

How do international norms travel?

Women's political rights in Cambodia and Timor-Leste

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Abstract

How do international norms travel, via statebuilding efforts, into post-conflict settings, and how do international and national actors interact in this process? These are the main questions addressed in this thesis. The empirical focus is the spreading and rooting of the norm of women's political rights in Cambodia and Timor-Leste, two countries in which international actors have played a significant role in statebuilding efforts. Although statebuilding has increasingly become a part of UN peacebuilding missions, we still lack a thorough understanding of how much, and in what ways, the international community can successfully promote change. This is important in view of the fact that the key to success ultimately depends on how the receiving community responds to the presence and efforts of international actors to promote new social norms.

This study analyzes the interaction between international and national actors engaged in the promotion of women's political rights as part of the effort to advance democracy. Three institutional developments are examined in detail – electoral rules and regulations, the establishment of a national gender equality/women's machinery and the strengthening of the local government structure. The study uses a modified norm diffusion approach and makes two theoretical contributions to the literature. First, I place the norm diffusion process in a post-conflict context. Second, I add the concept of capability to function in order to conceptualize and study the internalization of the norm. The thesis is based on both an analysis of written material and semi-structured interviews. A total of 65 interviews were conducted during three research trips to each of the countries between 2007 and 2009.

In general, the four empirical chapters reveal that the interaction between international and national actors has predominantly been characterized by international actors setting the agenda, with varying degrees of consultation and collaboration with national actors. While norm institutionalization has been rather high in both countries, norm internalization lags behind. This is explained by discriminating ways of life and attitudes, lack of resources and time. Norm internalization is higher in Timor-Leste, in part because national actors have adapted the norm of women's political rights to fit the local setting, but also due to their openness to international influences. The empirical study underscores that international actors can push for change and norm adherence, but their efforts are not enough. In the end, national actors have to buy into the message that international actors try to convey. The strengths and weaknesses that have been uncovered in the Cambodian and Timorese case studies presented here should be carefully considered as international actors, led by the UN, embark upon future statebuilding missions around the globe.

Key words: norm diffusion, women's political rights, post-conflict statebuilding, Cambodia, Timor-Leste, norm entrepreneurs, capability to function.

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Umeå October, 2009.

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List of acronyms

| | |
|------------------|---|
| CEDAW | Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women |
| CEP | Community Empowerment and Local Governance Project |
| CMDG | Cambodian Millennium Development Goals |
| CNCW | Cambodian National Council for Women |
| CNRT | 1) Consultative Council of Timorese Resistance 2) National Congress for Timorese Reconstruction (Timorese political party established in 2006) |
| CPP | Cambodian People's Party |
| CPWP | Committee to Promote Women in Politics |
| ETTA | East Timorese Transitional Administration |
| Ex-Com | Executive Committee |
| Fretilin | Frente Revolucionária do Timor-Leste Independente (East Timor resistance movement and political party) |
| FUNCINPEC | Front Uni National pour un Cambodge Indépendant, Neutre, et Coopératif (Cambodian political party) |
| GAU | Gender Affairs Unit |
| GMPTL | Women's Parliamentarians' Caucus |
| INTERFET | International Force for East Timor |
| MoWA | Ministry of Women's Affairs |
| OPE | Office for the Promotion of Equality |
| OPMT | Popular Women's Organization of East Timor |
| PERWL | Programme for Enhancing Rural Women's Leadership and Participation in Nation Building in Timor-Leste |
| Rede Feto | East Timorese Women's Network |
| SEPI | (Office of the) Secretary of State for the Promotion of Equality |
| SRP | Sam Rainsy Party (Cambodian political party) |
| SSWA | Secretary of State for Women's Affairs |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNAMIC | United Nations Advance Mission in Cambodia |
| UNAMET | United Nations Mission in East Timor |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNIFEM | United Nations Development Fund for Women |
| UNMISSET | United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor |
| UNMIT | United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste |
| UNOTIL | United Nations Office in Timor-Leste |
| UNTAC | United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia |
| UNTAET | United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor |

Introduction

By and large, issues relating to women in war zones are receiving attention at the highest levels, but much more needs to be done for this rhetoric to translate into concrete action. (Anderlini 2001)

The end of the Cold War sparked a shift that has changed international relations for generations to come. Not only did the world see the fall of a superpower, but it also witnessed some of the most brutal wars in history, often within states and employing a mode of warfare increasingly targeting civilians. International norms and values premised on the conviction that real threats to international security are rooted in a lack of security for individuals gained increased attention as a response to the changing context (cf. McRae 2001:20; Small 2001:75).¹ The solution: democracy, human rights and good governance, supported and promoted by the international community, in particular the United Nations (UN).

An Agenda for Peace from 1992 recognized “the changing context” in which the UN now has to function.² The Secretary-General of the United Nations at the time, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, emphasized that the

¹ The international legal framework had started to address such issues prior to the early 1990s but the agenda was more forcefully promoted and taken for granted in the aftermath of the Cold War. The international human rights regime typically includes the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966) and its Optional Protocols (1976 and 1989), the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (1966), the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (1966), Convention on the Elimination in All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979), Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishing (1984), and Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). For more on the evolution of the international human rights regime, see for example Landman (2005). At the UN level, a series of policy documents underpinned this new agenda and new norms, including *An Agenda for Peace* (1992), *Supplement to An Agenda for Peace* (1995), *Prevention of Armed Conflict* (2001), and *Report on the Panel of United Nations Peace Operations* (2000).

² The new demands on the international community, as well as the leading normative framework to be promoted is supported not only in documents, declarations and conventions adopted after the end of the Cold War but also in ones dating back to the early post-WWII period. Some milestones are the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights; the four Geneva Conventions (revised and adopted in 1949) and the 1977 Additional Protocols on International Humanitarian Law in Armed Conflict; the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide; the two 1966 Covenants on civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights; the 1998 adoption of the Rome Statute for the establishment of an International Criminal Court (ICC); the actual establishment of the ICC; and the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty (ICISS 2001; Winslow 2003).

organization should not only be involved in actions relating to preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, and peacekeeping, but also increasingly in activities relating to *post-conflict peacebuilding* (Report of the UN Secretary-General 1992:II-21). Promoting democracy was identified as the core of this development. This new multifaceted post-Cold War agenda has, inter alia, resulted in more complex UN missions, some of which go as far as taking over countries' national administrations in order to bring peace and security to war torn societies. These new types of missions mean that the UN has allocated resources towards both nation- and state-building³ in efforts to promote democracy (see for example Chesterman 2004; Newman and Rich 2004; Caplan 2005; Dobbins, Jones et al. 2005). International involvement in state- and nation-building is a response to research and experience ("lessons learned") that shows that societies undergoing transition processes have weak democratic traditions and that their political institutions are often fragile and enjoy little popular legitimacy (see argument in Lijphart and Waisman 1996:2). Creating stable, representative, accountable and transparent institutions is therefore considered critically important for building sustainable peace and functioning states, and international actors play a crucial role in spreading such values of human rights, democracy and good governance to less developed and often war torn countries (cf. Rich and Newman 2004:5-10).

This development has put the business of international involvement after armed conflict in an interesting position. Critics of externally imposed nation- and state-building highlight the arrogance in the assumption that external actors will be able to spread democracy in sovereign states (cf. Jenkins and Plowden 2006:4-5). As highlighted by Anderlini and El-Bushra (2004), "ultimate effective and sustainable reconstruction is largely determined by the commitment and capacities of local populations, including national government and civil society, to maintain the process". However, Tschirgi (2003) argues that,

despite lip service being paid to the centrality of local ownership of peacebuilding, it is not clear that international actors have developed effective strategies for assessing local needs, setting priorities, allocating resources and establishing accountability.

The problem is nicely captured by Rich and Newman (2004:25) who state that when the UN arrives with its toolbox filled with international norms and values they meet groups with different cultures, traditions and ways of life. The authors ask whether or not the UN has the right technique to address this situation effectively. Essentially, considering that the international community is becoming increasingly involved in statebuilding, how much

³ These concepts are defined further below.

and in what ways can it actually push for change in a war torn state when the key to success lies with how well the receiving community accepts what is unpacked from the international normative toolbox?

This is the overarching issue addressed in this dissertation: how do international norms travel, via statebuilding efforts, into post-conflict domestic settings and how much of this process is, and can be, externally driven by actors such as the international community at large, or the United Nations specifically? Furthermore, how do national actors respond to the international norms that outsiders seek to plant? This study thus looks closer at the interaction and relationship among international and national actors in the process of democratizing post-conflict societies. My focus is the crucial issue of women's political rights.⁴ This is a norm that, since the 1990s, has been included in the international norm package promoted as "democracy and human rights"⁵. However, in order to achieve a gender-sensitive democratization and peacebuilding process, local actors have to buy into the message conveyed and the content unpacked by the international actors. How this process plays out in practice and what the outcomes of it are, is the subject of this study.

Aim of study and research questions

The discussion above can be synthesized into the following general aim of the study: to analyze and explain the spreading and rooting of the norm of women's political rights in two case studies where international actors have

⁴ Often this agenda is facilitated at both the international and national level through a process of *gender mainstreaming*, which can be defined as positioning gender equality issues at the center of policy-making, institutional structures and resource allocation (cf. Kuovo 2004:172). Indeed, research shows that pressure from international organizations such as the UN and from civil society organizations, many of whom represent the women's movement, have forced state governments to accept gender mainstreaming as a "valid political agenda" (Goetz 2003:70; Rai 2003:22) and as a means to achieve gender equality. Although I look at women's political rights, the developments within the two case studies is framed more along the lines of "gender mainstreaming", making it necessary for me to address these developments but with the aim to identify how "women's political rights" have been promoted and articulated through this agenda.

⁵ Along with the increased international focus on human rights came demands to include gender and sexuality in the concept of human rights. Women's struggle for the right to enjoy human rights has been emerging since the early 15th century and an international movement developed in the late 19th century. An international women's conference was organized in The Hague in 1915, followed by a congress in Paris during the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 (Kuovo 2004:84ff). By the late 1930s, the issue of "women's status" was on the international agenda, and with the help of extensive lobbying in 1945, men and women's equal rights were acknowledged in the United Nations Charter (Lake 2001:265). The issue of women's rights was further acknowledged in a series of world conferences beginning in 1975 in Mexico City, followed by Copenhagen in 1980, Nairobi in 1985 and Beijing in 1995. Women also participated and raised issues at the UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 and at the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna 1993. The *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* (CEDAW, 1979), which has been described as an international bill of rights for women, has also played an important role. But despite all the various conferences and voices raised about women's rights over the years, it was not until the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (1993) that women's rights were officially acknowledged as being an inalienable and indivisible part of human rights (Schuler 1995:3; Altman 2002:66ff).

been heavily present for statebuilding purposes. More specifically, I study the interaction between international and national actors in the promotion of women's political rights through the institutional developments of electoral rules and regulations, the establishment of a national gender equality/women's machinery⁶, and the strengthening of the local government structure. These institutional developments are then analyzed further to determine how they affect norm diffusion (i.e. the spreading and rooting of women's political rights). The research questions underpinning the study, while focusing on the cases of Cambodia and Timor-Leste, are:

- How is the norm of women's political rights manifested through the institutional developments of electoral rules and regulations, the establishment of a national gender equality/women's machinery, and the strengthening of the local government structure?
- Who are the main norm entrepreneurs and how do international and national actors interact in the norm diffusion process?
- How far have these countries succeeded in the diffusion of the norm of women's political rights and how can this be explained?

While the study is partly descriptive (analyzing the process of norm diffusion), explanatory ambitions underpin it as well, including trying to explain the status of women's political rights in Cambodia and Timor-Leste. Furthermore, the study adds to the theoretical discussion on norm diffusion by placing such a process in a post-conflict context, something that previous literature has only addressed to a limited extent (as will be discussed further below). War torn societies such as the ones included in this study are potential breeding grounds for norm conflicts, as international actors increasingly get involved in statebuilding. At the same time, this study argues that because these war torn societies have experienced an outside shock in terms of violent conflict, this might actually benefit norm change, particularly if there is heavy international presence. Another theoretical contribution is the addition of *capability to function* in order to grasp the internalization of a norm. This is discussed further in Chapter two.

⁶ The concept of "gender equality/women's machinery" is used to include the formalization of a "gender mainstreaming agenda" that national governments often engage in. Often a "women's" or "gender equality ministry" is established where the aim is to promote women's rights specifically. Promoting women's interest through establishing national machineries was introduced as a strategy after the women's conference in Mexico in 1975 and was strengthened by the Beijing Platform for Action from 1995 (see for example BPFA 1995: paragraph 201; Rai 2003:17). Such formalization can be managed through the establishment of a gender desk, identifying focal points, a specific department addressing the issue or a national ministry of some sort. See more on this in Chapter three.

For reasons of time and space, this work rests on certain assumptions and a number of subjects will not be covered. Firstly, this study takes as its starting point that international organizations such as the United Nations are facing increased responsibilities relating to democracy and human rights enforcement. Consequently, the international community has many obligations as regards establishing and enforcing universal norms. My aim is not to analyze how the international community *could have* promoted democracy and human rights in Timor-Leste and Cambodia. Rather, given the fact that the international community has influenced the statebuilding process in these two war torn societies, how did/are they, together with the governments that came to power after the end of violent conflict, working to help spread and root the norm of women's political rights? It is assumed that actors in the international community come to these countries with a pre-determined set of values, norms, and views on how to (re-)build a democratic society. These values and norms embrace democracy, the rule of law, human rights and, at least on paper, gender equality. The interesting question then becomes how this norm package is unpacked within the host societies and how the relationship between international and national actors evolves.

I will develop these assumptions further in Chapter two. It should be underlined, however, that the aim of my work is not to evaluate how the UN and other international actors acted in general in these two post-conflict societies. Also, this study only addresses international and national actors' roles in trying to root and spread the norm of *women's political rights*, leaving a more thorough account of women's economic, civil, social and cultural rights to another discussion. Having said that, it should also be emphasized that at times it is difficult to discuss how women's political rights are being socialized without addressing issues relating to for example economic and social rights. Still, even though such issues are discussed occasionally, I make no claim that I provide an exhaustive account of their diffusion in these two case studies.

Definitions

Although most of the concepts will be defined in the next two chapters, a few definitions need to be presented here in order to avoid confusion. Peacebuilding was defined above, but the relationship between post-conflict *nation- and state-building* needs to be clarified as well. Post-conflict nationbuilding, according to scholars, includes external involvement in the internal workings of a state. According to Jenkins and Plowden (2006:1) "nationbuilding is undertaken either to bring peace or to reconstruct a society badly damaged by internal conflict" and such measures might be necessary in order to "spread democracy". This resonates well with the definition put forward by Dobbins, Jones et al. (2005:2), who argue that nationbuilding is "the use of armed force in the aftermath of a conflict to promote a transition

to democracy". Fukuyama (2004:100-101) identifies three aspects of nationbuilding: 1) post-conflict reconstruction; 2) creating self-sustaining state institutions; and 3) strengthening weak states. An important component of nationbuilding is statebuilding, defined as efforts to reform and strengthen governance institutions (Fukuyama 2004:ix; Dobbins, Jones et al. 2005:2). Post-conflict statebuilding implies the existence of a security crisis, which distinguishes it from "normal" statebuilding (Barnett and Zürcher 2009:28). Scholars have also recognized that statebuilding and nationbuilding are used somewhat interchangeably in North America, whereas Europeans are more prone to distinguish between the two activities, arguing that the notion of a *nation* includes a common history and culture, something that outside powers cannot enforce upon a state (cf. Fukuyama 2004:99; Dobbins, Jones et al. 2005:2, see also Paris and Sisk 2009:15-15). This dissertation analyzes statebuilding, but in a complex (multifaceted) peacebuilding context. It does not imply that international actors can enforce a common culture or language upon the populations of Cambodia and Timor-Leste.

This study analyzes statebuilding by looking at efforts to build functioning and stable democracies. The goal is not to determine how democratic a given state is, regardless of whether one uses a more constitutional, substantive, procedural, or process-oriented⁷ definition of democracy (Tilly 2007:7). In *An Agenda for Peace* it is stated that,

[d]emocracy within nations requires respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, as set forth in the [United Nations] Charter. It requires as well a deeper understanding and respect for the rights of minorities and respect for the needs of the more vulnerable groups of society, especially women and children. This is not only a political matter [...] For this, strong domestic institutions of participation are essential. Promoting such institutions means promoting the empowerment of the unorganized, the poor, the marginalized. (Report of the UN Secretary-General 1992:X-81)

For international actors engaged in statebuilding, both the process of democracy (and the road to get there, i.e. democratization) and the outcomes of it are of importance. The former might, for example, be free elections, whereas the latter addresses issues such as the enforcement of human rights (Jenkins and Plowden 2006:3).⁸ Similarly Olsen argues that democracy entails a set of ideals, principles, visions, identities, commitments and beliefs, but it also

⁷ As defined by Tilly (2007:7-9), a *constitutional* definition "concentrates on laws a regime enacts concerning political activity". A *substantive* approach to democracy addresses "the conditions of life and politics a given regime promotes". A *procedural* definition "single[s] out a narrow range of governmental practices to determine whether a regime qualifies as democratic". A *process-oriented* approach identifies "some minimum set of processes that must be continuously in motion for a situation to qualify as democratic". See also Robert Dahl (1998:37-38) on aspects of process-oriented democracy.

⁸ As will be elaborated upon later, elections are often used as an indicator of democracy and its consolidation.

refers to “a changing collection of accumulated institutional practices, rules and procedures” (Olsen 1997). In other words, democracy is both about establishing certain types of institutions and a specific set of values. Although it is not the aim of this study to measure the level of democracy in a given state, it is interesting to keep these issues in mind, especially as regards the distinction between norm institutionalization and internalization, which is discussed further in Chapters two and three.

In this study, *international community* is used as a collective concept encompassing “outside” actors involved in attempts to build peace and democracy and to further development in Cambodia and Timor-Leste.⁹ Sometimes I talk about “international actors” to refer to the same set of agents as in “international community”. International organizations are formal actors such as, but not limited to, members of the UN family, such as the World Bank, United Nations Development Fund (UNDP), and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). The UN missions involved in these two post-conflict settings are also part of the international community, but they are generally referred to separately in order to avoid confusion. According to Simmons and Martin, formal international organizations are important to study because they have agency, and they have agenda-setting influences as well as socializing influences (Simmons and Martin 2002:192), something that is true for the entire international community in these two case studies.

Two other concepts that need some extra attention are norm *diffusion* and norm *socialization*.¹⁰ These are discussed further in Chapter two, but at this point it can be noted that the focus in this study is on how the norm of women’s political rights is diffused, which in itself is a matter of how national actors (national elites and grassroots) become socialized into the preferred behavior by the international community. Socialization of a norm indicates that ideas (the norm of women’s political rights) and processes have been transferred from one population (international community) to another (national elites and grassroots in the receiving states) and that the receiving actors have accepted the validity of the norm and altered their beliefs and attitudes in favor of the norm (cf. Hugill and Dickson 1988:263-264; Risse and Sikkink 1999:11). Norms are defined as “a rule-like prescription [...], which makes behavioral claims upon [...] actors” (Finnemore 1993). This is also discussed further in Chapter two. The study also looks closer at *norm entrepreneurs*, defined as “agents having strong notions about appropriate or desirable behavior” (Finnemore and Sikkink 2002:256), which in

⁹ My main focus here is on donor states and international organizations.

¹⁰ These concepts should be understood in the International Relations Constructivist sense, which is further addressed in chapter two.

this study includes both international actors as well as national elites and civil society organizations.

It is also useful to discuss the issue of *women's political rights* a bit further. Although one can argue that women ought to be included in our understanding of human rights per se, some violations of human rights affect women disproportionately, for example gender-based violence, discrimination in the right to own land or the violation of the right of widows to inherit. This makes it appropriate to discuss women's human rights specifically. Even though all women do not experience these violations in the same way, they overwhelmingly affect women. In general discussion about human rights, civil and political rights have often been prioritized over economic, social and cultural rights. Some characterized them as belonging to the first generation of rights¹¹ and other (more conservative) scholars would argue that these are the only rights that matter (Butegwa 1995 explores this traditional view a bit further). Women tend to have struggled more for economic, social and cultural rights since they relate more to the traditional sphere in which women have been located (Schuler 1995; Thomas 1995:41; Tomasevski 1998). Thomas, however, argues that “[t]o shy away from inserting women into the heart of traditional human rights law and practice [...], is to neglect an important site for the radical transformation of that law and practice” (Thomas 1995:44). She argues further that addressing women's political and civil rights is to recognize women's “individual personhood” (Thomas 1995:54). Sen argues in a similar way, stating that “political rights are important not only for the fulfillment of needs, they are also crucial for the formulation of needs” (Sen 1994:38). Coomaraswamy argues that addressing women's political and civil rights in the public realm recognizes women as free individuals with both rights and agency, something that is echoed by Thomas (Coomaraswamy 1994:40; Thomas 1995:45). By focusing on women's political rights, this study is not making a statement on the importance of different sets of rights, or about a hierarchy of rights (cf. Thomas 1995:41). Rather, it was necessary to limit my focus for theoretical and practical reasons. The focus on women's political rights is also based on the aim of the study at large, to address aspects of democratization of war torn societies through statebuilding. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights states in its article 25 that every citizen, both men and women, should have the right and the opportunity to

¹¹ There is traditionally a distinction of “generations” in the human rights discourse. The first generation, typically referred to as liberal rights, focuses on civil and political rights, whereas the second generation focuses on economic, social and cultural rights, and is often seen as the socialist contribution to the rights discourse. The third generation focuses on groups' and people's rights. Whereas the first generation of rights have traditionally been more in focus (for men), it has been argued that second generation of rights have been more important for women.

participate in public affairs, to vote and be elected, and have access to public services (International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights 1976). In other words, both women and men have the right to be represented and to participate in politics, i.e. both political participation and political representation (cf. Phillips 1998:30-33). In fact, however, although my study begins with women's political rights, in practice these cannot be understood separately from social, economic and cultural rights. Thus, these rights also come up in the individual case studies.

Placing the research into a context

Studying norm diffusion in post-conflict societies with heavy international presence is of relevance for many academic disciplines, including both Political Science and Peace- and Conflict Studies. Of course I can only scratch the surface of all that has been written about norms, but I have done so consciously, focusing on what is most relevant for this study. The discussion in this section presents a general overview of how my research relates to previous work. I provide a more detailed literature discussion in Chapter two, where I construct and explain my analytical framework

My theoretical point of departure is norm diffusion, which in this study is operationalized by analyzing the promotion and articulation of women's political rights in Cambodia and Timor-Leste in order to understand the process by which an international norm spreads and becomes rooted in two domestic settings. The relationship between international norms and domestic change is addressed in an anthology by Risse, Ropp and Sikkink (1999). Through the use of a five-phase "spiral model" of human rights change they try to explain variation in the internalization of norms. The spiral model divides the process of norm diffusion into stages of 1) repression; 2) denial; 3) tactical concessions; 4) prescriptive status; and 5) rule-consistent behaviour (Risse and Sikkink 1999:2-20). The argument raised by the authors is that once a norm has reached the stage of rule-consistent behavior, it is very likely to become internalized as well. As part of this process the norm is institutionalized, i.e. political rhetoric is changed to incorporate the norm, the validity of the norm is increasingly accepted, and the norm is incorporated into domestic practices (such as policies and legislation) (cf. Risse and Sikkink 1999:17). The authors argue that once the norm is firmly institutionalized it becomes part of the standard operating procedures of domestic institutions. The editors conclude that "the socialization processes captured by [the] 'spiral model' are truly universal and generalizable across regions and domestic structures" (1999:238). I use this analytical model to try and understand both the status of women's political rights in Cambodia and Timor-Leste today, and the process that explains this position.

The theoretical goal of this study is to introduce two main innovations relating to the analytical model presented by Risse, Ropp and Sikink. First, I present the idea of “stage jumping” that can be detected in post-conflict countries with heavy international presence. Secondly, I argue that, to a greater extent than has been done in previous research, internalization has to be analyzed as a separate stage in norm diffusion.

As for “stage jumping”, I argue that through the heavy presence of the international community, certain norms and values can be “fast-tracked” (and thereby jump stages in the spiral model presented by Risse, Ropp and Sikink). This development affects norm diffusion. First, because the norm can be fast-tracked, the outlook for norm diffusion can be positive because the international community is heavily involved in statebuilding. On the other hand, because the international community is “forcing” certain norms onto a society, there is a risk of norm conflict between the new norm and existing local norms, which might have a negative impact on norm diffusion. This uncertainty about the outcomes of norm diffusion merits further research into how norm diffusion in war torn societies with heavy international presence actually plays out in practice.

As for internalization being analyzed as a separate stage in order to fully assess the process of norm diffusion, my argument here is based on the often-detected “implementation gap” and the fact that people can have rights guaranteed on paper but still lack the capability to act on them. Landman has studied the development and enforcement of the human rights regime and concluded that whereas several states become signatories of international human rights treaties and ratify them (institutionalization), there is greater variability in human rights protection in these states (which is a matter of internalization) (Landman 2005:104). In order to capture the institutionalization-internalization dynamic and how they relate to each other, I argue that it is essential to make an analytical distinction between the two stages of norm diffusion and at the same time look deeper into what norm internalization encompasses.

This point can be motivated by the following illustrative example. Imagine a society (in this case a post-conflict state) trying to adhere to democratic values and practices. According to legislation, women have the right to vote and to be voted for (there might be a quota system in place of some sort); politicians speak about the importance of including female candidates and of women voting in elections. The conditions for institutionalization are in place. Ahead of the elections, however, no targeted information is available for women, many of whom might be illiterate and thus unable to read political party pamphlets or the rules and proceedings for the elections. On Election Day, many women are not able to vote because they cannot leave their homes due to lack of transportation or because they have to harvest rice, which is a traditionally female task. Or perhaps women actually vote but

they vote for the candidate their village chief or head of the family has told them to vote for. Women might be elected to parliament, but once in office perhaps they cannot carry out their their mandate because they are not considered worthy of their seat and are not respected as leaders. In such situations, do women have the capability to act on their constitutionally guaranteed rights? Their right to vote and be voted for is guaranteed and even specifically articulated – i.e. it is institutionalized – but they cannot exercise this right to function due to a wide range of circumstances often outside of their control. The realization of the right to political participation and representation is thereby contested. What this example illustrates is that lack of functioning can impede internalization, even when the norm seems to be institutionalized. In order to grasp this potential gap between norm institutionalization and internalization, I use the concept of “capability to function”.

