

IN IT FOR THE LONG HAUL? POST-CONFLICT STATEBUILDING, PEACEBUILDING, AND THE GOOD GOVERNANCE AGENDA IN TIMOR-LESTE

SHAUN GOLDFINCH¹* AND KARL DEROUEN JR.²

¹*The University of the South Pacific, Fiji Islands*

²*The University of Alabama, USA*

SUMMARY

Statebuilding after conflict often entails liberal peacebuilding measures. The end of the UN mission in post-conflict Timor-Leste in December 2012 provides a unique opportunity to investigate statebuilding in practice. The liberal peacebuilding agenda has met with stiff academic resistance—mainly from the critical theorist camp—and is questioned as an appropriate measure of statebuilding success. We deploy instead the good governance (GG) agenda as a hybrid local-liberal guide. Drawing on field work, interviews, and secondary documents, we investigate what we see as four key, intertwined and overlapping aspects of GG: state capacity including the establishment of a state bureaucracy, participation and the engagement of civil society, institution building and rule of law, and corruption control and transparency. We note GG provides a useful policy heuristic, while abstract “one-size-fits-all” liberal peacebuilding models, which avoid the complexities of machinery of government issues, the time taken to develop institutions, and historical and contextual environments of countries, are likely to face severe problems. New states may be dependent on external forces to maintain monopoly of violence. The reversibility and uncertainty of statebuilding and the decades-long commitment needed by international agencies are noted. Copyright © 2014 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

KEY WORDS—good governance; statebuilding; peacebuilding; Timor-Leste; liberal peacebuilding

INTRODUCTION

Post-conflict environments provide severe challenges, with international and domestic agencies faced with building and sustaining peace after conflict (*peacebuilding*), fostering complementary effective and stable states to sustain peace (*statebuilding*), and encouraging economic and social development (Jackson, 2011; Newman, 2011). These overlap to the extent Zurcher (2011, 69) claims ‘peacebuilding is ..statebuilding’ (see also Sabaratnam, 2011; OECD 2011). But which institutions, machinery of government issues and capacities, are important (Wolff, 2011; Hillman, 2013)? How to move beyond statistical abstraction toward implementation? Timor-Leste provides a unique opportunity to study these issues, with a United Nations (UN) intervention from 1999 engaged in programs of peacekeeping and statebuilding after civil war and a 24-year genocidal Indonesian occupation. The end of the UN peacekeeping mission on 31 December 2012 allows tracking of this process over 13 years (UNMIT, 2013).

The good governance (GG) agenda provides a heuristic to guide this endeavor, providing a summary of international agency approaches to development as expressly promulgated by them (Doornbos, 2003; Smith, 2007; Kaufmann et al., 2009). GG provides context and detail that other studies of statebuilding and peacebuilding can lack (OECD, 2011; Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 2013). The four broad and overlapping categories found within GG include building state capacity including bureaucratic expertise and machinery of government, fostering democracy and participation, institution building such as rule of law and property rights, and transparency and corruption control (Goldfinch et al., 2013). A key aspect is this focus on public administration and the machinery of government.

*Correspondence to: S. Goldfinch, School of Management and Public Administration, The University of the South Pacific, Laucala Campus, Suva, Fiji Islands. E-mail: shaun.goldfinch@gmail.com

Good governance is said to be vague to its boundaries and is criticized for an ostensible theoretically moribund and overly abstract statistical nature, a supposed teleological modernization agenda, overlapping measures, and claimed promulgation of a market-facilitating neoliberal “one-size-fits all” model (Goldsmith, 2007; Andrews, 2010; Knoll and Zloczyst, 2011). It has been questioned as an adequate historical account of Western development (Grindle, 2004). GG’s association with neoliberalism-derived agendas and related liberal peacebuilding models sees claims it serves to force a self-serving ‘Western’ universalism on developing countries, with instability and conflict undermining corporate interests and global markets (Boege et al., 2009; Di John, 2010).

None of these critiques are fatal. GG serves as a policy heuristic to supplement and guide contextual and historical studies (Andrews, 2010). There is not one type of “good government” or effective state, leaving room for variation (Goldsmith, 2007). Nor is GG narrowly “neoliberal,” with effective and democratic states and “good” institutions doing more than just supporting a market economy, and perhaps inherently valuable, even if in tension with traditional elites, institutions, and power structures (Argyriades, 2006). GG explicitly examines issues of participation and is adaptable to examining civil society, providing for greater engagement with local conditions. A World Bank program and related statistical indicators are part of this mix but not its entirety, providing a probabilistic heuristic for contextualization in the field.

Good governance provides substantive context to peacebuilding/statebuilding. Extant studies often drawn from liberal peacebuilding models focused on improving institutions, elections, political parties, and new constitutions (cf. Doyle and Sambanis, 2000; Fortna, 2004), albeit often expressed in over-simplified quantified measures, such as levels of democracy. There is often little in terms of actual mechanisms, organizations and state bureaucracies, policy itself, implementation, and governance, as studied in more state-centered public administration literature (Menocal, 2011; Hillman, 2013). Democratization and electoral processes can be destabilizing, with some post-conflict nations lacking capacity to absorb change (Wolf et al., 1996; Paris, 2004). Indeed, capacity of governments, effective bureaucracies, and good public administration may be relatively important in state stability and development at low levels of income, than even democracy and elections (Charron and Lapuente, 2011; DeRouen and Goldfinch, 2012; Hillman, 2013). Civil society and participation is important with cultural practices, the Catholic Church and kinship bonds important in Timor, particularly during the Indonesian occupation when these helped maintain Timorese identity and desire for independence. In particular, establishing effective public administration is central to statebuilding in post-conflict environments.

