

Electing community leaders: diversity in uniformity

Alex Gusmao¹

This article investigates the impact of the election of community leaders in local communities (villages or *suku*) in Timor-Leste. After looking briefly at the impacts of *suku* elections on selected communities – particularly on community cohesion – and at some community responses to elections, the article discusses local capacities for managing the challenges to social order and cohesion that can flow from elections, and key sources of those capacities. The study found that applying a uniform mechanism for electing community leaders across all *suku* has raised significant concerns in some communities, and that the differences that exist between communities can mean that uniform approaches to local elections threaten to undermine already working governance systems. During the field research, communities themselves suggested alternative approaches to managing elections or to the process of identifying community leaders. The article considers how best to respond to this desire for local diversity within a spirit of democracy and suggests an approach of ‘diversity in uniformity’ as a way forward.

The research process and sites

The research for this article was undertaken in ten villages in three eastern districts of Timor-Leste, as well as one *suku* in the district of Dili and one *suku* in the district of Oecusse, from September to December 2009. The research team (Alex Gusmao and Mateus Tilman) stayed for at least one week in each village, observing and conducting interviews and discussions, and in some cases attending community meetings. Altogether ninety-eight participants were interviewed or were part of a discussion, with a total 11.22 per cent female and 88.78 per cent male discussants. Heads of villages made up 10.2 per cent of discussants, heads of sub-villages 17.35 per cent, members of *suku* councils (not including heads and sub-heads) 17.3 per cent, members of the communities 27.35 per cent, elders or *lia-na'in* 16.3 per cent, youth 7.1 per cent, police 2.04 per cent, and NGO and church leaders were each one per cent.

Most of the villages were visited before the second round of *suku* elections had been held in their village and some after it. The research started in Bairo Pite, a relatively new urban *suku* located in Dili. The *suku* is one of the largest in the country, composed of a number of *aldeia* (hamlets, or sub-villages). In the 2004–05 elections residents of Bairo Pite elected a village head from FRETILIN, the party which led and was most closely associated with the independence movement, first in the final years of Portuguese rule and then during Indonesian rule.

The team then went to four *suku* in the eastern district of Baucau. *Suku* Caicua, now headed by an independent, was formed as a result of the Indonesian military forcibly moving people from the mountain areas and ‘concentrating’ them along the coast. Here, people from different origin communities and ancestral lands were brought into one village. Another *suku*, Bucoli, is a village of fertile agricultural lands that was the home of a famous guerrilla commander and leading member of FRETILIN during the 1970s, who was killed in battle with the Indonesia army in 1979. Under this commander’s leadership, Bucoli was a centre for political education during the mid-1970s. The head of the village is a sister of this commander and also a daughter of the former *liurai*. Another *suku* visited, Triloka, was again a ‘new’ village formed as a result of Indonesia occupation. While a new village, Triloka has a strong practice of *tarabandu* – a traditional system of community policing though a complex sacred ritual but also involving community decision-making. This *suku* is socially and culturally linked with a bordering *suku*, as they originally came from the same ‘kingdom’. The last destination within the Baucau district was Uatulia, an ‘old’ village also notable for a strong practice of *tarabandu* and with a *suku* council composed of representatives of different parties and independents.

The team then travelled further east to the district of Lautem, about 200km from Dili, and visited three *suku*, Parlamentu, Fuiloro, and Tutuala, then onwards to three *suku* in Viqueque. Viqueque, also an eastern district, has a reputation for conflict, but not all villages in Viqueque can be so characterised. The head of *suku* Loihunu has been in his position since the 1980s. In 2005 he was re-elected as a FRETILIN candidate. The *suku* council, however, has members from various parties. *Suku* Waimori is a very isolated mountain village which took twelve hours by foot to reach. The last village visited in Viqueque, Uma Wa’in Kraik, consists of a number of rural and more urban sub-villages, and is very unusual in Viqueque (and Timor-Leste) in the degree to which it adopts a highly traditional governance system. The leader of the *suku*, following traditions established before Portuguese colonialism, has been in his position since 1998, when he was a nineteen year old. Some of the community leaders have been in their positions for more than thirty years. Finally, all eight members of the broader National University of Timor-Leste research team came together to research in the exclave of Oecusse. Travel within Oecusse is difficult, and in the wet season it can take days to reach even those villages relatively close to the regional capital. Our sub-team visited a *suku* close to the Indonesian border, Ben Ufe, where betel nut production is a dominant activity.