My research brings together the literatures on nation- and state-building and peacebuilding, and literature on how to spread and root norms in order to help identify ways the agenda of (re-)constructing war torn societies into democratic states adhering to good governance and human rights can be advanced more successfully. Which issues should be addressed in peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction have already been debated by policy-makers, political scientist and peace- and conflict researchers. This debate also includes who should get access to the process and who the leading actor for its enforcement ought to be. The general wisdom can be summarized in the following way: in order to fulfill its obligation to follow through and help rebuild societies, policy-makers and interveners need to focus on the same issues (cf. Cockell 1998:214ff; Kumar 2001:2; Brown 2004:66-69; Sahovic 2007). The role of the United Nations in this process is considered crucial. Former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan stated in 2005 that the UN is the world’s only universal body that has a mandate to address security, development and human rights issues globally. This leaves the organization with a special burden and responsibility to protect the people of the world (Report of the UN Secretary-General 2005). According to Tschirgi (2003),

[a]n unusual window of opportunity opened in the 1990s, which provided the international community with the promise and the potential for addressing the global search for security and development through integrated peacebuilding approaches [...].

Still, as was also noted above, critics are increasingly disputing the idea that international actors can spread democracy and re-build nations, since this is ultimately something that national actors must adhere to (cf. Jenkins and Plowden 2006). Yet, research also notes that war torn societies have limited capabilities to address these issues themselves and thus need international

assistance. How to bridge this “international-national” divide has been the subject of a several research publications (cf. Kumar 2001; Bastian and Luckham 2003; Chesterman 2004; Donini, Niland et al. 2004; Paris 2004; Pouligny 2006, Jarstad and Sisk 2008). However, although acknowledging that this is a question of rooting new ideas and spreading international concepts such as democracy and human rights, none of these authors has used norm diffusion explicitly as an approach to study statebuilding after armed conflict. This is where my study can make an important contribution.

There are many norms I might have focused on. I chose women’s political rights because it is a norm that has gained increased international focus over the last decades, but one that still faces implementation problems, both at the international and national level.¹² Kumar (2001:221) addresses the role that international actors have and can play in promoting gender equality through their assistance, but underlines the problem of there not being any strategic framework in place to support these programs. This despite the fact that international actors often pride themselves for working through a “gender perspective” and promoting gender mainstreaming (cf. Anderlini 2001; Afshar 2004:5 for similar reasoning). A study by Kuovo reveals that UN personnel often consider gender mainstreaming to be an add-on, rather than something that was integrated within the organization itself. The explanations given were lack of time to “do gender”, lack of high-level institutional support and “gender mainstreaming fatigue” (Kuovo 2004:179). There is, in other words, rhetorical support for gender equality and mainstreaming at the international level but this is not necessarily translated into practice.

The norm of women’s political rights is also one that might cause a norm conflict at the national level because of its potential clash with existing cultural practices. An illustrative example in post-conflict scenarios is where armed conflicts initially result in transformed gender roles as a result of women’s new roles as sole breadwinners and heads of households (see for example Byrne 1996; Bop 2001; Manchanda 2001; Pankhurst 2004:15). Through changed gender roles, women can discover their capabilities and what strengths they possess and several case studies demonstrate that women have gained a political space due to changes related to a period of

¹² Similarly, the introduction of feminism into IR theory started in the late 1980’s along with the “third debate” in IR but is still struggling to be part of mainstream IR studies. The third debate questioned the core values of the IR-discipline and allowed approaches such as critical theory, historical sociology, postmodernism and feminism to enter. Traditional IR theorists focus on the causes and termination of war, but with the third debate, research about what happens during wars was introduced. For a further discussion about the three debates within IR, see, for example, Tickner (2001). However, feminism’s role in IR theory is still not taken for granted. As late as 2005, Ann Tickner published an article debating Robert Keohane’s inquiry posed in 1989 on how feminists could advance IR theory (Keohane 1989; Tickner 2005). Needless to say, the two authors still disagree about the role feminism can play in the field of international relations.

conflict (see for example Bop 2001:23, 31). This increased space has sometimes led all the way to peace negotiations, as, for example, in Guatemala (cf. Luciak 2001:199-200) and South Africa (Seidman 1999). Similarly, in Namibia women played a prominent role in the UN Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) during 1989-1990 (Olsson 2005). At the same time, post-conflict developments often reinforce pre-conflict traditions and practices because these are seen as therapeutical and healing in times of insecurity (Sørensen 1998). Indeed, research has concluded that women repeatedly suffer from post-conflict backlash (cf. Meintjes, Pillay et al. 2001; Pankhurst 2004:18). Women's struggles to retain new-found roles and responsibilities might then clash with traditional gender roles, thus causing a norm conflict.

By researching the process of norm diffusion (of women's political rights) and by making an analytical distinction between norm institutionalization and internalization, I can focus on the importance of different set of actors and their *agency*. More specifically, what role can and do international actors play in introducing national actors into the preferred behavior of the international community, and how do national actors respond to this? Also, norm internalization in this study is operationalized by looking at women's capability to function, which is an approach that focuses explicitly on agency. In other words, my research adds to the growing body of research on women as *actors* in peace-building and its aftermath¹³ (Afshar and Eade 2004; Mazurana, Raven-Roberts et al. 2005; Anderlini 2007; Porter 2007). Moser and Clark (2001) emphasizes that by describing women only as victims, we deny them agency and ignore the opportunity that conflict might offer them. Large portions of the research regarding women as actors focus either on women as combatants or as members of civil society organizations (see for example Enloe 1983; Cockburn 1998; Luciak 2003). Studying women in civil society organizations during and after conflict reveals that it appears to be common for women to establish their credibility as peacemakers on the grassroots level, but they are later marginalized in the official political sphere (cf. Rehn and Sirleaf 2002:76ff). This goes back to the problem identified above; international actors and national elites do not necessarily promote women's rights in the aftermath of violent conflict, or have the same understanding of its importance. Indeed, even if there is rhetorical support for women's rights, action still lags behind. By using a norm diffusion approach to analyze how international actors such as the UN and national actors work with issues relating to women's rights, my study can help explain why the normative agenda rhetorically promoted by the international

¹³ This body of research also includes women as perpetrators, but in this study I focus on actors in the sense of being in possession of political agency, i.e. having the space and opportunity to be a part of political decision-making and being acknowledged for that.

community is not always successfully implemented. Although I only include two case studies, strengths and weaknesses can be identified and analyzed further, and then used to study other cases as well.

A norm diffusion approach to studying women's political rights in Cambodia and Timor-Leste has not been used in previous studies. However, some researchers have addressed the issue of women's rights at large. There are a number of studies addressing the international involvement and its aftermath in Cambodia since the early 1990s (cf. Curtis 1998; Gottesman 2003; Peou 2007; Widyono 2008; Öjendal and Lilja 2009), but women's experiences and inclusion in the process have only been addressed explicitly in Öjendal and Lilja. As for Timor-Leste, recognizing women's experiences of conflict and its aftermath has been identified as crucial for building a functioning society. Trembath and Grenfell (2007) ask how conditions of war, colonialism and occupation, and women's participation in these phases, have affected gender identities in the aftermath of conflict. Hall and True address how gender equality has been promoted in Timor-Leste through the work of women's activists and international gender entrepreneurs (Hall and True 2009). Similarly, Olsson (2007) looks closer at power-relations between men and women during the UN peace operations in Timor-Leste, factoring in the role played by the international community (in this case the United Nations). Olsson studies the UN peace-keeping operations between 1999-2006 and how these missions worked with gender relations and its potential spill-over effects into Timorese society; essentially looking at the role of the UN missions as norm entrepreneurs, but without looking at it from a norm diffusion perspective. For both countries, less has been written on women's political rights as a norm to be spread and rooted, and how the international norm travels into the domestic setting. Hall and True address what I call institutionalization of the norm (in their case gender equality), but my research goes further in trying to unravel the status of women's political rights and the process that explains this status.

Women's political rights and aspects of norm internalization in Cambodia is addressed in a study by Lilja (2007). Lilja has interviewed women (and some men) at the national and local level and her study covers 12 years (1995-2007). Those interviewed include representatives of political parties, civil servants, and individuals working in NGOs. Lilja conducts a discursive analysis of women's understandings of their presence in politics and how others view women's political participation, relating to women's capability to function. The point of departure in Lilja's study is *resistance*, i.e. how women are resisting existing understandings of how women should behave and in what spheres they are allowed agency. Needless to say, Lilja's findings are important for my empirical study (analyzing internalization), but they do not explain how this international norm travels to become rooted in Cambodian society.

In sum, there is some previous research to relate to and learn from, but none of the studies have taken a comprehensive approach to trying to understand how international and national actors interact to help root the international norm of women's political rights domestically. Individually each piece of research can give us important clues to understand the bigger picture, something this study will facilitate further. Indeed, as has been discussed in the research review above, the present study makes a number of contributions to existing research. As for theoretical contributions, this study is part of constructivist research on norms that addresses how international norms are spread and rooted in domestic politics and policy.¹⁴ By analyzing norm diffusion in somewhat extreme cases (war torn societies with heavy international presence), I add to previous norm research by analyzing the diffusion process in a context that might prove to be very favorable for norm diffusion, but that can also be unfavorable. The norm of women's political rights is a norm that might conflict with existing norm structures in the receiving state since post-conflict states often revert to tradition in times of insecurity. It is also a norm that is not always promoted consistently by international actors, despite rhetorical support. Furthermore, by separating norm institutionalization from norm internalization and adding capability to function to the analysis, strengths and weaknesses in the process of norm diffusion can be more easily identified and as such help identify and explain mechanisms for norm internalization. Earlier research has only briefly touched on the problem of internalization, stating that once a norm is institutionalized, internalization usually follows somewhat automatically in the sense that institutionalization leads to habitualization, which would indicate internalization of the norm (cf. Risse and Sikink 1999:33). I challenge this assumption based on the problem of an "implementation gap" – i.e. a delay between the acknowledgement of a right and people's access to it. If "internalization" as a concept is operationalized by using the idea of capability to function, we can gain a more nuanced understanding of the mechanisms at play for successful norm diffusion.

As noted above, the literature gives us diverse answers to how we are to understand the process of norm diffusion. I argue that it is important to study the issue of norm diffusion in post-conflict states empirically by addressing the relationship among international and national actors in a post-conflict setting and how their different agendas can be harmonized. Earlier studies have either argued for more international control or more national ownership, but less has been said about how international and national actors can work together more efficiently. In other words, although

¹⁴ For more on the constructivist research agenda and international norms, see an excellent review in Finnemore and Sikink (2001).

the external push in statebuilding has been both supported and criticized in previous research, less has been said about how this international-national relationship can be made more efficient. Given that international actors are gaining increased control over statebuilding in post-conflict societies, how does this process actually play out, what can we learn from it, and what strengths and weaknesses can help future democratization processes in war torn societies? Another contribution my research can make is providing a comparison between two war torn societies and analyzing norm diffusion in-depth in the contexts of Cambodia and Timor-Leste. This has not been addressed thoroughly in previous research. Although few generalizations can be made based on two cases, the conclusions drawn in this study can then be applied to other similar cases.

Outline of the study

The thesis is divided into nine chapters. This first chapter has explained the aim of the study, highlighted its relevance and discussed how it fits with already published research. Chapter two gives a more thorough account of the theoretical foundations of this study, introducing norm diffusion as well as norm entrepreneurs. The chapter also provides an analytical framework where the different theoretical pieces are put together to facilitate the empirical study. Chapter three focuses on method and research design. I discuss case selection and the type of study I have conducted as well as how the material has been collected and analyzed. The chapter also presents a model for how to analyze institutionalization and internalization respectively. Chapter four provides a background description of the case studies. A brief historical review is followed by a discussion about how women's rights were addressed in the countries prior to the entrance of the international community. Chapters five and six turn our attention to Cambodia, the first chapter discussing norm institutionalization and the second its internalization. Chapters seven and eight do the same for the Timorese case. In the empirical chapters, institutional developments and norm entrepreneurs are discussed in order to answer the research questions. These answers are discussed more thoroughly in Chapter nine. The final chapter summarizes the findings, focusing on a comparison of the two cases and on what theoretical and empirical conclusions can be drawn. A number of policy recommendations are also presented, together with some thoughts about future research questions that this study has provoked.

The process of norm diffusion

As noted in the previous chapter, the aim of this study is to analyze and explain norm diffusion, i.e. the spreading and rooting of a specific international norm, in two war-torn societies. *Norms* can be defined as patterns of behavior, or “notions of what appropriate behavior ought to be” (Checkel 1999; Bernstein 2000). Farrell (2001) provides a slightly more detailed definition, arguing that norms are inter-subjective beliefs about the social and natural world which define actors, their situations and the possibilities of action. Finnemore and Sikkink define norms even more narrowly; as a “standard of appropriate behavior for actors with a given identity” (Finnemore and Sikkink 2002:251). More specifically, a norm is “a rule-like prescription which is both clearly perceptible to a community of actors and which makes behavioral claims upon those actors” (Finnemore 1993). This more narrow definition of a norm is how the concept is to be understood throughout this study. A standard definition of diffusion is presented by Hugill and Dickson: the “transfer or transmission of objects, processes, ideas and information from one population or region to another” (Hugill and Dickson 1988:263-264). In this study diffusion relates to the process of spreading and rooting the norm of women’s political rights into the domestic societies of Cambodia and Timor-Leste.

This chapter starts off by discussing the process of norm diffusion, looking at the different actors who are involved in the process as well as different stages of it. After discussing this process and its mechanisms, I consider to the question of what actually happens at the domestic level when the norm is introduced and what factors that can influence the outcome of norm diffusion. The chapter ends with a discussion of norm diffusion in post-conflict societies and the presentation of a theoretical model that brings the different components together. I particularly emphasize the importance of making a clearer analytical distinction between norm institutionalization and internalization and how this is beneficial for studying norm diffusion in the type of cases included in this study.

Norm diffusion

Much of the early literature on norm diffusion focused on norm emergence and evolution/change (cf. Kowert and Legro 1996; Price 1998; Elgström 2000; Björkdahl 2002; Finnemore and Sikkink 2002). A number of scholars have also written about the spreading and rooting of international norms (cf. Finnemore 1993; Finnemore and Sikkink 2002; Checkel 1999; Farrell 2001;

Acharya 2004). The codification of international human rights norms has been developing for decades, through such agreements as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the UN International Covenant on Political and Civil Rights, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The universality of these norms was reinforced in the Vienna Declaration of 1993. Such norms can therefore be said to have reached “consensual status” (Risse and Ropp 1999:266). Women’s right to not be discriminated against was established in the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and women’s rights and capabilities were further acknowledged in, for example, the Beijing Platform for Action adopted in 1995 and in Security Council Resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008).¹⁵ Thus, the focus in this study is not on the emergence of a norm but rather on how the international norm is transferred into domestic settings.¹⁶ Some scholars have looked specifically at the interplay between international norms and domestic change and/or political structure (cf. Risse-Kappen 1994; Checkel 1997; Risse, Ropp et al. 1999; Cortell and Davis 2000; Finnemore and Sikkink 2002; Flockhart 2005c). This is the type of research that serves as a basis for the analytical framework developed at the end of this chapter.

As noted in Chapter one, norm diffusion is often linked to a process of socialization, where norm breakers become norm followers. Barnes, Carter and Skidmore (1980:35) define socialization as the “induction of new members ... into the ways of behaviour that are preferred in a society” (cited in Risse and Sikkink 1999:11). Flockhart states that by using such a definition of socialization, two assumptions are made; first that there is an unequal relationship between the socializer (i.e. the United Nations/international actors in this case) and the socializee (i.e. the receiving state); and second that there is a functioning society into which the socializee wishes to enter

¹⁵ Security Council (SC) Resolution 1325 (2000), recognizes, among other things, that: “[...] civilians, particularly women and children, account for the vast majority of those adversely affected by armed conflict, including as refugees and internally displaced persons, and increasingly are targeted by combatants and armed elements, and [the SC recognize] the consequent impact this has on durable peace and reconciliation [...] [the SC reaffirms] the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building, and stressing the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, and the need to increase their role in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution” (UN Security Council Resolution 1325, 2000). Resolution 1820 calls for action against, for example, sexually based violence in armed conflict (UN Security Council Resolution 1820, 2008).

¹⁶ Finnemore and Sikkink have presented the “norm life cycle”-model that illustrates how international norms develop and how they eventually manage to influence domestic politics. The first step is “norm emergence” where norm entrepreneurs try to persuade a critical mass of states (norm leaders) to embrace new norms. The second step is what has come to be known as “norm cascade”, where norm leaders try to socialize other states to accept the norm and as such become norm followers. The final stage is “norm internalization”, when the norms are accepted and taken for granted (Finnemore and Sikkink 2002:255). The “norm life cycle model” primarily focuses on why states adopt norms, and less on what happens at the domestic level as this norm is being adopted.

(the “international community”) (Flockhart 2005b:15-16). The former assumption implies that the socializer either has, or believes it has, greater knowledge than the socializee about the norm that is to be adopted. The socializer also believes it has the power to judge whether or not sufficient changes has occurred in order to deem the socialization process accomplished (Flockhart 2005b:15). Thus, through various mechanisms, states are persuaded to adopt the norm preferred by the international community and thereby change their behavior to such an extent that external pressure is no longer needed to ensure compliance (Risse 1999; Risse and Sikking 1999; Finnemore and Sikking 2002:262; Flockhart 2005b:16). Such behavioral changes are preferably “deep”; i.e. attitudes and beliefs in the receiving state are altered (Flockhart 2005b:16). However, as stated by Flockhart, identifying whether “deep” changes have occurred is difficult if not impossible, something that I will return to below and in Chapter three.

Norm entrepreneurs

As argued in Chapter one, in this study the United Nations and the international community at large are considered important for the promotion of women’s political rights, making the relationship and interaction among international and national actors important to address. Thus, the main agents for norm diffusion are found both at the domestic level and the international level.¹⁷ Flockhart defines the “domestic level” in a process of norm diffusion to encompass both national elites at the formal state level and “the people” (what she calls the masses). Thus, she argues for the need to think of the domestic level as two distinct social groups (Flockhart 2005a:50), something which is echoed by Risse and Sikking, who identify the crucial role played by domestic pressure groups in norm diffusion (Risse and Sikking 1999). I also adopt this approach. I argue that in order to understand the status of norm diffusion regarding women’s political rights in these two war torn societies we have to look at developments within both the group of national elites and the wider group of people at the grassroots level, i.e. “civil society”.¹⁸ The role played by civil society organizations in facilitating communication between government and the grassroots, as well as their potential influence in policy-making and on the implementation of

¹⁷ Throughout the study I sometimes discuss in terms of norm enforcement from above and below, which should be understood as norm enforcement coming from mainly international actors (above) and civil society organizations (below).

¹⁸ Diamond provides the definition of civil society that is used in this study: “[c]ivil society is the realm of organized social life that is open, voluntary, self-generating, at least partially self-supporting, autonomous from the state, and bound by a legal order or set of shared rules [...] it involves citizens acting collectively in a public sphere to express their interests, passions, preferences, and ideas, to exchange information, to achieve collective goals, to make demands on the state, to improve the structure and functioning of the state, and to hold state officials accountable” (Diamond 1999:221).

policies and programs, are increasingly being highlighted in research and policy-making (Hughes 2003:208; Cheema and Rondinelli 2007:15). Indeed, a (stable) democracy seems to depend on the presence of a “civil society” (Almond, Dalton et al. 2006:153)

The norm entrepreneurs discussed and identified in this study are those actors who help the process of spreading and rooting women’s political rights, be they international actors, national elites or civil society agents. These international actors, national elites and civil society agents do not necessarily have to identify themselves as working specifically with women’s political rights, although the work they do impacts the diffusion of this set of rights. For example, a women’s organization might not use the concept of women’s political rights for a number of reasons (for example, they might not know or completely understand the concept of human rights per se). However, they can still be crucial norm entrepreneurs because the work they do affects the diffusion of the norm, regardless of the language used. Norm entrepreneurs use various tools to facilitate norm institutionalization and internalization. International actors try to turn norm breakers into norm followers, which is also a goal of civil society organizations pushing for changes at the national level. Individual national elites can also engage in efforts to turn fellow national elites into norm followers and as such change policy and legislation. According to Finnemore and Sikkink, legislation and bureaucracy are the main instruments at the point of internalization, especially as these institutions become increasingly professionalized. These mechanisms can then socialize people to value certain things over others and as such internalize the norm in people’s everyday lives (Finnemore and Sikkink 2002:265). In a war torn society, for example, women’s political rights may or may not have existed as a concept in its own right. By enforcing such a norm in legislation and national policies, people can start adopting understandings of the norm in their daily lives as well and start acknowledging and accepting women as political actors. Although the norm might initially be contested based on its presumed collision with national traditions and culture, the argument is that by enforcing the norm in new legislation and in policies, people will start adhering to the value of the norm as well. In the domestic setting, people in decision-making power (national elites) thus become important agents in the diffusion process. Legislation that enforces women’s political rights is believed to play a crucial role, as well as other mechanisms that facilitate women’s access to decision-making at different levels.

As for the role of international actors as norm entrepreneurs, this study argues that the United Nations plays an important part in both policy-making and implementation in these war torn societies. The international community at large has been able to function as norm entrepreneurs, which is something that has previously been studied by, for example, Martha

Finnemore. In her study on UNESCO's important role in teaching states the value and utility of science policy organizations, she highlights how states are affected by changing understandings about what the appropriate role of the modern state is, and this change can be promoted by an international organization (Finnemore 1993). This means that increased international pressure on a state from an international organization can shift the state's focus to highlight the importance of human rights, including women's rights. Ropp and Sikkink (1999:200) have analyzed norm diffusion in Guatemala and concluded that through the United Nation's participation in the peace process, human rights were promoted and their legitimacy consequently increased at the state level. This is also what Keck and Sikkink discuss when they highlight the importance of transnational advocacy networks¹⁹ and their role in putting pressure on states to comply with international human rights norms (Keck and Sikkink 1998).

Understanding norm diffusion

Chapter one introduced the spiral model used in the edited volume by Risse, Ropp and Sikkink (1999) to analyze and understand norm diffusion. The model distinguishes between several stages the human rights' norm travels through in order to become institutionalized and internalized in a society. In the first stage, *repression*, a government is repressing human rights and efforts to bring these violations to the attention of international actors are undertaken. Transnational advocacy networks play a crucial role in highlighting human rights oppression, but such advocacy networks are most efficient when it can link its activities to a strong domestic governmental opposition (Risse and Sikkink 1999:22). Often the government then enters the stage of *denial*, during which actors in the international arena call attention to the state in order to pressure the government to comply with international human rights. Often the government denies breaking any norms because they question the validity of the international human rights norms themselves (Risse and Sikkink 1999:22-23). In the third stage, *tactical concession*, the norm is promoted by the international community and articulated in various policies which the national government readily accepts, but perhaps only as a tactical concession. This phase refers to a situation in which the government succumbs somewhat to international criticism and seeks cosmetic changes. Governments often start talking the human rights talk and to some extent accept the validity of the norm, but

¹⁹ Keck and Sikkink define transnational networks to be activists who build transnational and national networks among actors in civil society, states and international organizations (Keck and Sikkink 1998:1). For more on the role, activities and limitations of transnational networks and "global civil society" at large, see for example Clark, Friedman and Hochstetler (1998), *The Global Civil Society Yearbooks* (2004/5-2009), and Tarrow (2005).

adherence to it is still very audience-dependent. Whether or not these changes actually entail a fundamental shift in behavior and attitudes is not easy to determine. Grugel (2005:36) emphasizes that “[national] actors have considerable incentives to accept new rules because they are not powerful enough to contest them”, but the norm as such has not reached any taken-for-granted status amongst national elites and the general public. As for national human rights proponents in the target state, they are most likely organized in a rather small human rights movement dependent on a few key leaders (Risse and Sikkink 1999:25-27). According to the spiral model, once a government entangles itself in human rights rhetoric it becomes harder for it to continue violating the norm, and it enters stage four: *prescriptive status*. In this stage, the government itself regularly refers to human rights, and words and deeds should ultimately match. According to Risse and Sikkink (1999:29),

governments are considered to accept the validity of human rights norms if and when: 1) they ratify the respective international human rights conventions [...]; 2) the norms are institutionalized in the constitution and/or domestic law; 3) there is some institutionalized mechanisms for citizens to complain about human rights violations; 4) the discursive practices of the government acknowledge the validity of the human rights norms irrespective of the [...] audience [...].

At this stage, the norm is being promoted irrespective of the audience, although action might still lag behind rhetorical support of the norm’s validity. According to Risse and Sikkink “validity claims of the norm are no longer controversial even if the actual behavior continues violating the rules” (1999:34). The final stage in Risse and Sikkink’s spiral model is *rule-consistent behavior*, where rhetoric and practice are consistent with each other. Human rights norms are institutionalized domestically and norm compliance becomes a habitual practice; the norm is thus internalized (Risse and Sikkink 1999:31-33). According to Risse and Sikkink, a norm is habitualized when it is part of standard operating procedures. Furthermore, habitualization and institutionalization are necessary to “depersonalize norm compliance and to ensure their implementation irrespective of individual beliefs” (1999:17). When all steps have been completed, the authors argue that norm diffusion has taken place, i.e. the norm is spreading and rooting itself in various contexts and the norm is believed to be internalized (Risse and Sikkink 1999:33).²⁰

Now that we have addressed the process of norm diffusion as it is described in parts of the literature and key norm entrepreneurs have been identified, it is time to turn to what actually happens at the national level as

²⁰ The analytical difference between the stages of norm diffusion presented in the spiral model and used in this study is presented in figure 3.1.

an international norm is spreading and rooting and becomes institutionalized and internalized.

