nature of intervention itself" and the need for accountability to those undergoing it (Hughes, Öjendal, and Schierenbeck 2015, 819). In the process, according to proponents of a local turn, the authenticity of the local was generally assumed to prevail over the international. Second, to avoid essentializing a binary opposition between local and international, writers using local turn frameworks formulated degrees or types of interaction of local and international (Hameiri and Jones 2017, 58). Despite this, as Hameiri and Jones pointed out, these frameworks still rely on the dichotomy—that is why "binaries are always reinstated" (Hameiri and Jones 2017, 58). Most compellingly, Hameiri and Jones argued that hybridity cannot explain "why particular institutions emerged and function"; and crucially, they cannot tell us who benefits from these hybrid institutions because certain social groups support, while others resist, interventions, in accordance with their own interests or normative agendas (Hameiri and Jones 2017, 58-9). To summarise, the results of peacebuilding are uneven, but frameworks that locate the cause of unevenness in the interaction between reified notions of local and international miss the power and resource inequalities and contestations within the local, before, during and after peacebuilding.

Despite local turn scholars' commitment to unearthing the "everyday and subaltern", thus far evidentiary research in Timor-Leste has relied on a few Timorese interlocutors generally from the *Liurai-Dato* class. As I explained in section in the appendix on elite bias in research methods in Timor, when researchers have gone beyond Dili, many have focussed on interviewing village chiefs and lineage heads, as these men are, in the eyes of Timorese society, held to be the keepers of tradition. In the case of Timor-Leste, reliance on a few sources was a mutually reinforcing loop, where particular interlocutors emphasised the

importance of preserving the position of the elite *Liurai-Dato* class. Richmond, for instance, used the opinion of Viqueque district administrator, Francesco da Silva, to argue that top-down approaches and democracy were ineffective (Richmond 2011, 199). The same administrator was quoted elsewhere arguing for the retention of *Liurai-Dato* leadership in villages because, if village chiefs are not “descendants of the *Liurai*, they have a lot more problems” (Cummins and Leach 2012, 101). In another example, Timorese researchers Fidelis Magalhães<sup>13</sup> and Jose ‘Josh’ Trindade were strong advocates for the local turn, and both worked for Xanana Gusmão (Office of the Prime Minister 2007-2015) and Taur Matan Ruak (Office of the President 2012-2017).<sup>14</sup> Scholars of the local turn heavily referenced interviews with, and writing by, these two key Timorese advocates of the local turn (Freire and Lopes 2013, 119, Cummins and Leach 2012, 90, McWilliam, Palmer, and Shepherd 2014, 305, Hicks 2012, 131, Wallis 2012a, 228, 230, Richmond 2011, 120). As both Randazzo (2016, 1358-59) and Sabaratnam (2013) note, scholars of the local turn make normative choices about who is local, and who is not. The bias also mitigates against describing contentious politics, whereby martial arts gangs or militia groups or even feminist organisations are not generally considered by either interveners or national governments, to be part of authentic or legitimate local groups (Scamary 2013, Smith 2015b). These choices affected scholars’ analyses of intervention outcomes, particularly when scholars made assumptions homogenising politics, ideology, and power of local groups (and nations).

The implications of scholars’ choices of “who is local” become more apparent when we turn to examine gender in peacebuilding interventions. A key theorist of the local turn, Richmond, for example, saw “gender issues and human rights” as arising out of liberal peacebuilding, but criticised the roll out of rights, suggesting that formal rights were emphasised to the exclusion of material or welfare aspects of peace settlements (Richmond 2014, 456). It is not correct to say that gender

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<sup>13</sup> Magalhães was elected to national parliament in 2017 as second on the list for Taur Matan Ruak’s People’s Liberation Party (PLP).

<sup>14</sup> Taur Matan Ruak is the commonly used *nom de guerre* of former guerrilla leader José Maria Vasconcelos.

interventions arise only from liberal frameworks (ignoring transnational and local feminisms) or that liberal peace interventions focussed on gender and rights to the exclusion of other issues. Most crucial, however, is the use of local or hybrid frameworks for understanding outcomes of gender intervention. Richmond presupposed a dichotomy between international liberal peacebuilding, which prioritised individual rights, and local societies who prioritise group rights, in this case, the Timorese nation. To illustrate, in *The Transformation of Peace* Richmond proposed that this tension between individual and group rights existed because in part, humanitarian decisions are “hegemonic acts” made by “third parties” in relation to others’ interests (Richmond 2005, 137-140). However, in Richmond’s analysis, the definition of who comprises a rights-bearing group, and who has power within those groups was overlooked. The present study instead highlights, as Peterson stated in the case of peacebuilding in Kosovo, that citizens experience peacebuilding “along ethnic, class and even [sic] gender lines, with some viewing the interface with the international as emancipatory, others as politically expedient and yet others as regressive or debilitating” (Peterson 2012, 19). In the final analysis, although the critique of the liberal peace offers important appraisals of peacebuilding, power, gender and hierarchy “also prevail in ‘everyday peace’ on the local level” (Paffenholz 2011, 150). It means that explanatory accounts based on clashes, frictions, or hybridity between local or international overlook critical structural factors within recipient societies shaping outcomes, such as class and gender.

In the case of Timor-Leste, a number of scholars using local turn and hybridity frameworks made problematic assumptions about the authenticity of local groups and overlooked the historical basis and power dynamics inhering in class and gender relations. These assumptions about the authenticity of *Liurai* have resulted in a fossilisation of tradition in the study of, and policy making in Timor-Leste (Kammen 2017). “Local” societies, institutions, culture and so on are naturalised in local turn accounts because their focus is on describing the international-local hybrid. On this view, power relations in the form of class and gender inequalities

are taken as authentic and legitimate, rather than uncovering their particular emergence. These assumptions meant that uneven outcomes for gender intervention are located in the incompatibility between international and local institutions, cultures, or practices. Development practitioner and anthropologist, Cummins (2013) used a mix of hybridity and institutionalism to explain the disappointing results of gender quotas in village elections in Timor-Leste. Cummins argued, like numerous other scholars, that “democratisation” has built “liberal-democratic institutions over existing customary governance structures and norms”, creating “political hybridity” in village governance (Cummins 2013, 144, 148. See also, Kirk 2015, Wallis 2012a, Boege, Brown, and Clements 2009). Thus, women’s lack of political participation in village governance can be explained by the fact traditional institutions are authentically male dominated: “the major difficulty for the women was that many community needs continue to be met through various aspects of *lisan*, which in patriarchal areas [sic]<sup>15</sup> is led by male authority figures” (Cummins 2013, 151). According to Cummins, hybridity helped improve the situation for women because a new practice grew whereby a woman representative accompanied the village chief during traditional dispute resolution in a case of domestic violence.

Although representation in these dispute resolution arrangements may improve individual outcomes, it does not alter the material outcomes in traditional dispute resolution, as I explain in Chapter 5. Moreover, the description of such a system as “hybrid” does not explain the persistence of certain men’s control over village institutions; the use of traditional dispute resolution; or the stubbornly high levels of domestic violence. Even more importantly to this study, because international interveners are but one of a series of powerful groups able to change outcomes, their alliances matter. As I explain in Chapters 5 through 8, sections of the donor community make concessions to and inadvertently support gender regressive

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<sup>15</sup> This should be “patrilineal” to describe the type of descent and inheritance of a particular kinship group, rather than patriarchal, which describes a system of male dominance of social, economic and political life, originating in the family.

actors. Thus, this study holds that processes perceived as authentic, such as traditional dispute resolution, are best analysed using a structural feminist political economy approach, which reveals the intersectionality of class and gender. Significantly, traditional dispute resolution processes materially benefit village elites. Village elites' control over resources at the local level, and their control over women set the conditions that lead to high levels of re-victimisation.

Some critical scholars of the local turn have argued liberal or neoliberal aspects of peacebuilding interventions cause uneven, unexpected, or ineffective outcomes in the Timor-Leste case (Richmond and Franks 2008, Croissant 2008, Mac Ginty 2010). On this view, peacebuilding intervention forced neoliberal market relations, with origins in Western capitalism, onto non-western communities who were organised according to non-market relations such as kinship. In contrast, the current study takes its cue from Hughes (2015), and focusses on how economic stratification and power relations intersect at the local level, looking specifically at “second-generation” neoliberal development programming (Rittich 2006). In this thesis, neoliberalism and its critiques are most important when looking at gender interventions to promote women's economic empowerment. Specifically, this includes second generation, market-led development strategies to reduce gendered poverty such as microfinance, and conditional cash transfers.

The local turn has criticised the *liberal* peace yet often their approach is not entirely removed from the conventional, liberal approaches as is assumed. For instance, local turn approaches overlap with “participatory” ones, an orthodoxy in these “second generation” development programs. The World Bank and other interveners already used the concepts of “local”, “emancipatory” and “empowering” in programs such as participatory budgeting, local governance reform, decentralisation, and microfinance. Mac Ginty and Richmond made a distinction between a “genuine” local and the “expedient and shallow” local of the World Bank, which is part of the liberal peace (Mac Ginty and Richmond 2013). Nevertheless, on the ground, prescriptive hybridity and local approaches blur with those of participatory development. Therefore, critiques of participatory and

“locally owned” development are relevant to the critique of the local turn and hybridity.

Feminist approaches to the hybrid model advocated by scholars of the local turn add a feminist concern with power but retain the concept and a focus on discourse and discursive methods. It is worth pointing out that discursive approaches are distinct from the focus on material power taken in this thesis. For example, McLeod considered “hybridity” to be a useful analytical tool which highlights the complex interactions between local and international actors, recognising that “the diversity of locals and internationals” means neither category is “clear-cut” (McLeod 2015, 51). McLeod aimed to broaden hybridity by adding a feminist concern that encompasses “the personal” and not simply “macro-political processes” (McLeod 2015, 52). This translates into a concern for the diversity of bodily and emotional responses to war—and how these shape political choices. Also using a hybrid framework, Smith used a constructivist approach to argue gender equality norms were associated with international interveners, which led to mistrust of these norms because Timorese saw interveners as part of a colonial legacy. This association with “colonialism” “intertwined” with national and international patriarchal barriers to the legitimacy of NGOs working on gender (Smith 2015b, 67). One problem with constructivist approaches to gender in Timor-Leste is they overlapped conceptually with local turn approaches because they took women’s rights as a largely foreign or transnational norm. On this view, the norms of women’s rights crossed national boundaries through international intervention and subsequently “cascaded” into society (Hall 2009, Allden 2007, Ottendörfer 2013). On the one hand, constructivist approaches elide the way contentions over gender relations in Timor arise independently of outside norms because women and girls resist patriarchal domination and seek to advance their interests within the gender order. On the other hand, constructivist approaches also reduce the visibility of struggles over resources between women and men of different classes, which shape how gender interventions turn out in practice. I turn now to an overview of critiques of gender interventions.

### 2.4.2 Gender Intervention in Timor-Leste: Successes, Problems and Critiques

Speaking about gender mainstreaming more broadly, True (2009) argued that gender mainstreaming's mandate under UNSCR<sub>1325</sub> has been left "unfulfilled", including in the Timor-Leste case.<sup>16</sup> Specifically in relation to gender interventions in Timor-Leste there is an existing critical literature describing shortcomings of gender mainstreaming in the Timor-Leste case. For example, as Charlesworth and Wood (2002, 346-7), Joshi (2005) and Olsson (2009) have pointed out, not only did gender mainstreaming encounter resistance from national leaders, but it was also underfunded, understaffed, and marginalised within the UN operation itself. In Australian aid too, Wigglesworth described a pattern of "lack of commitment" to gender mainstreaming among staff (Wigglesworth 2010, 137).

Initial planning for peacebuilding in Timor-Leste had included a Gender Affairs Unit (GAU) to conduct gender mainstreaming. However, due to tight budgets holding up the UN resolution to create UNTAET, the budget for the gender mainstreaming unit was cut. After deployment, the head of UNTAET, Sergio Vieira de Mello, supported cutting GAU because he did not see what role gender mainstreaming could play in reconstruction in Timor-Leste (Olsson 2009, 80, Charlesworth 2008, 354). Senior women at UN headquarters including Angela King, special advisor to the UN Secretary-General on Women's Advancement, and Sherrill Whittington, high-level gender consultant, intervened to ensure GAU's creation. King and Whittington facilitated a meeting between de Mello and Timorese women's organisations that convinced de Mello of the importance of gender mainstreaming (Olsson 2009, 80).

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<sup>16</sup> For a full discussion of UNSCR 1325 and the six subsequent UNSCR "Women Peace and Security" Resolutions, see the special issue of *International Political Science Review* "Women, Peace and Security: Exploring the implementation and integration of UNSCR 1325" (George and Shepherd 2016) and the special issue of the *International Feminist Journal of Politics* "Critically Examining UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security" (Shepherd 2011).



Another way that international institutions themselves obstructed gender intervention in Timor-Leste was on the issue of quotas. UNTAET's electoral affairs office and the UN Department of Political Affairs opposed the introduction of quotas for women in national parliament (Olsson 2009, 129, Hall 2009, Hall and True 2008). As a result, there was no quota in the 2001 elections. However, Timorese women's organisations, with financial and technical support from UNIFEM, ran electoral campaigns for female candidates, resulting in women taking 26 percent of the seats in 2001 (Hall and True 2008). In 2006, the law was changed to include a quota whereby "lists of effective and alternate candidates must include at least one woman per every group of four candidates, under pain of rejection" (Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste 2006, Article 12). After the 2007 elections, women made up 27 percent of parliamentarians, which was not an improvement. This prompted another amendment to the Law on the Election of Parliament to increase the quota to one in every three parliamentary candidates. Under those circumstances, women won 38.8 percent of seats in the 2012 elections, very high by global standards. Thus, after some adjustments, the quota has been a successful gender intervention in Timor-Leste.

A key demand of Timorese women's organisations in the initial Women's Congress in 2001 was a law criminalising domestic violence (Hynes et al. 2004, Swaine 2003). International interveners, GAU, UNIFEM and UNFPA, provided staff and expertise to help draft the LADV (Smith 2015b). Yet, a number of scholars have shown that within UNTAET itself, protection for women in cases of domestic violence was not a priority (Olsson 2009, 152, Groves, Resurreccion, and Doneys 2009). After ten years of lobbying, the LADV was passed in 2010. Although passing the LADV is a successful gender intervention, the introduction, implementation and outcomes of LADV have been contested and uneven, as I discuss in Chapters 5 and 6. Likewise, Gender Responsive Budgeting also faced opposition during its introduction and implementation. Since 2012 and the change in government, there has been no gender budget statement issued by Parliament, and bureaucrats have obstructed implementation and misappropriated funds, as described in Chapter 4

(Austen et al. 2013, Costa 2018). As such, the outcomes of these gender interventions have been uneven.

In the study of peace and conflict, scholars have developed different explanations for uneven outcomes in peacebuilding (within which gender interventions take place). Scholars have provided explanations for the gaps between gender mainstreaming's aims and outcomes. In the first place, as other scholars have documented, one cause of uneven outcomes of gender intervention in Timor-Leste was opposition to gender mainstreaming within the UN and other interveners (Olsson 2009, Charlesworth and Wood 2001). Charlesworth and Wood (2002, 348) for instance argue not only were some areas of the UN mission uncommitted to gender mainstreaming but also vulnerable to gender bias. Because gender mainstreaming in Timor-Leste was perceived to be "all about women", UN programs and decision-making left male patterns of behaviour unexamined and unreformed. In general, interveners misrecognised the relationship between gender and power.

Scholars have also drawn attention to the relative marginality of gender within the peacebuilding intervention. This is despite the way in which donor's gender interventions were criticised for overemphasising women and gender. For instance, the late creation of GAU meant some gender mainstreaming measures were not part of the initial peacekeeping operation. It also left GAU without a discrete funding "envelope" (Charlesworth 2008, Olsson 2009, 81). GAU comprised just six staff out of 11,000 in UNTAET, too few to properly carry out its mandate to mainstream gender in all peacebuilding and train hundreds of UN staff in gender mainstreaming (Olsson 2009, 80). In sum, initial obstruction of GAU led to resource constraints, which limited GAU's effectiveness and that of the gender intervention more broadly. Another, and crucial, reason scholars have given for the uneven outcomes of gender intervention was opposition from the Timorese parliament, notably in areas such as laws on domestic violence (Hall 2009, Hall and True 2008) and gender responsive budgeting (Costa 2018). The law criminalising domestic violence faced opposition from within the Timorese

leadership, evidenced quite convincingly by the ten years it took for the Timorese parliament to pass the LADV.

Critics have sometimes viewed gender mainstreaming as inappropriate, and enforced by Western aid conditionality (True 2009, 45). In other words, gender mainstreaming faced a backlash within peacebuilding missions, in scholarship on peacebuilding and among targets of intervention that sought to paint it as externally-imposed, “westernised”, liberal and thus unsuitable (Hodžić 2009). Backlash has been conspicuous in Timor-Leste. National leaders and international commentators have criticised gender programming as illegitimate, inauthentic, marginal or overly focussed on what commentators perceive to be “hot-button” and marginal issues such as gender-based violence (Hicks 2013, 31, for a critique see Niner 2011). Further issues included aid conditionality, criticism of some democratic principles that undermined established age or military hierarchies, and gender interventions on gender-based violence or women’s political representation (Hughes 2009). Some Timorese elites saw gender interventions to be at odds with national goals or culture and tied to Western interests. The influential Timorese leader, Xanana Gusmão, for example, argued that during UN rule Timorese were obliged to acculturate gender and human rights to please the UN, their “masters of independence” (Niner 2011, 47, Hughes 2009). As such, it is important to realise that sections of the Timorese elite found common cause with the local turn in peacebuilding on specific, often gender-based, issues.

Aside from uneven outcomes resulting from international and national opposition, there have been some problems within current gender mainstreaming practice. Gender mainstreaming is not always informed by a feminist approach that understands gender as a relationship of power (True 2009, 45). On this view, the reasons for these disappointing outcomes included that gender mainstreaming often lacked a feminist lens; it had a narrow vision of security that privileged physical security and elections over social and economic security; and it was not sufficiently attentive to the unequal power relations between states (True 2009).

Another reason has been because of the transformation of the received meaning of “gender” as it became part of mainstream development. The concept of “gender relations” was initially a feminist term to describe unequal material relations of power between women and men and the unequal social construction of masculine and feminine norms. However, “gender’ gained salience within development when it began to take the shape of an acceptable euphemism that softened ‘harder’ talk about rights and power” (Cornwall 2007, 70). Gender mainstreaming in Timor-Leste was not always positioned to connect women’s rights with broader economic demands on the state, such as the right to housing, education, health, and safety (True 2009). For example, although the gender intervention on GRB sought to remedy gendered state budgets, in some senses, GRB has allowed the Timorese government to self-promote their actions on “women positive” policies, without admitting shortcomings (Sharp and Broomhill 1990), particularly the gaps between planning and outcomes.

Attention to the uneven distributional effects of international peacebuilding intervention is not new. It is commonly acknowledged that gender justice has more traction in the area of political and civil rights than economic rights and entitlements (Goetz 2007, 24). Others have analysed the shortcomings of peacebuilding interventions for women in the Timor case, but have not focussed on the relationship between gender and class. Similarly to the argument of this study, Harris-Rimmer maintained that the peacebuilding intervention failed to promote socio-economic rights (Harris-Rimmer 2010). Likewise, my analysis supports existing studies that show entitlements of victims and veterans are significant factors in the Timorese political economy, and in outcomes for women (Niner 2016, 502-3, Wallis 2012b). Kent has convincingly linked peacebuilding intervention to a post-conflict “politics of memory” that damages women’s entitlements and women’s rights in Timor (Kent 2016, Kent and Kinsella 2015).

Nonetheless, these authors have had different concerns to mine, seeking to examine how (trans)national actors have tried to build gender perspectives into laws and institutions (Hall 2009, Costa, Sawyer, and Sharp 2013, Harris-Rimmer

2010, Graydon 2016). In contrast, it is the argument of this thesis that legal reforms using “rights-based approaches falsify the position of the socially weak, who are in no position to make claims or ensure that the more powerful actors meet their obligations” (Goetz 2007, 26). In other words, there is an assumption that formal institutions rule behaviours and guarantee rights. For example, the intervention on the issue of gender-based violence was attentive to legal reform, especially the creation of the Law Against Domestic Violence, but did not address material relations that set the conditions for high levels of violence against women. Other measures as advocated in the Women’s Charter to combat material factors contributing to domestic violence such as brideprice were unsuccessful (Ospina 2006). In that sense, gender intervention within a peacebuilding framework in Timor-Leste was, similarly to the case of gender intervention in Liberia, “instrumental in providing, space and resources for gender mainstreaming” (Garnett 2016, 99). Yet, in the final analysis, gender interventions lacked in-depth consideration of social relations and material conditions, and especially the connections between material conditions and VAW.

## 2.5 A Structural Feminist Political Economy of Gender Intervention

This section lays out the structural feminist political economy framework I use to explain uneven outcomes of gender interventions in terms of gender and class—and in particular, the role of dominant classes in shaping the post-conflict order that is so crucial to outcomes. This framework synthesises structural political economy with True (2012) feminist political economy of violence against women. Her framework explains the global yet specific occurrences and drivers of violence against women, whereas I seek to explain outcomes of gender interventions, which have a significant gender dimension. Thus, a synthetic structural political economy framework is required. I also modify True’s FPE approach to encompass kinship, which is vital to analyse the Timor-Leste case because kinship, especially brideprice, is how class and gender are co-constituted. Thus, my structural feminist political economy framework has six elements that together account for

uneven outcomes of gender interventions: Material relations and social forces; gender justice; gender divisions of labour; war, militarised conflict and violence; kinship; and neoliberal globalisation.

### 2.5.1 Material Relations and Social Forces

Structural political economy prioritises the role of material relations between individuals in villages, households, and the state, and the role of material relations in contests between social forces over the socio-political order. This contestation between social forces, can, of course, be violent (Jones 2010). Material relations are the “relationships that govern the distribution and use of resources, benefits, privileges, and authority within the home and at large” (True 2012, 29). These relationships are the basis of power: “All forms of power—including the use of violence—are understood as having a material basis, often founded on material relations of inequality within and across societies and cultures” (True 2012, 9).

Material relations arising out of economic processes over time define the key social forces with shared or divergent material interests (Cox 1981). “Social forces” denote elements in society with the capacity to cause and or resist social change. They are elements with the capacity to shape social structures, such that they are seen as a dominant presence. Social forces can be grouped along class, class fractions, religious, locational or ethnic lines governing the distribution and use of resources (Jones 2013, 73). Importantly, state institutions are the focus of so much political struggle and contestation because “they play a key role in structuring access to power and resources” (Jones 2013, 73). Material relations between economically stratified social forces comprise the “social structural factors [that] establish the environment in which politics operates, and establishes sets of pressures that shape political” and institutional outcomes (Hewison, Robison, and Rodan 1993, 4). The composition of social forces is historically contingent and forms the institutions, rules that give rise to the social order and the ideologies that underpin

them, such as who has the right to rule, and other forms of legitimacy. In the current study, class is the key social force examined.

Structural political economy thus takes material relations to be causal mechanisms shaping institutions. On this view, states and state institutions are not “apparatus abstracted and separated from society” (Jones 2010), but rather comprised of contested social forces with specific material interests in upholding or contesting a political order. Given my structural theoretical position, my analysis of gender intervention looks at policies and decisions which “directly and indirectly influence the distribution of wealth, power and the structure of social relationships” (Hewison, Robison, and Rodan 1993, 17). Most importantly to this thesis, those who own or control wealth-generating property directly or indirectly shape the principal institutions that shape ideology in gender progressive or retrogressive directions (True 2012, 7, Agarwal 1994, 16). Different social forces have divergent interests, and these interests can result in these groups upholding or challenging the gender order. Gender relations are a crucial aspect of the broader process through which the dominant class secures its position.

For these reasons, it is important to ask “who benefits” from peacebuilding (Hughes 2009, 41). When we understand this, we “understand what kind of power was awarded by the peace and to whom” (Hughes 2009, 41). The premise of my argument is, therefore: gender interventions comprise decisions, policies, institutions and their operation which in turn are part of “social and political domination, as a system in which the state takes a critical, partisan role” (Hewison, Robison, and Rodan 1993, 17). For instance, after the war’s end, historical leaders of the armed resistance and FRETILIN’s (The Revolutionary Front for Independent Timor-Leste) diplomatic front played decisive roles in the national government facilitated by international interventions. FRETILIN was the largest and most significant pro-independence party and was founded in 1974. It is the party associated with Timor-Leste’s struggle for self-rule. Post-independence, Timor-Leste’s integration into the global economy occurred through privileging the influx

of capital and entrenching elites as gatekeepers of these flows, “which put wider sections of the post-conflict population at a disadvantage in seeking economic opportunities, forcing them to submit to the competitiveness of the market” (Hughes 2009, 72). Thus, outcomes of gender interventions that modify socio-political orders are dependent on the results of contestation between social forces. These social forces, including locals, internationals, and coalitions of them, deploy competing, often cultural and gendered claims, to legitimacy. In addition, they seek to form or renew a particular social order and interveners play a significant role in supporting some groups over others. Or as Hughes puts it, rather than locating results of peacebuilding in local-liberal divides or hybrids, an analysis of the intersection between political economy and the politics of culture is more accurate.

[O]utcomes are better understood as emerging from the intersection between, on the one hand, a politics of culture in a post-conflict context, couched as a claim to power and status advanced against ‘outsiders’ and interlopers; and on the other, the business of constructing new economic, political and social orders and making claims for their authority—a project in which local actors are significantly engaged (Hughes 2015, 209)

I argue that structural factors in Timor-Leste, particularly elite dominance, have stymied the goals of gender justice. This is partly because gender interventions focus on transnational actors and organisations—such as NGOs with links to donors—and assume these actors are inherently progressive, while in reality they are the middle class (Hutchison et al. 2014, 14). These actors may or may not be (gender) progressive or regressive. The extension of Timor-Leste’s gender quotas and its vibrant civil society have not resulted in the extension of gender justice to the majority of Timorese women. This reflects international experience where “the extension of civil and political rights, [or in the case of gender quotas, increased participation and representation] to excluded groups does not produce equal levels of participation and even less equal economic rewards” (Goetz 2007, 28). Nor does the extension of political representation result in progress in women’s social and economic status (True 2013, 357). Thus, there exists in Timor, as elsewhere, a



significant gap between the goals of gender interventions and their outcomes, which partly arise from gender interventions focussed on narrow areas of political and economic rights, and market access.

Like Hughes (2015), my approach is a structural one, concerned with identifying the social origins, interests, and ideologies of various social forces, including women's organisations, in order to describe outcomes of gender interventions. In distinction to Hughes, I focus on the intersection between social forces and gender relations. The intersection is complex. One reason they are complex is that "women cannot be identified as a coherent group" and gender cuts across all social forces "producing differences of interests—and conceptions of justice—between women" (Goetz 2007, 18). Yet, women's movements can galvanise some women around issues of bodily autonomy, reproduction and the gender division of labour, despite those women's differing social origins.

## 2.6 Feminist Political Economy

After having outlined the first of six elements making up my structural feminist political economy, (a) material relations and social forces, this section outlines my feminist political approach. This is comprised of (b) gender justice (c) the gender division of labour (d) war, militarised conflict and violence, (e) kinship and (f) neoliberal globalisation. A framework comprised of all of these factors is required to explain the outcomes of gender intervention. However, an evaluation of outcomes also features a normative measure, and the evaluative criterion I develop here is gender justice.

### 2.6.1 Gender Justice

Answering the question, "What can account for the uneven outcomes of gender intervention in Timor-Leste?" requires a yardstick with which to measure the outcomes of gender interventions. In this study, in addition to intervention

objectives themselves, the yardstick used is gender justice. Gender justice is “the ending of—and if necessary the provision of redress for—inequalities between women and men that result in women's subordination to men” (Goetz 2007, 31). Using a benchmark like gender justice allows this thesis to look at uneven outcomes of gender interventions beyond their sometimes narrowly defined aims. Further, because I am concerned with *structural* features, gender justice is a notion that focusses on distributive and material features. The differences and overlaps of material interests, particularly the intersection of class and gender, complicates both the definition and enactment of gender justice (Goetz 2007, 18). Thus, I use this term because it encompasses a variety of areas, including redistribution and redress at multiple levels.

Gender justice is also amenable to a structural feminist political economy approach because it encompasses a normative goal for gender relations at the level of the individual, the family, the community, the state or the globe (Goetz 2007, 16). The local, as I have shown above, is often defined as ideas, institutions, cultures, and people at subnational, community, kinship, and household levels. Relationships between men and women in these arenas are critical to the distribution of power and resources and “they are key sites of gender-specific injustice” (Goetz 2007, 18). Gender injustice at the level of kinship or family hollows out democracy because the deep “continuities between patriarchy in the private sphere, and in governmental, non-governmental and market sphere” strip so many citizens—women, youth, socially-derided racial or ethnic groups, of legitimacy and authority (Goetz 2007, 39). Also, where patriarchal practices of the state and family have deep continuities, there may be little desire among power holders, or their constituents, to reform gender relations. Despite gendered inequalities in access and control over resources, these go unchallenged “because standards of accountability do not necessarily consider gender iniquities to be intolerable or require official remedy” (Goetz 2007, 27).

I use gender justice to evaluate outcomes for gender intervention in security, distribution, legal reform and the state. The state may be perceived as having more

pressing security and economic priorities than gender justice, linked to the general problem of gendered notions of security. Concessions to various groups can mitigate against gender reforms and multiply the exceptions for “personal law” such as “marriage, divorce, inheritance, adoption, burial, and clan-based property management” (Goetz 2007, 37). These concessions can have negative outcomes for gender justice, at the same time they link gender relations to the state:

many states [have ceded] control over women and children in periods of state formation to traditional patriarchal groups, excluding many forms of injustice in private relationships from the purview of formal law as a form of compensation to those authorities for their surrender of power to the state (Goetz 2007, 35)

For example in Timor-Leste, the use of traditional dispute resolution for cases of gender-based violence is common, despite the Law on Domestic Violence. *De facto* legal pluralism is not unusual internationally. In many cases, “state rulings on justice are ignored” because relationships between men and women at the level of the family and community are seen as legitimate, natural, biological, or cultural and outside the remit of the state (Goetz 2007, 35, Grenfell 2006). Rather than view this as the persistence of traditional institutions, I understand this to be the persistence of structural relations, of which these traditional dispute resolution processes are but a part. The existence of personal laws governing kinship, gender and the family are “understood to be a product of conflictual power relations at local level” which are historically-specific and influenced by transnational and international forces and regimes (Hughes 2015, 910).

In sum, my feminist political economy approach analyses gender intervention against the benchmark of gender justice. Gender justice allows me to look at gender relations across time while remaining focused on outcomes for women. It can look at structural relations beyond the sometimes narrow legal, political, and security focussed remits of the interventions. Gender justice gestures towards the political economy approach I use here because of its attention to redistribution. It shows the deep continuities in gender injustice between the individual, the family,

and the state. Lastly, kinship and the family are key sites of gender injustice and linked to my critique of the local turn in peacebuilding.

### 2.6.2 Gender Division of Labour

Gender is the “socially constructed expectation that persons perceived to be members of a biological sex category will have certain characteristics” (Sjoberg 2013, 5). Sex and gender are conceptually distinct with sex being characteristics associated with biological sex and gender the socially constructed expectations constituting binary sex difference. Gender relations denote the unequal relations between socially constructed categories of masculine and feminine. Gender relations was a new analytical concept in the 1970s, which moved “beyond ‘women’ to active engagement with the relations of power that reproduced an unequal and inequitable status quo” (Cornwall 2007, 70). Thus, the analytical frame of “gender relations” was the locus in which women’s subordination and male domination were produced and sustained (Cornwall 2007, 70, 72). Many societies devalue women and phenomena denoted “feminine” and look more favourably on men and phenomena denoted “masculine” (Connell 2005, Hutchings 2008). A feminist *political economy* perspective draws attention to ways in which gender relations in many societies tend to accord women a greater share of (unrecognised) burdens, and less access to and control over resources and benefits (True 2012). Unequal access to and control over power and resources, combined with asymmetries in gender ideology reproduce unequal gender relations. However, as gender relations are “socially and historically constructed” they are variable across time, space and between different groups and require explanation (Hozic and True 2016, 6).

A relational view of gender should avoid conflating gender and women, as this can “obscure the analytic importance of gender as a constitutive element of all social relationships and as [typically] signifying a relationship of power” (Cornwall 2003, 1326). Thus, I contextualise the gender interventions within specific gender relations in Timor-Leste, which requires attention to men and militarised

masculinities (Wigglesworth et al. 2015, Niner et al. 2013, Streicher 2011, Myrntinen 2005, Kent 2016). Even so, because women were the primary focus of the gender interventions and because I am concerned with uneven outcomes for women, I look at the “gendered experiences of women”, and the unjust circumstances that gender interventions sought to lessen or ameliorate (Chappell 2016, 8).

Gender relations encompass the gender divisions of labour. The gender division of labour is a system where women are held to be “primarily responsible for the unremunerated and often invisible, unpaid work” in the household (True 2012, 30, Meillassoux 1975, 4).<sup>17</sup> The gender division of labour manifest a society’s differential valuations of work by men and women. Crucially, work performed by women is generally devalued relative to work done by men (Sweetman 2008). Rather than the value of the task itself, it is the devaluation of women, which reduces the perception of the value of women’s labour (Pearson 2004).

As a result of systematic devaluation, the gender division of labour entails inequalities in bargaining power between men and women within the household (Pearse and Connell 2016). On this view, the household is not unified but rather a site of “negotiation, even contestation, over gender norms and the distribution of resources among family members” (Pearse and Connell 2016, 32). Household bargaining thus involves contests over material resources and work. At the broadest level, men benefit from women’s unpaid work and the devaluation of women’s labour, receiving a “patriarchal dividend” (Walby 1989, 21, Connell 2005). The gender division of labour can be subject to both resistance and violent enforcement (True 2012, 30-1). Relatedly, it is the material gender inequalities between women and men with respect to income, property, employment and control over resources that best explain the magnitude of violence against women in various contexts globally (True 2012, 18). In Timor-Leste, the gender division of labour hinges on a distinction between domestic work in the household and *public*

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<sup>17</sup> The household is not a particular place or group of people, nor confined to heterosexual couples and their children, but stands for “the bundle of relationships ... through which primary reproductive activities are organised, recognising that these frequently involve principles of kinship and residence” (Kabeer 1991, 7).

work, rather than unpaid domestic work and *paid* work, and it is this division between household and public work that I take forward.<sup>18</sup> It is comparable to the division between paid and unpaid work because household work is “invisible” compared to work done by men in the public sphere. I operationalise my FPE approach by describing and analysing the burdens, justifications, structures and hierarchies in Timor’s gender division of labour (Nentwich and Kelan 2014).

Gendered material relations are also underpinned by ideologies of male authority that justify women’s greater labour burden and their lack of control over resources in the household and beyond (True 2012). Within the ideology of male authority, the idea of “masculinity” does “rhetorical work of valorisation, denigration, and exclusion done by the formal, relational properties of masculinity as a concept, *regardless of the substantive qualities in question*” (Hutchings 2008, 24, emphasis added). The ideology of male authority rationalises husbands’, fathers’, brothers’ and uncles’ control of women (Rubin 1975, 168). What is more, the ideology of male authority permeates institutions outside the household. Male power in one sphere justifies and reinforces authority in others, including in the state. Thus, although the household and kinship are key sites producing gender injustice, men’s disproportionate capture of power and resources saturates all areas. In Goetz’s words: “the patriarchal mindsets and social relations that are produced in the private sphere are not contained there but infuse most economic social and political institutions” (Goetz 2007, 18).

Some argue criticism of Timorese society as patriarchal is misplaced because Timorese belief systems valorise women as the source of life (Hicks 2004, 2015), however, valorisation of *reproduction* reinforces gender differences, which are

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<sup>18</sup> In Timor-Leste, domestic work is work associated with the private sphere and the household, such as childrearing, cleaning, cooking, but also tending to household gardens, raising small animals, and running small shops or businesses from the home. Public work includes paid work, but also any work associated with the public sphere such as tending far away fields and staple crops, raising communal houses, transporting goods, heavy lifting, driving, politicking, and negotiation between families. This is common in rural areas in developing countries. The gender division of labour is normative, rather than actual, because in Timor-Leste women regularly perform “public” work (see Grenfell et al. 2009, Grenfell et al. 2015 for a description of the gendered division of labour in Timor-Leste and ).

ultimately harmful to women. In societies using brideprice, women's socially constructed role in reproduction and as the lynchpin of kinship systems means that women's fecundity is at once both "repressed and revered" (Meillassoux 1975, 78, Fishburne-Collier and Rosaldo 1981, 279). In the Timor case, this manifests in what some anthropologists have termed a "maternal religion", which places fertility at the centre of ritual (Hicks 1990, 2004, 2012, Silva and Simião 2012). Some scholars have thus advocated a "return" to woman-centred religion or matrifocality, which would be more culturally legitimate than imposing "Western" gender mainstreaming (Trindade 2008). But the valorisation of women's role in reproduction reduces women's value to a function of their fertility—as a function of their biology—to the exclusion of other features (Cockburn 2013, 437). Moreover, and like many human societies, although Timorese women are celebrated as the source of life, menstruation and birth is considered polluting, dangerous and taints women by association (Nguyen 2015, 26-8). Thus, a feminist approach shows that woman-centred "matrifocality"—worship of women's fecundity—does not lead to female authority or an increase in women's ability to control material resources. An emphasis on motherhood complements rather than contradicts the ideology of male authority because men's power lies in the more important material world, whereas women have a sacred place in the spiritual world (Niner 2012, Fishburne-Collier and Rosaldo 1981). The disjuncture between dogma and practice arises because cultural gender notions rarely reflect actual male-female relations (Ortner and Whitehead 1980, 10).

### 2.6.3 War, Militarised Conflict and Violence

As True emphasises in her feminist political economy of violence against women, there are linkages between different forms of violence against women and the structures of the gender division of labour, war and conflict and neoliberal globalisation (True 2012). In the case of gender intervention in Timor-Leste, a feminist political economy approach needs to encompass war and militarised conflict. War and militarised conflict in Timor formed social classes and

constituted certain social forces. These social forces' interests were served by an ideology celebrating of armed masculinity, which was thus used to shape the relationships between state and society. In the post-conflict period, social forces constituted during war have captured the bulk state resources, at the same time as constraining most women's access to state and household resources. Secondly and relatedly, the lack of access to resources sets the conditions for continued high levels of sexual and gender-based violence.

Violence against Women (VAW) "is rooted in gendered social structures rather than individual and random acts; it cuts across age, socio-economic, educational and geographic boundaries" (UNWomen 2013). These structures, as I explained above, are historically-specific.<sup>19</sup> Sexual and gender-based violence are more prevalent during conflicts because of the greater availability means of violence (especially arms), ideologies that celebrate armed masculinity and men's entitlement to sex, and rape as a weapon of war. In these respects, war and militarised conflict shape social relations in gender retrogressive directions (Hudson, Bowen, and Nielsen 2016).

FPE approaches, because of their focus on material relations, have tended to see violence against women as "epiphenomenal, derivative of another more major social process at work such as war or capitalism" whereas VAW possesses its own logic in materially unequal gender relations (True 2010, 44). This is not the approach taken here. Rather, a feminist structural political economy approach can help explain how material relations, the state, ideology and the gender division of labour and kinship and their distributional outcomes set the conditions for high

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<sup>19</sup> I use the UN definition of Violence Against Women as: "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life" (UNWomen 2013). Until relatively recently, women's experiences of intimate partner violence were dismissed by turns as exceptional or normal. In the 1980s, new research on prevalence established how pervasive, multifarious and extensive VAW was (Kelly 2005, 475). In the 1990s, following successful lobbying by anti-VAW activists armed with new data and a new strategy to make "women's rights, human rights", the study of VAW moved from margin to mainstream in the academy (Kelly 2005, 475). Networking and coalition-building by activists on a single anti-VAW message generated support and resources for the anti-VAW movement and has been a "wellspring" for much feminist activism (Kelly 2005, 475).



rates of violence against women. For example, there is a relationship between women's lack of access to productive resources, and men's control over these resources and violence against women (True 2010, 39).

Moving to the Timor-Leste case, the ideology of male authority manifests during and after war in what True terms the "celebration of armed masculinity" (True 2012). This celebration of armed masculinity helps explain the nature of outcomes of gender interventions in Timor-Leste. To take a step back: patriarchal systems devalue femininity vis-à-vis masculinity, regardless of the content or substance of that masculinity (Hutchings 2008). Although the content of masculinity varies according to time, place and power relations, masculinity is always valued more than femininity (Hutchings 2008). Both the content and relational values of masculinities require empirical analysis and explication in any study of gender relations. Hegemonic masculinity is a term developed by Connell to describe how, although all men benefit from patriarchal dividends, not all men benefit equally because of the intersection of class status with gender, for instance (Connell 2005). The ideological valorisation of an ideal type of hegemonic masculinity reinforces certain men's disproportional benefits from social and gender orders. Militaries are institutions of hegemonic masculinity which perform the rhetorical work of constructing the importance of men and their place dominating military institutions (Kronsell 2006, 108). In militaries, armed masculinity is the norm, and its dominance is part-and-parcel of militarisation, the "step-by-step process by which a person or a thing gradually comes to be controlled by the military or comes to depend on for its well-being on militaristic ideas" (Enloe 2000, 3). As I show in Chapters 3 and 4, the celebration of armed masculinity has a damaging effect on gender justice. For one thing, guns are a source of masculine identity "linked with power and subordination" and that maintains the socially constructed associations of men with war and guns (True 2012, 45).

The ideologies of male authority and armed masculinity hold "hierarchical political, economic orders together at every level" (True 2015, 421). The valorisation

of armed masculinity justifies socio-political orders. For example, even prior to the Indonesian invasion, Timorese elite classes were militarised, that is, because elites were themselves members of the military, they became dependent upon the military for resources, and motivated by militaristic ideas (Enloe 2000, 3). The celebration of armed masculinity was characteristic of the Timorese elite, yet in the post-conflict era, this celebration has also extended into wider society through the valorisation of veterans. In another example, the ideology celebrating armed masculinity was also crucial to Indonesian rule, holding together the New Order. In particular, violence against East Timorese justified the Indonesian military's dominant role in the Indonesian state (Anderson 1993). Indonesia's war in Timor "gave an aura of unity and heroic purpose to an organisation that otherwise may have appeared bloated and fat" to the Indonesian public (Hughes 2009, 38). At the individual level, promotion in the Indonesian military was often tied to an individual's facility with violence in Timor (Anderson 1993).

War and militarisation often create the conditions for high levels of VAW which gender interventions seek to reduce. When we refocus attention away from the security of the state to the insecurity of women, we can see structural continuities between domestic violence, structural violence of poverty and deprivation and sexual and gender-based violence (True 2012, 4). Thus, the division between public war and private violence is a gendered one. War and VAW are not separate but exist on a continuum of violence (True 2010, 38). In the post-conflict period, VAW can continue or increase (True 2014b). For example, in Timor-Leste, domestic violence has not decreased, although incidences of violence committed by an unknown perpetrator have (Hynes et al. 2004). Indeed estimates of the prevalence of VAW have increased, but this could be because of better translations and measurements of VAW. During war, male war deaths can exceed female deaths, but in post-conflict contexts, numbers of women dying from war-related food, health, and personal insecurity can increase (Ormhaug, Meier, and Hernes 2009). Thus, feminists define post-war security as comprising not just the cessation of public fighting between men, but also the satisfaction of human needs including

the safety of women in their homes (Cockburn 2013). Thus, VAW is a factor necessary to explain the uneven outcomes of peacebuilding. In sum, war and militarisation shape institutions and social classes, which in turn genders distributional outcomes. Post-conflict reconstruction does not prioritise women, even though protection of women (from the violence of the enemy) often justifies war or military intervention (Young 2003, 146, True 2012).

Further, the use of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) as a military strategy to secure political and economic power and resources affects outcomes in gender interventions. Wartime SGBV committed by belligerent forces can “taint” female victims, and exclude them from communities and resources (True 2012, 127). Victims of wartime SGBV perpetrated by the “good guys” are often not counted or reported (True 2012, 127). This can normalise non-reporting of sexual violence that occurs within families and communities and contribute to a culture of impunity for perpetrators that create the conditions for the continuation of high levels of SGBV (True 2012, 127, Meger 2015, 417).

Methodologically, accounting for uneven outcomes of gender intervention involved problematizing “taken for granted” or common-sense ideologies such as the valorisation of male authority, militarisation, or matrifocality (Ackerly, Stern, and True 2006, Kronsell 2006). Interrogating how the ideology of male authority or matrifocality is relational, meaningful and practised was part of my feminist normative approach (Robinson 2006). I concentrated on eliciting ideas, facts and relationships related to gender justice and redistribution during my participant observation and large numbers of semi-structured and unstructured interviews with various sectors of Timorese society (see Table 1.3). I also applied a feminist political economy approach to the interrogation of anthropological material. Herein, I examined the disjuncture between matrifocal rhetoric on women’s value in motherhood, fertility, and birth, and the lack of control and access to resources experienced by women in practice (Fishburne-Collier and Rosaldo 1981, Reinharz and Davidman 1992).

#### 2.6.4 Kinship

Kinship is another key site producing gender relations and social inequality in the case of Timor-Leste and thus requires elaboration in my structural FPE approach. In particular, determining who benefits from kinship relations can help explain high levels of VAW, the entrenchment of harmful practices, and gaps between gender interventions' aims and outcomes. Moreover, kinship plays a key role in class formation, most notably in the current climate through the mechanism of brideprice. This contention—that kinship organises social relations—is in line with feminist critiques of anthropological studies of kinship (Peletz 1995). In this vein, I apply Fishburne-Collier's argument that paying brideprice in exchange for women causes social inequality, particularly in creating and reproducing ranks, (Fishburne-Collier 1988, 145). Rank is a specific anthropological term used to describe kin-based lineages with subordinate and superordinate groups. The following section lays out the theoretical basis for the relationship between kinship, gender relations, and class formation.

At a basic level, all kinship systems prohibit some sexual relations and prefer others. The wide variations in preferences and prohibitions of sexual relations illustrate that kinship is not biologically determined but a “normative” code of laws and morals for sex and marriage (Rubin 1975, 169, Meillassoux 1975, 11). The centrality of marriage in patrilineal kinship systems led early theorists such as Levi-Strauss to describe these systems as being based chiefly on “the exchange of women”. The exchange of women is an exchange of “sexual access, genealogical structures, lineage names and ancestors, rights and people—men women and children—in concrete systems of social relationships” (Rubin 1975, 177). Rubin argues the exchange of women is “made up of and reproduces, concrete forms of socially-organised” gender relations (Rubin 1975, 169). Anthropologists convincingly argued that, in kinship based societies, “marriage, as the basis of kinship, organises social inequality” (Fishburne-Collier 1988, vii, Meillassoux 1975). To put it another way: marriage is the basis of kinship, and kinship organises social

relations. In this sense, control over marriage *is* control over political power (Meillassoux 1975, 45).

At the same time, the intersection of kinship with political power is not anachronistic in the Timor case. Classes and centralised states have existed in Timor-Leste. However, kinship is productive of and produced by contemporary capitalist relations. Kinship remains crucial in many areas of Timorese social and political life, but intersects with electoral politics, cash, the finance market, the state, and social classes. The mutual constitution of kinship and access to political power in the Timor case is not unexpected because kinship systems are socially constructed and thus shaped by historical and material conditions (Meillassoux 1975, 3). Indeed, the politicisation of kin groups is a significant part of class formation (Meillassoux 1975, Peletz 1995, 355) and state formation (Musisi 1991). Indeed, Chapter 3 describes the historical politicisation of Timorese kin groups, wherein male lineage heads leveraged militarisation, slavery, and gender relations to control resources and form the currently dominant *Liurai-Dato* class.

Turning now to the contemporary period, one crucial way kinship and capital are mutually constitutive is through brideprice. Brideprice is a significant part of the Timorese political economy, requiring definition and explication. Brideprice is a form of marriage payment and refers to the valuables that the bride's family receives from the groom's family before, during and after marriage (see Table 6.1). In Timor-Leste, the exchange of women for a marriage payment is a "brideprice" because it is asymmetric, that is, net assets move from the groom's family to bride's family in exchange for the bride. Timor is not unique; marriage payments feature in many societies today. Brideprice is common in Africa, the Pacific, Central Asia, East Asia and Southeast Asia (Hudson 2016). Dowry (net assets move from the bride's family to the groom/groom's family) is regularly practised in South Asia and was common in Europe. Of all of the marriage payments, brideprice is the most widespread globally (Goody and Tambiah 1973, 51).

Brideprice and the exchange of women impact gender justice because they exclude women from political and economic benefits of their own circulation. Political authority and alliances that are created through brideprice have been the focus of anthropological work on Timor-Leste (McWilliam 2007, 2011, 2005, Hicks 2004, 2013, 2015). Such work contained an implicit assumption that because the exchange of women is beneficial in creating and cementing alliances between patrilineages, it also confers benefits to women. It tended to minimise or overlook the gendered aspects and gender injustices in the exchange of women. However, gender analysis shows that women are the “conduit of a relationship, rather than the partner to it” and cannot “realise the benefits of their own circulation” (Rubin 1975, 174). Besides, after marriage a wife’s loyalties belong to her husband’s kin, her children belong to her husband’s kin, and she works on land belonging to her husband’s kin (Meillassoux 1975, 75-7). Most crucially to this study’s feminist political economy analysis, male family members, not women, receive and control brideprice. Women, thus, cannot realise the political or economic benefits of their circulation. The use of cash and buffalo to exchange women between groups of men has a negative outcome for women because “women become equivalent to livestock” (Meillassoux 1975, 72-74).

### 2.6.5 Neoliberal Globalisation

Gender interventions in Timor took place during second-generation neoliberal reforms. First generation neoliberal reforms were about minimising the role of the state in regulating markets, while second generation reforms are characterised by greater attention to the role of the “effective” state in harnessing social relations for the market and society (Rittich 2006, 210, Hameiri 2010). In particular, the regulation of economic transactions is prioritised, principally the protection of “property and other investors rights” (Rittich 2006, 210). Economic growth and social inclusion were not seen as exclusive but complementary (Rittich 2006, 210). Social inclusion was also to be effected through law, regulatory and institutional reform (Rittich 2006, 210).

Second generation neoliberalism has major implications for the conceptualisation of gender, and gender justice, in gender interventions. For instance, “growth with equity” combined poverty reduction with the economic inclusion of women (Hughes 2009, 52). The economic inclusion of women was to be effected through financial inclusion, read, microfinance. Such approaches emphasising women’s agency in the market instrumentalise an ideology of empowerment, self-help and self-actualisation (Jakimow 2009). Yet, market access and inclusion does little to overturn hierarchal social and gender relations (Goetz and Gupta 1996, Rankin 2002, Ferguson 2010, Elyachar 2005).

Critical peace scholars advocating for local approaches have overlooked the critiques of these kinds of “second generation” approaches to participatory development by scholars such as Cooke (2003) Jayasuriya and Rodan (2007) and Carroll (2010). Such approaches show how projects taking a “local approach” can still advocate liberal agendas “to harness the ambition of each and every individual in local resources, labour and markets” (Hughes, Öjendal, and Schierenbeck 2015, 819). In another relevant critique, Meagher argued hybrid governance resembles the sub-contracting of government services to private and informal spaces to reduce the size and responsibility of government that was prevalent during neoliberal policymaking of the 1980s and 1990s (Meagher 2012, 8). In like manner, I argue that hybrid programming in local governance reform has also coincided with, in this case, the Timorese central government’s interest in “shedding expenditure responsibilities that exceed its fiscal capacity” (Cammack 2004, 204). Reliance on legitimacy or capacity explanations for government’s use of local or hybrid approaches overlooks the shared interests governments can have in liberal approaches to spending and cost-saving, local and individualised, participatory development.

Specifically, in the case of peacebuilding interventions in Timor-Leste, donors have been instrumental in promoting the use of microfinance for women’s economic empowerment. There are two aspects regarding microfinance and gender

intervention that necessitate the inclusion of neoliberal globalisation in my framework to evaluation gender interventions. First, this promotes new forms of gendered economic governance. Legal reform spearheaded by the World Bank's International Finance Corporation (IFC), government and donor subsidies and national policymaking have been instrumental in shaping microfinance in Timor-Leste, with troubling outcomes as I show in Chapters 7 and 8. Second, in Timor-Leste, microfinance is a part of a new and global "deep marketisation" of development, reaching beyond the state and institutionalising debt relations in the social sphere (Carroll 2015). In practice then, despite a focus on the social, and the idea the "institutions matter" in second generation reforms, international development agencies still saw "development as identical with economic growth", only now "good governance" is seen as guaranteeing markets (Rittich 2006, 210).

### 2.6.6 Implications of the Framework

In this study, I operationalise True and Hughes' theoretical insights on neoliberal globalisation in my methods and analysis of gender interventions (True 2012, Hughes 2015, 2012). First—and related with the gender division of labour—I concentrate on household work, budgets, who works, who is paid, and, crucially, who owes debts to whom (Guérin 2014). This indicates the kinds of economic and social stratification at the village and national level. Where possible, I try to connect labour and debts to historical relations of power, and to current gender relations. I look at class, gender and age stratification, and the reasons and ideologies accompanying them (see Appendix for a breakdown of class, gender and age of participants). Second, I analyse people's explanations for the frequency, severity, causes, and solutions for violence against women in interviews and participant observation, using a feminist framework of analysis (Reinharz and Davidman 1992). Economic conditions and causes featured in these narratives warrant explanation. Third, I problematise the narrative of local versus international, or local versus neoliberal, in Timorese policymaking. By examining advocacy, opposition, contestation, and interests, I find groups are "involved in



complex, tactical, multi-scalar alliances”, that cut across easy associations of peacebuilders with neoliberalism or local actors with an anti-liberal stance (Hameiri, Hughes, and Scarpello 2017, Hameiri and Jones 2017). Lastly, I coupled long exposure to village life of work and debts with an examination of the history of microfinance in Timor-Leste. Again, I go beyond the narratives of microfinance’s international introduction, locating its real history in the documents describing economic life in the Indonesian occupation, and in the Bank Rakyat Indonesia microfinance success story (Robinson 2004, Seibel and Ozaki 2009).

In like manner, operationalising a structural FPE approach methodologically involved analysing the post-conflict gendered distribution of state resources by comparing distributional outcomes for political coalitions, spending policies, veterans, victims of wartime violence, and vulnerable women in the community. I also relied on documentation of sexual and gender-based violence during the war, drawing out the relationships between sexual violence and material interests (CAVR 2006). Analysing government spending in the Timor-Leste case revealed the well-known trade-off between “military and social spending”, and the fact that increased military spending marginalises women (True 2012, 423).

## 2.7 Conclusion

This chapter began by outlining differing explanations for the uneven outcomes of peacebuilding interventions more broadly and gender interventions specifically. These explanations have dominated both academic and practitioner work on peacebuilding in Timor-Leste. Many analyses of the uneven outcomes of peacebuilding intervention pointed to problems with interveners’ statebuilding that created institutions without legitimacy or capacity. One particular critique of the liberal peace, the “local turn”, emphasised the lack of authenticity or a clash or cultural paradigms between local and international. There are problems with an argument based on legitimacy. Firstly, an explanation for unevenness and failures

of intervention that is reliant on binaries between local or international, or hybrids of them, cannot explain the differential impact of intervention on different groups within a society. Some groups support, while others repel interventions, in accordance with their own interests and ideology. Coalitions of interests and struggles between them shape outcomes. Thus, scholars using the local turn suffer from a lack of attention to other relations of power within target societies especially gender and class. I proposed that these structural relations are the cause of uneven outcomes of gender intervention. Gender intervention in Timor-Leste is an example of how different social forces and groups, both local and international, support and challenge aspects of peacebuilding interventions. Again, feminist analyses of gender mainstreaming have been often less attentive to class factors shaping outcomes for international programming.

The chapter outlined my analytical framework: structural feminist political economy. My approach starts from an analysis of gender relations including the gender division of labour and the ideology of male authority. The approach brought together True's (2012) feminist political economy with the structural political economy of Hughes (2015), Hameiri, Hughes, and Scarpello (2017), Hughes (2015), Jones (2010). Accordingly, gender relations and social forces are seen as co-constitutive in my theoretical framework.

I then made explicit my case for evaluating outcomes of gender intervention using the yardstick of gender justice, because gender justice encompasses political economy concerns with redistribution along gender and class lines. The gender division of labour is an important tool to analyse material relations between men and women. The gender division of labour results in inequalities in bargaining power between men and women within the household and these are subject to violent enforcement.

An analysis of gender intervention in Timor-Leste must include how war and militarisation have shaped Timorese socio-political life. Specifically, it has been crucial in the interrelated process of class formation and accumulation through

material effects of war and the valorisation of armed masculinity. War and militarisation set the conditions for high levels of violence against women because of the availability of arms, cultures of impunity for perpetrators of sexual and gender-based violence and the securitisation of men and masculinity. Of particular relevance to my critique of the local turn, keeping the peace can lead to a “trade-off” between military and social spending, with the effect of adding to women’s labour burdens.

The structural feminist political economy framework then defined kinship’s dual role in gender relations and class formation, following Fishburne-Collier (1988) and Meillassoux (1975). Kinship is thus a necessary inclusion in a feminist structural political economy of Timor-Leste because of kinship’s enduring role in class formation and brideprice. An examination of kinship relations reveals how gender relations and class are co-constitutive.

Neoliberal globalisation has been most apparent in “second generation” regulation of economic life in Timor-Leste. Some interveners have favoured access to markets as a solution to poverty, while others have advocated conditional cash transfers. Microfinance sets up a debt relation between poor women and international financial markets, while conditional cash can relegate more caring work to women’s sole responsibility. Nonetheless, these contemporary relations of debt and power are grounded in older processes of class formation and accumulation. It is to the development of historically-specific class and gender relations in Timor that I now turn.



## CHAPTER 3. CLASS FORMATION: SLAVERY AND MILITARISATION

### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter foregrounds the emergence and role of class formation in Timor-Leste as it has impacted the outcomes of gender interventions. The *Liurai-Dato* class emerged out of the monopolisation of trade, slavery, plantation agriculture, bureaucratisation, and militarisation during Portuguese and Indonesian rule. The dominance of the *Liurai-Dato* class underpins and conditions state power in Timor-Leste. The *Liurai-Dato* class is demarcated and formed through kinship, as I explain in Chapter 6. In the contemporary period, the most successful members of the *Liurai-Dato* class have been able to leverage their high-born status into well-paid political leadership, government or private sector jobs in Dili. Extended family members who are unable to break into these higher levels of the state remain in less prestigious functions such as village chiefs. Members of the *Liurai-Dato* class have shaped the emergence and use of institutions in line with their material interests and ideologies, including those institutions deployed in gender interventions. Uneven outcomes for gender interventions arise because the agendas and interests of economically and politically dominant *Liurai-Dato* class “diverge” from the goals of gender interventions (Jones 2010, 552).

