CHAPTER 8

Accommodating Incomplete DDR, Security Sector Development, and Veterans' Issues to Peacebuilding Efforts: National Responses, *Suco*, and Local Security in Timor-Leste

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Introduction

Timor-Leste is often interpreted as a successful case of peacebuilding because no mass violence has been observed since 1999. Nevertheless, the country has experienced repeated upheavals directed against the government after independence. These include the 2002 Dili riots; the turmoil in 2006 that led to the dysfunction of the national police and the resignation of the first Prime Minister, Mari Alkatiri; and the assassination attempts against the Nobel Peace Laureate José Ramos-Horta and the charismatic liberation leader Xanana Gusmão by army mutineers led by a new officer in 2008. Communal violence has also been prevalent since the 2006 turmoil, and is said to involve mostly youths, members of gangs, and martial

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arts groups (MAGs), many of whom were unemployed (Scambary 2006). Some observers have pointed to geographical and social divisions, such as those between east and west or urban and rural, as well as ethnic divisions, that appear to be promoting the scattered violence in Dili, but also "veterans' issues" as a source of instability (Babo-Soares 2003; McWilliam 2007; Kingsbury 2008).

During the 46th anniversary ceremony of F-FDTL (FALINTIL-*Forças de Defesa de Timor-Leste*/Timor Leste Defense Force) in 2021, the president of the National Parliament called on the Minister for the Affairs of National Liberation Combatants and the National Council of Combatants of National Liberation to integrate the veteran survivors into the socio-economic development of the nation (Martins 2021). This comment exemplifies that the veterans' issue is at the center of the political agenda, which strongly connects with the resistance history of Timor-Leste since the mid-1970s. As veterans today are recognized as influential actors that shape the political landscape of Timor-Leste, the issue is worth exploring from the view of peacebuilding discourse.

A civil society figure articulated that "the security and stability [of Timor-Leste] is heavily dependent on the actions of Xanana Gusmão, the veterans' pension system, and continued revenue from the [P]etroleum [F]und" (Belo 2016). International society engaged with Timor-Leste heavily in the early phase of peacebuilding post the 1999 referendum, but its engagement has been reduced since the UN mission withdrawal in 2012. This chapter addresses the following questions: What actions have been taken by national and local actors to deal with the veterans' issue? What actions by international actors have supported national and local actors? What are the consequences and the challenges that remain?

This chapter analyzes the adaptive processes that accommodated the veterans' issue in national and local contexts, arguing that two types of self-organization have been developed. One is the process of considerably rewarding veterans by the government using the abundant state budget that the country supports by oil and gas deposits, and the other is the iterative process of inclusion through assessing local governance within a traditional conflict resolution mechanism. Current security-political challenges in Timor-Leste stem from (1) the prolonged political rivalries and ties between elites since the successful resistance movement, (2) an incomplete disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) process, and (3) security sector development, which produced the Timorese version of the "veterans' issue." While the handling of veterans is considered the

central agenda by domestic elites, the international community, specifically the United Nations (UN) and donors, have considered this issue an exclusively domestic one. Then the chapter argues that the *suco* (village) functions as a catalyst of state affairs and traditional practices, where local security is also managed. Their contribution indirectly creates a basis for accelerating some national initiatives at the community level where conflict prevention measures were sought by incorporating traditional dispute mechanisms.

This chapter, by applying the concepts of self-organization and adaptation, demonstrates that Timorese national and local actors have steadily managed their emerging conflicts in connection with the veterans' issue. The highlight is two self-organizations that are reinforcing each other: local governance arrangements at national level creating a sustainable self-organization at village level, and vice versa. These interactive assessments have enabled the government to integrate the fledging state structure with local practices, which has crafted a new governance system that corresponds with the transformative Timorese context, and so with the adaptive peacebuilding approach that this book suggests. International peacebuilders have iteratively refined their actions since the early period in a step-by-step development of the relationships between national and local actors.

In this chapter, section "Conflicts, Peacebuilding Efforts, and Rising of Veterans' Issue in Timor-Leste" reviews the historical background of elite competition across historical phases that shaped the fates of veterans in the post-independence period. It also briefly covers the trends of international peacebuilding efforts, which have diminished over time. Section "Crafting Space Around the Government: Incomplete DDR, Security Sector Development and Veterans Issues" demonstrates the connections between DDR processes, security sector development, and the emerging veterans' issue, along with international peacebuilding efforts in these relevant fields. While democratic elections and state-building could contribute to bringing about political concessions through nonviolent means, both processes are tied to a renewed relationship not only among the leaders but also among their ex-colleagues from the resistance movement. The DDR processes ended within an international-led time frame in which the valorization of veterans and treatment arrangements are largely left to national elites, who have adopted a "buying peace policy." Section "Crafting Space for Self-organization Around Suco" turns our view to *suco*, where the valorization of veterans and local security is managed through an iterative

assessment for developing local administration with traditional practices. Section "Discussion" then considers the relevance of international cooperation on veterans' issues when national/local initiatives were concurrently active, and where the latter is the key to conducting iterative peacebuilding processes. The last section concludes with the overall findings from this case study, the significance of understanding political developments and upcoming challenges in the Timor-Leste context, and the prospects for future international peacebuilding policies.

Conflicts, Peacebuilding Efforts, and Rising of Veterans' Issue in Timor-Leste

The resistance movement against the government of Indonesia launched in 1974 was the main conflict in Timor-Leste prior to 1999. Earlier conflicts such as the colonization by Portugal in the mid-sixteenth century and the invasion by Japan during World War II form the backdrop to this conflict. This prolonged struggle resulted in between 100,000 to 180,000 casualties due to violence, hunger, and illness even though the population of the country is under 1 million (CAVR 2005, 44). During this period, violent conflicts between the group leading the resistance movement and pro-Indonesian groups demonstrate the variety of positions of the Timorese in regard to nation-state formation. Additionally, as the resistance actions intensified, the different positions among the leaders of the resistance movement made the political environment intricate.