Critiques of liberal peacebuilding/statebuilding abound. Duffield (2001, cited in Sabaratnam 2011) contends that liberal peacebuilding represents a system of governance designed simply to keep order in developing countries. Richmond (2010, 2011a, 2009) argues that the liberal agenda does not treat “a-liberal” citizens (e.g., citizens not part of the free market economy) as equal to liberal ones and contends liberal post-conflict interventions are subject to backsliding from peace to violence; indeed, such reverses transpired in Timor-Leste in 2006. Tadjbakhsh and Richmond (2011) argue that the claimed liberal model’s rigid stance as a universalizing doctrine undervalues cultural diversity; perhaps an unfair criticism given it explicitly embraces rule of law and aspects of participation that might engage oft-excluded non-elite and other groups. A focus on Weberian legal/rational states is seen to down-play local and traditional systems of legitimacy, order, and service delivery existing outside formal structures (Richmond, 2010; Titeca and De Herdt, 2011).

Because of considerable overlap with liberal peacebuilding/statebuilding, the GG agenda is susceptible to the similar critiques. These critiques reflect apparent failures, with “backsliding” in liberal-oriented peacebuilding missions in Sri Lanka, East Timor, Lebanon, Kosovo, Bosnia, and the Middle East (Paris, 2004; Richmond, 2011a). Despite the limitations, however, liberal peacebuilding models dominate in practice and much of academia, with Paris (2011) contending that most critics do not offer viable alternatives and with liberal missions doing more *good* than harm (Newman, 2009). As Mac Ginty (2010, 360) argues, peacebuilding “should be judged according to [its] efficacy. Both Western-style peacebuilding and indigenous...techniques hold advantages in certain circumstances.”

We see GG as addressing critiques of the liberal enterprise, without entirely jettisoning important liberal elements (cf. Paris, 2010; Richmond, 2011a; 2011b). It serves as a “local-liberal hybrid” guide to assess peacebuilding/statebuilding (cf. Richmond, 2010; 2011a; 2011b; Paris, 2011; Thiessen, 2011). GG incorporates

liberal indicators such as participation, institution building, and anti-corruption measures not entirely unique to liberal market-based economies, including locally oriented indicators such as civil society engagement and measures outside formal states. GG is consistent with arguments that liberal peacebuilding does not proceed from rigid and unanimously agreed-upon assumptions (Heathershaw, 2008, cited in Sabaratnam, 2011). Nor does it assume “rapid liberalization [will] create conditions for stable and lasting peace in countries emerging from civil conflict” (Paris, 2011, 34). As such, the GG agenda provides a useful organizing principle to inform post-conflict development. At worst, it summarizes the stated aims of international agencies, allowing us to examine statebuilding implementation.

To investigate these issues, we examine a UN-led post-conflict peacebuilding and statebuilding exercise in Timor-Leste over 13 years. Interviews were conducted in Timor-Leste with senior figures within the UN mission, senior Timorese officials, USA, New Zealand, and Australian diplomats and officials, and some foreign consultants, and were taped and transcribed.¹ Using largely unstructured interviews, supplemented by other primary and secondary material, this case study provides texture sometimes lacking in multi-country statistical studies (Yin, 2009). Hillman’s (2013) study of public administration reform in post-conflict Aceh, Indonesia, and Ingram’s (2012) analysis of the UN Transitional Administration in East Timor before Timorese independence provide similar examples.

We show the immense difficulty of establishing new and functioning states, despite a considerable commitment of international resources, including military and police forces. To maintain monopoly of violence, new states may be dependent on international forces. Broader lessons perhaps are not surprising: institutions, both formal and informal, take time and considerable effort to establish and face resistance. The success of peacebuilding and statebuilding is hard to judge even for those on the ground, particularly with a somewhat transitory and fragmented international development community. Legitimacy and the belief in democracy of victorious post-conflict regimes may exist, but factional, regional, and cultural differences; feelings of entitlement; and personal tensions decades old can erupt into violence. Building new institutions needs to take into account traditional and other institutions that provide centers of disruption and resistance. Timor-Leste shows that there is no easy answer to the problems of statebuilding, and no substitute for knowledge and long contextual engagement, and commitment of considerable resources, human, financial, and coercive over extended periods.

TIMOR-LESTE

Four hundred years of Portuguese colonization unraveled quickly in the South East Asian East Timor in 1975, with an attempted coup by one newly formed Timorese political party Timorese Democratic Union (UDT) with ties to Indonesia, followed by a short civil war, won by another political party, Fretilin, which declared independence on 28 November 1975. After initial forays, a Western-backed invasion of around 35 000 Indonesian troops, Tentara Nasional Indonesia (TNI) began on 7 December. Subsequent TNI massacres, torture, rape, and starvation saw as much as 20 per cent to even a third of the population perish by 1999 (Kiernan, 2008; Kingsbury, 2009; Taylor, 1999). Falantil—initially the military wing of Fretilin—retreated to the interior from where it conducted a protracted guerrilla war.