This chapter examines four historically specific social dynamics—class formation, slavery, militarisation, and gender relations—to show how the historical emergence of, and conflicts between, kin groups, underpin and condition the formation of classes. It first considers the role Portuguese trade, taxes, and institutions played in the formation and consolidation of the *Liurai-Dato* class

from the mid-nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century. In particular, it is argued the change from a patchwork of Portuguese-Timorese alliances and enmities to centralised bureaucratic rule incorporating *Liurai* and *Dato* resulted in greater vertical inequality *between* Timorese. Next, the chapter explains how Indonesian rule (1975-1999) continued the pattern of elite incorporation. The corollary of elite incorporation has been the subordination of other groups of Timorese as slaves, serfs, or bonded labourers. The subordination of such groups is of continuing relevance because of the kinship-mediated class system. Next, the chapter describes the militarisation of the *Liurai-Dato* class. This class came to depend on the military for its well-being during Portuguese and Indonesian rule. The penultimate section analyses the role of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). In the political economy of the Indonesian occupation, there was a continuum between unequal gender relations and conflict related SGBV that manifested in the use of rape as a weapon of war, sexual slavery, the exchange of women and polygyny. The final section briefly describes the emergence of the Timorese women's movement within FRETILIN and the women's wing of FRETILIN, the Popular Organisation of Timorese Women (*Organização Popular Da Mulher Timorense*, OPMT). The examination of the women's movement in the context of militarisation and SGBV provides context for Chapter 4 on gender responsive budgeting, where conflicts over "heroes" and "victims" have produced a gendered distribution of state resources.

### 3.2 The Emergence of the *Liurai-Dato* Class

The dominant class of Timorese society comprises two overlapping groups that are demarcated by kinship—the *Liurai* (Tetun: King) and the *Dato* (Tetun: Noble).<sup>20</sup> *Liurai* lineages are "aristocratic"; considered the first settling or autochthonous family of any given area. Hence, *Liurai* lineages are the effective landowners,

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<sup>20</sup> Standard Tetun-English Dictionary, Second Edition., s.vv. "Liurai", which is, "King; Timorese native chief". and "Dato", which is, "native chief, nobleman; nobility, nobles". Compare Dato with the Indonesian term "datu", which is "title of headman". *Kamus Indonesia Inggris: An Indonesian-English Dictionary*, Third Edition., s.v. "datu".

determining other's rights to land in the area (Hicks 1983, 51). *Dato* lineages are “noble” and lower status than *Liurai* lineages. Members of *Liurai* lineages usually marry endogamously; that is, they marry other *Liurai* or *Dato*. In sum, the *Liurai* and *Dato* are respectively first and second ranked kin groups, linked by intermarriage, which together comprise a dominant class.<sup>21</sup> In the contemporary period, like in the past, members of this class dominate subnational political and economic institutions. A smaller number of people of the *Liurai-Dato* class dominate Dili-based institutions, forming a recognisable political elite. It is to the formation of this class that I now turn.

Between the sixteenth and late eighteenth century, Portuguese control of Timor was minimal (Kammen 2003, Gunn 1999). Portuguese traders were just one of many groups of merchants and missionaries in the eastern part of the Southeast Asian archipelago (Kammen 2003, Davidson 1994). Timor was part of the “informal Portuguese empire” rather than the formal Portuguese state (Andaya 2010).<sup>22</sup> For this reason, the beneficiaries of the Timorese slave and sandalwood trades were maritime traders, corporations and the Catholic Church located in Goa and Macao, not Portugal. From the late eighteenth century, Portuguese state-sanctioned, and militarily supported, trade in slaves and sandalwood grew. The deepening mercantile connection with Portugal had consequences for social and political structures in Timor.

Timor-Leste's exclave of Oecusse (see the map in Figure 1.1) is a good illustration of how trade and military alliances with the Portuguese in this context of growing mercantile connection, was the catalyst for the formation of the *Liurai-Dato* class. The stepping off point was the conversion of the *Liurai* of Lifau in Oecusse to Catholicism in 1641 (Davidson 1994, 57). Subsequent conversion and intermarriage of local rulers, *Liurai* and *Dato*, resulted in more mixed—*mestiço*—people and

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<sup>21</sup> The specific relationship between kinship and class in Timor is explained in Chapters 5 and 6.

<sup>22</sup> The colonial empire was termed the *Estado do India* (Portuguese: The Indian State). Despite claiming Timor in 1515, Timor-Leste was not even named as a Portuguese overseas dominion until 1681 (Andaya 2010).

Portuguese speaking people in Oecusse, Flores and Solor, termed “*Topasses*” (Andaya 2010).<sup>23</sup> The *Topasses* sometimes held Portuguese administrative and military posts in Oecusse, but they were outside formal Portuguese control. For instance, the *Topasses* fought both the Portuguese and the Dutch for control over the lucrative sandalwood, slave, and coffee trades (Davidson 1994). The *Topasses* exacted tributes of slaves and sandalwood from their subjects and captured slaves and goods from enemy groups (Hägerdal 2012, 62). Later on, the *Topasses da Costa* family blocked repeated attempts by the Portuguese to sell or trade the nominally Portuguese owned Oecusse exclave to the Dutch (Hicks 1983). They did so by making themselves indispensable to the Portuguese war with other groups by collecting taxes and supplying troops to the Portuguese during trade wars with the Dutch (Yoder 2016, Hägerdal 2012). These patterns of incorporation, allegiance, and enmity occurred across Timor and helped shape the patterns of districts seen today in the map in Figure 3.1 below.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> *Mestiço* is a mixed ethnicity person. In Timor, in general, *mestiço* families can include two or more of the following ethnic backgrounds: Timorese, Portuguese, Mozambican, Angolan, Brazilian, Hakka Chinese, Macanese, Arab, Indonesian-Malay, or Dutch. *Topasses* is likely derived from *topi* (Indonesian: hat). *Topasses* were also commonly called “Black Portuguese” (Hägerdal 2012).

<sup>24</sup> Map reprinted from National Statistics Directorate, Timor-Leste Census of Population and Housing Atlas, 2000.





Figure 3.1 Map of Timor-Leste

The situation changed from the 1850s, as the plantation economy using coffee began to replace sandalwood and slaves. During this period, the Portuguese subjected the forty-nine *Liurai* on the eastern half of Timor to a twenty percent levy on coffee production. As the economy shifted to plantation coffee in the late nineteenth century, the nascent *Liurai-Dato* class gained access to new resources. *Liurai* benefitted from coffee wealth because it allowed them to buy “more weapons and gunpowder, to raise more buffalo, stage more feasts, marry more wives, wage more wars, plunder enemy settlements and accumulate more human heads and slaves” (Shepherd and McWilliam 2013, 331). Those *Liurai* not growing coffee had to pay ten percent of their rice harvest (Gunn 1999, 160). In practice, however, most *Liurai* paid irregularly. More importantly, under the new Portuguese tax system, *Liurai* were prohibited from levying their own taxes and tributes, as they had formerly, which marked their incorporation into the colonial systems. The prohibition led to violent resistance by the *Liurai* (Davidson 1994). The twenty percent coffee levy chafed, and there were seven major tax rebellions between 1860 and 1915 (Davidson 1994). For example, in 1911 tax increases resulted in *Liurai* Dom Boaventura leading a rebellion of disaffected *Liurai* in Manufahi. The Manufahi rebellion was defeated by a coalition of Portuguese and enemy Timorese *Liurai*.

Notwithstanding the rise and fall of individual fortunes, the relationship between *Liurai/Dato* and commoners remained asymmetric. After the Manufahi rebellion in 1911-12, *Liurai* kingdoms were divided into smaller units called *Suco* all over Portuguese Timor.<sup>25</sup> *Liurai* who had revolted against the Portuguese were replaced by “individual *Liurai* descendants and [*Dato*] totally loyal to the Portuguese” (Guterres 2006, 96). Loyal *Liurai* became heads of Portuguese administrative districts or *Regulo*, while others became lower ranked Village Chiefs back in their home village (Gunn 1999, 246-7, Kammen 2017, 135). The line between the two

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<sup>25</sup> The word *suco* is a Portuguese rendering of *suku*. *Suku* in modern Indonesian means “extended family, ethnic group, or tribe”. *Kamus Indonesia Inggris: An Indonesian-English Dictionary*, Third Edition., s.v. “suku”. Three spellings exist today in Tetun: *suku*, *suko*, *suco* and it generally signifies the collection of hamlets comprising a spread out “village”. In this study, *suku* is translated as “village” throughout.

ranks of aristocratic *Liurai* and noble *Dato* became blurred (Hicks 1983, 23). More broadly, although some individual *Liurai* lost power, the colonial administrators realised the usefulness of “maintaining the façade of indigenous political figureheads in the service of the colonial state [. ...] The result was a highly dependent neo-traditional revival of dynastic rule” (Kammen 2016, 102). Class structure in Timor, as a result, was pyramid-like. Privileged classes of European, *Mestiço*, Chinese, and “assimilated” *Liurai* and *Dato* numbered around 7,000 people, while peasants, slaves and serfs numbered around 435,000 people (Jolliffe 1978, 42). *Mestiço* families were comprised of *Liurai* and *Dato* families who married or became the intimate partners of Europeans, Chinese or other outsider peoples. Kammen describes what I take to be a typical example of *Liurai-Dato* intermarriage with Europeans: One of the Portuguese Governor’s sons was sent to manage his father’s coffee plantations in Ermera and he settled in the district of Maubara, where he took a daughter of a local *Dato* family, Madalena Lo Bete, as his mistress (Kammen 2016, 104).

Most crucially to the argument of this chapter, after 1912, taxes were fundamental to the formation and dominance of the *Liurai-Dato* class because commoners were forced to provide goods and labour to *Liurai* and *Dato* who passed the taxes on to the Portuguese in a system of indirect rule. Despite the imposition of levies by the Portuguese, their role in administering and controlling who paid taxes was crucial to developing *Liurai* and *Dato* wealth and power within the Portuguese colonial state. During their reorganisation of the state after the Manufahi wars of 1912, Portuguese introduced a “*capitacão*” (Portuguese: head tax). The *capitacão* was a direct and monetised taxation system to replace the twenty percent levy on coffee production. The head tax was equivalent to around four month’s labour, and people absconding from cash payment, or payment of labour *in lieu* of cash, were jailed (Gunn 1999, 211-12). *Liurai* and *Xefe Suku* (Tetun: Village Chief) were not only exempt from the head tax but also entitled to a twelfth of the corvée labour extracted through the head tax (Davidson 1994). The labour burdens were considerable and inescapable: “individuals unable to pay the head tax were forced

to work as *auxiliar* (Portuguese: auxiliaries), some allocated to civil servants and traditional chiefs as domestic servants” (Kammen 2003, 76). Others were compelled to labour on plantations and roads (corvée labour)(Kammen 2003, 76). Brutal physical punishments during this corvée labour were the norm and meted out by higher ranked Timorese (Jolliffe 1978, 48).

In the same period of reorganisation after the Manufahi war, the Portuguese incorporated *Liurai* and *Dato* into a bureaucratic system, systematising vertical inequality between Timorese, as shown in Table 3.1. Of note, the Portuguese appointed new administrators for the head tax—Village Chiefs who were from either the aristocratic *Liurai* or noble *Dato* lineages (Hicks 1983, 23). The position of Village Chief was inherited, but the individual from the right family had to be elected by “consensus” (Hicks 1983, 23). Candidates had to be male, moderately fluent in Portuguese, and Christian. It is important to realise that the Village Chief was elected by only a quarter of the population of one village—the *male* members of aristocratic and noble lineages (Hicks 1983, 23). In those middle levels of the racialised colonial bureaucracy Timorese had access to, the *Liurai* and *Dato* dominated all of the available paid employment available, such as the new subnational administration role, *Xefe Postu* (Tetun: Chief of the Post) (Kammen 2016, Hicks 1983). Likewise, in the military, *Liurai* automatically became commissioned as officers whereas the lower ranked *Dato* did not automatically gain officer status (Hicks 1983).

	PLANTATION PERIOD ~1850-1910	POST “PACIFICATION” ~1910-1950	PORTUGUESE OVERSEAS PROVINCE ~1950-1975
ARISTOCRAT	<i>Dom</i> (Portuguese: King); or <i>Liurai Boot</i> (Tetun: Great King)	<i>Regulo</i> (Portuguese: Petty King)	<i>Administrador</i> (Portuguese: Administrator)
	<i>Liurai</i> (Tetun: King)	<i>Liurai</i>	<i>Xefe Posto</i> (Tetun: Chief of the Post)
NOBLE	<i>Dato</i> (Tetun: Noble)	<i>Xefe Suku</i> (Tetun: Village Chief)	<i>Xefe Suku</i>
PEASANT OR COMMONER	<i>Ema Reino</i> (Tetun: lit. Person of the kingdom; peasant) <sup>26</sup>	<i>Ema Reino</i>	<i>Ema Reino</i> <i>Toos nain</i> (Tetun: Farmer)
SLAVES / SERFS	<i>Atan</i> (Tetun: slave) <i>Lutu-hum</i> (Tetun: retainer), <i>ulun-houris</i> (Tetun: chattel slave), <i>servi</i> (serf)	<i>Atan; Lutu-hum</i>	<i>Atan; Lutu-hum</i>

Table 3.1 Rank Continuity During the Portuguese Period, 1850-1975

These class structures translated into the parameters of a new Timorese political elite in the capital, Dili. The Dili-based members of the *Liurai-Dato* class had more wealth and power than those *Liurai* and *Dato* outside of Dili. In the early 1970s, educated youth from *Mestiço* and *Liurai* families working in the civil service, the military, or the press, formed a recognisable *intelligentsia* in Dili.<sup>27</sup> However, events in Portugal soon overtook them. In 1974, the military coup against the fascist Salazar-Caetano regime in Lisbon precipitated the decolonisation of Timor (United Nations 1976, Jolliffe 1978, 49). The Timorese intelligentsia responded by forming political parties to prepare for independence (Jolliffe 1978).<sup>28</sup> Unsurprisingly, political party leaders were from aristocratic *Liurai* families (Hicks 1983, 8, Guterres 2006). FRETILIN, formed in 1974, was the leftist party of

<sup>26</sup> Standard Tetun-English Dictionary, Second Edition., s.v. “reino” meaning “kingdom, realm; tribe; subjects; commoners; people”.

<sup>27</sup> In the 1960s, with the granting of Portuguese citizenship to Timorese, Portugal expanded education for children of *Liurai* and *Dato* in Catholic seminaries. These were the only literate Timorese. For a discussion of the influence of the Church education on the formation of this intelligentsia see Carey (1999).

<sup>28</sup> For an overview of the political parties in 1975 see Gunn (2011, 1999), and Dunn (2003).

independence that went on to lead the resistance against the Indonesian military for decades. FRETILIN's founding members Xavier do Amaral, Nicolau Lobato, Rosa Bonaparte, Justino Mota and Xanana Gusmão were from *Liurai* families, while Mari Alkatiri, Jose-Ramos-Horta were from *Liurai / Mestiço* families.<sup>29</sup> Similarly, in the rival Timorese Democratic Union (UDT), founding member, Francisco Lopes da Cruz, was the son of a *Liurai*, while members Domingos de Oliveira and the brothers Mario Carrascalão, João Carrascalão were from a *Mestiço* family.<sup>30</sup> Other prominent UDT members came from the Catholic Church, the Portuguese administration, or from the Hakka-Chinese business community (Gunn 2011). Likewise, the founder of the pro-Indonesian integration party APODETI, José Abílio Osório Soares, was from a *Liurai* family (Bovensiepen 2014a).

### 3.2.1 Timorese Elites in the Indonesian Occupation 1975-1999

Fearing that left-leaning FRETILIN party would seize power and proclaim independence on FRETILIN's terms, the rival political party UDT, backed by the police, staged a coup on the 11th of August 1974. UDT was a conservative party advocating a slow decolonisation process, continued links with Portugal, and maintaining the power of the *Liurai* (Jolliffe 1978, Gunn 1999). Because UDT were conservative, they feared the social changes that FRETILIN promised with their revolutionary program. After the coup, UDT called for the imprisonment of all FRETILIN members. The subsequent civil war between FRETILIN and UDT was violent, with numerous atrocities committed on both sides (CAVR 2006).<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> FRETILIN began in 1974 as the *Associação Social-Democrática Timorense* (ASDT), or Timorese Social Democratic Association. Other leaders of the 1975 generation from *Liurai* families included: Vicente Sahe, member of the FRETILIN Central Committee, and son of the *Liurai* of Bucoli; Borja da Costa, member of the FRETILIN Central Committee, and son of the *Liurai* of Same (Guterres 2006).

<sup>30</sup> Mario and João Carrascalão were sons of a wealthy coffee plantation owner, and Domingos de Oliviera was a member of the military administered customs office and his family had coffee interests. Mario Carrascalão (d. 2017) was a member of the fascist National Union party of Salazar/Caetano Portugal (United Nations 1976).

<sup>31</sup> This chapter relies heavily on the work of the CAVR the *Comissão de Acolhimento, Verdade e Reconciliação* (the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation). CAVR was a UN initiated Commission, "tasked by the government of East Timor with "establishing the truth regarding past human rights violations" and presenting "factual and objective information" to determine whether and what kind of pattern of abuses of human rights took place (Roosa 2007, 569-570).

FRETILIN, backed by the army, defeated UDT and declared independence on the 28<sup>th</sup> of November 1975 (Nygaard-Christensen 2012). At the same time, Indonesian and Timorese troops skirmished on the border.

Using the UDT-FRETILIN fighting as a pretext, and with the backing of the USA and Australia, the Indonesian Armed Forces (ABRI) invaded Timor on the 7<sup>th</sup> of December 1975 (US Embassy Jakarta 1975). Indonesia and its allies justified the invasion by citing FRETILIN's socialism. Left wing politics had been brutally suppressed in Suharto's 1965 takeover, and hatred of leftist FRETILIN propelled and vindicated the invasion of Timor-Leste. The invasion was brutal. Tens of thousands of Timorese were killed (Jolliffe 1978, 277-9, CAVR 2006). Many Timorese evacuated Dili for the mountains where they held out against the invasion. In districts close to Indonesian West Timor, the resistance was mostly defeated by 1977. In contrast, the central mountains and east of the island remained under FRETILIN control until the ABRI offensive of December 1978 crushed the last open resistance (CAVR 2006).<sup>32</sup> During this period, many *Liurai* and *Dato* who had previously been suspicious of FRETILIN and who had supported one of the other parties lent their support to the anti-Indonesian forces under FRETILIN, despite FRETILIN being an ostensibly Marxist party, committed to ending social hierarchies.

The 25-year Indonesian occupation of East Timor was brutal and coercive, but incorporation of the *Liurai-Dato* class was part of the occupation's political strategy of "working with and through the local population" (Jones 2010, 255). Administratively, the *Suku* or villages of the Portuguese period became *Desa* (Indonesian: village) (Yoder 2005, 1189).<sup>33</sup> In terms of personnel, initially Indonesian military men filled high level positions within the bureaucracy, civil service and the military posts such as *Bupati* (Indonesian: District Administrator)

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<sup>32</sup> Interview with the daughter of a Village Chief, a young girl at the time of the invasion, ET158-2011, Dili, 7 July 2011.

<sup>33</sup> Yoder (2005), for example, states that the 18 *Suku* listed in 1952 in Oecusse became the 18 *Desa* under Indonesian administration

and *Camat* (Indonesian: Sub-District Administrator), but they were later replaced with Timorese men (CAVR 2006, Hill 2001). As the former Timorese District Administrator of the eastern district Lautem, recalled:

Public servants from the Portuguese-era were immediately appointed. Those of us who came down [from the hills] early and had been public servants were immediately appointed, whether FRETILIN, APODETI or UDT... just appoint him (CAVR 2006, 46).

The District Administrator's statement reveals the continuity of institutional personnel. There was a pattern of elite integration throughout Timor where, "an effort was made to select individuals from the old noble families to fill these positions" (Kammen 2016, 136).<sup>34</sup> A significant number of *Liurai* and *Dato* were thus able to retain their privilege over commoners by becoming part of the Indonesian bureaucracy.

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<sup>34</sup> Estimates suggest that from 1975-1999, up to one quarter (250,000) of all Timorese people were killed as a result of fighting, deliberate famine, or in concentration camps (CAVR 2006).



	PORTUGUESE PERIOD 1960-1975	INDONESIAN PERIOD 1975-1998	INDONESIAN MILITARY TERRITORIAL COMMAND STRUCTURE <sup>35</sup>
ARISTOCRAT	<i>Administrador</i> (Portuguese: Administrator)	<i>Bupati</i> (Indonesian: District Administrator)	<i>Kodim</i> (Indonesian: District Military Command)
NOBLE	<i>Xefe Posto</i>	<i>Camat</i> (Indonesian: Subdistrict Administrator)	<i>Koramil</i> (Indonesian: Sub-district Military Command)
	<i>Xefe Suku</i>	<i>Kepala Desa</i> (Indonesian: Head of the Village) <i>Temukung</i> (Atoni: Head of the lineage)	<i>Babinsa</i> (Indonesian: Non-commissioned guidance officer or team)
	<i>Xefe Aldeia</i> (Portuguese: Chief of the Hamlet)  The headman of a lineage can be a commoner or noble lineage	<i>RT Rukun Tetangga</i> (Indonesian: neighbourhood association)  <i>RW Rukun Warga</i> (Indonesian: Administrative unit)	-
PEASANT OR COMMONER	<i>Ema Reino</i> (Tetun: Peasant)	<i>Toos nain</i> (Tetun: Farmer) <i>Petani</i> (Indonesian: Farmer)	Indonesian Regular Soldiers
		<i>Wanra = Perlawanan Rakyat</i> (Indonesian: People's Resistance) Civil defence forces <sup>36</sup> ; <i>Ratih = Rakyat Terlatih</i> (Indonesian: Militia Trained civilians); <i>Tenaga Bantuan Operasi TBO</i> (Indonesian: Operations Assistants)	
SLAVES OR SERFS	<i>Atan; Lutu-hum; Ulun-houris</i>	<i>Atan ba ema</i> (Tetun: slave to people or domestic servant) <i>Budak</i> (Indonesian: Slave); Sex slaves and those in servile marriages	-

Table 3.2 Rank Continuity during the Indonesian Occupation

<sup>35</sup> Source on territorial command structure: Kammen (1999)

<sup>36</sup> Militia leaders and pro-Integration officials were still drawn from the *Liurai-Dato* class

Like the Portuguese colonial government, the Indonesian government distributed material benefits to Timorese who cooperated. In Dili, high-level bureaucrats were rewarded for supporting Indonesian rule, such as the former manager of the Portuguese *Banco Nacional Ultramarino* (BNU), who grew wealthy managing coffee plantations for the Indonesian military-backed PT Denok (Budiardjo and Liong 1984, 100).<sup>37</sup> In a similar example, the wealthy Carrascalão family won back their coffee plantations in the 1980s. Individuals from that family often held prominent leadership positions within the Indonesian government (Budiardjo and Liong 1984, 100). Away from Dili, district and sub-district administrators and village chiefs gained material benefits such as “cash incomes” and access to resources through “petty corruption” and extortion or exploitation of other Timorese (Budiardjo and Liong 1984, 100). The Indonesian military rewarded supporters with government jobs and material benefits, creating a state-dependent elite, with several thousand of Timorese on the payroll.<sup>38</sup>

Despite the efforts at incorporation, Indonesian military rule alienated some members of the *Liurai-Dato* class, propelling them to join the resistance. In Maubara, for instance, the Indonesian military and their associates took coffee plantations from some elite families and sidelined them from political office, while non-*Liurai* families who had backed the pro-Indonesian party APODETI were given posts in the administration (Kammen 2016, 136). An Indonesian intelligence report from 1982 similarly suggested that some elites felt their social inferiors had usurped their positions:

Some of the GPK leaders [FALINTIL/FRETILIN leaders] are *Liurai* or the offspring of *Liurai*.<sup>39</sup> Some traditional leaders were replaced as leaders of tribes because of the upheavals, and new leaders were appointed by Operation commanders. Some of these traditional leaders feel very resentful because they have lost their wealth and now find

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<sup>37</sup> PT Denok’s role in the occupation is described in Chapter 7.

<sup>38</sup> For example, the *Liurai* Gaspar Nunes who supported UDT, was appointed speaker of the provincial legislature (Kammen 2016, 135). One of my interviewees, now bounced back down to Village Chief, had been a member of the DPR-D during the 1990s. Interview with Village Chief ET104, Oecusse, 30 July 2015.

<sup>39</sup> GPK is *Gerakan pengacau keamanan* (Indonesian: Security disturbance movement).

themselves in positions of disadvantage and moreover being led by people who are not the descendants of *Liurai*.<sup>40</sup>

The Indonesian military document does show that the occupying forces considered control over disenfranchised elites sidelined by the invasion to be crucial to the occupying forces. Timorese elites in the administration were constantly under watch; Table 3.2 shows the Indonesian military territorial command, which paralleled each administrative level. Parallel military commands had authority over all Timorese, whether *Liurai*, *Dato* or commoner.<sup>41</sup> Intelligence operatives monitored Timorese village chiefs, district and subdistrict administrators for their loyalty constantly (Budiardjo and Liong 1984, 102).

Within the FRETILIN-led resistance, there was an internal struggle regarding whether to reform, relinquish, or reject, the superior class status of *Liurai*. In one camp was a centre nationalist group that supported retaining *Liurai* leadership. This group dominated FRETILIN before the Indonesian invasion. In a revealing example, in the first and only district level elections organised by FRETILIN in July 1975, Timorese were forced to elect members of the *Liurai* class to the constituent assembly because *Liurai* were “competent” (Gunn 2011, 93). After the invasion, in areas under FRETILIN control, some *Liurai* and *Dato* members re-imposed “feudal relations”, “demanding that the masses give them the respect they had experienced when they were Portuguese civil servants” (Budiardjo and Liong 1984, 58). The tension between the *Liurai-Dato* class and commoners manifested in criticism of centrist FRETILIN President Xavier do Amaral’s “feudalistic attitudes and insistence upon a comfortable lifestyle” in FRETILIN’s mountain bases (Budiardjo and Liong 1984, 59). Do Amaral was deposed as FRETILIN president in 1977

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<sup>40</sup> Source: Established Procedure (Protap) on Intelligence no. 01/IV/1982 cited in Budiardjo and Liong (1984, 194).

<sup>41</sup> The “dual structure” of Indonesian civilian and military command was the same in the rest of New Order Indonesia (Turner 2005, Crouch 2007).

because of criticisms of his view that civilians return to the villages from the mountains.<sup>42</sup>

In the other camp were FRETILIN radicals who campaigned against “tribalism, regionalism, arranged marriages and feudal servitude” (Budiardjo and Liong 1984, 59). This view is represented in the 1974 FRETILIN manifesto, which held Portuguese colonialism responsible for the “obsolete and anachronistic political and administrative structure” and aspired to be free of this colonisation and “other forms of domination and exploitation” (Jolliffe 1978, 328-30). For FRETILIN radicals, raising awareness of class divisions through “conscientisation was crucial to social reform” (da Silva 2012).<sup>43</sup> FALINTIL commander Ular Rihi described how he came to recognise the presence and meaning of Timorese class hierarchy during the Indonesian occupation:<sup>44</sup>

During the Portuguese times, I had been of the *Liurai* class; there was always the possibility of getting *ordinença* [ordnance—Tetun: military logistic support]. While we were going to school, they were carrying our provisions while we were riding the horses. During the war, we found ourselves in their position, carrying everything, performing manual labour so that we could put ourselves in their shoes. I began to learn what it was to be oppressed and to understand how wrong class oppression was (Rihi 2009).

Ular Rihi’s awareness of his class position came through manual work. The war between UDT and FRETILIN and infighting within FRETILIN made it clear that the superordination of the *Liurai-Dato* class generated conflicts within and between Timorese people (CAVR 2006).

Even though radical members of FRETILIN challenged *Liurai* superordination, FRETILIN’s commitment to social reform diminished in the 1980s. Many radical

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<sup>42</sup> Much later, in 2008, do Amaral said he was deposed because he suggested that in the forests, FRETILIN members should look to “new ideas”, principally they should stop having children. Klaak Seminal, “*Hau nee ema FRETILIN*” (I am a FRETILIN person), 22 September 2008.

<sup>43</sup> “Conscientisation” is a term taken from the work of Brazilian education theorist, Paulo Freire and applied in Timor-Leste. For a description of the application of Freire’s theories of consciousness raising by FRETILIN during this period, see da Silva (2012).

<sup>44</sup> “Ular Rihi” was the *nomme de guerre* of FALINTIL Commander Virgílio dos Anjos.

leaders were killed during the war, while many Timorese elite families or family members survived as war refugees and exiles in Mozambique, Angola, Portugal, and Australia (Wise 2011). Some people living in exile were both members of the *Liurai-Dato* class and social conservatives. For example, during the civil war between UDT and FRETILIN, 90 percent of the Catholic nuns and priests, many of them from the *Liurai-Dato* class, left for Portugal (Budiardjo and Liong 1984, 117).<sup>45</sup> More concretely, in 1984, the commitment to reforming the Timorese class system was sidelined when Xanana Gusmão led the FALINTIL guerrilla army in a split from the political party FRETILIN to become a non-partisan armed force (Kammen 2012). In the process, Gusmão established an umbrella nationalist organisation, CNRM (later also called CNRT, not to be confused with Gusmão's post 2007 party CNRT), which included FRETILIN's rivals from UDT. The reorganisation resulted in a softening of the position of the radicals (Niner 2001, Kammen 2012). By the 1990s, FRETILIN had shifted to a reformist and nationalist ideology. After independence, many Timorese from elite families returned to Timor, taking up positions of authority and influence in business, politics and development (Hughes 2011, Wise 2011).

During the Indonesian occupation, the political views, actions and allegiances of leaders were inconsistent and remain difficult to document. The presence of Timorese elites in Indonesian institutions of the state and military, the lack of records, and the defection and rehabilitation of guerrillas made it difficult for participants and observers alike “to keep track of who was involved in the independence struggle” (Hughes 2009, 44). To this day, who sacrificed themselves and who collaborated is highly contested (Kent 2016, Kent and Kinsella 2015, Rothschild 2017). Likewise, there are contested claims over who is a *Liurai loos* (Tetun: true *Liurai*), rather than merely installed as a Portuguese or Indonesian collaborator. These contestations are particularly fraught because *Liurai* lineages can claim a right to own land and to rule over others. Over time a recognisable

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<sup>45</sup> Interview with a Catholic Nun, currently in a leadership role who was exiled in Portugal during the Indonesian occupation. ET122, 18 August 2015

dominant class has formed, and despite contestations, occupation and incorporation, its dominance continues.

### 3.2.2 Slavery's Legacy

Important to the formation of the *Liurai-Dato* class was the simultaneous historical development of slavery in Timor. Commercialised chattel slavery was an essential part of European trade in Timor, as it was in much of Southeast Asia. Slaves were the second most valuable export from the island, after sandalwood (Gunn 1999, 46, Kammen 2003). Traders could procure slaves year round, unlike the seasonal sandalwood. Timorese slaves could be enslaved directly by European traders, or more usually, enslaved by *Liurai* and *Dato* as a result of war or debt and then sold to European and Southeast Asian maritime traders (Andaya 2010, 406). Demand for slaves could be high. After the Dutch genocide of the Bandanese in 1621, the Dutch needed new workers for nutmeg and mace plantations on Banda, and this fuelled the demand for Timorese slaves (Gunn 1999, 46). Later on, in the nineteenth century, demand for Timorese slaves, and other non-Javanese slaves intensified again because of the Dutch prohibition on selling Javanese slaves in Dutch-controlled ports (Kammen 2003).

	PORTUGUESE TYPES	TIMORESE TYPES	DEFINITION
CHATTEL SLAVERY	Slaves exchanged for goods and money	<i>Ulun-houris</i> (Tetun: lit. living head. Chattel slave). <sup>46</sup> Usually prisoners of war and their families; Can be sold  Now called <i>Atan</i>	The enslaver has rights of ownership over the slave, with the intent to exploit through the use, management, profit, transfer that person
DEBT BONDAGE	<i>Axuliar</i> (Portuguese: help) or <i>asuliar</i> (Tetun: Servant); labourer, farmhand, coolie	<i>Lutu-hum</i> <sup>47</sup> (Tetun: retainers of a <i>Liurai</i> ). Usually bonded as a result of debts: Cannot be sold  Now called <i>Atan</i> or <i>Servo</i> , <i>Servi</i> or <i>Servidor</i> (Tetun: Serf)	Debtors pledge their labour, or the labour of a dependent, as security for a debt.
SERFDOM	Generally an indentured labourer; bonded labourer, or corvée labourer working on plantations, roads or in the home		A tenant who is by law, custom, or agreement is bound to live and labour on land belonging to a landlord, to render a service to the landlord, and not free to change their status
UNFREE LABOUR AFFECTING WOMEN ONLY	Servile marriage or concubinage	Servile marriage, including polygynous marriage  <i>Serbi</i> <sup>48</sup> was the term for Timorese women in sexual slavery in the Second World War	A woman, <i>without the right to refuse</i> , is married on payment of money or in kind to her parents, guardian, or family <sup>49</sup>

Table 3.3 Types of Unfree Labour in Timor during the Portuguese Period

Within Timor there existed various forms of unfree labour—termed “traditional slavery” by scholars, although these forms blurred in practice (see Table 3.3).<sup>50</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Standard Tetun-English Dictionary, Second Edition., s.v. “ulun” which is “head” and s.v. “horis”, which is “living, alive”.

<sup>47</sup> Standard Tetun-English Dictionary, Second Edition., s.v. “lutu-hum”, which is, “retainers of the *Liurai*, lit. “Dwellers at the bottom of the pale [wooden fence]”.

<sup>48</sup> Source: Matsuno and Oliviera (2016)

<sup>49</sup> Definition in this column are based on Allain (2012, 277-79)

<sup>50</sup> Slavery exists where a slaveholder or his agent exerts personal and physical domination over the slave. It is based on ownership, and characterised by absolute power of slaveholder backed up by physical or

Hägerdal describes two kinds of terms that Timorese used historically for slaves: *lutu-hum* (Tetun: personal retainer) who were bound to a master because of debts (hence bonded labour); and *ulun-houris* (Tetun: chattel slave) who were usually prisoners of war and their families, but could be sold (Hägerdal 2010, 33). There is no specific term for women in domestic slavery but I return to the issue of female slavery later in the chapter. *Liurai* could simply declare someone a slave for any number of crimes and take their property (Hägerdal 2010, 25). Moreover, if commoners failed to pay taxes or corvée labour to their social superiors, they could face death or enslavement. The line between bonded labour and slavery was slippery and indistinct.

Although Portugal outlawed slavery in 1875, slavery in Timor-Leste continued until the 1950s (Kammen 2003, 78). Thus, *Liurai* and *Dato* and Portuguese colonists continued to use unfree labourers, long after the export of slaves was outlawed (Kammen 2003, 78). The *Liurai* and the *Dato* controlled and benefitted from the bodies and work of retainers, war-captives, and women in servile marriages long into the twentieth century. Hierarchies between master and slave could be extreme; one of da Silva's interlocutors recalled in the last years of Portuguese rule in the 1960s seeing that when the "dead body of local *Liurai* was buried, his mattress was the human body of his human slave" (da Silva 2012, 115).<sup>51</sup> Thus, slaves and serfs were at the bottom of the four-tier hierarchy of lineages: first the *Liurai*, then *Dato*, then commoners, and then slaves (see Tables 3.2 and 3.3). More than half of the Timorese population were commoners, and subordinate to the *Liurai-Dato* class (Jolliffe 1978, Hicks 1990). A much smaller number of Timorese were bound in servitude to the *Liurai-Dato* class or to colonial masters. Today, the generalised term for slave is *atan* (Tetun: slave; servant) although others are still in use.<sup>52</sup> To be clear, "traditional slavery" of either serfs or chattel slaves no longer

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psychological violence (Patterson 2012, 323). "Unfree labour" is a generic term to encompass chattel slavery, dependency, indenture, domestic slavery in marriage and modern slavery (Hägerdal 2010, 20-1, Allain 2012).

<sup>51</sup> da Silva's interlocutor was a member of FRETILIN who ran education programs in occupied East Timor

<sup>52</sup> Standard Tetun-English Dictionary, Second Edition., s.v. "atan". This practice of slaves being killed/committing suicide upon their master's death was also observed in Sumba, a culturally similar area of Eastern Indonesia (Hoskins 2004, 107).



exists in Timor-Leste. Nonetheless, many people descended from the subordinate classes live in debt bondage to their social superiors, as I explain in Chapter 8, and servile marriages are not uncommon (Khan and Hyati 2012).<sup>53</sup> Hence, legacies of traditional slavery, which was part of the hierarchy establishing class formation, continue to shape social relations.

The widespread militia violence at the end of Indonesian occupation in 1998 was linked to social class. Militias had always been a crucial part of the Indonesian military's strategy of using "Timorese to fight Timorese" (Wandelt 2007). Kammen, discussing militia violence during the lead up to Independence, argued that militia members were recruited from the "lumpenproletariat—*preman* (Indonesian: strongmen, gangsters), gamblers" and the unemployed (Kammen 2003, 82). To support this argument, Kammen documents a pattern of recruitment from among lower-ranked lineages (slave and peasant/commoner lineages) in certain districts. For instance, in Lautem, militia members were from the *akanu* lineages (Fataluku: slave) (Kammen 2003, 82). Similarly, in coffee growing areas of Ermera and Liquisa, militia members were the descendants of plantation bonded and indentured labourers (Kammen 2003, 82). Kammen's two examples may indicate a wider pattern where militia members were the sons and grandsons of slaves and unfree labourers, although Timorese militia and pro-Indonesian party leaders were from the *Liurai-Dato* class. This resembled the pattern throughout Indonesia where *preman* were recruited from the underclass to do the violent work of the state (Wandelt 2007, 143).

Scholars of Timor-Leste's contemporary society and politics mostly overlook the social ramifications of unfree labour in the forms of slavery, debt bondage, and servile marriage (cf. Kammen 2003). Instead, their studies focus on institutions of political leadership that are dominated by the *Liurai-Dato* class. Studies drawing on the local turn in peacebuilding typically argue the layering of the "modern" state

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<sup>53</sup> For a discussion on the problems of defining modern slavery see Patterson (2012). Patterson uses "traditional slavery" to refer to slavery when it occurs as a part of social hierarchies, such as the system I describe here.

institutions on top of “traditional” of village leadership is crucial to any analysis of the contemporary Timorese politics and society (Hohe 2002a, b, Fox 2008, Trindade 2008, Brown 2012b, Cummins and Leach 2012, Hicks 2013). But in doing so they ignore unfree labour and the power relations involved. “Traditional” social relations persist because *Liurai* or *Dato* status is almost a prerequisite for access to paid work, land, capital, welfare, education, political power, justice, ability to marry, and social position, as I show in Chapters 4 through 8. As I argue in this thesis, these very power relations shape the outcomes of gender interventions.

### 3.3 Political Economies and Ideologies of Militarisation

This section explains how social forces in Timor-Leste shape and are shaped by militarised political economies. As I earlier defined, militarisation is an incremental process whereby an object or subject becomes dependent on the military or militaristic ideas (Enloe 2000, 3). In Timor, this process began after Portugal had lost the colony of Brazil in the late nineteenth century and its military officers sought new positions in Timor, Angola and Mozambique (Davidson 1994, 6). Thus, an increasing number of army and navy officers were appointed as colonial governors in Timor. Consequently, the political status of Portuguese Timor changed from a “trading enclave” to a “permanent military outpost” (Davidson 1994, 6). Portuguese military governors, and their officers, gained jobs in the new colonial bureaucracy from which flowed material benefits such as land, plantations, and access to unfree Timorese productive and reproductive labour.

Subsequently, the *Liurai-Dato* class came to associate themselves with and benefit from the military power of the Portuguese state. As explained above, Portuguese trade depended on fostering enmity between, and creating military and trade alliances with, different groups across Timor. Part of this involved the Portuguese granting military titles to Timorese rulers to cement relationships with the *Liurai* and *Dato*. In return for military rank, the *Liurai* and *Dato* gave the Portuguese “vows of loyalty, tribute and trade access, and a supply of labour for warfare and

other colonial tasks” (Yoder 2005). In turn, the *Liurai* and *Dato* benefitted from the military titles as a way to leverage “an external power to support their authority” (Davidson 1994, Araujo 1975). Military titles symbolised Timorese elites’ expanding control over organised violence and their access to Portuguese arms, wealth, and trade.

During the nineteenth and twentieth century, the *Liurai-Dato* class progressively militarised in that the “well-being” of members of this class increasingly “depended on militaristic ideas” and it saw military ideas and institutions as valuable and normal (Enloe 2000, 3). Repeating an earlier pattern, *Liurai* who fought for the Portuguese were made lieutenants and colonels (Araujo 1975). As described above, after the Manufahi War the Portuguese reduced the size of kingdoms but importantly reformed the new districts into military commands (Guterres 2006, 96). In addition, in the 1960s, Portuguese colonial wars in Angola and Mozambique resulted in the transfer of Portuguese military officers stationed in Timor to other posts abroad. Henceforth, *Liurai* and *Dato* Timorese replaced them, resulting in a “Timorisation” of all the layers of the military and the bureaucracy (Dunn 2003).

During the Indonesian occupation, resources and power flowed to Timorese who supported the occupiers. Again, this distribution of material benefits to armed men, and military leaders, contributed to militarisation. On the one hand, Timorese men began to earn wages in the regular military and police forces. As a result, by 1998 there were 6,097 Timorese serving in the security sector in the province of East Timor: 5,510 in the Indonesian army and 569 in the Indonesian police (CAVR 2006). On the other hand, many Timorese fought alongside the military but were not included as regular security forces but as part of “civilian defence” called HANSIP. This was in line with the “total people’s defence” that applied to the whole of Indonesia and was a core military strategy and structure. Civilian defence members were, after a time, paid salaries by the Indonesian army (CAVR 2006, Chapter 4). After the 1980s, the strategy of using “Timorese to fight Timorese” grew more intense (Wandelt 2007, 123). Large numbers of HANSIP

members, auxiliaries (Indonesian: *TBO Tenaga Bantuan Operasi*) and unpaid militia troops were deployed as part of the Indonesian counter insurgency strategy of repression and welfare (CAVR 2006, Wandelt 2007). East Timorese militia who fought for integration with Indonesia, although not on the official military payroll, were rewarded with regular cash payments, as well as other material benefits including rice, vehicles, transport, fuel, office space, communications equipment, medical supplies and weapons (CAVR 2006, Annex 1).

Militia leaders had overlapping roles in military and civilian government—and in illicit activities—in either case using their association with the military to attain wealth and power. High-ranking militia leaders made money from corruption and extortion (CAVR 2006). Crucially, the majority of Timorese militia leaders also held positions as government officials, village heads, and university vice chancellors (Tanter, Ball, and Van Klinken 2006, 74). These men's roles as civil service employees blurred with their roles as military officers, militia leaders, and regular soldiers (Tanter, Ball, and Van Klinken 2006, 74). At the end of the occupation in 1998-99, the real fear of losing benefits was a factor in driving a significant minority of Timorese civil servants to support the violent pro-Indonesian militia (Tanter, Ball, and Van Klinken 2006).

Militarisation in Timor had ideological facets as both Indonesian and Portuguese occupiers promoted an ideology of celebrated armed masculinity, which encouraged and justified the use of violence by state and non-state actors (Wilson 2006, Scambary 2009b). Myrntinen argued that the dominant form of Timorese masculinity has been a type of “violent masculinity” that is characterised by the “readiness to use violence” (Myrntinen 2005, 238). The Indonesian military fostered this readiness to use violence through martial institutions and rituals, using martial arts to “bring military values” to society at the same time as creating auxiliary state forces (Streicher 2011, Scambary 2009b). Specifically, the Indonesian government militarised Timorese youth in the 1980s and 1990s by promoting martial institutions such the scout movement (Indonesian: *Pramuka*), martial arts groups, and using student bodies' in the “performance of nationalist rituals

through military-style ceremonies and events to celebrate national days” (CAVR 2006, Chapter 4, Wandelt 2007). Martial institutions encouraged young boys to mimic the work of soldiers. Formally, young boys worked for soldiers as operations support (*TBO Tenaga Bantuan Operasi*) (CAVR 2006, Chapter 4). Most viscerally, in the lead up to the 1998-99 militia violence, the Indonesian military designed strange blood rituals for Timorese militias (Tanter, Ball, and Van Klinken 2006). The rituals, imitations of Timorese ceremonial animal sacrifices, aimed to unify and strengthen militia members and inspire them to violence. Thus, through rewards, institutions, and rituals, occupiers perpetuated an ideology that celebrated violence and armed men.

Historically, the Timorese resistance, like the Indonesian military, also celebrated armed men. Weapons were synonymous with resistance: “being a male member of the FALINTIL almost always meant carrying and using arms” (Myrntinen 2005, 240). Not only FALINTIL, but also the *Clandestinos* and the exiled diplomatic front of FRETILIN emphasised their nearness to weapons and armed men, and “treated FALINTIL as the vanguard of the liberation struggle” (Aditjondro 2000). The celebration of armed masculinity continued post-independence, for example, in government’s commemoration of armed men, including a ten-metre high statue of FRETILIN leader Nicolau Lobato carrying an assault rifle at the entrance to the Dili airport.

Importantly, elite Timorese men are associated with the ideal of “armed masculinity” even when they were not necessarily armed. In other words, like all ideologies, the meanings, representations, and contents of “armed masculinity” are not reliably representative of the facts. At the end of Indonesian occupation, few armed men remained. Roll reports: “Indonesian intelligence reports filed in 1995 estimated that as few as 210 fighters held 98 guns” (Roll 2015, 71). Unarmed members of the clandestine networks and mass movements comprised the majority of the resistance. Yet, men were still associated with an “armed masculinity” and thus there existed a strong association between men and arms as

those who can claim to have won independence, although this is not consistent with the facts. Women carried arms and have been praised as female comrades, support staff and spies in the war (Cristalis and Scott 2005, Kent and Kinsella 2015) or as barefoot female teachers doing FRETILIN's political work of conscientisation in the guerrilla years (da Silva 2012), or as mothers, wives or "bush wives" of guerrillas (Ingram, Kent, and McWilliam 2015). Thus, Gusmão obfuscated when he argued that male soldiers are "the true heroes of the struggle". Both Gusmão and ex-President Taur Matan Ruak<sup>54</sup> were "unable to admit that women bore arms too" even though some did (Niner 2011, 424).

The valorisation of armed masculinity has real material outcomes. First, participation in the resistance as an armed warrior, or a high ranking member of the resistance, has become a prerequisite for political office. Thus, "armed masculinity" has evolved in a civilian context, and no longer applies literally to men with arms but to a more generalised notion of seniority, leadership and entitlement associated with men the *Liurai-Dato* class. Second, Timorese elites use the celebration of armed masculinity to justify access to state resources in the form of pensions, construction projects and so on, as I elaborate in Chapter 4. Because of the overlap of the association of armed men with the *Liurai-Dato* class, the power of men is not limited to those who are combatants but rather militarised masculinities intersect with other aspects of patriarchy.

Hutchings's (2008) insights on masculinity are salutary here; she argues the *relational position* of masculinity vis-à-vis femininity is most important to understanding gender ideologies. Although the ascribed qualities or content of masculine and feminine may vary, there is always a "fixed value hierarchy" between them (Hutchings 2008). For this reason, it is necessary to look at the celebration of armed masculinity in relation to the construction, and denigration, of the excluded feminine (Hutchings 2008, 29). War and militarisation, by arming vast numbers of men and marshalling them into military institutions, "magnifies the

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<sup>54</sup> Taur Matan Ruak, part of Gusmão's 2017 alliance, was named as Timor-Leste's new Prime Minister in 2018.

distance between femininity and masculinity and enhances men’s authority in a quantum leap” (Kronsell and Svedberg 2011, 23, Cockburn 2013). The valorisation of armed masculinity is part of a value hierarchy which juxtaposes it with what is considered feminine (weak, dependent) and in need of (male) protection. Running parallel are negative tropes of women as “polluters”. In many societies, including Timor, women’s fertility puts them in touch with the spiritual world, risking the stability of the material world and translating, for example, into the forced isolation of women after birth (Hicks 2004, Therik 2004, Rosaldo, Lamphere, and Bamberger 1974). Negative stereotypes of women have included women as the victims of men’s violence, sex objects and slaves, domestic servants, or chattels of war (Wallis 2012b, Schnabel and Tabyshalieva 2012, Rothschild 2017, Hägerdal 2010). Nonetheless, in the Timor case, militarisation had a significant impact on gender relations where the idea of an “armed man” came to be juxtaposed with an “unarmed” person. In a feminist analysis, the logic of masculinist protection and its corollary of control was taken to the extreme during the war, whereby one concrete way that armed men—both Timorese and Indonesian—could control, denigrate, and assert entitlement to sexual access to women was through sexual and gender-based violence. Thus, I argue the celebration of armed masculinity and the denigration of victims of SGBV are two aspects of the same ideological hierarchy. Making this ideology explicit helps explain the circumstances under which the Indonesian military and Timorese militia used SGBV to achieve political and military goals.

### 3.4 Conflict-related Sexual and Gender-based Violence

Historically, slaves, serfs, and bonded labourers in Timor were often low-ranked women (Hägerdal 2012, 17). It is possible women and girls were enslaved in large numbers because they were useful in a greater variety of work roles, including as agricultural workers, domestic workers, reproductive workers and sex workers (Patterson 2012, 335). In the European-Timorese slave trade, many of the Timorese slaves traded were also women and girls, and there they were also sexually

exploited (Hägerdal 2012, 274). French explorer de Freycinet's diary from the nineteenth century records that Timorese female slaves' appearance determined their worth and that sexual exploitation of female slaves and their families occurred (Gunn 1999, 46).

At the same time as female slaves were sexually exploited, other women and girls were kept only as sexual slaves. At the turn of the nineteenth century, a Portuguese journalist accused Timor's Governor da Suva of "maintaining, with the excuse of civilising, harems (Portuguese: *serralhos*) in what he calls schools", indicating an early overlap between girls' educational institutions and institutionalised sexual violence on a large scale. This practice was repeated by the Japanese and Indonesian militaries who kept women as sex slaves in schools (Kammen 2003, 77, Matsuno and Oliviera 2016). The historical record thus points to the existence of institutionalised sexual exploitation and sexual violence linked to social hierarchies and the military.

Prices paid for female slaves and brideprice (marriage payments to the bride's family) overlapped. This is not unique. Globally, institutional slavery is often found in societies with brideprice: "over half [55 percent] of all societies with bridewealth [brideprice] hold slaves, the presence of bridewealth more than triples the odds of finding institutional slavery" (Patterson 2012, 337). In brideprice marriages, the groom's family pays the bride's family. In "servile marriage", that is, marriage that resembles slavery, a woman is given in marriage—without her consent—in exchange for payment to her kin (Allain 2012, 277-79). A consequence of institutionalised slavery is that when women were enslaved, the categories defining a woman as a war captive, a slave, or a bride were blurred because there was little to differentiate these statuses in practice. Showing how slavery and brideprice co-occur, are mediated through kinship relations, and have comparable forms, helps to contextualise sexual slavery during the Indonesian occupation. The co-occurrence shows how conflict-related SGBV drew on existing unequal gender relations, including the gendered institution of slavery.



The Indonesian military used SGBV as a weapon of war variously to intimidate the broader Timorese population, as proxy violence, to control resources, and to break the guerrilla resistance. Early in the invasion, between 1975 and 1979, there was a pattern of gang rape during armed attacks (CAVR 2006, Chapter 7). Rape was used to establish domination over the broader population, such as by raping those who had initially fled to the mountains and who later surrendered or were captured (CAVR 2006, Chapter 7). There was a pattern of using violence against women as proxy violence against soldiers of the resistance. Peake describes a typical case where Indonesian soldiers “raped the wife of a pro-independence figure whom they were unable to detain” (Peake et al. 2014). SGBV was a means of gaining military intelligence—the Indonesian military used wives of guerrillas as sex slaves in order to “monitor and communicate with their husbands in the bush” (Aditjondro 1998, 206). The military also used sexual torture as a means to procure information (CAVR 2006, Chapter 7, 56-7). The Indonesian military and Timorese militia targeted wives of male members of the resistance in order to demoralise them. Conflict related SGBV was about power and control: armed men’s power over women’s bodies and the Timorese population as a whole. One victim summed up the meaning of Indonesian military posts, “it is as if these posts, which were set-up for security reasons, became in fact places where women were raped” (CAVR 2006, 18).

SGBV was a weapon of war, but was couched in terms of, and reproduced existing practices of marriage, sex slavery, and polygyny. Even earlier, during the Second World War, the ten thousand Japanese troops in Timor perpetrated domestic sexual slavery, either phrasing it in the language of marriage or institutionalising sex slavery in public buildings converted into *ianjo* (Japanese: military brothels) (Matsuno and Oliviera 2016). The Indonesian military established similar institutions for sexual slavery. The detention of women in military institutions for sex slavery was “logistically supported as part of everyday military operations with the knowledge of the local military commander” (CAVR 2006, Chapter 7, 45). Indonesian and Timorese military men also forced those in domestic sexual

slavery, and those in institutionalised sex slavery to perform household labour. They were “expected to cook and clean, and attend to other domestic duties” while imprisoned in military facilities (Peake et al. 2014, 7). In the Indonesian period, Indonesian soldiers and Timorese militia forced women into relationships that mimicked marriages. During the Indonesian occupation, domestic sexual slavery could involve a “military man living in [a family’s] home or the woman belonging to one man or a range of men” (CAVR 2006, Chapter 7). Some domestic sexual slavery was couched in terms of the existing practice of polygynous marriage, that is, sex slaves were second or third wives. For example, one victim, then 15 years old, described how a Timorese member “of Laksaur [militia], put a necklace around my neck. He said, ‘This is my war prize. As of now, she is my third wife’ (CAVR 2006, 41). The perpetrator referred to the practice of taking war captives as chattel slaves and as secondary wives. Placing the necklace around her neck was an imitation of the engagement and marriage ceremonies where the groom “puts necklaces” on his bride (Tetun: *tau korenti / tau morteen*) (McWilliam and Traube 2011, Khan and Hyati 2012, 26). In the Indonesian occupation, Indonesian soldiers and Timorese militia also perpetrated sexual slavery in military installations, by repeatedly raping women whose names were on “lists”, and by forced marriages (CAVR 2006, Chapter 7, 53-4). Some women were imprisoned in military sexual slavery for extended periods of time in publicly visible institutions, such as military bases or schools (CAVR 2006, Chapter 7, 46). Thus, extant practices of slavery and polygyny shaped the form, the institutionalisation, and frequency of conflict-related sexual slavery in Timor. Conflict-related SGBV was part of ongoing unequal gender relations and not exceptional (True 2012, Davies and True 2015).

Likewise, armed men used existing practices of compensation and brideprice to enable and justify sexual violence and sexual slavery. In the cases of sexual slavery under the Japanese occupation, perpetrators are known to have paid the women’s family a “price”, mimicking the exchange of women using brideprice (Matsuno and

Oliviera 2016).<sup>55</sup> In the case of sexual violence, the victims and their families could obtain compensation (Nixon 2008, 316, CAVR 2006, 25). This followed the practice, documented since the 1930s, of paying compensation to a victim's family in rape cases (Nixon 2008, 320). In both cases—sexual slavery and rape—the traditional practices of compensation to the victim's family were used. This compensation is often likened to brideprice (Nixon 2008, 320). In the rare cases where a perpetrator of rape was called to account, he could be liable for compensation. For example, a Timorese militia member raped one woman repeatedly between 1998 and 1999. Eventually, the perpetrator's wife reported her husband to his commander. Afterwards, the perpetrator was ordered to pay a fine to the family of the victim and to his own wife (CAVR 2006, 73). Compensation has been the usual form of punishment for SGBV in both the courts and traditional dispute resolution today, as I explain in Chapter 5. In the case of wartime domestic sexual slavery, parents had “little choice other than to allow their daughters to “marry” Indonesian military officers” (Peake et al. 2014, 6).<sup>56</sup> Frequently, a woman was exchanged for the security of the village or family (Peake et al. 2014, 7, CAVR 2006, Chapter 7, 69-70). Again, the exchange of women as domestic sex slaves to prevent inter-group violence had historical precedents and was part of established patterns of gender inequality.

As is true of conflict-related SGBV generally, perpetrators of SGBV could act with impunity because of the severe stigmatisation of victims. Moreover, the weakest and most vulnerable—refugees, starving women, those who had lost their husbands and families, victims of other men's violence—were targeted, amplifying

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<sup>55</sup> Sources on sexual slavery in the Indonesian period do not talk about brideprice. The payment of brideprice is not discussed in the CAVR report. The report on Japanese sexual slavery does mention payments (Matsuno and Oliviera 2016). The absence of brideprice could be because violence was the only coercive force used by Indonesian military men so brideprices were not paid in these forced marriages. Discussion of brideprice might also have been avoided because survivors, interviewees, and CAVRs authors understandably want to reveal the violent coercion present in domestic sexual slavery and forced marriage.

<sup>56</sup> I also recorded the practice of the Indonesian military paying compensation for rapes in the border areas of West Timor, Indonesia, in 2015. A Hamlet Chief told me that sexual violence did not cause further violence between the West Timorese community and the military men stationed there so long as the soldiers followed West Timorese tradition and compensation was paid. Interview with Hamlet Chief, WTo42, Tasi Feto Timor, Indonesia, 16 March 2015.

women's marginalisation (CAVR 2006, Chapter 7). Rape victims were seen as soiled, dishonourable, traitorous or amoral; perpetrators relied on "the victim's sense of shame to protect their identity" (CAVR 2006, Chapter 7, Aditjondro 1998). To the broader Timorese community, "sex slaves" were seen as "women who take goods and money for sex" (Aditjondro 1998, 206).<sup>57</sup> Victims of SGBV could be blamed, shamed, re-victimised, or rejected by their male partners, family members and the wider community (CAVR 2006, Chapter 7). Typically, "a woman raped by the military might become 'fair game' for sexual abuse by other men" increasing the numbers of cases of SGBV (CAVR 2006, Chapter 7). In one case, a Timorese FALINTIL soldier raped a woman bringing food to the guerrillas, one month later she was raped by the Indonesian armed forces for having helped the enemy (CAVR 2006, Chapter 7). In conflicts, the social stigma attaching to victims, and the real socio-economic effects of exclusion, abandonment, or spinsterhood results in low levels of reporting (Ban 2012, Davies and True 2015). In the Timor case, it is not surprising that stigma and exclusion allowed perpetrators to commit SGBV with impunity.

Sexual and gender-based violence was connected to the distribution of benefits to men associated with the military. Perpetrating SGVB could be a way to increase a man's rank or power. For instance, militia members, operation assistants (TBOs) or low-ranking civilian officials would "forcibly take women and pass them on to the military commanders in return for increased status and rewards with access to military power" (CAVR 2006, Chapter 7). The opportunity to commit sexual violence with impunity functioned as payment to armed men, or, in True's words, as "compensation to soldiering masculinities" (True 2012, 44-5). As an illustration, FALINTIL Commander Ular Rihi recalled how during his capture by Indonesians, "they were directing us to watch these [pornographic] films, and inviting us to come and rape girls with them, as though this would win our hearts, as though we

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<sup>57</sup> Women in forced marriages sexual slavery were termed TNI wife, or *Feto Nona*. *Feto* is Tetun for woman, *Nona* is a term common in eastern Indonesia for "unmarried woman" or "girl".

would think ‘Wow, this is a really good life with the *Bapak* [Indonesian men]’ (Rihi 2009).