Political Ties, Rivalries, and Power-Sharing Among the Elites and Veterans' Issues

A charismatic leader often called *Maun boot* in Timor-Leste, Xanana Gusmão remains a central political figure in the country. He was one of the core members of the political party favoring independence for the Timorese called FRETILIN (*Frente Revolucionária de Timor-Leste Independente*—Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor), together with Ramos-Horta and Mari Alkatiri. Leading the resistance movement since the mid-1970s, all three have become eminent leaders since then. A military wing named FALINTIL (*Forças Armadas da Libertação Nacional de Timor-Leste*—Armed Forces for the National Liberation of East Timor), operating under FRETILIN and headed by

Gusmão, was primarily responsible for guerrilla activities against the Indonesian Army. As the rivalries between hardliners such as Alkatiri and Gusmão escalated, Gusmão and Ramos-Horta left FRETILIN and sought to expand the resistance movement and integrate the entire country. They formed a nonpartisan organization known as the CNRT (*Conselho Nacional de Resistência Timorense*—National Council of Timorese Resistance).[1]

This competition among the elite intensified when the independence of Timor-Leste was accelerated by the international community. The CNRT ultimately became a core delegate for international negotiation in the 1990s when the United Nations (UN) facilitated the mediation between Portugal and Indonesia over the future status of Timor. Gaining 55 seats out of 88 in the 2001 Constituent Assembly allowed Alkatiri, the secretary-general of FRETILIN at that time, to expand his influence over the draft of the new country's constitution as well as to control government activities as the first prime minister of the country, while Gusmão was elected president.

The turmoil irrupted in 2006, revealing the intensification of rivalry among the top leaders combined with weak state-building and social dissatisfaction. For instance, a FRETILIN defense minister in 1975, Rogério Tiago Lobato, formed the Association of Former Combatants of '75. Being the first interior minister, Lobato utilized these veterans' networks to form a special police unit (Simonsen 2006, 591). This likely reflects the fact that the old divisions between the leaders of the resistance were being institutionalized as F-FDTL and the *Polícia Nacional de Timor-Leste* (PNTL—National Police of East Timor) as the turmoil started from a protest by a group of "petitioners" on their discrimination by high-ranked officers from the eastern region. The 2006 protest was enlarged with the participation of anti-government groups such as "Colimau 2000" composed mainly by FALINTIL veterans as well as farmers and youth, mostly from the western region, and later a group led by Major Alfredo Reinado. Minister Lobato conducted an extrajudicial act to give the uniforms and arms and ammunition of special police units to a civil group in the midst of the 2006 turmoil, placing them under the supervision of the prime minister (UNHCHR 2006, 40).

[1] The original name of the organization was CNRM (Conselho Nasional Resistência Maubere).

The pursuit of further political influence between the top leadership Alkatiri and Gusmão created tense confrontation in several social situations (Hasegawa 2013b). In particular, the latter insisted that the former resign to take responsibility for unlawful acts by PNTL. In the following year, as the result of an election, Gusmão successfully took over the legislature by forming a new political party, the CNRT (*Congresso Nacional de Reconstrução de Timor*—National Congress for Timorese Reconstruction) and built a political coalition to create the government.[2] Reelected in 2012, Gusmão remained prime minister until the beginning of 2015.

In essence, the political leaders from the "old generation" (*jerasaun tuan*) who contributed to the resistance movement renewed their old ties in the form of the introduction of free and competitive elections. Taur Matan Ruak, a commander of the FALINTIL, then became the commander of F-FDTL in the new state, taking over the presidency from Ramos-Horta in 2012. While he was an independent candidate, Ruak received support from Gusmão, highlighting the significant needs of veterans and former combatants, and youth throughout the electoral campaign (Powels 2012). The political situation turned volatile as a result of the 2017 national elections when FRETILIN won the presidential seat through Francisco Guterres "Lu Olo" but did not gain an absolute majority in the legislature. At this time, an opposition coalition led by CNRT with newly established political parties, one of which is the *Partidu Libertasaun Popular* (PLP) led by Ruak, was launched. However, confrontation between FRETILIN and CNRT continuously brought political deadlock, such as denial of the state budget by President Lu Olo, which led to new elections in 2018.

It should be noted though that the country remained stable during these political impasses. In this light, the second section in this chapter addresses the extensive arrangements made for veterans by elites following the 2006 turmoil.

Shifts in International Peacebuilding Efforts

On the path toward independence, between 1999 and 2002, intervention by external actors was characterized as immense and top-down in style. The independence referendum was conducted under the UN auspices,

[2] Other parties participated in AMP were ASDT (Associação Social Democrata Timorense), PSD (Partido Social Democrata), and PD (Partido Democrático).

while security was Indonesia's responsibility. As massive violence and destruction prevailed following the announcement of the referendum result in favor of independence, the International Force for East Timor (INTERFET) was dispatched to recover security under UN (Chap. 7). This was followed by the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNMISET), which performed as a peacekeeping operation (PKO) to implement executive, administrative, and judicial authority until Independence Day. As the "Timorization" policy, which demanded consultation with the locals, was developed, Timorese representatives were eventually invited to work with the international staff of UNMISET by creating the National Consultative Council and a transitional administration for East Timor, as well as to assign Timorese district administrators (Babo-Soares 2003). However, the ultimate decision-making power was vested in the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General, the highest-ranking position of the UNMISET. This mission was followed by the United Nations Office in Timor-Leste (UNOTIL), which largely supported the police.

The 2006 turmoil redirected the international society to enlarge the PKO to support reinventing the national police by recruiting, training, and mentoring new officers. This peacekeeping operation, the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT), was initially mandated to support the democratic electoral process in 2007, then to review security sector development with the government, supporting the judicial system and government organizations, while the recovery and maintenance of security was arranged by an agreement with a multilateral force led by Australia.