International pressure and national change

This study argues that the international community brings the norm of women's political rights into war torn societies as part of a peace- and statebuilding toolbox and has the opportunity to actively promote the norm in policies, legislation and institutional developments. This can be referred to as *norm enforcement from above*. Indeed, considering that national elites have few options but to start adhering to the norm (as argued above), norm diffusion has the potential of being successful. Similarly, Checkel argues that how a norm is introduced into a society affects its outlook for becoming successfully internalized among actors, a process he refers to as norm empowerment (Checkel 1997). According to Checkel, when a norm is subject to elite learning and national decision-makers adopt prescriptions about international norms, the norm is more likely internalized than if the norm is empowered through non-state actors and policy networks that try to coerce and mobilize decision-makers to adopt the norm. The reason for this, according to Checkel, is because when pressure for change comes from civil society agents the norm is seen as a constraint on behavior, whereas in a process of norm empowerment from above (elite learning) the norm constitute a "set of shared intersubjective understandings that make behavioral claims" (Checkel 1997). Indeed, as national elites pick up on the norm and start making reference to it in political rhetoric, they will have to start making behavioral changes as well. Risse and Ropp (1999:247-255) state that, "talk is not cheap"; i.e. when tactical concessions have been made, it is more difficult for a state to reject rule-consistent behavior. Once the state is acting according to international rules and regulations, the norm is "fully institutionalized domestically and norm compliance becomes a habitual practice of actors and is enforced by the rule of law. At this point, we can safely assume that the human rights norms are internalized" (Risse and Sikkink 1999:33). More specifically, international norms can either be grafted onto existing local norm hierarchies, or completely replace (or displace) the local norm in favor of the new international norm (cf. Acharya 2004). For the latter, more radical change to take place, there needs to be a shock of some sort (for example a war or a revolution), together with effective norm entrepreneurs or personnel change (Farrell 2001).²¹

²¹ A similar argument is found in the social constructivist literature, where it is argued that norm socialization is more successful following a critical juncture, or after a destabilizing ideational shock, or in a state of "normlessness" (Flockhart 2005a:43).

However, some of the literature argues that by focusing on norm enforcement from above as well as solely on elite learning, we run the risk of ignoring the important role played by various transnational movements and domestic pressure from below, as well as what actually happens at the national level in such processes (see, for example, Risse, Ropp et al. 1999). Brinkerhoff and Crosby emphasize that political will and indigenous leadership are crucial for successful implementation:

[n]o amount of external donor pressure or resources, by themselves, can produce sustained reform. It takes ownership, both of the policy change to be implemented and of any capacity-building efforts intended to enhance implementation. (Brinkerhoff and Crosby 2002:6)

In other words, the authors highlight the importance of local ownership and “policy champions” (norm entrepreneurs) in order for implementation to succeed. Such entrepreneurs are either individuals or groups *within* the target state who become agents of change who push the reform agenda forward (Brinkerhoff and Crosby 2002:6).

The literature also highlights the need to address what happens at the national level in order to capture possible constraining factors impeding norm diffusion. Such constraining factors can arise for several reasons, for example lack of understanding of the norm or an explicit resistance towards the norm. Several authors have highlighted that “perfect” policy implementation is essentially impossible to achieve (Hogwood and Gunn 1997:224; van Baalen and de Coning 2006:215), thus decreasing the likelihood of successful norm diffusion. Legro argues that even if there is a condition of outside shock of some sort, new norms might not become rooted if the norm is not consolidated before the effects of the shock has worn off (discussed in Farrell 2001); i.e. the norm has to be both institutionalized and habitualized. Constraining factors include inadequate state legal apparatuses; an inconsistency between law and practice; ratified human rights treaties that are not always codified into domestic legal frameworks, or policies and practices that are applied in ways that still violate human rights principles (Hogwood and Gunn 1997:224; van Baalen and de Coning 2006:215). Furthermore, inadequate time and resources, flawed communication, and lack of knowledge or understanding of the objectives to be achieved (Hill 1997:130-131; Hogwood and Gunn 1997) also influence policy implementation and in the bigger picture also norm diffusion.

Similarly, Ropp and Sikkink (1999:203-204) state that if a “complete” international human rights regime and network [is] not in place at the time [of norm diffusion], it should come as no surprise that the tactical concessions phase [lasts] for some time”. In other words, if there is limited understanding of what to implement (or of the norm to be enforced) or if this process is understood as externally imposed upon the receiving society, then

the stage of tactical concessions will last longer than anticipated. This can be related to a process of internally validating norms and values, as described by, for example, An-Na'im (1993; 1994; 1996), who emphasizes that local agents are not passive bystanders but actually important actors in the process of rooting new ideas. This lack of understanding of an international norm can be remedied by, for example, validating the existing international system of human rights law and institutions "in terms of the values and institutions of each culture, and also in terms of shared or similar values and institutions of all cultures" (An-Na'im 1994:174). The end result of such an internal validation resembles what Acharya (2004) calls localization of norms, where the international norm is made to fit into the local hierarchy of norms. Localizing a norm means to actively construct foreign ideas into something local, making the international norm fit into the local hierarchy of norms. Acharya identifies several steps in the process of localization, starting with a period of *pre-localization* where local actors might still resist the new norm being introduced. The second step is *local initiative* where local actors frame the external norm in ways that make it interesting and understandable for the local population. This is followed by *adaptation*²², when external norms are adjusted to fit local beliefs and practices. The final step in the process is *amplification and "universalization"* when new instruments and practices are established that include local influences (Acharya 2004).

Sometimes an international norm might not be considered challenging at all, and the domestic actors accept the norm as it is, while at other times the process of diffusion is a more challenging endeavour; it is a matter of *cultural match* (Cortell and Davis 2000). Risse and Ropp (1999:271) conclude that, "international norms are more likely to be implemented and complied within the domestic context, if they resonate with existing collective understandings embedded in domestic institutions and political cultures". That is, if there is not already a domestic understanding of the norm, international enforcement might result in feelings of alienation and a wide-spread sentiment that the norm is foreign to this particular society (see similar argument raised by Risse and Ropp 1999:239, 251). This alienation can also be brought on by the international actors themselves, as exemplified by Grugel, who has studied the process of socializing the norms and values of *democracy*. He argues that "democracy-building easily elides into a process of domination and a rejection of cultures and norms that are regarded as un- or anti-Western" (Grugel 2005:39). Such cultural mis-match can push the diffusion process back to the stage of denial. This alienation can also result from women's own lack of understanding of themselves as agents with rights

²² Note that this stage should not be conflated with the alternative of localization, *adaptation*, which in that sense refers to a process in which local norms are made to fit with the international norm.

that can be violated. This lack of understanding is a case of negatively *adaptive preferences*, which Amartya Sen exemplifies as a situation in which “women [...] do not desire some basic human good because they have been long habituated to its absence or told that it is not for such as them” (paraphrased in Nussbaum 2000:139). In other words, women have come to undervalue basic human capabilities (and rights) because of social demands and habituation. Lack of institutionalization and internalization of a norm can also be a question of a lack of political will and/or capacity. Chauvet and Collier identify three impediments for policy implementation in their discussion about reform initiatives. They argue that if the national elites risk losing out on reform, they will try to resist it. Secondly, if citizens are poorly informed about the benefits of reform, they might oppose it, even if they would benefit from such a reform in practice. Finally, if civil society organizations are too weak to implement the changes on the ground, policy reform is likely to fail (described in Collier 2007). All these flaws in implementation thus impede norm diffusion.

In sum, the literature thus points us in two different directions regarding what happens when international actors enforce an international norm and pressure is put on national elites to start adhering to it. Norm diffusion is either more successful as a result because national elites start adhering to the norm through elite learning, and once the norm is appearing in the political rhetoric and in policies and legislative developments it is difficult for the government to not engage in rule-consistent behavior. On the other hand, enforcing a norm from above, in this case through heavy international presence in the country, might lead to outright rejection of the norm or flaws in the process of institutionalizing and internalizing it due to a lack of national support/commitment/political will, lack of awareness, cultural mismatch, or an inadequate institutional framework. Voices have also been raised regarding the need to enlist the support and help of civil society organizations to help root and spread the international norm, as such focusing on pressures coming from below together with norm enforcement from above.

Presenting an analytical model for norm diffusion

As discussed in Chapter one, due to the complex peacebuilding agenda that international actors such as the United Nations now increasingly engage in, there has been increased international involvement in statebuilding after violent conflict. Nonetheless, the process of norm diffusion in states with heavy international presence is relatively under-researched. How this process actually unfolds at the national level; what processes are introduced to facilitate norm diffusion and what obstacles can emerge are all questions that deserve further scholarly attention. The edited volumes by Flockhart (2005) and Risse, Ropp and Sikkink (1999) come close because they discuss

norm diffusion in different contexts. Yet they do not address the specificities found in war torn societies. Although conflict-ridden countries are included in the 1999 edited volume, the fact that they are (post-)conflict countries is not discussed specifically. The closest the 1999 edited volume comes is when Ropp and Sikkink state that “the presence of civil war appears in general to have such a blocking effect on human rights progress” (Ropp and Sikkink 1999:203) and that “Uganda is [the] only ‘success story’ in which change came about through a bloody civil war”²³ (Risse and Ropp 1999:241). Still, norm diffusion in a post-conflict setting is not discussed explicitly in their case studies. By contrast, in looking at norm diffusion in democratizing societies, I make an analytical separation between countries that are post-conflict and those that are not, as presented in Figure 2.1.²⁴

Figure 2.1. Norm diffusion in democratizing societies

| | Post-conflict countries | Non-conflict countries |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| Heavy international presence | Countries with experience of manifest armed conflict; in the process of “democratizing”. International presence heavy, involved in state-building | Countries with no manifest armed conflict; still in the process of “democratizing”. Heavy international focus in terms of development aid and assistance |
| Less international presence | Countries with experience of manifest armed conflict; in the process of “democratizing”. International presence less, but can still be subject to an international peace-keeping force of some sort | Countries with no manifest armed conflict; still in the process of “democratizing”. Less international focus in terms of development aid and assistance |

The logic for this, as noted in Chapter one, is that the outside shock caused by the violent conflict can actually fast-track norm diffusion, and thereby allow for stage jumping in the original spiral model presented by Risse, Ropp and Sikkink. I do not argue that norm diffusion is necessarily more successful in the post-conflict developing societies with heavy international presence, because I do not test this proposition in this study. Neither do I argue that norm diffusion does not happen in cases with less international presence, only that it might happen under somewhat different circumstances. What I do argue is that cases of war torn societies with heavy

²³To clarify, Uganda is the only such success story of the case studies included in their study.

²⁴Selection of cases is discussed in Chapter three.

international presence differ from previous case studies presented in much of the norm diffusion literature because they provide both possibilities to fast-track the norm in focus as well as the potential to become breeding grounds for norm conflicts.

Thus, this study argues that due to the complex nature of the societies into which the international norm travels, i.e. the context of heavy international presence in war torn societies involved in statebuilding, the norm diffusion process plays out differently than what has been argued in previous literature on diffusion of international norms. For example, because the context is different and the international community basically brings a norm package to these war torn societies as part of a peacebuilding/statebuilding tool box, the first two steps in the spiral model, repression and denial, are not necessarily the natural starting point for a process of norm diffusion, as is argued by Risse and Sikkink (1999:20).²⁵ In other words, stage jumping is plausible. Although *repression* might occur, a well-organized domestic movement able to alert transnational advocacy networks and call for action does not necessarily exist. Furthermore, the norm might still be contested nationally and considerable domestic resistance towards women’s rights, articulated through traditional and cultural practices, could still be prominent. However, because the “heavy international presence” is highly influential in statebuilding, the receiving government has little if any choice to not comply with international actors’ advice to ratify international conventions and start complying with international norms. In other words, through heavy international presence the human rights norm arguably travels quickly into what Risse and Sikkink define as stage three in their spiral model – i.e. tactical concessions.²⁶

Once the norm has entered the post-conflict societies and international actors are engaging in statebuilding activities, different activities are undertaken to socialize national elites as well as the general public to the norm. For example, in cases of heavy international presence, the UN family is often involved in drafting and adopting new legislation, and is thus able to automatically incorporate the human rights norm into a society. As noted above, the receiving government often has little choice to continue denying the existence of the norm or openly continue repressing human rights. Thus,

²⁵The authors do state that the “spiral model does not assume evolutionary progress towards norm implementation but claims to explain variation and lack of progress” (Risse and Sikkink 1999:34). However, the authors do state that repression is often the initial stage as this is what provokes the interest of the transnational advocacy network in the first place.

²⁶Fast-tracking a norm might not automatically be good for norm diffusion. In the case study of Tunisia it is noted that by skipping the “denial” phase of the process, domestic human rights protests could be silenced by the government. The pressure from below was weakened and there was also little pressure from the transnational network, resulting in stagnation in the diffusion process and the norm has never really made it past the tactical concessions’ stage (Gränzer 1999:132).

there is little choice but to make concessions, although they might still be tactical in the sense that the government wants continued support from the international community. The argument raised by the spiral model is that once a government entangles itself in human rights rhetoric it becomes more difficult to deny the validity of the norm and the stage of prescriptive status is entered, in which words and deeds ultimately match and the norm is enforced irrespective of audience. When validity claims are no longer controversial the norm becomes part of a government's rule-consistent behavior, which leads to depersonalization of norm enforcement and the norm becomes part of standard operating procedures (habitualized) and also becomes internalized. However, I argue that reaching this stage of "habitualization" is a rather complex process. Indeed, as noted above, the literature on norm diffusion is not in agreement on what happens at the national level when international actors put pressure on national elites to start accepting the norm, indicating that arriving at "habitualization" (and thereby internalization) might indeed be a rather complicated process. Consequently, I argue that it is useful to make a clearer analytical distinction between norm institutionalization and internalization in order to trace the process by which the norm of women's political rights is spread and rooted in Cambodia and Timor-Leste. Such a distinction helps explain varying outcomes of a norm diffusion process. The institutionalization of women's political rights is a necessary but not sufficient achievement for reaching norm diffusion. Analyzing the internalization of a norm, as will be discussed further below, is a more subjective matter, and in this study I operationalize it using the idea of *capability to function* (cf. Sen 1999a; Nussbaum 2000; Comim, Qizilbash et al. 2008).

Norm institutionalization is well described by Risse who distinguishes between three types of socialization processes: a process of "forced imposition" of norms and instrumental adaptation; a process of moral awareness-raising, persuasion, argumentation and dialogue; and a process of institutionalization which can help determine outputs of a norm (Risse 1999; Risse and Sikink 1999:11-17). Instrumental adaptation of human rights norms can start a process of identity transformation and as such the norm becomes more rooted in a society and its people. Raising moral consciousness and promoting argumentation and dialogue help people accept the validity and significance of the norm. Adaptation and raising moral consciousness facilitate the institutionalization of a norm and once the norm reaches this phase it is more likely to be implemented regardless of the individual beliefs of different political leaders (Risse and Sikink 1999:11-17). Cortell and Davis (2000) also promote this understanding by describing three signs when an international norm is becoming rooted in a domestic setting. The first sign is

when the norm is appearing in the domestic political discourse²⁷ (political reference is made to the norm); the second is when national institutions change and the norm becomes embedded, for example in national legislation; and the third sign is when state policies are harmonized with the international norm. According to Risse and Sikkink (1999:20), the ratification of international treaties, the norm's incorporation into domestic institutions and legislation, and "discursive practices" often lead to rule-consistent behavior, which means that rule-breakers are now norm-followers. According to the authors, this is also when human rights norms can be regarded as internalized in domestic practices: "when actors comply with [norms] irrespective of individual beliefs about their validity" (Risse and Sikkink 1999:16-17). However, this is not necessarily a linear process and a norm might be articulated in political discussion but not be visible in institutional changes (Cortell and Davis 2000). Indeed, it is recognized that the ratification of international treaties (an institutional change), for example, can be a case of tactical concessions (the norm does not enjoy high validity in its own right and adherence is not irrespective of audience) and not a sign of true commitment and rule-consistent behavior by the government (Risse and Ropp 1999:248). Applying this to the diffusion of the norm of women's political rights, the government might confess to the importance of ensuring women's rights and even articulate it in the constitution based on several international treaties but fail to adopt a domestic violence law or take measures to promote women's participation in politics.

In other words, despite going through different phases of norm diffusion the norm might still not be genuinely rooted. We might have what Grugel refers to as norm change that is only skin-deep and not profoundly embedded (Grugel 2005:36). In order to capture internalization we have to include aspects of *agency*, or the capability to act upon the human right provided. That is, it is not enough to provide a right on paper (institutionalize the norm); in order to achieve norm diffusion, the capability to function, or the right to political agency (internalization of the norm) must be facilitated as well. This is not disregarded by scholars such as Risse, Ropp and Sikkink, but my critique of the model presented by these scholars is that they risk under-estimating the complexity of norm internalization by arguing that institutionalization leads to a habitualization of the norm, which results in internalization of the norm. I argue that this process is complex and

²⁷ The political discourse should here be understood in terms of *communication*, i.e. debates and discussions surrounding the political institutions. Cortell and Davis state that political discourses often "takes the form of demands for a change in the policy agenda" and this demand for change may come from state or societal actors (Cortell and Davis 2000).

internalization of a human rights' norm must also include *capability to function*.²⁸

By using ideas put forward by the *capabilities approach*, a more in-depth analysis of norm internalization becomes possible.²⁹ The core argument of the capabilities approach is that it is interesting to learn about a person's satisfaction with what s/he does, but also about *what* it is s/he does and what s/he is in a *position to do* (Nussbaum 2000). The approach also highlights the importance of societal structures that impact groups differently (Robeyns 2008:89). Although the capabilities approach was originally developed within the discipline of Development Economics³⁰, the basic idea is used in this study to highlight the need to focus on *agency* and not just on providing the rights per se. According to Sen, an agent is someone who "acts and brings about change [...]" (Sen 1999b:19). *Capabilities* are defined here as representing the possibility or opportunity for functioning, i.e. what a person manages to do and be (cf. Crocker 1995:162; Sen 1999a:7; Alkire 2002).³¹ *Functionings* are considered an integral part of capabilities, alluding to "the various things a person may value being and doing" (Sen 1999b:75), but the focus is still on capabilities as such, or "freedom and opportunity" (Alkire, Qizilbash et al. 2008:3). Robeyns (2008:84), while interpreting Sen, states that "[c]apabilities are real opportunities to functionings [...] such as being literate, being well fed, being healthy, being educated, being part of a social network [...]", or as in this study, being able to participate and be represented in the political sphere. However, social institutions (such as the political system or the family), social norms, traditions, and stereotypic or discriminating behavior are just some of the possible obstacles to enjoying one's capability to functioning (Robeyns 2008:84-85). In this study I argue that if there are institutional impediments, discriminating traditions and stereotypic behavior that constrain women's capability to politically function (i.e. political representation and participation), then

²⁸ I thereby ask a lot of internalization, but I argue that this is needed in order to understand why enforcement of norms often fails, despite their institutionalization and rhetorical support. The approach put forward in this study thus offers a more nuanced picture of norm diffusion.

²⁹ For more information about various applications and developments of the capabilities approach, see for example Nussbaum and Glover (1995); Alkire and Black (1997); Nussbaum (1999, 2000, 2002); Alkire (2002); Fukuda-Parr (2003); and Comim, Qizilbash, and Alkire (2008).

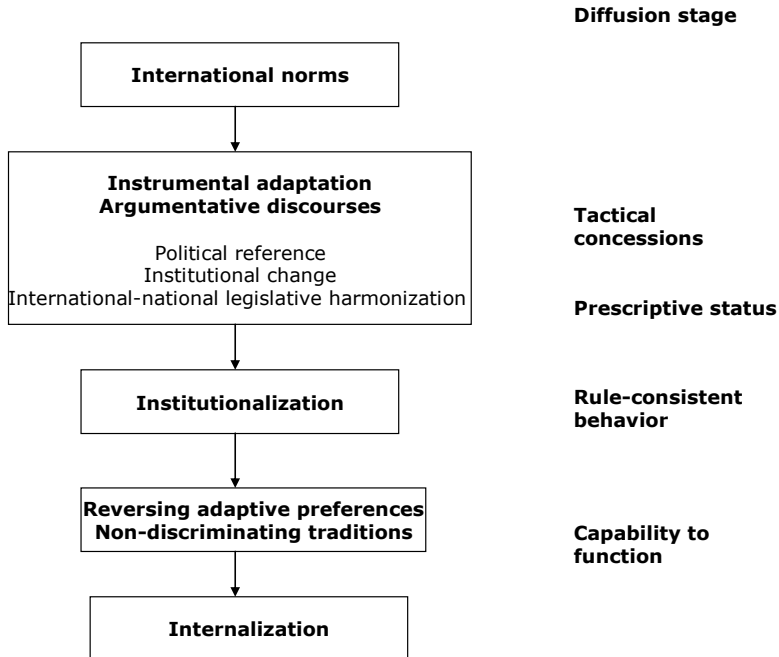
³⁰ The approach has been used outside Development Economics prior to this study, for example in Philosophy and Law (Nussbaum) and in International Affairs (Fukuda-Parr).

³¹ The capabilities approach in itself deals with some very philosophical ideas about well-being, capabilities and freedom, and Nussbaum (and others) have tried to establish lists of basic human capabilities. Sen stops just short of such a list, arguing that the selection of capabilities should be the result of a process of public debate. Increasing one's capabilities can be achieved through capacity-building, essentially translating into "increasing the ability of citizens and their governments to produce more responsive and efficient public goods and services [...]" (Hawkins 1980, recited in Bowman and Keraney 1988).

internalization of the norm itself is constrained. This can vary along a scale, as presented in Figure 3.2.

People can lack an understanding of themselves as agents, often due to negatively adapted preferences. Many women have come to undervalue and accept the absence of basic human capabilities (and rights) because they have never enjoyed (or only to a very limited extent) such agency in the past. Through awareness-raising and capacity-building, women can come to realize that they have a right to better treatment, and progress is often recognized, even if such a change in treatment is yet forthcoming. Nussbaum identifies two stages in awareness raising for women: “coming to see themselves as in a bad situation, and coming to see themselves as citizens who have a right to a better situation” (Nussbaum 2000:138-140). This study takes for granted that enjoying political rights is a natural component of a person’s life. It is not argued that women have to act upon these political rights, but they should nonetheless have the capability, or the *choice* (freedom and opportunity), to do so. The point of departure is that institutions developed - and processes and strategies undertaken or adopted as a part of the democratization of a war torn society - are a question of human rights, which in itself is closely related to the understanding of human capabilities. However, whereas many women might have the right to participate politically, they do not always have this right in the sense of a capability. According to Nussbaum, capabilities, by asking also what a person is actually able to do goes a bit deeper than the rights discourse (Nussbaum 2000:97-99). Looking into a person’s (or group of people’s) capabilities also means addressing discriminating traditions and ways of life, since these often impede a person’s agency.

This discussion can be summarized as in Figure 2.2 in which the original process of norm diffusion, as described by Risse and Sikink (1999:12) and inspired by arguments by Cortell and Davis (2000), is developed further to incorporate the discussion above regarding the need to make a more explicit analytical separation between norm institutionalization and norm internalization. The figure also includes the different stages of norm diffusion (further developed in Table 3.2) and how they relate to the diffusion process as such.

Figure 2.2. Norm diffusion process

Source: modified model based on Risse and Sikink (1999:12) and Cortell and Davis (2000).

The model presented in figure 2.2 thus illustrates how the different theoretical components are linked together to facilitate the analysis of norm diffusion. Moving from institutionalization to internalization, or from providing the right to actually accessing the right, can be facilitated by various measures, such as providing sufficient resources (time, mandate, money and personnel), civic education, awareness-raising campaigns, capacity-building, and action plans and guidelines. I use such measures in the empirical chapters to analyze norm institutionalization and internalization, i.e. the status of norm diffusion. I also try to explain the outcome. Previous literature has been inconclusive regarding the outcomes of norm diffusion when the norm is enforced by international actors and this leaves us with three possible scenarios: the norm is either both highly institutionalized and internalized, highly institutionalized but not internalized, or neither institutionalized nor internalized (rejected). In the event of the first two possible scenarios, the norm can either be subject to adaptation or localization. In other words, the international norm is localized, i.e. actively constructed to fit the local hierarchy of norms, or adapted; i.e. the local norms are made consistent with the international norm.

Conclusion

This chapter has laid the theoretical groundwork for the empirical study of norm diffusion in Timor-Leste and Cambodia. In this study, analyzing norm diffusion is facilitated through the analysis of the institutionalization and internalization of women's political rights, as manifest in efforts to democratize war-torn societies. By making a more distinct analytical separation between institutionalization and internalization, a more nuanced study of norm diffusion can be conducted.

The theoretical discussion presented three scenarios focusing on what happens with norm diffusion in these somewhat extreme settings (heavy international presence in a war torn society), where the receiving government actually has few alternatives but to accept the international norm, at least as a tactical concession. The discussion presented so far in has revealed that the extreme circumstances encompassing norm diffusion in these post-conflict societies can actually help fast-track norm diffusion in terms of both institutionalization and internalization. The argument rests on beliefs that because the international community participates in policy-making and legislative development the norm can be incorporated into policies and legislation. Once the norm starts making such appearances it is difficult for national elites not to engage in rule-consistent behavior and at this point words and deeds should ultimately match, causing a habitualization of the norm in people's everyday lives and the norm is both highly institutionalized and internalized. However, there is also a risk of norm conflict and lower levels of institutionalization and internalization due to national factors such as lack of national support/commitment/political will, lack of awareness, cultural mis-match, or an inadequate institutional framework. If international actors push for the institutionalization of a specific norm, national actors might dismiss the norm as something foreign, or they might not understand the meaning of the norm or how it translates into the specific culture in the receiving state. Looking at it from this point of view, heavy international presence in a war torn society might actually be a breeding ground for norm conflict and not necessarily fast-track institutionalization and internalization of the norm. There is also the possible scenario of outright rejection of the norm. In order to assess what actually happens on the ground both the stages of institutionalization and internalization have to be scrutinized further. In this study, this process is analyzed by looking at norm entrepreneurs, three areas of institutional developments (debates and outcomes surrounding electoral rules and regulations, the role and mandate of a national gender equality/women's machinery, and the strengthening of local government structures through decentralization), and capability to function. The areas are discussed further in Chapter three.