The impact of *suku* elections 2004–05

In 2004, the National Parliament approved Law 5/2004 establishing that all local village and sub-village leaders must be elected directly and instituting an elected village council. This contrasts with the ‘engineered’ elections introduced by the Indonesian military regime before independence. The

introduction of democracy at the village level created a new dynamic in communities and people have had a number of responses. Some community members considered democracy to be an opportunity to exercise their freedom to elect their leaders and to be elected, enabling not only those from particular kinship groups to be a leader. Community leaders could now be either male or female, traditional leaders, the descendants of *liurai*, those who distinguished themselves during the resistance against Indonesia or simply locally respected ordinary people. Some *suku*, or members of communities, preferred to emphasise their cultural practices for identifying leaders.

These different responses to the new law on local elections are also evident in the ways different villages put forward candidates. Communities that particularly emphasised maintaining their culture, for example, nominated and elected candidates with strong links to traditions and customs, or tried to maintain the traditional leadership structure. In Uma Wa'in Kraik (Viqueque) and Ben Ufe (Oecusse), for example, customary leaders were simply elected as village head. In some villages, for example, Bucoli and Tutuala, candidates with strong party affiliation were elected, but these candidates were also descendants of *liurai*. In other villages, candidates were elected more on the basis of strong personal standing, for example arising from leadership in the resistance (such as Waimori, Loihunu and Fuiloru) or through their position within a party that had a popular following in the village (such as in the new villages of Bairo Pite and Triloka). There are no clear dividing lines between these categories, however, with many villages having a mixture of two or more features. The desire to maintain culture is strong and widespread. This is a matter of identity, but also of governance, security and social order. In reality, across the rural areas, *suku* are still governed to most practical intents and purposes by traditional elders and customary systems. Most community disputes are solved through traditional systems or mechanisms, a finding supported by Asia Foundation research among others.²

In none of the research discussions did people question the value of democracy. Nor was the existence of political parties to elect leaders in the national arena questioned (although the capacity of national leaders to responsibly lead parties was questioned). Regarding the election of community leaders, however, views on political parties varied strikingly with concern and criticism preponderating, particularly regarding the effect of parties on community relations. The changes to legislation in 2009 have tried to address this concern (while raising some new problems). While we heard many accounts of successful elections and effective leadership, there were also a number of problems or challenges arising from elections affecting social cohesion and co-operation. Moreover, the effects of these problems were ongoing in some *suku* and capacity to manage them varied; the role of leadership in this context will be discussed later.

Timor-Leste has not long emerged from conflict. As Sanson and Bretherthon note, '[c]onflict can have damaging consequences. It can create suspicion and

distrust, obstruct cooperation action and damage relationships, escalate the difference in positions and . . . lead to violent confrontation'.³ The challenges of democracy in Timor-Leste need to be understood in this context. One widespread impact of the *suku* elections was increased suspicion and distrust within communities. Campaigning, particularly in the context of party competition, led some candidates to humiliate others publicly, sparking conflict in the community. Interviewees in six *suku* commented particularly on this situation. When elders, community leaders or family members are humiliated publicly the situation can become extremely tense. Interviewees considered that this was a common occurrence in elections.

The experience of electoral competition led many interviewees to express feelings of insecurity and anxiety about the future of their village. Some have particular concerns about political parties which were seen as rooted in a violent history. The struggle between political parties in the period of 1974–75 was seen as having ushered in a disaster which in turn saw almost one third of the population killed or die from hunger. Today the same parties were regarded as again playing politics in Timor-Leste, this time under the name of reconciliation and democracy. In addition, some of the new political parties had emerged through crisis, or from the fracturing of other parties, particularly FRETILIN. Political parties were considered by some as inherently divisive and conflict ridden, so that even if 'God sends all His Angels' they will not stop fighting. These people felt trapped by political division.

Distrust generated around electoral processes also led to lack of co-operation in some *suku* councils, particularly in the case of party competition. The *suku* council was a new initiative in Timor-Leste and people had no problem with its introduction. However, lack of co-operation between members from different parties meant that some councils simply did not function and existed in name only. In other instances however mixed councils appeared to work, and in places such as Bucoli or Fuiloro where all council members were from the same party, the council functioned well.