Indonesian President B. J. Habibie unexpectedly announced in January 1999 that if the majority of East Timorese rejected autonomy within Indonesia, independence would be granted (Olsson, 2009). On 1 June 1999, UN representatives arrived to organize the process. Despite violent TNI intimidation, on 30 August, 99 per cent of registered voters turned out to vote, with 79 per cent supporting independence (Martin, 2001). A rampage by TNI militias and troops saw further rapes and torture, 1500–2000 murdered, and 60–80 per cent of buildings

¹These must remain anonymous but included interviews with a US official from the State Department (twice) and a Timorese working for the US Embassy; a senior New Zealand diplomat; and officials from New Zealand Aid Programme and Australian Agency for International Development, a New Zealander working in the Ministry of Education, two senior Timorese public servants, a foreign advisor to the Civil Service Commission, a senior member of the International Committee of the Red Cross, and a locally based Australian business man, plus two sets of interviews with three senior members of the United Nations Democratic Governance Support Unit. Some interviewees had long histories within Timor-Leste, back to 1999. Unstructured interviews were carried out over 2 weeks from 15–28 November 2010 and were usually an hour or more. Notes were taken, and interviews were recorded and transcribed. Article drafts were circulated for comment.

and infrastructure destroyed. The capital Dili was largely demolished. Around a third of the population fled to the mountains while another third left, or was forcibly taken, into West Timor. The UN mission fled (Commission for Reception, Truth, and Reconciliation Timor-Leste, 2005).

Following intense international pressure, Indonesia acquiesced to an Australian-led international peacekeeping force mandated by the UN, the International Force in East Timor, which landed on 20 September. The formal TNI did not engage directly with International Force in East Timor, and on 29 October 1999, it retreated into West Timor. Direct UN rule was followed by formal independence in 2002, with a constitution promulgated. East Timor became Timor-Leste.

STATEBUILDING AS GOOD GOVERNANCE

Good governance overtook or supplemented the market-based “Washington Consensus” and public management reform along New Public Management lines as an organizing agenda for development for international development agencies from the 1990s on (Doornbos, 2003). Rhetoric may be shifting/converging from GG to statebuilding and “state fragility” (OECD, 2011). GG also serves as a statebuilding agenda, with a particular focus on public administration (Gosovic, 2000; Goldsmith, 2007). Within a broadly “whole of government” approach that recognizes the interrelationships between factors (OECD, 2006), GG consists of the following:

1. A focus on *the basic capacity and machinery of a state*, including increasing merit-based recruitment and training of civil servants; an emphasis on ethical and values training; and developing processes, revenue collection, and other functions (Brinkerhoff, 2005; Argyriades, 2006; Baeck and Hadenius, 2008). This was partly a re-affirmation of Pre-New Public Management Weberian-type bureaucratic models.
2. *Participation*, with a key role for civil society in developing and implementing policy, linked to broader notions of participatory democracy (Kaufmann et al., 2009). Participation was seen to increase government responsiveness, increase scrutiny and incentives for better performance, draw on and develop the capacity of civil society, and increase state legitimacy (Roy, 2008). Our earlier criticism of democratization as a central indicator of successful peacebuilding was based on the argument that a numerical measure democracy should not be considered a *sufficient* indicator, with processes also potentially destabilizing. Democracy, *alongside* effective government machinery and institutions, remains important.
3. *Institution building* including private property rights, rule of law, and judicial machinery and independence. These were seen as fundamental to a functioning market economy, but also provided dispute mechanisms, protection of human rights and checks on other branches of government, and support for broader notions of democracy (Haggard and Tiede, 2011; Krever, 2011). This is central to our case, with Rotberg (2010) asserting that land rights were a leading cause of disputes in Timor.
4. A focus on developing *anti-corruption mechanisms and related transparency* and audit mechanisms, including various ostensibly independent anti-corruption agencies and audit agencies, with an array of powers, including investigatory and criminal. This reflected renewed international focus on moral probity (Blunt, 2009; Isaksson and Bigsten, 2012).

Timor-Leste provides a unique opportunity to investigate implementation of this agenda, as follows.

BUILDING A STATE AND STATE CAPACITY

The UN Transitional Administration in East Timor assumed governance and judicial power on 25 October 1999, progressively shared with Timorese elites until independence in 2002. The UN returned to a country largely destroyed, with buildings, infrastructure, basic state machinery, records, and personnel absent (Lemay-Hébert, 2011). Indonesian officials, school teachers, and some Timorese irredeemably compromised, fled, or were forcibly removed by the Indonesians. The remnant public service was often a ghost workforce, and/or one with little education, training, experience, or capacity, paid partly to tie it to the occupational regime but with little work expected.