On method and operationalization

Chapter two introduced the theoretical foundation of this study and explained the process of how an international norm travels into domestic settings. In this chapter I discuss methodological issues and how I have resolved them in order to study norm diffusion empirically. Special attention is given to questions of operationalization. The three areas of institutional development included in the study are also discussed further.

This study uses a comparative qualitative case approach to analyze norm diffusion in two cases. For both cases I conduct documentary analysis and semi-structured interviews. I discuss the selection of cases below. Before doing so, however, it is useful to say something more general about comparative studies such as the one presented here. This type of study is particularly well-suited for illuminating processes, institutions, or “the politics of the countries within which it occurs” (Peters 1998:13). One of the characteristics of qualitative research is its ability to develop interesting arguments about *how things work in particular contexts* (Gillham 2000:11; Mason 2002:1; Yin 2003:13ff). The use of qualitative data goes beyond simple description of events and phenomena and attempts to create an understanding, interpret and critically analyze data (McNabb 2004:341). As Mason (2002:3) describes it: “qualitative research is concerned with how the social world is interpreted, understood, experienced, produced or constituted”. This study thus analyzes the diffusion process of the norm of women’s political rights in post-conflict statebuilding in the cases of Timor-Leste and Cambodia. This involves describing the process, but also asking “how-and-why” – i.e. explanatory – research questions about operational links, which must be traced over time (cf. Yin 2003:18; Gerring 2007:44). According to McNabb, the purpose of a case study is to represent a specific case or cases, not to be a representative picture of “the world”, and Gerring states that a case study is an intensive study of a single case with the ambition to shed light on a larger set of cases (McNabb 2004:359-360; Gerring 2007:20) – in this study cases of statebuilding in war-torn societies and the process of norm diffusion in such states.

Selection of cases

The selection of cases is based on two main criteria: war-torn society and heavy presence of an international actor, such as the UN, involved in post-conflict statebuilding. As was discussed in the introduction chapter, the UN peacebuilding agenda emerged at the eve of the end of the Cold War. The

first such mission is considered to be the one in Namibia, which was deployed in 1989.³² According to United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations, 18 peacebuilding missions have been deployed between 1998-2006, for example in Nicaragua, Angola, Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Timor-Leste, Sierra Leone and Burundi. As of January 31, 2008, 12 United Nations political and peacebuilding missions were actively under way (DPKO 2008). The UN has taken over some, or all, of the powers of the state on a temporary basis in, for example, Eastern Slavonia, Kosovo, Timor-Leste and Cambodia (Chesterman 2004: appendix 1). Other cases may involve the take-over of some of the national administration mainly by an international body other than the UN, for example the EU in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The cases of Afghanistan and Iraq are somewhat special since the UN has come to play a crucial role in the aftermath of US-allied intervention/occupation, but initially played a limited role (on Iraq, see for example Dobbins, Jones et al. 2005).

Timor-Leste and Cambodia fit the above-mentioned criteria very well. In both countries the United Nations has taken over parts of the national administration for peace- and state-building purposes, although the extent of UN control was not the same. Cambodia was a case of international supervision, while Timor-Leste was one of international governance (Caplan 2005:17-18).³³ In each case, when the international operation was undertaken it was the most extensive and expensive peacebuilding mission launched under the UN-flag. Selecting cases based on complex international peacebuilding strategies positions the two cases within a similar setting where it is very likely that international norms and values will be included in national policies and legislation. This study empirically explores the role played by the international community in norm diffusion in Timor-Leste and Cambodia in-depth, and from a theoretical point of view, it can be argued that if the heavy international presence in these two countries cannot influence norm diffusion positively, it is difficult to see under what circumstances international pressure can be successful?

³² A peacebuilding mission is defined by Paris as the “deployment of military and civilian personnel from several international agencies, with a mandate to conduct peacebuilding” where peacebuilding is defined as “action undertaken at the end of civil conflict to consolidate peace and prevent a recurrence of fighting” (Paris 2004:38).

³³ This could also be referred to as *transitional administration*. Such administration can be defined as comprehensive peacebuilding, including “quasi-governmental activities such as electoral assistance, human rights and rule of law technical assistance, security sector reform, and certain forms of development assistance” (Chesterman 2004:5). What distinguishes international administration from state-building or “regular” peacebuilding is that the above mentioned roles have been pursued by assuming some, or all, of the powers of the state on a temporary basis. At the same time, an international administration differs from “military occupation” because it is under control of, and accountable to, an international body – the UN in the cases of Timor-Leste and Cambodia (Caplan 2005:4).

The goal of case study researcher is to uncover both the commonalities and the particularities in the case(s) studied. McNabb (2004:368) underlines the importance of the cases being either superior or best in their class; that cases should be chosen because they demonstrate a point better than any other selection of cases would. This ensures that the research will make a significant contribution to our body of knowledge. Selecting cases based on heavy international presence in a war torn society can be considered theoretical sampling, which Mason (2002:124) describes as selecting groups or categories based on, for example, their relevance to the research question, the theoretical position and analytical framework, or to the argument that is developed in the study. Schnabel (2001:198) argues that researchers often select a case, not because it represents the only case or even the worst case, but because it is a good example of a specific phenomenon. I selected Timor-Leste and Cambodia because they share the phenomenon of heavy post-war international presence involved in statebuilding at some point in their recent history. Because of this heavy UN presence, the international community at large has spent extensive resources in these two countries and is present in policy- and legislation-making even after the withdrawal of the primary UN mission as such.

Starting with the complex UN peacebuilding missions in these two countries, the international community has had the opportunity to promote the norm of women's political rights through its very active participation in statebuilding. Thus, selecting cases based on this criteria controls for the risk of the complete absence of a discussion of human (women's) rights, since this is something that has been promoted, at least rhetorically, by the international community since the early 1990s. This means that even if the complexity of the UN mandates varied between the missions in Cambodia and Timor-Leste, this opening up to international influences can still be identified in both countries today.

Although both countries share the experience of having been post-conflict countries in which the UN conducted complex international missions with a mandate to engage in statebuilding, the two differ in certain ways as well. The UN mission in Cambodia started during the early 1990s and in Timor-Leste in the late 1990s. The reconstruction process in Cambodia had been on-going for approximately 15 years when I conducted field work in 2007 and 2008. In Timor-Leste the process was approximately 10 years old. Statebuilding in Cambodia and the policies adopted as part of this development have thus had a longer time to become implemented than in Timor-Leste, something which might affect the results of norm diffusion to date. On the other hand, it can be argued that due to insecurity and a relapse of violence in Cambodia during the 1990s, the reconstruction period was more seriously encouraged only after the elections in 1998, which would mean that the process there is about as old as the process in Timor-Leste.

Another significant difference between the cases is that there was basically no functioning government apparatus in place for the UN to work with/ towards in Timor-Leste, which led to a much broader statebuilding mandate for the UN peacebuilding mission there as compared to Cambodia. There were, in other words, some constraining factors present in Timor-Leste that were not as demanding in Cambodia. Furthermore, the reconstruction of Timor-Leste was initiated post-Beijing 1995, and most of the reconstruction has taken place post-Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000).³⁴ This might have affected the organization of the UN missions. In fact the United Transitional Administration in East Timor was the first UN mission to include a Gender Affairs Unit. By contrast, *gender* or *women's rights* were not specifically highlighted in Cambodia, but were seen as falling under the responsibility of the human rights component. Thus, even if gender and the discussion of women's rights was recognized and gradually gaining ground in the early 1990s when the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia was deployed, the mission did not have an articulated focus on gender.

Having argued that the international community brings an international norm package into the target societies, the explicit gender sensitivity in one of the missions but not the other can be seen as an important difference between the two cases. Again, however, considering that the period studied does not end with the withdrawal of the initial UN mission, and that such complex UN missions are actually just the beginning of continued international presence in the receiving states, the norm package has been introduced to both countries and it is relevant to analyze how this process has unfolded.

Operationalization

As I have already emphasized, this study analyzes both institutionalization and internalization in order to explain norm diffusion. The outlook for norm diffusion might seem bleak in a war-torn society which is trying to reconstruct and rebuild political institutions and relationships. Efforts to socialize people to international norms are nonetheless undertaken and need to be analyzed. A number of norm entrepreneurs are involved in such a process and, as mentioned in Chapter two, this study focuses on international actors, national elites, and civil society organizations. Again, the norm entrepreneurs identified and discussed are actors who help the process of spreading and rooting the norm of women's political rights in society. Such entrepreneurs can, for example, be politicians trying to influence fellow politicians, politicians reaching out to the grassroots, women's organizations

³⁴ See for example footnote 5, 6 and 15 for more on the Beijing Conference in 1995 and Security Council Resolution 1325 (adopted in 2000).

putting pressure on policy-makers or educating the public on women's political rights, and international actors pushing for changes at the national level. Men and women returning from the Diaspora are also an important group of norm entrepreneurs. Pressures from above include an international push, but also pressure from national elites that targets fellow national elites in an effort to promote norm enforcement through, for example, national policies and legislation. Pressures from below include what is achieved at the grassroots level, particularly through the work of women's organizations lobbying for change to achieve adherence to the women's political rights norm.

Table 3.1 lists the norm entrepreneurs I focus on and how I believe they influence each other in their efforts to spread and root the norm of women's political rights. International actors (including the UN missions) have the power to influence national elites (elite learning) and civil society organizations, particularly by giving them support to develop and assist in the norm diffusion process. International actors are at the same time influenced by the human rights discourse and what policies and guidelines that are adopted at UN headquarters. National elites can influence civil society organizations through collaboration relating to, for example the education of other national elites. Civil society organizations mainly have the power to push national elites to adopt the norm and engage in rule-consistent behavior, but they also play a crucial role in spreading the norm at the grassroots' level. What unites these norm entrepreneurs is that they all try to facilitate the process of norm diffusion in some way. Considering the context into which the norm travels and the role played by international actors (norm enforcement from above), the relationship and interaction among international and national actors is crucial for norm diffusion. The international actors can either take the lead, while allowing for limited national input, or be more open to national input and priorities throughout the process.

Table 3.1 Norm entrepreneurs

| ACTOR | MAIN INFLUENCE PUT ON |
|-----------------------------|---|
| International actors | Civil society organizations, National elites |
| National elites | Civil society organizations, Other national elites |
| Civil society organizations | National elites, Grassroots |

Working with broad concepts such as norm diffusion in a democratizing state can complicate an analysis of its institutionalization and internalization unless they are broken down into sub-goals. In this study I do so by identifying specific areas of institutional development where we can identify the manifestation (or lack of it) of the norm of women's political rights. In other words, it is in these more well-defined areas that we can study developments that capture both political debate and institutional change and analyze the extent to which these are facilitating harmonization with the international norm.

Areas of institutional development

As noted in Chapter one, the multifaceted post-Cold War agenda has forced the international community, most notably the United Nations, to broaden its activities and focus on its responsibility to protect and rebuild, increasingly so in a gender-sensitive manner. The literature focusing on nationbuilding emphasizes that the first stage of (re-)building a nation, i.e. changing the regime, is not a very complex issue. The second stage is more challenging; that is, creating the necessary institutions for a functioning society as well as various mechanisms to ensure that the institutions are legitimate (i.e. statebuilding) (Jenkins and Plowden 2006:6). This includes, *inter alia*, establishing an electoral system so that rulers can be chosen in a participatory fashion. At the centre of political reconstruction are the establishment of a democratic order and the creation of institutions that can prevent the outbreak of violent destabilization (Cockell 1998:215; Schnabel 2002; Wallenstein 2002:144ff; Brown 2004:66-67; Brinkerhoff 2005). Thomas Carothers (1999:90) describes it as "institutional modeling". Democratic institutions are defined by Luckham, Goetz and Kaldor (2003:18), as "a set of arrangements for organizing political competition, legitimating rulers and ensuring accountable governance [...]". The political system that is established does not necessarily have to be a democratic one, but democracies, are considered to be more accountable, transparent and accessible and are therefore often used as the role model for statebuilding.

Many of the societies subject to statebuilding efforts have weak democratic traditions, and the existing political institutions are often fragile and initially enjoy little popular legitimacy (Lijphart and Waisman 1996:2). Indeed, looking at many of the poorest (and often unstable) countries in the world,

[a]lmost by definition their institutions are weak, vulnerable, and very imperfect; their decision-making spaces are constricted by the presence of international actors with multiple priorities, their public organizations are bereft of resources and are usually badly managed; those who work for government are generally poorly trained and motivated. (Grindel 2004)

In other words, strong and firm (yet accessible and transparent) democratic political institutions are the basis for sustainable peace and development. The political institutions that we aim for should be accessible to all citizens, both women and men. Article 21 (1) in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* states that “everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives” (UDHR 1948). The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women states that women should have the same access to public life as men and states should ensure women’s right to vote and participate in the formulation of government policy and participate in government at all levels (CEDAW 1979: article 7). Still, in 2008, the world average for female representation in national parliaments was 19.8 percent³⁵, with regional differences from 41.4 percent in the Nordic countries to 9.6 percent in the Arab states (IPU 2008). Evidently, creating new democratic institutions does not guarantee women’s equal rights or enhance their status *per se*. Formal democracy (establishing legitimate institutions and procedures) has to be complemented by substantive democracy (redistributing power to allow citizens to participate in policy- and decision-making) (Luckham, Goetz et al. 2003:9).

In this study, in analyzing institutional developments that promote democratic developments I have decided to focus on three specific areas in order to identify and evaluate evidence of norm institutionalization and internalization. The first area is electoral rules and regulations, which affect both participation and representation in politics. The second and third institutional developments represent institutional arrangements at both the national and local levels: the establishment of national gender/women’s machinery and the development of a functioning local government structure.

Electoral rules and regulations essentially set the stage for national and local elections, which are often considered one of the most important aspects of a democratic state (see for example Grugel 2002:70). Indeed, fair and free elections are one of the cornerstones of functioning democracies and they are considered to confer local and international legitimacy.³⁶ In other words, they are crucial for “crafting government of, by, and for the people”, and are both a process and an event (Cheema 2005:25, 29). Post-conflict elections are not a panacea for the democratization of war-torn societies but they offer

³⁵ This number looks only at the Lower or Single Houses.

³⁶ Scholars and practitioners have different opinions about the role of elections. A common understanding is that if a country is able to hold elections, democracy is underway and the peacebuilding operation is completed. As true as this might be, Roland Paris argues that countries emerging from civil war are not ready to hold elections within three years as is most common today. Even if they were ready, the peacebuilders need to stay even after the elections, assuring that the country is able to consolidate democracy (Paris 1997, 2001, 2004). Terrence Lyons, on the other hand, is more optimistic towards post-conflict elections, although also recognizing that timing is everything (Lyons 2002)

people the opportunity to participate in the democratic process.³⁷ In order to reach this goal, however, efforts are needed to ensure all eligible voters have the right to participate in post-conflict elections. This task can be facilitated through adopting a package of rules and regulations, including the constitution, electoral laws, codes of conduct and other administrative regulations (Cheema 2005:39).

One frequently debated issue relating to increasing access to elections is the use of quotas, in this study focusing on formal or informal mechanisms (often called soft quotas) that aim to guarantee under-represented groups a minimum percentage in the national or local decision-making constituency or on party candidate lists. In 2005 it was estimated that around 40 countries used some sort of gender quota in elections to national parliaments (Dahlerup 2005:3). Quotas can either focus on regulating the pool of potential candidates, the candidates who stand for election, or those elected (Dahlerup 2005:19). It is more common that quotas are used for candidate lists than for elected candidates (Darcy, Welch et al. 1994:154; Dahlerup 2005:19).

Other rules and regulations adopted and used to increase the participation of the electorate in the democratic process is the development of voter education programs. Such efforts aim at increasing awareness among the public about the role of elections, how to vote and where to vote. They can also be aimed at helping political parties develop campaign material. A wide range of actors are involved in such educational efforts, ranging from civil society, via political parties, to the state. An Electoral Management Body tasked with organizing the election is often established (Cheema 2005:46). Such institutions might also be involved in voter education initiatives for example, through poster campaigns, information pamphlets and radio slots. These electoral bodies are sometimes established as temporary institutions and at other times they are permanent (Cheema 2005:46).

The establishment of a national gender equality machinery of some sort is the second institutional development included in this study. As was noted in Chapter one (footnote 4), many governments and their departments/ministries use the rhetoric of gender mainstreaming and this agenda is often pursued within a national gender equality or women's machinery, or the establishment of such machinery is seen as an important part of mainstreaming gender and as a catalyst for promoting gender equality. Gender equality machineries can thus be considered crucial nodes for representing

³⁷ As for the results of elections and how effectively the outcome represents the diversity in society, several scholars have addressed the pros and cons of different electoral systems. See for example Lijphart (1994), and Reilly (2005) on this. As for women's participation and the various electoral systems, see for example Norris (1985), Rule (1994), Rule and Zimmerman (eds) (1994), Wide (2006) and Paxton and Hughes (2007).

women and men's interests upwards in the governmental structure and downwards towards civil society.

Of course, no national machinery exists in a vacuum, and socio-economic and political contexts affect how influential these machineries can actually be. Rai (2003:26) distinguishes five key elements affecting the strength of national gender equality or women machineries. The first issue is whether or not the machinery is located high enough within the decision-making hierarchy to be able to influence policy-making. The second element is the clarity of the machinery's mandate and its functional responsibility. The third issue is the machinery's link with civil society groups working for the advancement of women's rights. The fourth and fifth are the human and financial resources of the machinery and the national machinery's accountability. It is important to note, of course, that being located at the highest level of government is not the same as being able to influence policy-making if there is no political will from other actors to actually allow the national women's machinery to effectively carry out its mandate. It is also important to highlight that not all gender/women's machineries have the same roles and responsibilities. Some machineries focus exclusively on their role as policy advisers, promoting attention to gender issues in various programs and projects and providing advice to the government, whereas other machineries create programs but also monitor the implementation of them (Goetz 2003:72; Rai 2003:30). Also, not all gender/women machineries are located as a specific entity within the governance structure. Sometimes a gender desk is established in a sector that is judged to be "closely related" to the issue (see for example Goetz 2003:71).

Strengthening the local government structure is the third institutional development discussed in this study. Measures to strengthen the local level are often related to a process of decentralization³⁸. Indeed, decentralization is often advocated as a measurement to empower the poor in general and women specifically and as a way to promote democracy and development more generally (see for example Hutchcroft 2001 on decentralization's effects on democracy). Decentralization is not addressed in this study in order to evaluate its real effect on people or how democratic it is (or is not).

³⁸ Scholars usually distinguish between political, administrative and fiscal decentralization. Within administrative decentralization, three different alternatives exist: deconcentration, delegation, or devolution. Devolution involves a rather extensive transfer of decision-making authority and responsibilities to local government institutions (also known as political decentralization and a common organizational reform in federal states), whereas delegation transfers decision-making to semi-autonomous organizations. Deconcentration is the most common form of decentralization and involves an "intra-organizational transfer of particular functions and workloads from the central government to its regional and local offices" (Hutchcroft 2001:3; Cheema and Rondinelli 2007). Focus in this study is primarily on decentralization via deconcentration, although this is naturally dependent on what type of reforms that are introduced in the two case studies.

Rather my purpose is to look at whether and how the development of the local government structure functions to promote women's participation and representation. Local democracy has the power to make the policy process more accessible and accountable. Strengthening local government institutions is thought to enhance democratic practice (Olsen 1997; Diamond 1999:119). Easier access to decision-making increases involvement in local governance and facilitates the spread of norms and their translation into local communities. Thus, in this study, efforts to strengthen the local government structure is addressed in order to evaluate its ability to bring national policies closer to the people. Of particular importance is looking at how women's political rights and capabilities are addressed in these efforts and analyzing how local government institutions are made accessible to women.

In sum, these three areas of institutional development are included in this study because they are important for the articulation and promotion of women's political rights and serve as crucial avenues for women's political representation and participation. Analyzing how they facilitate the promotion of women's political rights can reveal whether or not the norm itself is spreading and becoming rooted in society. For example, in the literature elections are considered the cornerstone of functioning democratic societies, thus in themselves they serve as important mechanisms for democratization. However, if women are excluded from the electoral process, consciously or unconsciously, it affects norm institutionalization and internalization. Establishing a national machinery addressing gender equality or women's issues can be a sign of institutionalization, but its possibility to function properly must also be secured. Lack of money, power and mandate affect the ability of such machineries to exercise agency. Finally, the link between democratization and decentralization is highlighted in the literature and the details surrounding a country's organic structure can help inform us on the institutionalization of women's political rights. To what extent women's political representation and participation can be facilitated in a local government structure can also say something about norm internalization.

Analyzing norm institutionalization and internalization

Now that we have narrowed the study of the diffusion of women's political rights in Cambodia and Timor-Leste into looking at three groups of norm entrepreneurs and three areas of institutional development it is time to address the issue of how to actually analyze norm institutionalization and

internalization.³⁹ Throughout this study, the assets of time and resources, commitment and political will, coordination and communication, adequate and accessible state apparatuses, and awareness and training are highlighted as important for achieving a “successful” norm diffusion process. For example, part of the institutionalization of the women’s political rights’ norm could be the formalization of a national women’s machinery located high enough in the governance structure to actually have the ability to influence policy-making, and equipping this machinery with competent personnel, resources and a clear mandate. Furthermore, if the machinery manages to facilitate the enforcement of a gender mainstreaming agenda and make other ministries and representatives “think and act gender”, then institutionalization and internalization of women’s rights are proceeding; i.e. actors are getting entangled in human rights’ talk and it becomes – according to theory – difficult to not engage in rule-consistent behavior.

However, as noted in the previous chapter, we must analyze whether or not changes are only tactical concessions or proof of a norm’s prescriptive status and, in time, part of rule-consistent behavior. The critical question thus remains; how do we really analyze norm diffusion? Figures 3.1 and 3.2 below illustrate how I operationalize this in the empirical study. The different stages of norm diffusion and what characterizes each stage can be summarized as in Table 3.2.

³⁹One measurement that would facilitate the analysis of norm internalization is the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM), presented in the Annual Human Development Report. The GEM measures inequalities between women and men in a country by looking at political participation and decision-making, economic participation and decision-making, and power over economic resources. The problem is that there are no official values to be found for Timor-Leste at this point in time. The same goes for the Gender Development Index that measures standard of living in a country, based on life expectancy of women and men, education of women and men, and women and men’s earned income.

Table 3.2. Stages of norm diffusion

| Stage | Characteristics |
|--------------------------|---|
| Repression and Denial | National elites are repressing human rights; Efforts to highlight oppression possibly undertaken by national opposition or international actors; National elites addressed at the international arena; Validity of norm denied. |
| Tactical concession | National elites succumb to international criticism and make cosmetic changes; Norm adherence (by national elites but also enforcement by international actors ⁴⁰) still audience-dependent; Validity claim still somewhat controversial; Few key leaders pushing for norm adherence. |
| Prescriptive status | National elites make political reference to women’s political rights; Rhetorical support for women’s political rights followed by action (may still lag behind rhetoric) - example: human rights conventions ratified, constitution and domestic law incorporate international norms; Validity claims of the international norm are not controversial; Norm adherence irrespective of audience. |
| Rule-consistent behavior | Norm part of “standard operating procedures”; Norm adherence de-personalized, Rhetorical support consistently followed by action (implementation). |
| Internalization | Norm adherence de-personalized; Implementation; Agency – freedom and opportunity to act for own change. |

⁴⁰ International actors are included because of the specifics of the context in which norm diffusion is taking place – post-conflict settings with heavy international presence.

Throughout the analysis of norm diffusion in the three areas of institutional development I examine, I address both international and national norm entrepreneurs because they are the key to pushing the norm through the various stages mentioned in Table 3.2.

Figures 3.1 and 3.2 below illustrate how this translates into analyzing norm institutionalization and internalization. Figure 3.1 provides an analytical tool for institutionalization, ranging from low levels to high. At the endpoint on the left the norm is at the stages of repression and denial. This might be where the norm is actually positioned when the international community – in the form of the UN mission – arrives. However, as was argued in Chapter two, stage jumping is plausible since the international actors bring with them their toolbox of various norms and values, ready to be institutionalized. As was also mentioned in Chapter two, three signs of when an international norm is institutionalized in a domestic setting is when political reference is made to the norm, when national institutions change (for example the norm becomes embedded in national legislation), and when state policies are harmonized with the international norm (Cortell and Davis 2000). Depending on whether these developments are cosmetic (instrumental adaptation) or genuine, and irrespective of audience, serve as an indication of whether or not the norm is leaning more towards the stage of tactical concessions (norm adherence is audience dependent), prescriptive status (norm is adhered to irrespective of audience but action may lag behind rhetorical support) or rule-consistent behavior (rhetoric and action match and the norm is part of standard operating procedures irrespective of individual beliefs).