A further impact concerned the legitimacy of the village head in providing or distributing services. According to some respondents, village heads associated with political parties would serve only their own political party and their party members, instead of the community. One of the Baucau district village heads (himself a party member) noted that membership of or support by a political party created a dilemma in a community with mixed party affiliation. Needs were huge, but resources were limited. However he distributed resources, his actions were read through a lens of distrust built around party affiliation and the conviction that he would be seeking unfair advantage for fellow party affiliates. In effect, in the context of mixed party affiliation and intense competition, his legitimacy was weakened, creating problems for the community.

In some villages *suku* elections were considered to threaten tradition and identity. In Uma Wa'in Kraik and Ben Ufe it was argued that the

aim of independence was to enable expression of people's culture and identity. The polarisation and threat to community cohesion seen as posed by electoral competition was also regarded as a threat to culture, as maintaining co-operation is a fundamental goal of community life in Timor-Leste and often essential to survival. Even in villages where locally popular candidates were elected, people emphasised the need to maintain their culture, as a source of identity but at the same time a source of governance, community spirit and co-operation.

Local resources in managing social order

While these challenges to social cohesion were widespread, the capacity of communities to manage them differed. In general the cultural system and the legitimacy of leaders played a very significant role in maintaining and rebuilding peace. To focus on leadership, there were three main sources of legitimate authority in the villages in which we researched. The first was involvement in the resistance struggle – not only had such people demonstrated leadership skills under very testing conditions and thus were seen as being committed to the community, but they also related symbolically to people's suffering through the period of occupation. The second source of authority evident in some of the *suku* studied was close affiliation with FRETILIN, the political party most associated with the struggle for independence and which has strong bases of support in parts of Timor-Leste. The third source of authority arose from being of the family of the *liurai*. The *liurai* represents a deeply embedded cultural system and being from the *liurai* clan represents integration into the belief systems of society. Those who hold one of these sources of authority can generally handle tensions in the community.

In Fuiloro, Loihunu, Bucoli and Waimori the *suku* heads were former resistance leaders; their villages were relatively calm. Moreover, in the 2004–05 *suku* elections, the heads in the first three *suku* nominated as FRETILIN representatives. In that sense, these village heads held another 'card'; holding these two cards played a very significant role in their communities and meant they could more easily manage social divisions when they occurred. Fuiloro is noteworthy here as it is a 'new' and large village. As a 'new' village, more customary mechanisms for maintaining social order are less immediately available. The village head, however, is widely respected. Fuiloro relies on election to establish leadership, but it is substantially dominated by one party, FRETILIN. In Waimori, by contrast, the head of the village stood as an independent. As well as being a resistance leader, he was well known and valued in his community for regularly walking the six to twelve hours needed to visit the *aldeia* and keep in touch with the different parts of the *suku*.⁴ Waimori was also very quiet compared to other *suku* in Viqueque.

Bucoli is also interesting in this context. The village head is a member of FRETILIN in a village historically strongly linked to and even now

dominated by this party. Furthermore, the village head was herself active in the resistance and is related to a famous resistance leader. Moreover, she is also from the Bucoli *liurai* family. She therefore holds many 'cards', which form a strong foundation for authority and social cohesion and, in fact, the village is relatively quiet and well managed. Both rounds of *suku* elections have occurred without particular incident. However, it is worth noting that in the 2010 election the village head was the only candidate. Even in the 2004–05 election all members of the *suku* council were from FRETILIN (and this would also be the case under the new regulations); there is no problem with the co-operation of *suku* council members in this village. The village head and *suku* council fully endorsed party activity in *suku*. Interestingly, however, this village is also a strong supporter of custom and has an active local variation of *tarabandu*. This form of internal regulation was democratically developed in Bucoli, was launched by senior district government officials, and involved not only members of the village but representatives of various locally active institutions. According to a senior resident this internal regulation is one of the significant achievements of the village and reduces tensions at the community level. When problems occur people know where to go, how it will be dealt with and what sort of penalty could be applied.