The closure of the UNMIT by the end of 2012 marked the shift of the Timorese government to the message, "Goodbye Conflict, Welcome Development" (RDTL 2010). This message implied the country's readiness to transit to economic development as its citizens began to enjoy growing, stable, safe, and peaceful situations (Tanaka-Sakabe and Honda 2018). Further, a massive volume of external financial support was no longer expected. The public finance management of Timor-Leste is unique from other post-conflict countries in that over 90% of the source is the oil/gas deposit-related tax and royalties available from the resources in the country; the grant contribution of donors is only approximately 10% of the state budget (RDTL 2021). This privileged fiscal environment allowed the government to project a positive outlook for the country.

At a glance, the UN missions' involvement, especially their early engagement, is largely considered to be an example of a determined-designed approach. The downsizing of international intervention and the shifting of the focus to development represent a relatively successful case of peacebuilding, even though social tensions remained. The succeeding sections discuss veterans' issues, which necessarily accommodate the interests of ex-combatants, politicians, and communities with the international peacebuilding efforts.

Crafting Space Around the Government: Incomplete DDR, Security Sector Development, and Veterans' Issues

This section examines the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) processes, security sector development, and emerging veterans' issues, along with international peacebuilding efforts. There is a direct connection between the DDR process and the veterans' issue, as once a soldier is demobilized, this person can assert themselves as a "veteran."

Managing Tensions in the State-Building Process

From the launch of state-building processes, the Timorese leaders were quite flexible and adaptive to the emerging needs given the concern to settle the requests of ex-combatants and veterans. When Gusmão and Ramos-Horta were formulating the foundation vision for the new country, that is, visualizing state-building, they both agreed that the new country would not have a standing army (CNRM n.d.). However, aggression from militia camps in West Timor, combined with the need to provide a role for FALINTIL ex-fighters, forced the leaders to reconsider their positions (Walsh 2011). At the time, Gusmão recognized that ex-FALINTIL fighters were "almost in a state of revolt" because they were dissatisfied with their inappropriate treatment in the cantonments and the lack of follow-up on their demands (Conflict, Security and Development Group—King's College London 2003). As a consequence, the CNRT recruited 650 ex-combatants for the new army, F-FDTL, who had been core members of FALINTIL under the direction of Gusmão. Another 1300 members were demobilized and assigned to the DDR program called FRAP (Falintil Reinsertion Assistance Program).

The initial arrangements for ex-combatants sparked further grievances. Some were dissatisfied with their exclusion from army recruitment and requested a pension and compensation for their contributions to the resistance movement. In response, Alkatiri, as prime minister, established an "Office of Veterans Affairs" in the "Office of the Secretary of State for Labour and Social Affairs" to deal with veterans' complaints (Conflict, Security and Development Group—King's College London 2003, para. 53). Using the capacity of the presidential office Gusmão initiated the registration of veterans and ex-combatants through two commissions to establish a pension system in August 2002. The two commissions were the Commission for the Issues of Former Combatants (*Comissão para os Assuntos dos Antigos Combatentes*: CAAC) to register the combatants that worked between 1975 and 1979, and the Commission for the Issues of FALINTIL Veterans (*Comissão para os Assuntos dos Veteranos das FALINTIL*: CAVF) to register the combatants that worked between 1981 and 1999. Nevertheless, these initiatives did not satisfy all of the requests. Some ex-combatants eventually joined anti-government groups that participated in violent acts, such as the 2002 Dili riots (Rees 2002, 151–56).

One contributing factor to the failure of the DDR process was the lack of financial resources. Ex-combatants considered that the international society should provide compensation to them (McCarthy 2002, 30), but there was no specific mandate for a UNPKO or other entities to take care of them. The FRAP did not have sufficient funding, and not much attention was paid to supporting the committees initially established by Gusmão (Conflict, Security and Development Group—King's College London 2003). Rather, international donors urged the Timorese government to provide a budget for compensation through its own efforts (The Timor-Leste Institute for Development Monitoring and Analysis 2004). This was a shocking message to the government, which had sought financial support from donors, embassies, and international organizations (Hasegawa 2013, 34).

Subsequent to the FRAP, the Recovery, Employment and Stability Programme for Ex-combatants and Communities in Timor-Leste (RESPECT) offered an additional opportunity for former FALINTIL members but also targeted other vulnerable groups such as widows and unemployed youth, as needing to be integrated into the community. Some projects aimed at creating short-term jobs for ex-combatants by participating in rehabilitating the infrastructure. Villages had the opportunity to reconstruct irrigation systems, markets, local roads, or receive training for

starting up small businesses such as kiosks. The program was managed by the UNDP (United Nations Development Programme), financially supported by the Japanese government, and later by the Thai government, while its challenges included achieving satisfactory participation of the Timor-Leste government and communities (The Timor-Leste Institute for Development Monitoring and Analysis 2004). Overall, as observed, international support for reintegrating ex-combatants skewed quickly.

The constitution endorsed in 2002 articulates the positions of those who contributed to national independence. Section 11 clause 3 highlights that it would not only support the fighters and church people that had roles during the resistance, "the state ensure[s] special protection to the war-disabled, orphans and other dependents of those who dedicated their lives to the struggle for independence and national sovereignty, and shall protect all those who participated in the resistance against the foreign occupation, in accordance with the law" (RDTL 2002). Article 85 then specifies the president's competency to award honorary titles, decorations, and recognition of merit in accordance with the law.