The Indonesian occupation, however, also represented a juncture that opened social and gender relations to transformation, but predominantly for elite women. The effects of the occupation on gender relations in Timor-Leste have been powerful and complex, as a number of authors have argued (Cristalis and Scott 2005, Ospina 2006, Joshi 2005, Niner 2016). In the first instance, the formation of FRETILIN and the women’s wing of FRETILIN, the *Organização Popular Da Mulher Timorense* (OPMT) was a watershed moment. OPMT was crucial to the struggle for women’s liberation and the work of the armed and clandestine fronts. Female members of FRETILIN and OPMT saw themselves in a “dual struggle” against oppression, first as Timorese anti-colonial nationalists, but second as women against patriarchal practices, whether committed by Portuguese or by Timorese men in their homes and communities. Founder of the Timorese women’s movement, Rosa “Muki” Bonaparte used the term, “double exploitation” common in anti-colonial feminism at the time (Loney 2015). Members of OPMT challenged gender roles by taking on roles previously reserved for male members of *Liurai* families such as teachers, health workers, and political educators. In the early years 1975-79, in FRETILIN areas, women from OPMT took on roles commensurate with established roles for women, such as caring for orphans and taking care of health and welfare of families (Wigglesworth 2010).

The struggle for national liberation and the political party of FRETILIN linked itself to progressive goals for women’s liberation. After these experiences, women in independent Timor-Leste were no longer prepared to “become the slave of some man” (Carey 2001, 262). The women’s movement in Timor-Leste grew out of shared suffering, goals, and desire to transform gender relations. Other more “traditional roles” included women from the OPMT as “moral guardians” of other women. For instance, it was the job of the OPMT to “give guidance to women in the *kampung* (Indonesian: village), as well as to stamp out prostitution” (Budiardjo and Liong

1984, 204). Nonetheless, political representation of women in FRETILIN was initially very limited. In 1975, “FRETILIN’s Central Committee of fifty members included only three women” (Loney 2015).<sup>58</sup> Further, these women were part of Timorese elite; they were “some of the very few Timorese women who had studied overseas to graduate at a higher education level” (Wigglesworth 2010, 133). All were from *Liurai* lineages and related to male members of the FRETILIN Central Committee (Wigglesworth 2010, 133, Gunn 2011). Thus, although the struggle for Timorese women’s liberation both anti-colonial and anti-traditional, gender and class relations shaped FRETILIN.

### 3.5 Conclusion

The structural analysis presented in this chapter contributed a new historical analysis of social forces in Timor, and their intersection with slavery, militarisation, and sexual and gender-based violence. The chapter outlined the means by which the *Liurai-Dato* class emerged and accumulated economic resources and political power during their incorporation into the governing structures of Portuguese and Indonesian rule. Moreover, this chapter has argued that the relation between the *Liurai-Dato* class, commoners, and slaves are power relations. The superordination of the *Liurai-Dato* class depended on material relations of power; namely on the subjugation of lower-ranked lineages, slaves, and women. Concretely, control over land, taxes and *corvée* labour strengthened the *Liurai-Dato* class’s resource accumulation, because commoners, slaves, and women were forced to provide resources and labour to *Liurai* and *Dato*, and to Portuguese and Indonesian rulers. The emergence of the *Liurai-Dato* class, coupled with institutionalised unfree labour of various and gendered types, stratified Timorese society, which gives form to social and gender relations in contemporary Timor. *Liurai* or *Dato* status continues to be a prerequisite for access

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<sup>58</sup> The three female members were Rosa ‘Muki’ Bonaparte Soares, Maria do Céu Pereira, and Guilhermina Araújo. Rosa ‘Muki’ Bonaparte was the head of OPMT. For an overview of women in the Timorese nationalist struggle see Loney (2015, 2016) and Cristalis and Scott (2005), Cristalis (2002)

to paid work, land, capital, welfare, education, political power, justice, ability to marry freely, and social position as I show in Chapters 4 through 8.

The analyses of conflict-related SGBV contributed two original analyses. First, it showed how the forms and institutionalisation of conflict related SGBV was couched in terms of, and reproduced aspects of, existing unequal gender relations. This included the duplication of large-scale institutions for SGBV in Portuguese, Japanese and Indonesian periods. The forms of domestic sexual slavery during war were couched in terms of marriage, but also extant practices such as paying brideprices (which in turn overlap with paying for slaves), paying compensation to victims' families for SGBV, and polygynous marriage. This analysis contributes more empirical data to the feminist contention that conflict related SGBV is part of a continuum of violence and does not stand outside extant gender hierarchies (Davies and True 2015, Cockburn 2013). Nor does SGBV end when war ends, which has ramifications for gender intervention and the broader goals of gender justice. Second, this section contributed to the body of the feminist political economy work on conflict related SGBV (Meger 2016, 2015, Davies and True 2015). It showed how soldiers and militia used SGBV as a weapon of war, to gain resources, compensate soldiers, and achieve military goals.

Militarisation has been a critical instrument of dominance in social and gender relations throughout Timorese history. The *Liurai-Dato* class was progressively militarised during Portuguese rule and the Indonesian occupation. The Indonesians incorporated significant numbers of men and boys from all social classes into the bureaucracy, the army, the police, and the militia, with positions of power generally reserved for elite Timorese men. In both periods, proximity to the military was a means to gain political and economic benefits. Militia leaders had overlapping roles, some in rackets, but most in the civil service and these men used their association with the military to attain wealth and power. Militarisation was accompanied by an ideology celebrating armed masculinity, which justified elite control over resources.

Following from the above analysis, the following Chapter 4 shows how in independent Timor-Leste the vast bulk of state resources have been distributed to elite men, many of whom claim veteran status. This had been justified by the celebration of armed masculinity. The resilience of the ideology celebrating armed men while denigrating women victims has affected the distribution of state resources. In other words, the effectiveness of the intervention on Gender Responsive Budgeting has been limited by a gender ideology of valorising heroes and denigrating victims. Importantly to this thesis, the growth and nature of the Timorese women's movement are considered together with the widespread and systematic nature of SGBV during and after the war.



# CHAPTER 4. CLASS, GENDER AND THE DISTRIBUTION OF STATE RESOURCES 2007-2017

## 4.1 Introduction

The gendered distribution of state resources plays a substantial role in shaping outcomes for gender justice. The distribution of state resources has a particularly large impact on women because gender divisions of labour means that the burden of caring for others fall primarily on women. As Elson showed early on, the extent of the care burden “is directly related to macroeconomic policies” because state spending on areas like health, education, welfare and so on reduces the burdens placed on women (Elson 1993, 239). In times of crisis, if state spending is reduced, the burdens on women, and incidences of domestic violence, increase (Hozic and True 2016, 9). In the Timor-Leste case, the burdens on women are magnified because it has one of the highest rates of poverty and deprivation in Asia (Inder, Cornwell, and Datt 2015) and a rigid gender division of labour (Asian Development Bank and UNIFEM 2005). In short, the burden of care on non-elite Timorese women and girls is onerous.

The chapter contextualises gender interventions in the political economy of the Timorese state. Namely, the distribution of state resources to “so-called veterans” cements a coalition between urban-based members of the *Liurai-Dato* class, the political elite, and rural-based members of that same class. The chapter first outlines how veterans’ pensions are part of a “politics of memory” (Wallis 2012, Kent 2015) that by privileging a masculinist view of war, exclude large segments of the population, particularly women, from state resources (Kent and Wallis 2013,

Kent 2015). Extending their analyses, the chapter argues that the veteran's pension can be explained by looking at the centrality of state resources for the reproduction of the *Liurai-Dato* class. Policymakers, who are members of the *Liurai-Dato* class, have distributed state resources in a way that preserves social hierarchies, including the dominance of the *Liurai-Dato* class, which often overlaps with membership of the resistance. This identity is linked to the valorisation of armed masculinity. I argue that similar to earlier periods, (predominantly male) members of the *Liurai-Dato* class are able to capture state resources through both veterans' pensions and infrastructure spending. In addition to benefitting the political elite directly, veterans' pensions are a way for the Dili-based political elites—the most successful members of the *Liurai-Dato* class, to shore up a rural constituency of village leaders and veterans who are also members of the *Liurai-Dato* class, but not part of the Dili-based political elite. This is achieved by distributing resources to these men, which in turn helps veterans to ensure the physical infrastructure projects favoured by elites, are carried out.

The gendered distribution of resources has flow-on, gendered effects. A gulf exists in the Timorese economy, with significant state resources from the petroleum revenues pooling in Dili and subsistence and unpaid work providing for the wellbeing of the majority. The distribution of state resources is crucial because government spending drives the Timorese economy (World Bank 2017). It is clear that state resources are very unequally distributed—the difference in income inequality between the highest quintile of Timorese and the majority are extraordinarily high (Sepulveda 2011). Since state spending has been concentrated in infrastructure and transfers to the wealthy, rather than on services, health, or education, as I show in the central section of the chapter, households are burdened with responsibility for care work and household provisioning. Consequently, in times of acute crises such as the three-month-long annual hungry season where most households must survive on stored food before the first crops come in, Timor-Leste relies on the labour of women. Thus, the distribution of state

resources matters for gender justice in Timor-Leste, and these flow on effects are examined in Chapters 6 through 8.

In this context, two gender interventions, Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) and a cash transfer to vulnerable mothers, *Bolsa da Mãe*, to direct state resources to women's needs and enhance gender justice have not been successful. Building on extant analyses of GRB in Timor-Leste (Costa 2018, Costa, Sawer, and Sharp 2013), the second part of the chapter asserts that gender interventions addressing the distribution of state resources were largely unsuccessful, except in the limited area of monitoring spending on the 2010 Law Against Domestic Violence. When cash is distributed to women through *Bolsa da Mãe*, the targeted beneficiaries are in fact their children. Thus GRB did not live up to the aims of gender intervention to hold policymakers to account for directing state resources to women's needs and enhance gender justice in budgeting. GRB has not prevented the distribution of state resources from the Timorese petroleum fund to (mostly male) members of the *Liurai-Dato* class. The unequal distribution of state resources comes at the expense of budget areas that most benefit poor women and girls, such as water infrastructure, health, education, and food security.

#### 4.2 The Independent Timorese State

The nature of the independent Timorese state sets the context for attempts to introduce various gender interventions. The state itself is a relationship of power between social forces. The nature of the state—comprised and shaped by dominant classes in the Timor case—shapes what kinds of and how institutions, including those implementing gender interventions, emerge and how they may be used in practice (Jones 2013, 70). Added to this, any analysis of the nature of the independent Timorese state must include the distribution of state resources. In the Timor-Leste case, a very significant area of state resource distribution, and one that affects citizens directly, is cash transfers. The origin of these is a key way to understand the Timorese political economy.

The valorisation of veterans has been a hallmark of successive Gusmão-controlled governments in power in the decade from 2007 to 2017. Demobilisation programs, including veterans' pensions, have been heavily politicised, and key to bolstering support for Gusmão's coalition (Kent and Wallis 2013). The statement in the incoming government's program in 2015 highlights the obligation of the state to provide (certain) veterans with cash they "rightfully deserve", and treating them with "greater cordialness, deference and professionalism than ordinary citizens (Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste 2015a). Veterans' pensions, in particular, are a crucial, material part of state-building and the reconstitution of military-era patrimonial networks (Roll 2015). As Kent and Kinsella argued, the valorisation of veterans uses a politics of memory for political gains and "further promotes a culture of 'militarized masculinity' that elevates and rewards men who show the capacity to use violence" (Kent and Kinsella 2015, 473). All told, cash transfers have been the single most significant political tool used by the government to create alliances, reduce dissent and gain legitimacy (Roll 2015, 121). The following section explains the origins and centrality of the distribution of state resources to veterans.

In Timor, cash transfers are especially significant, comprising around 10 to 15 percent of the state budget. Cash transfers include the veterans' pensions (Tetun: *Pensaun Veteranu*), the conditional cash transfer to mothers, *Bolsa da Mãe*, a disability pension, an ex-office holders' pension (Tetun: *Pensaun Vitalisa*) and "other personal benefits" paid by state agency employers to individual civil servants. Unlike the *Bolsa da Mãe* they are not means-tested on an individual's incomes, and did not come with any conditions. Cash transfers to individuals—including public servants and ex-office holders, was around \$210 million, or around 13 percent of the budget (with 5 percent going to veterans alone, see Figure 4.1 below ) (Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste 2015b, Lao Hamutuk 2016). In terms of total volume, the most significant of these cash transfers is the veterans' pension. In terms of individual benefits, veterans' pensions were the most generous cash transfers from the Timorese government to individuals. Section 4.3 below explores the budgetary significance of transfers in more detail.

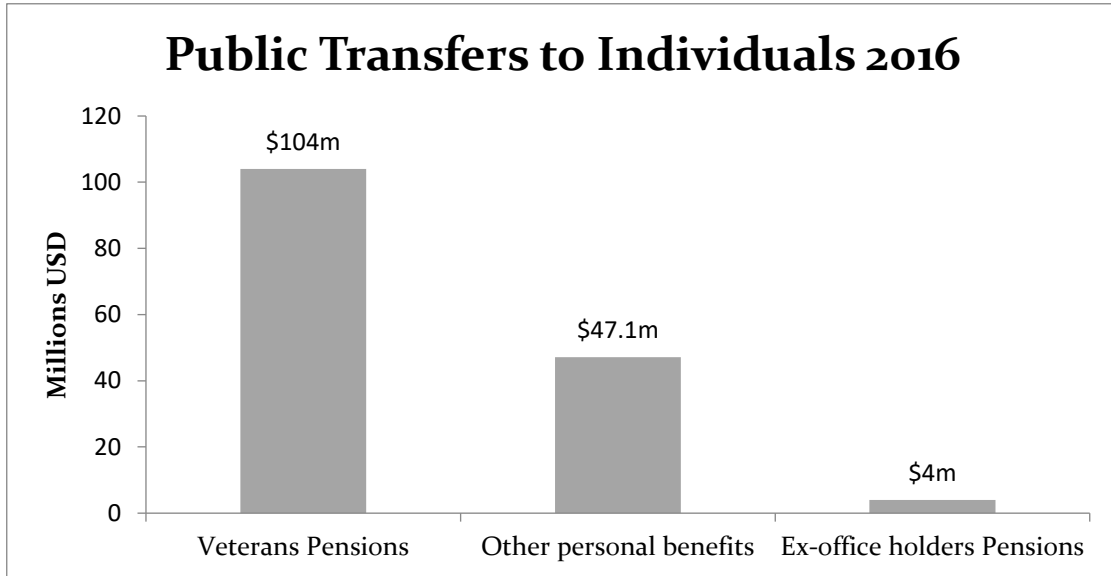


Figure 4.1 Public Transfers to Individuals in the 2016 State Budget<sup>59</sup>

These cash transfers developed as a response to the first decade of peacebuilding interventions in Timor-Leste, which featured a number of security crises. Following the deployment of an international military intervention called InterFET (see Table 2.1), the UN Transitional Administration in East Timor, had formal authority over Timor-Leste between October 1999 and May 2002. UNTAET was conceived as a “maximalist” form of statebuilding, with supreme authority over security and administration (Lemay-Hébert 2017). UNTAET sought to build new state institutions in line with international liberal standards (Hughes 2009). In other words, UNTAET used the model of liberal peace creating liberal democratic institutions, enforcing the rule of law and creating liberal markets (Richmond and Franks 2009, Lemay-Hébert 2011). However, as a number of authors explained, UNTAET faced not a tabula rasa in Timor-Leste, upon which they could build new institutions, but a field of social conflict (Jones 2010, 559, Hughes 2009). Moreover, although rhetorically UN missions positioned statebuilding as starting from a tabula rasa, in fact, institution building, development programs, and security employed Timorese people, and had to use

<sup>59</sup> Source: Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste (2015b) and Lao Hamutuk (2016)

existing institutions and practices to achieve their goals (Lemay-Hébert 2011) (as I explore in detail in Chapters 5 and 7).

After the first elections in August 2001, FRETILIN secured a 55 seat majority among the 88 elected Timorese members of the Second Transitional Government, and ruled with UNTAET in a co-governance model (Goldstone 2013). FRETILIN Secretary General, Mari bin Amude Alkatiri was elected Chief Minister and his contemporary and rival, Alexandre Ray Kala “Xanana” Gusmão was elected President. The division of titles and positions between Alkatiri and Gusmão reflected long-standing divides between factions in the Timorese resistance. These stemmed from Gusmão’s leading a majority of the FALINTIL guerrilla army to reject FRETILIN allegiance in the 1980s. This inter-elite rivalry has been a decisive feature of Timorese politics in the four decades since. The Restoration of Timorese Independence was declared on 20 May 2002 and FRETILIN continued to lead the country.

As a part of the demobilisation of these easily mobilised groups identifying as FALINTIL, the first cash transfers for veterans were made during the UNTAET period under the internationally designed FALINTIL Reinsertion Assistance Program (2001-2002). The programs were designed and run by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) with support from the Canadian and US aid agencies (Roll 2015, 78) that aimed to demobilise and reintegrate potential spoilers of peace in the new state. Demobilisation consisted of lump sums of \$1,060 paid to 1,308 FALINTIL veterans. At the same time, then President Gusmão established special Commissions to authenticate and verify veteran identity (Kent and Kinsella 2015, 480). The most involved donor to the Commission was the World Bank, which contributed half a million dollars to the projects and received regular updates on progress (Kent 2006, 17). Overall, after Timorese independence and the end of UNTAET’s administrative control in 2002, the Timorese government changed their approach to veterans from demobilisation and reintegration to a “valorisation” approach (Roll 2015, Kent 2016). Valorisation rewarded individual veterans with money, government contracts and jobs “based on the perceived

significance of their service” (Roll 2015, 89). Significantly, the four Presidential Commissions from 2004 to 2006 were managed by the two former comrades-in-arms, Gusmão and Taur Matan Ruak. The Commissions registered veterans considered most deserving of money, respect, and honour. Donor support for Gusmão to oversee both the veteran’s commissions and security forces recruitment was significant in shaping who received money from the valorisation approach.

As Hughes argued, in the early part of independence, Timorese elites from FRETILIN were squeezed between donors aid conditionality demanding market driven development and demands from easily mobilised Timorese social forces for redistributive policies (Hughes 2009, 134). The first government of independence, FRETILIN ran on a very tight, aid dependent budget of a few hundred million dollars, while interveners spent conspicuously on salaries and accommodation (Hughes 2009). Donors mandated the creation of a Petroleum Fund to manage and save funds from the shared gas development just south of Timor. The Fund was created to avoid the resource curse, but prevented the Timorese government from spending money on urgent issues of basic welfare and infrastructure (Drysdale 2007, Hughes 2009). Concurrently with Timorese independence, UNTAET was wound down. UNTAET was replaced with a much smaller, development-orientated Mission of Support (UNMISSET). As UNTAET troops and staff withdrew, the economy contracted at least 38 percent. At the same time, a famine hit the central highlands. Electricity and water supplies to most remote rural areas were non-existent (Goldstone 2013, 214, McWilliam 2011). Rebuilding happened in Dili but was paralysed in rural areas (Chopra 2002). In the context of these deficiencies and challenges, the relationship between the FRETILIN government and the UN deteriorated (Jones 2010, 559).

Although peacebuilders sought to demilitarise Timor and defuse FALINTILs claims on the state, many of those demobilised from FALINTIL expected to continue to serve in the security forces (Hughes 2009, 104). In another role, Gusmão, in exchange for brokering the tense UN-Timorese government

relationship, was allowed to handle recruitment for the new defence forces, the *Forças Defesa de Timor-Leste* (F-FDTL), which he “promptly staffed with his FALINTIL allies” (Jones 2010, 560, Bexley and Nygaard-Christensen 2014). Tensions arose because FRETILIN member Rogerio Lobato handled recruitment to the new police force, the *Poliçia Naçional de Timor-Leste* (PNTL), including 300 members of the Indonesian-era police force, who were associated with the suppression of independence (International Crisis Group 2006, 22). Recruiting for both the army and the police excluded many who called themselves FALINTIL veterans, causing complaints (Scambary 2009b). The division of roles between the army and the police was also unclear (International Crisis Group 2006). Since the interests of international groups in demobilisation and the interests of former guerrillas and men seeking employment in the security forces did not align, demobilisation was partial as well as dissatisfactory (Hughes 2009, 104).

The strain between older ex-FALINTIL, the police force, and recruits in the new army F-FDTL, increased as the UN wound down operation UNMISSET in 2005-2006.<sup>60</sup> Grievances over demobilisation and “jobs for the boys” in the security forces were “co-opted and mobilised by competing politicians during the escalation of intra-elite rivalry” (Hughes 2009, 119, Grindle 2012). The tipping point came in 2006 after a group of 156 F-FDTL were sacked after unsuccessfully petitioning the Alkatiri government for changes to promotions and privileges. At protests, police shot five protesters, after which violence escalated further (Kingsbury 2008). Again, thousands of Timorese citizens, in fear of militia and gang violence, fled to the central mountains or over the border to West Timor. As a result, the UN renewed their military intervention in an expansive operation called UNMIT in May 2006 (Goldstone 2013). Timor-Leste went from being referred to as a UN peacebuilding success story to a “failed state” (Scambary 2009a, Neumann 2006, Arnold 2009). Although for five years veterans had received some financial support, disaffected veterans’ factions and allied groups remained

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<sup>60</sup> The new armed forces, F-FDTL was established on 1 February 2001, despite earlier ideas in the resistance that no army would be needed and FALANTIL would be disbanded upon independence (Kingsbury 2007).



engaged in violent protests, clashes and house-burnings, culminating in the 2006-7 crisis fomented by disaffected politicians and veterans (Hughes 2009, Scambary 2009b). FRETILIN won the 2007 elections by a slim majority, but was unable to form a stable government in the face of political violence. Then President Ramos-Horta nominated Gusmão to form a government, and Gusmão's CNRT alliance took power. Still, violence threatened the stability of the government, and, with the 2008 assassination attempts on Ramos-Horta and Gusmão, veterans threatened the lives of key power-holders. The Timorese government sought to buy the peace and preserve itself using a variety of means.

#### 4.3 The Distribution of State Resources Under CNRT 2007-2017

After the 2006-7 crisis, Gusmão's formed a coalition led by his new party, The National Council for the Reconstruction of Timor, (Tetun: *Conselho Nacional de Reconstrução de Timor*). The CNRT began by remedying the years of austerity under peacebuilders and FRETILIN by "buying the peace" from key constituencies using cash transfers and other state resources—a pattern that continued throughout CNRT's three successive governments from 2007-2017. CNRT's tactic of obtaining political support using cash payments was enabled by a massive increase in state revenues from gas fields in the Timor Sea which began to be collected in the petroleum fund in 2005-6 (Goldstone 2013). Timorese citizens had seen a decline in their living standards, and their awareness of the oil fund wealth increased public pressure on the Gusmão government to distribute it (Porter and Rab 2011). Rather than a broad-based welfare program, however, the Gusmão government chose to distribute this money to "key constituencies" that is, veterans (Porter and Rab 2011, 5). After the 2006-7 crisis, the Commissions' registers of veterans were codified in a series of laws.<sup>61</sup> Payments under these laws included

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<sup>61</sup> First was the Law on Veterans' Pensions 3/2006. This Law was revised twice: once to make one-off payments of \$1300 prior to the 2009 village chief elections, and again in 2011 to establish Veterans' Councils which would regulate pension claims. The law was followed by the Decree Law on the Pensions of the Combatants and Martyrs of the National Liberation No. 15/2008, as amended by Decree Law Amending Decree law No. 15/2008 of 4 June No. 25/2008 (Roll 2015).

\$8,000 to the group of demobilised army members and gang members who fomented the crisis and the introduction of much more generous veterans' pensions. Special measures to buy the peace also included expanding veteran's roles in the civil service, healthcare, and granting generous infrastructure building contracts—averaging between \$500,000 and \$1 million—to veterans, and the creation of the National Program for Village Development (PNDS) (Tetun: *Programa Nacional Desenvolvementu Suku*) (International Crisis Group 2013, 3, Lao Hamutuk 2013).

During this period too, international donors supported aspects of payments for veterans. Donors were wary of institutionalising long-term claims by veterans on the state (Hughes 2009, 105, World Bank 2013). Nonetheless, as I explained above, IOM and bilateral donors had initiated small payments to demobilise FALINTIL before 2005. After the crisis too, IOM supported the use of cash payments in programs to resettle internal displaced persons. Donors also continued to support the Veterans' Commissions. From 2006 donor support came from UNDP (World Bank 2008, 12). Allowing the Gusmão government to take “strong ownership” over the cash transfers to veterans was one of the manifestations of a pragmatic “local turn” in peacebuilding. This approach received support from donors, underlined by some peacebuilders' and academics' support for the “charismatic” “unifying” hero Gusmão (Bexley and Nygaard-Christensen 2014, cf. Kingsbury 2008).

Equally important to the winning over of key constituencies, in the 2012 legislative election the incumbent CNRT used state resources including cash transfers to veterans in order to win votes. To illustrate, on the second day of campaigning the CNRT coalition announced the expansion of veterans' payments to tens of thousands of (mostly male) voters. The government then made (backdated) payments two weeks before the election totalling \$47 million (European Union Election Observation Mission 2012, 17). CNRT won the 2012 election with a convincing majority. Overall, CNRT justified cash payments as necessary for peace and referenced the Timorese constitutions which said veterans should be valorised (Kent 2006, Kent and Kinsella 2015). Ensuring stability by “improving veterans'

economic position” who were seen as a “vulnerable” and “deserving” group was articulated through numerous development plans (Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste 2011b, 8, 2015a, b).

At the same time as the expansion of veterans’ pensions, the government announced expansive infrastructure spending, as part of a “New Deal” (Leach and Kingsbury 2013). The New Deal was also been part of a process of consolidating political support. It was articulated through the Gusmão government’s 2011 Strategic Development Plan, which comprised spending a majority of the budget on physical infrastructure (such as roads, electricity, ports, and airports) (Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste 2011b). This “big push” of spending on state infrastructure and citizen welfare was supported by important sections of the donor community, notably by the UN Millennium Project Director, Jeffrey Sachs, who visited Timor-Leste in 2010 (Goldstone 2013, n18). The government and their supporters justified large expenditures by arguing the state’s role was to set the conditions for market-led development. In terms of infrastructure expenditure, in the 2016 budget, for example, 45 percent the budget was spent on infrastructure projects (Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste 2015b, Lao Hamutuk 2016). Altogether cash transfers and infrastructure spending on the Oecusse ZEESMs<sup>62</sup> Special Zones of Social Market Economy— a free trade zone—and the South Coast oil development project transfers totalled \$475.775 million, just under a third of the total government expenditure for 2016 (Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste 2015b, Lao Hamutuk 2016).

Yet infrastructure projects have rarely been well executed and it is increasingly suggested that these are more about political patronage than development (Scambary 2015, Kingsbury 2017). A key reason for this conclusion is that many of the infrastructure projects have been awarded to influential veterans and their networks. Roll describes how, in the Gusmão government’s rural electrification

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<sup>62</sup> ZEESMs is the *Zona Especial de Economia Social de Mercado* or the Special Zones of Social Market Economy of Timor-Leste.

project under the PNDS (2012 onwards) “contracts are awarded to a shell company registered in the names of former resistance members and tender processes are not required” (Roll 2015, 117). I documented similar cases regarding veterans receiving contracts for electrification in the Oecusse free trade zone, ZEESMs. Not only did prodigal spending on physical infrastructure benefit a relatively small number of people, but corruption was particularly acute in infrastructure projects. According to Timorese NGO Luta Hamutuk’s monitoring, only 30 percent of the money allocated was used to build infrastructure because of “KKN” or corruption, collusion and nepotism (Scambary 2015, Timor Post 2015f). Consequently, the majority of the Timorese citizenry perceived their government to be corrupt—Timor-Leste ranked 133 out of 175 countries in the Corruption Perception Index (Bosso 2015). All of this amounts to a significant distribution of state resources to veterans and their networks.

In sum, the two previous sections have argued that the distribution of state resources to veterans is a material manifestation of the celebration of armed masculinity, which has in the post-conflict era facilitated the emergence of a “new political economy of entitlement” of armed men (Hughes 2015, 910). Violent groups who might spoil the peace, have, unsurprisingly, been prioritised during peacemaking (Goetz and Jenkins 2016, 212). In the Timor-Leste case, like other post-conflict countries, the tendency towards gendered resource distribution is compounded because of the spending priorities on security, demobilisation, or military restructures, as part of keeping, or “buying the peace”. The valorisation of armed masculinity, in this case, veterans, has helped elites to resolve ideological contradictions between the narrative of unified national liberation and the distribution of state resources to those same elites. It has also helped consolidate socio-political orders, as I turn to now.

#### 4.3.1 Veterans and the *Liurai-Dato* Class

It is the contention of this section that the distribution of state resources is also shaped by class bias rather than veteran identity in isolation. But the overlap between *Liurai-Dato* status, veteran status and a position in the elite is complex. At the national level a (high ranking) veteran identity—overlaps with *Liurai* or *Dato* rank.<sup>63</sup> In other words, leadership positions in political parties and the military are filled by members of the *Liurai-Dato* class. As I showed in Chapter 3, most leaders of the resistance—FRETILIN, UDT, FALINTIL, CNRT and the members of civil service (the clandestine movement) were from the *Liurai-Dato* class (Hicks 1983, 8, Guterres 2006, Kammen 2016). Prominent members of political parties who are recorded as having *Liurai* or *Liurai / Mestiço* family backgrounds include: FRETILIN: Vicente Sahe; Borja da Costa; Xavier do Amaral, Nicolau Lobato, Rosa Bonaparte, Justino Mota, Jose Ramos-Horta, Xanana Gusmão. From UDT: Francisco Lopes da Cruz, Gaspar Nunes; Domingos de Oliveira, Mario Carrascalão, João Carrascalão. From APODETI: José Abilio Osorio Soares; and from KOTA Clementino dos Reis Amaral (served in parliament from 2001-2007) (Guterres 2006, Gunn 2011, 1999, Bovensiepen 2014a, Kammen 2016). As I showed in Chapter 3, throughout the Indonesian occupations, *Liurai* and *Dato* were military leaders for both pro-integration and pro-independence sides (Gunn 1999, Kammen 2016). Incorporating members of the *Liurai-Dato* class took place because of the Indonesian military used a political strategy of “working with and through the local population” (Jones 2010, 255).

This pattern of the association of a militarised identity with political leadership continued in the post-independence period as most Timorese parliamentarians identify as members of the armed front (FALINTIL), the diplomatic front (FRETILIN or the first CNRT) or the clandestine front (RENETIL among others)

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<sup>63</sup> In the same fashion, most village and hamlet chiefs are from the *Liurai-Dato* class, as I will explain in more detail in Chapters 5 and 6 (Hicks 1983). As a result many village leaders retained their roles, a pattern that has continued into the independence period

(Guterres 2006). Francisco da Costa Guterres, Secretariat of State for Security under Gusmão from 2007-2015, claimed in his 2006 PhD dissertation that FALINTIL veterans do not seek “any political position or power” due to their commitment to FALINTIL principles of “non-alignment (Guterres 2006, 235-6). In fact, veterans held a number of positions inside the government and in the diplomatic corp. For instance, former President, Taur Matan Ruak, was the last military commander of FALINTIL until 1999, and commander of F-FDTL from 2002-2011. Former Prime Minister Dr Rui Araujo, is from the clandestine front organisation RENETIL, and ex-Prime Minister Xanana Gusmão was commander of FALINTIL. President Lu-Olu (2017-onwards) from FRETILIN is also a former FALINTIL commander. Leaders of Dili-based militia and gangs—who received substantial payouts and veterans contracts—were from elite families, enjoying high-levels of education as well as jobs in government and civil society (Scamary 2015, 290). The pre-eminence of military men, or those claiming an identity as a veteran, had important implications for the distribution of state resources.

There are two aspects to class bias in veterans’ pensions: in the design of eligibility criteria, and in the implementation of who receives a pension. First, because pension rates are decided through the valorisation approach, that is, the significance and length of service, the individuals able to claim the most money are elite men. One reason is that the amount of money is determined by military rank. Officially, veterans’ pension rates depend on the recipients’ *grau* (Tetun: lit. degree; rank) the grade or seniority in military rank, and number of years served, and exclusive dedication to the armed struggle (Kent and Kinsella 2015). Rank was thus a proxy for the level of contribution. Therefore, lieutenants, captains, and other high ranked members of the resistance receive higher pensions than ordinary ranked guerrillas or support staff. As one female Member of Parliament said: “*Gräu* 1, 2, 3, this signifies the person’s position or status. This signifies the person’s work in the liberation; work in the resistance, which determines the amount of money”.<sup>64</sup> In other words, seniority or rank was assumed to indicate a

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<sup>64</sup> Interview with a member of the Women’s Cross Party Caucus, (GMPTL), ET085, 11 June 2015

higher level of work in the resistance, and thus was rewarded with a larger veterans' pension. Only a handful of men receive the more generous veterans' pensions of between \$345 and \$575 per month (BELUN 2013, World Bank 2013, Roll 2015). Fifteen prominent male figures receive the most generous lifetime pension of \$750 per month (International Crisis Group 2013). As I showed in Chapter 3, historically, military rank (as well as political leadership) was determined by social status as *Liurai* and *Dato* as this determined access to enough resources, language proficiency, literacy, and gave such men the hereditary right to rule. Thus, in the resistance—many top leaders and those able to serve exclusively—were often men of the *Liurai-Dato* class.

The elite-focussed criteria for pensions, however, contradicts the widespread view that many Timorese feel they contributed, and indeed “determined” the outcomes of independence through the vote (Timor Post 2015d). The distribution of state resources to former guerrillas is seen as unfair for a number of reasons. In the first place, the war was idealised as a nationalist struggle where Indonesian invaders were resisted by a united Timorese nation (Carey 2003). Because of the broad-based nature of the clandestine movement, all Timorese feels that they contributed in some way to the resistance and citizens see themselves as veterans of the struggle. Over 100,000 people registered for a veterans' pension, yet only a relatively small number have received them, around 11,000 people in 2014 (Dale, Lepuschuetz, and Umapathi 2014, World Bank 2013, 3). There has also been widespread discontent about the distribution of infrastructure spending and pensions to politically well-connected elites (Timor Post 2015a, g, c). Veterans' pensions have been criticised by activists, media and academics (Lao Hamutuk 2013, BELUN 2013, International Crisis Group 2013, Kent and Wallis 2013, Scambary 2015, Roll 2015, Timor Post 2015a, e). NGO Lao Hamutuk has been very critical of the Timorese Government's spending of state resources that benefit only a few (McKechnie 2013, Austen et al. 2013, Lao Hamutuk 2016, 2013).

The second class bias arises in implementation of the veterans' pensions. Being awarded veteran status—and thus a veterans' pension—is not dependent on the stipulated criteria of actual years of service or “exclusive service”—but is based, in most cases, on the claimant's position within patronage networks (Roll 2015, 198). For example, according to Roll, most high-level commissioners added their family members to the list of combatants, even if those relatives were not in the resistance (Roll 2015, 198).<sup>65</sup> Thus, although “exclusive service” is a key legal criterion to receive a generous pension, some claimants of the veterans' pension did not serve exclusively. This pattern of elite capture exists not just within the Dili-based political elites, but also in rural areas. Rural bureaucrats assigned to register veterans' pension are also members of the *Liurai-Dato* class because veteran status overlaps with roles as village chief, which overlaps with membership of a higher ranked lineages (Cummins and Leach 2012, 99, Gusmão 2012, 184-85, Roll 2015, 135-6). During the war, the village based network leaders (Tetun: *Nucleos De Resistencia Popular* NUREP) were elected, under a FALINTIL commander's supervision, by hamlet leaders. These male village leaders were often from *Liurai* or *Dato* families (Cummins and Leach 2012, 99). In rural districts in the post-independence era, FALINTIL-linked bureaucrats in charge of the pensions in districts often misrepresented an applicant's service length (Roll 2015, 194). Doing such favours—“from the veranda” as Roll calls it—allows local military-linked bureaucrats to grow their networks. Thus, who is counted as a veteran “marks the continuation of patronage politics along resistance-era lines and the conservation of these power networks in the post-conflict period” (Roll 2015, 194). Thus, rather

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<sup>65</sup> In the 2010 Government Decree No. 10/2010, on veteran data verification, the Commissioners were (all male) leaders in FALINTIL with long service records (1) Faustino dos Santos 'Renan Selak'; (2) João Miranda 'Aluk Descartes'; (3) Justo Bernardino da Costa 'Lari Mau'; (4) Camilo Tibúrcio Hornay 'Larcy'; (5) Vidal de Jesus 'Riak Leman' FALINTIL Regional Secretary (Currently vice Commander of F-FDTL); (6) Calisto Santos 'Koliati' Vice-Secretary of Ainaro Region; (7) Pedro Alves Carlos 'Raituto' responsible for Caixa Ramelau; (8) Gil da Costa Monteiro 'Oan Suro' Second Rank Commander of Covalima; (9) Félix Amaral 'Sakari'; (10) Edmundo Amaral; (11) Justino da Costa 'Fitun Mesak' Secretary of NUREP Bobonaro; (12) Jacinto Viegas Vicente 'Roke'; (13) Agostinho Soares Carvalheira 'Samarusa'; (14) Francisco dos Réis Magno 'Loco Meo' Secretary of the sub region of Liquiçá; (15) César dos Santos da Silva 'Merak'; (16) Filinto Fátima Marques 'Marconi'; (17) Ernesto Fernandes 'Dudo'; (18) Eduardo de Deus Barreto 'Du Sahe'; (19) Afonso Martins 'Aten Brani'; (20) Martinho da Cunha 'Mala'; (21) Zeferino da Cruz Sal 'Papa Teme'. It is beyond the data collected for this thesis to determine the socio-political status—whether their families are *Liurai* or *Dato*—for all these men. It is also beyond the scope of this study to confirm that the Commissioners received the highest pension amounts.



than entrenching the “*perception* that veterans (and their families) are a privileged social group” (Wallis 2015, 244, emphasis added) by virtue their veteran status, elites received veterans’ pensions as an *already* privileged social group. As a result, cash transfers distribute cash to the already wealthy. All cash transfers including veteran, disability, old age pensions, “reached 23 percent of the population in the richest quintile” (World Bank 2013, 50). More than half of the people under the poverty line do not receive any cash transfer at all, with “61 percent of the bottom two quintiles and 56 percent of the poorest 20 percent not receiving any assistance from the main cash transfer programs” (World Bank 2013). In sum, the pattern of control over resources at the subnational level reflects historical patterns of accumulation, as I have shown Chapter 3.

A class bias in favour of the *Liurai-Dato* class was most apparent where some members of the unarmed clandestine movement received pensions, whereas many others did not (Kent and Wallis 2013). Some members were able to identify themselves with the armed resistance, and crucially, benefit from a veterans’ pension. For example, a senior bureaucrat, Eugenio, working for the free trade zone Special Zones of Social Market Economy (ZEESM) in Oecusse said:

My father is a member of the ‘so-called veterans’. It means he participated. I don't want to say he's a veteran, because in different countries this has a different meaning. My father didn't get a gun and go into the wild to fight the Indonesians. He was a key member of the clandestine movement.<sup>66</sup>

Although Eugenio’s father did not “carry a gun”, he receives a veteran’s pension because he was a member of the political resistance in Oecusse.<sup>67</sup> In addition to veteran status, Eugenio’s father is also a member of a *Liurai* family. Thus, some men from the *Liurai-Dato* class can access veterans’ pension without having physically fought. But many other members of the resistance, especially women, have never received a pension (Kent and Wallis 2013). I suggest that the most

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<sup>66</sup> Interview with male senior bureaucratic Eugenio, ET108, Oecusse, 4 August 2015

<sup>67</sup> Interview with Eugenio’s mother, ET103, Oecusse, 30 July 2015

decisive factor is Eugenio's father's status as a male member of a historically influential *Liurai-Dato* family. Because of these hierarchies, the valorisation approach to pensions is biased in favour of a few men of the *Liurai-Dato* class, making status, not work, or actual contribution, a crucial factor in determining eligibility.

The distribution of resources to veterans plays a significant role in holding together coalitions between urban and rural members of the *Liurai-Dato* class and in enforcing the political order. Two examples illustrate this: the elections for village chief in 2009 and in the government's use of veterans to "resolve" disputes over development. Veterans' pensions and one off payments to veterans were key to bolstering support for Gusmão's CNRT in the 2012 legislative election, as I explained above. At the village level, village elections after 2005 were not supposed to involve political parties. Nonetheless, it was clear from fieldwork that village elections remain arenas of political mobilisation along party lines. In the 2009 local village council elections, payments to veterans helped veterans mobilise support. Shortly before the 2009 village chief elections, Gusmão's government altered the veterans' pension law to transfer one-off veterans' payments of \$1,380 to over 15,500 individuals. These individuals were classified as having served between four and eight years in the resistance, making them ineligible for the ongoing pensions (Roll 2015, 103). The payments to veterans demonstrated how Gusmão's government was willing to offer support to veterans and help them "mobilise resources" (Roll 2015, 138). The cash transfers allowed leading veterans to campaign for local village leadership or help candidates of their choice and organise the rank and file. Veterans' campaigning was also aided by the politicisation of militarised hierarchies which, "do not allow any members to oppose policy made by their commanders" (Guterres 2006, 235). Thus, payments to veterans comprise an important material link between the Dili-based members of the *Liurai-Dato* class with rural members of the *Liurai-Dato* class.

In social conflicts over land use and rapidly expanding infrastructure development projects, veterans are used to "resolve" problems, that is social conflict, and thus

to enforce a political order. Traditional dispute resolution favours male power holders of the *Liurai-Dato* class (as I discuss in detail in Chapter 5). It is commonplace for members of the *Liurai-Dato* class to be enrolled by the government to ameliorate conflicts between infrastructure project developers and ordinary Timorese citizens using “traditional dispute resolution”. A female village secretary in Oecusse described the process arising when the community resisted the regional government’s attempts to develop land for ZEESMs:

Village chiefs and hamlet chiefs use *adat* (Tetun: tradition). For example, in ZEESMs, when they meet with people who don’t like ZEESMs, they take the *katua adat* (Tetun: elder) with them. When you are going to do something, to implement ZEESMs, to build roads, *adat* helps with the development. They have done this many times to implement development. It helps a lot with the socialisation of the ZEESMs program.<sup>68</sup>

A clear example arises again from the case of the ZEESM bureaucrat, Eugenio’s father, a *Naizuf* (Meto: King or *Liurai*) who was also the recipient of a veteran’s pension.<sup>69</sup> ZEESMs employed Eugenio’s father as a traditional mediator in land disputes for the government. During fieldwork in 2015, there were many land disputes during the construction of roads, ports, and airports in ZEESMs. People were removed from their homes, gardens and agricultural lands when these spaces were allocated for new roads. In response to my casual questions about conflicts, Eugenio’s father stated that the *ema kiik* (Tetun: lit. the little people: ordinary citizens) were not knowledgeable. He reported that during land disputes ordinary citizens told him keeping their land was a human right. Eugenio’s father was of the contrasting view, that human rights were different to cultural rights. He further argued that if ordinary people wanted development they must expect to sacrifice their land.<sup>70</sup> This one case illustrates the role of members of the *Liurai-Dato* class in suppressing dissent and mediating complaints which, in turn, can allow the

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<sup>68</sup> Interview with Serafina, ET110 female village secretary, Oecusse, 4 August 2015.

<sup>69</sup> *Naizuf* is the Meto language (the language of Oecusse) equivalent to *Liurai*, see Table 6.3 Comparative table of rank names across districts in Timor-Leste).

<sup>70</sup> Fieldwork notes, Oecusse, 30 July 2015.

government to proceed with road building and land clearing for the free trade zone, sometimes without compensating landowners (Journal Independente 2017). Anecdotally, people in Oecusse have rarely been compensated for land taken for development projects.<sup>71</sup> In a similar example, Roll also observed the mobilisation of veteran authority for political ends in rural areas in 2011. Gusmão met with veterans regarding the government's rural electrification program under the National Program for Village Development, PNDS, which at the time consumed a controversially large percentage of the budget. One of Roll's interviewees said that veterans used status and intimidation to ensure that no claims to compensation for land lost to electricity infrastructure would arise from communities. In return for their roles as enforcers for projects, veterans were rewarded with contracts to install the electricity infrastructure (Roll 2015, 120, International Crisis Group 2006, 14, Scambary 2015). The overlaps and links between veteran status, *Liurai-Dato* heritage, and government employment as well as contracting, indicates the concentration of power in the hands of certain elite families.

These families dominate government jobs, which are the primary source of cash in the rural districts. To look again at the typical case of Eugenio, many members of his family are employed in the Oecusse public service. Eugenio's cousin is program director at the labour ministry, SEFOPE, on a \$7,800 annual salary (Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste 2016b). This is around twenty times the average annual income in Timor-Leste. Eugenio said in response to a question about his family working in the civil service:

We have a lot of family in government. Maybe not district administrator, but directors, and vice-directors. Are you asking me if I am from a dynasty? My family here is in the government or the private sector or politicians—but is it because of their exposure to education?<sup>72</sup>

Eugenio, like many members of the *Liurai-Dato* class, is uncomfortable speaking about class hierarchy. Instead, he suggests that it is his family's access to

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<sup>71</sup> Fieldwork notes, discussion with researchers from Lao Hamutuk, Dili, 13 August 2015.

<sup>72</sup> Interview with male senior bureaucratic Eugenio, ET108, Oecusse, 4 August 2015

education—and achievements therein—is the reason for their preeminent position in the state and access to its resources.

#### 4.3.2 Gender and Cash Transfers

As well as class biases, the veteran's pension also has well-documented internal gender biases. Kent and Kinsella (2015) have pointed out how these eligibility criteria discriminate against women. For non-elites and women, the length of service criteria eliminates them from claims to veteran status, because they worked as subsistence farmers or cared for dependents during the war. As women were largely excluded from military leadership roles, they were also disqualified from generous pensions by the lack of rank. Even women leaders were initially excluded from the first veteran's Commission and the reason given was that these women had held political, not military positions (Kent and Kinsella 2015, 480). The valorisation of armed masculinity is a lens which makes women's work in war invisible (Kent and Wallis 2013). Roll heard a succinct description of the criteria for the pension: "If you didn't carry a gun, you don't get money" (Roll 2015, 94). Members of Timorese women's organisation lobbied against the narrow definition of a "veteran". Because cash transfers are made based on valorising armed men, it is a view of war through a masculinist lens that excludes women. After this lobbying, the law was amended in 2009 to allow women to receive pensions. Still, only 13.5 percent of veterans' pensions are transferred to women (Kent and Kinsella 2015, 481). However, most of these female recipients of the veterans' pension receive it on behalf of a deceased male relative, and these are the least generous pensions of around \$230 a month (Kent and Kinsella 2015, 481, Roll 2015, 104).

Excising further claims by the citizenry on the state is particularly apparent in the lack of reparations to victims of SGBV during the Indonesian occupation. Most significantly, the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions' recommendations for reparations to victims were not enacted, despite ongoing lobbying of the UN by Timorese NGOs (cf. Asia Justice and Rights 2017). As such, in independent Timor-

Leste, veteran status is privileged whereas victim status is marginalised (Harris-Rimmer 2010, Kent 2016, Rothschild 2017). These authors repeat the questions of Timorese women leaders like Maria Domingues-Alves: “Why is it that the men who are tortured by military forces are seen as the heroes, whereas the women who are tortured (including rape) are seen as traitors?” (Harris-Rimmer 2010, 125, Kent 2016). Again, as argued in Chapter 3 and following Kent, this reflects the deliberate strategy of associating men with heroism and armed masculinity and women as victims—and, because of the unfair stigma attached to the widespread sexual violence—as traitors (Kent 2016). In the field in 2015, this kind of sentiment was occasionally voiced. Serafina, a female village secretary, stated it most clearly: “Veterans get more money than women or victims of violence because the government thinks more of the heroes because they fought in the war”.<sup>73</sup> A masculinist lens is blind to the fact that, as I have shown in Chapter 3, SGBV was used as a weapon of war—an explicit war strategy with material costs and benefits. Many of those women subject to SGBV were targeted precisely because of their involvement with the resistance.

An unequal gendered division of labour further validates diminishing women’s war-time contributions and their exclusion from a share of state resources. Therefore gender relations is a key ideological aspect of how the dominant class secures its position in independent Timor-Leste. Ex-President and current Prime Minister Taur Matan Ruak has stated that women “just sat there” during the war (Kent and Wallis 2013). This renders women’s crucial work in working in, feeding, clothing, and protecting the scattered guerrilla resistance and the clandestine movement, invisible. Overlooking and diminishing the value of women’s work is part-and-parcel of the “everyday” gender order. Again, village secretary Serafina questioned this: “I also question [the government’s] plans for veterans getting even more money because women are on the receiving end of violence and they have the children. I don’t understand the government”.<sup>74</sup> As Serafina suggests, dividing

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<sup>73</sup> Interview with Serafina, Female Secretary of the Village, ET110, Oecusse, 4 August 2015.

<sup>74</sup> Interview with Serafina, Female Secretary of the Village, ET110, Oecusse, 4 August 2015

who is deserving of state resources according to victim-versus-veteran was incomprehensible to women who see their labours and suffering go unacknowledged.

Not only veterans' pensions, but the entire cash transfer system has inbuilt gender bias. Another cash transfer, the *Bolsa da Mãe* was the part of the New Deal targeted at women. The *Bolsa da Mãe* was transferred to vulnerable women, and for policymakers, this made it an intervention to support increasing "gender equality", and reduce poverty (da Cruz 2014, 19). However, the recipients may be vulnerable mothers, but the targeted beneficiaries are their children. As such, although it is called an intervention for gender equality, it is not clear how the cash transfer was supposed to make this change. Rather, increased gender equality is here equated with "better" mothering outcomes.

The cash transfer for mothers, *Bolsa da Mãe*, unlike the veterans' pension, is means tested and conditional. It is only for "vulnerable" mothers—single and widowed mothers with children aged up to 17 years, that is, female-headed households were eligible (UNWomen 2015a). Like the Veterans' Pension, the *Bolsa da Mãe* was run by the Ministry of Social Solidarity under the National Directorate for Social Reinsertion (DNRS) (da Cruz 2014).<sup>75</sup> The aim of *Bolsa da Mãe* is to reduce intergenerational poverty and improve education outcomes by giving a small amount of cash to vulnerable households. Similar CCTs have been rolled out by donors and governments in many countries.<sup>76</sup> Broadly, the logic of CCTs is that making transfers *conditional* upon school attendance will reduce poverty because "higher levels of education will ultimately translate into higher salaries and better

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<sup>75</sup> DNRS is *Direção Nacional de Reinserção Social* or The National Directorate of Social Reinsertion in Tetun

<sup>76</sup> Conditional cash transfer programs are common worldwide. For instance, 19 out of 23 countries in Latin America have a CCT Program. The payment levels are always quite small, although all are much greater than the Timor-Leste program (Fernandes 2015). CCT programs include: *Bolsa Família* in Brazil (started 2003) with an average payment \$50 per month; *Juntos* in Peru (started 2005) with an average payment \$70 per month; *Oportunidades* in Mexico; *Solidario* in Chile (started 1992); and *Asignación Universal por Hijo* in Argentina (started 2009) (Saad-Filho 2015).

jobs and thus break the intergenerational transmission of poverty” (Ulrichs and Roelen 2012).

A comparison of state spending on *Bolsa da Mãe* and veterans’ pension highlights the significant and ongoing gender injustice in the distribution of state resources. First, for the recipients, the veteran’s pensions are far more generous than *Bolsa da Mãe*. In 2011, veterans’ pensions were between \$2,760 and \$9,000 per annum (World Bank 2013, 3). The top pension is more than ten times the per capita monthly non-oil GDP in Timor-Leste. *Bolsa da Mãe*, in contrast, pays between \$60 and \$180 per annum. Even the *minimum* veterans’ pension for a living veteran is \$3312 a year, over forty times the average *Bolsa da Mãe* payment of \$80 per annum (Fernandes 2015, n26). Even measured in terms of the very modest Timorese national poverty line, which defines poverty as having an income of less than \$0.88 a day, the *Bolsa da Mãe* was too small to put a household above the poverty line (Fernandes 2015). As a result, it was ineffective at reducing poverty. Moreover, as the current maximum amount payable is \$15 per month (\$5 per month per child) regardless of how many children are in the household, this lessens its impact because most families have more than three children.<sup>77</sup> In rural areas, interviewees suggested that the high price of goods meant *Bolsa da Mãe* did not help the most vulnerable.<sup>78</sup> At the individual level, receiving a veteran’s pension placed an individual far above the poverty line, while *Bolsa da Mãe* barely helped a family to survive. In terms of the budget, significantly there is a vast gulf between the generosity of the veterans’ pension as shown in Figure 4.2 below.

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<sup>77</sup>World Bank Development Indicators 2016: Fertility rate, total (births per woman)  
<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.TFRT.IN?locations=TL>

<sup>78</sup> Interview with ET104 Village Chief, Oecusse, 30 July 2015



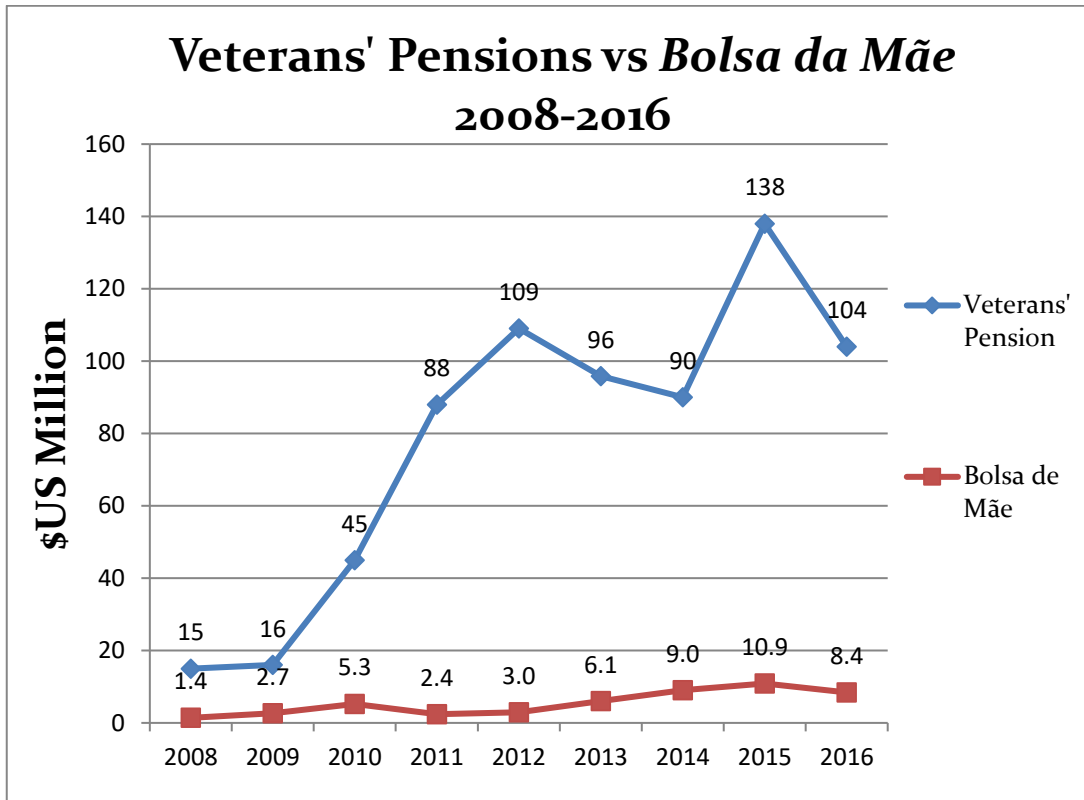


Figure 4.2 Spending on Veterans' Pensions versus *Bolsa da Mãe* (2008-2016) <sup>79</sup>

Compared to *Bolsa da Mãe*, and all other cash transfers, veterans receive a much greater portion of the national budget, as shown in Figure 4.2 below. The budget for *Bolsa da Mãe* was \$9m in 2014, whereas it was \$90 million for veterans' pensions.<sup>80</sup> In 2016, budget spending on payments to veterans was tenfold the spending on *Bolsa da Mãe*. Veterans' pensions account for a sizeable portion of the budget, averaging 5 percent of the total state budget since 2008. Moreover, veterans' pensions consumed 60 percent of the Ministry of Social Solidarity 2015-2016 budget.<sup>81</sup> *Bolsa da Mãe* ought to be an area strongly associated with the enactment of gender justice through the distribution of state resources to the most vulnerable. Yet, its inadequacy and small size compared to the veterans' pension,

<sup>79</sup> 2015 *Bolsa da Mãe* figures are estimates from DNRS line budget in 2013 and 2015 budget books and therefore may include non-*Bolsa da Mãe* spending such as disability. Data source: Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste (2015b), Lao Hamutuk (2016), and World Bank (2013).

<sup>80</sup> Some of the *Bolsa da Mãe* money went missing after being transferred to bank branches. Of the total budget of \$9 million in 2014, in total, families did not receive \$89,222 although it was paid into the BNCTL banks (da Cruz 2014). This is referred to as "leakage".

<sup>81</sup> Timor Post (2015a) 15 September 2015

reflects deep-seated social and gender inequalities. Illustrating dissatisfaction with cash transfers, the 2015 Timorese NGO Shadow report to CEDAW complained that:

In the current 2015 State Budget, US\$130.4 million has been allocated to cash payments to veterans, out of a total US\$176.4 million allocated to the entire social welfare program. Women are marginalised from the veterans' pension scheme and the very low investment in other social welfare programs for the poorest households has a disproportionate impact on women. This is only one example of the cumulative failure to address inequalities between women and men through Government policy" (JSMP, PRADET, and ALFeLa 2015, iii).

Although aimed at vulnerable women, the same problems of elite capture seen in veterans' pensions befall *Bolsa da Mãe*. Over the duration of the program, about 40 percent of *Bolsa da Mãe* recipients did not meet the qualitative criteria stipulated by the law (Fernandes 2015). Female public servants, village chiefs wives, and veteran's families received the payments (da Cruz 2014, 21).<sup>82</sup> They were not the most vulnerable—single women, widows, with low incomes—for whom the program was intended. One reason for this is that public servants responsible for running the programs, and village chiefs (who are also members of the *Liurai-Dato* class), were responsible for disseminating information and choosing beneficiaries, appropriate or co-opt *Bolsa da Mãe*, as the Commissioners do for veterans' pensions (World Bank 2013, da Cruz 2014, 21). Information about the program failed to reach the community, especially communities in remote areas. Very few poor women I interviewed in rural areas had heard of the program, and even fewer had received it, despite meeting the criteria. Deep-seated social inequalities are also reflected in the targeting, outcomes and corruption in the veterans' pensions and *Bolsa da Mãe*.