In Uma Wa'in Kraik cultural practices remain unusually strong; the *suku* still maintains the *liurai* system with descent believed to reach back some hundreds of years. This system of governance is understood to derive from their ancestors pre-dating colonialism. This gives great authority to the current *suku* head, who has held his position since 1997. In 2005 the government tried to introduce political parties, according to interviewees, but political parties have so far had little influence in this village. The *liurai* was elected head of village standing as an independent in both elections, with the vote only undertaken to fulfil government requirements (according to respondents, who depicted it as a 'cultural vote'). This village has very few conflicts and people are still 'held tight' to each other by their customs. An elder and senior figure in one sub-village commented:

in this place we trust each other and respect each other. When there is a problem, we manage it through existing structures. . . Most of villages in Viqueque have lots of problems, but in our village there are few. You hardly find people fighting each other here.⁵

The aforementioned *suku* have strong capacities for dealing with social divisions or tensions. While problems arise, the legitimacy of leadership is strong in all these cases, enabling the *suku* heads to manage the tensions. Even in these examples, however, when tensions involved national players it was extremely difficult for local leaders to manage. When a village faced this situation, it to some extent paralysed their functions, especially when those who hold these 'cards' are used or misused by political powers from above.

Views on *suku* elections: a community matter

More generally, responses to the process of village elections suggested the importance of community autonomy, and/or questioned the desirability of political party involvement in communities. In the first category is the argument that the selection of village leaders is a community matter. In the strongest articulation of this position, while interviewees felt that democracy was necessary and beneficial at the national level, elections were seen as not necessarily appropriate for communities that already had systems of governance that were working to the satisfaction of the community. Uma Wa'in Kraik was the clearest example of this view. While they had in many respects adapted elections to their cultural requirements (through the election of culturally determined leaders) they regarded electoral mechanisms as having been forced upon them without consultation or consideration. Their governance system was seen as part of their spiritual and cultural life, which was in turn integrated with the cycles of agricultural life, enabling them to communicate with their ancestors, deal with their sacred places, work with their plantations and animals, and maintain harmony. Certain positions across the village (including head of the village) were seen as sacred; only those with such cultural powers could successfully exert authority. Even in those *suku* where elections were supported, local leadership was seen as the business of the community rather than outsiders, and there were views expressed regarding the preferred mechanisms for nomination of candidates, the role of political parties, the operation of the council and so on. In different ways, for all villages, the election of their leaders is a community matter.

In Caicua, Uatulia, Triloka, Loihunu, Parlamentu, Waimori and Ben Ufe community members argued strongly against the involvement of political parties, mainly on the grounds of the security of the local community, the challenges of managing divisions that political parties generated and the threats to socio-cultural life noted above. A common view put forward was that their villages were 'not ready' or were politically too 'immature' for direct party competition. It is interesting in this context to note, however, that a number of group discussions also suggested that the national leaders were themselves not sufficiently 'mature' to manage competition constructively. National leaders were not always regarded as good role models of political engagement. They influenced their grassroots supporters to pointless conflict, the consequences of which were borne by the communities. When the national leaders fought it affected people on the ground. It was extremely difficult for communities to manage conflicts that were started and supported by national organisations and forces.

There was a range of views across these villages on how independent candidates should best be put forward and ways of integrating cultural legitimacy with the electoral process. For example, candidates could be from the *liurai's* bloodline, those involved in the resistance (which can also bestow cultural authority), or ordinary people with the necessary capacity, or a

combination of these factors depending on the history and characteristics of the village. Discussions in Triloka (Baucau) and Uatulia (Venilale) proposed that each sub-village put forward a candidate, chosen either by election or by elders and *lia-na'in* ('holders of the words', traditionally responsible for conflict resolution), and representing either an *uma lisan* (clan) or simply a person considered of capacity, depending on the preference of the sub-village. Parmentu, Caicua, Waimori, Loihunu, and Ben Ufe suggested that a group of elders and *lia-na'in* nominate candidates for the village to vote on (not based on the sub-village), that each *uma lisan* should nominate one candidate, or that a broader village committee nominate candidates after consultation across the village. Elders and *lia-na'in* were seen as playing roles of varying significance in the consultations leading up to voting. For all proposals, candidates would be introduced to all parts of the village and election would be by secret ballot. Following elections, a number of *suku* consider it a necessary part of the process of identifying leaders to undertake a series of rituals that confer authority. In Ben Ufe, for example, they perform a traditional ceremony to hand over the symbols of power, as part of conferring upon the village head the obligation of responsibility and authority to be a good leader serving the whole community.