Public servant recruitment began, but Timorese from the diaspora were reluctant to return for a “starting salary [of] seventy dollars [a month],” as a UN official noted. Entry level positions at least could be “trained-up,” and some leadership positions could be filled by returning expats and/or resistance leaders. The lack of suitable staff was particularly bad for mid-level positions. There was also some re-hiring of former employees of the Indonesian regime, particularly in the case of the Police. Loyalty to the new regime was complex, given the morass of (dis) loyalties, accommodation, and dissemblance of an occupational regime. Some officials had been secret supporters of the resistance, providing further complexity.

For a resistance that saw itself as defeating an invasion, notions of a neutral public service rather than one that directly served the political elite were difficult. Perceived loyalty could assist promotion, and links with newly ascendant elites and former resistance leaders could provide access to government jobs, particularly after independence in 2002. Public servants with a background in the resistance, but mixed skills, were difficult to retire or force into training. Nor did notions of appointment on merit sit well in a culture where it is expected that family and language groups will be favored in appointment, particularly where government jobs might be the only available.

Some returning Timorese expats were attracted to positions in international organizations, such as the UN, which paid considerably higher salaries. Some, while ethnically Timorese, had foreign passports, and Australian and/or Portuguese educations, and were known by the locals as *Timor-malai*—“foreign Timorese.” These foreign educations and passports also allowed movement in-and-out of Timor, and some stayed only a short time before returning to Australia and Portugal, largely because of the low salaries. Consultants hired on short-term contracts paying international rates to carry out public sector tasks, sometimes of Timorese background, not only faced resentment from considerably less well-paid local Timorese public servants but also faced some uncertainty of tenure, with jobs potentially changing with changes of government (Lemay-Hébert, 2011). The high visibility of UN and aid agency presence, with the dominance of traffic by the remarkably ubiquitous UN white SUVs, and the few hotels and bars dominated by aid workers, highlighted the difference between a local population facing high levels of poverty, the poorly paid local public servants, and the comparatively well-off expatriate community and Timorese working for international agencies.

“Capacity building” and “capacity development” remain buzzwords of development assistance, albeit with uncertain and shifting meanings at times. In April 2000, a Civil Service Academy was established, which became the National Institute of Public Administration, coming under Timorese control in 2003. This focused on developing human resource capacity in the civil service, and provided training and various courses, often in partnership with foreign aid agencies and international organizations. It continued to lack capacity and expertise, suffered from a high turnover of staff and a brain drain, and focused on short courses rather than advanced academic study (AUSAID, 2010). Within the public service generally, UN, other specialist agencies and foreign advisors provided support to ministries in capacity development and training; indeed, the word “capacity” is found in myriad initiatives through the decade to cover myriad activities (AUSAID, 2010). The various subgroups within the UN worked together on a diverse range of issues and even made submissions to Parliament on legislative issues and provided input into the policy process.

Without any major industry outside oil, government remains the key source of employment, with no shortage of applicants for positions albeit most woefully under-qualified. Government employment grew by 1 per cent annually (East Timor Law and Justice Bulletin, 2012). Simply providing education or training is not an easy solution. Despite Timorese being sent overseas for study with scholarships funded by aid, the top heavy civil service is not able to absorb them all, giving some an incentive to return to countries with better employment prospects. Internal education and training has been hampered because of the lack of high level training available within Timor-Leste. There has been reluctance to let competent people leave for advanced training or education overseas as they will be lost “for 2 or 3 years” as one interviewee noted.

The Timorese civil service has been increasingly formalized. In 2004, *The Statute of the Civil Service* was promulgated, which sets out in exhaustive detail in 122 articles the rights and duties, employment and disciplinary procedures, amongst other things, of civil servants, including a detailed Code of Ethics. The statute provides for a reasonably standard legal/rational type public service and a re-affirmation of Weberian-type bureaucracy.

International and aid agencies are committed to capacity development for the near future (AUSAID, 2010; The National Directorate for Aid Effectiveness, 2011).

Despite the extensive rhetoric, laws past, and money spent, evidence of success of capacity building and public service effectiveness is mixed. Basic skills in literacy and numeracy are lacking. An assessment by USAID (2009; p. 3) found “the average staff of the Ministry of Finance is educated to a third grade level” with “errors were made all day, every day, by everybody.” While “some of the better ministries” had some planning, develop strategies, and report results as one advisor noted, basic skills and information remained lacking. There was a lack of coordination of agencies, particularly between central and line, and a lack of established procedures (AUSAID, 2010). Reliance on foreign advisors continued with debate on “substitution” versus “mentoring,” and foreign advisors sometimes find training local staff difficult to the extent it was easier to personally complete tasks. Nor should the quality of the support and leadership provided by UN and international agencies be overstated: with loss of organizational experience with quick turnovers of staff, lack of coordination between foreign advisors, sometimes questionable expertise, and competing and changing emphasis within and between agencies (AUSAID, 2010).

The civil service commission

Of note is the establishment of the Civil Service Commission, with commissioners appointed in 2009 on five-year terms; three nominated by the government and two by Parliament (Democratic Republic of Timor Leste, 2012). This drew on a Public Service Directorate established under UN mandate in 2000, with its president becoming the first President of the new organization. The earlier body also has a considerably narrower brief and had a focus on developing conditions and legal framework for the civil service. Some interviewees suggest increasing politicization of the public service and patronage after independence in 2002, with the establishment of the Commission partly to address this.