Despite this articulation of the importance of honoring and protecting the fighters for national liberation, the implementation was not straightforward. The dissatisfaction of ex-FALINTIL members again revealed itself in July 2004 when they held a demonstration in front of the *Palácio do Governo* (Government Palace) calling for the resignation of Prime Minister Alkatiri. As the demonstration ended only when the police opened fire on the protestors, President Gusmão held a dialogue with them (Stidsen and Vinding 2005). Following this dialogue, Gusmão accelerated the revalorization of ex-combatants (Office of the President 2006; ICG 2008, 19) by establishing another commission, the Commission for Matters of the Cadres of the Resistance (*Comissão para os Assuntos dos Quadros da Resistência*: CAQR), to register personnel involved in civil resistance, and the Data Validation Commission (CVD), subsequently the Data Consolidation Commission (CCD), which completed its work in May 2007. Also, the Commission for Tribute, Supervision of Registration, and Appeals (CHSRR) followed the appeals to the registration process. Most of these commission works were financially and technically supported by the World Bank, UNDP, and donors such as USAID and AusAID (World Bank 2008, 12).

As a result of the commissions established under the Office of the President, a veterans' law was introduced in March 2006 (RDTL 2006). The 2006 law mainly set up three policies, which sought to recognize and

valorize liberation combatants, to protect their socioeconomic status, and to preserve and disseminate the memory of their contribution to the liberation work. In other words, it defined how to register the liberation combatants, the provision of subsidies to veterans as well as widows, orphans, and surviving parents and siblings of deceased combatants who met the criteria of vulnerability, as well as recognizing their contribution in various ways, such as by awarding medals and establishing museums and archives.

Accelerating Registration, Adjusting Policies, and Sporadic Responses from Veterans Outside of National Politics

Following the 2006 turmoil, the government identified payments to veterans as one of the priorities in enhancing social protection using the country's growing revenue from its oil and gas industries (RDTL 2008b). This policy is backed by the issuing of a decree-law in 2008 that specifically identifies the number of payments, according to rank, with registration by the committees (RDTL 2008a). Furthermore, the awarding of scholarships to the children of ex-combatants allowed the government to support a good proportion of the youth identified as vulnerable. The total number of veterans and ex-combatants registered by the three committees (CAAF, CAAC, and CAQR) was 75,143 as of 2008 (World Bank 2008). The second-round registration phase in 2009 found 125,000 cases (ICG 2011).

The process of valorization and registration of veterans were generally accepted with positive impressions but also caused tensions in the communities (see section "Crafting Space for Self-organization Around Suco"). The general acceptance is partly due to the broad selection of commissioners who are largely distinctive former commanders, and its openness to the public (Kent 2006; World Bank 2008). Commissioners conducted interviews with pre-set questionnaires. Then the registered list was posted in each *suco* for its verification by the public. Data were rechecked through the work of the CHSRR. The Office of the Prime Minister in 2008 conducted reviews of the data to select the beneficiaries for pensions involving over 2000 former resistance leaders from national to local levels (World Bank 2008).

This two-year work of registration allowed the government to conduct payment of veterans' pensions, and this volume was increased over time, compared to other schemes for the vulnerable. Among a range of social

benefits in Timor, the annual benefits from the veterans' pension scheme for veterans are within the range 2760 to 9000 USD, while the elderly receive 360 USD; support to children in vulnerable households called *bolsa da mãe* (the wallet of mother) is also available, but it provides only 80 USD per year (Dale, Lepuschuetz, and Umapathi 2014). Additionally, international reports argue that veterans are incorporated into the patronage system, which rapidly grew through procurements in projects targeting the subnational level by the AMP government (Valters, Dewhurst, and de Catheu 2015; ICG 2011). Among them, rice procurement was also at the forefront, and contracts for rice import were granted to 68 veterans in August 2010, among other political cronies (Kammen 2011).

This abundant distribution of wealth is possible because over 90% of the state's revenue is derived from royalties and tax income via petroleum production in offshore deposits such as Bayu-Undan and Kitan liquid products. The establishment of the Petroleum Fund in September 2005 targeted the country's state budget—reasonably sustained by the oil sector in the long term—creating the mechanism of the Estimated Sustainable Income (ESI) and investment abroad for future financial reserve. Utilizing this fund, the 2015 budget included 130.4 million USD for payments, in addition to 1.8 million in goods and services, equivalent to 8% of the state budget (the total of the state budget is 1.57 billion USD), "so as to honor the sacrifice" made by the contributors of the liberation (RDTL 2015, 17). As of 2021, this budget is maintained and has added 23,000 new cases for ex-combatants and their families. Within this range of social protection programs, 93.6 million USD for pension payments and health treatment of veterans has been allotted. Additionally, grants and scholarships for the children of veterans are provided separately under the Human Capital Development Fund (RDTL 2021).

On the other hand, the supportive work led by Gusmão did not capture all liberation combatants, and the veterans' group outside the politics of the "75 generation" reactivated their violent activities in 2013. The return of a famous ex-FALINTIL member, Paulino Gama, aka Mauk Moruk, in 2014 showed that the division between ex-FALINTIL members back in the 1980s, when Gusmão called for nonpartisanship to all resistance activists, was unresolved. Moruk has criticized the high unemployment, poverty, and corruption rates that continue in the country, and has created the militant group Konselho Revolucionário Maubere (KRM) to change this situation. In response, Gusmão mediated a special forum, but Moruk did not attend, and the MRM with other veterans' groups such as Popular

Council for the Defense of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste (CPD-RDTL) intensified violent activities, including attacks on the police (Leach 2015). Such unrest caused a parliamentary resolution No. 4/2014 to identify CPD-RDTL and KRM as illegal groups (Beuman 2016, 142). In March 2015, Gusmão responded by mounting a joint police and military operation to "prevent and suppress criminal actions from illegal groups" (ABC News 2015).

Honoring veterans is another continuous arrangement by the government, which is considered as a form of respect and recognition. Since 2017, the government commemorates the first meeting of the FRETILIN Central Committee in 1981 as National Veterans' Day, honoring all the men and women serving in the national liberation struggle (Colo 2020). In the fourth ceremony in 2020, President Lu Olo at that time emphasized that "[we must] record all the stories from each combatant who still survive, as we have lost many people during the independence [period]; when one dies, we are losing part of our collective history." Timor-Leste has also created a monument named the *Garden of the Heroes of Metinaro*, and the Archive and Museum of Timorese Resistance opened in 2005.