By contrast, some villages were happy with party activity in the community; however, these villages also fell into very distinct categories. Urban villages, such as Bairo Pite in Dili and Fuiloru in Lautem (which are both also new villages), face different circumstances from the long-established rural communities. In urban villages, there are no dominant cultural practices tied to particular *uma lisan*. In Bairo Pite, for example, residents come from every district in the country, while in Fuiloru, they come from different villages around Lautem. Moreover, urban villages are not structured around dealing with the lifecycles of primary food production, the management of environmental, social and ritual matters arising from those cycles, and the relationship of *uma lisan* with a particular part of country – generally significant tasks of rural *suku* leadership. While all *suku* heads and councils in principle must work with requirements and resources from central government or other external bodies, this is a greater part of the work of urban *suku*. Overall, too, the more urban population is likely to have a different educational background and greater access to information. Interviewees in Bairo Pite (in the capital), for example, were happy with party involvement.⁶

Bucoli, however, is a strong example of an apparently different dynamic. This village welcomed party involvement, with the village head asserting eloquently that political parties were necessary institutions to bring together and organise those who share the same vision and passion for the development of the country. According to the village head, being an independent is without logic. This village has a long history of association with FRETILIN and in the 2010 elections the standing *suku* chief was re-elected, unopposed. While the village welcomes party affiliation, it is not clear whether it would welcome actual party competition.

A way forward: diversity in uniformity – options for discussion

The necessity of democracy for Timor-Leste is indisputable; however, the challenge facing communities and government is how to enable a grassroots democracy that is sensitive to, and reflects, the diversity and the characteristics of communities across the country. The uniqueness of each village should not be ‘washed away’ by policy for the sake of uniformity. Rather the principles of the Constitution, recognising Timor-Leste’s unique cultures, need to be satisfied. The richness of a country derives not only from material resources but also from its socio-cultural life and values.⁷ Nor should villages be locked into stasis; the characteristics of a village need to genuinely come from community practices which people feel part of, allowing natural selection to determine the survival of these characteristics. The important thing is that community practices should not abuse human rights.

Traditional systems have weaknesses and indeed they can violate the human rights of the weak, such as women and children. These issues need to be worked on through continuing exchange, creating a common understanding, instead of ‘burying community life with a bulldozer’, as an interviewee in Ben Ufe put it. Members of the *suku* council in Tutuala, for example, suggested preparing a long-term plan to build a sustainable local political community that would meet the requirements and needs of both the national government and the local community.

In the spirit of democracy, what sort of mechanism could be applied in villages such as Uma Wa’in Kraik? What could be learnt from other countries’ experiences? Indonesia employs a category of ‘special province’ and *suku adat* (traditional village), while the Autonomous Region of Bougainville (within PNG) allows villages to opt for one of a range of systems for the identification of community leaders. Allowing flexibility is also not to defend the *liurai* system per se; however, if the system has deep roots in some communities and people are happy with their arrangements, is it beneficial for this system to be changed? In other communities, even where elections are accepted, communities still want to better align elections with already operating cultural governance norms and practices.

In reality, it is cultural norms and practices that still underpin governance and order in local communities across Timor-Leste. Could not these systems be recognised as a ‘fence’ – whether temporary or permanent – protecting people, at least while Timor-Leste is still in process of shaping its own democracy from the grassroots as well as from the central government? In Viqueque some argued that national systems in Timor-Leste are still weak, including the police. In most of the villages in this study, police visited once every one to three months. In effect, there are no police; people do not know whether laws are operating or not and the laws themselves are written in a foreign language unintelligible to the community. It is cultural or traditional leaders who are living with the people, managing through systems and practices such as *tarabandu*, which are still relatively effective in maintaining social cohesion.⁸

Given this context, communities could proceed according to three options. They could determine local leadership according to entirely customary forms, without elections. The government's role would be to ensure that the process does not violate human rights or create serious division. Very few *suku* would opt for this path. Alternatively, *suku* could hold elections but integrate elements of customary legitimacy more openly into the process and work to ensure that fundamental elements of customary life are not disrupted. As discussed earlier, proposals have been put forward by communities to establish legitimacy for elected village heads or to help ensure that candidates would work co-operatively with customary authority. The villages emphasising this option tended to prefer independent candidates, as independents were considered less likely to encourage polarisation, particularly important in the context of Timor-Leste's legacy of conflict and in being more aligned with cultural approaches to conflict resolution. However, some notably customary villages have strong party affiliation, but not necessarily party competition.⁹ A final option could be that *suku* could decide to allow, or disallow, the competition of political parties in their village. Allowing political parties to compete was satisfactory for a number of *suku*, particularly in urban areas. The 2009 legislation has stopped political parties campaigning directly in *suku* elections. However, individual candidates can be party members and their affiliation is generally in the community, so parties remain a factor, albeit at one or two removes. This final option suggests that the 2009 legislation should respond to some of the concerns raised during this research; removing party campaigning but accepting that various candidates are already affiliated with particular parties may in effect allow some flexibility for communities around political parties.¹⁰