The Commission has wide powers across the public sector and is responsible for ensuring merit-based appointment of public servants across the public sector; sets terms and conditions of employment; promotes a code of ethics; conducts training, education, and staff planning; and provides for disciplinary matter and appeals. It resembles the central bodies prevalent in many Westminster regimes before the decentralization reforms of the 1980s and 1990s, with it being “a bit of a hybrid [a] Portuguese model bolted onto a Commonwealth Australian model and a bit of Timorese as well,” according to one advisor. Indeed, the Australian state of Victoria was particularly influential, with the “model we’ve got is the Victorian model in Australia and the ex-premier of Victoria, Steve Bracks and some of his senior bureaucrats have assisted with the legislation.”

The Commission’s enthusiastic adoption of its broad mandate and unwillingness to delegate to other agencies may have overwhelmed its capacity, so foreign and UN advisors were needed to fill the gaps (AUSAID, 2010). Its ability to act independently depends somewhat on the personal power of the Commissioners, although initial indications are positive, with the salaries of over 363 officials suspended in 2010 and termination of salaries or employment of 29 (AUSAID, 2012). As one advisor noted, the Commission is “serious about being impartial and merit [with] governance structures to hold them accountable” despite “some... clash with the status quo where it’s...family and friends first.” For those facing cultural norms to patronize family and cultural groups, but who subscribe to a merit-based public service, the Commission offers a means of resisting pressure. A focus on legal/rational norms inherent in the Commission provides a potential model for mediating between competing linguistic and other groups.

In sum, Timor-Leste faced a lack of trained personal and continual problems with building capacity, recruitment, training, and education; a culture not traditionally supporting notions of merit-based appointment; a brain drain; and the tensions and questionable loyalties of a post-occupational culture. International agencies often competed with government agencies for staff and resources, and the higher salaries offered and better living standards of foreign experts placed further stresses (Lemay-Hébert, 2011). A key response has been to develop Weberian-type structures under law, with the Commission a notable example. Despite continual rhetoric on “capacity building,” long reports, and considerable effort and money, Timor-Leste relied and relies to an extent on UN, international

organization, and non-governmental organizations for advice and support for even some basic services, despite years of development (Armitage, 2011).

DEMOCRACY, PARTICIPATION, AND STATEBUILDING

If participation, democracy, and legitimacy are important for statebuilding as research suggests (Jackson, 2011; DeRouen and Goldfinch, 2012), Timor-Leste is fortunate that it was borne out of an expressed will of its people, with broad support for the resistance and their role in government. Timor-Leste's 2012 election, turnout of 75 per cent with 95 per cent valid votes cast, suggests some democratic engagement and legitimacy. Recent elections have been mostly fair according to international observers, and governments have changed more-or-less peacefully. The early days of the UN regime was a top-down exercise with limited Timorese participation, and a sometimes tense relationship between the largely all-powerful UN authority and the National Consultative Council, largely made up of members of the resistance National Congress for Timorese Reconstruction (Chopra, 2002); but this evolved into self-government. A more-or-less 2001 peaceful election, the establishment of the 2002 constitution, independence, and the reduction of the UN presence promised much.

Prospects for long-term stability should not be overstated. The coming and going of UN missions—in particular the return of UN peacekeepers in 2006 in the face of near-civil war—shows the difficulty of gauging stability and legitimacy, even for those on the ground. A particular issue is the factional, multi-lingual, multi-cultural, and regional nature of Timorese identity (Rosser, 2009). There are around 19–20 language groups, of which around 10 are widely spoken (Ethnologue Languages of the World, 2013). One of the two official national languages, Portuguese, is spoken by a small elite and often older minority. Attempts to spread the language through education have faced mixed success. The second official language, Tetum/Tetun, is widely spoken, and the Catholic Church conducts its liturgy in Tetum. But some do not speak Tetum well, and it remains somewhat under-developed in terms of grammar and vocabulary. Indonesian Bahasa remains widely spoken, particularly amongst younger members of the population, and English is also common. Language differences are layered on competing claims of quasi-nationhood in a multi-cultural society as “each group, each kingdom, has its own rituals [which] may be far from each other” as one Timorese noted and “where people very much identify with their own first.” Returning expats—including the returning Portuguese-speaking Fretilin leadership—faced different language groups and divided loyalties from those that remained through the occupation. Regional differences are seen between East and West Timor-Leste.