The treatment of veterans' issues forms an important policy agenda in this post-conflict state. Timorese veterans strongly seek to ensure that they are recognized, honored, and rewarded in society. Timorese elites assess policies for veterans and attempt to respond to the need of veterans today. This continuous assessment derives from the disaffected perception of veterans, in that they perceive themselves as neglected by a government composed of ex-leaders of the resistance movement (Peake et al. 2014). While the typical DDR concept, in a determined-designed view of peacebuilding, expects ex-combatants to reintegrate themselves into communities where they settle and manage their civilian life, their status as veterans is continuously under scrutiny and must be continuously acknowledged.

Crafting Space for Self-organization Around *Suco*

The veterans' issue is not just a matter of political figures but directly connects with the people of Timor-Leste. The slogan "*Povu Mak Bee, FALINTIL Mak Ikan*," which literally means "the army are fish and the people are water," is repeatedly used by F-FDTL (Pereira 2020). This demonstrates a close historical link: the FALINTIL's guerrilla warfare acts were only operational with the people's support, incorporating their guidance, civil guards, and later associating youth and church (ICG 2011).

People generally view veterans' power as influential in their political, social, and economic life. While the degree of their power may vary in each community, especially those in urban and rural areas, the data show that approximately 10% of the population in each *suco* in the eastern region are veterans, and this shows their considerable proportion in the society (Gusmao et al. n.d.). Such a situation led to the formation of the Association of Former Combatants (*Associasaun Antigos Combatentes*—AAC), demanding cash payments from those who registered in return for an ID card or electoral card and promises of employment following independence. The demands of these groups swiftly fueled tension over who was or was not a *bona fide* veteran (World Bank 2008, 9). Such tensions were raised among Timorese as a source of local security concerns (Tanaka-Sakabe 2018). The following section discusses how veterans' registration was assessed at the subnational level and how veterans were incorporated into local affairs.

Suco and Suco Council Role in the Process of Reintegration and Verification of Veterans

The *suco* (village) in Timor-Leste is unique, as it is an administrative unit in the state structure recognized in the process of state-building but also a community unit acknowledged by the people to represent their collective will. Throughout the Portuguese and Indonesian occupations, one pattern used to construct local government was to incorporate traditional authority systems into the occupying authorities' own administrative structures. This enabled the local king (*liurai*) to be appointed as *chefe de suco/kepala desa* (village chief) or *chefe de aldeia/kepala dusan* (sub-village chief) (Ospina and Hohe 2001). In the current Timor-Leste, it is increasingly important that activities around the *suco* are connected to peoples' everyday life. The usual practice is that services in the communities are launched with the permission of *chefe de suco* and *chefe da aldeia* (Tanaka-Sakabe 2021). The position of *suco* is expected to collaborate with public administrative bodies and services while considering public interests within the community (RDTL 2016). This was done to preserve cultural identity and traditional symbols such as the *knua* (geographical area of an extended family) and the *uma lulik* or *uma lisan* (sacred house/kinship system based on a common ancestry). The election of *chefe de suco* was advanced, for example, from 2000, based on the suggestion of CNRT, which targeted rebuilding power structures at the local level (AGLD 2003, 54).

Regarding the veterans' issue, *suco* has become a pivotal interface in the registration process. The registration lists are posted in each *suco* for public consultation, which reinforced its credibility (World Bank 2008, 15). The original lists contained thousands of claims, which included some people falsifying their participation in the resistance. The registration process was dependent on grassroots organizations and community-level engagement where the commissioners connect themselves to the registration request updates. As mentioned earlier, the process produced many tensions, specifically reaction to the fact that claims have been denied, causing interpersonal and village-level insecurity (ICG 2011). More concretely, the procedure of gaining eligibility of payment causes wider dissatisfaction as the legislation specifies the hierarchical categories for lifetime pensions according to their contributions. Thus, the repetitive verification process is unfinished even today, and it functions as one of the means for alleviating tensions in communities.

Simultaneously, in Timor today, veterans play various roles in communities. Common local security concerns derive from general crimes such as thefts of personal property (animals), physical attacks, land disputes, bribes, unlawful taxation, to domestic violence (New Zealand Foreign Affairs and Trade 2019). Veterans can be involved in such local disputes. In contrast, some veterans have turned into elected community leaders, being respected by villagers as they contribute to village development (Gusmao et al. n.d.).

The Timorese Model of Integrating State Structures and Traditional Practices: The Role of Community Policing and Conflict Prevention Mechanisms

Local security received attention following the 2006 turmoil, and many initiatives have been launched for preventing conflicts or de-escalating tensions in villages, from the government, civil society organizations, as well as from communities themselves. This section explores those efforts to attain local security through linking community policing and traditional mechanisms. It addresses the efforts to show how existing local systems and mechanisms could be incorporated to ensure their effectiveness in the phase of state-building.

Building a relationship between the public and police officers in communities has been a challenge in Timor due to the historical experience of the non-professional behavior of police organizations during the

occupation and the 2006 turmoil, signaling the failure of a top-down style of state-building in the police sector. Therefore, the establishment of the Community Policing Council (CPC), also known as the *Konsellu Polisiamentu Komunitária* (KPK) in Timor-Leste, only happened after repetitive consultation about its style. The PNTL is responsible for implementing the principle of community policing as defined in the Organic Law issued in 2009 (RDTL 2009). The core of community policing is the deployment of police officers, namely Ofisul Polisu Suku (OPS), and the establishment of the KPK. Among 425 *sucos*, OPS have been deployed to 323, and it was expected that all OPS would be assigned to the rest of the *sucos* by 2021 (as of August 2021). The left side of Fig. 4.1 shows the state structure incorporating the PNTL organigram.