It should be noted that separating a norm's placement at the stage of tactical concession or prescriptive status is sometimes a difficult task. As noted in Figure 3.1, both referrals to and adoption of the norm is dependent on how and when it is articulated and promoted. If the norm is not being promoted irrespective of the audience, the norm is classified to be at the stage of tactical concession. If, however, the norm is advocated for irrespective of whom is listening, then the norm is considered to be moving towards high levels of institutionalization and the norm is either classified at the stage of prescriptive status or rule-consistent behavior. The difference between the stages is based on whether or not rhetoric is followed by action and if norm adherence is de-personalized and in the end actually implemented. Ratifying international treaties could be a tactical concession, but it can also be evidence of the norm reaching prescriptive status and subject to rule-consistent behavior. The adoption of a national gender action plan can also be an example of forced imposition and action that is instrumentally adapted by the receiving society without much knowledge of why it is

important. However, if the action plan is then followed by efforts to raise moral awareness (i.e. civic education), then the level of institutionalization of the women's rights norm is increasing. In other words, determining at what diffusion stage a norm is at depends on what happens next. This is why it is necessary to focus on the process of norm diffusion as a whole. For example, if women's representation and participation in national elections is highlighted, efforts could end there – i.e. with an acknowledgement of their importance but without further measures to actually increase them. By contrast, if various measures are undertaken to promote women as political actors in the election, then the norm is not just adhered to as a tactical concession but also enjoys a certain level of legitimacy and action has followed rhetorical support. In this case, the norm enjoys prescriptive status and might be moving towards rule-consistency.

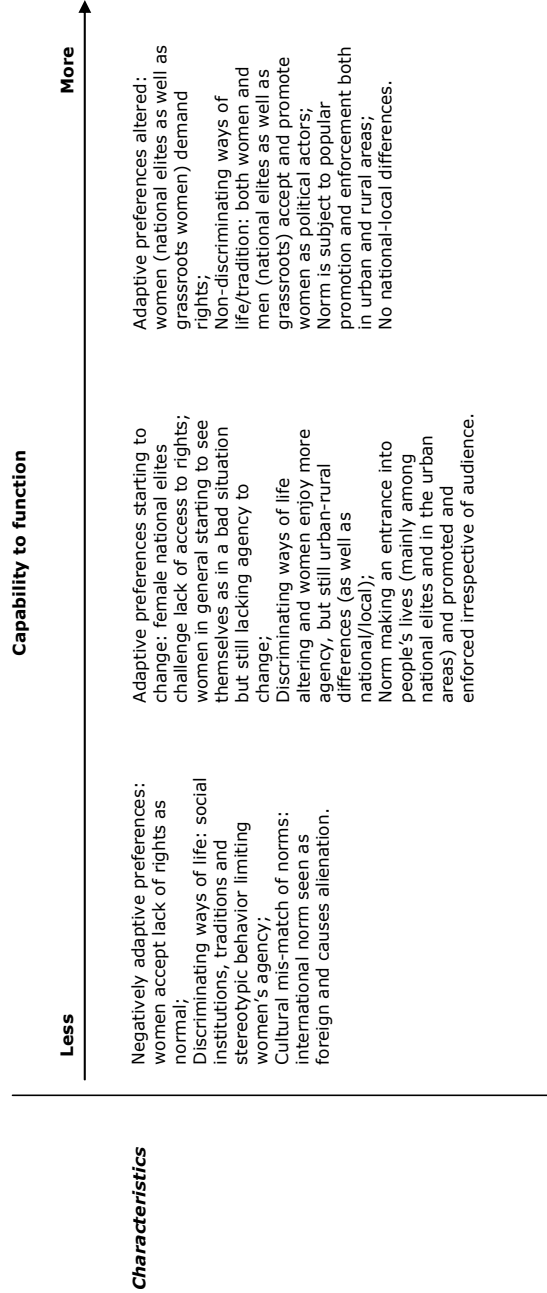
Figure 3.1. Analyzing norm institutionalization

| <i>Diffusion stage</i> | Repression/ denial | Tactical concessions | Prescriptive status | Rule-consistent behavior | Towards Norm Internalization |
|-----------------------------------|--|---|--|--|-------------------------------------|
| Characteristics | <p>Value of norm denied; No national institutional change to incorporate norm; State policies and institutional developments not harmonized with international norm.</p> | <p>Political references made to the norm, either followed by action or not, dependent on audience; Cosmetic or factual national institutional changes to incorporate norm; Initial (instrumental?) harmonization between institutional developments and the international norm.</p> | <p>Political reference to the norm irrespective of audience; National institutional change to incorporate norm irrespective of audience; Institutional developments harmonized with International norm irrespective of audience; Getting other actors (national and local) "to think and act gender".</p> | <p>Political reference to the norm irrespective of audience; National institutional change to incorporate norm irrespective of audience; Institutional developments harmonized with International norm irrespective of audience; Getting other actors (national and local) "to think and act gender".</p> | |
| Institutional developments | <p>Possible existence (or not) of gender/women's machinery but with few resources and limited mandate/agency; No explicit gender sensitization of electoral rules and regulations; Weak local government structure, not including women and with limited, if any, power.</p> | <p>Initiating gender/women's machinery, e.g. gender desk, gender focal point system; Gender-sensitization of debate surrounding electoral rules and regulations; Decentralization that makes some reference to women as agents in local government structure.</p> | <p>Existence of gender/women's machinery with agency power, resources and mandate (<i>Commitment and understanding of what to implement/enforce</i>); Gender-sensitized electoral rules and regulations (<i>Women's participation and representation in national and local elections is promoted</i>); Gender-sensitized decentralization with the development of a local government structure actively promoting women as political actors.</p> | <p>Existence of gender/women's machinery with agency power, resources and mandate (<i>Commitment and understanding of what to implement/enforce</i>); Gender-sensitized electoral rules and regulations (<i>Women's participation and representation in national and local elections is promoted</i>); Gender-sensitized decentralization with the development of a local government structure actively promoting women as political actors.</p> | |

As argued in the previous chapter, institutionalization is a necessary but insufficient indicator of norm diffusion since a deeper analysis of internalization is also needed in order to say anything about how national actors socialize the norm in focus. In this study, I operationalize internalization by looking at women's capability to function. When the norm is highly institutionalized it should already be internalized to some extent, since rule-consistent behavior implies that words are followed by action and the norm is practiced as a matter of habit and adherence to it is de-personalized. However, internalization might still lag behind institutionalization.

Figure 3.2 explains how to internalization can be operationalized and analyzed using the concept of capability to function. Moving from low levels to higher levels of capability to function means that negatively adaptive preferences change towards the realization of women's political rights, and women at both elite and grassroots levels start to demand their rights. At the same time, discriminating ways of life and traditions should be challenged, and both women and men – elites and grassroots – should start to accept and promote women as political actors. Furthermore, to reach high levels of capability to function, there should be no prominent urban-rural divisions in the promotion of the norm in focus. This includes societal change so that the norm becomes part of people's daily lives and is accepted/promoted irrespective of audience.

Figure 3.2. Analyzing norm internalization



Research tools

This study is based on both analysis of written materials, primary as well as secondary sources, and semi-structured interviews.⁴¹ The two types of empirical material answer somewhat different questions. The interviews are primarily used to try to capture the internalization side of norm diffusion, while the written material is more concerned with institutionalization. However, these boundaries are not water-tight, because some of the interviewees also provided information about institutionalization and some documents analyzed are actually evaluations and policy briefs concerned with the rooting of the norm and its internalization. Also, some of the tentative conclusions I drew from the written material were then checked against what interviewees said. This allowed me to perform a certain degree of triangulation, which is an important mechanism for comparative research. Apart from validating previously collected information, triangulation can also “help the researcher go into geographical and cultural settings with which he or she is relatively unfamiliar without committing egregious errors of interpretation” (Peters 1998:101).

Document Analysis

A lot of the information about policy formulation, legislative developments, and democratization in general and about women specifically was found in written sources, including academic publications, articles, reports and surveys. These are mainly secondary sources that help establish the context and initial outputs and even some of the results of norm diffusion in post-conflict democratization in the two cases. However, some primary sources were also analyzed, such as press releases, UN documents and United Nation’s Security Council Resolutions, government policy documents, bills and legislation. The use of documentary information is a common technique in case studies and is often seen as a complement to information gathered through interviews and observations (Yin 2003:85-86; McNabb 2004:365). When using secondary sources it is important to check for quality, authenticity, credibility, representativeness and meaning (cf. Flick 2006:248). A bias in my written sources is that they are limited to ones available in English. Although undoubtedly a weakness in terms of accessing written sources, much of the academic debate regarding the two cases is in English

⁴¹It can be argued that in order to actually develop a deeper understanding of internalization, a quantitative survey would have been preferable because it would have enabled me to ask more women about their perceptions of their capability to function. However, this would have been difficult to do in Cambodia and Timor-Leste. First, many women are not literate. In addition, the survey would have to have been conducted in person because the postal services in both countries are seriously flawed. This raises the dilemma of whether an outsider, particularly a middle-class white woman, could really get reliable answers to survey questions. As with focus group interviews mentioned in footnote 42, these practical problems mean that conducting a survey was not a viable method given the short time spent in each country.

and a lot of the government-issued material can also be found in English. For example, English translations of many reports, government bills and program assessments are available for both countries. Furthermore, in Timor-Leste, the UN compiles daily news from Timorese, Australian, Portuguese and Indonesian newspapers that are translated into English and circulated through various e-mail listings. In Cambodia, one of the independent daily newspapers is published online in English, which facilitates access to information.

Most of the written material was found either through personal contacts in the two countries, online or in printed versions available through various libraries. Umeå University library, the Library of Congress in Washington D.C, the University of Maryland's (College Park) McKinley Library, and the libraries at the National University of Singapore and the Institute for Southeast Asian Studies in Singapore were used to access secondary printed material. During field visits to Timor-Leste and Cambodia on three occasions between 2007 and 2009, written material from the governments, various NGOs and international organizations was also accessed, documents that would have been difficult to obtain without personal contacts in the various ministries, departments, and organizations. I also came across several research reports addressing issues of women's rights and capability to function in various ways in Timor-Leste and Cambodia, all of which provided useful information and served as a good comparison to my own results.

Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were used as a second technique to collect information about the institutionalization and internalization of women's political rights. Between May and June 2007, January and February 2008, November and December 2008, and March 2009, I met with a total of 65 interviewees; 33 in Cambodia and 32 in Timor-Leste. Several people were interviewed twice in both cases.⁴² International and national personnel and represen-

⁴² I had initially planned for focus-group interviews, but once in Phnom Penh and Dili I realized that the problems of assembling representative focus groups were insurmountable in the short period of time I had to spend in each country. These problems included trying to convince women to participate, gaining their trust as an outsider, as well as practical difficulty of finding a time in which I could bring these very busy women together. When I found out that many organizations actually conduct focus group interviews in various areas of their countries, I decided to use their material instead of trying to duplicate their studies, probably with less accurate results. I did however participate in one workshop with a women's organization in Timor-Leste as well as in the second International Women's Peace Conference organized in Dili in March 2009. I also sat in on a meeting for young female politicians in Phnom Penh in December 2008. These occasions made it possible for me to listen to what a larger group of women discussed regarding issues of political participation and representation.

tatives for women's and human rights organizations were interviewed⁴³ using a semi-structural approach focusing on various themes regarding the country's post-conflict democratization process and whether/how women's political rights have been incorporated into this development. During my first round of interviews, I had no pre-set list of questions I asked of all the interviewees, but rather I raised a number of themes I wanted them to discuss (see appendix 4). Each theme had several sub-themes, and if the respondent (or informant, see below) did not touch upon the themes or sub-themes, I formulated a question to address it. For example, if a women's rights organization was working with training female candidates ahead of national elections but never mentioned how this related to women's overall position or status in society, the interviewee would get a follow-up question regarding his or her view on the relationship, if any, between women becoming political leaders and the traditional roles of women, women's roles in the community, etc.

In addition to questions related to the interviewee's expertise on certain issues, they were also asked to reflect upon how much influence they believed the international community had had in acknowledging women/gender issues and their opinions on how to move from rhetoric to action – both as regards international actors but also for national leaders and themselves as individuals or organizations. Furthermore, the interviewees were asked questions related to the abolishment of negative adaptive preferences and discriminating ways of life. For example, do women understand themselves as political actors and do others see and accept women as political actors? Are references made to women's political rights irrespective of the audience? Is a more gender-sensitive framework becoming a habitualized part of people's everyday lives, thus replacing discriminatory traditions, legislation and policies? The interviewees with whom I met more than once were asked more specific questions in the second interview. This was particularly the case during my final research trip to Cambodia (December 2008) and Timor-Leste (March 2009), when I focused on filling certain empirical gaps and used specific questions to do so.

⁴³ In Cambodia, I met with civil society organizations Licadho, Gender and Development for Cambodia, Women for Prosperity, SILAKA, Women's Media Center Cambodia, the Khmer Institute for Democracy, and the Cambodian Women's Crisis Centre. I also met with people at the World Bank, UNDP, UNIFEM, UNFPA, GTZ, D-FID, SIDA, CARE international, and UNOHCHR. Members of Parliament, politicians, civil servants in different line ministries, and people working as researchers or consultants were also interviewed. In Timor-Leste, I met with civil society organizations Alola Foundation, JSMP, Women's Political Caucus and Rede Feto on several occasions. I also spoke to people working in smaller NGOs. International actors interviewed included people working for UNFPA, UNIFEM, UNDP, UNCDF, UNMIT, and the World Bank. I also interviewed civil servants in different line ministries and at various levels, politically active women, and Members of Parliament. Researchers and gender consultants were also interviewed, as well as representative of individual donor countries.

The people interviewed were both respondents and informants. Trying to understand how women themselves feel and experience the development and enforcement of their political rights and capabilities is an example of interviewing respondents, while talking to key international personnel is an informant interview. Some interviewees talked to me both as a representative of a Cambodian or Timorese women's organization, discussing their own experiences, and at the same time explained how they work with local women to facilitate norm diffusion. I consider these interviewees to be both informants and respondents. In general, people interviewed ranged from staff in national NGOs, often with a specific focus on women, to international advisors to the sovereign governments of Cambodia and Timor-Leste, and others in-between (see footnote 43 for details). Some interviewees represented international organizations/institutions/donors with authority to influence national policy-making and decision-making – either because they are part of the policy-making process as such (developing programs and projects that facilitate the implementation of women's rights) or because they provide advice to national policy-makers. Other interviewees represented national actors who have either the authority to shape policies and legislation or to influence the content of programs and legislation, or actual policy implementation authority – i.e. national NGOs focusing on the promotion of women's political rights. These interviewees were selected because of the work they do and the knowledge they have about the issues addressed in this study. For example, to analyze the status of women's political rights, women and other relevant actors (national program directors, women's organizations and international personnel) were interviewed regarding their perception of how well women's political rights are promoted and actually affect women's lives (or how well various programs seem to be implemented in the case of key international and national personnel). For Timor-Leste, a few representatives of women politicians were also interviewed. While this does not provide a complete picture of how women manage to function within official politics, it nevertheless provides useful insight in the matter. For Cambodia, a dissertation from Göteborg University (Lilja 2007) provided useful and important information about female politicians. When I describe women in politics in Cambodia, I rely to some extent on Lilja's research, which covers 12 years and a significant number of interviews. I also interviewed some female politicians, and their answers correlated well with the findings of Lilja's research.

I first contacted the interviewees in either in Phnom Penh or in Dili. Each interviewee was given the opportunity at the end of the interview to mention names of others they thought would be useful for me to talk to. Through this snowballing technique, I got several new names. My sense is that the interviewees were able to provide a fair picture of the climate for women's political rights in Cambodia and Timor-Leste from 1992/1999 until mid-

2009. A majority of the people interviewed were women, simply because women are more likely to work with “gender issues” in international organizations and in the national political sphere and because more women than men work in civil society organizations focusing on women. It is important to stress, however, that the interviewees were selected because of their position and not gender. Thus, a number of men were also interviewed. Some of the men worked with women’s rights issues, while others worked on matters relating to institutional developments, were politically active, or active in NGOs working on development issues. It is worth mentioning that even though the people interviewed were all based in Dili and Phnom Penh, many organizations/actors direct efforts towards the provinces or districts, which made it possible for them to give informed views – as professionals and sometimes as women from rural areas – about whether/how women’s political rights are spreading throughout the country. I was also able to visit a couple of women’s rights organizations outside of Phnom Penh and Dili, although I used those occasions as an opportunity to learn more about women in rural Cambodia and Timor-Leste, rather than as basis for interviews.⁴⁴ As mentioned above, many organizations were also able to provide me with reports, household surveys or other written materials, thereby giving me access to information I would have had great difficulties obtaining on my own (as a Western white woman coming to a remote village trying to gain people’s trust and convincing them to be part of my study).

The role of a Western white woman conducting interviews on the issue of women’s rights in war torn societies should be discussed a bit further. I started each interview session by explaining the aim of the interview and my research as well as how I would use the information gathered. Most interviewees did not seem to think of me as someone they could use to lobby international donors, but on two occasions it became obvious that the interviewees initially thought of me as a representative of the international community with the power to influence donor funding.⁴⁵ After I had explained my work, I asked the interviewee to tell me about their organization and some of their programs. After this, my questions could more easily follow because I could target the specific issues I was interested in. I have consciously not used words like “norms”, “diffusion”, “socialization”, “institutionalization” or “internalization” in the interviews. I

⁴⁴ One organization I visited ran a shelter for battered women and worked with various projects involving victims of domestic violence. I was able to join the organization for a one-day visit in several Cambodian villages, meeting women who had been abused by their husbands. Domestic violence is not an issue I address explicitly in the study but it nevertheless impedes women’s fulfilment of their rights and capability to function. Thus, I did not conduct interviews with the women but nevertheless absorbed the context in which they were living and the problems they faced.

⁴⁵ Needless to say, I always stated firmly that this was not the case and believe this message to have been well received by the interviewees.

wanted the interviewees to tell me their story in their own words. When interviewing politicians I asked them to tell me about how they came to be a politician, and then we would talk about the positive and negative aspects of being in politics. Often, gender-specific issues would then be addressed automatically. Most of the Cambodian and Timorese people I interviewed (regardless of whether they were part of the national elite or represented a women's organization) were grateful to me for giving them an opportunity to tell the world their story, a story that they believed had been neglected in everything that has been written about their countries. In sum then, I have tried hard to reduce the impact of my Westernness in the interviews. Also, by triangulating the information gathered through interviews with other interviews and written material, the validity and reliability of the information could be increased.

I mentioned above that language was a potential issue for analyzing the written material, but it could also be a problem when conducting interviews. Most interviews were conducted in English, but in some cases they were conducted through an interpreter. I did not rule out any interview due to language problems, because interpreters were available in both Timor-Leste and Cambodia. All the interviewees were contacted by either e-mail or phone, which made it possible to determine whether an interpreter was needed. Most of the interviews were recorded and transcribed, although some were only documented with hand-written notes. I left this decision up to the interviewee. After I explained my purpose and goals and the objective of the study, many interviewees agreed to be recorded. It is interesting to note that interviewees in Cambodia were more willing to accept the use of a recorder than those in Timor-Leste. As a result, I have fewer recorded interviews from Timor-Leste.⁴⁶ A natural consequence of this is that less detailed information can be obtained through taking notes, but the notes were typed and sent back to the interviewees, making it possible for the interviewees to add information or make corrections, as they felt necessary.

The recorded interviews were all transcribed and sent back to the interviewee for comments. Interviewees were thus able to fill in inaudible words or clarify ambiguities. Usually, they had very few comments and corrections. Not everyone took the opportunity to read through the transcript, and in these cases I sent several e-mail reminders. If there was still no response, I assumed the material was correct and could be used.⁴⁷ This decision was based on the fact that I do not reveal the identities of the interviewees in my work. In the early stages of my research, quite a few

⁴⁶ Other researchers have discussed the problem of conducting research in fragile societies, for example war-torn countries, including conducting interviews that are recorded (Smyth and Robinson 2001; Dalen 2007).

⁴⁷ Since these interviews were recorded and fully transcribed, there is little, if any, risk that I have completely misunderstood the interviewee.

interviewees asked for anonymity. Because anonymity seemed to make them more comfortable, I decided to not name respondents/informants or make their organizational or institutional affiliation known. I do reveal the gender of the interviewee, except when this risks conflict with the requested anonymity. Many of the international advisors and experts liked that they could remain anonymous because otherwise they sometimes felt uncomfortable criticizing their employer or counterpart. As for the national actors interviewed, I hope that anonymity made them more relaxed and able to share their true perspective on the issues addressed. My impression is that most interviewees appreciated the discretion. I believe that the way I have presented the interviewees in the empirical chapters satisfies their desire for anonymity.⁴⁸

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed methodological issues relating to the study of institutionalization and internalization of women's political rights in the reconstruction of war-torn Timor-Leste and Cambodia. The two cases were selected because they fulfill the selection criteria: war-torn society that has experienced heavy international presence involved in statebuilding. Engaging in such theoretical sampling of cases can help us with the task of applying the norm diffusion model (Figure 2.2) in post-conflict war torn societies. The chapter put special focus on how to actually analyze institutionalization and internalization. An analytical tool was presented that includes the various stages of norm diffusion, their characteristics and how they translate into low,- medium,- or high levels of institutionalization and internalization. The three areas of institutional development that make up the framework for the empirical study were also introduced in order to explain both why they are included in the study as well as how they will be analyzed related to the diffusion stages.

In these first three chapters I have set the stage and narrow the scope of the study (Chapter two) and presented an analytical tool (Chapter three) to use to answer the research questions presented in Chapter one. In the next chapter I turn to the empirical part of the dissertation. In particular, I provide a brief background discussion of the two cases. This will facilitate the discussion of international presence and norm institutionalization and internalization in the two countries, which are the topics addressed in Chapters five through eight.

⁴⁸ Some interviewees emphasized that I was more than welcome to reveal their name and organization, although I have not done so.

Background

The men look like gold, when it drops in mud, we can clean it, but the women look like white clothes; when it drops in mud we cannot clean it to be white again. (Cambodian proverb, Fiske 1995:23)

Before analyzing the institutionalization and internalization of the norm of women's political rights in Cambodia and Timor-Leste it is useful to provide some background information about the countries. In this chapter I present a short description of each of them and then briefly review the violent conflicts that preceded the deployment of United Nations missions and the arrival of other international actors. I conclude the discussion by positioning women's rights in the two countries at the time the international community arrived.⁴⁹

Setting the stage

At a first glance, Cambodia and Timor-Leste (until 2002 known as East Timor) seem to be very different from each other, apart from the fact that they are both located in Southeast Asia. They share, however, some characteristics that are important for this study. Perhaps the most obvious similarity besides the geographical location is that they are both poor, post-conflict countries where tradition has ascribed women a subordinated role to men. Major differences include the fact that Cambodia is primarily a Buddhist country, with 95 percent of the population subscribing to Theravada Buddhism, whereas Christianity is the predominant religion in Timor-Leste. Fully 98 percent of the Timorese identified themselves as Roman Catholic in 2005. Cambodia is approximately 181 000 square kilometres and has a population of close to 14.5 million. Timor-Leste is a very small country, with an area of 15 000 square kilometres and a population estimated around 1.1 million (CIA The World Fact Book 2009). Timor-Leste is further divided into 13 districts (re-named municipalities in the recent

⁴⁹ See Appendix 3 for a timeline for both countries, encompassing major events discussed in Chapters four through eight.

decentralization reform), 65 sub-districts and 442 *sucos*⁵⁰. The decentralization reform in Cambodia divided the country into 20 provinces and 4 municipalities. The provinces are further divided into 171 districts and 1510 communes, while the municipalities are divided into 14 *khans* (sections) and 111 *sangkats* (quarters).⁵¹

Both countries are still struggling to become functioning democracies after years of violent conflict. In the Freedomhouse rating, Cambodia is considered “not free”, and Timor-Leste scores high enough to be rated “partly free”. Cambodia scores a 6 out of 7 on political rights; Timor-Leste is rated 3 (Freedomhouse 2008).⁵² For 2007, the Polity IV project rated Cambodia a 2 on the polity variable and 3 on democracy. Timor-Leste got a 7 on both scores (Marshall and Jagers 2007).⁵³ As a complement to these numbers, an Asia Foundation survey from 2003 provides an assessment of how people perceive democracy in Cambodia. According to the survey, which was conducted after two national elections and just ahead of the third (in 2003), a majority of the voters had limited knowledge of what elections could do for them and little sense of what the elected Assembly representatives do and can do (The Asia Foundation 2003). According to one of my interviewees, a national human rights advocate, “[people have] made their decision but they cannot make rational decisions [regarding elections], because they don’t even know what information to look for, they don’t even know if the other side has a better agenda or platform [...] we don’t have free and fair elections” (Interview no. 12). Or as explained by a representative of an international development organization: “I think what we have got in Cambodia is a very embryonic understanding of representational democracy [...] people still think they can sell their vote” (Interview no. 14).

Naturally, these democratic flaws and differences in levels of democracy between the countries affect the context in which women’s political rights are trying to become widespread and rooted through institutional developments. If elections are not free, then women’s participation and ability to become elected will be affected as well. If citizens lack a general understanding of what democracy (and accompanying rights) entails, then any deeper socialization of women’s political rights will probably be difficult to achieve

⁵⁰ A *suco* is best translated into a “hamlet” and consists of several *aldeias* (towns).

⁵¹ Cambodia was prior to the decentralization reform divided into 23 provinces and 1 province-level municipality, 171 districts and approximately 1621 communes/*sangkats*.

⁵² A score of 1 indicates “free”, whereas 7 is the lowest level of freedom. The Political Rights’ index takes into consideration the electoral process, political pluralism and participation, and the functioning of government (Freedomhouse 2008).

⁵³ The Polity score ranges from +10 to -10, where the higher score is full democracy and the lower score full autocracy. The democracy score ranges from 0-10, measuring competitiveness of political participation, openness and competitiveness of executive recruitment, and constraints on the chief executive (Marshall and Jagers 2009).

as well. Despite this, however, it is still important to analyze how women's political rights are actually manifested and promoted in democratization efforts. By analyzing the norm diffusion process and its outcomes, lessons can be learned and can serve as a basis for understanding the process through which international norms travel into post-conflict democratizing societies. Before turning to this task, however, we need to provide an introduction to Cambodia and Timor-Leste.

A first glance at Cambodia...