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<sup>82</sup> The statement in the report is: "*Sistema selesaun ba benefisarias nebe balun sidauk tuir kriterius Bolsa Mae (Ex. Inan-Aman Funsionariu publiku hetan benefisiu husi Programa Bolsa Mae*"; or "The system of selection of some beneficiaries does not follow the criteria of Bolsa Mae (For example, Sir and Madam public servants receive benefits from the *Bolsa Mae* Program)" (da Cruz 2014, 21).

Given these points, there has been extensive elite capture of all the cash transfer programs pointing to the centrality of state resources in securing the political order. Across all cash transfer programs, there has been significant “leakage” of monies to non-veterans and the non-poor. These have been portrayed as technical problems of implementation (World Bank 2013, Dale, Lepuschuetz, and Umapathi 2014). Roll has argued that the state plays a key role in deciding who has access (Roll 2015, 17). I agree with Roll, but I go further in arguing that the state itself is comprised of members of the *Liurai-Dato* class. Members of this class shape the implementation and outcomes of veterans pensions and *Bolsa da Mãe* to their benefit. The preceding sections have shown that gender and class intersect over the distribution of state resources. The following section goes beyond these contextual political economies to illustrate the gender intervention seeking to tackle gender bias in the distribution of state resources, Gender Responsive Budgeting.

#### 4.4 The Case of Gender Responsive Budgeting

Gender Responsive Budgeting is a gender intervention designed remedy the distribution of state resources and mainstream gender in budgetary policy. GRB is a tool of analyses and planning for budgetary policy. The aim of GRB is that policies that contribute to women’s well-being and increase women’s empowerment ought to be well funded by the state, and policies that detract from women’s well-being, or amplify men’s power, or gender inequality, ought not to be funded. This results in a budget that is responsive to the areas requiring more gender equality. GRB can include the creation of new, costed policies, funding commitments on national action plans on gender and women’s empowerment, and accountability mechanisms to ensure money was spent where it was committed. Another aim of GRB is to create gender-disaggregated data and time use statistics improving information on the gendered nature of the economy (UNIFEM 2009). As feminist economic analysts have long argued, the gendered distribution of state resources sustains generalised impoverishment and gender inequality (Elson 1993). GRB has

been promoted by international donors since the 1990s because it was increasingly recognised that “decision-making behind taxation policies and the distribution of public financial resources is highly gendered, as is their impact” (UNIFEM 2009, 17, Costa 2018). Overall then, GRB seeks to make governments accountable for ensuring their budgets promote the achievement of gender equality and women’s rights, especially among the poor (UNIFEM 2009). Many countries piloted GRB initiatives, but few proceeded to implementation (Costa 2018, 16). Timor-Leste has implemented a few, related kinds of GRB that overall aimed to make the budget more responsive to gender inequality (Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste 2010c).

The introduction of GRB in Timor-Leste faced setbacks initially. In the Timor-Leste case, the introduction of Gender Responsive Budgeting was linked to two other gender interventions: increasing women’s political participation in national parliament including the introduction of gender quotas for parliament, and subsequently, the creation of the women’s parliamentary caucus, the Group of Women Parliamentarians in Timor-Leste (henceforth, Women’s Cross-Party Caucus). The first efforts to mainstream gender in budgetary decision making, and thus a precursor to GRB, came the attempt to establish a standing parliamentary commission for gender affairs, equality and children. The legislation went before the parliament in 2004, and was defeated. Reportedly, it lost the vote because establishing a commission especially for women was considered by some parliamentarians as discriminatory against men (Soetjipto 2014, 34). The defeat showed that introduction of GRB would be difficult. Subsequently, Timorese Parliament did pass a resolution to include gender equality, but as one of several issues presided over by Parliamentary Commissions’ E (2007-2012) and F (2012-2017).<sup>83</sup>

Next, UNWomen held workshops on GRB with the national parliament and UNDP in 2008. Following these workshops, Gusmão’s IV Constitutional Government

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<sup>83</sup> Parliamentary commissions, in the Timorese political system, are permanent standing committees charged with jurisdiction over specific areas of lawmaking.

issued a Gender Budget Statement for the 2008 and 2009 budgets (Costa 2018, 3). Gender Budget Statements are documents or sections of documents that highlight how budget spending or revenue promote gender equality (Budlender 2015). The 2009-2010 “Gender and Culture Statement”, urged the consideration of gender in the formulation of departmental annual action plans. The aims of GRB in this case was to mainstream gender across the policies and programs of government departments. In association with the statements, the Gender Working Group and the Women’s Cross Party Caucus worked to ensure GRB was implemented correctly.

Then the national parliament made Resolution No. 12/2010 instituting a gender-sensitive budget. Again, this was initially resisted by male member of parliament who “ argued that GRB could be construed as special treatment for women” and was thus anti-gender equality” (Costa 2015, 107). In the text of Resolution 12/2010, the government justifies the introduction of a gender sensitive budget because gender equality considerations contribute to “growth and prosperity”, helping Timor-Leste reach its social and economic objectives. However, Resolution 12/2010 interpreted gender as an essentialised sex difference—that women had different concerns and needs compared to men (Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste 2010a). It did not see gender as involving power relations, and thus did not address this. Further, the National Parliament Resolution No. 12/2010 on GRB explicitly *precludes* creating separate budget lines (Portuguese: *rubrica orçamental separada*). The exclusion of separate line items limits the ability to do gender disaggregated spending. Consequently, the “line budget does not match their programs and [the gender working group] needs a lot of follow up work to really track budgets to activities”.<sup>84</sup> Likewise, Costa, Sharp and Austen describe “some resistance to translating gender equality into detailed policy and budget allocations” (Costa, Sharp, and Austen 2009). Lastly, then-President Ramos-Horta issued a Presidential Decree No. 13/2010 urging the Timorese Government,

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<sup>84</sup> Interview with a female international UN manager, ET076, 6 June 2015.

through the Ministry of Finance, to implement budgetary policy rules that take into account gender equality.

All through this period, gender mainstreaming of budgets—ensuring that spending policy addressed gender equality—was primarily conducted by parliamentary institutions, such as the Women’s Cross Party Caucus, and Commissions E and F, or the government’s gender equality office, the Secretariat of State for the Support and Socio-Economic Promotion for Women (SEM). SEM, not the more powerful finance ministry, has reviewed the action plans accompanying each ministry’s budget (Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste 2014, 77). This meant GRB was a limited internal process during this period.

However, the Gender Budget Statements accompanying each budget did not continue. Instead, the Timorese parliament established the Gender Working Group and a Women’s Cross-Party Caucus to use tools of GRB to monitor budget spending and implementation.<sup>85</sup> The Gender Working Group comprised Timorese women’s organisations with technical assistance from UNWomen perform GRB by examining the draft national budget, budget execution and implementation.<sup>86</sup> At this point then, the involvement of civil society organisations meant GRB became a “social accountability” tool “to hold public officials answerable for their behaviour” (Rodan and Hughes 2012, 367). On the parliamentary side, the Women’s Cross Party Caucus was established by Parliament in 2011 to introduce, implement, and monitor gender mainstreaming in national institutions (see Table 2.2 Gender Interventions in Timor-Leste 2001-2017). One of the main roles of the Women’s Cross-Party Caucus was advocacy in parliament and parliamentary commissions for gender-sensitive policies, and for proper implementation of already introduced policies.<sup>87</sup> Gender Working Group and UNWomen also used GRB at the government department level to monitor departmental Action Plans on gender-sensitive spending. The Gender Working Group monitoring involved

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<sup>85</sup> The Gender Working Group was established under Government Resolution 27/2011.

<sup>86</sup> Interview with a female Timorese NGO senior manager, ET077, 5 June 2015.

<sup>87</sup> Interview with a member of the Women’s Cross Party Caucus, ET085, 11 June 2015.

evaluating budgets and spending using an existing system of gender focal points within departments, usually with Director Generals.<sup>88</sup> After 2010, no more budget statements were issued, and since that period, GRB has become more internal, technocratic and ineffective, mirroring reductions in budget transparency across the board (Lao Hamutuk 2016, 3).

Yet, civil society based monitoring separate from parliamentary procedure was not able to achieve concrete gender sensitive budgeting. As one member of the Gender Working Group put it in 2015, civil society involvement was just a process of rubber-stamping the budget: “they just ask us to come and give input at the end. It is just a formality. They do not implement it”.<sup>89</sup> This recalls other examples of the limitations of participatory budgeting in Southeast Asia which “has largely been [...] on the basis of directing civil society energies toward demanding technical and administrative tasks to improve governance” (Rodan and Hughes 2012, 372). Equally, the 2015 NGO shadow report to CEDAW complains government measures with respect to gender equality have not been concerned with effecting real change. Chiefly, “while the Government expresses its commitment to gender mainstreaming through various gender-working groups and gender-responsive budgeting, successive budgets since 2009 have not included any gender equality impact assessments” (JSMP, PRADET, and ALFeLa 2015). Thus, despite rhetoric around gender budgeting, for the most part there has been little real accountability on outcomes. I turn to the explanations of these now.

Academic and practitioner literature often cites capacity, technical reasons or timing as factors constraining GRB (Dale, Lepuschuetz, and Umapathi 2014, World Bank 2013). An oft-cited shortcoming of GRB is lack of capacity—of GRB analysts or state institutions—but, as Budlender argues, this is “accompanied by and can be a screen for—political resistance” to GRB (Budlender 2015, 41). The orthodox view among economists working on post-conflict states is that GRB is not

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<sup>88</sup> Interview with a female international UN manager, ET076, 6 June 2015.

<sup>89</sup> Interview with a female Timorese NGO Senior manager, ET077, 5 June 2015.

compatible with post-conflict states' lack of capacity. It holds that a complex policy tool like GRB should be postponed until the state is more stable and prosperous (Costa 2018). I argue in the following section that although technical and informational barriers exist, other factors are more crucial. Poor outcomes for GRB are a result of an unwillingness to introduce and implement GRB, or the necessary strategic compromises and prioritisation by GRB advocates and the outright capture of state resources by the *Liurai-Dato* class.

One reason for disappointing outcomes on GRB lies with political opposition to reforms. Advocates for progressive gender reforms from Timorese women's organisations regularly faced opposition to lobbying for more resources for women. Opposition even came from within the ministries they considered to be receptive to gender equality. For instance, a gender advocate recalled a conversation about what she saw as the disproportionate spending on veterans compared to victims of violence. The former Vice-Minister of Social Solidarity, one of the ministries most friendly to gender perspectives, said in regards to reparations to female victims of violence: "I do not agree with these points about gender equality". It was the gender advocate's opinion that many male sitting members of parliament and ministers alike ignored or sidelined the plight of women, especially victims of violence.<sup>90</sup> Given such opposition, Timorese women's organisations know that their agenda is contentious and male decision makers are likely to oppose them if they take an explicitly feminist approach. Therefore, they moderate or reframe their argument. For instance, a Timorese gender advocate reported telling male parliamentarians and bureaucrats that gender is "simply" about women making their own decisions because women and men's experiences are not the same. She continued:

But we do not say feminist, because if this enters into the conversation, they say we are against men. They say we want women to be able to do anything they want. Sometimes in Timor, they see the word feminist as too extreme. [...] That is why you still have to have the NGOs who

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<sup>90</sup> Interview with a female Timorese NGO Senior manager, ET078, 6 June 2015.



understand these problems. The view is that feminism is something bad”.<sup>91</sup>

Legal anthropologist Merry explains this in the following terms. When “local” women’s organisations take up international norms on women’s human rights, they need to “translate” them for a domestic context (Merry 2006, 39). Merry takes this “translation” to comprise a process whereby “new ideas are framed and presented regarding existing cultural norms, values, and practices” (Merry 2006, 39). On this view, translation from global to local contexts results in “hybrid feminist discourse”, which, by drawing on authentic local tradition, is more legitimate, making feminist actions more effective (Merry 2006, 39). While this accords with ideas in the local turn, I argue these are political rather than translational acts. When Timorese women’s groups avoid using the term feminist, rather than performing acts of “translation”, it instead represents political compromises with male decision-makers. As described in the above quote, they work politically to avoid being branded anti-men for advocating “women can do anything they want”, which is considered “too extreme” and for which they may face (violent) reprisals. In other words, advocates reframe the argument to downplay the challenges to male power but also secure some victories. As a further illustration, in the face of GRBs disappointing outcomes, since 2011, the Gender Working Group and the Women’s Cross Party Caucus have made a strategic decision to focus only on the budget for the implementation of the 2010 Law Against Domestic Violence (LADV) (Costa 2018), the subject of the next section.

#### 4.4.1 Why Does GRB Have Dissappointing Outcomes?

Technical constraints regarding a lack of data often comes up when discussing GRB’s outcomes in Timor-Leste. In their monitoring of spending on the LADV, a member of the Gender Working Group confirmed the lack of data and line responsibility obstructed GRB. Firstly, she said, only two out of seven responsible

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<sup>91</sup> Interview with female Timorese NGO Senior manager, ETo82, 8 June 2015.

line ministries (the Secretariat of State for Security and the Ministry of Social Solidarity) could show her where they had spent the money allocated for the LADV. This is significant because this monitoring is an area the Gender Working Group has focused on since 2011. The Secretariat of State for Security, who had budget allocated to support the Vulnerable Person's Unit, a special police unit for victims of GBV had easily traceable spending. However:

Other ministries, like Education and Health, Justice, they simply said this money is for the implementation of the LADV, and there was no line budgeting, we do not know what money is for training. After a year of implementation, we asked Justice, for example, how much is allocated for training on anger management for the prisoners? And they said they did not know how much they allocated. They told us to ask Finance, but they did not know. Then we asked the Director General, who lead the Gender Working group in each ministry, but sometimes they are very busy. And then we asked for their spending data, which is a difficult thing for them. We [the Gender Working Group] also don't have time to look at that.<sup>92</sup>

Thus, there was a disconnect between budget allocation, planning and expenditure in some ministries, even though departmental Director Generals, as Gender Focal Points, were responsible for implementing GRB.<sup>93</sup> More problematically, spending earmarked for measures to improve women's access to security under the LADV, for instance, was used for other items on an *ad hoc* basis. The Gender Working Group member continued:

Then, there is a conflict between areas of spending in the budget. The departments prioritise other things. They might have marked it for the LADV, but then they put it into other things. There's a new priority.<sup>94</sup>

Re-allocation of funds suggests not merely an inability to track item expenditure, but a more general problem in departments, including those prioritising gender.

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<sup>92</sup> Interview with a female Timorese NGO senior manager, ETo82, 8 June 2015.

<sup>93</sup> Interview with a female international UN manager, ETo76, 6 June 2015; and Costa, Sharp, and Austen (2009), Costa (2010).

<sup>94</sup> Interview with a female Timorese NGO senior manager, ETo82, 8 June 2015.

Another and related reason for poor outcomes on GRB is that tracking spending is not merely a technical issue. The lack of transparency and state-capacity merge with corruption, social hierarchy, and gender ideology. The lack of transparency in spending is coupled with political contests over state resources, which leads to the limited implementation of GRB. Spending is the real issue. The example of budgets in the Vulnerable Persons' Unit (VPU), the front line police unit in the implementation of the LADV, illustrates this. In a review of the national police (PNTL) budget, the Gender Working Group recommended the VPU should have a new vehicle to serve victims of gender-based violence in a rural district. The government granted the VPU's request. When the vehicle arrived in the rural district, the male police commander simply took the car. When the Gender Working Group complained to the line ministry, the Secretariat of State for Security, the Minister told the working group his department could not order the Commander to return the car to the VPU because it was "the hierarchy, the structure" of the PNTL.<sup>95</sup> In the face of such evidence, it is the actual spending of state resources, not the budgeting of them, according to the interests of dominant members of social and gender hierarchies, which make the distribution of state resources so uneven.

Those advocates engaged in GRB are largely from the *Liurai-Dato* class, which has also tended to limit the radical redistribution of state resources to poor women.<sup>96</sup> As in earlier Portuguese and Indonesian periods, membership of the *Liurai-Dato* class allows members of that class to leverage their social status to contend for jobs and resources at the national level: in NGOs, government or political parties. Because the *Liurai-Dato* class dominate paid employment in public and NGO sectors in Dili, members of that elite also dominate the Timorese women's movement. For example, Maria Maia dos Reis e Costa, Member of Parliament from 2007 to 2012 was the daughter of a *Liurai* in Baucau (Loney 2015). Ilda Maria da Conceição, FRETILIN Member of Parliament from 2001-2007 and re-elected in

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<sup>95</sup> Interview with a female Timorese NGO senior manager, ETo82, 8 June 2015.

<sup>96</sup> Interview data. June to September 2015.

2017, was the daughter of a *Liurai* in Viqueque. Female members of the *Liurai-Dato* class also filled better-paid jobs in Timorese women's organisations and NGOs, paralleling *Liurai-Dato* men's dominance of military and government jobs. Notably, a significant number of women's NGO leaders are direct descendants of *Liurai*. For example, a president of women's NGO umbrella organisation Rede Feto is the granddaughter of the *Liurai* of Baucau. Laura Pina Menzes Lopes of the *Liurai* of Maubisse led PATRIA, an organisation that works with UNWomen to raise women's political participation. After the 2017 election, Lopes entered parliament as a candidate for FRETILIN and became Secretary of State for Gender Equality and Social Inclusion. Another head of a prominent Timorese microfinance organisation, and political party member, is the descendant of a *Liurai*. Importantly to this analysis, like their male counterparts, most female members of parliament were members of the resistance. One parliamentarian suggested that: "Many of them come from the resistance. I think 70 percent of the women in Parliament are from the resistance era".<sup>97</sup> Again, this confirms the overlap described in Chapter 3 whereby many of the resistance leadership were from the *Liurai-Dato* class.

As a result of their patriarchal bargain with men of their class, Timorese women's organisations and parliamentarians did not always challenge the gender injustices in cash transfers. As members of the *Liurai-Dato* class, which overlaps with resistance and political party leadership, women working on GRB benefit from the current distribution of state resources that are ideologically justified through the valorisation of armed resistance. Quite often, women in parliament and civil society receive the veterans' pension on behalf of a family member, or a male family member receives it (Kent 2016). Members of the Timorese women's movement have at times adhered to an ideology that valorised armed masculinity, even while sidelined within it.

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<sup>97</sup> Interview with a female Timorese NGO Senior manager, ET077, 5 June 2015.

Gender responsive budgeting has not yet been used to diminish the gender injustice in cash transfers programs. In that sense, the aims of GRB to mainstream gender in the policies and programs of government departments, in this case, the Ministry of Social Solidarity, has not worked. A female member of parliament argued the reason for this was that the distribution of cash transfers could not be linked or compared but comprised two “separate” issues. She said: “You cannot say, this person was a victim of Indonesia, nor was a victim of some other kind violence. For the veterans’ pensions, we do not look at whether someone was a victim in the past”. The female MP argued that the needs of vulnerable women were being met through the *Bolsa da Mãe*, and, understandably, that progress on poverty reduction could not happen overnight.<sup>98</sup> The issue of cash transfers to veterans being prioritised over victims of SGBV or other vulnerable women thus seemed to find little traction among the Women’s Cross-Party Caucus.

Moreover, the gendered shortcomings of *Bolsa da Mãe* have not been addressed in GRB. These shortcomings include the fact that the beneficiaries of *Bolsa da Mãe* are children, not women; that the transfer is too small; and lastly, that conditionality measures in conditional cash transfers like *Bolsa da Mãe* are often experienced as coercive and disempowering by the poor (Rabinovich and Diepeveen 2015). To be fair, some of these deeper, structural kinds of flaws that authors have described in Latin American cases (Barrientos 2017, Saad-Filho 2015) have also not yet been addressed in practitioner discussions of the Timorese *Bolsa da Mãe* (World Bank 2013). The World Bank (2013) has recommended the rate paid under the *Bolsa da Mãe* ought to be increased. Even so, given the centrality of cash transfers and the “politics of memory” to the nature of the Timorese state, a slight increase in the rate of a conditional cash transfers would not interrupt the gendered distribution of state resources to privileged groups. Although GRB gave political authority to the Women’s Cross Party Caucus and civil society to

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<sup>98</sup> Interview with a member of the Women’s Cross Party Caucus, ET085, 11 June 2015.

scrutinise the budget, focussing on technical and administrative outcomes of the LADV the scope of GRB.

Another area of state spending that has considerable gendered impacts, but has not been part of GRB is physical infrastructure projects such as the ports, airports, roads, oil refineries and hotels built in Timor-Leste since 2007. These infrastructure projects have been politicised and part of patrimonial networking, in smaller electrification projects as I described above, but also in the largest projects (Scambary 2015). For example, Gusmão has been personally responsible for spending on a series of hundred million dollar projects, first under the National Program for Village Development (PNDS) (2012-2015) and then as infrastructure minister (2015-2017). Surprisingly to some, Gusmão's rival from FRETILIN, Alkatiri, was given carriage of the hundred million dollar project to develop physical infrastructure in Oecusse to enable it to become a free trade zone. The Women's Cross-Party Caucus has supported these high levels of physical infrastructure spending, despite criticism of its unequal gendered impacts from Timorese women's organisations and gender experts (Centre for Women and Gender Studies 2014, UNWomen 2015a). For instance, a female FRETILIN member of the Caucus described the Caucus' support for ZEESMs as setting the conditions for market-led development:

The Women's Cross-Party Caucus also approved the money for ZEESMs. [...] The people in ZEESMs are not going to make the factories, they are not allowed. *This is about creating the conditions.* This means building basic infrastructure. This is to make a public-private partnership, to make an investment, ZEESMs has to start at the beginning—basic infrastructure—to create the conditions in order that investors come. <sup>99</sup>

At the individual level, state distribution in favour of men through jobs in infrastructure means women have less control over resources and must access money through men (UNWomen 2015a). At the national budget level, spending

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<sup>99</sup>Interview with a member of the Women's Cross Party Caucus, ET085, 11 June 2015.

limited resources on physical infrastructure rather than health, water access and girl's education takes money away from areas that improve women's maternal well-being. Indeed, spending on health and education in Timor-Leste is low. According to Lao Hamutuk's budget submission

The health sector receives only 4.2% of the total budget, while education receives 8.7%, although the number of children reaching pre-primary and primary school-age has increased dramatically, there is a severe lack of equipment and medicine, and disease is widespread (Lao Hamutuk 2016)

Thus, although infrastructure spending in Timor-Leste was an area that would have benefitted from GRB, the Women's Cross-Party Caucus has not yet been publicly critical of the gendered distribution of resources in infrastructure spending.

Another reason for the limitations of GRB is that international staff working on gender interventions, like all interveners, worked with members of the Timorese elite, rather than with a broader cross section of society. International UN staff members working in Timor-Leste were aware class privilege of Timorese women's organisations. As one manager acknowledged, "the people who work for us are the elite".<sup>100</sup> Another female UN manager observed that in Timor-Leste, similar to women's movements in Malaysia and Indonesia, women's "organising is still middle-class oriented and city-centred" with notable grassroots exceptions.<sup>101</sup> The implications for international gender experts often "didn't know what was going on"<sup>102</sup> and they were reliant on Timorese women's organisations as partners to implement their programs. Further, as these Timorese women's organisations have long served as "conduits of information, preferences to governments, and suppliers of government or market services" they have shaped the focus of GRB in accordance with their political compromises and interests, narrowing its scope

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<sup>100</sup> Interview with female international manager at the UN ET076, 6 June 2015.

<sup>101</sup> Interview with female international senior manager at the UN, ET152, 9 September 2015.

<sup>102</sup> Interview with female international manager at the UN ET076, 6 June 2015.

(Rittich 2006, 223). Overall, international interveners were in no position to neutralise the role of class in shaping GRB outcomes. In the case of GRB in Timor-Leste, because female members of the political elite (with overlapping identities as members of the *Liurai-Dato* class and of the resistance) control and carry out GRB, they do not challenge the prevailing hierarchies in the distribution of state resources as it currently benefits them and their families. It is possible that GRB, like other participatory budgeting measures, can inadvertently, despite the goals of participants “help preserve existing power hierarchies and limit the scope for critical evaluation of prevailing reform agendas” (Rodan and Hughes 2012, 368). Costa has similarly shown that, despite “codification” in budget processes, “traditional gender politics and ways of prioritizing and allocating resources have continued to undermine positive change” (Costa 2015, 208).

The nature of the state, made up of members of *Liurai-Dato* (as I describe above), shaped by the historical monopolisation of resources by armed men (that I described in Chapter 3) comprise the context within which gender interventions take place. The greatest barrier to a gender just distribution of state resources has been a gendered class process that enables their monopolisation by groups of elite men, justified by the ideology valorising armed masculinity. Leaving the distribution of state resources out of GRB limits its outcomes for gender justice.

#### 4.5 Conclusion

As this chapter has outlined, Timorese gender advocates face an upward battle in using GRB, and outcomes of GRB must be seen in the context of elite dominance. On the technical side, government accountability through the GRB process was limited by the lack of gender-disaggregated budget data. GRB was a process largely internal to government, with external gender experts called on to “rubber stamp” GRB, rather than contribute decision making on state resources. Bureaucrats stymied gender sensitive spending for gender-political reasons, although this is often couched in terms of a lack of institutional capacity. Most importantly to this



chapter, despite positive rhetoric and important advocacy, GRB must be seen in the context of elite monopoly of state resources. An obvious example of this was the gendered distribution of state resources through veterans' pensions. Veterans' pensions went to members of the *Liurai-Dato* class. In addition, the Gusmão government used veterans' pensions as a way to build a coalition with local members of the *Liurai-Dato* class. Men outside the narrow, Dili based elite, were enrolled to build support for the government, limit opposition, and ameliorate land use conflicts in the government's favour, again a continuation of earlier historical patterns of rule. Paying veterans pensions was justified ideologically by the valorisation of armed masculinity, which precluded recognition of and redistribution to women, even though in reality, men who did not "carry a gun" received pensions. Female members of parliament, women's organisations and NGOs were predominantly from the *Liurai-Dato* class. Their membership of this class limited their advocacy. It was unlikely elite women would press for radical redistribution because they benefitted materially and ideologically from their association with armed masculinity, even as it excluded them. As a result, women's organisations made a politically strategic decision to focus on government accountability for spending on the LADV and scope of GRB narrowed.

The chapter aims made several contributions to the study of gender relations in post-conflict zones. The critique of gendered budgets and cash transfers in Timor-Leste is well established (Wallis 2015, Kent and Wallis 2013, Wallis 2012b, Niner 2016, 2017). This chapter built on these works and Costa's (2018) analysis of GRB in Timor-Leste by contextualising the distribution of state resources in the structural political economy of Timor-Leste. Concerning this study's proposition locating the cause of uneven outcomes in structural factors of class and gender, the chapter examined interests, ideology, and resilience of the *Liurai-Dato* class. This analysis provided a more complete explanation of the uneven results of gender intervention and clarified how these were justified by the valorisation of armed masculinity. The chapter set forth a unique contribution, contextualising gender interventions as structured by elite dominance. Lastly, this chapter brings together

insights from feminist security studies—that state and non-state actors prioritise violent men after conflict (Elias 2015, Goetz and Jenkins 2016)—with the study of GRB in feminist economics that has long drawn the link between gender sensitive spending and increasing welfare and gender justice (Elson 1993).

Returning to the central research question of the thesis—accounting for uneven outcomes from gender interventions—GRB using a gender justice lens could entail a radical challenge to state distributional patterns to ensure the ending of material inequalities between women and men that result in women's subordination to men. However, such a redistribution would transfer state resources away from the control of men of the *Liurai-Dato* class. As we saw, distribution of state resources plays an important role cementing a rural urban alliance veteran alliance. As a result of these vested interests in keeping the current socio-political order that GRB as a gender intervention had uneven outcomes, with some successes but little overall impact on the gendered distribution of state resources. Similarly, the gender intervention *Bolsa da Mãe* had little support. On the ground, like the veteran's pension, it was primarily captured by elites. Its impact on Timor's high levels of poverty has been negligible. With this in mind, the gendered distribution of state resources burdened Timorese women with more work and responsibility and failed to alleviate the economic stress faced by households. The lack of state resources has real everyday impacts on all areas of life. It also sets the conditions for high levels of violence against women, to which the subsequent chapters turn.

## CHAPTER 5. THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter now moves away from the discussion of state power and distribution to a lower level of governance and law, the introduction and implementation of a law criminalising domestic violence, the 2010 Law Against Domestic Violence (LADV). The LADV was the most ambitious and controversial area of gender intervention as domestic and international coalitions took up strong positions both for and against it. It took ten years of national and international advocacy to pass the law and women's organisations are proud of this achievement. Outcomes of the LADV have been uneven. There are new women's shelters in the districts run by women's organisations and funded by the government under the 2012 National Action Plan to fund and implement the LADV (UNWomen 2015b, Kniepe 2013). Legal aid and evidence gathering has improved and community awareness that domestic violence is a public crime and not a private issue between couples has grown. On the other hand, funding for the LADV remains precarious, police and lawyers have not implemented recommendations, few women access formal justice and violence against women, including domestic violence, remains very high. This is not surprising in the post-conflict context but still warrants explanation. The chapter aims to explain the reasons for these uneven outcomes by looking at the governance of domestic violence. It does so by moving away from the level of the state, to the research question: what have been the experiences of rural women of programs aimed to promote women's empowerment—in this case, the LADV.

Scholars and practitioners of the local turn in peacebuilding argue the explanation of ongoing conflict and violence lay in the disconnect between local and international institutions, cultures, and practices. As a result, some scholars take what Millar terms a “prescriptive” view of hybridity, and suggest that ongoing violence and conflict in society could be reduced by a hybrid justice system (Millar 2014). In the Timor case, hybrid peacebuilding found the greatest purchase and accepted definition as a blend of formal processes and traditional dispute resolution processes for resolving crimes in the community mediated by village leaders, but chiefly for cases of domestic violence. Scholars and practitioners of the local turn justified the hybrid system as pragmatic, cheaper, and more culturally legitimate. International peacebuilders and local elites supported these hybrid approaches. As a result, peacebuilding programs incorporated hybrid approaches into justice in reconciliation and justice programs and into national laws. In practice, the local turn in peacebuilding ideologically strengthened coalitions in parliament keen to oppose the LADV, and related programs that inadvertently helped legitimise village elites’ control of traditional dispute resolution in cases of domestic violence. As such, it negatively affected the introduction and implementation of the LADV.

The central argument of this chapter describes the political economy of domestic violence that results in uneven outcomes for the LADV as a gender intervention. As was argued in Chapters 2 through 4, the causes of uneven outcomes are historically-specific power and gender relations in Timor-Leste. The chapter argues that these historically specific relations of power are grounded in social relations of control over resources, and, in gender relations, control over women. Such a position is in contrast to scholars urging a local turn and a hybrid framework. I follow feminist scholars who have argued the use of traditional dispute resolution was problematic for women’s rights in post-conflict Timor-Leste (Swaine 2003, Harris-Rimmer 2010, Myrtilinen 2005). This chapter, however, makes an intersectional argument, that in the case of hybrid approaches to justice, advocates for hybrid peace reproduced the gender and class bias of Timorese elites

and village leaders. Using a structural feminist political economy analysis, I show that traditional dispute resolution in cases of domestic violence has been problematic for gender justice because perpetrators, village leaders, as well as uncles and fathers of victims, materially benefit from traditional dispute resolution. This happens as male leaders and family members are compensated with cash and animals when a woman experiences male partner violence. Male perpetrators can also buy impunity and avoid formal prosecution or any punishment. Thus, supporting local approaches to traditional dispute resolution assists those who materially benefit from the continuation of violence against women. In analytical terms, it inadvertently supports a political economy of domestic violence.

## 5.2 Domestic Violence and Traditional Dispute Resolution

Rates of domestic violence—violence committed against women by their male intimate partners (Tetun: *Violensia Domestika*)—have remained high in Timor-Leste after independence. While global rates of Violence Against Women (VAW) were estimated at around 30 percent of ever-partnered women experiencing domestic violence, the Timorese rate is higher and with more repeat incidences (García-Moreno et al. 2005). In 2013, three years after the promulgation of the LADV, the overwhelming majority of domestic violence cases in the courts (352 in four of thirteen districts) were perpetrated “against women by their husbands or intimate partners”; only six percent involved female perpetrators. Thus, domestic violence in Timor-Leste is case of male violence against women. Domestic violence is common and regular; around 60 percent of women experience domestic violence and 50 percent of women within the last 12 months (The Asia Foundation 2016).<sup>103</sup> These figures are part of a pattern of widespread use of violence by male partners towards women, as evidenced by the figure that 81 percent of women in

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<sup>103</sup> Earlier estimates of the prevalence and severity of domestic violence in Timor-Leste were probably underestimated (The Asia Foundation 2016).

Timor-Leste who have experienced domestic violence have experienced this violence many times (The Asia Foundation 2016).

Domestic violence had traditionally been handled at family and village levels. Traditional dispute resolution, also called *adat* or *lisan*, is a non-state, non-criminal process for resolving law-breaking in the community, entirely controlled by male village leaders.<sup>104</sup> Traditional dispute resolution processes nearly always exclude women from acting as mediators or even giving evidence (Myrntinen 2005). Women are instead represented by their fathers, brothers or uncles. These same men are usually also formal political position holders as Village Head, (Tetun: *Xefe Suku*) or Hamlet Head (Tetun: *Xefe Aldeia*).

As Chapter 3 on class formation outlined, the *Liurai-Dato* class has retained leadership of Timorese villages over generations. A revival of tradition generally across Timor-Leste is visible and “akin to the renewed significance of *adat* in Indonesia and *kastom* in Melanesia” (Bovensiepen 2014a, 294). The most visible manifestation of this claim to power since Independence was the (re) construction of sacred houses (Tetun: *uma lulik*) (Bovensiepen 2014a, McWilliam 2005, Molnar 2010). The most formalised manifestation of the claim of village elites’ right to rule has been through local governance reform, specifically, the already mentioned laws governing community leaders and their election (Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste 2009). Since 2009, (and re-written in 2016) new laws on local government have (re)formalised rule of the village by *Liurai* or *Dato*, because, although nominally democratic, village leaders come from *Liurai-Dato* class, or what Cummins and Leach (2012) call a “co-incumbency” model where the village

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<sup>104</sup> There has been debate over which term best describes traditional law and practice in Timor-Leste. *Adat* the Indonesian-derived term has wide currency; *Lisan* the Tetun term for traditional law and practice has been less well recognised in Timor-Leste, but preferred by some writers, including a key informant of the local turn, Josh Trindade Trindade (2008); *Lulik* (Tetun), meaning “sacred” in Tetun, also describes specific aspects of customary practice, including taboos. I concur with Hicks’ definition that *adat* is the term most commonly used in Timor-Leste which also “includes rules that govern the inheritance of property, spouse eligibility, ritual etiquette, taboo observance *tara bandu*, land ownership, political authority, sanctions, [history], oral literature and cosmology” (Hicks 2013, 27).

chief is also from a *Liurai* or *Dato* family.<sup>105</sup> Scholars reported that villagers and village chiefs justified village elite men's control over dispute resolution was justified by referring to the long *duree* of their control and by the belief that a change in leadership to a non-elite family would disrupt the cosmological order and bring ruin on the village (Brown 2012a, Cummins and Leach 2012).

Some anthropologists prefer to use the description of traditional dispute resolution as *nahe biti boot* (Tetun: spreading the mat) (Babo-Soares 2004). However, as was more commonly found in the fieldwork, people referred to "using *adat* [tradition] to solve the problem" or "*uze adat atu resolva problema*". The process of traditional dispute resolution requires deciding who is at fault and awarding compensation. The aim of traditional dispute resolution is a return to peace, harmony, and consensus. In other words, traditional dispute resolution aims to preserve the order of things. Nonetheless, although 60 percent of women never tell anyone about their experiences of domestic violence, women who seek help usually go through a traditional dispute resolution process. Significant barriers such as cost, distance and lack of courts outside Dili prevent access to formal systems (Kniepe 2013).

Currently, many of the cases tried by traditional dispute resolution in Timor-Leste involve domestic violence. According to village chiefs, much of their job is mediating domestic violence disputes, although this is not allowed under the LADV as it categorises domestic violence as a public crime, requiring formal intervention by the police and the courts.<sup>106</sup> This is not the case with traditional dispute resolution, which has different aims. In cases of domestic violence, village chief mediators should aim to preserve the marriage and prevent divorce. In the view of village chiefs, violence against women is not seen as inherently disruptive

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<sup>105</sup> For example, a female village secretary stated that villagers they vote for the *Liurai* or the *Liurai's* family, "because they believe in the *Liurai*, they look within the *Liurai's* family, then they vote accordingly. Interview with Serafina, ET110 Oecusse 4 August 2015.

<sup>106</sup> Interviews with a village chief ET127 Manufahi, 8 June 2011; and 31 August 2015; with village chief ET104 Oecusse 1 August 2015 and with hamlet chief ET103 Oecusse 30 July 2015.

to the community. Instead, problems with compensation and redress were disruptive because they caused families to fight over money (Khan and Hyati 2012).

### 5.3 Gender Interventions and the LADV

Creating and implementing a law against domestic violence was a key aim of the Timorese women's movement and international staff working in various gender interventions. Timorese women's organisations, notably the Popular Organisation of Timorese Women (OPMT), had struggled since its inception in 1975 on two fronts: for Timorese independence from colonial structures that also oppressed women, and against "traditionalist, patriarchal social structures" (Loney 2015, paragraph 1). Even prior to international gender intervention Timorese members of women's organisations lobbied for women's rights, both within FRETILIN and within the organs of the Indonesian New Order state-sponsored women's organisations such as the Family Welfare Movement (Indonesian: *Pembinaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga*) (PKK) and *Dharma Wanita* (Smith 2015a, 59-62).<sup>107</sup> As described in Chapter 3, SGBV committed by Indonesian and Timorese men was prevalent and institutionalised during the Indonesian occupation.

In 1998, amid the heady air of anti-Suharto rallies and pro-independence rallies, the Timorese umbrella network of women's organisations, the East Timorese Women's Communication Forum (FOKUPERS) organised a protest against the systemic violence against women (Hall 2009, 314). At this time, FOKUPERS "demanded a law against domestic violence and from this came the impetus for a national campaign in support of such a law" (Hall 2009, 316). FOKUPERS then organised the first National East Timorese Women's Congress, paid for by UNTAET, in 2000, with over 500 mostly Timorese delegates. Delegates presented the findings from a series of sub-national level meetings with women's organisations and activists held before the National Congress. The resultant "Platform for Action" formulated during the National Congress made

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<sup>107</sup> Domestic violence was not a crime under New Order-era Indonesian law (Hall 2009).



recommendations in the priority of “poverty, law and order, reconciliation and justice, culture of violence and decision making and institution-building” (Hunt 2008, 196-7). In the context of widespread conflict-related SGBV and increasing domestic violence in the post-conflict, a law on domestic violence was a key demand of the first Timorese National Women’s Conference in 2000 (Hall 2009). Rede Feto, a network of women’s organisations, was formed at the same time (Trembath, Grenfell, and Noronha 2010). Rede Feto, together with FOKUPERS, became a key women’s organisation advocating for a law on domestic violence (Hall 2009, 316).<sup>108</sup> Rede Feto aimed to train the 24 women’s organisation to advocate and help members implement domestic violence prevention and awareness programs across the country (Hall 2009, 316).

At the same time, members of the Gender and the Law Working Group working under UNTAET (see Table 2.2 Gender Interventions in Timor-Leste 2001-2017) campaigned for the protection of women's rights in the Timorese Constitution from 2000-2002. During this debate over the shape of the constitution, Timorese women’s organisations, receiving technical and capacity support from UNIFEM, campaigned against key areas of gender inequality such as forced marriage, informal dispute resolution of domestic violence cases and brideprice (Charlesworth and Wood 2002, UNWomen 2015b). The Working Group reviewed the constitution in accordance with international women’s human rights frameworks, and then wrote a Charter for Women's Rights, with the aim of including it in the constitution (UNWomen 2015b). Most importantly to the argument of this chapter, the Charter sought to reform traditional dispute resolution, by inserting a constitutional guarantee of “women's participation in traditional decision-making processes” (Charlesworth and Wood 2002, 339). Lobbying for this guarantee demonstrates that Timorese women’s organisations had long sought to reform traditional dispute resolution viewing it as a key site of gender injustice, for the reasons that this chapter explains. Despite lobbying by the

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<sup>108</sup> Interview with Female Timorese NGO Senior Manager ET077, 2 June 2015.

Working Group, regulation of such practices was not included in the final promulgated constitution (Charlesworth and Wood 2002, 339). Nonetheless, in 2003, the newly independent Timor-Leste acceded to the 1979 UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which obliges state parties to protect and fulfil women's human rights (UNWomen 2015b).

Although arising out of the pre-independence activist landscape, Timorese women's organisations were soon supported in their national campaigns by donors. A wide variety of international organisations (such as UNIFEM, UNFPA) international NGOs (Oxfam, the Asia Foundation) and bilateral donors (USAid and AusAid) supported Timorese women's organisations with funds and expertise. For example, UNIFEM paid for staff within the women's NGOs, for gender experts in ministries and directly funded women's NGOs and programs. Transnational alliances of academics, gender experts, and practitioners were subsequently responsible for implementing gender interventions (see Table 2.2 Gender Interventions in Timor-Leste 2001-2017). As FOKUPERS and other Timorese anti-VAW organisations drew on international human rights frameworks in framing their advocacy for women's rights, this led them to focus on violence against women (Hall 2009, Allden 2007, Grenfell and Trembath 2007). Hall argued it was the presence of the UN and the use of international human rights law that allowed Timorese women to broaden their campaign against VAW to include Timorese perpetrators, not just Indonesian ones (Hall 2009, 316). Previously, "there was no political space for campaigns against domestic violence, all were concentrated on the goal of independence" (Hall 2009, 316). In a nationalist framework, campaigning against domestic violence undermined male members of the resistance and thus undermined independence. After 2004, UNIFEM was a recipient of funding under the CEDAW Southeast Asia Programme to help Timor-Leste implement policies to comply with its commitments under CEDAW (UNWomen 2015b). The goals of this programme were to help Timor-Leste to

“develop new and revised legislative frameworks”, such as laws criminalising domestic violence (UNWomen 2015b).

Domestic violence laws nearly always cause controversy in the countries that introduce them. In Ghana, for example, during the introduction of a bill against domestic violence the Ghanaian government claimed to be the voice of the “the people” and constructed a “discourse of cultural sovereignty and deployed it against women’s rights” by superimposing notions of ‘foreignness’ onto both the Bill and Ghanaian women’s rights activists” (Hodžić 2009, 331). In peacebuilding missions with large, visible military and other forces, this becomes particularly acute, and the introduction of women’s rights legislation has regularly been framed by governments subjected to gender interventions, among others, as entailing imposition of so-called western feminist values (Chaudhary, Nemat, and Suhrke 2011). These sentiments were common among Timorese politicians (Niner 2011) and the public sphere more generally (Corcoran-Nantes 2009, 169) as those pushing gender regressive positions sought to characterise Timorese women’s organisations as centralist, westernised, or top down.

Unsurprisingly then, there was political opposition to the introduction of the LADV (Niner 2011, 415). The LADV was put before the Council of Ministers in 2003. It was first rejected by the Government’s Council of Ministers, but after an internationally supported campaign by Timorese anti-VAW advocates, the Council passed the draft legislation in 2004. After that, however, the LADV was not promulgated as a law for six years. Similar to the implementation of Gender Responsive Budgeting outlined in Chapter 4, opponents claimed technical difficulties and limited capacities were an obstacle. Parliamentarians, for example, blamed the delay of the LADV on needing to harmonize it with the criminal and civil codes (Trembath, Grenfell, and Noronha 2010, 135).<sup>109</sup> Another technical screen was the use of the Portuguese language, which reflected deeper problems

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<sup>109</sup> In turn, passing the penal code was delayed because of a debate between Alkatiri and Gusmão over the ability of the parliament to pass decree laws, on, for example, defamation, without any public debate (Shoesmith 2008, 77).

of exclusion and elite capture using Portuguese (Taylor-Leech 2007, 189, 219, 246, Ross 2016). The LADV was drafted, introduced, and promulgated in the official national language, which in the Timorese case is Portuguese. This was a barrier for members of women's organisations who were not fluent in Portuguese. Notably, among Portuguese speakers in Timor-Leste in the early period of independence, male Portuguese speakers outnumbered female speakers 5 to 1 (Corcoran-Nantes 2009, 168).

Greater than these delays citing technical grounds, the LADV was painted as a foreign imposition of the peacebuilding intervention, rather than a key demand of the Timorese women's movement and a response to the material threat of domestic violence in Timorese women's lives. Prominent female Timorese politician Milena Pires explained how "cultural discourse is frequently invoked to quash attempts to introduce discussions on women's rights into the East Timorese political equation" (Charlesworth and Wood 2002, 336). In that sense, advocacy for women's rights were linked to foreign interventions, in distinction to cultural discourses. Parliament was unable to reach quorum during debates on LADV as male parliamentarians simply refused to discuss it. One senior NGO manager considered that the LADV was blocked deliberately because "policymakers' perspectives are still dominated male authority. And, they thought, if this law on domestic violence is passed, then divorce cases will increase and women will have more courage; [the LADV] was threatening to them".<sup>110</sup> According to this interviewee, the LADV threatened male legislators' entitlement to use violence against their own wives and intimate partners. Indeed, some prominent male Timorese parliamentarians have been accused or arrested for crimes of domestic violence. A prominent early case was the Health Minister, Sergio Lobo, who escaped prosecution for allegedly "beating his wife with a stick and injecting a sedative into her arm with a syringe he had brought for this purpose" (Rede Feto 2001). Another anonymous female source said it was widely known that a male FRETILIN parliamentarian Osario Florindo had in 2012 publicly beat his wife, the

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<sup>110</sup> Interview with senior manager of a Timorese women's organisation, ET082, Dili, 8 June 2015.

then-director of the anti-VAW network, FOKUPERS.<sup>111</sup> Thus, conflicts over the introduction of the LADV were not between liberal interveners as upholders of women's rights and Timorese, but also within and across different groups of Timorese people, and between elite Timorese men and women.

International pressure was applied to the Timorese government to pass the law. In July 2009, the CEDAW Committee's Concluding Observations in 2009 urged Timor-Leste to "speedily enact the Law on Domestic Violence and to make it widely known to public officials and society at large and to monitor its effectiveness", as well as criminalise marital rape, improving rural women's access to justice and ensure justice is enacted through the formal, not the traditional justice system (CEDAW 2009). Following the passage of the penal code in 2009, the LADV was passed in 2010, and it was hailed a great success for transnational mobilisation (Hall 2009). The 2010 LADV criminalises domestic violence and makes it prosecutable under the criminal code. It defined domestic violence as acts committed by a family member, or an intimate partner, that:

resulted, or may result, in physical, sexual or psychological injuries or suffering, economic abuse, including threats such as intimidating acts, bodily harm, aggression, coercion, harassment, or deprivation of freedom (Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste 2010b).

The LADV requires all cases to be reported to the police (Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste 2010b). Crucially acknowledging the economic conditions and structural inequalities setting the conditions for domestic violence, the LADV set out obligations for the state to prosecute perpetrators and support and protect victims of violence (Kniepe 2013). It lists the state's obligations to provide specialised police services, women's shelters, and court processes, at no cost to the victim. The 2010 LADV was followed up by the 2012 National Action Plan (NAP) on implementing and funding the LADV (UNDP 2013, Kovar 2012, Kniepe 2013).

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<sup>111</sup> The accusation against Florindo also appeared on a Facebook message board on 17 September 2012, "*Deputado hosi partidu Fretilin - hola feto kiik, baku nia fen naran \*\*\*\* agora Direktor FOKUPERS to tasak didiak*". "Member of Parliament from FRETILIN—slept with a second wife, then beat his wife named \*\*\*\*\* Director of FOKUPERS until [tasak lit. inflamed] bloody". Copy archived with author.

Thus, there were legal obligations on the Timorese state to provide services to prevent violence in the family and to protect and support victims of violence. In the introduction and promulgation of the LADV, it is clear that coalitions for and against parts of the gender intervention often crossed the supposed local-international divide.

After 2010, however, it was precisely in the areas of implementation of the law that severe problems occurred, as the section on the political economy of traditional dispute resolution at the end of this chapter describes. Indeed, similar to the gender intervention on Gender Responsive Budgeting, political compromises with social forces stymied implementation. Specifically this included ongoing use of traditional dispute resolution continued—in direct conflict with the law. Moreover, outside gender mainstreaming programming, other peacebuilders were working at cross-purposes, and their support for a local turn in peacebuilding undermined the gender intervention supporting the LADV. It is to the actions of these local and international coalitions affecting the implementation of the LADV that I now turn.

### 5.3.1 The Local Turn and Domestic Violence Programming

This section argues that the local turn heavily influenced domestic violence programming, domestically and internationally. Like much mainstream work, academic work prescribing or describing hybrid peacebuilding rarely addressed or recognised violence against women as a form of conflict. Moreover, such work rarely addressed empirical research drawing the link between conflict related SGBV and domestic violence, and that these can increase after fighting ends (Cockburn 2013, True 2014a). This glaring lacuna has meant there have been two parallel debates on peacebuilding in Timor-Leste: one regarding transitional justice peacebuilding and hybridity that ignored another one regarding feminist approaches to violence against women and legal pluralism.

Within the initial UN administration period from 1999 to 2002, UNTAET, there were groups of staff advocating for specific measures to protect women from violence, and those who saw this as a less urgent problem. In accordance with the Women Peace and Security agenda under UNSCR<sub>1325</sub>, UNTAET ought to have implemented gender mainstreaming in all aspects of its mission. However, as Joshi argued, UNTAET was only superficially supportive of the Timorese women's movement (Joshi 2005, 205). Most importantly to the argument of this chapter, UNTAET did not prioritise domestic violence. Violence against women, was in general seen as both a corollary of war, which peacebuilding would end, and as less disruptive than civil strife in the post-conflict period. UNTAET carried on using laws from the era of Indonesian military occupation. These were not protective of women and children's rights, as they criminalised adultery, did not criminalise marital rape and did not "treat domestic violence as a distinct crime" (Charlesworth and Wood 2002).<sup>112</sup> Moreover, "UNTAET permitted the continued use of alternative justice mechanisms at the local level" and postponed the creation of a "new criminal justice system" (Nakaya 2010, 101). UNTAET's early decisions to allow VAW cases to be dealt with by traditional dispute resolution were not in line with UN international human rights instruments such as CEDAW. In Nakaya's estimate, "UNTAET seemed content to accept the role of traditional justice forms for 'minor crimes' without defining what constituted a minor crime" (Nakaya 2010, 101).

In Timor-Leste, there were two reasons for the introduction of hybrid peacebuilding through bringing together formal justice and traditional dispute resolution. One, hybrid justice was seen pragmatic and cheaper because the UN and the new government lacked "capacity" to provide justice in rural areas. Two, hybrid courts were perceived as culturally legitimate because interveners' culture, ideas, and institutions "clashed" with the local ones. In particular, according to some scholars, the court system was "fundamentally Western" because it did not

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<sup>112</sup> In Indonesia, after 1998 and the fall of Suharto, an Indonesian Commission for Anti-Violence Against Women was established.

“resemble the population’s understanding of justice” (Hohe 2003, 336). On this view, the differences between liberal and local ideas, institutions and cultures led to more violent conflict between Timorese. Following this logic, some scholars made what Millar (2014) calls “a prescriptive case” for a “liberal-local” hybrid system on the grounds it could balance international liberal practices with local ones, leading to better outcomes (Wallis 2012a). Scholars of the local turn influenced the international intervention in a number of peacebuilding programs, listed in Table 5.1 below.

PROGRAM	YEAR
World Bank’s Local Governance Program	2001-2003
Community Reconciliation Program (CAVR Truth Commission)	2002-2004
The Asia Foundation Justice Sector Programs	2002 - present
UNDP-UNCDF Local Governance Programs	2003-2012
Also: Incorporated into Timorese Constitution (2002) and the Law Electing Community Leaders (2009 and 2016)	

Table 5.1 International Programs with Traditional Dispute Resolution

Manifestations of hybrid approaches to justice by the international community were in the community justice program in Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation (CAVR), the World Bank’s Community Empowerment Program and the 2003 Asia Foundation seminar on Traditional Justice. Community reconciliation events under CAVR aimed to bring together victims and perpetrators of lesser crimes in villages in Timor-Leste in an alternative to the formal justice system (Kent 2004). As explained above, CAVR was a UN mandated commission to establish the truth regarding the nature, causes, and extent of human rights violations from 1974 to 1999. Under the Community Reconciliation Program, over 1,400 community reconciliation events were held across all subdistricts from 2002-2004. They mixed criminal law, civil procedure and traditional and spiritual practices to resolve lesser crimes cheaper and faster than



the formal court system while remaining sensitive to human rights and women's rights (Burgess 2006, Kent 2004). The aim was to ameliorate community anger and facilitate peace in the future. Perpetrators initiated the request to the CAVR, the community reconciliation event would hear the case, and the victim, in many cases, a whole hamlet or village, would forgive the perpetrator (Burgess 2006, Kent 2004, 10). Undergoing such a process made the perpetrator immune from formal prosecution. The use of traditional dispute resolution excluded women from the process, and there were many more women victims who did not participate (Kent 2004, 37).

The Asia Foundation seminar held in Dili in 2003 advocated hybrid approaches to conflict resolution (Hicks 2013, 26, Trindade 2008). The report on the approaches to justice was prepared by hybridity advocates Hohe and Nixon (2003). The report advocated giving village chiefs power to mediate in low-level disputes. In a report on the World Bank's Community Empowerment program, Hohe and Ospina recommended the (non-democratic) inclusion of traditional leaders (men from the *Liurai* and *Dato* families) on village councils: "Traditional leaders could be formally appointed to the Village Development Councils" (Hohe and Ospina 2002, 118). In these approaches, the rule of these men was not connected to the unequal position of women in communities. Although the power imbalances in gender were mentioned, community cohesion and peace was more important than women's experience of violence. For example, Hohe and Nixon noted for the community, "not marrying one's mother's brother's daughter endangers society more than, for example, a case of domestic violence" (Hohe and Nixon 2003, 18).

Hybridity as a form of peacebuilding was subsequently incorporated into the national policy sphere, especially after 2007. For example, Dionísio Babo-Soares, the former doctoral student of anthropologist James Fox at ANU, and high ranked Minister in Gusmão's government from 2008 to 2017, published a paper arguing for the hybridisation of traditional dispute resolution (Tetun: *nahe biti boot*) and state law. In this paper, Babo-Soares argued "this village-level concept of achieving

peace and stability could be fitted into the broad concept of state justice” (Babo-Soares 2004). Such views tended to emphasise the importance of consensus and unity over contention and discord and the prioritising of generalised community peace over individual rights (Simião 2007, Kovar 2012). Various scholars argued that to blend formal processes and traditional dispute resolution was pragmatic, cheaper, and more culturally legitimate approach (Jackson et al. 2003, Hohe 2003, Hohe-Chopra, Pologruto, and de Deus 2009). Kirk called the blending of formal courts and traditional dispute resolution as “practical hybrids” (Kirk 2015).

There was support for using traditional dispute resolution among Timorese national policymakers. In the first place, the Timor-Leste constitution “provides for a law to be made to ‘institutionalise means and ways for the non-judicial resolution of disputes’” (Wallis 2012a, Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste 2002). This provision was further developed in the 2009 (revised in 2016) law on Community Leaders which empowered village leaders, 95 percent of which are male, to create “grassroots structures” for the resolution and settlement of minor disputes (Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste 2009, Wallis 2012a, 749).<sup>113</sup> In 2012, Babo-Soares, an expert witness for those advocating traditional dispute resolution in the courts was appointed Minister of Justice because of his expertise in “customary law” (Grenfell 2013, 266).

### 5.3.2 The Local Turn’s Gender Bias and Domestic Violence

Some scholars writing on peacebuilding from an anthropological frame went further in advocating for hybrid approaches because gender interventions were inauthentic. Hicks urged the Timorese government and United Nations to stop promoting “Western values of governance and jurisprudence” by accommodating local *adat*,” to create “a single political culture” which would promote peace and give Timor-Leste more chance of evolving into “a unified nation-state” (Hicks 2013,

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<sup>113</sup> In the 2016 village elections, 21 out of 442 village chiefs elected were women. This was despite the existence of a quota and donor and NGO support for 319 women to run for the office of village chief.

26). Hicks' rejection of "western values" applied most strongly to the area of law and gender, where he sees acute disconnect between international and Timorese views on "hot-button issues such as domestic violence sexual abuse and rape, which obsess the United Nations and their fellow agencies" (Hicks 2013, 31). Revealingly, Hicks notes that he enclosed "the terms 'domestic violence' and 'sexual abuse' within quotation marks to signal their imprecision as verbal tools for scholarly analysis" (Hicks 2013, n26). Brazilian anthropologist Simião, for instance, argued that the concept of domestic violence was "invented" by international interveners, because what Timorese victims may have understood as a normal "act of aggression" was then "*perceived* as an act of violation and violence" (Simião 2007). On this view, and ignoring the long history of women's rights advocacy, because the gender intervention named VAW as domestic violence, and thus as a part of a relations of power and inequality, the gender intervention "invented" it. According to Kirk, Timorese village leaders have rejected the state justice system's interventions on domestic violence because it imposed "alien institutions onto a population that has historically fought to retain its identity" (Kirk 2015, 435). Likewise, Kirk relied on this evidence to say "the LADV can be interpreted as a top-down imposition of norms and practices that are still struggling to find widespread acceptance in Timor-Leste" (Kirk 2015, 455). Kirk argued that resistance to formal legal processes for domestic violence cases "continues a long tradition of Timorese resistance to top-down and alien governance arrangement" (Kirk 2015, 441).

Some authors—contracted as gender analysts—advocated "flexible approaches" to traditional dispute resolution. Some suggested that the concept of VAW came from Western feminism, again disregarding the history of Timorese women's activism, effectively dismissing violence against women as an issue. For example, Kovar, who worked for UNDP as the Access to Justice Adviser to the Public Defender General, argued in 2012 that:

Much of the previous research may have approached domestic violence issues from a Western perspective or a centralised one, coming from the

capital city, Dili. This has in some instances *led to a coloured interpretation of the reality of domestic violence* in Timor-Leste (Kovar 2012, 210, emphasis added).

Kovar's assertion of a binary difference between Western and Timorese understandings and approaches to domestic violence, like much of the writing on traditional dispute resolution, is based on work by practitioners trained as anthropologists who advocated for hybrid justice, including Babo-Soares (2004) and Hohe (2002b, 2003). Subsequent research has not supported the assertion that reports of domestic violence are "coloured interpretations", that is, overstated or overestimated. Instead, given better prevalence data, early reports are said to have underestimated the extent, severity and frequency of domestic violence (The Asia Foundation 2016, Wigglesworth et al. 2015).

Hybridity was also used to advance "taking local agency seriously" in terms of further empowering traditional dispute resolution and families to deal with cases of domestic violence. Nixon makes two claims for an agential approach. First, he argues that his view of the hybrid justice program run by a New Zealand aid agency in Timor-Leste took a "balanced" and "realistic" approach arguing that women should have a choice about whether to deal with crimes of violence through traditional dispute resolution or the courts (Nixon 2008, 370). In his words, "It is, however, reported [in Timor-Leste] that many 'rapes' initially occur as consensual acts agreed to on the basis that marriage will follow. The claim that an act of rape took place is said to often result in cases where the man subsequently reneges on the promise to marry" (Nixon 2008, 333). Indeed, there is confusion in communities as to what constitutes a sexual crime, but here Nixon's statements minimise the extent, prevalence, and seriousness of sexual violence, especially against girls, who are often in no position to reject men.