The uniqueness of the Timorese model of CPC is that it is the voluntary participation of community representatives that links with the governance structure. As noted by the director of PNTL, Community Policing Program Commandant Antonio da Luz, the Timorese community policing model is developed from the essence of the Japanese Koban system, the Singaporean Community Policing system, and New Zealand's community policing council mechanism which especially functions in Maori communities (da Luz 2021). This development was progressed with continual intervention by international organizations, donors, and the participation of the civil society for law development, institution building, and training of police officers for the installation of the CPC.

Australia's Timor-Leste Police Development Program (TLPDP) is one of the lasting programs of police training, and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has offered police officers support to study the Koban program since the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) period, which has enabled PNTL officers to form the Timorese style of community policing (Tanaka-Sakabe and Honda 2018). The installment of CPC was supported by Timor-Leste Community Policing Programme (TLCPP) through the New Zealand police, with a program called HAKOHAK (*Hametin Koperasaun Hamutuk Polisia ho Komunidade*) operated by the Asia Foundation (Peake et al. 2014). The roles of national and international NGOs were also important in the development and operationalizing of a unique CPC style in each *suco* according to their needs (Tanaka-Sakabe 2021). The right side of Fig. 8.1 illustrates the actors in CPC, including their international involvement.

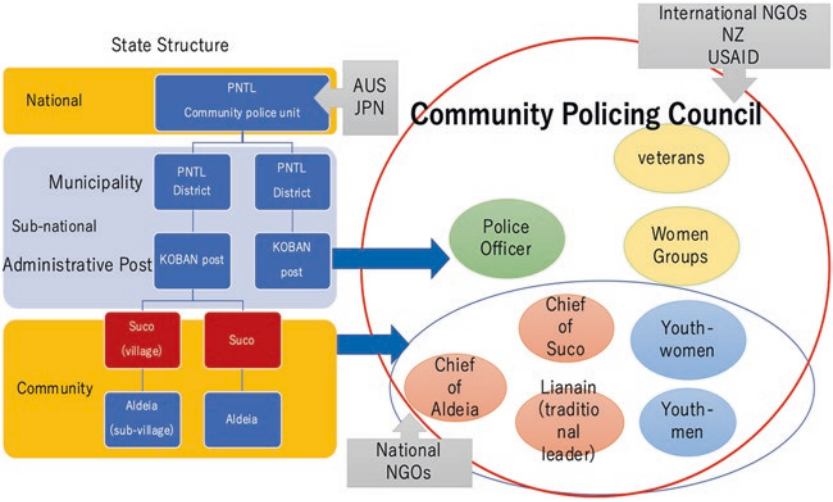

Fig. 8.1 State structure, CPC, and interactions between internationals, nationals, and locals. Source: Updated from Tanaka-Sakabe (2018)

The core of the linkage between the state and society is represented in the collaboration between OPS and the *chefe de suco* (see Fig. 8.1). This is key to managing incidents, conflicts, and potential tensions that arise at the village level on a range of issues, from social crime to interpersonal disputes. As it is common to carry out *Nahe biti boot* (which literally means spreading of the large mat, a traditional method of discussion and resolution) in most communities, the traditional leader *lia nain*, who interprets customary law and resolves local disputes, is also a crucial figure in the solution of many of the social conflicts that lead to this process. In fact, the *Nahe biti* process is applied to numerous community reconciliation programs including the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation in East Timor (*Comissão de Acolhimento, Verdade e Reconciliação de Timor Leste*: CAVR), a transitional justice process at the local level set up to investigate and reconcile crimes committed during the resistance period.

In the post-independence period, the *Nahe biti* process has been implemented in diverse formats, including the involvement of church authorities and district administrators or with wider participation (Miyazawa and Miyazawa 2021). Among these, dealing with cases in the CPC could be interpreted as an extended version of the current *Nahe biti* process. The

CPC is generally composed of *chefe de suco* as head and the OPS as deputy head, and *suco* council members. As the CPC functions by volunteer work, it depends on the participation of church, youth, women, and veterans. Usually, their participation is confirmed by their mutual will with an invitation from the *chefe de suco*. In practice, public crime, which corresponds to procedural cases such as assaults, is handed over to OPS, which refers such cases to the prosecution and investigation authorities, while minor crimes such as theft and interpersonal disputes are handled by the *chefe de suco* and *lia nain* to implement the *Nahe biti* process. As the formal judicial procedure is perceived to be slow and dysfunctional, many cases select the *Nahe biti* process for their resolution.

In this context, the importance of including veterans is well understood as it has the potential to promote local stability. Up to today, the situation reports occasionally identify veterans as perpetrators of local disputes (Belun 2019). At the same time, there was an attempt by *Suco Madohi*, a part of Comoro in the capital Dili, to successfully include veteran representatives in the CPC following the violence among young gangs at the market during the 2006 turmoil (da Luz 2021). In this CPC, respected veterans take the role of mediator between youth groups to reduce their confrontation.

Beyond the CPC, veterans are influential in Timorese communities, playing an important role in decision-making and in local activities. Other observation notes that some veterans' networks have a good hierarchical structure with abundant finance from their pensions and could become mobilizers at the time of elections. A survey found that a local veterans' organization funded the rehabilitation of a village school and similar projects (World Bank 2015). These cases exemplify ways of reinventing the relationship with communities, which could be said to be reintegration of ex-combatants in the peacebuilding discourse.

Furthermore, veterans' positions at the subnational level have been confirmed as having a consultative role. In the deconcentration law issued in 2014, which laid out the structure of the Administrative Post but is yet to be operative as of March 2020, veterans' representatives are expected to be part of the Administrative Post Assembly and the Local Advisory Council, among others, such as the post administrator, the *chefe de suco* and *lia nain*, women, and youth groups. While the aim of the Assembly is to formulate recommendations over local development priorities, the Local Advisory Council promotes social participation to implement decentralization policies (RDTL 2014, paras 30, 31, 68, 69). These official

arrangements led by the government indicate that veterans are increasingly becoming key figures at the local level.