Cambodia is a country where approximately 85 percent of the population lives in rural communities, the majority dependent on agriculture, forestry and fishery for their livelihood (NSDP 2005:13).⁵⁴ In 2004, 34.7 percent lived below the poverty line at \$0.46-0.63 a day (NSDP 2005:8). The 2007 Human Development Report places Cambodia's Human Poverty Index⁵⁵ at 38.6, and its rank on the Human Development Index is 131 out of 177 countries (at a value of 0.60) (UNDP 2007/2008). The National Poverty Reduction Strategy from 2002, which covers the period 2003-2005, identifies the causes of poverty as high population growth, inadequate opportunities, low capabilities, insecurity, exclusion and vulnerability (NPRS 2002:15). A majority of the poor depend on agriculture for their livelihood, and women make up a significant number of this part of the population (NSDP 2005:13). In general, Cambodian women are fairly active in the economic sector compared to neighboring countries; 74.4 percent female economic activity was reported in 2005 (UNDP 2007/2008). Women are also the main economic contributors in the family; 64 percent of women have this role according to the 2006 Human Development Report (UNDP 2006a). Cambodia has one of the lowest levels of income in Southeast Asia, and there is significant geographic inequality. The major urban areas are experiencing rising income levels, but income is stagnant in the rural areas (Sjöberg and Sjöholm 2005:5).

One issue important to address in an effort to understand the Cambodian context is the power of the patron-client relationship. This is visible at most levels of society and can also be noted between national and international agents. Lilja describes this relationship as "dyadic as it involves two parts: vertical, as the patron is positioned hierarchically above the client, and finally, multi-stranded, i.e. the relationship pertains to more than one sphere

⁵⁴ According to the National Strategic Development Plan from 2005, 90 percent of the poor live in rural areas (NSDP 2005:vii).

⁵⁵ The Human Poverty Index for Developing Countries measures ability for population to live a long and healthy life (deprivation in health), access to education (adult literacy rate), and a decent standard of living (the unweighted average of people without access to an improved water source and the proportion of children under the age of 5 who are underweight for their age) (UNDP 2007/2008 – Cambodia).

in life” (Lilja 2006). The patron offers protection, both physical but also related to economic issues and moral support, and the client guarantees political loyalty and often a labor force (Lilja 2006; 2007:72).

The patron-client relationship also includes the relationship between men and women. Although it is often pointed out that Cambodian society operates under a bilateral kinship system (for example, after marrying, the relatives of the wife are all part of the new extended family), the dominant religion, Buddhism, considers men superior to women. Although protected and respected, women still have a lower status than men (Fiske 1995:21). The concept of family plays an influential role at all levels of Cambodian society. Santry explains that “[e]very person in a village is addressed as a family member of some sort and every member within a family is addressed according to their place, while the village head is referred to as mother of the village” (Santry 2005:31). Although referred to as the *mother* of the village, a typical Cambodian village has a male chief and only on rare occasions are women considered suitable enough to rule villages. Népote (1992:156) states that “any woman achieving a senior position is soon pulled down as a female elder is seen as bringing disorder to the society” (paraphrased in Santry 2005:111). This is addressed further below and also in the Cambodian chapters.

A number of governmental strategies have been developed with the aim of fighting poverty and increasing development opportunities in the country. The Khmer Rouge regime managed to destroy most of the country’s assets. A significant number of people lost their lives during the brutal years (for example most well educated people were killed), the economy was ruined, education and other social institutions were basically non-existent, and most of the infrastructure was destroyed. The long-lasting civil conflict also brought about demographic changes in the country, as more women than men survived this period. This demographic unbalance is now leveling out and women currently make up around 52 percent of the population (McGrew, Frieson et al. 2004:9).

Most of the strategies to rebuild the country after 1979 were initiated during the 1990s, and the Paris Peace Accords of 1991 state that Cambodia should ratify a number of international conventions (Agreement Concerning the Sovereignty, Independence, Territorial Integrity and Inviolability, Neutrality and National Unity of Cambodia 1991). One of the first institutional developments was the writing of a new constitution. In accordance with the Paris Peace Agreement, the Constitution from 1993 thus incorporates the international conventions that the Government had adopted up to that point, including the Convention in the Elimination of All Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which was ratified in 1992

without any reservations.⁵⁶ In other words, the constitution of Cambodia prohibits discrimination against women and emphasizes the importance of gender equality (The Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia 1993: article 31.2 and article 45.1). According to Marcus (1996:8), “the constitution now mandates specific attention to rural women, guarantees that household work and work outside the home are equal in value and that women cannot be dismissed from employment because of pregnancy”. Other strategic developments evolving during the 1990s and onwards included “the National Programme to Rehabilitate and Develop Cambodia” (1994), a “Socio-Economic Development Plan” – the first five-year plan (1995), and Public Investment Programs developed to channel domestic and external aid to priority areas (NSDP 2005:1). The “Governance Action Plan” was prepared in 2001 and identified the judiciary and legal system, public finance, civil service, and anti-corruption as crucial reform areas. Gender equity was added as a fifth issue after international pressure (McGrew, Frieson et al. 2004:23). In 2004, the Cambodian Government adopted a “holistic and comprehensive rectangular strategy” to address a number of issues relating to governance and socio-economic development. The “Rectangular Strategy” focuses on growth, employment, equity and efficiency, and consists of four inter-locking rectangles (NPRS 2004). In 2003 Cambodia adopted the Cambodian Millennium Development Goals (CMDG) based on the development goals adopted at the United Nations Millennium Summit in 2000. The CMDGs incorporated some changes in order to make the goals applicable to the Cambodian context (MoP 2006). The National Strategic Development Plan commits to gender mainstreaming and promoting women’s rights and participation (NSDP 2005). Taking all these developments and initiatives together, the outlook for the institutionalization of women’s political rights seems to be rather well rooted in the legislation and policies adopted since 1991.

⁵⁶ Cambodia ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights on May 26, 1992, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on May 26, 1992, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women on October 15, 1992, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child on October 15, 1992, just to mention some of the international declarations and conventions signed and ratified. As for national legislations, the Cambodian Gender Assessment from 2008 highlights the adoption of the following laws as important for protecting women’s rights and interests: the 2005 Law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence and the Protection of Victims (a National Action Plan to Combat Violence Against Women has been submitted to the Council of Ministers); the 2001 Land Law emphasizing that women and men have the right to co-sign land titles; the 1997 Labor Code recognizes gender-specific concerns and affords liberal rights to women in employment. The Government has modified a restrictive national law on abortion to make it available without restriction during the first 14 weeks of pregnancy; and the Marriage and Family Law allows divorce on grounds of “cruelty and beatings” (Article 39) (CGA 2008:173).

... and at Timor-Leste

Timor-Leste is one of the poorest countries in the world. In 2008, almost 50 percent of the population lived under the upper poverty line of US\$ 0.88 a day.⁵⁷ It is estimated that Timor-Leste's GDP in 1997 was \$344 million and increasing. In 1999, after the mass destruction following the popular consultation (discussed below), GDP is estimated to have dropped by 40-45 percent (ADB 2000:2). In 2007, the country ranked 150th of 177 countries in the UNDP Human Development Report (with a value of 0.514) (UNDP 2007/2008). Timor-Leste is an agrarian society and approximately 80 percent of the population is involved in agriculture.⁵⁸ The poorest of the poor are those with the lowest levels of education and those who work in agriculture with small land-holdings, or those who are members of families headed by fishermen (NDP 2002:33; UNDP 2006c:2; Timor-Leste CAP 2007:15). Female-headed households, widows, veterans, orphans of the resistance, and former child soldiers are also among the poorest (UNDP 2006b:2). In 2002, an estimated 40 percent of women participated in the labor force, compared to 81 percent of the male population (UNCDF 2005:18). The 2007 Human Development Report stated that in 2005, approximately 54 percent of women over the age of 15 were engaged in economic activities, although statistics also reveal that out of the total population, only about 13 percent men and 9 percent women are involved in wage employment (UNDP 2006b:8; UNDP 2007/2008).

The traditional Timorese society⁵⁹ is patriarchal, with tradition and customary laws favoring men over women. However, both patrilineal and a few matrilineal kinship systems exist throughout the country (Ospina 2008:12). Tradition provides men with more economic and political advantages than women, and Timorese men inherit and own property while women are generally regarded as inferior (Wandita, Campbell-Nelson et al. 2006:289). The core social structure evolves around the extended family and descent group (Ospina 2008:12). Traditional Timorese society also believes strongly in sacred relations with ancestors, a relationship that is demonstrated through various rituals and protocols. Each house generally has an elder who is responsible for the contact with ancestors, and each hamlet has a "king" who is in charge of non-sacred "political" relations (Swaine 2003:20ff; Cristalis and Scott 2005:20). Ospina (2008:12) explains that

⁵⁷ The lower poverty line (extreme poverty) is set at US\$ 0.71 and in 2008, 33.2 percent of the population is believed to be living in extreme poverty. All these 2008 figures are World Bank statistics, presented to me by an international aid worker in November 2008.

⁵⁸ In the rural areas, 46 percent of the population is reported to be poor (World Bank 2003; TIDS 2007).

⁵⁹ It is, in fact, more proper to talk of Timorese *societies*, as there exist a variety of traditional cultures, languages, practices, and customs which differ from region to region (see for example Cristalis & Scott 2005:101)

“knowledge and power is passed from father and son” and that women’s participation in decision-making is limited in both the public and the private sphere. Another characteristic of Timorese society is the role played by the Roman Catholic Church. During the Indonesian occupation, the church sided with the people and consequently, the percent of Timorese who are Roman Catholic rose from less than 50 before the invasion to close to 90 at the end of the occupation (Retbøll 2002:14ff).

At the time of Indonesia’s withdrawal from Timor-Leste, the new country basically had to start reconstruction from scratch. At the time, few Timorese knew what to expect from the soon to be independent country. For example, according to an Asia Foundation Survey in 2001, approximately 37 percent of Timorese were unable to say what “democracy” is and 43 percent did not answer the question about what democracy could bring them personally. To illustrate the complex situation better, not a single person cited elections as an important part of democracy (the Asia Foundation 2001; see also Hohe 2004 for a discussion about the problems of translating "democracy" into Timorese society).

One urgent issue that needed to be addressed in 1999 was that the country had no functioning judicial system and no constitution. Hence, drafting a new constitution was prioritized and was to be completed by the Constituent Assembly elected in 2001. The United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) also played an important role in this process, and it has been argued that the constitution was the “most concrete political legacy that UNTAET left East Timor [with]” (Chesterman 2004:140). In general, the Timorese Constitution embodies modern human rights thinking quite extensively (Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste 2002). In terms of law, rules and regulations, it seeks legitimacy in international law, indicating a greater commitment to international standards than constitutions usually display.⁶⁰ The constitution also has several provisions protecting the rights of women and promoting gender equality, emphasizing that women and men have the same rights and duties in all areas of family, political, economic, social and cultural life (Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste 2002: part II, section 17).

Other strategic developments since 1999 include the National Development Plan presented in 2002. The plan outlines the main development goals for the country, including advancing economic, social and

⁶⁰ Timor-Leste ratified the International Covenant on Political and Civil rights on September 18, 2003, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on April 16, 2003, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women on April 16, 2003, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child on April 16, 2003. As for national legislation, the constitution ascribes women equal rights as men and there are undergoing efforts to gender-sensitize other laws as well. A Domestic Violence law is yet to be adopted and a new Penal Code was promulgated on March 30, 2009 and implemented as of June 2009.

cultural well-being; improving the educational, health and nutritional conditions of the Timorese; encouraging gender equality and the empowerment of women; reducing poverty; and establishing a social safety net for the vulnerable. Furthermore, the National Development Plan stresses the need to promote a culture of human rights and the rule of law, addressing specifically vulnerable groups (NDP 2002:20-21). The Timorese government has identified nine key challenges confronting the country that needs to be addressed in order to achieve national development and poverty reduction. These challenges include helping the growing number of poor to help themselves and to reduce poverty, and improving the status of women and striving for gender equality (NDP 2002:24). The country also ratified the CEDAW convention in December 2002.

From violent conflict to peacebuilding

A few-page summary of the armed conflicts of Cambodia and Timor-Leste is necessarily incomplete. In order to give an even somewhat inclusive picture of the countries' conflicted pasts I would need to write several books. Fortunately others have written about the conflicts and can tell the stories far better than I.⁶¹ The brief presentation below is only an effort to provide a better understanding of why and how the United Nations and other international actors entered Cambodia and Timor-Leste when they did.

Recovering from genocide

Cambodia's brutal past has a long history and is characterized by control of others. It was a French protectorate from 1863 to 1953, and Japan and Thailand occupied the country from 1941 to 1945. In 1970, Cambodia's head of state, Prince Sihanouk, was ousted from power in a coup d'état and the Prime Minister Lon Nol took control. This coup eventually placed Cambodia in the context of a wider war, when Vietnamese troops started to deploy deeper into the Cambodian countryside. The United States, fearing a communist takeover of Cambodia, launched air strikes against Vietnamese strongholds within Cambodia. In this turmoil, Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge gained strength and support and were able to capture Phnom Penh in early 1975, forcing Lon Nol from power. For almost four years, the Khmer Rouge controlled the country, initiating a genocide that killed approximately 1.8 million people and leaving Cambodia in ruins. In late 1978, Vietnam launched an intervention and forced the Khmer Rouge to retreat into the rural areas in the northeast of the country. Despite the conflict being

⁶¹ For more on the Cambodian conflict, please consult for example Amer (1991, 1995), Chandler (1991), Curtis (1998), and Peou (2007). More on the struggle for independence in Timor-Leste can be found in, for example Fox and Soares (2000), Cristalis (2002), McDonald, Ball et al. (2002), Marker (2003), and Nevins (2005).

considered terminated with the entrance of the Vietnamese in 1979, the international community initiated an international boycott of Cambodia between 1979 and 1991 (see for example Mysliwiec 1988). Not until May 1991 was a ceasefire agreement signed between the warring parties, although fighting continued until the late 1990s (see for example Chandler, 1991; 1997; Curtis 1998; Gottesman 2003). A United Nations Advance Mission in Cambodia (UNAMIC) was deployed in 1991 to help maintain the ceasefire agreement (DPKO 1993a)

In October 1991, the Paris Peace Accords were signed, facilitated by the Jakarta Informal Series of Talks held during 1988 and 1989. For this study, it is interesting to note that no women were involved in the formal peace negotiations; neither at the international or the regional level (McGrew, Frieson et al. 2004:5). The “Paris Agreement on a Comprehensive Political Settlement of the Cambodian Conflict” stipulated the establishment of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC). UNTAC was mandated to ensure the implementation of the Agreement, which, inter alia, included controlling all administrative units related to foreign affairs, national defense, finance, public security and information (DPKO 1993b; Allén and Amer 2009 (forthcoming)). UNTAC was also mandated to oversee the withdrawal of foreign forces, supervise the cease-fire, and monitor the demobilization and cantonment of combatants. One of the UNTAC’s main responsibilities was to organize and conduct general elections. This task included ensuring a legislative framework, registering and educating voters, and registering political parties and formalizing candidate lists (UN Security Council Resolution 745, 1992; DPKO 1993b). Another result of the Paris Agreement was the establishment of an interim government (a coalition called the Supreme National Council) that coexisted alongside UNTAC until the elections in May 1993 (Marcus 1996:5).

The four national elections held since 1993 are discussed in greater depth in Chapter five, but to understand the Cambodian context better it should be mentioned that civil unrest broke out in 1997 when armed conflict between pro-FUNCINPEC troops and pro-CPP troops escalated.⁶² Prime Minister Hun Sen ousted his co-premier Ranarridh from power in 1997, an action that was seen as a coup d’état. Nonetheless, both sides participated in a peaceful manner in the 1998 election (Sok 2007:5). Until 1998 the country also experienced continued clashes between Khmer Rouge soldiers and others, but the Khmer Rouge lost their final stronghold, the Anlong Veng District, in 1998, and with the death of Pol Pot that same year the movement was

⁶² FUNCINPEC - the Front Uni National pour un Cambodge Indépendant, Neutre, Pacifique, et Coopératif – is a Royalist Party. CPP- Cambodian People’s Party – adheres to a socialist platform. For more on the main Cambodian and Timorese political parties and their platforms, see appendix 2.

considered fully defeated. Furthermore, the 2003 election was also followed by political turmoil when FUNCINPEC and the Sam Rainsy Party (SRP) filed a complaint against the election result. Their “Alliance of Democrats” coalition blocked the formation of a new government and none could be formed until July 2004, a full year later (Sok 2007:158). Despite political deadlocks, a flawed judicial system⁶³, and widespread poverty, the 2005 National Strategic Development Plan underlines progress in restoring internal peace and security, rooting democracy, enforcing the rule of law, and improvement on a number of social indicators, such as access to primary education and reduced gender disparities in education, literacy and wage employment (NSDP 2005:6-7).

Solving the problem with the “pebble in the shoe”⁶⁴

Timor-Leste formally gained independence from Indonesia on 20 May 2002. By then the small island-country had experienced 24 years of Indonesian occupation, ending in 1999. Portugal colonized the eastern half of the island of Timor during the 16th century and remained the colonial power until political turmoil in Portugal in early 1974 led to preparations for the independence of Timor-Leste. Internal clashes between União Democrática Timorense (UDT) and Frente Revolucionária de Timor Leste Independente (Fretilin) led to civil war. Fretilin declared the country independent on 28 November 1975, which prompted a coalition of pro-Indonesian parties to announce the island’s integration with Indonesia two days later (Martin 2001; Smith 2003). Prior to December 1975, Indonesia, though it controlled the western half of the island of Timor, had not made any territorial claims to the eastern parts of the island. Nevertheless it launched a naval, air and land invasion of the island on 7 December 1975. Thus began a 24 yearlong struggle for independence, one of “the forgotten wars” of the Cold War era. The United Nations initially condemned the 1975 invasion and recognized Timor-Leste’s right to self-determination, but it did not take any direct action against Indonesia, and until the 1990s, the international community only referred to the issue as “the East Timor question”. In November 1991,

⁶³ One of the more recent developments that has sparked international criticism is the government’s legal offensive against outspoken critics, such as opposition politician Mu Soehua. For example, EU representatives in Cambodia raised concerns regarding “the use of criminal defamation and disinformation charges, including severe penalties imposed by the courts, to target those in civil society who raise minor criticisms of government policy” (Strangio 2009). The Prime Minister Hun Sen responded by attacking the opposition and international critics by stating that “I am not going to apologize to either Cambodians or foreigners. You are all idiots. You are the tool of the opposition. I condemn the statement by the EU. You do not respect the leader of this nation. I am the leader of this nation. If I want to I can take over Phnom Penh with the use of only 500 armed men” (unofficial translation, report in Swedish Radio, August 13, 2009).

⁶⁴ Former Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas wrote a book called *The Pebble in the Shoe, The Diplomatic Struggle for East Timor*, in which he traces events from the Indonesian invasion in 1975 to its withdrawal in 1999. During this period, Alatas has referred to the East Timor situation as a pebble in the shoe for Indonesia.

film footage from the Santa Cruz massacre⁶⁵ altered international opinion somewhat and the international human rights movement managed to rally increased support against the Indonesian occupation (Jetschke 1999:155). The massacre thus created a “turning point” in the conflict, and the former foreign minister of Indonesia, Ali Alatas acknowledged it as the catalyst that “set in motion the events leading to East Timor’s independence” (ETAN 2009). As Timor-Leste received increased international attention in the 1990s, frequent negotiations were initiated between Indonesia, Portugal and the UN, with Timorese input. Women’s participation in this process was limited; only 1 out of 30 negotiators was female in the early 1990s. In 1997, 4 women participated in the negotiations, and in 1999, the Consultative Council of Timorese Resistance (CNRT, discussed further in Chapter seven) had 2 female representatives out of a total of 15 delegates (Abeysekera 2006:15; Porter 2007:37).

The conflict in Timor-Leste was not only long-lasting but also deeply impacted on the civilian population. During the 24 years of occupation, between 102 000 and 183 000 Timorese are estimated to have died (CAVR report 2005).⁶⁶ It was not until 24 years after the invasion that the newly appointed president of Indonesia, Habibie, announced that the people of Timor-Leste were to decide for themselves if they wanted full independence or to become an autonomous region within Indonesia. A UN supervised referendum took place on 30 August 1999, and 78.5 percent of Timorese voted for independence. The result incited Indonesia-backed militia forces to mass-violence, which killed thousands of people, displaced hundreds of thousands in and outside of Timor-Leste, and destroyed over 70 percent of the infrastructure.⁶⁷ After two weeks of violence, an Australian-led multinational force (the International Force for East Timor - INTERFET) was deployed, giving support to the UN mission established to supervise the referendum (United Nations Mission in East Timor - UNAMET). On 25 October 1999, the UN Security Council set up the United Nations Transitional Authority in East Timor (UNTAET) through Resolution 1272 (1999). UNTAET was mandated to provide security and maintain law and order, establish an effective public administration, support in the development of social and civil services, coordinate humanitarian and development assistance, strengthen institutional capacity, and establish conditions for

⁶⁵ The massacre occurred at a peaceful gathering in a cemetery in the capital Dili that had turned into a pro-independence demonstration. Close to 550 Timorese died or were injured during, or as a consequence of, the massacre at the cemetery.

⁶⁶ For more information about the struggle for independence as such, see for example Fox and Soares (2000), Dunn (2002), Smith (2003), Cristalis and Scott (2005). Regarding different estimates on the number of deaths, please consult the CAVR report (2005).

⁶⁷ Several investigations have come to the conclusion that the militias were backed by parts of the Indonesian military (see for example McDonald, Ball et al. 2002)

sustainable development (UN Security Council Resolution 1272, 1999). UNTAET was replaced by the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET) when Independence Day arrived in May 2002 (Fox and Soares 2000; Charlesworth and Wood 2002; Smith 2003; Cristalis and Scott 2005). On 20 May 2005, the United Nations Office in Timor-Leste (UNOTIL) was deployed on a one-year political mission. In March 2006, 600 military officers were dismissed (about a third of the military), causing increased violence and severe unrest in the small country. In response, the UN scaled up its presence once again, and an Australian-led multinational military mission was deployed to help the Timorese leadership regain control of the situation (see for example UN Daily News 2006: June 5-9,12). Security Council Resolution 1704 (2006) confirms the establishment of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT), a mainly civilian mission deployed, among other things, to support the Timorese government's efforts to achieve democratic consolidation, support the country in the presidential and parliamentary elections in 2007, and ensure the restoration of security (UN Security Council Resolution 1704, 2006). The UN missions in Timor-Leste have internationally been defined as success stories, especially UNTAET. In a relatively short period of time, it managed to bring peace and stability to Timor-Leste and set the country off in the direction of democracy. In February 2008 the country was once again shaken by an attack on the President, José Ramos Horta, and a failed attack on the Prime Minister, José Alexandre (Xanana) Gusmão. The guerilla leader Alfredo Reinado was killed in the attack. The security situation has improved since then (cf. ABC News 2008; UN Security Council Report 2008).

Women's rights

Although this study looks closer at the international-national relationship in the diffusion of the norm of women's political rights, I do not assume that international actors brought their toolbox with international norms and values into a vacuum. That is, even though international actors bring certain norms and values and affect norm diffusion, it is likely that some understanding (positive or negative) of women's (political) rights can already be found in the host countries. It is therefore necessary to look closer at these national understandings in order to assess how the diffusion process evolved after the armed conflict.

Women's rights in post-genocide Cambodia

Cambodian women have been eligible to vote since 1955, and the first female member of parliament was elected in 1958 (Mansfield and MacLeod 2002:78). Officially there are no constraints on women's right to vote and the constitutions from 1981 and 1989 both guaranteed equal rights for women. Nevertheless, having these rights on paper did not really impact

women's daily lives (SSWA 1994:28). In Cambodian society, traditional codes of conduct for both men and women regulate how a *proper* man and a *proper* woman ought to behave. The *Chbap Srey*⁶⁸ (Code of Conduct for Women) was composed in the 19th century and tells women to be faithful, modest, obedient, and to accept and honor their husband regardless (CGA 2008:5). For example, the *Chbap Srey* explains that,

If you do not believe your husband or ignore him, conflict will arise; Happiness will be destroyed, your reputation will suffer, discord will continue without ceasing. This means you are not ladylike, but a low person, with the heart of a 'golden flower' [immoral woman or prostitute]. (verses 83-85, cited and explained in Jacobsen 2008b:120)

The status of the *Chbap Srey* is contested in modern Cambodian society, but parts of it are still taught in school (Interview no. 26). The subordination of women should be understood in relation to the patron-client system. Differences based on sex are thus one element of the power relations that exist in the hierarchical Cambodian society. Women are considered the “weaker sex” and generally excluded from male-dominated patronage networks. According to McGrew, Frieson and Chan, although changes have occurred in the last decade, “women’s activities in the realm of politics [have] historically [...] been confined to building patronage networks for their husbands, playing behind-the-scenes roles, and occupying positions subservient to patriarchal power holders” (McGrew, Frieson et al. 2004:13; echoed in Jacobsen 2008b). The current changes are discussed more in-depth in Chapters five and six.