In the debate over traditional dispute resolution procedures, as in other areas of intervention, advocates of hybridity ignore the extent to which extant local law and practice had been combined with Indonesian modes of governance during the

occupation.<sup>114</sup> For instance, the privileging of community welfare and unity over individual rights is a feature of New Order ideology. The New Order heavily promoted consensus-driven decision-making (Indonesian: *musyawarah-mufakat*), which aimed to maintain harmony in the material as well as the spiritual world (in so far as the prevailing order was sacralised). Under the New Order, the promotion of consensus-style decision making in *adat*, “tried to freeze Indonesian society in the stasis of a mythic vision of the Indonesian past, which stressed consensus, harmony and tradition, but also obedience and passivity” (Aspinall and Fealy 2010, 5). These legacies have been strong, yet mis-recognised in research. For example, Hohe and Ospina, in their evaluation report on the World Bank’s Community Empowerment Program, defined the “decision-making concepts” in villages in Timor-Leste, as “very much characterised by the notion of discussion and agreement by everybody” (Hohe and Ospina 2002, 68). In sum, advocates for the local turn in effect reproduced ideological legacies of the New Order that emphasise the importance of preserving the prevailing social and political order, which in turn supports power holders from the *Liurai-Dato* class.

#### 5.4 The Political Economy of Traditional Dispute Resolution

My key argument is that traditional dispute resolution has material outcomes that impair gender justice. As previously mentioned, the process of traditional dispute resolution involves deciding fault, reaching consensus, and payment of compensation, not punishment. Compensation and payments to mediators can be hundreds of dollars and numerous animals. Rather than view the use of traditional dispute resolution as the persistence of local informal/traditional institutions, I understand this to be the persistence of structural relations, of which these traditional dispute resolution processes are but a part. These unequal class relations intersect with gender relations and explain barriers to achieving gender justice through the gender intervention supporting the LADV.

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<sup>114</sup> For examples concerning politics and economics, see Hughes (2009, 208).

Domestic violence cases progress up a “ladder” of traditional resolution mechanisms from the family to the hamlet and then to the village levels. The material exchanges involved are critical to elites’ control over resources and legitimacy. In the context of high rates of poverty, traditional dispute resolution takes much-needed resources from poorer villagers and women and transfers them to male family members and male village elites. The sums involved are significant as tens or hundreds of dollars in Timor-Leste means a great deal where cash incomes, in generous estimates, are around US\$400 a year (Inder, Cornwell, and Datt 2015). There are three groups of beneficiaries from traditional dispute resolution: the female victim’s family, the mediators, and the male perpetrator. Conversely, female victims are marginalised and endangered at each step.

At the first step on the ladder of traditional dispute resolution, male heads of the perpetrator’s family and the victim’s family “sit together” to resolve the problem. Traditional dispute resolution could also begin if a victim ran away from her husband, or a victim’s natal family complained that she was being treated badly. The family heads would then decide whether the violence was the husband’s fault or the wife’s.<sup>115</sup> Even though prevalence surveys show that domestic violence is overwhelmingly male violence against women, in Timorese traditional dispute resolution a woman can be found to have caused the violence (Khan and Hyati 2012, 18). Legitimate reasons for a husband using violence against a wife can include a wife burning food, neglecting the children, having affairs or questioning her husband over his extra-marital affairs or polygyny (Wigglesworth et al. 2015). During fieldwork, some men, one a young boy of fifteen, reported that they had assaulted their wife or girlfriend after she questioned him regarding sexual liaisons outside their relationship.<sup>116</sup>

If family level male mediators decide the husband is at fault, he pays a fine, often a pig, or another small animal to the victim’s family, the *Umane* (Tetun: wife’s

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<sup>115</sup> Interview with ET130 wife of the Village Chief, Manufahi, 1 September 2015.

<sup>116</sup> Fieldwork notes, 2011 and 2015. Also reported in an interview with two young ordinary male citizens, ET150 and ET151, Manufahi, 9 September 2015.

family or wifegivers). Compensation does vary from district to district but can include animals, palm wine or palm spirit, cash or cloths (UNDP 2013). Thus, first, a victim's family benefits from compensation payments in traditional dispute resolution. If the wife's family is higher status, they find it easier to compel the husband to pay the fine. If the wife's family is lower status, they are in no position to compel the husband to pay the fine (Graydon 2016, 130). Moreover, the gender division of labour holds women responsible for small animal husbandry, including of pigs, the woman victim has usually raised the pig used to pay the compensation. That is, her husband pays a fine for his violence towards his wife using the proceeds of her work. The material implication for victims is that if women bring cases of domestic violence to their families and leaders, they risk being blamed and then fined, thus incurring material losses. Given these points, a woman victim has no real material interest in pursuing traditional dispute resolution because it will result in her household wealth decreasing.

Resolution at the family level will fail if the two families do not agree on who is to blame, or the wife presses separation or divorce. If this happens, traditional dispute resolution progresses to the second step of the ladder. Mediators at this level are village chiefs, hamlet heads, and spiritual leaders (Tetun: *lia nain*). This second level of traditional dispute resolution was conducted by mediators and male relatives. Accordingly, those conducting mediation were usually of the *Liurai-Dato* class. As some young women reported, the authority vested in these all-male mediators is ultimate because Timorese elders can curse a person of lesser status, especially young people, with death.<sup>117</sup>

Village leaders benefit materially from traditional dispute resolution at this level. In return for their work meditating, they can sometimes receive a small animal such as a pig, cigarettes, cash or palm wine, and always the ritually important areca nut and betel leaf (Tetun: *bua malus*).<sup>118</sup> Sometimes mediators received hundreds

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<sup>117</sup> Interview with two young female ordinary citizens, ET147 and ET148 on 8 September, 2015.

<sup>118</sup> Interview with ET131 Manufahi 1 September 2015.

of dollars. Importantly, gifts offered by the perpetrators' family influence village leaders to favour of the perpetrator, reducing the amount he ought to pay in compensation to the victim's family (Alves and Alita 2009, 67). Dispute resolution ends with a ritual meal together (Tetun: *haan hamutuk*). These kinds of meals are small-scale *adat* ceremonies. The whole community is not invited: only the mediators and the male leaders of the wife's and husband's respective families.<sup>119</sup> Afterwards, having received compensation and a meal, village leaders feel that balance is restored and the woman victim returns to living with her husband (UNDP 2013). One Hamlet Chief reported to me that he preferred traditional dispute resolution because it made perpetrators stay with their wives: "If it goes to court, then he will leave his wife; they will separate".<sup>120</sup>

As described in Chapter 3, village leaders are from aristocratic or noble lineages of Timorese society, the *Liurai-Dato* class. Because kinship links are so integral to organising Timorese society, leaders' control over domestic violence also strengthens their control over village law and politics. Village leaders can appeal to feudal, kinship, democratic, and martial sources of legitimacy. Village leaders are the apex of separate but related kinship groups linked together through marriage. Because their source of authority lies in their roles as heads of lineages, which is dependent on marriage, they require political control over marriages. *Liurai* and *Dato* have an interest in restoring these balances. Their control over traditional dispute resolution is not, therefore, the continuation of an authentic cultural tradition, but another aspect of their structural superordination.

The third beneficiary of traditional dispute resolution is the perpetrator. As the Timorese NGO shadow report to CEDAW describes, compensation payments lead to impunity for certain men:

Often the solution is for the perpetrator to pay a fine or compensation to the victim's family. This phenomenon empowers men to commit violence

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<sup>119</sup> Interview with female villager, Brigida, ET146 Manufahi 8 September 2015.

<sup>120</sup> Interview with village chief ET104 Oecusse 1 August 2015.



because *when a man has money, horses and buffalos, he is free to do violence against women* (Alves and Alita 2009, 18, emphasis added).

For some, the final step of the ladder is seen as the formal courts of law. For instance, families will sometimes turn to the courts if there is a failure of traditional dispute resolution, especially if compensation amounts cannot be agreed on, and this becomes another step in the ladder of traditional dispute resolution.<sup>121</sup>

### 5.5 Legal Pluralism, Accumulation and Control

Very few women report violence within formal processes prescribed under the LADV, nonetheless, domestic violence is the single largest category of crime committed in Timor-Leste (JSMP, PRADET, and ALFeLa 2015). Under the formal process of the LADV, police call specialist victims' services, such as a shelter. The woman victim would then be able to stay in a woman's shelter. There are provisions to remove the perpetrator in the LADV, but these are rarely used (Kniepe 2013). While at the shelter, specialist staff arrange an examination to collect forensic evidence for the court case. The women's shelter then would work with the legal aid agency to prepare a court case.<sup>122</sup> It takes some time before it reaches one of the periodic mobile courts or the Dili court. Most often the weakest charge of "simple physical assault characterised as domestic violence" was brought, rather than the stronger charge under the LADV of repeated assault, or as an aggravated charge with a sexual assault or attempted manslaughter (Kniepe 2013, 2).

The implementation of the LADV under conditions of the local turn has resulted in a widespread practice and justification for legal pluralism. This kind of legal pluralism in Timor-Leste's formal domestic violence cases is well-documented (Grenfell 2013, Charlesworth and Wood 2002). Court decisions on domestic violence tend to reproduce gender injustices present in traditional dispute

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<sup>121</sup> Interview with village chief, Bonifacio ET127, Manufahi, 1 September 2015.

<sup>122</sup> Interview with senior manager of a women's shelter ET112, Oecusse, 5 August 2015.

resolution. For instance, court cases have resulted in a “fault-finding process” resembling traditional dispute resolution (Kniepe 2013, 3)<sup>123</sup> Once in the court, the judge often sent cases back for traditional dispute resolution (Kniepe 2013). Also, frequently the court has ordered the perpetrator to pay a fine, often around 30 USD in cash over a period—again a similar outcome to traditional dispute resolution. As one Hamlet Chief said, although the LADV meant a change in some things, the outcomes of paying someone money were similar:

Nowadays you have to go to the justice system. You can't just tell someone to go here or there to pay compensation [...] But some things are the same. Both have their headaches. You have to take money to the *Umane* [the wife's family]—With the state, it's the same.<sup>124</sup>

As the Hamlet Chief pointed out, the perpetrator paying money was the rule in either case. In the formal system then, the material benefits of compensation became a fine. The money to pay the fine, however, resulted in a loss of resources for the victim's household. Most problematically, the court system relied on these perpetrator fines instead of civil compensation. Provisions in the LADV for the state to provide civic compensation consisting of economic support for women victims including alimony, welfare and school payments are only vary rarely used (Kniepe 2013, 4, JSMP, PRADET, and ALFeLa 2015). Thus, despite reaching program goals of socialisation and training, the LADV is not being implemented. In other words, the outcomes of the gender intervention are uneven.

Another uneven outcome of intervention arises out of resistance to the LADV. Although the LADV should prevent the use of traditional dispute resolution, on the ground it is still common. One reason is because, women victims still faced a general unwillingness of the police to treat domestic violence as a crime (Khan and Hyati 2012). Formal police and court processes often deliberately used traditional dispute resolution or deferred to male family members in charging perpetrators

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<sup>123</sup> The observation that they resemble a “fault finding process” has also been made regarding rape sentencing in formal courts in Papua New Guinea (Zorn 2012).

<sup>124</sup> Interview with hamlet chief ET105, Oecusse, 30 July 2015.

(Kniepe 2013). By 2015, education programs or “socialisation” of the LADV had raised awareness that traditional dispute resolution was not permitted for domestic violence cases because it was a crime and required police involvement. Thus, to avoid the mandatory reporting, male leaders told me there were two levels of domestic violence, normal or everyday violence (Tetun: *violensia bai-bain*) and serious violence, usually involving blood (Tetun: *violensia boot*).<sup>125</sup> They maintained only serious violence required any action from community members or the police. Everyday violence would continue to be mediated between the two families.

Another similarity between traditional dispute resolution and the current state of legal pluralism concerned the lack of post-trial protection for the victim. Global research on domestic violence has shown that the breakdown of the relationship is the most dangerous times for female victims of violence (Morgan and Chadwick 2009). In Timorese courts, the most common punishment issued by courts was a suspended sentence. Thus, the perpetrator continues or resumes living in the family home, putting the victim at risk (Kniepe 2013, 2). Protection orders making the perpetrator leave are provided for in the LADV but have never been used (JSMP, PRADET, and ALFeLa 2015). These kinds of risks for victims were not seen as problematic by some scholars backing hybrid approaches. For example, Nixon who worked on justice issues for Asia Foundation Timor-Leste asserted that traditional dispute resolution of rape using compensation payments had been judged too harshly “under the powerful beam of the human rights spotlight” (Nixon 2008, 333). In terms of restoring community balance, a return to the family is what Kirk advocated for in terms of “practical hybrids” for domestic violence cases. He proposed the continuation of the practice whereby legal aid lawyers “assist clients to submit reconciliation letters to judges, which use them to justify

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<sup>125</sup> Interview with male teacher Antonio ET131, Manufahi, 1 September 2015; and village chief Bonifacio ET127, 1 September 2015.

a suspended sentence or a fine, allowing the offender to return to his family” (Kirk 2015).

In the final analysis, I argue that seeing legal and traditional dispute resolution as either a clash or a hybrid of international and local institutions, cultures, or processes is misplaced. Firstly, because the notion of discrete realms of locals and internationals regarding traditional dispute resolution ignored Timorese feminists’ long struggles against gender inequality within their families and societies (Loney 2015, Niner 2011). Secondly, it is not a matter of the institution having more legitimacy at the local level, but about what kind of power relations this justice system supports. In the case of domestic violence, a feminist political economy analysis shows that it is in the interest of male members of the *Liurai-Dato* class as senior family members and village leaders (which also overlaps with the category of perpetrators), to retain control of domestic violence dispute resolution in villages. When we look at material outcomes, fines issued by both courts and traditional dispute resolution benefit those in authority and disadvantage female victims of domestic violence. Crucially, a feminist political economy approach used here highlights the underlying power relations of traditional dispute resolution.

The feminist structural political economy approach shows that traditional dispute resolution is thus a process which transfers goods or money from victims of violence and other families to village leaders. It has been my purpose to show that traditional dispute resolution is a process of control over both material resources and women. Some researchers took women’s continued use of traditional dispute resolution to be evidence of its effectiveness and legitimacy (Graydon 2016). However, an equally reasonable assumption could be that because sixty percent of women never tell anyone about abuse by their partner, this is evidence that women victims of violence do not trust either formal or informal systems because both systems are dangerous and do not support victim’s interests (The Asia Foundation 2016, Kniepe 2013). It is clear from over a decade of research on domestic violence

in Timor-Leste that for women facing domestic violence, there are few protections, while for perpetrators there is limited punishment.

## 5.6 Conclusion

The chapter argued that critical scholars and practitioners advocating a local turn saw uneven outcomes of peacebuilding interventions, such as high levels of violence, as arising from a clash of institutional legitimacy, which resulted in (descriptive hybridity) or could be resolved by using (prescriptive hybridity) hybrid systems. But hybridity does not explain the uneven outcomes of gender interventions, because gender interventions are about changing gender relations in progressive ways, and these are supported and challenged by various coalitions of local and international groups. Timorese women's organisations have fought for equality of treatment in marriage, divorce, and freedom from violence. The chapter showed that national level politicians blocked the LADV on technical grounds. Legislative technicalities were a screen for their political opposition to the LADV. Some women activists argued male politicians opposed on the grounds it criminalised male entitlement (read their own entitlement) to use violence. More than a theoretical debate, scholars', and practitioners' advocacy for the local turn and hybridity affected the outcomes of this gender intervention to support the LADV. By encouraging the retention of traditional dispute resolution, advocates for hybridity and a local turn inadvertently empowered village elites who benefit from the political economy of domestic violence.

This chapter explained the uneven outcomes from the introduction and implementation of the 2010 LADV, by elaborating a political economy of traditional dispute resolution. As revealed by the theoretical framework, historically specific social and gender relations provide a more accurate explanation for the uneven outcomes of intervention. In the last part of the chapter, I looked at the political economy of dispute resolution and showed who benefitted and who lost from these processes. Legal pluralism has allowed this

system to continue unchanged. As a result, the Timorese government did not fulfil its obligations under the LADV. Examining these material outcomes gave precise reasons for the continuation of traditional dispute resolution. I argued this is a more compelling reason than cultural explanations of legitimacy because cultural explanation cannot account for the unequal exercise of power by different social groups and different groups of men and women. Moreover, support for traditional leaders is part of their strategy of rule. Goetz and Jenkins argue that during peacebuilding and state formation more generally, ceding control of the family, kinship and personal law is a strategy of rule (Goetz and Jenkins 2016). As I showed in the previous Chapter 4, after 2007, the alliance between Dili-based and rural members of the *Liurai-Dato* class was vital to Gusmão's successive governments. Likewise, ceding control of dispute resolution to village chiefs added to village chiefs' ideological and material resources. In that sense, a local turn to traditional dispute resolution shored up this rural-urban coalition.

The next chapter expands on this analysis and uses a structural analysis of kinship (Fishburne-Collier 1988) to show how domestic violence is driven by social and gender relations entailed in kinship systems based on the exchange of women through brideprice. By looking at the exchange of women and the distribution of money and goods using brideprice I develop another compelling set of explanations for uneven outcomes for the gender interventions, chiefly the uneven outcomes of the LADV.

## CHAPTER 6. THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF BRIDEPRICE

### 6.1 Introduction

Brideprice is a controversial and common topic in Timor-Leste, and one with significant effects on outcomes of the gender intervention on domestic violence. Timorese women's organisations have long campaigned against brideprice. Despite these critiques, and the links between brideprice and domestic violence, there has been no explicit, long-term, or well-funded gender intervention challenging brideprice. Instead, I argue that the uneven outcomes of the LADV can be explained by the enduring, unchallenged, and central role of brideprice. Part of that explanation lies in the central role brideprice plays in structuring class. Brideprice links gender relations to class relations in a material way. This chapter applies a political economy of domestic violence combining the work of feminist anthropologist Fishburne-Collier (1988) describing how marriage and social hierarchy are co-constitutive, with that of True (2012) on the political economy of violence against women. Using a combination of these two materialist frameworks explains how brideprice in the Timorese political economy has limited the effectiveness of the LADV as a gender intervention.

This chapter looks once more at the LADV and the governance of domestic violence. I again cover anthropological perspectives because these have influenced interventions in the Timor-Leste case. But although it moves away from the state and the LADV to a discussion of kinship, the state is not absent from the coming discussion. Many scholars have demonstrated that kinship networks in Timor are constituted through complex exchanges, and these networks are structured to

cope with poverty in the absence of state welfare (see Chapter 4). However, these kinship networks are not relations of equals, rather, they are relations between ranked families, and the payment of brideprice creates and reproduces these hierarchies. These exchanges of brideprice for women mean that the *Liurai-Dato* class can extract more valuables from lower-ranked lineages because they marry their daughters to lower-ranked lineages and charge significantly high brideprices. Timorese leaders, including national, village, and hamlet chiefs, are always from higher-ranked lineages. These men are the apex of concatenated lineages, and form a recognisable *Liurai-Dato* class, as I described in Chapter 3. The exchange of women, therefore, has distributive outcomes, but is of more importance to *Liurai* and *Dato* families in rural areas who do not have the same access to other material resources as urban based members of the *Liurai-Dato* class.

Brideprice contributes to the continuation of domestic violence because of the differential power brideprice gives to men, and because brideprice undergirds the social order and has distributive effects. First, women themselves do not have access to brideprice paid to their male kin. Second, in violent marriages, it is not in the interest of parents of daughters to aid her in a divorce if her husband has already paid her brideprice in full. If brideprice payments are complete, the bride's parents have to return the brideprice to the husband's family. On the other hand, if parents encourage their daughter to return to her violent husband they receive compensation payments, as I described in Chapter 5. Third, paying brideprice allows men to justify control over their wives. Globally, dowry and brideprice do negatively affect violence against women (UNWomen 2013, Hudson 2016).

## 6.2 The Extent, Form, Invisibility and Debates of Brideprice

Payments for marriage are pervasive internationally, practised in around 75 percent of human societies today (Hudson and Matfess 2017, Hudson 2016). There are six forms of marriage payments (see Table 6.2 Types of Marriage Payments below). Globally, the most widely practiced of these is brideprice. Brideprice is a



payment of assets from the groom’s family to the bride’s family (Anderson 2007). Brideservice is where a groom owes a debt of labour, not assets, to the bride’s family. In comparison, dowry is a payment of assets from the bride’s family to the groom or the groom’s family. Dower, as distinct from dowry also comprises the groom’s family paying assets, but these should go to the bride. Dower can thus insure a wife against widowhood, abandonment or remarriage (Rapoport 2005). Bridetoken is a small payment from the groom’s family to the bride’s family. Finally, reciprocal gift exchanges or sister exchanges exist, usually among people with little property, and are rarer (Fishburne-Collier 1988).

MARRIAGE PAYMENT	DIRECTION & VOLUME OF VALUABLES
BRIDEPRICE (ALSO TERMED BRIDEWEALTH)	Net assets move from groom’s family to the bride’s family
DOWRY (ALSO TERMED MARRIAGE PORTION)	Net assets move from bride’s parents to the groom/ or groom’s family. Sometimes this is considered the bride’s property, but it most often passes into the practical control of the groom or the groom’s family
DOWER (ALSO TERMED BRIDE GIFT)	Net assets move from the groom and his kin to the bride. The payment is to insure her against divorce, or the death or incapacity of her husband.  When dower payments are made to, or are controlled by, the bride’s family, they are brideprice
BRIDESERVICE	A groom labours for a given period for the bride’s family in exchange for his wife
BRIDE TOKEN	Marriage payments are relatively small, but still move from the groom’s family to the bride’s family
GIFT EXCHANGE/ SISTER EXCHANGE	Marriage payments are reciprocal or involve the exchange of sisters and valuables

Table 6.1 Types of Marriage Payments

Globally, brideprices are substantial. Anderson (2007) estimated the global average brideprice at around four times the annual income of a family, and dowries

at around six times the family's annual income.<sup>126</sup> All things considered, brideprices involve the transmission of significant volumes of property and labour and thus have “economic functions” as well as symbolic ones (Goody and Tambiah 1973, 1, Anderson 2007).

Internationally, there is a substantial overlap of brideprice with women's subordinate status in law, women's ill-being, and gender-based violence (Wendo 2004, Hudson 2016, Jolly, Stewart, and Brewer 2012). Unsurprisingly perhaps, despite these overlaps, governments have generally been reluctant to challenge male dominance in areas of “personal law” like brideprice (Goetz 2007). A few governments have tried to regulate or ban marriage payments, including India (1961), Pakistan (1976) and Bangladesh (1980) but these have been relatively unsuccessful (Anderson 2007, 161).

Academics have largely overlooked the importance of brideprice to social and political life. Taking up this theme, Hudson and Matfess (2017) argued that brideprice was hiding in “plain sight” as a decisive factor driving violent conflict. Brideprices are many times an individual's income, affecting the welfare of women and the distribution of wealth across society (Anderson 2007, 152). Likewise, the present chapter holds brideprice is a vital yet and long overlooked factor driving social and political outcomes. While as Hudson and Matfess (2017) point out, the links between brideprice, conflict and war is in need of further research, the link between brideprice, kinship, hierarchy and community-level conflicts has been explored by anthropologists, notably by the feminist anthropologist Fishburne-Collier (1988).

One of the economic processes arising from brideprice is social stratification. Brideprice stratifies social groups in two related processes: it establishes rank, and it transfers wealth from lower ranked lineages to higher ranks. Societies with ranked lineages using brideprice are class societies, but class domination is

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<sup>126</sup> Cf. Jolly (2015), Tarney (2017) for more examples of high brideprice rates internationally

partially obscured by age and gender hierarchies and expressed in the language of kinship, confusing ethnographers (Meillassoux 1975, 86-7). Age and gender shape hierarchies within ranks. Brideprice societies usually have “three hereditary ranks plus a category of outcasts or slaves”, that is, four ranks in total (Fishburne-Collier 1988, 147).

First, brideprice establishes and confirms a person’s rank. In turn, a person’s rank determines access to, and control over, food, goods, land, education, labour, and choice of marriage partner. When brideprice comprises goods with market values, such as ivory and gold (or, in the Timor-Leste case, buffalo, metal breast disks and cash), groups with more access to valuables can use those valuables to pay higher brideprices for wives, confirming their high status. Men with more assets can also pay to marry more than one wife (polygyny), which is also a marker of high social status (Meillassoux 1975, 72-74). At the same time, women for whom high brideprices are paid are seen as higher status and bringing honour to themselves and their families.

Second, brideprice is a kin-based means of accumulation: higher ranked men gain materially from brideprice, chiefly because their daughters “cost more” but also because they are able to pay less or delay payments for wives (Fishburne-Collier 1988, 144, Goody and Tambiah 1973, 13). As a result, higher ranked men are polygynous; they can afford to marry more wives. Higher ranked women are first wives, lower ranked women and slave women are second and third wives and so on. Crucially, as Fishburne-Collier explained, polygyny provides higher ranked men with daughters from their liaisons with wives of lower ranks (or slaves) that they can exchange to lower ranked men in return for brideprice, increasing high ranked men’s wealth. Low ranked men unable to pay any brideprice at all must labour for their father-in-law or wife’s uncles as debt bondsmen (Fishburne-Collier 1988, 146-8).

The role of brideprice in the creation of rank, or social stratification, is not well-recognised by those practicing brideprice or by scholars because the focus is usually on a bride's economic function or value. To explain, societies practising brideprice see brideprices as reflecting a woman's value, and this view is often replicated in ethnographic reporting of the meaning of brideprice. On this view, brideprices are paid for the bride's productive and reproductive labour (Goody and Tambiah 1973, Boserup 1989, Alanamu 2015, Jolly 2015, 68, 71). This interpretation is reflected in the anthropological nomenclature describing the groom's family as "wifetakers" and the bride's family as "wifegivers": brideprice *compensates* wifegivers for the loss of a daughter's labour and fertility, and wifegivers are valorised as the givers of life. Relatedly, brideprices are seen to vary according to the marriage market; scarcity of brides leads to higher brideprices (Anderson 2007).

However, marriage's "economic functions" need social and political contextualisation (Goody and Tambiah 1973, 1, Anderson 2007, Patterson 2012, 337). Part of this is the need to recognise how brideprice and social inequality overlap. The overlap of brideprice and social inequality is very apparent in the relationship of brideprice to polygyny and slavery. Brideprice and polygyny overlap all over the world (Patterson 2012, 337, Goody and Tambiah 1973, 11, Fishburne-Collier 1988, Hudson 2016). Moreover, where there is both brideprice and polygyny, slavery is likely to occur (Patterson 2012, 337). High brideprices mean a small number of men monopolise marriageable women. Patterson suggests that this shortage of women means men of limited means take low-status, low cost or enslaved women as sexual partners until they can afford to marry (Patterson 2012, 337). Both slavery and polygyny have negative effects on women. Polygyny, even when it exists as an option but is rarely practised, weakens women's status within the household and society (Thomas et al. 2011, 372). This is because the power to take a second wife can pressurise a woman into conforming to her husband's wishes (Gaffney-Rhys 2011). Also, it reinforces a view of women as domestic labourers and reproducers. Finally, polygynous relationships are more

hierarchical, competitive and violent, and women in polygynous relationships are likely to be poorer, and less educated (Gaffney-Rhys 2011, Rees et al. 2016).

### 6.3 Brideprice in Timor-Leste

In Timor, brideprice is a longstanding practice; having been recorded during the colonial period in both Portuguese East Timor and Dutch West Timor, in particular among *Liurai* lineages (Hägerdal 2012, Gunn 1999). Currently, the majority of Timorese practice brideprice. Only around twelve percent of Timorese are matrilineal and do not practice brideprice but pay a much smaller amount, akin to a bride token. Brideprice comprises higher value “male” gifts: buffalo and cash. The bride’s family counters with a much smaller number of less valuable assets: pigs, necklaces and *Tais* (Tetun: traditional woven cloth). In the western exclave of Oecusse, a village chief, related to the *Liurai* family, explained he would charge a high brideprice for his daughter because:

Now *adat* is stronger. For example, my children have attended school. If a man comes to marry her, then I will charge US\$20,000 dollars. She's young and will look after her family well. Then you get a price of US\$20,000 or \$50,000.<sup>127</sup>

The village chief lives in quite a simple house with a basic garden. Because his daughter has been to school, he will charge a high price, many times his yearly income. Given the low average rural incomes, brideprices are the some of the most substantial sums that ordinary Timorese citizens ever deal with. In Timor-Leste, brideprice can vary between a bride token of \$200 in matrilineal families and large brideprices of around \$70,000, but are more commonly ten or twenty thousand dollars (see Table 6.2). By way of comparison, the average annual income in rural Timor-Leste is around US\$384 (Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste 2011a)<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Interview with a male village chief, ET104, Oecusse, 30 July 2015.

<sup>128</sup> The median income figure of \$384 per year attempts to quantify non-cash parts of income. This is problematic, however, as they include an imputed value for rental costs, even though most Timorese do not rent their house. Therefore, the actual amount of cash used by an individual is much lower than this (Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste 2011a). See Inder, Cornwell, and Datt (2015) for a discussion.

PUBLICATION	DATE OF DATA	DISTRICT	DESCENT	MINIMUM	MAXIMUM (USD UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED)	USD IN 2017 PRICES
HESSING AND TIMO (1923)	1918-1923	Dutch West Timor (Atoni group)	Patrilineal	150 guilders (\$720 \$PPP)	1,000 guilders for a royal marriage (\$4,800 \$PPP)	\$720 to \$4,800
GUNN (1999, 38)	1880s	-	-	30 Buffalo <sup>129</sup>	100 Buffalo	\$36,000 to \$120,000
FORMAN (1980, 342)	1970s	Baucau	Patrilineal	6-9 Buffalo	50 Buffalo + 50 Makassar swords + <i>Belak</i> (Jewellery)	\$7,200 to \$60,000
MEARNS (2002, 50)	2002	Viqueque	Patrilineal	-	30 Buffalo	\$36,000
FIELD (2004, 184-8)	2000-2003	Dili	Patrilineal	-	AUD 400 + AUD 100 <i>bee manas</i> (bride token) + AUD 400 for birth certificate	\$670
MCWILLIAM (2011, 751)	2004-2011	Lautem (Fataluku)	Patrilineal	-	77 Buffalo	\$92,400
WIGGLESWORTH (2010)	2007	Lautem	Patrilineal	-	80 Buffalo	\$96,000
SILVA (2011, 156)	2008	Ainaro	-	-	\$2,000	\$2,000
SILVA (2011, 157)	2008	-	-	-	\$2,000	\$2,000
SILVA (2011, 154)	2008	Dili	-	\$500	\$3,000	\$500 to \$3,000
KHAN AND HYATI (2012)	2009	Manatuto	Matrilineal	\$500	\$1,000	\$500 to \$1,000
KHAN AND HYATI (2012, 27)	2009	Suai	Patrilineal	-	\$5,100 + 6 <i>Belak</i> , 5 buffalo	\$11,100
KHAN AND HYATI (2012, 27)	2009	Betano, Manufahi	Patrilineal	\$2,500 + 10 <i>Belak</i> , 10 Buffalo	More than \$2,500 + 10 <i>Belak</i> , 10 Buffalo	\$14,500 and above
SILVA AND SIMIÃO (2012, 368)	2010	-	-	-	\$10,000	\$10,000
NINER (2012, 145)	2010	Dili	-	-	77 Buffalo	\$92,400
WIGGLESWORTH ET AL. (2015, 25)	2014	-	-	-	\$10,000	\$10,000

<sup>129</sup> All buffalo to USD calculations are estimates only using 2017 prices of: 1 Buffalo 200 kg live weight is around USD \$1200. Traditional events may require buffalo with special marks, which can cost \$2000 to \$7000. These calculations do not include estimates of the dollar value of jewellery (Tetun: *Belak*) contributed to the brideprice.

Author's Field research	2015	Oecusse	Patrilineal	\$1000 (for matrilineal cousin marriage)	\$50,000	\$1,000 to \$50,000
Author's Field research	2015	Manufahi	Matrilineal	\$100	\$200	\$100 to \$200

Table 6.2 Brideprice Costs across Publications and Author's Field Research.

The terminology, definition, meaning, and significance of brideprice has been hotly debated in anthropological and gender practitioner literature on Timor-Leste. The common term used for brideprice in the anthropological literature on Timor-Leste is *barlake* (or *barlaque*). Hull's Tetun-English dictionary defines *barlake* as "common law marriage",<sup>130</sup> while the Dili Institute of Technology dictionary defines *barlake* as "brideprice".<sup>131</sup> I use the term brideprice instead because the term for marriage payments with a wide currency is "*folin*"; the Tetun noun for "price", or the verb *hafolin*,<sup>132</sup> or *feto nia folin*, which is Tetun for "woman's price".<sup>133</sup> Thus, brideprice is the closest translation to the Tetun terms, rather than *barlake*, which is a blended Indonesian/Portuguese term. Although *barlake* is widely understood to mean the assets passed from the groom's family to the bride's. However, *adat* also stands in for brideprice.<sup>134</sup> For example, when asked to define *adat*, most of my interviewees responded by discussing brideprice. To many Timorese, *adat* is all about marriage and sexual rights. A Hamlet Chief in Oecusse, defined *adat* as:

*Adat* is *barlake* [. ...] If you have paid the *barlake*, that means that person is mine, not everyone's. This is *adat*. *Adat* is important everywhere in Timor. There is just one *adat*. The *barlake* is then like a *tara bandu*, [an official prohibition]. If someone else tries to *tama* [interfere with/enter] they'll be scared because that person has a

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<sup>130</sup> Standard Tetun-English Dictionary, Second Edition., s.v. "*barlake*".

<sup>131</sup> Word Finder: English-Tetun / Tetun-English, Second Edition., s.v. "*barlaki*".

<sup>132</sup> Standard Tetun-English Dictionary, Second Edition., s.v. "*hafolin*" The term "*hafolin*", which is derived from *folin* (Tetun: price or brideprice). *Hafolin* as a transitive verb means: One, to appreciate, value or esteem; Two, to negotiate; and Three, as a noun, brideprice, or arranged marriage.

<sup>133</sup> In West Timor, Indonesia, the term *belis* is used instead (Hägerdal 2010). *Belis* is possibly derived from the Indonesian *beli* or to buy. *Belis* is used throughout Nusa Tenggara Timur province on the islands of Timor, Rote, Sabu and Flores (Hägerdal 2010). Compare the standard Indonesian for brideprice, *mahar*, which is derived from the Islamic tradition. *Kamus Indonesia Inggris: An Indonesian-English Dictionary*, Third Edition., s.v. "*mahar*". *Mahar* means "expensive" in Tetun.

<sup>134</sup> I concur with Hicks' definition that *adat* in Timor-Leste denotes customary law governing "inheritance of property, spouse eligibility, ritual etiquette, *tara bandu* (Tetun: taboo observance), land ownership, political authority, sanctions, oral literature and cosmology" (Hicks 2013, 27). *Lisan* (Tetun: customary practice) is less well-recognised but preferred by some writers like Trindade (2008). *Lulik* (Tetun: sacred or taboo) describes specific aspects of custom regarding sacred and profane objects, people, especially those things which might be subject to a *tara bandu* (Tetun: official prohibition). Portuguese speakers favour the term *Kostumes* (Tetun: customs). Lastly, *Kultura* (Tetun: culture) is used to speak about material culture and custom in general.



husband already. You can't interfere with her because there's a *bandu* [traditional prohibition].<sup>135</sup>

The debate over gifts and commodities is linked to a basic divide between Durkheim-type approaches emphasising culture and Marxist/feminist ones highlighting production and hierarchy. Anthropologists in the Durkheim tradition tend to call brideprice, “bridewealth” and frame it as an exchange of gifts, not a transaction. For example, Mauss, drawing on Durkheim, said in 1925 that brides were gifts that resulted in debts which were so valuable, and irreducible, that they could only be repaid with a gift of a bride, such as a sister or daughter (Strathern 1988). Thus, on the Durkheimian tradition, the gift of brides sets up family relations, and brides are gifts that are “embedded in relations of reciprocity and mutual dependence” (Jolly 2015). Anthropologists using this approach have made important points regarding the political and economic functions of brideprice. One, brideprice sets up relations of interdependence between groups, which helps with social protection, and welfare. Two, brideprice sets up alliances for peaceful relations between groups to exchange goods and the means to live and grow. Three, anthropologists have shown how societies that exchange women for brideprice take careful steps to de-commodify brides, by using, for example, special kinds of marriage gifts, not everyday money (Hoskins 2004). As such, scholars in the Durkheimian tradition consider that if societies changed practices like brideprice, it would disrupt socio-cultural fabrics. Given their emphasis is on cohesion and solidarity, they tend to view this negatively.

Marxist/feminist approaches see this differently. The first point of difference is the emphasis on power, and brideprice as part of the structuring of power and the social order (Meillassoux 1975, Fishburne-Collier 1988). This has a material basis. Because brides are paid for using items with exchange values outside the marriage market, that is cash or cows or cowries can be used to buy items other than brides, brides become things with exchange value (Meillassoux 1975). In other words,

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<sup>135</sup> Interview with male hamlet Chief, ET105, Oecusse, 1 August 2015.

brides become a commodity in the circuits of material power. Using a gendered lens, I argue that a woman's participation in brideprice is as one of the objects exchanged, not as agent and beneficiary. This draws on Rubin's critique of Levi-Strauss' analysis of the exchange of women. Rubin argues that in the exchange of women, the woman is the "conduit to the relationship rather than the partner to it" (Rubin 1975, 174).<sup>136</sup> Importantly, brideprice's value as a linking mechanism benefits men:

The result of the gift of women is more profound than the result of other gift transactions because the relationship thus established is not just one of reciprocity but of kinship. The exchange partners have become affines [relatives by marriage] and their descendants will be related by blood (Rubin 1975, 174)

The second point of difference concerns societies' justifications for brideprice. Brideprice societies revere women and reproduction. This emphasis on reproduction, I argue, should be seen as ideological. That is, to follow Rosaldo (1980, 400), reverence for reproduction has to be understood as the justification for a social and political order, "with reference not to biological constraints but instead to local and specific forms of social relationship and, in particular, of social inequality". It is from this understanding of gender ideology that Fishburne-Collier and Rosaldo (1981, 278-9) conclude that societies using brideprice tend "in their rituals and cosmology to display a preoccupation with female reproductive capacities; women are valued as mothers but feared for their polluting blood".

### 6.3.1 Coalitions For and Against Brideprice

Timorese women's organisations have long said that brideprice is a problem for women's rights, but there is no mention of brideprice in the LADV. In the early 1970s, before the invasion, Timorese women intellectuals living in Portugal

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<sup>136</sup> Fieldwork notes from a brideprice negotiation ceremony, Dili, 14 August 2011: "The highest ranked man sat with four or five older men and one woman." Thus, the brideprice negotiation was between mostly male lineage heads, not between women.

debated the role of brideprice in the social and economic status of women in Timorese society (Loney 2015). Early on, women in FRETILIN and then in the diaspora debated and criticised brideprice (Loney 2015, Wigglesworth 2010). After independence, a report by FOKUPERS described brideprice as “oppressive” because women are treated like chattels and *Atan* (Tetun: slave) (Charlesworth and Wood 2002, 336). The Gender Affairs Unit (GAU) of UNTAET supported a campaign to regulate brideprice, but was unsuccessful. GAU provided monetary support and technical assistance to the Gender and Constitutional Working Group to draft the Charter on Women’s Rights containing ten articles that Timorese women’s organisations wished to include in the new constitution. Among them was a call for the government to “regulate the dowry system to prevent violence against women” (Gender and Constitution Subcommittee 2001). These attempts were unsuccessful, however, as only non-discrimination in access to political rights (Article 3) was included in the constitution (Charlesworth and Wood 2002, 356).

Subsequently, in the very widespread consultation with over 83 urban and regional women’s organisations in 2008-9 to produce the 2009 NGO shadow report to CEDAW, “ninety percent of participants” said “that there is extreme discrimination against women through cultural practices in wedding ceremonies” (Alves and Alita 2009, 17). In their view:

When a man pays dowry [sic: brideprice] to a woman’s family, the man’s family gains a full right to control the women. Because of the [brideprice] system, men often consider women as their property rather than their partners. Women must serve the men’s families; vote according to men’s choices; work in the kitchen all day during traditional ceremonies and have their meal at midnight after all the people have eaten. Women have no right to civil or cultural privileges and benefits related to their families and social life family life (Alves and Alita 2009, 17).

Brideprice, according to this report, was damaging to women’s power within the household and kinship group, and reduces their claims to their children. It bound them more tightly to the gender division of labour and gave them less access to

food. The women's organisations took a material view of brideprice involving commodification. For example, they argued that use of cash and buffalo as brideprice can result in negative outcome because "women become equivalent to livestock": to dispose of freely (Meillassoux 1975, 72-74, Alves and Alita 2009). For that reason, brideprice is a "major deterrent" to the "achievement of women's rights and a contributing factor to violence against women" (Alves and Alita 2009, 17). After identifying brideprice as a significant source of discrimination against women, the shadow report concluded that "the state must draft an anti-dowry law [sic: brideprice] in order to regularise [brideprice] in Timor-Leste" (Alves & Alita, 2009, 17). The rest of this section discusses academic and practitioners support or contestation of brideprice and the following section discusses everyday citizen's views.

A key reason for the lack of action on brideprice has been the impacts of anthropological debates over brideprice's definition as a gift or a commodity, which has influenced national and international policy makers. Again, specific kinds of anthropological perspectives had an impact on policy because of the prominence of anthropology in the local turn. The contestation over brideprice's meanings can be partially explained by the long history of "anthropological queasiness about the commoditisation of women" which resulted in anthropologists using the term *bridewealth* instead of brideprice (Jolly 2015, 73). In the Timor case, this results in the preference for the term *barlake* instead of brideprice, although, as I explained at the outset, brideprice is the more accurate translation of the Tetun term *folin*. Some of this reluctance to describe brideprice as commodification is that people practising brideprice also generally deny that they sell their daughters, even though they charge a price. A village chief declared: "Your children are not things to sell".<sup>137</sup>

Many anthropologists working on brideprice in Timor-Leste took the culture-based view of brideprice as a symbolic act of gift giving, not as a commodity

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<sup>137</sup> Interview with a male village chief, ET104, Oecusse, 30 July 2015.

exchange. For example, Silva stated, “criticisms of *barlake* are often grounded on the view that it amounts to the selling of women. As such, it is judged to be illegitimate following the (Western) ideology that persons and things are incommensurable” (Silva and Simião 2012, 366). According to Silva, there is a Western ideology versus an authentic Timorese view of brideprice and that brideprice is a gift or exchange, not a commodity. Hicks similarly explained contentions over brideprice using the Durkheim influenced model I explained above. Hicks reproduced these view when rejecting [Timorese and international] feminist criticism of brideprice. First, he argued that Timorese people do not consider brideprice to be selling a woman. Second, the bride has immaterial value because of her ability to work and reproduce and therefore cannot be substituted for a set of material objects. Third, because brideprice sets up a kinship relation, on Hicks’ view, the exchange of brides for valuables cannot be a sale (Hicks 2012, 129-30).

In the anthropological literature on Timor, practices and beliefs about women, childbirth and marriage are depicted in great descriptive detail in anthropological works (Forman 1980, Fox 1980, Francillion 1980, Traube 1980, Hicks 2004, Therik 2004). Despite many studies of gender, gender dualisms, kinship, and marriage, anthropological work on kinship in Timor has been inattentive to the power relations of gender relations. This literature is characterised by its focus on describing dualisms as the organising principle of Timorese society.<sup>138</sup> Feminist anthropologists Rosaldo’s critique of the edited book on dualisms in Timor and Eastern Indonesia, *The Flow of Life* (Fox 1980) is salutary here. Rosaldo opined that in the Fox volume “what high-rank and power *mean* are nowhere entertained nor is rank treated systematically in relation to actual marriage” (Rosaldo 1982, 214). The link between marriage and rank was naturalised as the expected order of things. In essence, such scholars did not adequately explore the political or

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<sup>138</sup> Dualisms were describe in kinship (wifegiving and wifetaking houses); in the social order (between aristocrats and nobles) (Trindade 2008); in colonial relations (Shepherd and McWilliam 2013); in interactions with the Church (Therik 2004); and in studies on marriage, childbirth and death (Clamagirand 1980, Forman 1980, Fox 1980).

economic implications of the unequal *gendered* dualisms of male/female, wifegiver/wifetaker. Namely, dualisms always privilege one term (male; the right hand; outside; cooked; purity) over the other (female; the left hand; inside; raw; pollution) although both are seen as necessary or “complementary”. Gender relations are thus naturalised and taken for granted.

Concurrent with the local turn in peacebuilding, peacebuilders relied on these anthropological works on Timor-Leste to frame their understandings of Timor-Leste (Gunn 2007). As I showed in Chapter 5, support among some interveners for the traditional dispute resolution was apparent in the intervention in the justice system. It also extended to brideprice, which was viewed as both an authentic gift system the “most iconic of Timor-Leste’s institutions” (Hicks 2012, 124). Again, a key academic informant of the local turn, Trindade, has argued that the focus on women and fertility signify that women are highly valued. Anthropologist Silva argued against government regulation of brideprice, claiming that brideprice’s controversy demonstrated contention between local views on brideprice and westernised, government, or educated views. As such, brideprice was a matter of “*Foho* (Tetun: Mountains) versus Dili” (Silva 2011). More recently, some have suggested the matrifocality and respect for women can be a starting point to improve women’s rights, specifically by leveraging a reverence for reproduction to reform traditional dispute resolution processes (Graydon 2016, 144). An example of anthropologists shaping practice is a 2002 report by an Australian anthropologist Mearns. The report described the discussion of brideprice during a training session about domestic violence in the district of Viqueque:

Some of the women involved were well educated and very articulate but they remained committed to a worldview that the western women found incomprehensible. This extended to the desire to keep a brideprice system “because this shows how our parents value us”. However, they were prepared to concede that current rates (around 30 buffalo [around \$36,000 as seen in Table 6.1 above] and other payments) were probably too high. Clearly, the value systems inherent in village people’s understandings and their systems of justice remain

significantly at odds with those of the western educated social transformers employed by the UN” (Mearns 2002, 50)

Academic and practitioner discussions on how best to rebuild Timorese society started from the assumption Timorese institutions, laws and cultures were definable, distinct, authentic, and therefore more legitimate than those imposed from the top-down by international peacebuilders. Thus, the local turn in peacebuilding supported the retention and reinvigoration of brideprice.

In literature on brideprice in Timor, scholars rarely asked, “where are the women?” (Rosaldo 1980, Tickner 2006). For instance, McWilliams’ described the last brideprice negotiations at a death ceremony, a *kore metan* (Tetun: death ceremony or end of mourning ceremony), in which male kin negotiated the final settlement of the brideprice owed to the late woman’s natal family. The negotiations comprised “lengthy and often theatrical negotiations over payment of outstanding debt obligations usually fuelled by liberal quantities of palm liquor and tobacco as *others prepare baskets of steamed rice and boiled meat for feeding guests*” (McWilliam 2011). The “others” referred to here are women, the objects of the discussion, and invisible workers. In other words, women’s labour and men’s agency in controlling women’s roles in production and reproduction are unnoticed as McWilliam focusses on the public theatricality of men.

Similarly, women in Timor-Leste are not the primary decision makers on brideprice; they do not decide the nature of the exchange, who will be exchanged, for what price, or who will supply the goods. It is mostly the senior men, the uncles and the *katuas* (Tetun: male elders) who negotiate the amount of brideprice. In the Timorese preferred marriage is of a bride from a higher-ranked lineage to a groom from a lower-ranked lineage. The large size of the brideprice demonstrates the high status of the bride’s lineage. The prestige and honour of brideprice thus accrues to the wifegiving lineages (patrilineages) in recognition of their higher status. Prestige also accrues to the wifetaking lineages in recognition of their

ability to afford such a high status and costly bride for their male relative and because of their new marital connection with their social superiors.

In Timor-Leste brideprice systems, women do not directly benefit from brideprice as they are the objects, not the parties to the exchange. As Rubin laid out, when women are exchanged as gifts between lineages, setting up a generational link between families also implies:

A distinction between gift and giver. If women are the gifts, then it is men who are the exchange partners [...]The relations of such a system are such that women are in no position to realise the benefits of their own circulation (Rubin 1975, 174)

In Timor, the valuables, the cash and goods comprising brideprice are given to the “the wife’s father, who must redistribute the *folin* [brideprice] among his kinsmen”(Hicks 2012, 128).<sup>139</sup> Women do not control access to and redistribution of the money, buffalo, pigs, *belak* (Tetun: jewellery), swords, or *Tais* (Tetun: cloth). Kinsmen have a right to the redistribution of brideprice, not kinswomen. The brideprice is distributed to male relatives according to whether they contributed cash or goods to the upbringing of the girl-child, their importance in the family, and age, whether he is considered *katuas* (Tetun: a male elder). As Silva recounted, in a ceremony she witnessed, brideprice was “distributed among all the men of his house/family. The elder would get more than the younger, but they would all receive their share for having contributed, one way or another, to the upbringing of the bride” (Silva 2011, 156).

Women’s lack of access to money or valuables from brideprice is reflective of the tendency for men to have ownership or control of capital. The patrilineal clan “forms the basis for inherited land entitlements for its agnatic membership” (McWilliam 2011 750). Therefore, women do not inherit land, although they may

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<sup>139</sup> Some marriage payments in brideprice systems transfer the valuables to the bride, not to her family. These are called dower systems and is common in Islamic marriage payments (Mahr). It should be an economic buffer for wives in case of divorce or death.



feel they have ownership rights. Even among those groups with matrilineal descent and often matrilineal residence, although women felt that they held land jointly with husbands, it would be held in their husband's name. For example, when asked about the upcoming registration in the new land cadastre, the women said:

Brigida: The land, it is far away—my husband and I own it together.

Melissa: If the state finally comes to give you a certificate, whose name will be on it?

Brigida: Just one. My husband's.<sup>140</sup>

### 6.3.2 Everyday, Ambivalent Attitudes to Brideprice

As I have already shown, brideprice is often presented as “pan-Timorese” and “iconic”, (Hicks 2012), or a “cosmologically vital” (Hohe-Chopra, Pologruto, and de Deus 2009) system enjoying the support of all Timorese, but not all Timorese people experience brideprice as a positive practice. The existence of a wide variety of negative and ambiguous attitudes to brideprice across the country undermines Silva and Simião's or Hicks' easy characterisation of rural versus city views on brideprice (Silva and Simião 2012, Hicks 2012). For instance, there is also a fairly common perception among a wide variety of people, including those in the countryside, that brideprice is damaging for rural communities' economic development. An illiterate, elderly hamlet chief in Oecusse had a perception that brideprice has decreased, which he viewed positively given the difficulties in making a living:

Before *adat* was strong, now it is not as strong because now we have an enlightened life—*moris naroman*—the kids go to school, people care for each other. But *adat* [brideprice] has decreased because people also have to look for food and drink [sustenance]. If you are just hunting for brideprice, what are you going to eat and drink? <sup>141</sup>

<sup>140</sup>Interview with a female villager, ET146, Manufahi, 7 September 2015. See Thu, Scott, and Van Niel (2007) for a discussion on the inconsistencies of matrilineal land inheritance in Timor-Leste.

<sup>141</sup>Interview with a male hamlet chief, ET105, Oecusse, 1 August 2015. ET105 never went to school.

In his view, high brideprice impoverished families, and their extended families were no longer so eager to help. Thus, he thought that a reduction in brideprice would be beneficial:

[...] because children also have rights, mothers and fathers have rights, families have rights. If they are going to pay brideprice and suffer, who is going to help them? Their parents can help them, but this is the new kind of life now, and it's not the same as mine, or their parents'<sup>142</sup>

Some Timorese, even those with low levels of education in the countryside are thus concerned that brideprice impoverishes people. Some rural-based interviewees expressed serious reservations about brideprice. Consider this statement from a young mother in Oecusse:

We heard about the government's programs to try to reduce the amount of money people spend on festivities. Before, when a man goes to ask the woman's parents for her hand in marriage, you had to pay money or give an animal. Now there is a *tara bandu* (Tetun: a ban); you are only allowed to bring coffee or cake or *sirih pina* (Indonesian: areca nut and betel leaf). This is better. It reduces the problems for *Emasusar* (Tetun: poor people with difficulties).<sup>143</sup>

Finally, a member of Timorese women's organisation told me that many Timorese in Dili (who have access to paid employment for instance) consider brideprice embarrassing and have stopped paying it: "*Barlake*, in Dili, this has reduced. Some people still use it, but not many. They start to feel embarrassed about paying it. But in the rural areas, it is strong, very strong. Not stronger, just the same as before".<sup>144</sup>

However, some Timorese women from elite families viewed brideprice positively as being part of a woman's honour. Serafina, a young woman employed in the local

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<sup>142</sup> Interview with a male hamlet chief, ET105, Oecusse, 1 August 2015.

<sup>143</sup> Although the interviewee ET113 mentions a government program to reduce the amount of money paid in engagement ceremonies, I did not find any other evidence of such a program. Interview with a female farmer, ET113, Oecusse, 5 August 2015. ET113 finished high school.

<sup>144</sup> Interview with a female Timorese senior manager in a women's organisation, ET089, 11 July 2015

government as the village secretary, told me that brideprice honours women: “*Adat* is very important. If you do not have *adat*, women do not have honour. It is the idea of dignity”.<sup>145</sup> The support by some educated women for brideprice suggests neither education, nor traditional worldview alone informs understandings of brideprices (Niner 2012, Graydon 2016, 57). Instead, based on my fieldwork I argue class interests shape views on brideprice. To explain, Serafina was high-ranking because she was related to the District Administrator of Passabe, a subdistrict of Oecusse. Brideprice was a signal of rank and her family’s higher status, and therefore she supported it. The fact the brideprice system benefits high-rank families also means that women from these families support brideprice—part of their patriarchal bargain—and account for reports of Timorese women supporting brideprice as they believe it values them (Niner 2012, Graydon 2016, 57).

Perhaps unsurprisingly, in matrilineal groups in Manufahi (who do not practice brideprice) some people had negative perceptions of brideprice. For example, Lucia, wife of the village chief argued that brideprice is used to justify domestic violence, because if her husband beats her “then the man will just say, ‘oh that’s my money; that’s like one of my cattle’”.<sup>146</sup> Lucia said that her lineage does not pay brideprice and this reduces the risk of violence. This assertion is supported by evidence. Narciso and Tilman suggest, “Women’s positions appear to be stronger when postmarital residence is matrilocal, rather than patrilocal” because they have access to a support network (Narciso, Henriques, and Tilman 2012). Lucia argues that brideprice can force women to remain in violent marriages, and that her matrilineal system was superior: “Here there is no *folin* [brideprice]. Here they just

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<sup>145</sup> Interview with female Secretary of the Village, ET110, Oecusse, 4 August 2015. ET110 had finished high school.

<sup>146</sup> Khan and Hyati note that women members of patrilineal groups that do not pay *barlake* are subject to less domestic violence. “It is striking that Manatuto, a district in which *barlake* is not usually paid by *kaben-sai* [patrilineal] communities, has the lowest level of domestic violence in the country (Khan and Hyati 2012, 34)

pay \$100 or \$200. In the future, if the price is \$10,000 or \$20,000, if the woman returns to her family [in divorce] you have to pay it back".<sup>147</sup>

The impetus to regulate brideprice practice has come from within communities. Even so, this has not necessarily been out of concern for women's rights. Khan and Hyati describe an interesting case where a village had introduced brideprice regulation. The village chief explained why:

In the past, in my grandmother's time, *barlake* [brideprice] could be \$500 to \$1000, and only when this was fully paid would the wife be released to the husband's family. But this left the parents without someone to care for them in their old age because the husband would not allow her to come [after paying so much brideprice]. So we changed the system (Khan and Hyati 2012, 28).

Nowadays, of its own accord, this community accepts no brideprice when their daughters get married (Khan and Hyati 2012, 28). It was not, however, the result of concern for women's rights, or concern about the impoverishment of families. Rather, women's labour was too crucial to be allocated entirely to a husband's patrilineage and given the needs of care for the elderly in an environment with little infrastructure or broad-based welfare support.

Scholars have differed on the effect that (partial) monetization has had on brideprice. McWilliam (2011) argued the change from brideprice in buffalo to cash is only a matter of convenience. It does not represent the commodification of brideprice because it remains a symbolic gesture. McWilliam argues because the system features a token reciprocity, the gift of pigs and cloth from the bride's family to the groom's, even when the brideprice is paid in cash, means that brideprice should still be considered as a gift (McWilliam 2011). Yet, some scholars have argued monetization will decrease brideprice. Hicks shared this view that development and modernisation will diminish brideprices:

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<sup>147</sup> Interview with Lucia, wife of village chief ET131, Manufahi, 1 September 2015.

social expectations that the ‘generic’ bridewealth should amount to a substantial proportion of a family’s wealth will be supplanted by a desire to invest resources in the individual’s own family rather than redistribute it to affines [in-laws] with whom, in any case, reciprocal ties will have become increasingly tenuous (Hicks 2012, 133).

Others have said the monetization has led to inflation:

the shift to a cash economy has meant that in contemporary times, brideprice is commonly paid in monetary currency, a transition associated with a rapid inflation in the cost to the husband and his family (Rees et al. 2016).

According to the majority of my interlocutors, with one or two exceptions, brideprice is not decreasing in volume, frequency, or importance with its monetisation. These reports from interlocutors are confirmed by my survey of brideprice volumes reported in the literature in Table 6.2. As others note, societies using brideprice usually try to de-commodify the brideprice by using special items as brideprice (Hoskins 2004). Likewise, in contemporary Timor, brideprice is often reckoned in buffalo and jewellery although it may often be paid in cash. Because of the careful semantic work done to de-commodify the gifts/payments/brideprice, it makes more sense to look at the accumulation of labour, debts, animals and cash in more general terms. That is, I propose that brideprice is a consistent feature of the Timorese political economy that allows accumulation by the *Liurai-Dato* class. Nowadays, these already powerful lineages look for other material bases such as elected office or patrimonial networks to accumulate wealth. Nonetheless, they still benefit materially, as they have historically, from brideprice as I show in the following sections.

#### 6.4 Social Forces and Brideprice

Brideprice is less about the value of a woman, or about market factors, than it is about rank and class. Like other brideprice societies, Timor has “ranked, named, hereditary status groups” that are larger than a single family (Fishburne-Collier 1988, 143). Societies using brideprice have four ranks. The Timor-Leste case

conforms to this pattern. As discussed in Chapter 3, there are four hereditary ranks: kings (Tetun: *Liurai*), nobles (Tetun: *Dato*), peasants or farmers (Tetun: *Ema bain; Toos Nain*), and slaves (Tetun: *Atan*) (see Table 6.3 which explains the names for these ranks in three districts across Timor-Leste). Those claiming high rank—kings and nobles—can include, however, many individuals. In any one Timorese village, around half the inhabitants are ranked as high-status and half as peasants, leading to the assumption that around half the Timorese population is from the *Liurai Dato* class (Hicks 1990).<sup>148</sup> Every village contains some higher-ranked, *Liurai-Dato* lineages, and some commoner lineages. Although nearly all people in these villages face high levels of poverty and deprivation, difference in wealth between high-ranked and low-ranked people is starkly defined and regulated through marriage.