This section has demonstrated that the *suco* has become a self-organized space for Timorese to integrate state structure and local practices, where veterans take various local roles. As an integration process, veterans are incorporated into village-level security assessment mechanisms such as the CPC and local administration but also some of them engage in social activities. International donors and NGOs have financially and technically supported these processes. These stakeholders have been adaptive in the transformative Timorese context, in response to the need to create the local security being demanded by citizens after the 2006 turmoil. In this area of development, national and local actors were considered the main figures in peacebuilding who searched for new forms of managing upcoming conflicts.

Discussion

The chapter has observed that there are two crafted spaces for self-organization and adaptive peacebuilding that deal with the veterans' issue in Timor-Leste. One is the space where national responses are formed by the '75' generation elites and the governments, and the other is the space around *suco*, mainly with local actors. Both spaces have been developed since the early period of peacebuilding, which was characterized by a top-down style of international intervention, but more iterative adaptive processes of assessing national initiatives and local efforts increased following the 2006 turmoil.

When we apply the determined-design view of peacebuilding, the DDR process is a necessary component of state-building, considering the establishment of the brand-new security institutions in the case of Timor-Leste. Specifically, the implementation of disarmament and demobilization of FALINTIL members was in parallel with the formation of the army and national police (F-FDTL and PNTL). These analogous processes occurred with heavy intervention by UN missions and donors, within a tight time frame, and created the discretion on important decision-making and then the dissatisfaction of the excluded.

While disarmament and demobilization are considered ended by international organizations and donors as the responsibilities of external and internal security were handed over to nationals, the leaders launched the registration process of contributors to liberation. Thus, international

involvement was confined by devoting their financial and technical support mainly to DDR and security sector development, and the valorization process for veterans. This was an essential step to invent public transfer payment schemes for veterans following the 2006 turmoil, which revealed a range of disaffected groups in the country. Accelerated by the Gusmão's coalition government, this shift in the policy agenda was fortuitously backed by an oil-dependent state budget to create the "buying peace policy." In essence, it was the national initiative that incessantly addressed the veterans' issue, especially with the elites, which created space for self-organization and locally owned adaptive solutions at both national and subnational levels, as discussed below.

Behind the wheel, the sequence of responding to veterans' demands exposes the importance of political leverage. Veteran status is much shaped by security sector development, disarmament, and demobilization. The conversion of their social status in the war-to-democracy transition period principally affects those who are included and excluded from mainstream politics and from posts in state organizations. This has created new political parties, veterans' associations, and nonformal political groups that sporadically participate in violent demonstrations, including the 2002 riots and the 2006 turmoil. This process also continuously challenged the elites who all previously fought together for national liberation. These events demonstrated the significance of understanding elite politics but also the interactions among veterans that turn into a variety of social stratifications. The processes are assessed to be context-specific when they are dealing with veterans' issues. Particularly for this issue, the elites' prospects were gradually reflected in policy development as international involvement skewed.

The crafted space around the *suco* supports legitimizing veteran registration, but also the incorporation of veterans to take their roles respectively at the local level. To make payment schemes functional for example, the registration of veterans confronts its validity. Any personnel can justifiably claim themselves as a veteran irrespective of the length of their involvement in the role of the armed, clandestine, or civil guard (Scambary 2009). The process has been generally perceived as inclusive, incorporating the multiplicity of the views of different factions within FALINTIL and the communities, and the efforts to maintain transparency could be and were made in this structure.

The creation of the CPC was not straightforward, however. It is a product of repeated consultations among national figures with international

support since the independence period. Following the amendment of the PNTL organic law to set the community policing principle, the setup of the CPC was nationally led with technical and financial support from international donors and NGOs. Such arrangements were available due to the local governance established in *suco*, which incorporated *lia nain* in the local structure as well as the local dispute mechanism such as the *Nahe biti* process. The advantage of *chefe de suco* in Timor is that they have the option to apply formal, modern procedures within a traditional system in the current context of conflict management.

In Timor today, as a result of the relative success in reintegration through payment schemes, veterans have penetrated diverse social dimensions. From being politicians, business persons, and community leaders, veterans are recognized as having influential power in the local public sphere. They are not just represented as a potential source of insecurity but alternatively as a source of stabilization when they contribute to village development and local security.

Nevertheless, the management of payment schemes still needs caution to maintain security as the pensions, scholarship, and support to orphans are often politicized during electoral campaigns (NGO member 2021; Wallis 2015). The citizens alarmed that the process of valorization for receiving cash payments is blurred. As one citizen said, "with regard to scholarship assistance for veterans' children, some children received it, and some didn't, despite the fact that they are all the children of veterans (Tanaka-Sakabe 2018, 25)." Furthermore, people note that some of those who really need assistance (other than veterans) have not received it yet. A new social division of "do have" and "don't have" likely remains in Timor-Leste today (FM 2021).

Additionally, veterans' registration is not complete. The contribution of women veterans was underestimated given the gender-based expectation of returning to traditional roles after the conflict, that extends the assumption that the resistance was a male struggle and reinforces a dominant male society (Kent and Kinsella 2015). While some women have held political positions in the FALINTIL, none were included in the command structure. The CAQR possesses around 9000 women personnel who are registered (equivalent to 25% of the total as of 2008) (Kent and Kinsella 2015). The *Organização Popular da Mulher de Timor* (Timor Popular Organization of Women: OPMT), the women's arm of FRETILIN, was formed, but the scope of their contribution remains a contentious matter in the verification process. Addressing such issues is a challenge for the

international community, considering this is underrepresentation in honoring veterans from the view of gender equality.

Furthermore, other excluded members from the local governance structure along with women are the elderly citizens, people with disabilities, and poor villagers. These groups are much more constrained in their ability to influence local public decisions. However, their inclusion in society and the creation of a connection between them and the younger generation could be a source of social cohesion.