The Khmer culture originates with a strong matriarchal queen (Santry 2005:49; Jacobsen 2008b). Historically, as noted by Santry while citing Ebihara (1971:113), “although Buddhist doctrine assigned superiority to males, and the legal code provided a man with almost absolute power over his wife, in everyday village life, the relative positions of male and female were equal” (Santry 2005:70). The institution of family is very important in Cambodian society and a woman’s position is with the family. According to tradition, an unmarried woman is expected to protect the family honor and not spend time with men outside of the family. A married woman has the duty to protect the family’s finances and interests (Fiske 1995:18-19; CGA 2008:6-12). Marriage is considered a life-long commitment and a woman is expected to be a virgin before marriage (Fiske 1995:23). Women are allowed

⁶⁸ There are a different ways to spell this, most commonly as noted above *Chbap* or *Chpab*. The *Chbap Srey* is a poem listing, among other things, codes of proper behavior. It stresses the responsibilities of a woman in performing her household duties, respecting her parents and obeying her husband (see for example Derks 1996). Even the Minister for Women’s Affairs, Ing Kantha Phavi, has stated that the *chbap srey* is an “obstacle to development for women” (Evans 2006).

to divorce their husbands, but tradition has taught women to be obedient, and divorce is generally seen as a very troublesome experience for women (MWVA 2000). It is widely believed that the country's conflict-ridden past has had serious impacts on the institution of family. For example, under the Khmer Rouge, individuals were encouraged to keep their eyes open for enemies of the State, even within the family. The unity of the family was therefore undermined. The conflict also led to large-scale population movements and family members lost contact with each other. Another post-conflict legacy was the demographic imbalance, with a surplus of women of "marriageable age" (Kumar, Baldwin et al. 2000:6). Before the war, women had enjoyed a well-respected position in the family, but the surplus of marriageable women resulted in men offering lower bride prices for wives (Khmer Women's Voice Centre 2000:121).

As in many other conflict-ridden countries, the traditional sexual division of labor was undermined during the conflict years. Kumar, Baldwin and Benjamin (2000:22-23) note that women's political participation increased during the conflict, both at the national and local level. Jacobsen (2008b:239-248) also highlights the important role played by women in reconstructing the country during the 1980s. However, despite the existence of influential female commune leaders and the "support for gender equality" pledged by the People's Republic of Kampuchea, de facto gender equality was not achieved. In fact, Jacobson argues that traditional (pre-Khmer Rouge) values were enforced (for example through the *chbap srey*), co-opting women "into the symbolism of the purity [...] of Cambodian culture" (Jacobsen 2008b:239). In its "Beijing plus 5" report, the Ministry of Women's and Veteran's Affairs argued that preserving the cultural heritage in Cambodia was part of the country's post-conflict recovery strategy, although the Ministry also recognized that women are often restrained by cultural traditional beliefs. More specifically, the Ministry highlighted that,

tradition and beliefs have created gender disparities in the following areas: discrimination against girls in regard to education; due to lack of education, girls enter the work force at a younger age than boys do; forced marriages are still practiced, despite the prohibition in the Law on Marriage and Family. Within marriage, compliance to parent's wishes is traditionally replaced by acquiescence toward the husband. Polygamy is prohibited according to the family law, but men with many wives are common. (MWVA 2000)

However, in comparison to other Southeast Asian countries, gender relations in Cambodia are considered "relatively equal" and well developed. This conclusion is based on women's important economic role in the household, their right to own land assets, inherit rice fields and houses, and women's participation in the labor market (CGA 2008:v, for one example of women's economic roles, see Allidén 2008).

Women started to organize to some extent through the political establishment from the late 1960's. A women's wing was established as a part of the Communist Party of Kampuchea at this time, which helped organize both rural and urban women's groups. The Khmer Rouge, for example, was the first to organize women at the grassroots level and when they came to power in 1975, the women's wing assumed more power and participated in the political repression and intimidation that followed. Women's political participation was enhanced with the Vietnamese-sponsored communist regime that succeeded the Khmer Rouge in 1979, particularly through commune solidarity groups (Kumar, Baldwin et al. 2000:8-9). After the civil war ended and Cambodia started its transition towards democracy, women started to lose their political space (this is addressed in Chapter five). Women's livelihood groups existed in the provinces from 1980, creating an arena for women to discuss the problems facing them in their daily lives (Kumar, Baldwin et al. 2000:8-9). After the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia in 1979 a National Women's Association was founded, tasked with raising awareness the obstacles facing women. In the early days, the Women's Association provided emergency assistance to women workers with special problems. It also played an important role in explaining government's policies and programs to both urban and rural women. The association had close ties to the Communist Party, and the president of the association was a member of the Party Central Committee. These ties to the ruling party influenced the work of the Women's Association in several ways. For example, the association was able to submit bills to the parliament and make recommendations about issues relating to women's rights and concerns. Family and marriage codes had to be approved by the Women's Association before being passed into law. The Women's Association also communicated with women through radio slots, addressing issues such as pig-raising, hygiene, and mobilizing women for literacy classes (SSWA 1994:21-23). On the other hand, being a wing of the communist party structure also meant that no issues that were offensive to the Party could be raised (Kumar, Baldwin et al. 2000:11; Mansfield and MacLeod 2002:74). Even though the association highlighted the issue of women's rights, the rights advocated were still within the respected discourse of the Party. For example, urban women were advised on how to behave "properly" in order to become "respectable" citizens (SSWA 1994:21), but this space was only provided within what was acceptable behavior as presented by the *Chhap Srey*.

In 1983, the first Cambodian National Women's Congress gathered 265 women to share their experiences from the last five years and plan ahead for the coming five. A Central Committee for Women was established with representatives from every province (33 members), with a mandate to oversee the implementation of decisions made at the Congress. At the

Congress, the National Association of Women for the Salvation of Kampuchea became the Revolutionary Women's Association of Kampuchea. In the mid-1980's, international organizations active in Cambodia started to focus specifically on women. A national program for women was initiated in 1988 with UNICEF as a partner, addressing family food production, child-care, and access to credit and literacy programs. This became the start of a more active Women's Association, which addressed the livelihood situation of women and contributed more directly to the wellbeing of its constituency. Women's economic, legal and educational status was highlighted, and rural women were prioritized (SSWA 1994:24). Despite this development, the Women's Association was still a wing of the Communist Party and restricted by the accepted discourse within the party. A second National Women's Congress organized in 1988 changed the association into the Women's Association of Cambodia (SSWA 1994:21). The Women's Association finally ceased to exist in 1992.

In sum, the emergence of independent women's organizations has really been a post-conflict phenomenon, in many ways a product of the international community. Many Cambodian women were the initiators of several women's organizations, but they were completely dependent on the international community for funding and technical assistance (Kumar, Baldwin et al. 2000:23).⁶⁹ This is discussed further in Chapters five and six.

Women's rights in Timor-Leste

According to the National Development Plan from 2002, it is difficult to assess the enforcement of Timorese women's rights because of the multitude of traditional practices in the diversified Timorese society (NDP 2002:25, for one example of women's economic roles, see Alldén 2008). Timorese women still have limited ownership of assets, and their access to social and economic services is restricted because of discriminating ways of life, for example they lead to women having lower levels of education. Many of the household duties are divided according to sex, and outside the domestic sphere women are mainly active in petty trade (NDP 2002:26). According to Timorese tradition, marriage between a man and a woman is often settled through a bride price (*barlaque*) paid by the groom's family. This bride price is part of a bigger marriage system in which women and means of production are circulated between clans; wife-givers and wife-takers (Wandita, Campbell-Nelson et al. 2006:289; Ospina 2008:12). In real life, this means that when marrying, women move from the father's control to the control of her husband and his family. According to Wandita, Campbell-Nelson and

⁶⁹ Many organizations are spin-offs of international NGOs, or the result of international NGOs themselves founding an organization.

Leong Pereira (2006:289), this tradition basically excludes women from political economic and social rights. The tradition of barlaque is less applied throughout the country today, but is still practiced in the rural areas. Divorce is possible, although strongly discouraged in the country. The strongest grounds for divorce is proof that the husband has not provided for the family. However, women's lack of economic opportunities often prohibits them from seeking a divorce (raised in Interview no. 41).

Indonesian women in general enjoyed limited political access prior to 1999, which naturally also spilled over onto women in Timor-Leste. In 1978 the issue of women's role in nationbuilding was addressed in Indonesia and included in the *Broad Guidelines of the State Policy*. This also included appointing an Associate Minister for the Role of Women, whose status was later elevated to that of a State Minister. According to the Indonesian Ministry of Women's Empowerment's website, 1999 marked a shift in focus for the Ministry and the issue of gender equality, because from that date the Ministry was empowered with an additional mandate that included a shift in focus from women's roles to their empowerment (Indonesian Ministry of Women's Empowerment, 2009). In other words, despite the existence of a national women's machinery of some sort in Indonesia prior to Timor-Leste's vote for independence, little was done throughout Indonesia to truly empower women and ensure their political rights. Indeed, during the Indonesian occupation, women experienced grave violations of their rights (cf. Alldén 2007). At the same time, some women managed to move away from their traditional roles and became involved in economic activities. Some women worked in public service and some were elected to public office. A large group of women participated in the clandestine movement and some worked in the emerging sector of NGOs, which is discussed further below (Ospina 2008:18). The women's movement also managed to influence the new constitution, which is discussed in Chapter seven.

Timorese women were not very outspoken or organized during Indonesian occupation (Retbøll 2002). However, some organizations were established during the Indonesian period, and two of them in particular addressed women's situation. The Dharma Wanita comprised all spouses of civil servants, while the PKK (Pembinaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga) focused on rural women's capacity-building (Ospina 2008:19). Apart from these organizations, women organized particularly through the resistance movement. One of the first organizations was *Organizacao Popular de Mulheres Timor* (OPMT - the Popular Women's Organization of East Timor - established in 1975), the women's organization of *Frente Revolucionária do Timor-Leste Independente* (Fretilin - the East Timor resistance movement). Through OPMT, the issue of women's rights was occasionally discussed during the 24 years of Indonesian occupation (Charlesworth and Wood 2002; Roynestad 2003; Cristalis and Scott 2005:27-28). OPMT's aim was to

promote the emancipation of women in all aspects of life, for example through helping displaced persons, by setting up literacy programs, and by establishing crèches. In addition, they also had two specific goals: to participate in the struggle against colonialism, and more specifically to fight the violent discrimination Timorese women faced in the colonial society (Cristalis and Scott 2005:28-29; Wandita, Campbell-Nelson et al. 2006:290). With the Indonesian occupation, the OPMT changed its focus, turning into a strict support group of the armed resistance movement. Women carried weapons alongside men, provided logistical support, participated in a variety of resistance activities, and took care of their communities and families. From the 1980s, women and children were essentially the backbone of the resistance movement because they could more easily pass through Indonesian military checkpoints without being suspected of liaison with the guerrilla movement (Cristalis and Scott 2005:27ff).

The latter half of the 1990s brought the emergence of a number of women's NGOs to Timor-Leste, for example *Forum Komunikasi Untuk Perempuan Loro Sae* (Fokupers - East Timorese Women's Communication Forum). The main activities of the new NGOs were not aimed at Timorese independence from Indonesia, but focused on every-day violence against women (Cristalis and Scott 2005:48). Women also organized in the Diaspora and functioned as an important lobby force, trying to attract the attention of the international community (Ospina 2008:21). When the UN mission arrived in the country and Diaspora women and men returned, the women in the former clandestine movement turned out to be an important partner in efforts to start a process of spreading and rooting women's rights throughout the country.

Institutionalizing women's political rights in Cambodia

It wasn't that UNTAC had special programs for women as such, but they did bring into Cambodia two new concepts: democracy was one, and the other was human rights. (Ung Vanna, cited in McGrew, Frieson et al. 2004:6)

Having set the scene in Chapters one through four, it is time to address the process of norm institutionalization and internalization in the two case studies. This chapter analyzes norm institutionalization in Cambodia, looking closer at some of the key norm entrepreneurs and the three areas of institutional development used in this study to capture norm diffusion. The chapter ends with a discussion of whether or not there is any harmonization between national developments and the international norm of women's political rights. The analysis of national-international harmonization provides an understanding of the level of institutionalization that the norm of women's political rights has achieved in Cambodia. Among the important questions to be addressed are: Are the changes that are occurring visible irrespective of the audience being addressed and are they real or cosmetic? In other words, is rhetorical support for the norm followed by appropriate action aimed at facilitating women's political representation and participation?

The chapter is organised thematically. I choose thematic division because it helps paint a picture of the status of the institutionalization of women's political rights in Cambodia. It should be noted, however, that although different institutional developments and norm entrepreneurs are presented separately, it is their combined joint impact that is of importance for determining the level of norm institutionalization in the country. Also, at times it is difficult to maintain complete analytical distinction between various aspects of institutionalization. This "overlapping" should be seen as strengthening our understanding of this process. Again, norm entrepreneurs are actors who help the process of spreading and rooting the norm of women's political rights and they can be either international or national actors (national elites or civil society agents). Analyzing institutional developments means addressing electoral rules and regulations, the

formalization of a national women's machinery, and strengthening of the local government structure. It is the activities of norm entrepreneurs and the outcomes of these institutional developments that are in focus in this chapter. The chapter ends with a broader discussion of the norm's movement along the scale of institutionalization, analyzing whether or not the norm is at the stage of tactical concession (norm adherence is dependent on the audience), prescriptive status (norm adherence irrespective of audience but action may lag behind rhetoric), or rule-consistent behavior (rhetoric and action match).

International and national norm entrepreneurs

Today, Phnom Penh, the capital of Cambodia, is considered "a city of consultants", which summarizes well the role played by international norm entrepreneurs at large. Within the specific issue of women's political rights, international influences such as agents within the UN-family and returning Diaspora empowered with international ideas of gender equality and human rights have played a crucial role in promoting norm institutionalization. In the Cambodian context, the returning members of the Diaspora community can be seen as a hybrid between international and national actors. Being Cambodians they are unquestionably national actors, but as will be illustrated below, some Cambodians who stayed in the country during the genocide and its aftermath considered the returning men and women to be almost as foreign as the international actors who arrived in the country during the 1990s. At this time, returning women became involved in politics and established a number of women's organizations, and they had the skills and experience that international donors wanted to invest in.

The discussion in this section is divided into two phases. The first one covers the years 1992-1998 and includes the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC), and the general election of 1993, which also marks the withdrawal of UNTAC forces. It ends with the 1998 national election. The election was not peaceful and violence erupted when the results were announced. Nevertheless, after 1998, Cambodia entered a somewhat more stable period and some argue that this is actually when democracy was given a fair chance. During these two periods norm entrepreneurs have grown stronger and played varying roles in trying to institutionalize the norm of women's political rights.

1992-1998

A number of norm entrepreneurs played a critical role in trying to promote the norm of women's political rights during this period. The discussion here focuses a lot on the role played by the emerging women's movement, which, together with international support, has had an opportunity to promote the norm of women's political participation and representation in Cambodia,

although this has not always been the case. As was mentioned in Chapter four, it is difficult to talk about a functioning independent civil society movement in Cambodia prior to the 1990s, despite the fact that women had been somewhat organized through the political party since the 1960s. Still, even before there was a functioning civil society movement to talk about in Cambodia, women formed livelihood groups that created an arena where they could discuss and share everyday problems. However, a tradition of voluntary organizations in the country is a phenomenon of the 1990s. The few organizations that tried to gain public legitimacy and obtain broader citizen participation prior to 1992 were generally unsuccessful. At the same time, the government had problems delivering services to its citizens, particularly in the remote rural areas. Voluntary organizations were thus accepted, although not supported, by the government. Furthermore, the government and voluntary organizations all competed over the same scarce resources. Women's organizations faced the additional hardship of women's low status in Khmer society (Kumar, Baldwin et al. 2000:17).

As Cambodia started to democratize and the political life opened up and international influences spread throughout the country, civil society organizations started to emerge and work with humanitarian assistance and a wide range of development issues. The international community was generous in providing assistance to civil society organizations because an expansion of this sector was considered a necessity for democracy. For the same reason, focusing on women was also prioritized. Due to the lack of an independent civil society prior to 1992, many women's organizations became pioneers in disseminating information to the public on issues such as gender equality and women's political rights. The women's organizations that emerged after 1992 usually focused on social services, economic development, or advocacy and democracy-promotion. The leaders of the emerging women's organizations primarily came from four groups of women: Western-educated Cambodians returning from the Diaspora, female refugees in camps on the Thai border, Khmer women employed by international NGOs in Cambodia, and past members of the National Women's Association (Kumar, Baldwin et al. 2000:13).

The new, "free" Cambodia was attractive to many women and men who had lived in exile since the 1970s. The growing international feminist movement had influenced many exile Cambodian women as they educated themselves abroad and gained experience in leadership. Many of them became the backbone of the emerging Cambodian women's movement (Kumar, Baldwin et al. 2000:11-12). They returned to Cambodia empowered with the international human rights rhetoric and used the momentum provided by increased international presence in the country to work for women's rights (cf. Jacobsen 2008b:250). Indeed, the space that opened up for women's organizations to flourish, supported by international assistance

and resources, was claimed by former exile women. Several of the returning men and women also joined politics and had the opportunity, as national elites, to influence policy-making firsthand. One female politician remembers that when she returned to Cambodia she became aware of the need for women to be in decision-making positions in the country (Interview no. 29). In other words, women's rights were put in the spotlight early in this process, but as Jacobsen notes, the views of women's rights brought back to the country by returning Cambodians did not take into consideration the changes that had occurred in gender relations during the last 25 years (Jacobsen 2008b:254). Jacobsen also notes that these returning Cambodians brought with them nostalgic ideas of the pre-revolutionary Cambodia, a view that did not necessarily correspond to the reality Cambodian women were living in (Jacobsen 2008b:254). These returning Cambodians were at times considered too liberal and patronizing towards Cambodian women who had stayed in the country (see a similar line of argument in Santry 2005:8).

As noted above, international influences in norm promotion can be easily identified through support provided to national non-governmental organizations. The UN mission in Cambodia, lacked a specific gender unit, but it did support the work of women's organizations. For example, the human rights component of UNTAC provided training on human rights in general and occasionally on women's rights in particular. Shelters for victimized women were established by local women's organizations, and these organizations also raised awareness of women's equal status in society and the importance of women participating in politics (Mansfield and MacLeod 2002:74). Furthermore, the UNTAC mission hired a large number of local Cambodian women. Gender equality was also mentioned in UNTAC's written material, including the voter education material circulated ahead of the 1993 election (McGrew, Frieson et al. 2004:5). Together these measures tried to emphasize the idea of women as political actors in the political debate ahead of the first national election and thus to promote women in politics. According to one UN-trained Cambodian human rights assistant working with the UN mission: "what UNTAC did was to show the importance of gender *indirectly* by showing that it was important for women to be active participants in society" (cited in McGrew, Frieson et al. 2004:6). This view was expressed despite the fact that the same interviewee considered several of the UNTAC staff to be gender blind, basically because they did not understand "gender" at all. However, he still saw UNTAC as helping to open up the political space for women and thereby promoting women's rights in the political discourse. This is summarized well by McGrew, Frieson and Chan (2004:6), who state that while UNTAC did not ensure women's participation in the peace negotiations and "did not consider gender issues key to political reconciliation efforts, its presence and hiring practices helped

mobilize women's activities and participation in the public sphere". It also created a space for women in the political debate. UNTAC's role as a norm entrepreneur is captured well by Pok Nanda, who participated in the 1993 election and is now working for women's rights through a women's organization:

UNTAC played a key role in 1992 to 1993 in providing the security for people to get involved in politics and to fight for civil rights. Without UNTAC we would not have dared to do that peace march on Wat Phnom or to fight for inclusions of equity in the Constitution. (cited in McGrew, Frieson et al. 2004:5)

In other words, although UNTAC did not include a specific gender component or promote women's rights explicitly, the UN mission nevertheless empowered Cambodians in general, and also, implicitly sometimes functioned as norm entrepreneur for women's political rights.

UNTAC left Cambodia after the election in 1993 and all political power once again rested with the sovereign state of Cambodia. However, international support did not cease with UNTAC's withdrawal because other actors had been trained to carry on. For example, ahead of the drafting of a new constitution in 1992, UNIFEM trained a number of returning Cambodian women and leading women of the Women's Association in Cambodia (Santry 2005:5). This indicates that international actors were important norm entrepreneurs, particularly by providing training to national actors (or hybrid actors as ex-Diaspora were referred to above) to enable them to become norm entrepreneurs themselves. Women returning from years in exile also played an important role in the drafting of the constitution, often through the organizations they were working in. Women realized that this was an opportunity to include women's rights in the constitution. According to one women's rights advocate cited in McGrew, Frieson and Chan (2004:8): "in 1993, Mu Sochua who was leading the NGO Khemera, and others took the lead on insisting the constitution ... [to] have equity issues in it. We had a peace march to Wat Phnom [...] to make demands for women's rights". According to another women's rights organization, women organized in groups and discussed different constitutions and what Cambodian women wanted their constitution to look like;

we would gather ourselves [...] and then discuss what we wanted to see in the constitution and write down our ideas. Then we would meet with members of parliament every day and talk with them about our ideas; and we focused on freedoms, such as freedom of expression or freedom of speech. We wanted democratic freedoms in the constitution, and they listened to us. (cited in McGrew, Frieson et al. 2004:8)

Consultations in the provinces were organized, as well as workshops and forums, and there was support within the National Assembly as well,

indicating that some of the national elites were starting to take onboard the issue of women's rights (McGrew, Frieson et al. 2004:8). Women's organizations thus played a crucial role in this development and had managed to organize themselves enough to become an important voice for institutional change.

Ahead of the first national election in 1993, another international push can be detected through the appointment of a UNIFEM coordinator tasked with helping to highlight women's issues during the election campaign. UNTAC supported such activities to empower women ahead of the election (Santry 2005:16). These activities lead to, among other things, a project called "Gender Issues in the General Election" that included information and media campaigns to raise women's awareness about the elections. UNIFEM partnered with the only existing women's organization at that time, Khemara, and enjoyed support from UNTAC and UNDP to implement the project. This project culminated in a National Women's Summit in 1993 (SSWA 1994; UNIFEM 2004). This was not the first national gathering of women, but it brought together women from all over the country and marked the first time that women got together as a non-partisan movement. At the meeting a statement was produced that was circulated to all political parties ahead of the election. The statement included a five-point Agenda for Action highlighting that women are the major economic producers and demanding recognition of this in legislation, decision-making, policy-making, economic opportunities, education and in health-related issues. The urban-rural divide was highlighted and efforts to increase solidarity between Cambodian women was identified as a priority issue (SSWA 1994:17-29). The five-point women's agenda produced at the Women's Summit was discussed one week before the election during an event at which political parties were invited to participate in a political dialogue with female voters. The representatives from six political parties were confronted about their commitment to the women's agenda. The women reportedly showed considerable determination in their questioning of the, mainly female, party representatives, who themselves also turned out to be rather outspoken and challenging. The event was broadcasted on UNTAC radio and television (UNIFEM 1997).

The work conducted in connection to the first National Women's Summit in 1993 continued after the election as well. One response to the agenda the Summit had produced was the establishment of the Secretary of State for Women's Affairs in 1993. In 1994, women gathered again to reiterate their commitment from the previous year's Summit. Once more women as a group, through their organization, showed that they had the potential to play an important role as norm entrepreneurs, at least by getting the issue of women's rights onto the political agenda and trying to influence the political debate in favor of these rights. A second Five-Point Agenda was produced.

This one included the following demands: the economic situation of women should be improved through development programs; national funds should be consolidated to prioritize women's access to education, health, shelters etc.; gender-based violence must be incorporated into specific laws and enforced; women should have increased access to decision-making in order to promote their empowerment; and a national plan of action should be developed to address and oversee the implementation of the Agenda (SSWA 1994:19-20).

NGOs in general, but also women's organizations in particular, have also been involved in voter education programs, the latter focusing on educating women on elections. Ahead of the 1993 election, some organizations undertook activities to encourage women to register and vote (Marcus 1996:8). According to Jacobsen, although few women were promoted at the national level ahead of this election, "women were indispensable at the grassroots political level", and the role played by "non-governmental organizations in educating women about the electoral process cannot be over-emphasized" (Jacobsen 2008b:250). In fact, the organization Khemara was the first organization dedicated to advancing women's leadership (Jacobsen 2008b:250). Mu Sochua, who had returned from abroad, established the organization in 1990, and serves as a good illustration of the role some individual norm entrepreneurs played in promoting women's rights in Cambodia. Mu Sochua later became the Minister of Women's Affairs and initiated a number of developments, for example a strategic plan, *Neary Rattanak*, which is discussed below. It is interesting to note that observers claim that since the successor to Mu Sochua is less outspoken, the Ministry of Women's Affairs has lost some of its power as a norm entrepreneur (cf. Santry 2005:267). (This is discussed further below and in the next chapter.)

In sum, during this initial period of norm entrepreneurs activity, the norm of women's political rights was starting to make an appearance through a number of channels. It was mainly international actors and returning Cambodian women who put the issue of women's political rights on the political agenda. UNTAC implicitly empowered women and opened up a political space, but it was mainly other forms of international support (for example through UNIFEM and international donor agencies) that promoted the norm of women's political rights through support to emerging women's organizations and returning exile women. As will be discussed in Chapter six, local women did not necessarily greet the returning exile women with open arms. In fact, at times they were seen as external imposers as well. Several of these returning women established non-governmental organizations. International actors and returning women noted the importance of having a functioning civil society in order to create a democratic system, and women's needs and interests were highlighted as part of this discourse. Through the first national women's summit, the women's movement started

to become organized. The gathering also provided an important foundation for initiating the institutionalization of women's political rights. The women's movement enjoyed the support of international donors and organizations such as UNIFEM, who trained and supported women's organizations to become norm entrepreneurs. It can be argued, however, that the heavy dependency on donors and international influences in women's organizations made the work of the women's movement vulnerable, something that we will consider in greater detail below.

1998-2009

During the second period, 1998-2009, the women's movement continued to form and function as a prominent norm entrepreneur, but international support was still needed and international actors continued to play an important role as norm entrepreneurs as well. International support during this period can, for example, be identified through the work conducted by UNIFEM ahead of the first communal election in 2002. UNIFEM's own assessment states that prior to the 2002 commune election, there were only 10 women in the councils. The number rose to over 900 after the election (UNIFEM 2004). This increase is, at least in part, attributed to training programs run by UNIFEM and others. Some national elites also took up the issue of women's rights. After the Ministry of Women's Affairs launched the five-year strategic plan *Neary Rattanak* (discussed below), women from the two main political parties met to show a united front and promote women's rights (Santry 2005:226-227). Ahead of the 2008 parliamentary election, UNDP invited political party representatives and women's organizations to a day-long workshop called *Increasing Women's Participation in Politics*. The participants were encouraged to propose recommendations about how to actively include women as political candidates and voters (UNDP 2008a). The Committee to Promote Women in Politics (see below) also provided UNIFEM-sponsored voter education to women ahead of the 2007 commune council election and the 2008 national assembly election. However, the outcome of such initiatives has been questioned; an evaluation conducted after the 2008 parliamentary election concluded that there was a general lack of female participation in the electoral and political process (EU/EOM 2008).