The history of the occupation is important. Within the resistance movement, there were divisions, murders, purges, and betrayals (Kiernan, 2008). The tensions created by the split between Falintil/Gusmao and Fretilin in 1987, when (future President and Prime Minister) Xanana Gusmao took Falintil to become the armed wing of the multi-party National Council of Maubere Resistance, last to this day. The Police force has members with experience in the Indonesian regime. In particular, complex divisions tracing back to the resistance movement and occupational era—and in some accounts to the Portuguese era—were close to reigniting civil war in 2006. What began as a demonstration by “petitioners” from the Army escalated to gun battles, the arming of citizens by different members of the military and the government, around 30 dead, the torching of houses, and the displacement of 100 000–150 000 (UN Independent Special Commission of Inquiry, 2006). Armed criminal “martial arts” gangs with de-mobbed resistance fighters as members and cultish beliefs were part of this unholy mix. Over 1500 UN troops and police were deployed to restore order on the invitation of the Prime Minister. The last play was the attempted assassination of Prime Minister Ramos Horta and President Gusmao in 2008 by army deserters, in which Horta was severely wounded. The exclusion of Fretilin from government after the 2012 election, and criticism of Fretilin itself, was blamed for igniting violence in July 2012 when 58 cars were burnt and one person was killed. Politics and power remains highly personalized, with the dominance of Gusmao continuing. It remains to be seen what the future holds when the heroes of the resistance retire.

In sum, the experience of Timor-Leste shows the fragility of new states, and the importance of contextual and historical understanding, even when there is evidence of legitimacy, participation, and initial wide scale support for a new regime. Governments are not established *tabula rasa* but grafted onto highly complex historical, factional, personalized, institutionalized, and potentially violent tensions. Ties to former regimes, and feelings of entitlement

due to military engagement in the past complicated by resentment fuelled by military demobilization, can ferment disorder. Populations can be subject to regional, cultural, and linguistic differences. Establishing democracies can lead to new tensions as competing elites struggle for power, and democratic and legal/rational norms create tension with existing institutions and traditional power structures (Cramer and Goodhand, 2002; Rosser, 2009). To maintain monopoly of violence, new states may be dependent on UN and external military and police. Historical knowledge and substantive contextual understanding can be hard to develop and maintain amongst a limited and changing pool of experts and international advisors, who may have short-term contracts and perhaps competing agendas.

INSTITUTION BUILDING AND RULE OF LAW

Institution building in Timor also shows difficulty in establishing institutions where they may not have existed and/or may sit in tension with existing norms. This applied both to the establishment of the machinery and formal rules and institutions of state, and the perhaps the more important supporting informal values and institutions. Establishing rule of law, judicial capacity, and secure property rights have been difficult. Land tenure is a mire of competing claims back to Portuguese times, leading to heated disputes including violent threats, with struggles over land tenure law reform continuing (IRIN, 2011; East Timor Law and Justice Bulletin, 2013a).

In 1999, the UN inherited a complex morass of Indonesian, Portuguese, and customary law. Indonesian law was reinstituted as the norm, modified in accord with human rights conventions (Olsson, 2009). There was virtually no machinery of enforcement. Legal personnel had fled with the Indonesian retreat and there were no Timorese legal professionals in East Timor in 1999. By 2001, there were only 25 East Timorese judges and 13 prosecutors but with largely secondary school educations and less than 2 years of experience or training. From 2003, legal training was provided by the UN supported Legal Training Centre based in Timor-Leste, with 70 judges and other legal professionals graduating since 2007. The judiciary is perceived to be reasonably independent, but most legal proceedings are conducted in Portuguese, which the majority does not understand; judges are chronically overworked with huge backloads of cases, and enforcement is difficult (USAID, 2009). There is limited legal assistance. As such, access is limited. The UN, Portugal, and others continue to provide support for judicial and legal development (Democratic Republic of Timor Leste, 2012; UNMIT, 2013).

Rule of law has a tenuous hold. It had little precedent during the Indonesian period. In resistance-controlled areas during the occupation, Maoist-type self-criticism, arbitrary justice, and even the lack of presumption of innocence were the norm (Kiernan, 2008). Notions of equality before the law sit uncomfortably with cultural norms of looking after one's own in terms of family, language, and/or regional group. Disputes were and are often settled by violence. Customary law is inchoate, disputed, and partly an "invented tradition" (Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1992) assembled by Portuguese colonial authorities from disparate sources (Kammen, 2009).

The political elite can undermine respect for rule of law by treating it as a tool of government policy, particularly with regard to prosecutions for atrocities. The Police force was compromised by its ties to the occupational regime. Some Timorese political leaders have pardoned various crimes and/or circumvented due process, and there has been a reluctance to prosecute Indonesian war criminals and their militias. Timorese politicians have bent over backwards to accommodate Indonesian interests, including taking part in the UN-boycotted Commission of Truth and Friendship established by Timor-Leste and Indonesia to investigate the events of 1999 (*not* the whole occupation), which led to no successful prosecutions (Commission for Reception, Truth, and Reconciliation Timor-Leste, 2008). This "culture of immunity" was again apparent after the crises of 2006 and 2008, where (now) President Ramos Horta (legally) pardoned some convicted offenders—according to the UN 217 since 2007—including 24 convicted of attempting his murder. A reading is that cultural norms have facilitated reconciliation and that recent events reflect regional variants of "rule by law" (Brauchler, 2011; Tamanaha, 2004). Indeed, the importance of customary law is continually restated, albeit with skepticism to motives of those promulgating its reassertion and to its actual content (Kammen, 2009). If Western-type institutions of legal/rationality are important for development, for which there is some evidence (DeRouen and Goldfinch, 2012), this seems a sticking point.