This case study demonstrates the importance of incorporating national-led initiatives and decisions into peacebuilding processes, as proposed in this book, and at an early stage of the peacebuilding process when heavy international intervention usually prevails. It should be noted that the treatment of veterans was a main concern for Gusmão and the CNRT. Their will to prioritize the valorization of the resistance's contribution was clearly reflected in the Constitution. These legal arrangements directed the elites in the government to launch a series of commissions, accelerate the registration, and provide a payment scheme. This type of institutional framework likely elaborates national initiatives, and their incorporation into important decision-making is essential from the early phase of peacebuilding. The donors' role was financial contribution and some technical support, following the decisions from the drivers' seat which the nationals and locals took in the post-2006 turmoil period.

Another important decision made by the CNRT was to conduct local elections in advance, which was a clear message from the national level that local governance matters. Acknowledging the significance of communal ties, culture, and customary practices, the design of the state structure to integrate the *suco* function has been key to connecting local and state affairs. As discussed, decentralization/deconcentration and incorporation of customary justice are ongoing after the first two decades of independence. In this realm, Timorese stakeholders, including national NGOs with back support from donors, assess the local governance mechanism by repetitive trials in a range of programs and projects (Tanaka-Sakabe 2021). *Sucos* have become an epicenter for local affairs as they represent the peoples' will for social-economic activities as well as for conducting traditional practices for conflict resolution and social cohesion. The CPC has developed in the balance between assessing customary justice mechanisms and the formal justice sector development. Thus, *sucos* have become a cohesive power in another space for creating self-organization—including international organizations, NGOs, and donors—being adaptable to the steps of

the peacebuilding process. In such processes, a common sharing of what direction to take in creating new organization is likely an essential matter and can be achieved by continuous interaction with national and local figures.

On the other hand, the financial vulnerability of the buying peace policy is a concern. The cash payment of veterans' pensions is a strategy adopted by the elite to deal with veterans' issues. In other words, to use "oil revenue to finance veterans' pensions and the Program of Integrated District Development has provided a peace dividend to the population and reduced the chances of conflict (RDTL 2015, 29)." However, the backbone of this buying peace policy fluctuates due to the volatility of oil/gas prices and the volume of oil deposits. The oil price dropped from 110 USD (in 2014) to 30 USD per barrel in 2016, and the volume of production is likely to diminish within a decade. As represented in the intense negotiation over a treaty with Australia to confirm the equal distribution of benefits from the Greater Sunrise oil/gas deposit, sustainable revenue is one of the Timorese priorities in trying to project future fiscal policy, but also the peace and stability of the country.

Conclusion

Democratization, the introduction of competitive and fair elections, is relatively successful in Timor-Leste in that the leaders have followed the rules for power-sharing over time. In parallel, the state-building process that is required to develop the state's capacity, such as forming security organs, administration, and operating the state budget, has renewed a close and tense relationship between leaders and ex-combatants. As determined-designed peacebuilding essentially includes both democratization and state-building processes, understanding of political development matters.

Then, when this is recognized, adaptive political solutions can be sought, which corresponds to the discussion in the UN HIPPO emphasizing the "primacy of politics" for peace operations (High-Level Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations 2015). In the case of Timor, national initiatives, especially from CNRT decisions at the pre-independence period, were taken. This demonstrates that international engagement in state-building is not simply reliant on pure technical assistance, and political assessment can show how international peacebuilders

could be more involved in adaptive peacebuilding that corresponds with nationally led state-building.

Following the heavy intervention in the early phase, international donors and NGOs have become more flexible in Timor-Leste as the state and society struggle to balance veterans' demands, the views of citizens, and the creation of brand-new state institutions that also fit with customary practices. As solving veterans' issues is a relevant matter for many Timorese, it requires public consultation. This has not been done on a single occasion but through iterative and multifaceted interactions between elites, veterans, and citizens. The valorization of veterans directly connects to justify the use of the state budget, creating disputes over the redistribution of wealth. As shown in this study, the Timorese reintegration phase was developed mainly by the elites, while the DD phase was monitored by international peacebuilders. Meaningful interlinkage of national initiatives with international peacebuilders, but also employing those linkages among different arms in international efforts from time to time, could be reviewed for further assessment to understand their adaptiveness to national initiatives.

This chapter demonstrates that adaptive peacebuilding has eventually been able to create the conditions for self-sustaining peace in Timor-Leste, after numerous trials and errors evolved with interactions between national, local, and international stakeholders. A Timorese version of the adaptive peacebuilding approach, which is grounded in the local context—down to the village level—has been so far viable through efforts of national actors, from the elites that sought the basis of local governance, to those NGOs that closely worked together with local communities to find solutions that work for all. However, this process was accelerated only after the deterministic peacebuilding efforts were considered questionable in the wake of the 2006 turmoil. Simultaneously, this chapter elaborates some of the national-led initiatives taken during the early peacebuilding period to address veterans' issues and shows that this is key to the later development of self-organizations. This infers that assessing political development is much more viable for international stakeholders as they are more heavily engaged in the peacebuilding activities.

Adaptive peacebuilding continues in Timor-Leste. The relative success of the Timorese strategy of generously rewarding veterans is left with some challenges in the forthcoming future. The government clearly mentioned that payment schemes are a "peace dividend." On the one hand, this is problematically viewed as the foundation of patronage. On the

other, Timorese elites considered it an effective measure for creating stability and peace. While the politicization of veterans' issues remains as a source of instability, the elites are continuously tested, especially those in the government, on how they manage the upcoming disaffected demands and treat excluded groups such as female ex-combatants. In other words, the problem of inclusiveness persists. Furthermore, another challenge is how to sustain this grand strategy by assessing sound fiscal management and the distribution of welfare so that privileged payment to veterans will not become another source of conflict. In this vein, a challenge for international peacebuilders is how they can be more flexible when it comes to balancing the promotion of transparent democratic governance and sustaining stability and peace. One way to address this challenge is to recognize that the Timorese and international peacebuilders need to take another step toward closer interaction.

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