DISTRICT	OECUSSE	MANUFAHI	LAUTEM
LANGUAGE	<b>Meto/Baikeno</b>	<b>Tetun</b>	<b>Fataluku</b>
KING	<i>Naizuf</i>	<i>Liurai</i>	<i>Ratu</i>
NOBLE	<i>Tobe</i> <i>Meo (warrior class)</i>	<i>Dato/Baino</i>	<i>Paca</i>
PEASANT	<i>Tob</i>	<i>Ema Reino / Toos Nain</i>	<i>Akan</i>
SLAVE	<i>Ata</i>	<i>Atan</i>	<i>Acar</i>

Table 6.3 Rank in Timor-Leste: Three Districts

Timorese society is also a gerontocracy, with elders outranking youth. Age hierarchy is referred to as a *Maun/Alin* relationship (Tetun: older brother/younger brother) (Hicks 2004, 73). In Timor-Leste, wifegivers outrank wifetakers, and leadership is hereditary even though not all high-ranked men become leaders. (Hicks 1990, McWilliam 2012, 2011). The most rigidly stratified groups in Timor

<sup>148</sup> Recall from Chapter 3 that only a quarter of the population could vote in a village election during the Portuguese era because women did not have the franchise.

have castes, not ranks (see Table 6.3). These caste-based systems in the district of Lautem, have in theory, little social mobility:

If a couple were not of the same caste, then there would be no marriage. In recent times, young men and women are able to choose their partners but they are still expected to marry from within their own caste. Inter-caste marriage is still frowned upon; women are not permitted to marry men of a lower caste but in some circumstances men may do so (Corcoran-Nantes 2009, 177).

Taken to an extreme in Los Palos, the exchange of women and brideprice are crucially bound up with social status across all of Timor-Leste.

The ranked kinship system is based around a system of male relatives or patrilineages. These systems are defined by patrilineal descent and patrilocal residence, which affect land and property inheritance, rights to labour, and access to other material resources. Most Timorese practice patrilineal descent and patrilocal residence. Less than 12 percent of the population practice matrilineal descent and many matrilineal groups incorporate patrilineal features (Narciso, Henriques, and Tilman 2012, Thu, Scott, and Van Niel 2007). Thus, my main discussion focusses on patrilineal groups, or “patrilineages”. Patrilineal descent means that kin groups are related through males. In Timor-Leste’s patrilineal groups, male individuals are counted as part of the father’s descent group, and females marry into their husband’s descent group. Male children are then part of the father’s house, while women move to their husband’s family. There is a preference for patrilocal residence, that is, for newly married couples to live near the husband’s relatives. The husband’s family thus pays a brideprice for the bride to enter their lineage group and for control over her labour and children. Women are thus obliged to perform labour obligations (cooking, childcare, washing, cleaning, gardening and farming) for their husbands’ family.

In Timor-Leste, the ideal marriage for its patrilineal groups is a “matrilateral cross-cousin marriage”, which limits the amount of brideprice that must be paid (Hicks 2015, 23). A matrilateral marriage is where mother’s brother’s daughter is married

to her father's sister's son. For example, in the far eastern part of Timor-Leste, Fataluku society follows asymmetric prescriptive alliance by marrying sons to their matrilateral cousins: "In doing so, they reproduce the direction of earlier patterns of marriage exchange and follow what Fataluku term 'the wide path and trail' (McWilliam 2011, 750). I documented the same preference for matrilateral cousin marriage in Oecusse. Here, a village chief told me:

Years ago, I married [my wife] and I paid her price. Now, if my boy marries my wife's niece there is no price, it wouldn't be right to charge. That's culture: the right path or the wrong path. There is not a contract.<sup>149</sup>

The village chief is explaining that because he paid the brideprice for his wife, a matrilateral cousin marriage between his son and his wife's niece would not incur a brideprice. By following the "right path", the village chief means he has to pay attention to the preference for matrilateral cousin marriage: he paid his wife's brideprice, now if his son marries his maternal cousin (or an equivalent relative from his sister's family) there would be no brideprice, just a token. His son would be following the same marriage pattern as his father, (as represented in Figure 6.1). It is important to see how this sets up relationships between patrilineal clans over generations. It sets up a pattern of marriage between families, which is why it is metaphorically a well-travelled path or road, the "right path" as the village chief puts it. McWilliam explained that Timorese favour matrilateral cousin marriages because everybody knows everyone already, they live close to one another, and the two lineages are of a similar status (McWilliam 2011, 750). They are also favoured because the brideprice is much lower.

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<sup>149</sup> Interview with a male village chief, ET104, Oecusse, 30 July 2015.



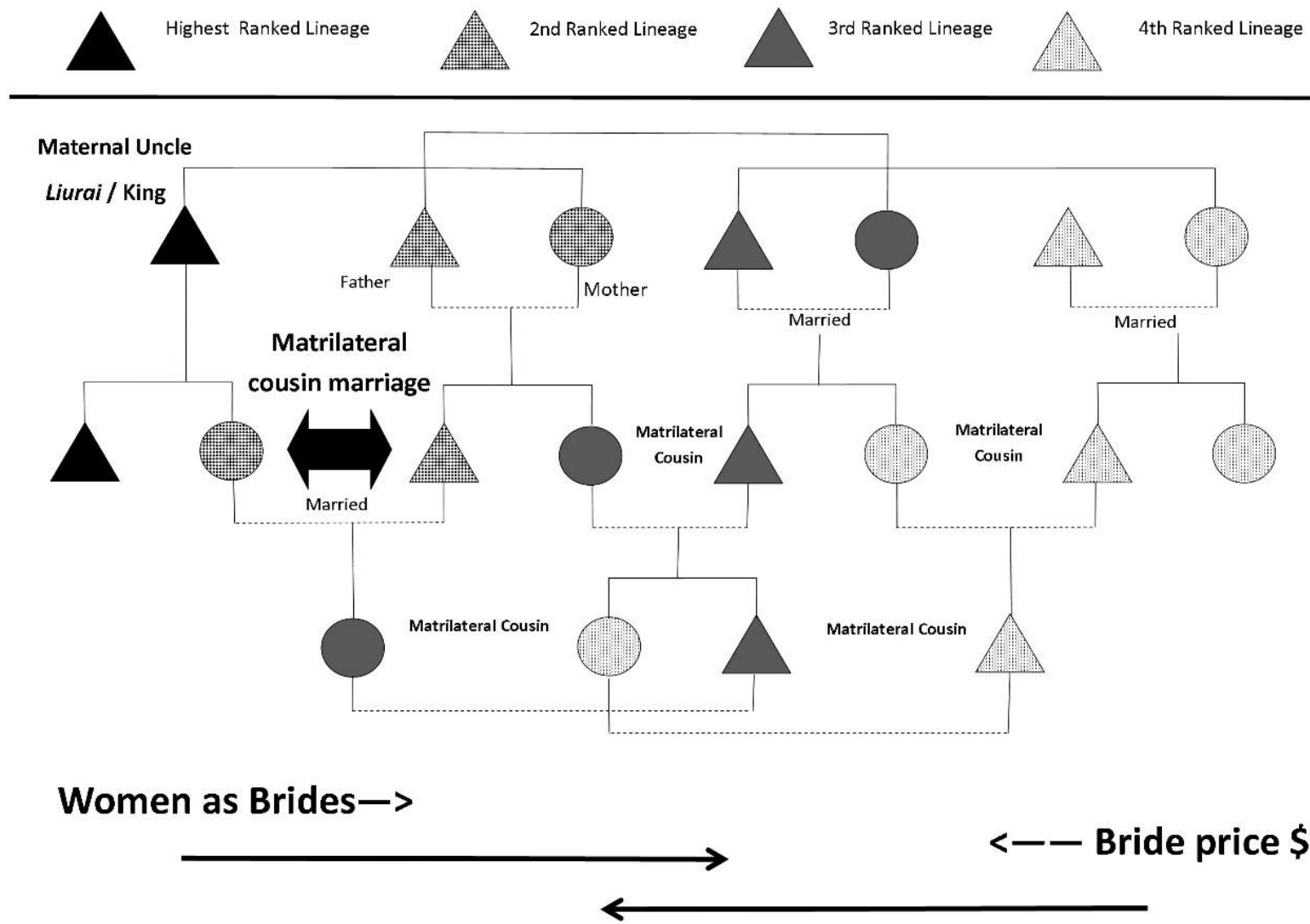


Figure 6.1 Matrilineal Cousin Marriage & Brideprice

As autochthonous or first settling inhabitants, *Liurai* lineages are accorded the right to rule, which is also partially justified through marriage (Bovensiepen 2014b, Yoder 2016, 116). In many myths, high-ranking lineages, the first settling lineages, give wives and land to the in-migrating group, who must pay a brideprice for brides from the *Liurai* lineages. Accordingly, the highest ranks, *Liurai*, intermarry with the *Dato* lineages, but not with the commoner or slave lineages. According to Fox, the “settlement lord” or *Liurai* gives wives to incoming male settlers in exchange for brideprice: “a settlement lord establishes his position as progenitor by giving a woman to the first, and possibly the second, in-coming member of a different” lineage (Fox 1996, 144). The second incoming group, in turn, gives wives to other incoming groups producing, in theory, an ordered hierarchy of lineages in which the wifegiving house is described as the male house and the wifetakers as the female house (Fox 1996, 144). Even today, deliberation among the noble and aristocratic lineages claiming to be the autochthonous lineage are a common method for determining land ownership, although these claims also lead to intra-elite conflicts, such as in Oecusse. There, three different families claim the right to rule.<sup>150</sup> With this in mind, marriage and rank determine access to land and thus to wealth.

As previously explained, in Timor-Leste, higher-ranked, first settling lineages continued to control political and economic power during Indonesian rule and into the present. Up to the present time, lineage hierarchy continues to influence social and political outcomes. For example, Antonio, from a high-ranking, first settling lineage, hamlet Fehuk in the village of Mota, Manufahi,<sup>151</sup> said they have a problem with incoming settlers:

Hamlet Fehuk in the village of Mota is my land, and people from hamlet Fetokiik have settled here. I command them to go, but they refuse. They

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<sup>150</sup> These claims have massive implications for the development of the social market free trade zone in Oecusse. A government historian told me of the government’s decision to research the “true history” of Oecusse in the lead up to the 500-year anniversary of Portuguese arrival in Lifau, Oecusse, led to problems. The project encountered problems because at least three families—claimed to be the true rulers of Oecusse. Interview with government researcher from Oecusse on 23 July 2015, Dili.

<sup>151</sup> Name of village and hamlet changed to de-identify data.

want to stay here permanently. There has been no solution as yet. They live in Mota but give allegiance to another village! That's what we don't want. They don't want to register to vote here because they don't like the leaders of our village, Mota.<sup>152</sup>

After prompting, Antonio replied that villagers in hamlet Fetokiik are reluctant to give allegiance to Mota because of brutality from the village chief during the Indonesian occupation. The chief had two men from the lower-ranked lineage in hamlet Fetokiik strung up a tree and beaten, leaving one dead.

He beat hamlet Fetokiik, the lower ones [the lower lineages]. Then all of them ran to another *suku* (village). After that, they returned to their place in Fetokiik, but don't want to register to vote. The village chief of Mota must be their leader, but they don't want him to be.<sup>153</sup>

Importantly, this violence is structural, that is, it was committed by a high ranked village chief of Mota on members of hamlet Fetokiik the lower-ranked lineage in the village, living nearest near the flooding river, close to the malaria-prone lowlands and furthest from the sacred mountain area. After the assault, lower ranked villagers sought refuge in another village. Following Timorese independence, lower ranked villagers returned to their land in the lowland area in the area of the village Mota, but refused to participate in elections for the high ranked village chief of Mota because he is a relative of the former chief who beat them. Because of their refusal to acknowledge higher status lineages, those living in hamlet Fetokiik have since had no access to roads, electricity, or services. Antonio saw the lineages of Fetokiik as interlopers who are granted land, and who should thus pay allegiance to the village chief of Mota.

#### 6.4.1 Accumulation Through Brideprice

In brideprice societies, marriage organises social inequality (Fishburne-Collier 1988). For this reason, changing brideprice would challenge the pre-eminence of

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<sup>152</sup> Interview with Antonio, ET130, Manufahi, 1 September 2015.

<sup>153</sup> Interview with Antonio, ET130, Manufahi, 1 September 2015.

higher ranked lineages and their ability to accumulate cash. High-ranked lineages can charge a lot more brideprice than low-ranked lineages, as seen in Table 6.2.<sup>154</sup> Consequently, although all men benefit materially from their daughters' brideprice, high-ranked men benefit more (Meillassoux 1975). Brideprice leads to the accumulation of wealth (cash, buffaloes and *belak* (Tetun: ceremonial jewellery) by the wifegiving house and the impoverishment of the wifetakers. Higher-ranked lineages always receive more valuable gifts and brideprice transfers wealth up the ranks (as shown in Figure 6.2). Buffalo and cash are worth much more than cloth and pigs and are given in greater quantities. As such, brideprice is not a reciprocal gift exchange but asymmetric.

Unequal marriages between high ranked and low ranked people ensure a generations-long unequal exchange of money and goods between families, which increases in intensity during periods of economic stagnation and crisis. Silva (2011) has described debt as “idiomatic” in Timorese society. In contrast, I argue that debt is a material relation with real material effects.<sup>155</sup> When, as in the case of Timor, brideprices are sky high, the husband's family (wifetakers) remains indebted to the wife's family (wifegivers) for years or even generations, with sons obliged to pay for their parents' brideprice debts (Corcoran-Nantes 2009, 91, Wigglesworth 2010, 127).<sup>156</sup> This exchange of women using brideprice is the “principal medium for reproducing social relations” (McWilliam 2011, 749). Lower-ranked wifetakers will continue to give more expensive gifts: “symmetric [sic] gift giving will continue indefinitely—wifegivers always give pigs and cloth, and wifetakers buffalo and cash” (McWilliam 2011, 752). McWilliam says the gift giving is symmetric, as indeed the acts of giving are, but the volume and value of gifts is asymmetric, as is typical in brideprice systems. Thus, brideprice debts can be “precisely quantified” and are not “reciprocal obligations” involving some egalitarianism as some scholars argue (Silva and Simião 2012), but “calculative forms of mutual appropriation or

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<sup>154</sup> Hudson and Matfess (2017) claimed that brideprice is set at a flat rate, but it is not.

<sup>155</sup> Debt is a major organising principle of human social and political relations (Graeber 2011).

<sup>156</sup> Fieldwork notes, 8 September 2015.

expectations of engagement” (McWilliam 2011). As a result, brideprice has been a means of kin-based accumulation for the *Liurai-Dato* lineages, as seen in Figure 6.2 below where brides marry down ranks (hypogamously) and buffalo and cash are redistributed upwards.<sup>157</sup>

This process has intensified in the post-conflict economy. In the stagnant Timorese post-independence economy, marriage mediated exchanges after delinking from the large Indonesian economy has, “galvanised opportunities for the reassertion of ascribed social hierarchies and the public expression of personal prestige” (McWilliam 2011, 747). That is, there has been an extra driver of brideprice as a means to accumulate and solidify class relations between the *Liurai-Dato* class and their debtors. This reinvigoration made changes to brideprice through a gender intervention unlikely, given the power and interests of this class.

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<sup>157</sup> Diagram below adapted from McWilliam (2011).

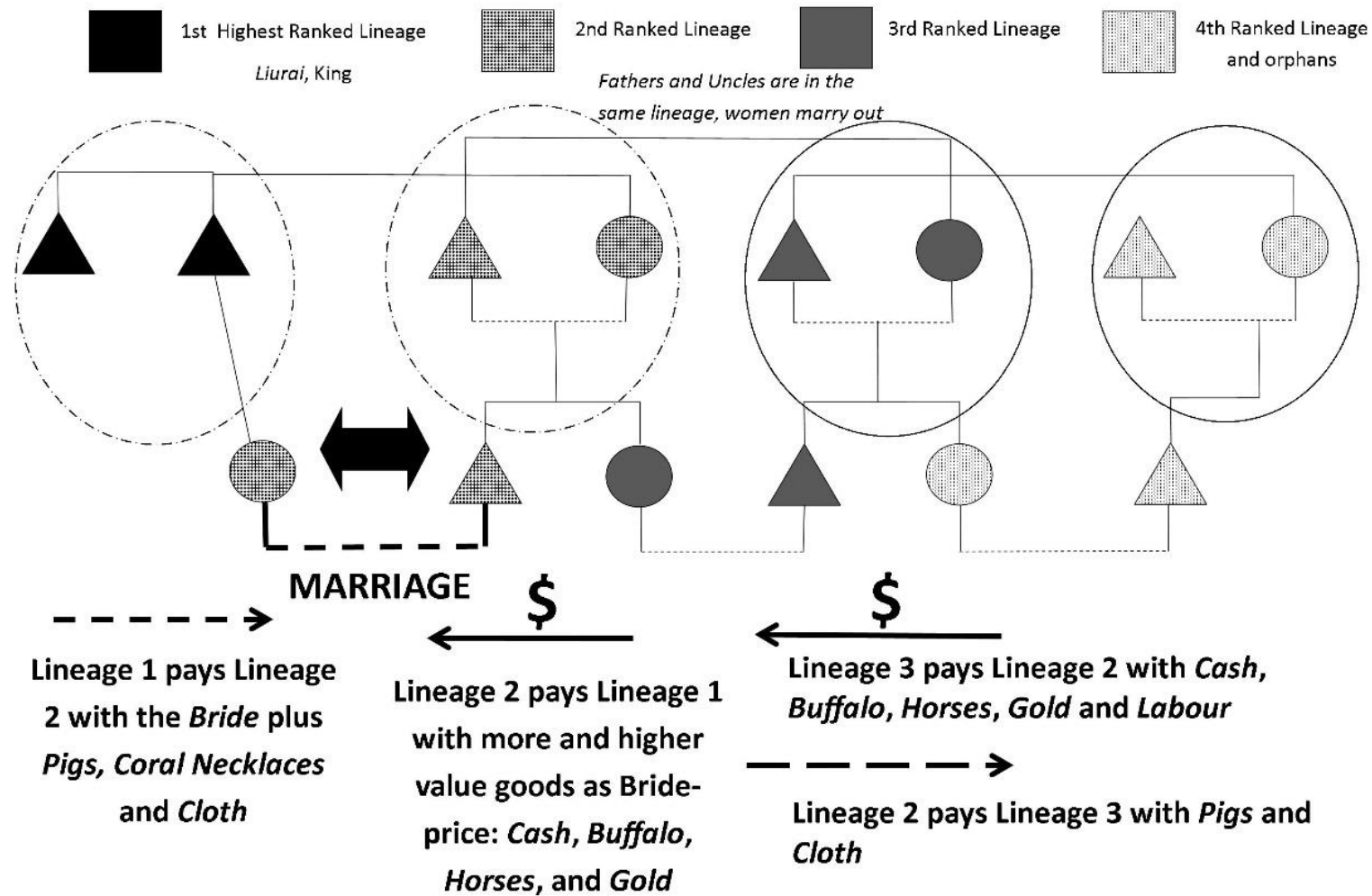


Figure 6.2 Brideprice Transfers Wealth Upwards

It is important to realise that in brideprice societies, “labour is divided by rank” and access to labourers is also often organised by marriage (Fishburne-Collier 1988, 143). To illustrate, at all cultural events, higher lineages do not work to prepare the food, drink and festival areas; they merely arrive after preparations, as one female farmer in Oecusse explained:

Rich people just come on the night. We ordinary folk do the cooking. Those people are not used to cooking. At their homes, they never cook right? They always need a *pembantu* (Indonesian: a maid). There's always someone who helps *Bapak sira* (those misters/higher status men) to cook. They go to work and come home and just eat.<sup>158</sup>

As the highest ranking group, men from *Liurai-Dato* lineages do not perform the labour necessary to produce valuables for brideprice and other ceremonies, they rely on other, low-ranking men and women to do it for them. Consider one of Tilman's interlocutors, a spiritual leader (*lia nain*) justifying a *Liurai* in Viqueque extracting valuables from his subjects:

If the *Liurai's* child wants to get married, [...] the people give buffalo as the brideprice. The parents cannot give buffalo as a brideprice otherwise the marriage won't endure, they could all die, from the children up to the mother. Their role is to work in the vegetable garden and rice fields to give food to the *Liurai* [...] During traditional celebrations with dancing if the *Liurai* wants to take a *Tais*, sword or *Belak* from one of his subjects then the person will give it to him. When playing cards for money, if the *Liurai* wants to take everything then he will (Tilman 2012, 198)

In this example, it is clear that, not only do *Liurai* charge more for their daughters, when their sons marry, lower ranked people can sometimes pay the brideprice for them. Access to paid work adds to the ability of men of the *Liurai-Dato* class to operate at the high end of the brideprice market. Because many *Liurai-Dato* men have paid jobs, they can also rely on these incomes pay higher brideprices. Again, this is typical of brideprice systems as described by Fishburne-Collier: “high-

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<sup>158</sup> Interview with a female farmer, ET113, Oecusse, 5 August 2015.

ranking families are free to pursue culturally valuable activities [like war or politics] because they have slaves, outcasts and debt-bondsmen” to labour for them (Fishburne-Collier 1988, 143). Further, marriage and brideprice play a role in organising labour through debt-bondage. For example, if a lower-ranked person marries the daughter of *Liurai*, that is, the difference in rank between the lineages is very great; the peasant man takes on an enormous debt and becomes his father-in-law’s debt-bondsman (Nixon 2008, 316). Gunn reports of this practice in 1880s Timor, where “enslavement of the husband to the family of the wife can occur” (Gunn 1999, 47). Brideprice causing debt bondage is common in the closely-related cultures of Eastern Indonesia (Hoskins 2004, 97). Again, a difference in rank causes a high brideprice, leading to debts, leading to control of labour by the higher-ranked lineages.

It is important to note that debt and social inequality are particularly interlinked through brideprice in Timor-Leste. In other words, kinship organises social inequality, and the mechanism that reproduces this inequality is debt between lineages. Brideprice initiates complex networks of exchange and obligations in which social and material debts are repaid using animals, goods, belongings, land, labour, favours, promissory notes or even sons and daughters. In Timor-Leste, social relations—like kinship relations—are shaped by and constituted by, debt. Sons owe debts to fathers and uncles, children to mothers, citizens to the war veterans who fought and died. Describing these relationships as a form of debt expresses a more significant and more important relationship than merely a debt that can be simply repaid in time or money. Some have suggested, drawing on ideas of the moral economy present in many places globally, that these debts create a notion of reciprocity and social cohesion in Timor-Leste (Shepherd and McWilliam 2013, Scott 1976).

To illustrate the movement of brideprice across different parts of the economy I use a model derived from Kabear (2003, 28). Figure 6.3 below shows the types of brideprice payments in an iceberg. The different modes of brideprice payment are



located in various parts of the economy, some formal and recognised, some unrecognised and informal.

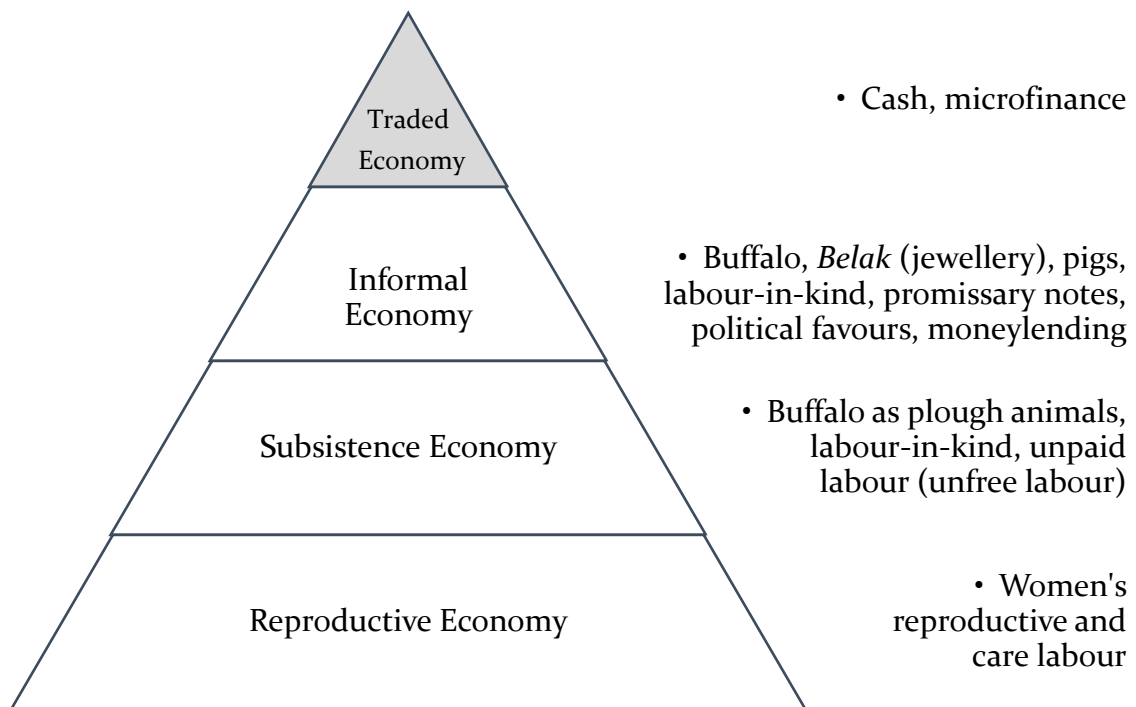


Figure 6.3 Brideprice in the Formal and Informal Economy

To start at the bottom tier, according to Timorese and anthropological definitions as I explained in Chapter 6, brideprice pays for the reproductive and care labour of the bride. The bride's labour is thus a part of the reproductive and care economy, which is unrecognised in the formal traded economy. Second, brideprice is reckoned in buffaloes, which farmers use in the subsistence economy as work animals. Also, women's labour in the fields of her husband is part of the subsistence economy. Bonded labour owed by the husband to his father in law, in part payment of brideprice, as I discussed in Chapter 6, and is also part of the subsistence economy. Third, trade in buffalo is part of the informal economy of barter. Brideprice can also take the form of labour in kind owed by the male relatives of the husband, to the bride's house, which is part of the informal

economy. Lastly, brideprice becomes part of the formally “traded economy” when it is paid in cash or paid for in part by a microfinance loan. At the top of the economic iceberg, brideprice as cash has been made “visible” and counted in the formally traded economy. Like an iceberg, only the top quartile, the traded economy, is visible. Because it is largely invisible in the formal economy, and associated most concretely with the invisible subsistence and reproductive parts of the economy, brideprice’s role in class based accumulation is obscured.

#### 6.4.2 Brideprice and Domestic Violence

In general, brideprice can cause higher rates of domestic violence because it marks wives out as the property of husbands and their families. Paying a brideprice means that a husband, and his family, has access to and control over a woman’s productive work in the fields, her domestic labour, and her children (Alves and Alita 2009, Boserup 1989, Meillassoux 1975). In the Timor case, research shows that brideprice is “something men would refer to as a way of reinforcing their rights over their wives” (Khan and Hyati 2012, 37). Specifically, if a husband has paid the brideprice in full, he can justify using violence over his wife to ensure she labours for him (UNHCR 2004, paragraph 53). The role of brideprice being used as part of a “discourse” to justify domestic violence has been partially explored by Grenfell et al. (2015).

When women are considered the property of men, this leads to both domestic violence and kinship groups disputing rights to women. Streicher’s ethnography focussing on masculinity in Dili provides a common contemporary example of this phenomena. She quotes a young man describing how fights arise over girls: “So when the other groups [from other communities] have a party, and we go there, and there are a lot of girls, and we want to dance with them, but maybe they refuse to dance with us, that maybe also creates conflict” (Streicher 2011, 64). Streicher concludes that the young men’s behaviour is based on “the assumption that girls are the ‘property’ of communities, so that conflict about girls becomes a

competition about both, the honour of the men and the honour of the community” (Streicher 2011, 64). I witnessed the same dynamic of men controlling with whom their young female sisters and cousins danced or dated at three cultural celebrations in 2015: a wedding; after a traditional dispute resolution and at a *kore metan* (Tetun: end of mourning ceremony).

Brideprice’s connection to traditional dispute resolution sets the conditions for high levels of gender-based violence. As I explained in the preceding Chapter 5, traditional dispute resolution mitigates against gender justice (Stewart 2016). Fishburne-Collier’s model of brideprice societies can help provide an explanatory model for the connection between brideprice and traditional dispute resolution because it explains disputes. Fishburne-Collier argued that in brideprice societies, because kinship organises inequality, disputes over women are endemic (Fishburne-Collier 1988, 3). Common dispute topics include brideprice payment, arranged marriage, rape, conception, inheritance, rights to labour, divorce, adultery, and domestic violence (Fishburne-Collier 1988, 3). In brideprice systems specifically, the status of the brideprice payment (arrears, partially paid, fully paid) can *start or prevent* common disputes. For example, where brideprice is not fully paid, domestic violence is considered a violation principally against wife’s natal family, entitling a wife’s natal family to material compensation. Although a natal family may wish to protect their female relative, there is a material incentive for a woman’s family to return her to her husband to receive compensation (Fishburne-Collier 1988). Moreover, in the case of divorce, internationally the experience has been that brideprice must be returned (Goody and Tambiah 1973, 12). In the Timor-Leste case, more evidence is needed, but Graydon described two victims seeking divorce failing to receive sanctuary because their natal families feared having to return a brideprice (Graydon 2016, 57). Divorce also risks the alliance between the patrilineages and any children—valued for their labour and brideprices—remain with their father’s kin. Economic and political losses for women’s natal family, especially under conditions of debilitating poverty, make

divorce very unlikely. In this way, brideprice sets the structural (economic and political) conditions for the continuation of high levels of domestic violence.

High brideprices constrain people's choices of marriage partner, which, according to some young male interlocutors, increases the rate of adultery and adultery-related violence. When marriages are not between lineages of the same status, these require higher brideprice because it is a new path of alliance between families. Timorese parents then have to *tuur hamutuk* (Tetun: sit together) to negotiate the brideprice. This can lead to intractable arguments when one person's lineage requires a very high brideprice. It can result in "people wanting to get married but can't because of *adat* or brideprice".<sup>159</sup> Interviewees in Manufahi suggested that the combination of high brideprice and the fact that lower lineage men were unable to afford to marry higher lineage girls, who were also more desirable, led to grief, extra-marital affairs, and domestic violence.<sup>160</sup> As described in Chapter 5, adultery and jealousy were often referred to as a driving cause of domestic violence.

Crucially, brideprice can increase the rates of domestic violence because it leads to economic pressure on households to give money to the wife's family. As I mentioned earlier, the role brideprice plays in accumulation may be increasing because of the stagnant economy, and this, in turn, leads to greater pressure on families to give gifts to the bride's family (wifegivers). The economic stagnation of large parts of the economy in the post-independence period meant many Timorese turned to dependence on the "exchange economy", which has at its basis, brideprice (McWilliam 2011, 748). I argue that a return to these marriage mediated exchanges represent the pressure of the lack of distribution of state resources, not a return to stronger kin ties and community spirit. The obligations to wifegivers continue at a rate of around once or twice a month, whenever there is a cultural ceremony—a birth, a death, a marriage or a *kore metan* (Tetun: end of mourning

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<sup>159</sup> Interview with Rosita, female farmer ET138, Manufahi, 4 September 2015.

<sup>160</sup> Interview with young men, ET150 and ET151 in Manufahi, 8 September 2015.

party). As a result, these ongoing and smaller brideprice repayments are the household's responsibility, although they will also call on other family members in the patrilineages for help. Under those circumstances, repayments lead to "a heavy, and sometimes unreasonable, burden on couples, which can lead to indebtedness and financial problems" (Khan and Hyati 2012, 37). These findings mirror mine that "financial problems were almost universally described as the main trigger for violence" (Khan and Hyati 2012, 37). The pressure of brideprice debts on already extremely deprived households can trigger violence. Similarly, in a recent report on the economic dimensions of violence against women, "respondents often cited poverty or a lack of money as a stressor that led to arguments and conflict within the household" (Grenfell et al. 2015, 36). Wives are under pressure to make sure their conjugal household pays money to their natal household. Many described to me the pressure from the wife's family [wifegiver] as a key pressure on household finances. Economic reasons were the most common reason people gave for the occurrence of domestic violence. For example, Antonio discussed a case of domestic violence in the village of Mota. He said:

The problem was because of economic problems in their house. Their household income is not enough. Insufficient. They did not have enough to take to the cultural ceremony. The women nags, *pipipipipip* ... then the man [makes hitting gesture].

Now they are good. No, the household economy is not any better, but she does not nag anymore. Because she is scared. <sup>161</sup>

Financial pressure on the household to pay money to the lineage increases the economic burden, which affects women's labour and experience of domestic violence. Indeed, a recent quantitative study of the argued problems repaying brideprice is linked to higher rates of domestic violence. The study found that "women with the most severe problems with brideprice also reported a threefold increase in conflict with their spouse and a fivefold increase in conflict with family" (Rees et al. 2016, 1). Moreover, problems with repaying brideprice has greater

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<sup>161</sup> Interview with Antonio, ET130, Manufahi, 1 September 2015.

implications for poverty-affected households than wealthier households: “Women with the most severe problems with brideprice had twice the poverty scores as those with no problems with the custom” (Rees et al. 2016, 1).

Thus, the pressure of the bride’s family obliging the married couple for gifts increases the rate of violence. When violence occurs, this is usually, as Chapter 5 explained, dealt with using a traditional dispute resolution process. If the violence, triggered by economic problems in the household, forces the victim to seek refuge, her family might return her to her husband if he pays the appropriate compensation. Thus, the wifegivers receive assets, but this is in the form of compensation this time, rather than an obligatory gift. To reiterate, traditional dispute resolution is mediated in the first instance by the male heads of the respective families, who have an interest in restoring the balance through compensation (Fishburne-Collier 1988).

## 6.5 Conclusion

Chapter 6 has argued that brideprice is a foundation of the Timorese political economy. Instead of a culturalist approach, most common in the literature on gender and brideprice, this thesis has deployed a feminist political economy approach. Scholars advocating for cultural approaches to brideprice and traditional dispute resolution have inadvertently supported a system that relies on material expropriation from lower-ranked to higher ranked lineages and violent control over women. This feminist political economy approach focussed on gender disaggregating the benefits and burdens of brideprice. Brideprice is large, dwarfing most people’s incomes. The chapter argued hierarchical social structure in Timor-Leste hinges on material accumulation through brideprice. There are broader implications for this work linking social class, brideprice, and political economy. This link between social order and the exchange of women has been noted in anthropology works, but not its politico-economic significance in cementing social

class. Further, large-scale quantitative research is needed to establish actual brideprice values, and historical research to record their shifts, or not, over time.

Chapter 6 drew on fieldwork and secondary material to show that brideprice is a cause of domestic violence. Brideprice can be used by perpetrators to justify domestic violence. But more than that, increased financial stress on households causes domestic violence. Ironically, a woman must pay for her brideprice through labouring to provide cash payments to her father's family over many years. Brideprice causes significant debts, leading to indebtedness, which affects poor households more than wealthy ones. Men and women in Timor-Leste cite over-indebtedness and poverty as the main reasons for domestic violence, and constant repayments of brideprice fuel this financial strain. Debts can lead households to marry off their daughters forcefully, one example of the connection of brideprice, debt and sexual violence. Many lineages now pay brideprice in cash, and brideprice is now more closely connected to the cash economy. Timorese finance brideprice using microfinance loans, subject to high interest rates. Microfinance links brideprice to the international financial market. I conclude that approaches that see brideprice as a cultural phenomenon overlook the connections to the political economy and to the connections of material conditions to domestic violence and debt.

When viewed through the lens of gender justice, the centrality of brideprice marks a continuity between patriarchy in the private sphere and in government and market spheres such as Goetz described (2007, 39). The use of brideprice strips many female citizens of legitimacy as their marriages mark them as exchange objects in a marriage market. Brideprice involves large sums, accumulation, and extraction. To paraphrase Goetz again, because of its role in cementing and reproducing class relations—that is, the state and the family have deep continuities—there is little desire among power holders to reform these relations.





# CHAPTER 7. MICROFINANCE INTERVENTIONS

## 7.1 Introduction

In Timor-Leste, donors have framed microfinance as a gender-sensitive technology of financial inclusion to reduce poverty at the individual and community level. It has been an important but infrequently examined gender intervention and for that reason, adverse social and political outcomes of microfinance in Timor-Leste remain little understood. I contend the outcomes of microfinance have been uneven with little to show for donor invention despite the expansion of the industry. There are a number of reasons for these uneven outcomes.

International finance institutions such as UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), Asian Development Bank (ADB), the World Bank's International Finance Corporation (IFC), as well as bilateral donors such as USAID and Australian Aid (AusAid) have promoted the use of microfinance as an indispensable policy to reduce poverty and empower women in Timor. By 2016, Timor-Leste had a sizeable formal microfinance sector, with three microfinance institutions (MFIs) holding loan portfolios worth at least \$14.5 million.<sup>162</sup> These loans are held by 14,000, mainly women, borrowers.

The chapter applies a historical feminist political economy analysis to the gender intervention using microfinance. This chapter argues that explaining the uneven outcomes in feminist political economy terms focuses attention on the historically-specific class and gender relations. The chapter asserts that interveners' ideologically-driven promotion of microfinance continued without

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<sup>162</sup> The total portfolio only includes two MFIs as the total portfolio for BNCTL is not known.

robust evidence for microfinance's effectiveness in poverty reduction and women's empowerment. But microfinance did not arrive in Timor-Leste with UN peacekeepers. In the case of Timor-Leste, in the small amount of practitioner writing on microfinance, the tendency is to under-historicise it as a creation of international interveners. It is the contention of this chapter that Indonesian-era microfinance shaped the Timorese political economy under conditions of violence and coercive militarised conflict. The Indonesian military, their supporters, and village elites benefitted from microfinance.

Despite the association between authoritarianism of the New Order and microfinance, microfinance found support in both major Timorese political blocs, FRETILIN and CRNT. In short, microfinance as a market-led development strategy of interveners found common cause with national elite policy thinking. What the interventions did do was to shape the outcomes of microfinance. Instead of reducing poverty and empowering women, interveners' support of microfinance has contributed to the financialisation of the Timorese post-conflict economy and society with adverse outcomes for many of the poor, especially women. In particular, the chapter argues that the combination of market-led development and national elite interests resulting in the promotion of microfinance and self-help, at the expense of gender just state resource distribution.

In the following chapter (Chapter 8) I explain the uneven outcomes of the intervention, showing how microfinance is neither an empowering, local-level intervention, nor an imposition of international institutions onto authentic institutions. Instead, different social forces can benefit from new modes of accumulation and power in microfinance. Microfinance extracts capital from Timorese borrowers at high interest rates, which accumulate as profits. By encouraging the flowering of self-help group (SHG) and MFI microfinance, interveners have promoted class-based strategies of credit-led accumulation. That is, high interest rates transfer sums of money from poorer Timorese to richer ones.

In order to explain the outcomes of the gender intervention to promote microfinance, I first explain the forms, debates, history of microfinance. There is an extensive literature on liberal markets, gender and outcomes of microfinance that can help explain the uneven outcomes of microfinance in Timor-Leste. This deepens the understanding of interveners' aims and microfinance's outcomes by placing it in a global context. The second part of the chapter describes and analyses the history shaping the development of microfinance in Timor, as this is important to understand class and gender dynamics. Thirdly, the chapter describes the interventions aims, especially focussing on the coalitions between international donors and national policy makers to promote microfinance.

## 7.2 Forms and Aims of Microfinance Interventions

Processes of microfinance are similar across the world. Microfinance describes financial services using small or micro amounts of money.<sup>163</sup> These micro loans, savings, insurance, and remittances are designed for people with very low incomes, such as subsistence farmers and petty traders. Banks do not normally lend to these low income earners because they lack collateral or reside in remote areas where services are limited. Despite a change of name to microfinance, *microcredit*—that is, loans—remain the predominant form of microfinance (Haase 2013, Mader 2015, Karim 2011).<sup>164</sup> Loans are intended to allow investment in existing or new productive activities to generate income, employ family members and smooth economic shocks (Haase 2013).

Essentially, there are four kinds of institution offering microfinance in Timor-Leste (Table 7.1). One, either the MFI's or the microfinance unit of the Timorese national bank, Banco Nacional Comércio de Timor-Leste (BNCTL), provide formal microfinance. Two, SHGs provide microfinance. These are also called savings and

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<sup>163</sup>The loan amount should be small relative to a person's annual income, no more than 250 percent (CGAP 2003).

<sup>164</sup>I use the term microfinance as it covers savings and insurance parts of programs, but it principally means micro loans.

loans cooperatives, *Usaha Bersama Simpan Pinjam* (Indonesian: literally Business Together Saving Lending), or credit cooperatives.<sup>165</sup> Three, there were non-financial cooperatives, usually agricultural cooperatives. Four, informal microfinance is a loan from a moneylender.

In microfinance provided by an MFI, a field officer from the MFI attracts a group of 8-10 clients, trains them, and disperses the first loans. The field officer organises a governance system, usually holding an election for a leader and treasurer. The field officer subsequently returns weekly or monthly to collect repayments. The MFI charges interest on these repayments, which it uses to cover overheads. The group decides which member receives loans in which order. Because the group must cover individual defaults and the loan officer will not disperse new loans until the group repays the old one, the group exerts strong pressure to repay to get the next tranche of loans. Microfinance is thus famous for its high repayment rates of uncollateralised loans (Mader 2015).

In SHG microfinance, the process of loans remains similar. Initial capital comes from the group's savings, or from an external grant (Credit Unions Australia 2011, FIELD-Support 2014). An officer trains women and forms a group, but the first steps consist of compulsory savings by the members until the group saves enough capital. Members decide the interest rate, usually higher than MFIs' interest rates. International NGOs pushed this model of SHG microfinance in many developing countries. Advocates assume SHGs are more equitable than MFI microfinance because members control groups and profits return to members, rather than to shareholders of the MFI. However, SHGs are credit-driven models, and people join to access loans (Seeds of Life 2016, Isern et al. 2007). There is little regulation or supervision of SHGs. In Timor-Leste, some SHGs are supervised by their NGO partners, and some are not supervised, except nominally by the Law 16/2004

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<sup>165</sup> I classified all of these kinds of SHG group together, as do other writers on Timorese microfinance.

Governing Cooperatives (Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste 2004) (see Table 7.1).<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> Table 7.1 is author's own composed from interview data from NGOs and microfinance clients and various sources including Solano (2013), Seeds of Life (2016), UNCDF (2014), Coulibaly (2014), Wronka (2015), BNCTL Banco Nacional Comercio de Timor-Leste (2014)

TYPE OF MICROFINANCE	MFI MICROFINANCE (FORMAL MICROFINANCE)	SHG MICROFINANCE (SELF-HELP GROUPS) AKA FINANCIAL COOPERATIVES AND CREDIT UNIONS	NON-FINANCIAL COOPERATIVES AGRICULTURAL	INFORMAL CREDIT MARKETS (MONEY LENDERS)
NUMBER	Two MFIs; One Bank (BNCTL) providing micro-loans	25 Credit unions (2011); unknown number of SHGs	Unknown number	Unknown number
ORIGIN OF CAPITAL	Initial loan capital from MFI	Initial loan capital from savings in group, or from NGO supporter	Initial loan capital from savings in group, or from NGO supporter	Initial loan capital comes from MFI or SHG or own capital
CONNECTION TO FINANCIAL MARKET	Connected to financial market through Financial Intermediaries (FIs)	Not connected to financial market	Not connected to financial market	Not connected to financial market
INTEREST RATES	Around 35 % p.a.	Between 24 and 120% p.a.	N/A	240-360 % p.a.
PROFIT SHARING	Loans repaid to MFI	Loans repaid to group and profit split between members, in principle	Loans repaid to group and profit split between members, in principle	Moneylenders make loans at higher interest rates to people outside SHG of MFI. Profits to individuals or split between SHG members
REGULATION	Regulated and supervised	Some registered, some not, generally unsupervised except by NGO supporters	Some registered, some not, generally unsupervised	Not recognised, regulated or supervised
SUBSIDIES	Donor subsidies to MFI itself	Subsidies to NGO providers	Subsidies to NGO providers	No direct subsidies

Table 7.1. The Four Types of Microfinance in Timor-Leste

At a basic level, microfinance is a gender intervention because microfinance targets women clients. In early iterations, this drew on feminist thinking wherein a pivotal obstacle to women's rights was that women lacked access and control over resources (Eyben, Kabeer, and Cornwall 2008, Garikipati 2010). Thus, at the individual level, making loans to women through microfinance ought to increase their access to income and lead to economic empowerment vis-à-vis their position in the household (Kabeer 2003). A source of livelihood separate to male relatives was said to give women more autonomy and a stronger voice in the household (Cameron and Ananga 2015). Where there were strong patriarchal controls on women's movements, microfinance allowed women scope for income, without necessarily disrupting domestic responsibilities or patriarchal norms in the same way that wage labour could (Kabeer 2000). Since microfinance was supposed to help redress gendered power relations in the household, it was hoped it would reduce violence against women. In cases of domestic violence, or abandonment or divorce, microfinance allowed women the opportunity to have an independent income and live separately from a male partner when there are no other social safety nets.

Advocates for microfinance hold that women's empowerment on an economic dimension could have a flow-on effect to political or social dimensions of empowerment (Cornwall 2014). Microfinance using the basic group model could create social bonds between women leading to greater social solidarity and empowerment (Mayoux 2001, Kabeer 2001, 2005, Rankin 2002). Sometimes microfinance programming contained additional features, on the basis that alone, microfinance did not transform gender relations (Mayoux 2000). These could include specific training or resources for group members on women's leadership, domestic violence, challenging male authority or group organising (Mayoux 2000, Drolet 2010).

Once marginal, from the late 1990s microfinance was included in donors' poverty reduction programs targeted at women. On the positive side, donors' focus on

women and poverty reduction drew attention to the fact that poverty was a “gendered experience”, with significant burdens for women (Chant 2008, 167, 171-2). Women’s incorporation into the World Bank’s “inclusion” agenda starting in 1995 was largely in the form of market inclusion efforts, and chief among these was microfinance (Bedford 2007). Women would be given the opportunity to empower themselves by their inclusion in markets: labour markets, credit markets, and as entrepreneurs. Donors made an “efficiency” argument for promoting microfinance. On this view, women’s empowerment was more efficient to the economy as a whole. Empowering women was “championed as a means to lift economies, drive growth, improve infant and child health, enhance women’s skills as mothers as well as to open up opportunities for women’s economic and political engagement” (Eyben, Kabeer, and Cornwall 2008, 1). Also, women’s economic empowerment was a “good investment” because “of the expectation that women would spend their income on their families, thereby improving development more generally” (Chant and Sweetman 2012, 519). Women’s empowerment through using microfinance was justified as a “smart” investment for development, welfare, and the economy.

### 7.2.1 Outcomes: Poverty Reduction and Women’s Empowerment

After decades of qualitative and quantities measurement, it is now clear microfinance does not reduce poverty. Banks and microfinance providers often measure success in terms of outputs such as the uptake of loans, numbers of people trained and repayment rates. Critics respond that uptake or client numbers are no evidence for microfinance’s impacts on poverty reduction or women’s empowerment (Vik 2013). After a decade of research, randomised controlled trials measuring impact have not found that microfinance increased household incomes, business profits, or saving rates (Angelucci, Karlan, and Zinman 2015, Bauchet et al. 2011). A systematic review of evidence from sub-Saharan Africa showed that microfinance had mixed impacts on incomes: some people grew richer, but some people became poorer because of microfinance, leading to zero overall impact on



poverty (Stewart et al. 2010). On the question of microfinance encouraging broader economic growth, Nega and Schneider (2014) argued that social entrepreneurship using microfinance has no impact on economic growth. Regarding development, other authors suggested that without broader service provision such as health, welfare and housing microfinance does not positively impact development (Ahlin, Lin, and Maio 2011, Ahlin and Jiang 2008). In the final analysis, the systematic review explicitly recommended that donors “avoid the promotion of microfinance as a means to achieve the Millennium Development Goals” (Stewart et al. 2010, 7).

Providing microfinance to women does not necessarily transform gender relations, but most certainly relies on existing gender dynamics in the household and society to function (Goetz and Gupta 1996, Mayoux 2001, Kabeer 2001, Elyachar 2002, Isserles 2003, Kabeer 2005, Eyben, Kabeer, and Cornwall 2008). Studies showed that microfinance intersects with the gendered division of labour, and unequal access to and control over resources. For instance, some evidence showed that although women did the work to acquire and repay loans, women did not get to use the loan, and did not directly benefit (Rahman 1999, Goetz and Gupta 1996). It was not based on a redistributive or welfare-based approach. Some authors argued that microfinance instrumentalises an ideology of empowerment of self-help and self-actualisation that cannot address structural inequalities (Elyachar 2002).

Likewise, because violence against women is rooted in unequal power relations between men and women, the “impact of access to material resources may be conditioned by various other factors making outcomes difficult to predict” (Kabeer 2014, 12). Evidence on the effect of microfinance on rates of VAW is mixed. That is, women’s greater access to and control over resources in communities and households, including those offered by microfinance, can be (violently) contested (Eves and Crawford 2013). Accordingly, more microfinance access may result in increased, not decreased, violence against women (Malhotra, Schuler, and

Boender 2002, Rahman 1999, Eves and Crawford 2013). In another study on Bangladesh, domestic violence perpetration rates were comparable between husbands of microfinance clients and husbands of non-clients. However, husbands of microfinance clients in urban areas used microfinance more often to justify their perpetration of domestic violence (Murshid 2016, 146). That financial resources may have such “destabilising effects for women is particularly alarming”, given that women receiving microcredit can report higher rates of domestic violence in Bangladesh (Murshid 2016, 147).

Charging high interest rates to the poor is the most controversial aspect of microfinance because of the implication of usury. Liberalised microfinance sectors charge high interest rates, globally averaging 26.6 percent per annum, although in individual cases percentages can run into the hundreds (CGAP 2003, Mader 2014, 608). High interest rates have effects at the individual and social level because “debt creates a state of domination and subordination between creditor and debtor, and it has both a financial and a social component” (Karim 2011, 37, Rankin 2004). The nature of debt means that domination and subordination are carried forward temporally; debt shapes the future power relations between people (Graeber 2011). Thus, in a study by Guérin, Kumar, and Agier (2013) microfinance was part of the reproduction of unequal access to, and control over, power and resources because microfinance gave some women power over other women.

### 7.2.2 Outcomes: Financialisation

Despite the mixed or negative evidence on both women’s economic empowerment and poverty reduction, the promotion and growth of microfinance continued apace, amounting to a “microfinance revolution” (Robinson 2002). In countries across the world, a neoliberal push to liberalise agricultural credit markets precipitated the “microfinance revolution”. International organisations and experts pushed microfinance towards the financially sustainable model since the 1970s, starting with the Ohio School, instrumental to the Indonesian government’s

embrace of “sustainable” microfinance (Gonzalez-Vega 1977). The Ohio school argued that providing micro- and group loans to the poor through banks, rather than through the state at commercial rates would avoid the inefficiency and corruption of subsidised agricultural credit in state-led development and the bureaucratic aid industry (Gonzalez-Vega 1977). Thus, “financially sustainable” refers to microfinance providers covering their overheads and to become profit-making using the yield on interest rates. On this view, MFIs that rely on government or donor money to subsidise client interest rates are considered to be “unsustainable microfinance” (Ravicz 1998, Rahman 1999). Critics have termed the microfinance industry’s move away from poverty reduction or women’s economic empowerment to focus on financial sustainability as microfinance’s “mission drift” (Augsburg and Fouillet 2013).

From the late 1990s, and concurrent with the use of microfinance in poverty reduction programs, the role of commercial finance and Financial Intermediaries (FIs) in microfinance expanded. FIs are specially created investment banks and managed funds that invest in microfinance. Globally, in 2009, at least half of MFIs commercial loans (or guarantees for loans) were sourced through the international financial sector, that is, FIs (Reille and Glisovic-Mezieres 2009). Financial Intermediaries such as the Grameen Trust, Blue Orchard<sup>167</sup> and Oiko Credit accelerated the expansion of financially sustainable microfinance because they have increased the availability of commercial loans for MFIs (Reille, Forster, and Rozas 2011). Investors put capital into FIs who supply commercial loans to MFIs because microfinance portfolios have consistently had investment returns of 5 percent per annum, which is a rate higher than many other forms of investment, given the historically low cost of loans (Reille, Forster, and Rozas 2011). This return arises from the gap between the cost of the wholesale loans, and the price of credit given to the poor. Another factor in the expansion of microfinance was the public offerings of shares in MFIs such as Bank Rakyat Indonesia and Banco

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<sup>167</sup> Blue Orchard, for example, is a Swiss-regulated, Luxembourg-based microfinance investment bank that was started by the United Nations in 2000.

Compartimentos, which made billions of dollars of profits for shareholders and state-owned enterprises (Mader 2015, 67-8, Lieberman et al. 2008). Accordingly, microfinance facilitates surplus extraction from poor citizens in developing countries to capital owners in developed countries (Mader 2015).

One result of this investment is that the sources of funding for microfinance are increasingly in the hands of financial asset managers, not development organisations. Internationally, the *donor percentage of capital* in microfinance institutions declined rapidly from 30 percent in 2002 to just 3.4 percent in 2007 (Augsburg and Fouillet 2013). The sources of funding for microfinance are almost wholly controlled by financial asset managers in FIs, not development organisations, although donor governments continue to make transfers to microfinance FIs. Microfinance is a part of a new “deep marketisation” of development as the financialisation of development describes the current situation wherein the financial market that sets the conditions for development (Carroll 2015). The sums of money invested by donors and banks in microfinance changes the relationship between citizens states and markets (Carroll 2015).

Microfinance works politically by “minimising or containing resistance to the adverse social implications that these policies engender” (Weber 2014, 545). Foremost, microfinance functions as a political safety valve by providing marginalised people with small amounts of cash and by pushing labour into precarious informal markets, where organisation is difficult (Weber 2002). Debt itself becomes a political tool, whether by trapping poor people in debt cycles (Gehlich-Shillabeer 2008), or by creating neoliberal subjects (Elyachar 2005, Karim 2008) or by limiting citizen’s claims on the state for resources and infrastructure (Weber 2014, Mader 2015).

In order to create the conditions for liberalised (micro)finance markets, interveners work through, with and around the state (Carroll 2015). Working through the state, donors draft laws (de)regulating the microfinance markets. Especially since the 1970s and 1980s, interveners have disciplined governments

into crafting liberalised financial sector policies and used microfinance politically to mediate the adverse effects (Weber 2014, 2004). Microfinance interventions are, as Rankin states, “a highly contested planning activity through which global economic processes articulate with local cultural-political structures via the mediating power of the state” (Rankin 2001). Donors also use microfinance to work with the state to push and domesticate liberalised markets. For example, microfinance was used to minimise individual resistance to large scale structural adjustments in Latin America (Weber 2004). Donors also use microfinance to work around the state. Interveners such as the UNCDF, active in Timor-Leste, now promote microfinance using the term “financial inclusion”, not microfinance, given microfinance’s (and previously microcredit’s) bad reputation for charging high rates.<sup>168</sup> Financial inclusion brings together SHGs, microfinance and loans to small and medium size enterprises. However, financial inclusion also usually means the expansion of microfinance to pay for public goods such as water, sanitation and power, and the use of insurance and derivatives to insure against losses (Mader 2016, Soederberg 2014).

Microfinance advocates and policymakers have always been at pains to differentiate between empowering microfinance and rapacious moneylenders. However, given recurrent crises of microfinance and its role in suicides, violence and debt cycles, microfinance advocates are now on the back foot (Guérin, Labie, and Servet 2015). Echoing earlier differentiations between microfinance and money lending, currently voices critical of MFI or financially sustainable microfinance likewise wish to differentiate between market-driven microfinance and “grassroots” SHG microfinance (Duggan 2016). SHGs are seen as an independent, localised, and more beneficial form of finance. However, for borrowers on the ground, there may be little to differentiate MFI, SHGs and

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<sup>168</sup>UNCDF is the United Nations main IFI active in Timor-Leste. Their mission shift to microfinance and financial inclusion has been particularly acute since the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Mastercard Foundation became major donors in 2008 and 2010 respectively.  
Source: <http://www.uncdf.org/contributions-to-uncdf>

moneylenders, and there is a great deal of overlap of personnel.<sup>169</sup> Moreover, SHGs in Timor-Leste have higher interest rates than MFIs, anywhere from 24-120 percent per annum (See Table 8.1). All three are credit and interest-driven models, and all three have overlapping historical roots. The nature of debt, obligation, and control over financial resources has important implications for class and gender relations. I trace the historical development of microfinance in various forms now.

### 7.3 Militarised Microfinance in Timor-Leste

Like Mader (2015) and Turnell (2009) urge, the next section uses historical political economy approach to examine the colonial and neo-colonial lineages of microfinance in Timor-Leste. It is essential to understand that although microfinance is now the policy of choice for poverty reduction and women's empowerment in Timor-Leste, it was not introduced by international donors in the post-conflict era, and this historical legacy shapes class and gender relations. Microfinance was a part of the Indonesian occupation and rural development strategy, which in turn was derived from Dutch colonial policy. Accordingly, the structure of Indonesian village microfinance and the interplay of patrimonial relationships and cooperatives continue to shape outcomes for microfinance in Timor-Leste today. In Timor-Leste currently, both SHG microfinance and MFI microfinance can be called a "cooperative" using the terms *kooperativa* (Tetun) or *Kooperasi Simpan Pinjam* (Indonesian). According to the 2004 Law on Cooperatives, citizens can start cooperatives dealing with trade, education, factories, fishing or culture. However, the most common form of cooperative is a financial cooperative, and on the ground, "cooperative" is a synonym for microfinance. The use of this term arises because of the historical overlap of agricultural credit with the expansion of profit-driven finance over the last three

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<sup>169</sup>There is also little to differentiate SHG and MFI microfinance and the Rotating Savings and Loans Associations (ROSCAS), called *arisan* in Indonesian. Sometimes these are held to be even more innocuous than SHG microfinance, but in fact many ROSCAS charge interest, some use violence to enforce payments, some on lend to others outside the group at higher interest rates. Thus, ROSCAS too may be indistinguishable from other forms of informal credit (Low 1995).

decades. These historically specific relations set the parameters within which gender interventions take place.