Conclusion

East Timorese have given their suffering and their lives as the price for an independent and democratic country. The reality of the country, however, requires East Timorese to keep searching for what types of mechanisms are appropriate across this diverse society. While a uniform approach is needed at the national level, at the community level a living democracy needs to be grounded in the reality of community lives. The role of government and civil society is to ensure that all processes support human rights and do not foster division. This element of flexibility allows space for sharing responsibility between community and government to ensure the sustainability of democratic processes.

Some of the country's traditional cultural values and systems are open to absorbing democratic practices.¹¹ If the implementation of democracy could likewise absorb some East Timorese cultural values it could enable democracy to be stronger and more sustainable – drawing on existing systems can help the roots of democracy go deep into people lives. By overlooking both the diversity of *suku* and the value of systems that are already working to people's satisfaction there is a danger of alienating

people in the long run. It may also undermine acceptance of new systems. Without being attentive to local forms of governance embedded in people's cultural values and practices there is a danger that the uniqueness of Timor-Leste will disappear, and with the uniqueness will go people's pride in being East Timorese.

This research uncovered many success stories, but also many sad stories of unnecessary division, suffering and disruption of culture. It is fundamental that the development of policies should answer not only to the demands of the international community, or even only to national interest. Policy making also needs to take account of what Sen terms 'development as freedom', where development is the expansion of capabilities, having the freedom to choose between different ways of thinking, the enrichment of human lives, and being able to choose *how* you want to live.¹²

Endnotes

- 1 This article draws on research undertaken for and funded by an AusAID Development Research Award. The author would like to express appreciation to AusAID for making this research possible. A longer Tetum version of this paper will be published on the website for *Local-Global*.
- 2 Asia Foundation, *Law and Justice in East Timor: A Survey of Citizen Awareness and Attitudes Regarding Law and Justice 2008*, prepared by S. Everett, Dili, 2009, <<http://asiafoundation.org/resources/pdfs/2008LawJusticeSurvey.pdf>>.
- 3 A. Sanson and D. Bretherthon, 'Conflict resolution: theoretical and practical issues', in D. Christie, R. Wagner, and D. Winter, eds, *Peace, Conflict and Violence: Peace Psychology for 21st Century*, Prentice Hall, New Jersey, 2001, p. 194.
- 4 Villages in Timor-Leste are often highly dispersed, with a number of smaller communities, or *aldeia*.
- 5 Interview with elder and senior resident, Uma Wa'in Kraik, Viqueque district, September, 2009.
- 6 It is worth noting that Uma Wa'in Kraik is also partly urban, albeit a rural town; however, the demographic profile is significantly different than the melting pot of Bairro Pite and the views there are distinctly different.
- 7 W. Davis, *The Wayfinders: Why Ancient Wisdom Matters in the Modern World*, CBC Massey Lecture, Anansi, Toronto, 2009.
- 8 A. Gusmao and M.A. Brown, 'Politika comunidade no harii-dame iha Timor Leste', in M. Leach, N.C. Mendes, A.B. da Silva, A. da Costa Ximenes and B. Boughton, eds, *Understanding Timor-Leste Proceedings of the Timor-Leste Studies Association Conference*, Swinburne Press, Melbourne, 2010, pp. 21-5.
- 9 Bucoli could be an example here, but also see A. McWilliam's discussion of *suku* Saburai, Bobonaro district in 'Customary governance in Timor-Leste', in D. Mearns and S. Farram, eds, *Democratic Governance in Timor-Leste: Reconciling the Local and the National*, Charles Darwin University Press, Darwin, 2008, pp. 129-42.
- 10 The new system was criticised by communities where voting under the new legislation had already taken place on other grounds, relating to the 'packet system' whereby the village head and the council are now voted in as a team, with the

village head having the power to choose people as part of the ticket and to remove them from the council.

- 11 See M. Tilman on 'organic democracy', this volume.
- 12 A. Sen, *Development as Freedom*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1999.