ANTI-CORRUPTION AND TRANSPARENCY

Corruption may be a serious problem, but mechanisms are being developed to combat it (Blunt, 2009). The Indonesian regime left a legacy of corruption, oil provides an expropriable resource, a sense of entitlement exists amongst some government members, and patronage is not necessarily seen as wrong. Notions of what constitutes corruption can be lacking (USAID, 2009). According to one UN corruption expert, the Timorese environment minimized corruption in the early years, including lack of experience and expertise in government processes, the large number of expats in line positions, and the lack of things to steal.

Over time opportunities for corruption have increased—in this case oil wealth—and expertise in the use of governmental processes that might assist its commission. Perceptions of corruption are high, with Timor-Leste ranked 143 in Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index (cf. USAID, 2009). In 2010, the Deputy Prime Minister resigned after accusing Gusmao of corruption. The Opposition party, Fretilin, claimed that the government was paying 40 per cent more than it should to award contracts, with “corruption and waste rampant” (Murdoch, 2012). The very high use of procurement, accounting for 70 per cent of all government expenditure and as high as 90 per cent in some agencies, along with loose and sometimes badly run procedures and little monitoring of projects, and little competition for tenders, provides further opportunities (AUSAID, 2010). That much money “has simply been wasted away” was acknowledged by Prime Minister Gusmao, who noted malpractice in government and the private sector (East Timor Law and Justice Bulletin, 2013b). This is combined with what one UN official called “a culture of impunity [and] the perception of entitlement [with] those who exercise power view[ing] it as their turn.” It was difficult to untangle misguided expenditure from “unaccounted for expenditure” from “actual corruption,” particularly with the absence of a developed audit authority, under construction from 2012.

There is now something worth stealing: the Petroleum Fund, which sat at \$10.5bn in 2010. Its revenues account for 97 per cent of the state budget. Originally, withdrawals were set at a level to allow the fund to exist for future generations, but by 2009, the government was overspending the original 3 per cent threshold at 3.8 per cent in 2009, 4.8 per cent in 2010, and 4.3 per cent in 2011, with it increasing into 2012 (The Guardian, 2011). Some money has been spent on large infrastructure contracts of debatable benefit and questionable rectitude, with a greater focus on state development after 2006. Questions were raised regarding the moral rectitude of the President of the Investment Advisory Fund (Bachelard, 2012). Expanded use of the fund is notable given the finite capacity of the oil resource. However, the Petroleum Fund is notable for its strong reporting requirements to Parliament and its transparency generally, and perhaps a resource curse can be avoided (USAID, 2009).

Anti-corruption mechanisms and audit

The Anti-corruption Commission (ACC) was established by Parliament 2009 to provide independent “competence to the State [in] specialized criminal [matters],” with its first commissioner sworn in February 2010 (ACC, 2012; see also USAID, 2009). The commissioner is appointed by and reports to Parliament. It has considerable investigatory powers but refers cases for prosecution to the Prosecutor General. In 2010, the ACC conducted three investigations, with six in 2011. A total of 142 alleged cases of corruption were filed from 2010 to mid-2012. Several ministers were under investigation by the ACC by 2012. In June 2012, the former Minister for Justice Lucia Lobato was sentenced to 5 years in jail in a case involving \$US1m in government contract tenders. Timor-Leste conducted a self-assessment of its implementation of the UN Conventions against Corruption in 2011. A Provedor for Human Rights and Justice also has powers to investigate corruption, with these superseded powers still existing in law (USAID, 2009).

A constitutionally required audit court was approved in legislation in July 2012 and development continues. The High Administrative, Tax, and Audit Court can monitor bidding and tendering processes for contracts, investigate contracts during their lifetime, and carry out audit functions (Democratic Republic of Timor Leste, 2012). The Chamber of Accounts of the Court of Appeals has carried out audit functions and in 2011 expressed concerns over possible legal violations (La'o Hamutuk, 2011). Previous external audits were conducted by a professional accounting firm through contracts with the Minister of Finance, but not reported to Parliament; and by internal bodies within other agencies. An Internal Audit Unit exists in the Ministry of Finance. An Office of the Inspector

General can investigate civil service conduct. A sophisticated online Transparency Portal, showing budget, aid, e-procurement, and results, was established in 2011.

In sum, anti-corruption, audit, and transparency mechanisms have or are being developed. Senior government officials and politicians have faced investigation and successful criminal prosecutions, albeit it with investigations and prosecutions slow and resources stretched. Opportunities for corruption, the continuing personalization of power, and growing expertise in government and perhaps the related black arts of corruption, however, continue (Blunt, 2009).

CONCLUSION

Good governance promulgated by international agencies has been attacked for its static nature, dependence on neo-liberal ideologically based indicators, a claimed teleological Western-centric modernization bias, questionable historical verisimilitude, and reduction to a system of governance as opposed to a true reconciliatory mechanism (Goldsmith, 2007; Andrews, 2010; Richmond, 2010). We argue that it functions better as a policy heuristic, with its normative basis beyond simple neoliberal and market supporting institutions recognized, providing a local-liberal hybrid gauge of peacebuilding/statebuilding performance. GG provides a useful way of summarizing an agenda explicitly adopted by international agencies in various forms, facilitating an examination of statebuilding in practice. To do just this, we examine the UN-led peacekeeping and statebuilding exercise in East Timor/Timor-Leste from 1999 to 2012, with a state rebuilt after a brutal 24-year Indonesian occupation. We investigate four key, intertwined and overlapping aspects of GG: state capacity including establishing state bureaucracies and machinery of government, democracy and participation, institution building including rule of law, and corruption control and transparency. Progress has been mixed. There are some apparent advances in reining in corruption, and the last elections were stable; but building state capacity and institutions remain works-in-progress.