For the Timorese independence movement, notably left-wing FRETILIN, “cooperative” signified a particular, independent mode of development, compatible with Timorese culture and different to market capitalism. After declaring Timor-Leste’s independence in Portugal 1974, FRETILIN began organising the rural economy into cooperatives, believing these should be the basis of a social economy (Aditjondro 2001, 109, Guterres 2006, Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste 2002). These included the nationalisation of state land to be run by cooperatives (Rocamora 1980, 19). FRETILIN Central Committee member, Abilio Araújo, who was later expelled from FRETILIN, described cooperatives in 1980 as having two goals of “[first] conscientise to [second] mobilise the people” (Rocamora 1980, 19, Budiardjo and Liong 1984, 55). Nicolau Lobato, a Timorese leader, admitted to a journalist in 1974 that the Timorese remained “suspicious” of his new FRETILIN cooperatives, because “they had been drawn into similar collectives before by either the Portuguese or the Japanese only to find themselves dispossessed” (Budiardjo and Liong 1984, 55). The Indonesian annexation in 1975, resulting fighting and displacement disrupted the foundations of the colonial economy and FRETILIN’s nascent cooperatives.

Although they had a vastly different vision of the state and society, cooperatives funded through microfinance were also a crucial part of the Indonesian control over the rural economy during the New Order. Understanding outcomes of microfinance in Timor-Leste today require unearthing how it was a part of Indonesian occupation policy in the past. Moreover, it is neither well known nor widely publicised that Indonesian microfinance’s lineage is in Dutch colonial policy. This lacuna is unsurprising; the New Order period reframed history narrowly to exclude both the “every day” and social inequalities of the colonial-era (Stoler and Strassler 2000, 12). In Indonesia itself, microfinance’s antecedents are in Dutch colonial government’s rural credit programs, introduced in 1901 as part

of Holland's "Ethical" colonial policy (Maurer 1999). In the Dutch policy, rural banks would provide subsidised agricultural credit to smallholders grouped in cooperatives. A major creditor was the state-owned *Hulp en Spaarbank der Inlandsche Bestuurs Ambtenaren* in Java, established in 1895 (Robinson 2002). Agricultural credit to smallholders grouped in cooperatives would reduce famine by firstly, helping groups to stockpile emergency food supplies and fostering "mutual cooperation" or *gotong royong*.<sup>170</sup> Secondly, it would combat money lenders, whom the Dutch made scapegoats for the impoverishment of the population in the earlier, high-taxing and brutal Cultivation System (Prawiranata 2013). The creation of agricultural credit was aimed at the household level, and part of what Stoler calls the "microphysics" of the subjugation and control of colonial rule that spread across Asia in the early twentieth century (Stoler 2001, 833).

After 1945, in independent Indonesia, President Sukarno (1945-1965) introduced credit cooperatives, but these became a hallmark of New Order development policy under President Suharto (1965-1998). Credit cooperatives were aligned with organising the economy according to "family principles" and "self-sufficiency" (Republic of Indonesia 1945, Article XXXIII). In 1968, under President Suharto, the Indonesian government transformed the former Dutch colonial bank *Hulp en Spaarbank der Inlandsche Bestuurs Ambtenaren* into the Bank Rakyat Indonesia (BRI) (Maurer 1999, Robinson 2004). BRI provided the credit to distribute seed, fertiliser, technical assistance and pesticides through a network of compulsory Village Unit Cooperative or *Kooperasi Unit Desa* (KUD) in every village, a central institution in President Suharto's New Order (Suradisastra 2006). Farmers who needed government resources such as seeds and credit were obliged to be members of the KUD.

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<sup>170</sup> Likewise, *gotong royong* became an important part of the New Order's political toolkit, at once justifying unpaid work gangs and community cohesion and order (Bowen 1986).



War shaped Indonesian microfinance in occupied East Timor because rural credit overlapped with powerful military institutions. Members of the Indonesian military used cooperatives operating with rural credit to accumulate wealth. Army-directed Chinese-Indonesian businesses, PT Denok and PT Batara Indra Group, were logistics companies in the initial military invasion of East Timor with connections to Indonesian General Benny Murdani. After the invasion, PT Denok took over the Portuguese coffee plantations, marble and sandalwood exports (Aditjondro 1996). It exercised a monopoly over the coffee industry using the KUD cooperative organisations to manage the production storage and profit from coffee (Danzer 2008: 183-4, Budiardjo and Liong 1984). The majority of profits—between 5 and 15 million US dollars year—were accrued to leaders of the military in East Timor (Budiardjo and Liong 1984, 104). However, local Timorese elites also benefitted, especially if they were in Timorese-Indonesian military units (Danzer 2008). The wealthy Carrascalão family’s plantations were returned to them in 1980, and PT Denok gave them higher per kilo prices than to those farmers working in the KUD (Budiardjo and Liong 1984, 105). The structure of KUD and the interplay of patrimonial relationships and cooperatives continue to shape microfinance in Timor-Leste today. For example, generally speaking, the heads of the village cooperative were usually the village heads, a pattern that continues today (Ravicz 1998, 3).<sup>171</sup>

From the mid-1980s and during the New Order, IFIs promoted the financialisation of microfinance and poverty. The falling oil prices in the 1980s allowed the World Bank to pressure Indonesia to liberalise agricultural credit (Holloh 1998). Sustainable or commercial microfinance became a model for the World Bank-backed “new wave” of microfinance in Indonesia. The new forms of profit-driven microfinance came in the context of increasing economic liberalisation in Indonesia, supervised by IFIs (Tilley 2017). Changes to rural credit were on the advice of US-based academics from the Harvard Institute of Development (Mader

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<sup>171</sup> Interview with a senior manager of a Timorese MFI, ET120, Dili, 16 August 2015.

2015). These academics criticised existing models of rural credit, arguing subsidised rural credit did not benefit the rural majority because elites captured the benefits, as I described above (Mosley et al. 2012, Robinson 2002). As a solution, US advisors wanted the Indonesian Government to “reduce, and even eliminate, the need for subsidies,” which could be accomplished in three ways: “by charging real interest rates, aggressively pursuing repayments, and achieving a significant volume of business” (Ravicz 1998, ix).<sup>172</sup>

In the 1990s, the microfinance terrain changed again when the US exerted pressure on Indonesia to open up occupied East Timor to trade. Externally, the opening up of Timor-Leste in the 1990s coincided with increased US-pressure on Indonesia to liberalise agriculture in East Timor. At the same time, in line with IFI ideas, the Indonesian state-owned bank BRI launched commercial microfinance products. These had commercial interest rates that would allow the institutions to operate at a profit. They also expanded the numbers of borrowers, which was a condition of financially self-sustaining microfinance. In Indonesia, the subsidised KUD provided a large customer base to convert to financially sustainable MFI microfinance (Ravicz 1998). For example, by 1988, there were over 172 village cooperative units or *Kooperasi Unit Desa* (KUD) in East Timor with over 32,000 members (BAPPENAS 1988, 832). These KUD, largely controlled by the Indonesian military, were opened up to commercial competition.

In East Timor, there was already pressure and internal competition within the army-controlled network of companies and the affiliated KUD. In 1994, the East Timor Centre for Village Cooperative Units, PUSKUD, received a US\$6.8 million grant from USAID to promote organic coffee production for export and set up a separate group of village cooperative units (KUD) (Piedade 2003). This group challenged the military-connected PT Denok and PT Batara Indra Group and their KUD. The chairperson of the centrally controlled PUSKUD at that time was

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<sup>172</sup>Whereby levels of interest needed to achieve this varied between 81 and 550 percent per annum (Ravicz 1998, ix).

Herminio da Costa. He was also the third-in-command leader of the pro-integration umbrella grouping of militia, *Pasukan Pro-Intergrasi* (Indonesian) and leader of militia *Aitarak* (Tetun), which killed many and razed the Timorese capital Dili to the ground in 1998.<sup>173</sup> After Independence and with the help of USAID, PUKSUD cooperatives were rebranded as “Cooperativa Café Timor”, still the biggest coffee producer in Timor and the largest sector of the non-oil export economy (Piedade 2003, USAID and Mendez England & Associates 2013).

Under Suharto’s New Order, gender ideology and the state apparatus reinforced the gendered division of labour and this shaped how microfinance worked on the ground. The state controlled access to microfinance for women’s craft, trading or farming groups through the state organisation of public servants’ wives, the Family Welfare Movement (PKK) (Suryakusuma 2011). The PKK was a hierarchical chain of command, incorporating every public servant’s wife; each woman allotted a title and responsibility reflecting the importance of her husband. The PKK extended from the wife of the President to the wife of a hamlet leader. Together with other key organisations such as Dharma Wanita, it propagated an ideology of gender relations that defined women by their role as wives and mothers looking after their family’s welfare (Muchtar 1999). Critics have termed this “State *Ibuisism*” or State Mother-ism (Syamsiyatun 2007, Wieringa 1992, Stivens 1990). Accordingly, elite women managed issues such as family planning, hygiene, and welfare, but all of these activities first started with savings and loans (Holloh 1998, 74). These women ran the village savings and loans groups for women, and the compulsory village *arisan* (rotating savings and credit groups ROSCAs) (Holloh 1998, 40, 69).

In the context of New Order authoritarianism, the PKK, together with the state family planning agency (BKKBN), both ran microfinance groups that ensured state supervision of family life, reproduction, and the gendered division of labour (Wieringa 1993). Most concretely, the New Order linked population control to

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<sup>173</sup> Although implicated in this and the Liquica Church massacre, da Costa has never been tried for war crimes, and is a political functionary in West Timor. See *Masters of Terror* database : <http://www.syaldi.web.id/mot/Herminio%20da%20Costa.htm>

microfinance. From 1979, microfinance groups started by the family planning agency required women to use contraceptives before they could get loans (Shiffman 2002, 1209). Further, with funding and support from the World Bank, in the 1990s, BRI enrolled midwives in microfinance program for midwives to encourage more mothers to use private sector health services (The Summa Foundation 1998). In East Timor, the BKKBN and the PKK helped with government family planning programs where sterilisation and birth control were used coercively against Timorese women, as a military strategy of population control, mirroring the use of SGBV as a weapon of war (Aditjondro 1998, 116, Budiardjo and Liong 1984).

#### 7.4 Microfinance Intervention: The Visible Hand

During the peacebuilding intervention, interveners supported the existing microfinance industry in the newly independent Timor-Leste, seeking to expand and reshape it. From 2002-2017, donors spent a total of nearly \$US45 million on various projects promoting microfinance (see Table 7.2). So significant is the microfinance industry today that it shapes the Timorese economy, and both have experienced interconnected crises in association with liberalisation, with material support from interveners playing a crucial role.

	MFI PROJECTS	SHG PROJECTS	AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVES	TOTAL
DONOR FUNDING 2002-2017	\$9,882,367	\$1,318,772	\$33,757,404	\$44,958,544

Table 7.2 Donor Spending on Microfinance 2002-2018 (Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste 2017, Wronka 2015)

Since East Timor province had been economically dependent on Indonesia, after independence, the economy contracted around 40-45 percent, bankrupting many petty traders and microfinance groups (Allden 2009). Moving into the gap, the World Bank, ADB, the UNCDF, and a variety of NGOs all founded new MFIs. The World Bank's Community Empowerment Program (CEP) used microfinance to recapitalize shops, businesses, and infrastructure destroyed in the militia violence of 1998-99. Other microfinance schemes included *Opportunidade Timor Lorosa'e* offering same-day (pay-day) loans, *Moris Rasik* supported by the Grameen Bank investor network, and *Tuba Rai Metin* started by Catholic Relief Services (Marino 2006). In 2001, ADB set up the Institute of Microfinance of Timor-Leste (IMfTL), which quickly attracted many new microfinance clients.

Interveners saw microfinance as a way to address economic losses from the war, alleviate poverty, and foster social cohesion. In Timor-Leste, the UN mission believed that the expansion of microfinance would have a beneficial effect on incomes and poverty reduction, reducing the credit "bottleneck" impeding rural development (UNMIT 2009). Microfinance could help achieve the Millennium Development Goal on poverty reduction by 2015 by extending market access: that is increasing "financial services for the poor and low-income people, both women and men" (UNCDF 2014, 5). It would do so by remedying the market's failure to provide "sustainable" (profitable) sources of credit to the poor, thereby allowing a poor individual to earn income through entrepreneurial activities or by earning interest on savings. SHG microfinance would also help grow social capital. In

addition to MFI credit, SHG microfinance would help grow savings and social capital. For example, Credit Unions Australia, who worked in Timor-Leste on the expansion of credit cooperatives, with the peak financial cooperative body, Hanai Malu, suggested that for a given group, having a joint liability for a loan fostered social cohesion and strengthened social ties among members (Credit Unions Australia 2011, 6-7).

Yet the microfinance industry in Timor-Leste faced successive crises. From 1999 to 2002, UN staffing levels drove Dili's service economy and real estate market. But in 2002, the international troop withdrawal caused a severe economic contraction and a related microfinance crisis. Repayment rates in the CEP credit scheme fell to 40 percent, and the scheme was declared a failure and abandoned (Conroy 2004, Hughes 2009). A few years later in 2006, violent upheaval and fear of army and police rivalry in the political crisis caused thousands to flee, and non-oil GDP contracted by at least five percent. Microfinance-supported businesses, such as small retail shops and credit unions across Timor-Leste went bankrupt, and microfinance providers across Timor-Leste shut their doors.<sup>174</sup> IMfTL had large numbers of microfinance defaulters who were unlikely to repay (Day 2010).

After the crises and microfinance collapse, IFIs took three steps to consolidate the microfinance sector. As a first step, ADB gave their debt-plagued microfinance institute IMfTL, to the government of Timor-Leste. It became a state-owned commercial bank, *Banco Nacional Comércio de Timor-Leste* (BNCTL). The "rescue" of IMfTL thus transferred MFI debt to the Timorese state, and socialising donor-finance created losses. The second step donors took was re-capitalising the MFIs through a joint IFI and Timorese government-funded project, INFUSE. Between 2008 and 2015, INFUSE made a series of grants and soft-loans to only two

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<sup>174</sup>The commercial banking sector was also severely disrupted. The Portuguese owned Banco Nacional Ultramarino (BNU), which operated in Timor-Leste during the colonial period and with an average loan size of around 12000 USD, experienced major repayment problems. Around half of its 97 million USD loan portfolio remains non-performing (FIELD-Support 2014, 11).

MFIs, Moris Rasik and Tuba Rai Metin, amounting to nearly \$8 million (De Sousa Shields 2011, UNCDF 2014).<sup>175</sup>

The third step was regulation, not to protect borrowers but to ensure Timorese microfinance conformed to market principles. INFUSE provided capacity-building and expertise to draft a law regulating MFIs (Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste 2010d). The Public Instruction No. 06/2010 Licensing and Supervision of Other Deposit Taking Institutions conformed to liberalised financial market ideals: high interest rates, commercial borrowing, no subsidies directly to clients, and collateralising the moveable property of the poor (UNCDF 2014). Under this law, Timorese MFIs were required to source their loans from international credit markets. For example, Moris Rasik borrowed from the FI Blue Orchard. Under these conditional grants, the MFIs had to increase the number of borrowers in line with typical standards evaluating MFIs on the basis of their expansion and not on their impact on either poverty or women's empowerment (Day 2010, Vik 2013). Under the law, the MFIs are subject to supervision by the Timorese central bank to ensure their interest rate is high enough to be financially sustainable or profitable.<sup>176</sup> These requirements mean that the two Timorese MFIs currently have effective interest rates of around 35% a year (see Table 8.1).

The bailouts show that microfinance in Timor-Leste is not a financially sustainable development. Rather, instead of donors or governments subsidising the poor directly through grants or transfer programs, the public sector and donors subsidise the private sector MFIs (Mader 2015, 56). Microfinance is most materially valuable to NGO, government, and private sector groups who own and run microfinance and benefit in the form of jobs and grants. The injection of tens of

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<sup>175</sup>Data (project donor, title, aims, results and disbursed funds 2002-2017) collected from <https://aidtransparency.gov.tl/portal/>.

<sup>176</sup>One MFI struggled to meet the requirements of the law, especially the international capital requirements, profits, and for minimum requirements for staff to have tertiary qualifications. Interview with ET120, Senior Manager of an MFI, 16 August 2015.

millions of dollars from donors and government enabled the two MFIs to survive and come to dominate the Timorese credit market.

In another area, donors encouraged liberalised financial sectors through the expansion of SHG microfinance. I argue SHG growth is promoted along with liberalised financial markets and thus represents another layer of finance. The links between liberalisation in both SHG and MFI microfinance has been overlooked in the literature. Particularly after the 2006-7 political crisis, NGOs such as Oxfam, Seeds of Life, and UNDP Compasis began training SHGs to mobilise savings to use as loans within the group. There are currently at least ten NGOs, and other government departments, running SHG groups in Timor-Leste. These SHGs have thousands of customers, although because these groups are not registered or supervised, it is unclear how many groups there are (Wronka 2015 also see Table 7.1) (). SHG advocates argue that because SHGs they are organised and run for members, they represent a form of self-empowerment (Dichter and Harper 2007, Cameron and Ananga 2015). As I explained above, microfinance can work with and through the state to deliver aid and development. SHGs have become a dominant form for delivering development goods to poor rural women (Jakimow 2009, 473).

Donors and IFIs promote SHGs as a “natural” response of communities to poverty, but SHGs, like other kinds of financial markets, are neither natural nor authentic. The perception of SHGs and other forms of informal credit like *arisan* as “natural” or “traditional” or “voluntary” is long held, although there is little empirical evidence to support claims it predated colonialism (Holloh 1998). A similar view of SHGs as arising in a natural fashion can be seen in a recent USAID report on agricultural finance. The authors cautioned against government regulation of SHGs or subsidising agricultural cooperatives because it would “hinder the spontaneous expansion of informal UBSP village savings and loan associations [SHGs] as entry-level financial service providers that are not ready or willing to convert into formal financial cooperatives” (FIELD-Support 2014, 11). The demonisation of subsidised and regulated SHGs as inhibiting the “spontaneous”



development of community-level credit markets echoes US academics' advice to the Indonesian government to foster commercial microfinance in the 1980s.

However, there are adverse outcomes for the expansion of unregulated informal credit markets, as I show in Chapter 8. SHGs were not about self-help as much as they were about financial intermediation within a given group or community. Although more evidence would be needed to assess this finding, this would change the view of SHG as mutual assistance groups as groups of debtors and creditors: or in other words, class led accumulation. Globally, research on SHGs in Uganda and Laos reported problems with over-indebtedness and lack of clear distinctions between microfinance, pyramid schemes and moneylending (Duggan 2016, Koichi 2015). Holloh, writing on SHGs in Indonesia, said that each group contained half lenders and half borrowers (Holloh 1998, 97). Regardless of the internal workings of SHGS, it is well established that unregulated expansion of SHGs can lead to general mistrust of SHGS and credit market volatility, which ought to be cause for concern for poverty reduction programs (Duggan 2016, Holloh 1998, Low 1995, 10).

## 7.5 The Local Turn and Microfinance

Politically, the blossoming of MFI and SHG microfinance arose at a confluence of two policy ideals. One of these ideals came from the leftist party of independence, FRETILIN—calling credit groups “cooperatives”—and the other ideal came from neoliberal approaches to poverty reduction—calling credit groups “microfinance” (Hughes 2015). Cooperatives/microfinance's social credentials as a bottom-up intervention resonated with Timorese elite political ideology (Budiardjo and Liong 1984, 55), while microfinance's neoliberal focus on market-led development suited donor and government policy (Hughes 2015, 917). It also resonated with the local turn in peacebuilding in its prioritising of local needs and bottom-up measures. In Hughes' analysis, although FRETILIN's form of locally based development was:

[...] based upon very different ideological foundations from neoliberalism, [it] found common cause with neoliberalism's local turn

precisely via such development strategies as funding cooperatives through microcredit (Hughes 2015, 917)

Support for cooperatives' "co-existence" with the public and private sectors in the economy was written into the 2002 constitution (Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste 2002). However, on what terms these would co-exist, or the role of finance in cooperatives, was not clarified constitutionally. In other documents, there was a suspicion of state interventionism. The 2004 Law on Cooperatives, written during FRETILIN's term, states that the Indonesian occupiers "distorted" cooperatives to:

[...] prevent their associates' self-reliance. Cooperatives came to be an organized form of creating and *strengthening the spirit of dependence of the community on subsidies and assistance granted by the occupying State*, as a way of fostering alienation and buying social peace' (Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste 2004, emphasis added).

FRETILIN and the Indonesian occupiers both promoted cooperatives as part of rural development strategy. Yet, the view of Timorese lawmakers was that the involvement of the state in cooperatives fostered dependency, not community empowerment. Thus, it is precisely what Elyachar calls a "pro-people, anti-state" ideal that resonates with the Timorese elite, but also with neoliberalism (Elyachar 2002, 496).

Successive Timorese governments have supported market-led approaches to poverty reduction using microfinance as "access to finance" is considered to be a crucial "bottleneck" in the growth of the private sector (Wronka 2015). Indeed support for microfinance is now formalised in what Soederberg calls "soft law"—the Timorese government's accession to the Maya Declaration on Financial Inclusion (Soederberg 2014). The Timorese Government's Strategic Development Plan 2011-2030, aims for "the private sector to be the primary source of growth in incomes and employment in rural areas of Timor-Leste" (Government of Timor-Leste 2011). In this plan, the Central Bank of Timor-Leste (BNTL) promoted the provision of credit to the private sector to enhance national development goals

(BNTL 2013). In 2015, Prime Minister Dr Rui Araújo confirmed that his government would continue to promote BNCTL to “provide micro, small and medium companies with access to credit (De Araújo 2015). Cooperatives run using microfinance are seen as a major part of private sector investment in rural areas. Araújo’s program describes how “the Government will continue to support the formation of cooperatives to encourage private sector growth in rural areas” (Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste 2015a, Section 3.12).

Since independence, microfinance has been one of the fundamental ways successive Timorese governments envisaged integrating women into a market economy. Responsibility for monitoring and some implementation of programs with women’s economic empowerment lay with the office for the Socio-Economic Promotion for Women, SEM. A senior male manager described how his role was to make one-off grants to women’s groups in the productive sector. SEMs process for the grants was to formalise and register a business: “groups of five to ten can apply for the grant. These are pure grants. We encourage them to deal with the banks because there is no second phase of funding. Initial capital only”.<sup>177</sup> The Oecusse free trade zone, ZEESMs was another example of the claimed linkages between microfinance and economic growth. ZEESMs “frontloaded” government spending on infrastructure such as roads, an airport, hotels and a harbour to service foreign private-sector companies. They had stated social goals, including reducing poverty by increasing employment and incomes.<sup>178</sup> Where women’s participation was considered, microfinance was a way of acknowledging and promoting women’s work. For example, microfinance for small enterprises would aid in the integration of social and gender goals into ZEESMs. According to ZEESMs policymakers, ZEESMs would provide jobs and growth directly in construction and export industries. During fieldwork in 2015, a senior staff member

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<sup>177</sup> Interview with senior government official ET108, Dili, 4 August 2015.

<sup>178</sup> The Budget preamble for ZEESMs states that the economic zone will “give priority to social economic activity which could propagate a good life for the whole community in the region” (original in Tetun) “*prioridade ba atividade sosio-ekonomiku ne’ebé bele habelar moris di’ak ba comunidade tomak iha rejiaun ne’e*” (Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste 2016a).

planned for ZEESMs to link the 300 existing microfinance (MFI and SHG) groups in Oecusse with export processing in the zone, such as strawberry farming. However the staff member was vague on the outcomes for poverty reduction or women's empowerment. Others have similarly noted the lack of coordination and cohesion across the four ministries implementing microfinance policy (Day 2010, Wronka 2015, Lyman, Shrader, and Tomilova 2015)

The promotion of microfinance's poverty reduction potential has ignored the effects of previous microfinance crises and minimised the risks of expanding low return, petty trade businesses in the volatile Timorese economy. Microfinance markets are prone to crisis from endogenous and exogenous factors (Guérin, Labie, and Servet 2015). Internationally, at least eight countries experienced destabilising microfinance crises between 2008 and 2015.<sup>179</sup> In Timor-Leste, publicly available evaluation reports on microfinance's performance through crises are mixed. Reports from the IFC, UNCDF and USAID were upbeat about microfinance's performance and potential (Day 2007, UNCDF 2014, FIELD-Support 2014, USAID and Mendez England & Associates 2013). Moreover, risks for microfinance clients or local credit markets associated with the expansion of MFI or SHG microfinance were not mentioned (See for example FIELD-Support 2014, Solano 2013, Day 2007, 2010). None took into account the widely acknowledged problems regarding the limited ability of governments to regulate and limit default risk, loan arbitrage, market saturation, or ensure a realistic capital to loan ratio, especially in SHGs (Staschen 2002). Only the independent evaluation of the microfinance component of the World Bank's CEP was pessimistic (Conroy 2004). The report outlined how the credit component of emergency micro- and midi- loans were supposed to promote post-conflict reconstruction by recapitalising retail shops and using credit to fund village infrastructure. However, it concluded that microfinance was not suited to a high-risk post-conflict environment because of the fragility of the

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<sup>179</sup>Microfinance crises reported in the press between 2008 and 2015 included: Nicaragua 2008; Bosnia-Herzegovina 2008-9; Morocco 2009; Kolar (India) 2009; Uganda 2009; Andhra Pradesh (India) 2010; Pakistan 2010; Ghana 2015; and Cambodia 2017 (Chen, Rasmussen, and Reille 2010, Lyman, Shrader, and Tomilova 2015, Boateng et al. 2016, Bateman 2017).

economy and the vulnerability Timorese citizens faced during downturns (Conroy 2004).<sup>180</sup>

When microfinance groups went bankrupt in an economic downturn, IFIs, donors and governments attributed this to the rural poor's lack of capacity or training in money management. Hence, the promotion of microfinance in Timor-Leste has elided structural poverty and reframed poverty as an agential problem, solved or exacerbated by the actions and "mentality" of the poor. However, fieldwork data from Timor points rather to the external risks for borrowers. Hughes (2015) showed that microfinance groups in the Timorese district of Liquisa collapsed because of stagnating economic growth. In my fieldwork, a manager in a Timorese NGO re-told this common story regarding their program:

When the UN mission was still in Timor-Leste [in 2012], there were many foreigners, and they bought many pieces and textiles and then women got money. They could have money for basics. Now the UN has left, there is not enough business.<sup>181</sup>

Without foreigners buying cloth at the markets, microfinance clients were unable to increase their incomes or repay their debts. Despite these structural and historical causes of poverty in Timor-Leste, elites I interviewed, such as civil servants and NGO workers, tended to view citizens' as being responsible for their poverty. In the words of the Director of the donor-supported, Timorese Cooperative peak body Hanai Malu:

In my opinion, the problem we face is one of mentality. The population's lives are conservative, in particular, they do not adapt to reality [...] For example, the people have a base, a cow or a goat. They do not sell the cow in order to develop the cow that it might become two cows, but instead, they slaughter it for an animist sacrifice (Ferreira 2012, 24)

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<sup>180</sup> There are similarities with the way emergency microfinance loans were used by the World Bank in Structural Adjustment in Bolivia. Cf. Weber (2004).

<sup>181</sup> Interview with a NGO manager, ET084, Dili, Timor-Leste, 10 June 2015.

Ferreira's opinion illustrates how the "inability or unwillingness" of the poor to "adapt" and join the market to overcome poverty is seen as "individual weakness", in this case, a weak mentality (Soederberg 2014, 204). In another example, a Timorese microfinance expert reported that policymakers argued ordinary Timorese put no value on being self-sufficient, instead "the government must always come to the rescue" (Allden 2009, 278). Even the former National Director of Micro Cooperatives and Small Business, Jacinta dos Santos, said:

The problem is a mentality where people just ask [for handouts]. However, because there is a different attitude of helping yourself in a cooperative, they know a cooperative needs to be independent and do things to help themselves. It is not just that someone else should continue to come and give them support (Timor Post 2015b)

For policy elites, microfinance stands in for welfare; consumer credit provided through microfinance or "debtfare" is promoted to avoid provisioning welfare (Soederberg 2014, 196). Microfinance shifts the responsibility for poverty from structures to agents by entrenching the idea the core problem facing people is their lack of assets. On this logic, the core solution is to extend credit, shifting attention from the fact that poverty structural. That is, poverty is borne of "rampant inequality and of rotten relationships that are rife with coercion, discrimination, exploitation and powerlessness rampant inequality" (Copestake et al. 2015, 5).

## 7.6 Conclusion

This chapter elucidated factors influencing the implementation and outcomes of microfinance as gender interventions. First, the chapter described the market logic of microfinance used internationally, its use in poverty reduction programs and deployment in gender and development. The chapter presented some contemporary international research on microfinance that has found little positive impact on either poverty or gender empowerment. Financial intermediaries and the World Bank's International Finance Corporation have been particularly important actors in shifting microfinance to the finance market or

“financialisation”. Part of the reasons for financialisation lie in microfinance’s profitability, and part of the reason is that it shifts development work from states to markets, thus changing the relationship between the citizen and the market.

The chapter argued that the outcomes of microfinance as a gender intervention are shaped by historical political economy legacies. In government and donor documents, the tendency is to make a sharp division between an older-style Indonesian microfinance and microfinance promoted interveners and the national government. In contrast, the chapter revealed the legacy of military involvement and the transition from state-led (as a tool of enrichment and control for the Indonesian military) to market-led microfinance. Because of their involvement with financial resources, microfinance strengthened the *Liurai-Dato* class and aspects of gender relations, an argument for which more evidence will be supplied in Chapter 8.

Since independence, the microfinance industry has expanded, collapsed, and expanded again. As such, the IFC and financial intermediaries set the conditions and rules for the microfinance industry. The consolidation of MFI microfinance was only possible using donor funds. Put simply, microfinance in Timor-Leste is not financially sustainable as donors claim because it has required donor funding over a long period. At the same time, donors have also encouraged the expansion of SHG microfinance, with significant consequences, as Chapter 8 will now discuss. The support of both MFI and SHG microfinance has continued without robust evidence that it reduces poverty or empowers women.

Taking this historical approach to microfinance during the occupation and the intervention revealed the hidden “visible hand” of the military, the state, and donors in microfinance’s development. By drawing attention to the role of the state and interveners support of microfinance, it showed how microfinance is prone to crises, and required subsidies from the state to function, as other critical studies of microfinance have shown (Morduch 1999). These subsidies primarily benefit

MFIs and NGOs, not microfinance clients. Instead, during times of economic downturn, under-regulated microfinance can pose risks to microfinance clients in the form of over-indebtedness and resultant social stress. Lack of regulation and supervision of credit markets is explored in Chapter 8.

Finally, the chapter documented how microfinance is a policy tool arising from neoliberal approaches to poverty reduction and women's empowerment, but Timorese elites support it for additional reasons. Microfinance was commensurate with the ideology of grassroots development, it met donor conditionality for private sector development, and it was a development policy that encouraged self-help, not dependence on the state. Microfinance as a policy to reduce poverty, puts the onus for growth in incomes on the poor, which corresponds with elite interests in centralising spending in Dili. This repeats the elite centric distribution of state resources through veterans' pensions seen in Chapter 4.



## CHAPTER 8. THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF MICROFINANCE

### 8.1 Introduction

The historical and (international) political economy context of microfinance were laid out in Chapter 7. This present chapter uses this prior contextualisation to describe and account for the uneven outcomes of the gender interventions for microfinance. I previously argued that MFI microfinance extracts money from the poor through high-interest rates to international financial institutions (credit-led accumulation). Of particular significance, and the subject of this final chapter, is that credit-led accumulation was repeated in miniature in both MFI and SHG microfinance at the village level. The central argument of the chapter is that by encouraging the expansion of both SHG and MFI microfinance to promote women's economic empowerment, the gender intervention for microfinance in fact promoted class-based strategies of credit-led accumulation. Microfinance, instead of increasing the poor's access to capital and therefore improving incomes, has instead strengthened the economic control of the *Liurai-Dato* class over poorer villages by rendering (kinship and social) debt relations interest-bearing and more formal. The first part of the chapter contextualises the class-based accumulation by describing village political economy in some depth.

The second part of the chapter describes village level credit led accumulation. Microfinance reconfigures the (previously described) heavy social debts into interest-bearing loans. As microfinance occurs in a "dense web of social and kin obligations" (Karim 2011, xvi); complex networks of exchange and obligations that encourage and coerce repayment in the form of meagre belongings, land, labour

or promissory notes. Here, meagre but significant sums are transferred, through sky-high interest rates, from poorer to relatively wealthier sections of Timorese communities. This transfer happens because SHG and MFI microfinance overlap with one another and with moneylending, and none are properly regulated.

In terms of these social relations, rural elites in Timor-Leste continued to use microfinance as a way of controlling economic life in the village. This in turn supports, as I have previously described, the *Liurai* and *Dato's* historical, political, and cultural claims over the right to rule over other villagers. Following this historical framework, the third part of the chapter describes how legacies of the New Order shape gender and social relations. The fourth part of the chapter describes how economies of debt and exchange are fundamental to power in villages with low levels of monetisation and exchange economies originating in brideprice exchanges. Because of its complicity and reliance on hierarchies to function, microfinance in Timor-Leste fails to help the poorest. Poor people experienced microfinance as extractive.

In Timor-Leste microfinance happens in a context where social and gender relations are expressed in terms of debt, as I argued in Chapter 6 on brideprice (Silva 2008, McWilliam 2011). Thus, the fourth part of the chapter argues that debts from microfinance thus fit within an already established repertoire of social domination. In terms of gender relations, I also examine the limited nature of empowerment through microfinance because of the centrality of male authority in Timorese kinship relations and the role microfinance plays in brideprice. Debts, as already described in Chapter 6, set the conditions for high levels of violence against women.

The chapter lastly argues that pursuing a rural development policy based on the so-called cooperative model (actually microfinance) mixed with donor goals for women's economic empowerment in reality shifts risks and responsibility from the central government onto women and the rural poor. I show the unevenness of this outcome by placing the "success stories" of entrepreneurial poor women in broader

social and gender relations. Moreover, the co-occurrence of these three kinds of under-regulated finance systems has created a shadow financial system in Timor-Leste that is unstable.

## 8.2 Village Political Economy

Here I explain why by describing the outcomes of microfinance in post-conflict Timor-Leste through a village level case study in Manufahi supplemented with some observations from fieldwork in Oecusse, which is saturated with microfinance.<sup>182</sup> The village of Mota (*Suku Mota*) in Manufahi has population of around a thousand residents in seven hamlets. Fehuk is the highest ranked hamlet and is high up (Tetun: *leten*), closer to the mountain, reflecting its elevated status. The leading family in Hamlet Fehuk is the founding *Liurai* lineage, and the leaders of this hamlet have ultimate authority on who may farm the productive land in Mota. As elsewhere in Timor-Leste, all of the leadership positions are occupied by members of *Liurai* and *Dato* lineages, although the male village chief of Hamlet Fehuk, Bonifacio, is a *Dato* married to a female member of the *Liurai* lineage, as their lineage is matrilineal. In Mota, the *Liurai's* son is a member of parliament. His cousin's husband, Bonifacio, see Figure 8.2, was elected Village Chief (Tetun: *Xefe Suku*) in 2009. Bonifacio leads the Village Council, whose members comprise his relatives, members of higher lineage houses, and their in-married male relatives.

*Liurai* and *Dato* lineages have businesses buying and selling cattle, chickens, clothes or they own small shops or kiosks (Tetun: *kios*), in addition to their family farms. The village chiefs and hamlet heads own all the kiosks except one, and microfinance has funded most of this small retail expansion. Others have noted that in Timor-Leste these small microfinance-funded kiosks are now so numerous that the market is saturated (Seeds of Life 2016, Moxham 2005). At least two of the

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<sup>182</sup>The following information is drawn principally from four months of fieldwork, interviews and participant observation comprising three weeks in Oecusse in 2015, six weeks in 2011, and six weeks in 2015 in Mota, Manufahi. Place names have been changed.

small shops in the village are supplied with government subsidised, imported rice by the owner's relative, a son of the *Liurai* who is a member of parliament. In this village, like many in Timor-Leste, the road to the district capital is terrible. The river makes it impassable in the wet season, so many residents buy items such as oil, salt and rice from these shops. Their dependence on these retail outlets means that owners can overcharge. Indeed, press reports showed that government subsidised rice has been sold under monopolies by village leaders in these small shops for double and triple the stipulated price (March 2012).

Members of higher lineages can afford to hire extended family members from their lower ranked (more distant) relatives to work on their fields during busy periods. The majority of Mota's villagers are peasant lineages and subsistence farmers who usually pay for consumer items and school costs by raising and selling a few animals a year but sometimes own small businesses (Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste 2011a). Of the peasant lineages, the lowest/poorest do not own businesses and survive on subsistence farming and animal husbandry of pigs and chickens. A small number of men in this group can earn small incomes working as day labourers.<sup>183</sup>

In the village of Mota, adult literacy is 46 percent, there is no access to electricity, and only 62% of children are enrolled in primary school (Asian Development Bank 2012). Even with these figures, the Asian Development Bank ranks Suku Mota as having just below average living standards compared with other villages in Timor-Leste. In sum, the village of Mota is comprised of one group dominating animal husbandry, small shops, and businesses, and another group mostly engaged in subsistence farming of corn and a few vegetables on more marginal land. This poorer group, the lower ranked lineages, are often referred to as *ema araska* or *ema susar* (Tetun: people with hardships/problems).

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<sup>183</sup> Government benefits do not reach the poor, as I showed in Chapter 4, because the veterans' pension is not means tested and is rather a regressive form of welfare. To reiterate, the *Bolsa da Mãe* payment for mothers reaches both wealthier and poorer Timorese (Fernandes 2015).

### 8.2.1 Village Lending and Borrowing

In this context, I spoke at length to microfinance client, Lucia, about her experiences with microfinance in Mota. Lucia is the wife of the village leader. She is related through her maternal uncle to the *Liurai* and a member of Timorese parliament. She founded a Moris Rasik microfinance group in 2007. The loans she received allowed her to start three businesses: a kiosk (Tetun: *kios*), a bakery and a tailor. In 2012, BNCTL opened an office in the district capital, and government-subsidised microfinance expanded to Manufahi. Lucia was tired of weekly repayment schedules and high-interest rates of around 35% at Moris Rasik. Lucia and her brother, a schoolteacher, received training in managing a cooperative through BNCTL in 2012 from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. Because her brother is a schoolteacher, he had already accessed the public servant's loan program to refurbish his house, buy a car and to start a business. Together, they founded a new microfinance group to enable them to access better loan conditions. Lucia's loan from BNCTL has a government-subsidised interest rate of 12% per annum, and the 15 members of the group, all relatively wealthy group members use it to borrow for large expenses. Lucia's group considered their experiences with microfinance to have been very positive. Lucia's cooperative is successful, and she had a reputation in the village as an empowered, hardworking and resourceful entrepreneur. Lucia is a microfinance success story.

Microfinance lenders are politically and economically well-connected and use this to their benefit by controlling access to resources, as Lucia's case will illustrate. Lucia's success in building her businesses has been because of her ability to tap into her network of relations in positions of power. Her relative brings government-subsidised rice to sell at market, as I explained above. Moreover, another of her relatives is a loan officer with the local district branch of BNCTL, the state-owned bank offering group microfinance at a much lower rate of 12 percent per annum. We might suppose in Timor-Leste that loan officers also act as mediators between moneylenders and the microfinance organisations, as they

do in the Indian case (Guérin 2014, 48). This accords with Guérin’s findings that certain “women use microcredit groups for a better position within ...clientelist networks” (Guérin 2014, 46).

A further example is how Lucia’s husband, Bonifacio, as village chief, restricted access to his signature on government paperwork for citizens, or prevented citizens from complaining to higher levels of the district administration. He also controlled access to public programs such as solar energy; the cash transfer *Bolsa da Mãe*; or water facilities; and traditional dispute resolution.<sup>184</sup> Guérin noted the same phenomena in her field sites in India: the controllers of political power and interaction with the state are also those lending money to the lower status members of their communities (Guérin 2014, 45). She stated that “lenders are well connected both with the administration and local political leaders and provide what can be broadly qualified as “political support” (Guérin 2014, 45). In Timor-Leste, as in South India, “given that a large number of resources are channelled through the state and political networks, women have a greater interest in negotiating their involvement in those networks than in challenging them” (Guérin 2014, 47). Taken together, microfinance and preferential access to state resources such as subsidised rice and subsidised credit help the elected leaders of Mota to control many areas of economic life of the village.

Contrary to the cooperatives law, Lucia’s microfinance group on-sell credit to people outside the MFI and SHG microfinance groups, as a moneylending business.<sup>185</sup> For example, on Row 3 of Table 8.1, we can see that Lucia’s group

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<sup>184</sup> Interviews with Village Chief Bonifacio ET127, Manufahi, 1 September 2015, and Rosita ET138, Manufahi, 4 September 2015.

<sup>185</sup> Sources for data in Table 8.2: Interest rates are reported on [www.mixmarkets.org](http://www.mixmarkets.org) as “Yield on Gross Profit”. Most MFIs do not report their actual interest rates (Rosenberg et al. 2013). Both of the Timorese MFIs report that they have a “flat interest rate” of 12% per annum. However, as Wronka stated in her report on Access to Finance, “interest paid every month is calculated based on the total loan amount instead of the outstanding balance” (Wronka 2015, 14). This translates to a doubling of the interest rate over time. As a result, she estimates Moris Rasik and Tuba Rai Metin to have an interest rate of 30.16% per annum. Even so, Wronka does not include fees and charges. These account for the extra 5 percent yield on portfolio profit recorded in the mixmarkets data as I report here, which I take to be a more accurate reflection of the actual rate paid by borrowers.

Moris Rasik data from [www.mixmarkets.org](http://www.mixmarkets.org) Accessed 5 January 2016. Tuba Rai Metin data from [www.mixmarkets.org](http://www.mixmarkets.org) Accessed 5 January 2016. BNCTL data from Audit Report 2014 BNCTL Banco

procures the BNCTL loan at a lower interest rate, 12% and sells the credit on at a higher rate to people outside the group (120-360%).<sup>186</sup> In fact, Lucia was elected president of the group because of her experience with Moris Rasik, which taught her “a lot about giving people credit”, implying that she had been running the moneylending business floated with a Moris Rasik loan in prior years.<sup>187</sup> Currently, as president of the microfinance group, she chooses borrowers based on people’s character: “you must look at their background. If you give it to them and they have a good history, all is well, if they don’t have a good history, then that’s bad”.<sup>188</sup> Lucia told me that a prospective borrower’s “character” was particularly important when lending for cultural ceremonies such as weddings and brideprice.<sup>189</sup> Village elites dominate the most profitable area of the economy, consumer credit. Table 8.1 shows that many of the SHG and MFI groups are controlled by village leaders, and Figure 8.1 shows the kinship network underlying Lucia’s microfinance group.

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Nacional Comercio de Timor-Leste (2014) and Interviews with Antonio ET130, Lucia ET131, Manufahi, 1 September 2015 and Brigida ET146, 7 September, 2015.

Alola Foundation data from Annual Report Alola Foundation (2014, 18) and Interview with a male senior manager at Alola ET083, Dili, 9 June 2015.

UNDP Compasis data from UNDP Compasis evaluation (Coulibaly 2014).

Seeds of Life data from Seeds of Life evaluation reports 2013 and 2016 (Seeds of Life 2016, Solano 2013).

Timorese NGO Oecusse data from focus group interview with Timorese Women’s NGO ET096, ET097, ET098, ET099, Oecusse, 27 July 2015.

<sup>186</sup> Interview with Brigida, ET146, Manufahi, 7 September 2015.

<sup>187</sup> Interview with Lucia, ET130 and Antonio ET131, Manufahi, 1 September 2015.

<sup>188</sup> Interview with Lucia, ET130 Manufahi, 1 September 2015.

<sup>189</sup> Interview with Lucia and her brother Antonio, Manufahi District, Timor-Leste, 1 September 2015.

NAME	DATE FOUNDED	MODE	REPAYMENT	LOAN PORTFOLIO (USD)	INTEREST P.A.	NO. BORROWERS	BORROWERS	AVERAGE LOAN SIZE (USD)	EVIDENCE OF LENDING TO NON-MEMBERS	INTEREST TO NON-MEMBERS	HEADED BY VILLAGE LEADERS?
MORIS RASIK	2001	MFI	weekly	\$4,525,162	35.16%	7373	99.30% women	\$542	No	N/A	Yes
TUBA RAI METIN	2001	MFI	weekly	\$9,727,499	36.04%	7265	98.50% women	\$748	No	N/A	N/A
BNCTL MICROFINANCE	2000	MFI	monthly	\$290,210	10% + 2% late fee	N/A	Targeted at women	>\$1000	Yes	up to 360%	N/A
OXFAM SAVINGS AND LOANS	2006	SHG	monthly	N/A	N/A	1500	Mixed	N/A	Yes	N/A	Yes
ALOLA FOUNDATION	N/A	SHG	N/A	N/A	N/A	111	Women victims of Gender-based violence	\$1000 initial grant	No	N/A	N/A
UNDP COMPASIS	2005	SHG	monthly	N/A	30% to 120%	213	98% women in Oecusse; focus on vulnerable	Approx. \$100	Yes	Higher than 30% to 120%	Yes,
SEEDS OF LIFE	2008	SHG	monthly	\$1,154,786.5 (Oecusse only)	24% to 60% (non-flat rate) + fines + collateral	925 (Oecusse only)	N/A	\$439	Yes	N/A	Yes
TIMORESE NGO OECUSSE	N/A	SHG	monthly	\$2000	240%	N/A	Women	N/A	No	N/A	N/A

Table 8.1. Interest Rates, Volumes & Lending to Non-members



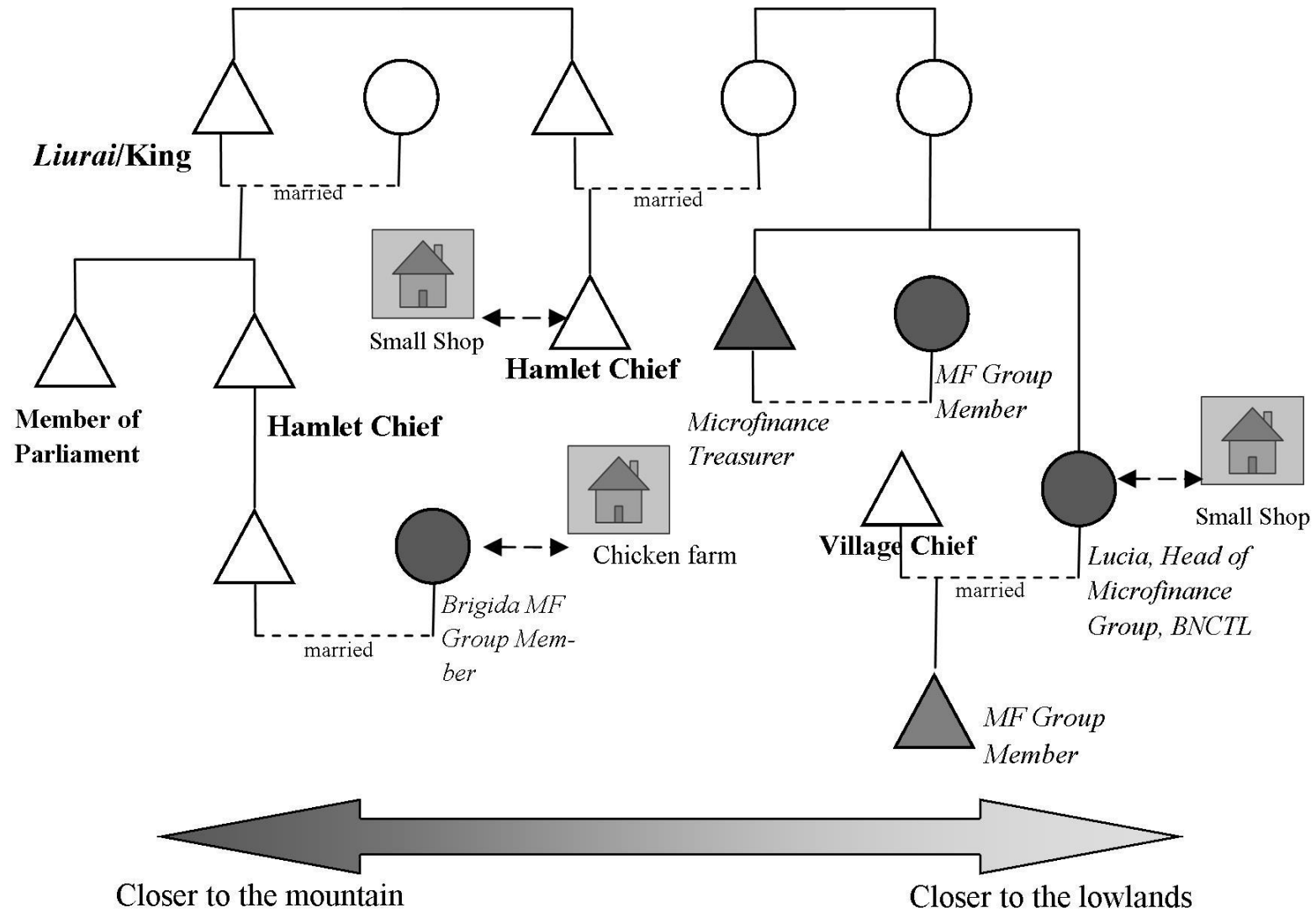


Figure 8.1 Overlapping Kinship & Microfinance in Mota

Microfinance literature is at pains to describe a sharp division between microfinance as benevolent and pro-poor while moneylenders are abusive and exploitative, but across Timor-Leste, as elsewhere, these categories are blurred. The use of microfinance to fund moneylending businesses is overlooked in the practitioner literature on microfinance in Timor-Leste and more broadly. Monitoring and evaluation reports show lending to non-members in four NGO programs for SHGs that together cover most districts in Timor (Coulibaly 2014: 23, Solano 2013). That is, in Timorese SHG microfinance, SHG members raise the initial capital themselves and sell the credit on to people outside the group. According to evaluations, UNDP Compasis, Seeds of Life, and Care International SHGs had reported lending to non-members. In UNDP Compasis SHGs in Oecusse, “most groups are lending money to non-members at a higher interest rate” (Coulibaly 2014), at rates of at least 30-120 percent per annum. Loan arbitrage was happening in two Compasis SHG groups in the district of Ermera (see Rows 3 and 7 of Table 8.1). Although program evaluators in SHG microfinance reported unsanctioned lending outside the group, evaluators have not recognised the implications, namely that higher interest rates extract money from non-members to members (Coulibaly 2014, Solano 2013).

Again, the use of microfinance to finance moneylending businesses has also been recorded by researchers working in Bangladesh, India, and Senegal (Karim 2011, Guérin 2014, Perry 2002, Koichi 2015). During the Andhra Pradesh microfinance crisis, the overlap was noted in the global press: “traditional moneylenders, the *Wall Street Journal* reported, were not being displaced by MFIs but rather were thriving, thanks to them” (Mader 2015, 172). Similarly, Perry documented the overlap of microcredit and moneylending in rural Senegal with the rise of the female moneylender: “female members opt not to invest their loans in artisanal activities or to petty trade but to invest in moneylending” (Perry 2002, 31). In a climate where other forms of entrepreneurship are risky and crowded, the demand for loans is a smart investment. One of Karim’s interlocutors who used microfinance to float moneylending described it simply: “I realised that this was a

lucrative business. All I had to do was raise money and give it to someone else to invest. I decided to join different NGOs to raise money” (Karim 2011, 108). Karim, for instance, found that women in the home had few options to be entrepreneurial except for money lending:

One activity that women engaged in was moneylending. In their social world, money lending proved to be a particularly viable option. As moneylenders, women could stay at home and lend to traders who could not get microfinance loans (Karim 2014, 159)

In the Timor-Leste case, although there are few official controls of women’s movements, lending money at higher interest rates is an easy way to make money and convert the capital and labour of the lower lineages into cash.

### 8.2.2 New Order Gender Legacies

The dominance of the village leader’s wife in microfinance groups and resulting patterns of debt relations builds on systems created during the authoritarian Indonesian New Order’s occupation of Timor-Leste. Lucia’s case fits this pattern too, as she is the wife of the village chief of Mota. Under the New Order, as I explained in Chapter 7, microfinance for women was organised under the PKK. The role of PKK members was to promote government interventions in village life, especially in the areas of hygiene and family planning. PKK conducted *arisan* (lottery) and microfinance groups. Today, the location of power within microfinance groups closely resembles the institution of the PKK.<sup>190</sup> As I explained earlier, each male official’s wife, including the village chief’s wife, had a corresponding place in the PKK hierarchy (Muchtart 1999).

A senior manager at Moris Rasik was aware of the issue: “I know the PKK, and I try to get away from this system. When I began at Moris Rasik, in the majority of the

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<sup>190</sup> The other mass women’s organisations affiliated with the government during the New Order was *Dharma Wanita* for wives of officials and *Dharma Pertiwi* for wives of military and police (Muchtart 1999, 21).

centres the leaders were the wives of the Xefe Suku [village chief].<sup>191</sup> She said she had tried to change this practice, but it “takes time”. The senior manager described how a typical village chief’s wife behaved as leader of a microfinance group, “She doesn’t allow others to get bigger loans, when she does, some of the loans have to be for her. She keeps them subdued, she says, you don’t help me, you don’t cover up for me, I won’t approve you”.<sup>192</sup>

This general trend represents a continuation of the control over poorer women by the wife of the village chief, as was common under the PKK. To emphasise, although this finding is particular to the post-New Order setting, such an outcome is not unusual for women’s empowerment in microfinance generally. Guerin, Kumar and Agier’s found in their study of similar microfinance programs that “women having agency require or imply domination over other women” (Guérin, Kumar, and Agier 2013, 76). Domination is required because microfinance groups involve groups of women, with peer pressure used to enforce payments. Internally, the structure of microfinance groups is hierarchical. Coulibaly found that group leaders exercised pronounced control over the SHGs in Ermera and Oecusse. This control makes the other group members, according to the evaluation, “dependent on the treasurer and the group president. It is possible that members are not aware of the profit made by the group” (Coulibaly 2014, 17).

At the same time that Lucia exercised control over other men and women’s economic activities through monopolisation of small shops and lower-interest loans, it was clear that within her family, male relatives considered her subordinate. Lucia’s older brother, Antonio, also had a leadership role in the microfinance group. He insisted that, although Lucia was the president, and he the treasurer of the microfinance group, he was still her superior in kinship and *adat*:

Antonio: There is some agreement [between *adat* in Suku Mota and women’s rights] but women’s rights are a bit less. Men have to be a bit

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<sup>191</sup> Interview with ET120, Senior Manager of an MFI, 16 August 2015.

<sup>192</sup> Interview with ET120, Senior Manager of an MFI, 16 August 2015.

higher. Men cannot be lower than women. [...] Because of this, women have to be subordinate to men. Like me. I have a younger sister, Lucia, according to *adat*; she has to listen to me. I am a man. She is a woman. That's simply how it is for them, they all have to be a little lower. They have to listen to men.

Melissa: But according to universal human rights, people are all the same.

Antonio: I agree with the human rights—then it is just one system. However, when it comes to implementing your *adat*, then women have to be a little lower.<sup>193</sup>

Older brother Antonio was happy to support women's equality intuitively and at the national level, but in terms of his own privileges, he was not. The division between public and domestic spheres means that although Lucia has authority in her work for the microfinance group, within the kinship group and household, she must be subordinate.

Village leader's monopolisation of state resources has led to resentment. There was a perception among those who were not directly connected with the village chief's family that they had used the power and position to enrich themselves.<sup>194</sup> I conducted interviews with members of Hamlet Feto-Kiik, comprised of lower lineages and in-migrants. It is located near the river, and subjected to more malaria and flooding. Rosita, a female villager, complained that leaders ought to "provide shade" that is, protect them as a large tree provides a canopy for coffee crops, their leaders have failed in their obligations; they "haven't taken care of us, however many years they've been in charge".<sup>195</sup> Sancio, a villager in lower ranked hamlet Feto Kiik, described how they had applied for an electricity connection but either the village chief or the state had prevented them access:

Some of us borrowed money from our family from our neighbours, gave our electoral cards and money and photocopies to the Village Chief, and

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<sup>193</sup> Interview with schoolteacher, Antonio, ET130 Manufahi, 1 September 2015.

<sup>194</sup> Interview with Rosita, ET138, Manufahi, 4 September 2015.

<sup>195</sup> Interview with Rosita, ET138, Manufahi, 4 September 2015 and Sancio, ET137, Manufahi, 4 September 2015.

until today we still don't have it. The electricity hasn't arrived. Why not? We people of Mota, we take care of our lands, our lives, and our work but the State doesn't value us: they “don't consider us” (Tetun: *la fo konsiderasaun*)<sup>196</sup>

### 8.2.3 An “Independent Life” or a “Struggle Against Death”?

In Timor-Leste, the MFI *Moris Rasik* has earned the unflattering nickname, *Mate Rasik* or “die alone”—a play on words of their name, which means “independent life”. In the Timor-Leste case, poorer people who have no economic power “*forsa la iha*” (Tetun: no force) turned to Lucia for help, that is, for moneylending services. Lucia's group lent to poorer members when someone was ill, and they could not work in the fields to support their families.<sup>197</sup> Lucia and her microfinance group members receive profits from interest.<sup>198</sup> In this way, a debt relation between higher ranked and lower ranked villagers is established. Through the interest, the village leader's microfinance group was able to extract capital from poorer villagers. As Mader says, this comprises the real relation of debt.

The lack of sufficient capital to satisfy needs among one class, poor people, becomes the basis for a contract with members of another class who are willing (for whatever reasons, whether “social” or “financial”) to rent out capital (Mader 2015, 104)

Likewise, Guérin noted in India that debt is asymmetric between higher and lower castes, that is “it is unusual to borrow from a lower caste” (Guérin 2014, 45). This was reflected in the data in Timor-Leste too.

In Timor-Leste poorer people fear microfinance because of the high-interest rates, risks of repossession and over-indebtedness. As I described in Chapter 7, the new microfinance architecture enables creditors to accept moveable property as collateral, thus making it available for forfeiture. Article D of the Law on Other

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<sup>196</sup> Interview with Sancio, ET137, Manufahi, 4 September 2015.

<sup>197</sup> Interview with Brigida, ET146, Manufahi, 7 September 2015.

<sup>198</sup> Interview with Brigida, ET146, Manufahi, 7 September 2015.

Deposit Taking Institutions which regulates MFIs makes it possible for MFIs to collateralise debts, using meagre belongings, “moveable property” as well as land (Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste 2010d). The fear of microfinance comes from the fear of losing this. In Oecusse, which is saturated with microfinance, interviewees said that having to sell assets to pay a debt was the reason they did not want a loan.<sup>199</sup>

Michaela: Yes, we have microfinance people here—people from Moris Rasik, from Tuba Rai [another MFI], many people from Oecusse. Our family doesn't use it. Because you get problems from it.

Elisabetha: Your money will go. The state will come and take your house!

Michaela: You don't have to give everything to the state, but you must pay. We know about this because we heard about it. It has already happened here before.<sup>200</sup>

Another interviewee in Oecusse reported she knew an MFI client whose husband had killed himself after having sold their house and land to repay their debt.<sup>201</sup> In Manufahi too, interviewees described financial stress from MFI microfinance: “In Same [Manufahi's district capital], you have Moris Rasik, they have a very high interest rate. Some people can't pay, because the interest rate is very high, and their money is already gone”.<sup>202</sup> Researchers Trembath, Grenfell, and Noronha (2010) evaluating NGO impacts on local communities encountered similar views on the Timorese island Atauru. Back in Suku Mota in Manufahi, Lucia pointed to the financial stress of borrowing: “If you borrow a lot of money, and you use it well, that's fine, [. ...] but if you don't know how, you just have debt. Then the fear never ends. It's just a struggle against death/collapse”.<sup>203</sup> In Suku Mota, people reported

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<sup>199</sup> Interview with woman villager Michaela, ET113, and her mother, Elisabetha, ET114, Oecusse, 5 August 2015.

<sup>200</sup> Interview with woman villager Michaela, ET113, and her mother, Elisabetha, ET114, Oecusse, 5 August 2015.

<sup>201</sup> Interview with villager and laundress Lina ET102, Oecusse, 7 July 2015. Similar experiences with microfinance and micro-insurance suicides were reported in the microfinance crisis in Bangladesh in 2010 (Weber 2014) and the Andhra Pradesh (Mader 2015).

<sup>202</sup> Interview with schoolteacher, Antonio, ET130 Manufahi, 1 September 2015.

<sup>203</sup> Interview with Lucia, ET131, Manufahi, 1 September 2015.

furniture taken as collateral by SHG and MFI member.<sup>204</sup> In an Australian Aid funded agricultural cooperative/microfinance, Seeds of Life, SHGs required members to sell collateral to pay overdue debts (Solano 2013, 9).<sup>205</sup> Repossession of household items in this fashion in Timor-Leste supports Weber's argument that microfinance disciplines the poor by making possible the collateralisation of the "meagre" belongings of the poor, preventing debt strikes and the like (Weber 2014, 548).

#### 8.2.4 Debts and Domestic Violence

I have previously argued that kinship, particularly brideprice, organises social inequality into a four-tier system in Timor-Leste. Although reciprocity and cohesion are part of Timorese social life, I take a different approach than existing ethnographies by analysing debt through the lens of material relations and power. I argue that attention to the reciprocal aspects of kinship debts has romanticised the role that debt and obligation plays in class and gender stratification. Guérin states regarding the South Indian case, "debt may produce solidarity and social cohesion but also exploitation, hierarchy, and domination" (Guérin 2014, 41). To rephrase, debt is not merely an idiom with symbolic significance but a crucial part of material social relations with critical distributive outcomes and associated power imbalances.

The creation of high debts has a negative impact on women and girls and can lead to the sale of girls and women to pay debts. Others have connected indebtedness to the sale of children: "In rural areas, heavily indebted parents sometimes provided their children as indentured servants to settle debts. If the child was a girl, the receiving family could also demand any dowry payment normally owed to the girl's parents" (United States Department of State 2013). Wigglesworth also noted that "among poor families a daughter may be given in marriage to a creditor

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<sup>204</sup> Interview with schoolteacher, Antonio, ET130 Manufahi, 1 September 2015.

<sup>205</sup> Article 4 (d) on collateralising debts (Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste 2010d).



as a means of repaying a pre-existing debt, although the practice is now less common” (Wigglesworth 2010, 127). Thus, the linking of brideprice with debts between lineages is linked to human trafficking.

Gender relations also affect microfinance borrowers in terms of the use they make of the loans (Rahman 1999). Women are often the “holders of the money” in households in Timor-Leste (Grenfell et al. 2015). However, this is often a fraught position, as women must manage household budgets with little control over income and significant areas of spending. As Guerin notes in rural South India, when women are “called on to manage budgets without having any control over income; they have no choice but to multiply the sources and routes of debt, which are often strictly feminine” (Guérin 2014, 46). A recent report on the economic dimensions of domestic violence in Timor-Leste acknowledged that “the management of household funds by women can often be a two-edged sword: it gives them an important measure of influence, yet can also place them at risk of violence when they are not seen as sufficiently compliant by an abusive spouse” (Grenfell et al. 2015, 13). The same process frequently came through in my fieldwork, as a manager in a local women’s NGO in Oecusse related:

Sometimes women get a loan but they don't use it for a business, they use it for the household, for the children. Then, when it comes time to repay the money, then they have to sell household items, then it leads to strife in the household. This is one of the problems [...] When the money is finished, and you have no things left, then you have problems in the household.<sup>206</sup>

Moreover, the widespread use of microfinance to pay for consumption of food, or school uniforms and supplies creates debts which in turn put economic pressure on households already below the poverty line. Many interlocutors blamed

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<sup>206</sup> Focus Group Interview with managers at a Timorese Women’s NGO: ET096 Female Timorese NGO Director, ET097 Male Timorese NGO Program Manager, ET098 Female Timorese NGO Finance Officer, ET099 Female Timorese NGO Program Manager, Oecusse 27 July 2015.

household poverty and economic stress for domestic violence, phenomena already seen in Chapter 6 on brideprice debts driving domestic violence.

Microfinance organisations generally claim they only make loans to women entrepreneurs for productive activities, but lending for brideprice was common in Timor-Leste. As one member of a microfinance group said: “If we are loaning for [brideprice] ceremonies, it depends on the person. If they are going to be late with the payment, then we do not loan to them”.<sup>207</sup> The use of microfinance to pay for brideprice is not surprising. Microcredit has been a source for dowry payments for some time (Rozario 2002, 68). The lens of feminist political economy reveals that when microfinance is used to help pay for brideprice, brideprice becomes part of the formal and international financial market, and it accrues interest. Brideprice already plays a foundational role in the social structure, by forming debt relations between higher-ranked and lower-ranked lineages, as I have explained over the course of this study. Since brideprices are so large they most often manifest as debt, it has great affinity with microfinance. As I show in this chapter, microfinance is dominated by members of the *Liurai-Dato* class, and they make money by charging high levels of interests to vulnerable groups. Thus, both microfinance and brideprice result in ordinary citizens owing debts to higher ranked lineages. Importantly, brideprices are owed in perpetuity, when brideprice is monetised through cash microfinance loans; it is then subject to (very high) interest. Moreover, when this microfinance is provided through a microfinance provider, the profit from the interest rate on the brideprice accrues to a microfinance institution connected to the international financial market.

Microfinance debts, like brideprice debts, are owed from lower ranked lineages to higher ranked ones. Microfinance debt relationships flow in the same direction as brideprice debts—they mirror the obligations of lower lineages to higher lineages. In the case of brideprice, high-status lineages—*Liurai* and *Dato*—can charge more money for brides than lower-status lineages can. Thus, they accumulate

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<sup>207</sup> Interview with Lucia, wife of a village chief ET131, Manufahi, 1 September 2015.

brideprice, or, more commonly, debts owed to them. In that sense, microfinance is not separate from the broader political economy of debt in Timor-Leste. Wealthy families, usually from these high-status lineages, loan money to lower status lineages who accumulate the debts. Debts and reciprocity are framed in terms of “looking after” the lower lineages, such as Lucia’s microfinance group loaning money to those in the village too ill to work.<sup>208</sup>

### 8.3 Risks of Microfinance

In the Timor-Leste case, only the wealthier, those from the higher lineages, are able to benefit from access to microfinance. One monitoring report from Seeds of Life SHG suggests that their sponsored microfinance SHGs were “not reaching the poorest of the poor, which is supposed to be their target population. This is observed especially in those Hamlets where the “microfinance groups are bigger, have raised greater capital and are asking for higher monthly compulsory savings to their members” (Solano 2013, 32). The findings presented are similar to other studies of microfinance showing that microfinance tends to reach the economically active poor, not the poorest (Bauchet et al. 2011). For example in India, the majority of new clients for microfinance do not come from the bottom 30% of a village (Kabeer 2005, 4711). This same finding concurs with the results of a randomised experiment evaluation of microfinance in Ghana. There, “it was only the larger female-owned businesses that benefited in terms of profit. Women from the general population are not always, nor, indeed, more likely to be, able to convert capital into profits, and men tend to be more successful overall” (Bauchet et al. 2011, 11).

The microfinance crisis in Andhra Pradesh highlights endogenous and exogenous risks for poor borrowers, overexposed moneylenders, and the micro-financial market. These also apply in the Timor-Leste case. Mader describes the four endogenous causes of the Andhra Pradesh crisis. One, rapid growth in the

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<sup>208</sup> Interview with Brigida, ET146, Manufahi, 7 September 2015.

numbers of loans, because of, two, the withdrawal of state-sponsored agricultural credit. Three, state-sponsored MFI loans to poor sectors of the community replaced earlier direct state credit (Mader 2015, 164-5). Four, MFIs were able to “poach” new clients from older programs of subsidised credit and existing SHG members (Mader 2015, 164-5). This was in the context of wider economic pressures, land pressures that squeezed farmers onto smaller and smaller plots; promoting cash crops over food crops created dependency on volatile markets; the withdrawal of welfare subsidies by the state made life more expensive; and degraded environment and climate risks. Increased lending and NGO privatisation were coupled with extensive shareholder investments in microfinance, which also created a boom in Indian microfinance (Mader 2015, 168). All these factors contributed to increased borrowing from MFIs.

Moving to the Timor-Leste case, some comparable risks exist. In the stagnant agricultural sector, the endogenous risks are that borrowers do not have enough income to pay loans due to persistent droughts, floods, landslides and other natural disasters and must either further borrow or sell assets to repay loans. Microfinance already moved from state-subsidised to MFI microfinance, although there are uneven pockets of state subsidies to microfinance (Wronka 2015). The exogenous risks are the low levels of stable government spending on agriculture, patrimonialism in the allocation of veterans’ pensions, political instability and decreasing oil receipts, leading to aid dependency and certainly less budget spending (Scambray 2015, Drysdale 2007). Microfinance in Timor-Leste has been prone to such risks and crises before, and many risks remain, which the poor know only too well.

The expansion of SHGs of MFIs promoted by donors under the rubric of financial inclusion does not take into account key factors increasing risks in microfinance. In addition to conflict and economic driven instability, financial markets are inherently unstable. MFIs and SHGs are no different, risks to micro-financial markets include “contagious” defaulting, loan arbitrage, market saturation, capital to loan ratio in SHGs, stagnant economic situations or consumer protection and

over-indebtedness (Staschen 2002, Wronka 2015). For those moneylenders operating SHGs in the shadow market, moneylenders need to be able to threaten severe or violent sanctions in order to ensure repayment. Any government wishing to expand SHGs in this manner would have to note that supervision is a daunting task (Duggan 2016). If repayment of the principal does not occur, because of over-indebtedness or external shocks, then microfinance is prone to collapse. Microfinance is a risky business and prone to financial crises with real, material effects as seen in recent microfinance crises in Nicaragua 2008; Bosnia-Herzegovina 2008-9; Morocco 2009; Kolar (India) 2009; Uganda 2009; Andhra Pradesh (India) 2010; Pakistan 2010; and Ghana 2015.

Advocates for microfinance's poverty reduction potential ignored the risks in under-regulated, high-interest credit products. Levels of overindebtedness in Timor-Leste have not been measured quantitatively, and this chapter's qualitative findings suggest they deserve attention. Moneylending is rarely mentioned in the practitioner literature in Timor-Leste explicitly. Assessments of microfinance in Timor-Leste minimised endogenous risks associated with the expansion of MFI or SHG microfinance (See for example FIELD-Support 2014, Solano 2013, Day 2007, 2010). Moreover, there are no consumer credit protections in MFI regulations in Timor-Leste (Day 2010). Encouraging the expansion of MFI and SHG microfinance does not take into account the acknowledged problems regarding the limited ability of governments to regulate and limit default risk, loan arbitrage, market saturation, or ensure a realistic capital to loan ratio (Staschen 2002). Yet, when microfinance groups go bankrupt after external shocks or economic downturn, donor and government documents explain this away as the rural poor's lack of capacity or that culture was an obstacle to development.

#### 8.4 Conclusion

Microfinance does not work for the people it is meant to target, precisely because it works for other groups of Timorese. However, microfinance does "work at"

something. It works at the (re)production of inequality through class based accumulation at the village level. It reproduces gendered economies of debt and brideprice and the gender division of labour. It is materially valuable to NGO, government, and private sector groups who own and run microfinance and benefit in the form of jobs and attracting international aid funding.

The way microfinance works in Manufahi and Oecusse undoes assumptions donors and government make about the outcomes of microfinance in Timor-Leste. Firstly, many loans were used for consumption, and the main entrepreneurial activity of moneylending. Microfinance has helped village elites to be economically active. In contrast to cultural explanations of outcomes that use “local” and “international” as a starting point for analysis, and portray microfinance as a bottom up tool of development, a feminist political economy approach shows how microfinance reproduced class relations. The (re)growth of microfinance did not “trickle down” in villages and raise living standards overall but rather allowed elites to retain control of the village economy and extract wealth from poorer members. This mirrors historical patterns seen in Chapter 3, and political economies of domestic violence I examined in Chapter 5. Political economy analysis of power in the village fits with the properly historicised view of microfinance in Timor-Leste as containing legacies of colonial and neo-colonial economic governance. Again, these class structures are not “natural” categories, consented to by the majority, but constituted through material relations of inequality and strengthened through war and militarisation during the New Order, and earlier Portuguese mercantilism, slavery and plantation driven economies.

Thirdly, the status of the *Liurai-Dato* class depends on the exchange of women. Microfinance is another way to reckon these intergenerational and community debts. Microfinance intersects with gender through bride price in a concrete fashion. This chapter argued that despite the rhetoric of access to credit empowering the poor and empowering women, microfinance works to strengthen debt regulated inequality. Microfinance programs reinforce this gender order and village leaders’ control, even when some women in the families of village leaders

experience greater economic empowerment. Microfinance transforms the dense web of kinship relations from debt relations to loan relations—they are two sides of the same coin.

At the policy level, microfinance facilitates the political elite's shifting of responsibility for poverty onto the poor at the same time as satisfying neoliberal donor demands and freeing up budgets to buy support from veterans. But shifting these responsibilities comes with risk, as microfinance markets, like all markets, are unstable and prone to crash. In Timor-Leste, the lack of consumer protection and expansion of SHG microfinance entails risks. High levels of overindebtedness are likely to increase the risks for social and political conflicts in the future.





## CHAPTER 9. CONCLUSION

### 9.1 Introduction

Over the last two decades, and especially since UNSCR 1325 on Gender, Peace and Security, peacebuilding interventions increasingly incorporated gender perspectives. Peacebuilding interventions use both gender mainstreaming and development programs for women's empowerment. On the whole, however, these gender interventions have had uneven results. Scholars have attempted to explain the reasons for the uneven outcomes of gender interventions, even where these uneven outcomes are unsurprising. The central aim of this study has been to contribute to the study of gender and peacebuilding through a feminist political economy lens by examining the outcomes of gender interventions in Timor-Leste.

The thesis sought to answer the question: What can explain the uneven outcomes of gender interventions? As the thesis has shown, the outcomes of gender interventions for GRB, the LADV and microfinance have been uneven when measured by interveners' aims. However, more crucially, this thesis measured gender intervention against the yardstick of gender justice, which entails an evaluation of the distribution of resources and power (Goetz 2007). The use of this measure allows the study to go further than the successes and failures of the specific interventions to encompass redistributive aspects of gender interventions. In other words, using gender justice allowed the thesis to answer the question: what are the different distributional outcomes of gender interventions for different groups? Using gender justice also allowed the thesis to look at the material relations of power driving domestic violence, which is significant given the prevalence and severity of violence against women after conflict.

Dominant explanations of peacebuilding's uneven results use ideas popularised by the local turn and this thesis is in part a rejoinder to these. Scholars associated with the local turn made timely and essential critiques of liberal peacebuilding. However, the study found the local turn and hybridity were inadequate tools with which to examine gender interventions, partially because the assumptions and premises guiding the local turn are insufficiently attentive to class and gender hierarchies within local societies. What is more, when turning to the examination of peacebuilding in practice, theories of the local turn found purchase among the dominant classes in Timor-Leste. This alliance of domestic and international support contributed to aspects of the local turn being incorporated into peacebuilding in practice in Timor-Leste. I have argued this inadvertently provided a veil of legitimacy to the continuation and reinvigoration of highly unequal gender relations in the critical areas of state resources after peace settlements, traditional dispute resolution, and brideprice.

The thesis has pushed forward the analysis of gender interventions by using a structural feminist political economy frame. Such a framework reveals that gender relations are a crucial aspect of the broader processes through which the dominant class secures its position in independent Timor-Leste. The theoretical framework combined a structural political economy approach used elsewhere in the study of Southeast Asian politics and development, and the Timor-Leste case (Hameiri, Hughes, and Scarpello 2017, Hughes 2015, Jones 2010) together with the feminist political economy of True (2012). True's political economy of violence against women provided a framework with which the thesis sought to explain material (resource and power related) drivers of high levels of violence against women in post-conflict Timor-Leste. Kinship was added to this synthetic framework because kinship is a crucial factor constituting both gender and class structural power relations, but a factor neglected by theoretical strands of FPE and structural political economy. The synthetic framework entailed an understanding of the shape of the state as resulting from the outcomes of contests between social forces. As such, rather than contests between local and international groups, the analysis

considered that international interveners are just one of a number of groups in contests over the socio-political order. In this study, class was the fundamental social force examined. I argued that structural relations of class and gender are the cause of uneven outcomes of gender intervention in no small measure because these structures are mutually constitutive. Consequently, the Timor-Leste case study implies that an analysis of the outcomes of gender intervention requires an understanding of how gender interventions work in practice and comprehensive analysis of historically specific gender and class relations.

## 9.2 The Political Economy of Gender Interventions: Empirical Findings

This thesis has shown that the control over women, reproduction, and the gender division of labour are fraught areas of gender intervention and areas that feature contests and coalitions within and across categories of local and international.

Chapter 3 argued the explanation for the uneven outcomes of gender interventions lies with historically specific social forces. Chapter 3 was novel in applying a structural political economy approach to the history of Timor-Leste. The structural political economy approach used in Chapter 3 and again in Chapter 7, made a significant contribution to the study of Timorese politics because it allowed the chapter to isolate the emergence and continuing dominance of the *Liurai-Dato* class as a crucial part of the political analysis. This class emerged through the monopolisation of slavery, the military and was characterised by the valorisation of armed masculinity. Further, this chapter showed that the existence of slave status and its overlap with gender relations is an overlooked area of historiography. The relations between the *Liurai-Dato* class and those from slave backgrounds also profoundly shaped the hierarchical structure present in Timorese society. Although these relations arise from a kinship structure that exists across the country from village to city, the *Liurai-Dato* class is split in two parts. Only the most successful members of the class have been able to leverage their high-born

status into well-paid political leadership, government or private sector jobs in Dili. Family members who are unable to break into these higher levels of the state or the NGO sector remain in less prestigious functions such as village chiefs or similar.

Chapter 4 built on this historical background to describe the expanding dominance of the *Liurai-Dato* class in the post-independence period through an examination of the distribution of state resources. In the Timor-Leste case, buying the peace using veterans' pensions funnelled resources to the *Liurai-Dato* class. The Dili-based elites take the bulk this money, but with crucial resources also directed to patrimonial networks in villages. At the same time as the expansion of veterans' pensions, donors pushed for means-tested cash transfers to vulnerable women to encourage better health and education outcomes for their children. Cash transfers to women are, however, dwarfed by the volumes of veterans' pensions. The study made an important contribution by showing that the *Bolsa da Mãe*, although also too small to be effective in reducing poverty, in any case, is, like other kinds of state resources, at least partially captured by members of the *Liurai-Dato* class and thus does not benefit the most vulnerable.

The last section of Chapter 4 moved away from contextual factors to examine the narrowing of the mandate and disappointing outcomes of gender responsive budgeting thus far. In the face of this Timorese political economy, gender responsive budgeting failed to take hold in any meaningful way. After a series of compromises and with its mandate falling away, GRB has narrowed to focus on the implementation of the Law Against Domestic Violence. Again, class interests play a role. The Women's Cross Party Caucus has made political and patriarchal bargains with men of their class which has tended to limit the radical redistribution of state resources to poor women. Overall, however, the capture of state resources by men explains the failure of gender interventions to redistribute state resources. The lack of redistribution has flow-on effects to other areas of welfare that damage prospects for gender justice.

Chapters 5 and 6 showed how gender intervention for the Law Against Domestic Violence has had uneven outcomes. Overall, the peacebuilding intervention in Timor-Leste was shaped by the local turn. Thus, when we look at gender interventions, on their terms, and regarding gender justice, we see that peacebuilders made alliances with members of the dominant class. Chapter 6 looked at the political economy of brideprice. Brideprice has been a controversial topic for anthropologists, scholars looking at gender and for national and international level gender experts working in Timor-Leste. The focus of intense debate, there has nonetheless been no gender intervention on brideprice. Existing works on brideprice in Timor-Leste have rehearsed older anthropological debates over whether brides constitute a commodity or gift. Scholars whose works have informed local approaches say criticism of brideprice is misplaced because brideprice is a vital cultural practice, holding together families and promoting peace. Timorese women's organisations with both urban and rural members, in contrast, have long opposed brideprice as damaging to women's human rights and as a driver of violence against women (Alves and Alita 2009). Chapter 6 took a structural feminist political economy approach, examining how brideprice is an overlooked but central part of the Timorese economy setting up long-term debts between families.

Chapters 7 and 8 were paired in order to explore the historically specific factors affecting implementation of microfinance as a gender intervention (Chapter 7) and its outcomes (Chapter 8). Microfinance was contextualised as part of the development and military policy of the Indonesian invasion. A historical approach helped explained how village based members of the *Liurai-Dato* class were able to monopolise political power and resources through their access to finance and debts. The study contains implications and conclusion that have contributed to the study of gender and peacebuilding more broadly.

### 9.3 The Political Economy of Gender Interventions: Implications

All chapters showed how gender relations are strategic part of the ways in which the *Liurai-Dato* class secures its position. Although all cases showed the dominance of the *Liurai-Dato* class, and their dependence on gender relations for reproduction, this took place in different settings, with different results for different societal groups. I traced these differentiated outcomes. Assessments of the post-2006-7 crisis showed that veterans' pensions help CNRT buy the peace from key belligerent actors threatening the political elite (Porter and Rab 2011, International Crisis Group 2013). However, the present study contributed to the scholarly understanding of how veterans' pensions also allowed Gusmão's CNRT to create a political network of funded veterans into rural villages, establishing patronage links where the disconnect between local and national had been the rule (Roll 2015, Hughes 2009). Moreover, the study pointed to the important role of veterans in enforcing the political order. In rural areas, veterans (often also village leaders) have been enrolled by the political elite to help mitigate, resolve, and enforce land disputes in the rapid expansion of spending on physical infrastructure projects. In one case in Oecusse, veteran identity overlapped with membership of the *Liurai-Dato* class.

This thesis has made a number of contributions to the empirical study of gender relations in Timor-Leste, but it has wider applicability. Using a gendered lens to examine peacebuilding allowed the analysis to move beyond the local turn's proposition of a clash or divide between liberal international and local cultures, institution and practices are the reason for uneven outcomes of peacebuilding intervention. The thesis questioned the current orthodoxy of using hybrid peace frameworks because, like the local turn, hybridity left power relations within different social and gender orders unexamined, and as such, could still not account for uneven outcomes. The alternative framework used here—structural feminist political economy—moved the discussion beyond local and international to the development of historically specific social forces. Others have applied structural political economy to the case of Timor-Leste (Hughes 2009, Jones 2010, Hughes,

Öjendal, and Schierenbeck 2015, Hughes 2015, Hameiri, Hughes, and Scarpello 2017). However, describing how the gender order is essential to the consolidation of the post-conflict political order pushed this literature forward. The study showed the coalition of Dili based and rural members of the *Liurai Dato* class as key to understanding the contemporary Timorese state. Political economy explanations grounded in an account of the intersection between historically specific gender and class relations in this sense gave a more accurate picture. The application of a structural feminist political economy approach was able to extract the various gender progressive and gender regressive alliances that defy simple labelling of local or international. This study has shown that the distribution of state resources, the control over traditional dispute resolution and debt relations has been essential to the reproduction of the *Liurai-Dato* class' power in villages. This reproduction is also achieved through the close control over kinship, which is, at the same time, a means of accumulation.

GRB's efficacy as a gender intervention was evaluated by looking at the distribution of state resources through cash transfers, particularly veterans' pensions. Although Gender Responsive Budgeting in Timor-Leste has been considered a successful case of "women acting for women" (Costa, Sawer, and Sharp 2013), over time, GRB narrowed and failed to address the capture of state resources by members of the dominant class. The distribution of state resources is gendered in three ways. First, at an individual level, the distribution of state resources is deeply gendered. The ideology valorising armed masculinity has been used to justify the distribution of state resources—both cash transfers and infrastructure contracts—to men. This ideology is deeply gendered because it privileges heroes over victims. The distribution of state resources is in itself a source of gender injustice in that the overwhelming beneficiaries of state resources have been men. Around 87 percent of veterans' pensions go to men and lucrative government contracts likewise. Transfers to women through the *Bolsa da Mãe* are too small, conditional, and reinforce gender roles.

Second, at the level of the state, the gendered distribution of resources to men detracts from spending in areas of high import to women's well-being and results in gender injustice. The Timor-Leste case provides confirmatory evidence that peacebuilding can involve concessions to, and buying off, armed groups, and this is particularly relevant in the area of personal law and the distribution of resources (Goetz and Jenkins 2016). In the Timor-Leste case, the unequal distribution of resources towards the dominant class has had negative, if typical, effects on gender relations. GRB in post-conflict states ought to be an area of gender intervention with considerable positive outcomes for gender justice. Yet a more radical or social justice inspired gender responsive budgeting has been stymied by the interests of men of the *Liurai-Dato* class monopolising state resources within their networks.

Third, the nature of the Timorese state set the boundaries of gender interventions. Namely, the post-conflict distribution of resources to well-connected men, rather than state infrastructure, health, welfare and education has detrimental effects on the well-being of women and increases their burdens because of the gender division of labour. The post-conflict distribution of resources has also been profoundly shaped by second generation neoliberal reform agendas. Programs inimical to the everyday welfare of the majority—patrimonial projects, cash transfers to the elite, lack of spending on health education and welfare and microfinance—have ruled government programming from 2007 to 2017. This has continued the lack of spending on welfare under the neoliberal UN era in the post conflict period from 1999 to 2006. The resultant continuing impoverishment of rural areas also had flow-on effects. Poverty and scant resources were shown to be linked to brideprice, because the cash, goods, and reciprocal networks provide some material security for families. But these networks and brideprice itself drives violence against women and thus material reciprocity comes at the cost of gender justice. Poverty encourages over-indebtedness through microfinance—which transfers wealth to MFIs and thence to international financial institutions, and exorbitant debts owed to higher ranked lineages. This discussion of the three ways that the gendered distribution of resources impacts gender intervention leads to



the first conclusion that *gender interventions cannot be measured according to program level aims because this misses the broader political implications of state resource distribution.*

The thesis argued that by evaluating gender interventions according to who gets what from peacebuilding interventions leads to a more accurate picture of the outcomes of peacebuilding for women. Moreover, the fact that the most vulnerable women were impacted negatively by (the lack of) gender interventions in the distribution of state resources, the LADV, brideprice and microfinance points to the need for gender interventions to look at their outcomes in terms of gender justice. The chapters, in exploring the political economy of gender intervention all point to the necessity of conceptualising gender intervention as an inherently political activity for all groups, and alliances thereof.

The co-constitutive nature of class and gender relations continued, not just at the level of the state, but also at the level of the village. The implementation of the LADV has had only limited success because, in villages, members of the *Liurai-Dato* class rely on their control over marriage and traditional dispute resolution as a means of accumulation. These material considerations, not culture *per se*, forms the basis for objections to change to traditional law, culture, marriage custom, and institutions. Thus, the second conclusion of the thesis is that *historically specific power relations between dominant and subordinate classes shape outcomes of gender interventions profoundly.* The *Liurai-Dato* class' monopolisation of resources continues to be justified ideologically by the valorisation of armed masculinity.

Following from this conclusion about the material aspects of the relations between *Liurai-Dato* class and subordinate classes is the importance of gender ideology in undergirding this control. This section comprising the paired Chapters 5 and 6 moved away from the state level to discuss lower level governance (and of course its association with state politics and political economy). A third and critical conclusion is outcomes are uneven because *brideprice connects the dominant class*

*vertically across the state and is a vital part of class based accumulation and interests.* The present study is the first piece of research showing how brideprice can be a means of class-based accumulation in a post-conflict setting. A considerable empirical contribution of the thesis was to show how the emergence and dominance of the *Liurai-Dato* class was conditional on gender relations. As such, brideprice is not a peripheral aspect of cultural practice but rather is central to the political economy of Timor-Leste. Brideprice establishes status—wealthy families charge higher brideprices—and allows higher ranks to accumulate wealth, shoring up their political power and dominance. In that sense, brideprice is a basis of social structure, connecting gender and class. This finding makes a meaningful contribution to the study of the role of gender in conflict because it challenges Hudson and Matfess’ assertion that brideprices are “flat taxes” spurring men to partake in conflict (Hudson and Matfess 2017). Rather, the relationship between brideprice and violence is more complex because it is classed in particular ways. Domestic violence has different drivers for different classes. The conclusion I draw here has been an intersectional one, focussing on the political economy of brideprice. It reveals brideprice’s role—not as some anachronistic aspect of cultural practice—but an essential part of contemporary processes of class formation and class conflict. Brideprices benefit dominant groups and are detrimental to subordinate ones because they initiate accumulation and debt relations. At an individual level, they create obligations between powerful fathers-in-law and less powerful sons-in-law. At the group level, it creates a series of material obligations where resources flow upwards from lower ranks to higher ranks in return for brides.

A fourth conclusion is that, in the Timor-Leste case, *various international and national groups support, while others resist gender interventions, and their support depends on their interests and ideology.* Chapters 5 and 6 showed that coalitions of peacebuilders and national elites make concessions in areas of personal law—the realm of the local—and involved particular compromises in and concessions to powerful, patriarchal groups and traditions (Goetz and Jenkins 2016). As a result,

support for a “local turn” in peacebuilding can inadvertently support groups who benefit from the continuation of unequal gender relations. Such a finding provides empirical evidence of what Wallis, Jeffery, and Kent (2016) have called the “dark side of hybridity”. A crucial contribution of Chapter 5 showed how interveners supported traditional dispute resolution and legal pluralism in the courts, which inadvertently fuelled a political economy of domestic violence. Again, Chapter 5 showed it was in the interest of the village-based members of the *Liurai-Dato* class to retain control over traditional dispute resolution as they benefitted materially. Village leaders’ interests in using traditional dispute resolution aligned with the interests of ordinary men because the subordination of their wives, daughters, and sisters conferred a patriarchal dividend on ordinary men from the gender division of labour.

A fifth conclusion is *gender interventions in finance are not new and require historical and gendered analysis* to contextualise these within the expansion of state development, as well as neoliberal globalisation. Kinship relations—defined through debts—play out through gender interventions on microfinance. However, the mutually constitutive relationship between debts, kinship, and finance is not a new occurrence. Instead, microfinance shaped social and gender relations through the decades of conflict. Chapter 7 historicised microfinance as a part of the New Order Indonesian occupation. Microfinance linked cooperatives were heavily implicated in the Indonesian military’s extraction of money from the occupied country. The same microfinance groups were also linked to the changing modes of microfinance in Indonesia from state-subsidised credit to “financially sustainable” microfinance. In particular, war and militarism, and elite interests shaped outcomes on the ground in Timor. In the post-independence period, in villages, the *Liurai-Dato* class can control local resources through debts, and these take the form of both microfinance debts and brideprice debts.



# APPENDIX

## Methods

The 2011 fieldwork study was on the different, but related topic of decentralised governance and village leadership in post-conflict Timor-Leste, undertaken for an uncompleted degree at a different institution, the University of Vienna, Austria. Earlier fieldwork in Timor-Leste from 2011 provides background to the thesis. I conducted around eighteen semi-structured interviews, primarily in Manufahi in Timor-Leste, over a period of five months (see Table 10.1). These interviews were obtained ethically under ethical standards applicable at the University of Vienna, Austria. These standards were taught through the Institute for Social and Cultural Anthropology (KSA), where I was enrolled. The University of Vienna did not require formal human research ethics approval. However, like all KSA research students doing fieldwork, I was required to inform research participants of possible adverse outcomes, protect their privacy and anonymise their data, inform them of the scope and aims of the research for participants to give informed (oral) consent. The results of this research were not submitted for a degree in Austria. In 2015, I interviewed some of these participants again using formal, signed consent forms, following the Australian National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (Murdoch University Permit Number 014/188).

The West Timor data was not drawn on in any detail in the thesis. The reason for this was simply that I had too much, diverse data (including over 172 semi-structured interviews) given the time and space constraints of a PhD thesis project. To include both case studies in the final dissertation would not have done justice to the richness of the material.

Readers should note interviews from earlier fieldwork in Timor-Leste in 2015 are cited as ET followed by a three digit number (for example ET010) with some information on the gender, social status and affiliation listed in the footnote. More detailed information beyond on the age, linguistic background of participants is

listed in Table 10.1. Those few from West Timor, Indonesia were cited as WT, followed by a three-digit number (for example WTo10). The few interviews from 2011 cited in the thesis were cited as ET, followed by a three-digit number and the year, 2011 (for example, ET156 – 2011).

Locating interviewees (sampling) was done purposively. Names of national policymakers, experts, and gender experts were gathered from websites, the Timorese news, documentary research, and drawing on my established and emergent Dili-based networks. For example, the Oecusse subnational contact list was drawn up with the help of an international gender and police-building expert. In terms of establishing contact with village leaders and subnational leaders in rural areas, these were drawn initially from my existing network of contacts in Timor-Leste from the 2011 fieldwork. Interlocutors included village leaders, *Liurai* and *Dato*, veterans and members of NGOs and women's organisation networks. Initial interviews were instrumental in introducing the researcher to other potential participants. Locating interviewees used, in other words, purposive snowball sampling. This is deemed the most efficient in this type of research where the researcher becomes a temporary feature of the rural community in which she is working (Kerstan and Berninghausen 1992). However, drawing on elite level networks and snowball sampling introduced bias. Partiality arises in part because elite, or male, or educated interlocutors/participants act as gatekeepers, intentionally or unintentionally controlling the terms on which researchers can talk with ordinary citizens.

With this in mind, avoiding one-sided sampling within patrimonial networks, within which I had to operate, was a principal aim of the 2015 fieldwork. The broad range of interlocutors is evidenced in Table 10.1 below. Roll (2014) gives a good account of problematic bias in qualitative snowball sampling in Timorese patrimonial networks. I compensated for this common problem by purposively trying to sample beyond the networks of "gatekeepers" and "patrons". In all sites, I initially approached higher status formal and informal gatekeepers, seeking formal and informal approvals while conducting interviews. Next, at each field site,

I employed one or two younger, educated people from the area as research assistants. Research assistants introduced me to the community and acted as informal “key informants” (Rabinow 1977). Walking around with research assistants allowed me to reach lower status community members because the familiar faces of my research assistants reassured community members that I was under someone’s supervision and protection. This “supervised” freedom allowed me to move beyond gatekeepers’ networks and talk to people unrelated to village chiefs, hamlet chiefs, or other subnational leaders. Getting beyond those networks with research assistants, who, as young people were often considered to be of low status provided vital insights into hierarchy and subordination on the island of Timor-Leste. Methodologically, I look critically at elites’ historical narratives, and social scientists’ reproduction of them, to sketch the material and structural implication of who benefitted and by what means, from the gender division of labour, economic processes, war and militarisation, and international intervention.

Questions were drawn from a “menu” of questions, only some of which are discussed briefly here. The initial questions established and discussed the social status of the participant and their social group, and the social relations and gender relations surrounding them. Social status was also elicited through biodata forms asking about participants’ first languages, education level, occupation, number of people living with them and so on. The biodata forms also helped clarify oral information during the interview. The forms asked interviewees to self-estimate whether they considered themselves of ordinary class status (Tetun: *Ema Bai Bain*) or famers (Tetun: *Toos Nain*) or upper middle class (Indonesian: *Kelas menengah atas*), or of *Liurai* or *Dato* rank or indeed whether they considered themselves elite (Tetun: *Ema Boot*). Next, the interview itself established biographical narratives and kinship affiliations. I drew kinship diagrams to establish people’s affiliation across administrative bodies and families. Social status, biography and affiliations were particularly useful for understanding interests, benefits and access to resources. Other areas of discussions also centred on kinship, authority, *adat* and

extra-legal institutions. It established common ground and definitions, who exercises (extra) legal authority, transactions, problems with legitimacy and authority and brideprice. It also elicited opinions about ideal types of authority, ideal types of romantic partners, problems in family relationships, marriage, brideprice, and dispute resolution.

The penultimate area of discussion was gender and violence, probing the juncture of gender, class and the “local” to analyse systemic issues. Discussion topics included definitions of gender and violence, women’s organisations, typical circumstances when domestic violence takes place, traditional dispute resolution, and transactions of goods and cash associated with it. These issues were handled with care, drawing on my professional experience working with European NGO network, Women Against Violence Europe. Discussing these issues in the Timorese context often involved interviewees asking me questions about VAW in other countries. I replied that VAW occurred all over the world because of gender relations, but different countries and communities experienced different drivers of VAW, different legal processes and different outcomes. The results of these discussions, where participants discussed their experiences, particularly the intersections of brideprice and traditional dispute resolution are presented in Chapter 6 and 7. The final part of the interview often moved back to the political economy of the everyday, looking at who gets what, when and how, and feelings of justice or fairness, whether in the family, village, organisation or the nation or between these levels.

Interview data was collated and analysed using Nvivo qualitative research software. Not all interviews were transcribed: some were merely annotated. Two coding schemes were developed to identify and analyse themes. First, an *a priori* coding scheme was developed based on the research question and the structural political economy of Southeast Asia (Hughes 2009, Hutchison et al. 2014, Rodan, Hewison, and Robison 2006, Jayasuriya and Rodan 2007) and feminist political economy (True 2012). These coded data from interviews, reports and newspaper articles according to thematic areas such as control over resources, elites, class



formation and so on. Second, a coding scheme emerged out of the data itself, or *in vivo* (Bernard and Ryan 2003). Initially, these were based on interview questions, but over time, themes emerged forming the main empirical areas of the thesis: control over state resources, development and infrastructure, veterans' payments and welfare, poverty and inequality, marriage and brideprice, microfinance and village elites.

The interview process followed a set format. Interviewees were given an information letter, in Tetun, Indonesian, or English, describing the scope of the study, its aims, their role, and possible risks. We read and explained the letter to those with low levels of literacy. We then discussed the information letter, and the aims of my research and my background, after which participants were nearly always happy to sign the consent form. The interviews were all audio-recorded except one or two informal interviews, which were recorded in writing. At the same time, participants completed, with the help of the researcher and research assistant, biodata forms. These forms aided collation, and record keeping, in particular with the substantive data collection on social status.

Next, participants were engaged in face-to-face, semi-structured interviews of about 40-60 minutes in length. I conducted nearly all the interviews myself, in Tetun, Indonesian, or English. Nonetheless, in rural areas, research assistants were also crucial in smoothing communication and overcoming considerable gaps in understanding. Rural Timorese citizen's first language is not typically Tetun. Tetun itself is a creolised and non-standard language (Ross 2016). Thus, reflecting the use of Tetun in practice, many participants spoke a version of Tetun heavily influenced by a second language or dialect (Ross 2016, 73).

## Interviewee Profiles

Table 10.1 List of Cited Interviewees

	NUMBER	PSEUDONYM	DESCRIPTION	AGE	DISTRICT INTERVIEWED	LANGUAGE OF INTERVIEW	SOCIAL STATUS	DATE INTERVIEWED	1ST LANGUAGE
1.	ET076		Female International Manager at UN	-	Dili	English	Elite	6 June 2015	French
2.	ET077		Female Timorese NGO Senior Manager	-	Dili	Tetun	Elite	5 June 2015	N/A
3.	ET078		Female Timorese NGO Senior Manager	-	Dili	Tetun/ English	Liurai	6 June 2015	Portuguese
4.	ET079		Female Timorese NGO Senior Manager	-	Dili	Tetun / English	Liurai	11 July 2015	Mambai
5.	ET082		Female Timorese NGO Senior Manager	36	Dili	Tetun	Elite	8 June 2015	Tetun Praça
6.	ET083		Male Manager At Alola	43	Dili	English	Dato	9 June 2015	Makkassae
7.	ET085		Female member of GMPTL	57	Dili	Tetun	Elite	11 June 2015	Tetun Praça / Portuguese
8.	ET089		Senior Manager, Timorese women's organisation	-	Dili	Tetun	Liurai	17 July 2015	Mambai

	NUMBER	PSEUDONYM	DESCRIPTION	AGE	DISTRICT INTERVIEWED	LANGUAGE OF INTERVIEW	SOCIAL STATUS	DATE INTERVIEWED	1ST LANGUAGE
9.	ET096		Female Timorese NGO Director	32	Oecusse	Tetun / Indonesian	Liurai	27 July 2015	Meto
10.	ET097		Male Timorese NGO Program Manager	32	Oecusse	Tetun / Indonesian	Elite	27 July 2015	Meto
11.	ET098		Female Timorese NGO Finance Officer	29	Oecusse	Tetun / Indonesian	Elite	27 July 2015	Meto
12.	ET099		Female Timorese NGO Program Manager	30	Oecusse	Tetun / Indonesian	Elite	27 July 2015	Meto
13.	ET102	Lina	Female Villager	43	Oecusse	Tetun	Citizen	30 July 2015	Meto
14.	ET103		Female volunteer with veterans' group, Housewife	59	Oecusse	Tetun	Liurai	30 July	Meto
15.	ET104		Male Village Chief	61	Oecusse	Tetun / Indonesian	Elite	30 July 2015	Meto
16.	ET105		Male Hamlet Chief and Farmer	62	Oecusse	Tetun / Indonesian		2 August 2015	Meto
17.	ET108	Eugenio	Senior Government Official	-	Oecusse	Tetun / English	Elite	4 August 2015	Meto / Portuguese
18.	ET110	Serafina	Female Secretary of the Village	32	Oecusse	Tetun / Indonesian		4 Aug 2015	Meto
19.	ET112	-	Female Senior Manager, Women's Shelter	34	Oecusse	Tetun	Liurai	4 August 2015	Meto

	NUMBER	PSEUDONYM	DESCRIPTION	AGE	DISTRICT INTERVIEWED	LANGUAGE OF INTERVIEW	SOCIAL STATUS	DATE INTERVIEWED	1ST LANGUAGE
20.	ET113	Michaela	Female Farmer	29	Oecusse	Tetun / Indonesian	Citizen	5 August 2015	Tetun
21.	ET114	Elisabetha	Female Farmer	60	Oecusse	Tetun	Citizen	5 August 2015	Meto
22.	ET120		Female Senior Manager, Microfinance Institute	NA	Dili	English	Elite	16 August 2015	Tetun / Portuguese
23.	ET122		Catholic Nun in a leadership role		Dili	English	Elite	18 August 2015	Portuguese
24.	ET127	Bonifacio	Male Village Chief Suku Mota	~50	Manufahi	Tetun	Dato	1 September 2015 and June 2011	Laklae
25.	ET130	Antonio	Male Teacher	43	Manufahi	Tetun	Dato	1 September 2015	Tetun Therik
26.	ET131	Lucia	Wife of Village Chief and Businesswoman	47	Manufahi	Tetun	Dato	1 September 2015	Tetun Therik
27.	ET137	Sancio	Female Villager	35	Manufahi	Tetun	Village Elite	4 September	Tetun
28.	ET138	Rosita	Female Villager	29	Manufahi	Tetun	Citizen	4 September 2015	Tetun Therik
29.	ET139		Female Villager	45	Manufahi	Tetun	Citizen	4 September 2015	Tetun Therik
30.	ET146	Brigida	Female Villager Suku Mota	31	Manufahi	Tetun	Dato	7 S September 2015	Tetun Therik
31.	ET152		Female UN Senior Manager	-	Dili	English	Elite	9 September 2015	-
32.	ET158-2011		Daughter of a Village Chief	55	Dili	Tetun	Elite	7 July 2011	Tetun Therik

	NUMBER	PSEUDONYM	DESCRIPTION	AGE	DISTRICT INTERVIEWED	LANGUAGE OF INTERVIEW	SOCIAL STATUS	DATE INTERVIEWED	1ST LANGUAGE
33.	Not recorded		Male Government Researcher	-	Dili	English	Elite	23 July 2015	Meto
34.	WTo42		Hamlet Chief	50	Belu, West Timor, Indonesia	Indonesian	Elite	16 March 2015	Tetun Therik
35.	WTo71		Male East Timorese ex-Militia member, residing in West Timor, Indonesia	46	Timor-Tengah Selatan, West Timor, Indonesia	Indonesian	Citizen	31 March 2015	Tetun Praça



## GLOSSARY

Note that I use the term Tetun, not Tetum, reflecting how Tetun sounds when spoken (Ross 2016).

TERM	LANGUAGE	DEFINITION
A Luta Continua	Portuguese	The Struggle Continues. A FRETILIN slogan. The same call to revolutionary struggle is used by FRELIMO in Mozambique
Acar	Fataluku	Slave
Adat	Tetun/ Indonesian	Customary law governing “inheritance of property, spouse eligibility, ritual etiquette, <i>tara bandu</i> (Tetun: taboo observance), land ownership, political authority, sanctions, oral literature and cosmology
Administrador	Tetun	Administrator for the district
Affines	English	Relatives by marriage
Akan	Fataluku	Commoner/farmer
Akanu	Fataluku	Slave caste
Aldeia	Tetun	Hamlet
Amaf Naek	Meto	Noble
Angotta DPR	Indonesian	Member of Indonesian Parliament
APODETI	Tetun	Associação Popular Democrática Timorese
Arisan	Indonesian	Lottery. Rotating Savings and Loans
ASDT	Tetun	Associação Social-Democrática Timorese. Timorese Social Democratic Association. Later Fretilin
Asuliar	Tetun	Servant
Atan	Tetun	Slave
Auxiliar	Tetun	Auxiliaries / servants
Axuliar	Portuguese	Help
Babinsa	Indonesian	Non-commissioned guidance officer or team
Baikeno; Baiqueno	Tetun	Tetun word for the language of Oecusse
Baino	Tetun	A noble. See “dato”
Bapak	Indonesian and Tetun	Indonesian for “Man or Mister”; used to refer to Indonesian men in Timor during the occupation
Barlake; Barlaque	Barlaki; Tetun	1. Brideprice 2. Common-law marriage
Bee Manas Ai Tukan	Tetun	Lit. Hot water and firewood. A payment made from the groom’s family to the bride’s at a couple’s engagement to recognise the bride’s parents efforts in raising their daughter

GLOSSARY

TERM	LANGUAGE	DEFINITION
Belak	Tetun	Disk made of gold, silver or bronze worn as jewellery on the chest. Used in brideprice.
Belis	Eastern Indonesian	Brideprice
Bolsa da Mãe	Tetun	Mother's Purse. A conditional cash transfer aimed at vulnerable women.
Bua Malus	Tetun	Areca nut and betel leaf chewed to produce a narcotic effect.
Budak	Indonesian	Slave
Buibere	Tetun	A term used for "woman" among FRETILIN and FALINTIL. Also a term for a female farmer who is also a female revolutionary subject. See also <i>Maubere</i>
Bupati	Indonesian	District head
Camat	Indonesian	Subdistrict head
Capitacão	Portuguese	Head tax
Chattel Slavery	English	The enslaver has rights of ownership over the slave, with the intent to exploit through the use, management, profit, transfer that person
Clandestinos	Tetun	Members of the clandestine nationalist front for independent Timor-Leste
Comité Executivo Da Luta	Portuguese	Executive Committee for the Struggle
Cooperativa Café Timor	Tetun	National Timorese coffee cooperative.
Cooperativa Credito	Tetun	Credit cooperative
Corvée	French	A form of labour tax exacted by a lord or local authority
Dato	Tetun	Noble
Debt bondage	English	Debtors pledge their labour, or the labour of a dependent, as security for a debt.
Deportardu	Tetun	Deported political prisoners
Deputada	Tetun	A Female Parliamentarian
Desa	Indonesian	1. Village 2. Village Administrative Area
Dharma Wanita	Indonesian	Lit. Women's Duty; Indonesian Women's association of wives of civil servants
Differend	French	Mimicry in a coloniser's language that asserts an injustice has been done, although the coloniser's language is inadequate to express this injustice
Distrikto	Tetun	District Administrative Area
Dom	Portuguese	King
Ekonomia	Tetun	1. The national economy 2. The household economy



TERM	LANGUAGE	DEFINITION
Ema Boot	Tetun	Important or “great” person
Ema Kiik	Tetun	Ordinary or “little” person
Ema Reino	Tetun	Commoner
Ema Susar	Tetun	Poor people with difficulties
Endogamous	English	The practice of marrying within a clan or tribe or family group
Estado do India	Portuguese	The Indian State. The name for the Portuguese colonial empire.
FALINTIL	Tetun	Forças Armadas De Libertação Nacional De Timor-Leste. The Armed Forces for the National Liberation of Timor-Leste
Feto Nia Folin	Tetun	Lit. Woman’s price. Brideprice. See Barlake.
F-FDTL	Tetun	FALINTIL – Forças Defeza de Timor-Leste. The Defence forces of Timor-Leste. The name of the post-independence armed forces of Timor-Leste.
FOKUPERS	Indonesian	Forum Komunikasi Perempuan East Timor. East Timorese Women's Communication Forum
Folin	Tetun	1. Price 2. Brideprice
FRETILIN	Tetun	Frente Revolucionário Do Timor-Leste Independente. The Revolutionary Front For Independent Timor-Leste
GMPTL	Tetun	Grupo Mulheres Parlamentario Timor-Leste. Lit. Group of Women Parliamentarians in Timor-Leste. The Timorese
Gotong Royong	Indonesian	Lit. “Mutual cooperation”. A form of labour done by the community on local public works popularised by Suharto’s New Order
GPK	Indonesian	Gerakan Pengacau Keamanan. Lit. “Security disturbance movement”. Indonesian armed forces term for anti-Indonesian forces FALINTIL
Grau	Tetun	Grade or seniority in military rank
Hafolin	Tetun	<i>Hafolin</i> is a transitive verb meaning: 1. To appreciate, value or esteem 2. To negotiate 3. However, in the third definition, as a noun, hafolin means brideprice or arranged marriage
Hanai Malu	Tetun	Timorese national cooperative peak body
HANSIP	Indonesian	Pertahanan Sipil. Civilian defence organisation. Militia
hypogamous	English	A marriage between a high status or high class woman with a low status or low class man
Ianjo	Japanese	Military brothel
Kadeira	Tetun	1. Chair

GLOSSARY

TERM	LANGUAGE	DEFINITION
		2. Political position
Kampung	Indonesian	Village
Katuas/Ketuas	Tetun	A male elder or leader or male elders
Kepala Desa	Indonesian	Head of the village; village chief
Ketua	Indonesian	Leader
Ketua Adat	Indonesian	Male Spiritual Leader
Kios	Tetun	Small shop selling small amounts of everyday items such as oil, rice, salt, cigarettes, cola.
Kooperativa	Tetun	Cooperative
Koramil	Indonesian	Sub-district military command
Kore Metan	Tetun	Lit. Cutting/Lifting the black cloth. Ceremony marking a death, the anniversary of a death or the end of mourning.
Koremetan Naçional	Tetun	National memorialising ceremony
Korporasi Pinjam	Simpan Indonesian	Savings and Loans Cooperative
Kostumes	Tetun	Customs
KUD	Indonesian	Kooperasi Unit Desa. Village Unit Cooperative. New Order era organisation
Kultura	Tetun	Culture
LADV	English	Law Against Domestic Violence. The 2010 Law Against Domestic Violence. In Tetun: Lei Contra Violensia Domestika
Lafurana Hi Kare	Makassae	Lit. Hearth and knife. A sister
Laksaur Militia	Tetun	An East Timorese militia based in Suai, Cova Lima
Lao Hamutuk	Tetun	Walk Together. A Timorese NGO working on economic development monitoring.
Lia Loos	Tetun	Truth
Lia Nain	Tetun	Lit. Owner of the voice; elder
Lisan	Tetun	Customary practice
Liurai	Tetun	Lit. “more land”, King, Landowner
Lulik	Tetun	Sacred or taboo
Lutu-Hum	Tetun	Tetun: retainers of a <i>Liurai</i> lit. “Dwellers at the bottom of the pale [wooden fence]”
Mate Rasik	Tetun	Die alone
Matrilocal residence	English	Married couple reside with the wife’s family
Maubere	Tetun	A term for a male Timorese farmer repurposed by FRETILIN to symbolise a revolutionary subject. See also “Buibere”
Meo	Baikeno	Noble warrior class in Oecusse

TERM	LANGUAGE	DEFINITION
Mestiço	Portuguese	Timorese, Portuguese, Mozambican, Angolan, Brazilian, Hakka Chinese, Macanese, Arab, Indonesian-Malay or Dutch.
MFI	English	Microfinance institution
Mikrokredit	Indonesian	Microcredit
Moris Rasik	Tetun	Lit. “Independent life”, or self starting. A large Timorese Microfinance Organisation
Moris Naroman	Tetun	enlightened life; enlightenment.
Naizuf	Baikeno (Meto)	King
NUREP	Tetun	Nucleos De Resistencia Popular. The nucleus of the popular resistance. The village-based resistance network leaders.
OMT	Tetun	Organização Mulher Timorese. The women’s wing of conservative CNRT party
Operasi Sapu Jagad	Indonesian	“Operation global clean sweep”. The Indonesian organised operation to kill, deport and destroy East Timor after its people voted split from Indonesia in 1999
OPMT	Tetun	Organização Popular Da Mulher Timorese. Popular Organisation of Timorese Women. The women’s wing of the FRETILIN party
Opportunidade Lorosa’e	Timor Tetun	Opportunity Timor-Leste. A Christian microfinance provider in Timor-Leste
Ordinença	Portuguese	Ordnance or Military Logistic Support
Paca	Fataluku	Noble
Pasukan Pro-Intergrasi	Indonesian	Pro-integration umbrella grouping of Timorese militia
Patria	Tetun	Fundação Pátria. A Timorese women’s rights NGO
Patrlineages	English	Kin groups related through males
Patrilocal residence	English	Married couples reside with the husband’s family
Pembantu	Indonesian	A Maid; home help.
Pensaun Veteranus	Tetun	Veterans’ Pension
Pensaun Vitalisia	Tetun	Life Pension. A pension paid to ex-members of parliament for life.
Petani	Indonesian	Farmer
Piastres	Portuguese	Portuguese currency
Pramuka	Indonesian	Indonesian scout movement
Preman	Indonesian	Strongmen or gangsters
Rai Lulik	Tetun	The spiritual world
Ratih	Indonesian	Rakyat Terlatih. Trained civilians; civilian militia
Ratu	Fataluku	King

GLOSSARY

TERM	LANGUAGE	DEFINITION
Rede Feto	Tetun	The East Timor Women's Network
Regulo	Portuguese	Petty king
Reino	Portuguese	1. Peasant 2. Kingdom, Realm; Tribe; Subjects; Commoners; People
RENETIL	Tetun	Resistência Nacional dos Estudantes de Timor-Leste. The National Resistance of the Students of Timor-Leste.
Rubrica orçamental separada	Portuguese	Separate budget lines
Rukun Tetangga (RW)	Indonesian	Neighbourhood association
Rukun Warga (RW)	Indonesian	Administrative unit
Sagrada Familia	Tetun	A violent group of ex-FALINTIL, banned by the state, and led by Cornelio Gama, or Elle Seti L7
SAPT	Portuguese	Sociedade Agricola Patria E Trabalho. Agricultural Society for the Fatherland and Workers
Saun	Tetun	The material world
Secretaria Suko	Tetun	Secretary of the Suku
SEM	Tetun	Sekretária Estadu Ba Apoiu No Promosaun Sosciu-Ekonomika Ba Feto. The Secretariat of State for the Support and Socio-Economic Promotion for Women (2015-2017)
SEPI	Tetun	Sekretária Estadu Promosaun Igualdade. The Secretariat of State for the the Promotion of Equality (2012-2015)
Serfdom	English	A tenant who is by law, custom, or agreement is bound to live and labour on land belonging to a landlord, to render a service to the landlord, and not free to change their status
Serralhos	Portuguese	Harem
Servile marriage	English	A woman, <i>without the right to refuse</i> , is married on payment of money or in kind to her parents, guardian, family
Servo, Servi, or Servidor	Tetun	Serf
Sirih Pina	Indonesian	Areca nut and betel leaf combination chewed to produce a mild narcotic effect. Used in many ceremonies.
STAE	Tetun	Secretariado Técnico de Administração Eleitoral. The Secretary for Technical Administration of Elections Department of State Administration
Subdistriktu	Tetun	Subdistrict Administrative area smaller than a District
Suku, Suco, Suko	Tetun	1. Village 2. Village administrative area.

TERM	LANGUAGE	DEFINITION
		This word is a Portuguese rendering of Suku (I) which means tribe in modern Indonesian. Three spellings exist today in Tetun: Suku, Suko, Suco
Tais	Tetun	Traditional Timorese woven cloth. Tais can be worn as skirts and scarfs and used in marriage and mortuary ceremonies.
Tama	Tetun	1. Enter 2. Interfere
Tara Bandu	Tetun	Official prohibition (e.g. on entering a plot of land)
Tau korenti, Tau morteen	Tetun	Lit. "Put a necklace". A ceremony to mark an engagement
TBO	Indonesian	Tenaga Bantuan Operasi. Military operations' assistants
Temukung	Atoni:	Head of the lineage
Tob, Tobe	Baikeno	Noble
Toos Nain	Tetun	Farmer
Topasses	Indonesian	Derived from the Indonesian <i>topi</i> or hat. <i>Topasses</i> were also commonly called "Black Portuguese"
Tua Haraki	Tetun	Palm liquor
Tuba Rai Metin	Tetun	"Stand firmly on the ground". A Timorese Microfinance Institution
Tuur Hamutuk	Tetun	Sit together to resolve a problem or to celebrate
UBSP Usaha Bersama Simpan Pinjam	Indonesian	Usaha Bersama Simpan Pinjam Lit. Business Together Saving Lending. Microfinance Savings and Loans
UDT	Tetun	União Democrática Timorense. Timorese Democratic Union. Timorese political party
Ulun-Houris	Tetun	Chattel slave, usually war captives. The name means 'living head' owing to the tradition of head hunting in Timor
Uma	Tetun	1. House 2. Lineage group
Umane	Tetun	Wife's family, wifegivers
Usif	Meto (Baikeno)	King
Violensia bai-bain	Tetun	normal or everyday (domestic) violence
Violensia boot	Tetun	Serious (domestic) violence, usually involving blood
VPU	English	Vulnerable Persons' Unit. A unit in the Timorese Police Force to protect vulnerable persons such as women and children.
Wanra	Indonesian	Perlawanan Rakyat. People's resistance. Civilian militia
Wifegiver	English	Lineage group providing a wife to another group

## GLOSSARY

TERM	LANGUAGE	DEFINITION
Wifetaker	English	Lineage group receiving a wife from another group
Xefe Aldeia	Tetun	Hamlet chief
Xefe Posto	Tetun	Chief of the Post
ZEESMS	Tetun	Zona Especial de Economia Social de Mercado. Special Zones of Social Market Economy of Timor-Leste. The Oecusse free trade zone

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