While the GG agenda provides a useful means of melding local and liberal measures, it could benefit from engaging with calls for recognition of emancipatory, social welfare, local traditions, and indigenous dimensions of peacebuilding (Richmond, 2010). Richmond's (2010, 2011b) modifications to the liberal agenda include reducing a claimed emphasis on universalism, top-down strategies, and "one-size-fits-all" approaches to post-conflict issues, while privileging emancipatory components; whereas Boege et al. (2009) and Titeca and De Herdt (2011) note the importance of local traditions and non-state forms of organization. While GG embraces these suggestions to varying extents (e.g., its recognition of the importance of civil society and participation), a deeper engagement could help support GG against charges of undermining legitimacy and promulgating a self-serving Western neoliberal policy agenda (Cramer and Goodhand, 2002). However, we should be wary in ascribing some transcendental virtue to apparent traditions, traditional elites, and local civil society organizations, with these highly politicized, interest driven, and potentially disruptive and/or ineffective (Hilhorst and van Leeuwen 2005). As such, liberal peacekeeping and statebuilding and even apparent "Western" aspects of GG still hold considerable normative and practical appeal, including to those that might be marginalized or oppressed by traditional institutional structures; even if statebuilding is more effective if adapted to local norms and constraints.

In Timor-Leste a more-or-less democratic state does seem to have been established—at least in terms of elections. This is an important achievement. The UN established a trusteeship in 1999 before independence was granted in 2002. This sat in tension with notions of participation and democracy, but only in a temporary or developmental sense, with elections in 2001 and self-government beginning in 2002, albeit with extensive UN and other international support.² Perhaps the period of UN trusteeship was too short, with tensions erupting into violence in 2006 and peacekeepers returning to restore order. Our study illustrates the importance of local knowledge, context, functioning machinery of government and institutions in understanding post-conflict regimes, and the dangers of reliance on overly abstract measures (Blunt, 2009; Hillman, 2013). For example, the Polity score, which is a widely used measure of democracy and sometimes used as a measure of peacebuilding success (e.g., Doyle and Sambanis, 2000), *improved* in Timor despite the dangerous crises of 2006 and 2008. Despite

²See Chandler 2010 for a different view.

tensions, turnout for elections remains impressive, although subject to limited violence, suggesting an acceptance of democratic notions.

Building state capacity has been difficult, with a remnant and somewhat ghost workforce of public servants left in 1999 being slowly built upon, with a dearth of trained and experienced people, problems with recruitment and retainment, lack of local education and training facilities, and difficulty in retiring/retraining those with links to the resistance but not the requisite skills. Recent reforms have attempted to centralize recruitment along classic bureaucratic and meritocratic lines. There have been various training initiatives and process development. Capacity remains mixed. Notions of merit-based appointment sit uneasily with cultural norms.

The Timorese case shows the difficulty of developing institutions of rule of law, and establishing property rights, particularly in the aftermath of a long and convoluted occupation and war, with mixed loyalties, and lack of judicial machinery and requisite trained individuals. Nor can notions of rule of law be simply rolled out to cultures where they have not previously existed and where existing forms of order might be in tension. The actions of Timorese governments have not always helped in this regard, with their willingness to circumvent due process. As such, the inculcation of values that underpin notions of even “neoliberal” or market promoting institutions is difficult. Without these values, however, organizations and mechanisms of government can be undermined or circumvented, or turned to serve other aims. Corruption remains a concern. There is opportunity, perceptions, and evidence it occurs. However, formal corruption and audit mechanisms have been established, prosecutions have occurred, and there is hope.

To conclude, new nations may need not only a long-term commitment—perhaps decades—from the international community in terms of development of capacity, but also military and police forces to maintain order (Hillman, 2013). Timor-Leste has shown the fragility and reversibility of statebuilding, even with the international commitment of significant resources over an extended period. There is no *tabula rasa* even for new states. Regimes are established upon often well-disguised but long-established factional tensions and disputes, personality clashes, multi-cultural and linguistic differences, ties to previously discredited regimes, feelings of entitlement for former “freedom fighters,” and competing traditional norms and institutions. Detailed historical and contextual knowledge is vital for those engaged in development and statebuilding. Simple tick-box agendas, multi-national studies, and statistical sophistication will only ever be complementary. For those looking for a simple answer to complex problems of peacebuilding and statebuilding, Timor-Leste provides further disappointment; but perhaps for those with greater readiness to adapt statebuilding prescriptions to institutional constraints of new states and commit sufficient resources, it also provides hope.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Research funding was received from the British Academy and the Folke Bernadotte Academy, Sweden. Thanks to the editors and referees of this journal and those interviewed for this study.

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