The path of joining forces in national congresses continued to be followed during this period. In 1999 it was time for the first National Conference on Gender and Development. The Conference saw the participation of 200 activists, mostly women from within Cambodia, who came together to discuss the achievements of the Cambodian women's movement since the Beijing Conference in 1995. By coming together at the grassroots' level, norm promotion from below, although with international support, continued to be an important avenue for rooting the idea of women's political rights. The

Conference produced a three-year agenda for the women's movement and a platform for action that was presented to the Deputy Prime Minister, thus forcing national elites to address the issue. Recommendations for the establishment of the Cambodian National Council for Women (CNCW) were also put forward at the conference. The National Council became a reality in 2001 (JICA 2003). Secretaries of State from 12 line ministries are represented in CNCW, which makes it an inter-ministerial body and not one that directly represents women's organizations (CGA 2004:151; CGA 2008:176), although three NGOs have observer status. The composition of representatives from line ministries indicates that national elites have also started taking the message of women's rights more seriously. The Minister of Women's Affairs serves as chair for the council and the council works with advocacy, reviews governmental legislation and policies from a gender perspective, evaluates government compliance with international conventions, and writes the Cambodian CEDAW-report (CGA 2004:151; Khus 2004:32). The CNCW also collects information regarding the situation of women from the different line ministries and from the international level, and it lifts their recommendations to the government and the prime minister (Interview no. 9a).

A second National Conference on Gender and Development was held in 2002. Again a three year platform for action was presented to the government, this time to the Minister of Women's and Veteran's Affairs (GAD 2002). The work of women's organizations with the different national congresses shows a strengthening of the women's movement as a whole, which affects its power base for operating as a norm entrepreneur. Individual women's organizations took on different tasks. In 1998, for example, the organization Women for Prosperity raised public awareness of gender issues by highlighting each party's platform for women and by training female candidates in leadership. Close to 700 women participated in leadership workshops in Phnom Penh and 11 provincial towns. The organisation also conducted leadership-training courses directed at commune chiefs and district chiefs (Kumar, Baldwin et al. 2000:15-16). Women for Prosperity also conducted training for 5000 women ahead of the 2002 commune council elections, in which 954 women were elected (Coates 2005:171). The organization was established in 1994 by returning Cambodian Pok Nanda, again showing that women from the Diaspora have been important norm entrepreneurs. These women and their organizations also took the lead in organizing peace marches in response to the political turmoil that followed the 1993 and 1998 elections. According to McGrew, Frieson and Chan (2004:7):

This group of women who dared to act in the space opened up by UNTAC made a substantial difference in what was an extremely tense atmosphere [...] Women at the frontlines of these demonstrations showed by their public presence that they were tired of the years of conflict and wanted to build a future for their families.

A National Women's Summit was also initiated ahead of the 2003 election. More than 100 women gathered and together they produced a new five-point agenda, highlighting women's main concerns. Once again this agenda was submitted to the political candidates. Representatives from 6 of the 20 political parties met with female voters one week before the election to discuss the five-point agenda (UNIFEM 2004). These developments highlight the role women's organizations, with international support, played in helping to promote the norm of women's rights and bringing it to national elites, who were then required to address the issue, in this case ahead of national elections. Even if few changes came about as a result of such initiatives, they nevertheless show how the norm was being articulated and promoted in the political debate.

With the increasing formalization of the women's movement, it is possible to detect certain developments that have played a crucial role in the enforcement of women's political rights. In 2005, a network of eight (now seven) organizations joined together and established the Committee to Promote Women in Politics (CPWP), whose vision was that men and women should enjoy the same opportunities and benefits in society.⁷⁰ The goal is to increase women's political space through media campaigns, public forums, the training of female candidates and raising awareness among the public and political parties (CPWP 2005). In general, women's organizations have managed to use a wide range of available technology, including radio, television and print media, and they have gathered people in workshops and public forums to spread their messages. The CPWP was very active ahead of the 2007 commune election, striving to enforce the norm of women's political rights at the local level. They lobbied at the district level to get political parties to put women on the party list in electable positions (Interview no. 8a). Training provided for women who wanted to stand for election brought together women from different political parties and inspired networking among the participants and involved part of the national elite in the process as well (CGA 2008:166). The Committee also provided training for women who were elected to the commune councils (Interview no. 8a). Overall, the results of such training programs included increased knowledge among female candidates, both elected and defeated

⁷⁰ A women's network focusing on the village and commune level, the Amara Women's Network, was created as early as 1995 (Jacobsen 2008a:154). However, the CPWP is the main network working on issues relating to women's political rights.

(CGA 2008:166). A network such as CPWP serves an important function in politics in Cambodia today, as the general public and political parties need training and information regarding issues such as women as candidates and voters. According to one interviewee, where the CPWP was active ahead of the 2007 election, more women were elected (Interview no. 13). CPWP has, in other words, become an important norm entrepreneur in the country and it was also active in the 2008 national election.

As mentioned in Chapter four, the Government of Cambodia signed CEDAW in 1992, but a combined report was not submitted until 2004 and addressed in 2006. Parallel to the government's increased focus on the Convention and the writing of the CEDAW report, civil society mobilized around the issue as well. The NGO Committee on CEDAW was established in 1995 and comprises 68 organizations working together on CEDAW with the support of UNIFEM. The main purpose of the committee is to monitor and promote the implementation of CEDAW in Cambodia (Interview no. 9b). The committee has been involved in producing the CEDAW shadow reports, the first of which was published in 1997 and the second in 2001. The 2001 shadow report to the CEDAW Committee noted that men were unwilling to give up a share of their authority in order to support women's political representation and participation. The report also noted that women in general lacked an understanding of their rights and how to access them (Santry 2005:28). (This is discussed further in Chapter six.) A third shadow report was submitted to the CEDAW Committee in New York in 2006, accompanying the Government's first, second and third periodic report that was to be reviewed at the 34th CEDAW session in January 2006. The Cambodian Committee of Women (CAMBOW), a coalition of 35 NGOs established in 2000 and dedicated to enhancing women's rights in the country, also helped prepare the 2005/2006 CEDAW shadow report (Cambodian Shadow Report to CEDAW 2005; CAMBOW 2008).

Through the CEDAW shadow reports, the women's movement has been able to highlight developments in government policies and legislation as regards women's political rights, but also to pressure the government as to what could be improved. One representative of a human rights organization remembers:

[i]t was a lot of work, but in the end, it really paid off because the Cambodian government was really investigated by the UN CEDAW Committee [...] In the end the CEDAW Committee [in New York] handed down this list of recommendations, basically saying that the Cambodian government was falling short on women's rights in many areas contained in the CEDAW. (Interview no. 2; see also CAMBOW 2008)

One recommendation highlighted by the NGO CEDAW Committee was for the Cambodian government to clarify the relationship between international conventions and domestic legislation and as such “ensure the primacy, direct applicability and enforceability of CEDAW within the national legal system” (Cambodian Shadow Report to CEDAW 2005). The Committee also suggested the ratification of the Optional Protocol to CEDAW that would strengthen the international convention’s status in the domestic legal framework, as women would then be able to seek redress at the international level for violations of rights covered by the convention (Cambodian Shadow Report to CEDAW 2005). Another obstacle identified by the CEDAW Committee is women’s own lack of confidence. The shadow report also highlighted the lack of adequate financial support to women participating in political life, as well as a lack of support for female candidates from their husbands (Joint Coalition Shadow Report for the CEDAW Committee 2006).

With the emergence of a functioning civil society came the emergence of public consultations between the government and NGOs (Kumar, Baldwin et al. 2000:23); a process that became more institutionalized with the establishment of the Cambodian National Council for Women mentioned above. Several women’s organizations have established close collaboration with the Ministry of Women Affairs (MoWA)⁷¹, something that several representatives of women’s organizations testified about. Indeed, developing strategies to strengthen women’s role and capacity in Cambodia is a task that is often carried out by the Ministry of Women’s Affairs, donor agencies and civil society organizations working together. This highlights the international push for norm adherence as well as the role played by women’s organizations and part of the national elite in promoting women’s political rights. One representative for a civil society organizations explained that,

at the national level [we work] to influence and lobby the government to lobby the policy-maker level to make sure that all the laws and policies are gender sensitive and make the policy-makers hear and [be concerned] about the needs and demands from the grassroots. (Interview no. 10a)

The same interviewee went on to explain that,

We see it as important to access them, they have resources but they need capacity [...] if we want the government to be [...] gender sensitive, and make the situation change, like improve special women’s issues; we need to work deeper and closer with the government. (Interview no. 10a)

⁷¹ The establishment of the Ministry of Women’s Affairs is discussed under institutional developments.

The National Strategic Plan adopted in 2005 also highlights the importance of such close collaboration (NSDP 2005:40), indicating that national elites are increasingly starting to promote the norm of women's rights, although doing so is still very much a matter of individual commitment.

However, although women's organizations generally enjoy the support of the ministry and a lot of gender awareness training and capacity building is carried out by these organizations, concerns have been raised regarding the strength of such collaboration. One representative for a women's organization stated that the government sometimes support NGOs just to be able to show off to donors (Interview no. 33). Part of the problem regarding government-civil society collaboration is likely to be explained by the fact that both parties still need to develop further in order to function as norm entrepreneurs on their own and in collaboration with each other. According to one international development organization in the country, promoting the further development of organizations and strengthening their independence and role in society is seen as very important for democratization:

[d]onors are looking for impact and they want the voice of civil society, however it is recognized that we have a weak government and limited civil society understanding in terms of representational democracy [...] Involving civil society and the continuous process of involving civil society is going to be key. (Interview no. 14)

The biggest issue regarding women's organizations as norm entrepreneurs is thus that there is a weak civil society movement in general and, according to some interviewees, no real national women's movement: "[i]t's a handful of elite NGOs, who are well-meaning. This is what some commentators suggest, that there is a lack of an indigenous women's movement [...]"(Interview no. 15a). Indeed, a review of women's organizations in Cambodia states that many NGOs are still headed by charismatic leaders and run in a hierarchical way (Kumar, Baldwin et al. 2000:18). One national gender consultant stated that the women's movement is donor-driven and not independent because it relies on donor money (Interview no. 16). This highlights the fact that international actors still influence a lot of the developments in Cambodia. Today, many organizations still compete for funds, which is even true for the government in some cases.

In sum, during this second period, efforts to spread the norm of women's political rights continued through the activities carried out by women's organizations, with the support of international donors and organizations. Individual national elites have increasingly started to take on the role of norm entrepreneur as well. This can be identified through the work that the Ministry of Women's Affairs is conducting, primarily through its support of and collaboration with women's organizations. One of the priorities for the Ministry of Women's Affairs has been to ensure that there is actually a pool of women to select from when it comes to decision-making positions. In

collaboration with civil society organizations, women are trained to stand for election to the National Assembly, Commune Councils and training is also provided to elected female commune councilors and to female government officials (CGA 2008:177; Interview no. 20).

Efforts to increase women's opportunities to participate in decision-making seem to be paying off. Through lobbying and awareness-raising campaigns, political parties have actually started to place female candidates higher on their party lists, as will be discussed below. At the end of the second period analyzed in this study, the national women's movement seems to be stronger than it was in the early 1990s, but this development must be understood as norm enforcement pushed by international actors as well. In 2004, 24 Cambodian and 31 international NGOs focusing on women's and gender issues were registered with the Ministry of Interior. In 2007 the figures were 35 national and 16 international NGOs (MoWA 2004:10; CGA 2008:186).

An assessment from 2000 state that through their work, women's organizations have redefined and expanded the political, social and economic roles available to Cambodian women. In doing so they have started to object to cultural traditional codes for women's behavior (Kumar, Baldwin et al. 2000:15-17). International actors are still prominent norm entrepreneurs in the country, which is evident when one looks at the heavy international presence still in the country. By setting the agenda and providing support to women's organizations, international actors have taken the lead in the norm diffusion process. International advisors are located in a number of ministries and international donors still influence policy-making. The norm has thus been enforced both by international actors and civil society actors during this second period, but elite learning continues to lag behind. As noted by Santry, the government still lacked a commitment to "do gender" during the 1990s, an effect of "strongly developed collective socio-cultural understandings of women's place in family and society [...] These understandings were at odds with Western concepts of development issues, including gender equity and women's empowerment" (Santry 2005:260). We return to this in Chapter six.

Institutional developments

The discussion above indicated that during the period covered in this study, norm entrepreneurs increased in number and, through various activities, helped articulate and promote the idea of women as political actors. However, there are important hurdles to be overcome. As the norm makes more frequent appearances in the political debate, there should be institutional changes to accommodate the norm. The institutional developments discussed in this section focus on efforts to create and formalize a space for women's political representation and participation. More precisely this

translates into looking at the rules and regulations surrounding elections, the establishment of a national women's machinery, and efforts to strengthen local government structures.

Adopting measures and regulations that can fast-track marginalized political actors' entrance into the political sphere is a frequently-used strategy to ensure that eligible voters and candidates participate in politics. As will be noted below, Cambodia has not adopted a quota system for national elections, although such measures are sometimes used at the local level. The discussion below focuses on the debate surrounding the adoption of a quota system, other regulatory mechanisms to promote female candidates, and the outcomes of the debate. In Chapter three I noted that one common way to improve the institutionalization of women's political rights is to employ a rhetoric of gender mainstreaming to promote a gender equality agenda. Often this agenda is pursued within a national women's machinery, or the establishment of such machinery is seen as an important part of mainstreaming gender and as a catalyst for promoting gender equality. As was noted in Chapter four, such institutionalization in Cambodia began prior to 1992, but in this chapter we focus primarily on the developments from 1992 and onwards. The third type of institutional change addressed here is the strengthening of local government structure. As was stated in Chapter three, local government structures can bring democracy closer to the people and thus help institutionalize women's political rights locally. In Cambodia, much has happened to promote decentralization, and women's needs and interests have been addressed to varying degrees throughout these measures. For example, the Department of Local Administration of the Ministry of Interior established a gender working-group in 2005. This working group established a Gender Mainstreaming Strategy that highlights the importance of striving for the equal participation of men and women in decentralization and deconcentration. The National Committee for the Management of Decentralization and Deconcentration Reform was established in 2006, and the Ministry of Women's Affairs is represented in the Committee as well as in all sub-committees (CGA 2008:165).

Electoral rules and regulations

Officially there are no constraints on a woman's right to vote in Cambodia and the 1993 Constitution stipulates the protection of women's rights in accordance with CEDAW (The Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia 1993). Discussions about electoral rules and regulations – initiated with the deployment of UNTAC – began at the start of the post-conflict period. It is best described as an effort to promote women as political actors in an environment that rejected all sorts of fast-tracking of women into politics, including the use of a quota system. At the same time, women's political

representation decreased as a whole. Chapter four told a story of Cambodian women enjoying some political power prior to the signing of the Paris Peace Agreement. More precisely, Jacobsen estimates that until the peace accords were signed in 1991, the average number of female parliamentarians was 18 percent (Jacobsen 2008b:245). However, this figure should be understood in the wider political context and the fact that Cambodia was a communist state under Vietnamese influence. As often in communist states, strict quotas were used to control political candidate nominations (Wide 2002).⁷² The fact that the number of female parliamentarians decreased rather drastically with the 1993 election (see below) indicates that the 18 percent female representation was not well-rooted and the idea of women as political actors did not necessarily enjoy a natural space in the political reality.

UNTAC was mandated to be the sole authority responsible for all aspects of the 1993 election (Widyono 2008:95), and it did not push for the use of a quota system. Instead, the issue of gender equality was put forward in the voter education material circulated ahead of the 1993 election. UNIFEM also provided a lot of support ahead of the election. Together these and similar measures carried out by some of the newly founded women's organizations tried to emphasize the idea of women as political actors in the political debate and as such promote women in politics. But despite making room for women as political actors only five representatives of those elected to the 120 member National Assembly in 1993 were women (CGA 2008:152). In all, only five percent of the candidates in the election were women (Jacobsen 2008b:250). Thus, despite efforts by UNIFEM and women's organizations to enforce the norm of women's political participation and representation, the ratio of women elected to the National Assembly fell from the previous 18 percent (Santry 2005:154-155). According to the Secretariat of State for Women's Affairs, political harassment, lack of genuine democracy, and "lack of political will of the parties' leaders, who were predominantly men" were the reasons why so few women ran as candidates in the election (Jacobsen 2008b:251). UNTAC has also been blamed for not setting a good example; only a few women were provincial heads and no women were heads of UNTAC components (Jacobsen 2008b:251). Women constituted 54 percent of registered voters, but they clearly did not necessarily vote for women. According to Hughes (1996:80), "the climate in which the 1993 elections were held fell short of what would have been needed to install a culture of

⁷² Communist states are usually understood as achieving high levels of representation for women, workers and peasants, but often so through the use of strict party control over who gets nominated for elections (Hague and Harrop 2004:253). However, Jacobsen (2008a:157) notes that fewer Cambodian women were actually nominated to leadership roles once the Communist Party of Kampuchea introduced central party nominations in 1985.

accountability and popular control of the government in Cambodia".⁷³ The result of the election gave FUNCINPEC the power to form a new government, something that CPP could not accept. In the end a coalition was formed between the two political parties.

Arguments were subsequently put forth that since little had been done (apart from NGO activities) to promote the election of women to political decision-making positions, a quota system could promote equal opportunities for men and women to seek and achieve political office. In support of a quota, supporters argued that in a male-dominated political climate, such as Cambodia's, a quota system can facilitate women's participation and access to decision-making (McGrew, Frieson et al. 2004:26). Ahead of the 1998 national election however, most men in power rejected a 30 percent quota. It was considered a form of bias for women to accept such a measure, and women's participation was to be promoted without a quota in place (Khus 2004:18). When UNTAC left Cambodia, another authority had to take responsibility for the conduction of elections and the National Election Commission was temporarily established ahead of the elections in 1998 through article 12 of the election law. It was subsequently decided that the Election Commission was to become a permanent electoral body through article 13 of the 2002 amendment to the election law. The structure of the commission was revised again in 2006.⁷⁴ The National Election Commission functions both as an electoral authority and as an election court. Part of its responsibility includes educating the public regarding the elections (Amended Law on Elections of Commune Councils 2006: article 10; Law on the Election of the Members of the National Assembly 2007: article 16). However, according to an employee of the Election Commission, it is not the role of the Commission to teach people about elections and democracy; that is the role of NGOs.⁷⁵ The mandate of the National Election Commission does not allow it to promote women's participation *per se*. However, the Committee can provide information on the number of female candidates and their placement on the party lists (CGA 2008:153).

As noted above, all efforts to establish a quota system at the national level have run into opposition, although more has happened at the local level. Sub-Decree no. 22 on Decentralization from 2002 actually states that in appointing village chiefs, deputy chiefs and assistants, one of the three has to

⁷³ Part of what Hughes refers to is for example that the Khmer Rouge withdrew from the elections shortly before they were held.

⁷⁴ In 1998 the national election commission had 11 members, in 2002 it was revised to 5 members, and the 2006 version of the National Election Commission includes 9 members. The members of the commission are all party-affiliated; the 9 members of the 2006 version of NEC include 5 members from CPP, and 2 members each from FUNCINPEC and SRP respectively (Sok 2007:66).

⁷⁵ Personal communication, National Election Commission official, Phnom Penh 18 May, 2007.

be a woman. If possible, the Commune Councils should strive to appoint a woman as either village chief or deputy village chief (Sub-Decree no. 22 on Decentralization 2002: article 22).⁷⁶ Ahead of the first commune council election in 2002, the Ministry of Women and Veteran Affairs and SEILA (a donor-sponsored decentralization program, which is discussed further below) recommended a 30 percent quota to ensure female participation in the commune council. All participating political parties recognized the importance of including women in decision-making but the use of a quota was rejected; the Prime Minister disagreed and the suggestion was turned down (CGA 2004:135).⁷⁷ In other words, although highlighting the importance of women's political representation in the political debate, the Prime Minister did not believe that facilitating women's representation through a quota system was the way to go.

Indeed, despite lobbying from the Ministry of Women (and Veteran's) Affairs and several other organizations to adopt a quota system of some sort to fast track women's political participation, quotas have always been rejected with the argument that it is undemocratic, an argument most prominently put forward by the Prime Minister. One interviewee, a representative of a women's organization, argued that since Cambodia is a "democratic and equal" country, men and women have "equal opportunities" to run for election (Interview no. 8a), indicating that there is no real need for a quota system to facilitate women's political representation.

However, although there are no formal constraints that hinder women from running for political office, there are other circumstances that constitute severe hurdles for women's political representation. One obstacle is that the placement on a party list depends on how well connected you are and how much money you can pay (CGA 2008:154; Interview no. 15b). One representative of a women's organization working specifically on women in politics explained that political candidates have to spend their own money to run for election, private money that for many Cambodians is scarce. The sum to be paid includes payment to the political party to put one's name on the ballot. Although she was not sure about the details, the representative said that she had heard anecdotes that the more money that is paid, the higher on the party list a person is placed (Interview no. 8b). Another representative from a women's organization told a similar story. Although this is the same for both women and men, women have less control over household financial

⁷⁶ The Village Chief represents all residents of the village and functions as a link between the village and the commune council (Sub-Decree no. 22 on Decentralization, article 24). The Village Administration is appointed by the commune council.

⁷⁷ One interviewee referred to this phenomenon as Cambodia being a "democracy by high power"; when the Prime Minister says something, everyone acts to please him (Interview no. 9b).

resources and thus face greater economic difficulty than men accessing the money necessary to be placed on candidate lists (Interview no. 22).

According to both national practitioners and international researchers, women are less willing to spend scarce resources on politics rather than their families, and women are rarely in a position to make decisions about how the household money is to be spent, and therefore have limited opportunities to pay their way onto a candidate list (Khus 2004:17; McGrew, Frieson et al. 2004:26-27; Interview no. 8a). The representative for the women's organization mentioned above also explained that if both the husband and wife happen to be parliamentarians and both want to be re-elected, but there is only enough money for one of them to run, then the husband will most likely be prioritized. According to this interviewee, this is because the husband, if re-elected will be able to earn the money back faster than the wife can (interview no. 8b). While this is only the opinion of this particular interviewee, taken together with the strong views about women's and men's different spheres of activity it is not very surprising.⁷⁸ A report from the Committee for Free and Fair Elections in Cambodian (COMFREL) similarly states that "putting women's names on the candidate list is seen as a 'waste'", and that political party leaders wanted to promote candidates with "capacity, popularity, high commitment and long-lasting political background" (COMFREL 2009).

According to an Asia Foundation survey from 2003, there was overwhelming support for a 30 percent quota system for the National Assembly election (The Asia Foundation 2003), but this has not changed the political debate. According to one women's rights organization:

We work for the quotas and we tried to convince the government about quotas, but they are unhappy [...] Many of the men have a conversation about the quota system [...] men say that if you promote women like this, where do men go? If our seat is taken by a woman, where do we go? (Interview no. 9a)

Opposition to quotas is also related to questions about women's capabilities. One national gender advisor stated that she was uncertain about whether there actually are enough competent women to fill a 30 percent quota (Interview no. 16). One international gender consultant argued that having

⁷⁸ This can be related to the practice that if a family is on a limited budget, the boy will almost always be promoted ahead of a girl child, for example when it comes to education. (This was raised by interviewee no. 26, and is supported in statistics regarding, for example, drop-out rates for girls and boys). Another interviewee explained that access to education is very much a matter of funding. If a family has money then both boys and girls will attend school, but girls tend to come back to their homes sooner than boys. This interviewee called it a "push-out" instead of dropout; "they are pushed out because they don't have the money; they are pushed out because their families need them for other work. There is also a very strong cultural understanding that the girl child and woman must sacrifice herself [...] if someone has to give up something, it will be the female, it will not be the man" (Interview no. 14).

unqualified women is not an option and that investment in training women is necessary if they are to reach decision-making positions. Otherwise, women will not be taken seriously by others (Interview no. 19). According to one leader of a women's organization, the government has put forward the argument that using a quota system is against the constitution. Furthermore, the government has made the argument that if a quota is established at a certain percent, it would be the same as saying that only that percent of Cambodian women (e.g. 30 percent) are sufficiently qualified. "If women are qualified, then why do we need a specific number since they are eligible according to the constitution?" the government has asked supporters of a quota system (Interview no. 28).

However, one female politician argues that it is unlikely that the reason the number of elected women is still rather low (although it is on the rise and, in the case of the National Assembly, has increased with late appointments) is only because there are too few qualified women. According to this politician, "if there are not 30 percent competent women out there, what have we been doing so far? All throughout the country there has to be at least 30 percent qualified women and they need to be given the chance" (Interview no. 29). This interviewee argued that the appointment of female deputy governors in all provinces (discussed further below) indicates that even the government has realized that there might be a need for "alternative mechanisms." If there is a will there is a way in other words (Interview no. 29). The appointment of women as deputy governors is understood as a commitment from the Prime Minister and outcomes are believed to be positive; "this means that women will participate more in the future" stated one representative in a gender mainstreaming action group (Interview no. 30).

Due to the opposition to a quota system, other ways to increase incentives for political parties to take the question of women's representation seriously have been introduced. One such tool is lobbying and awareness-raising, which has been undertaken by different organizations. Several NGOs lobbied the CPP, FUNCINPEC and Sam Rainsy Party to use affirmative action in the 2003 election. Although no formal quota system was in place, political parties agreed in principle to facilitate the election of women. This did not really increase women's opportunity to be elected, however, because they were placed at the bottom of the parties' lists (McGrew, Frierson et al. 2004:25-26). The number of female candidates nevertheless increased significantly ahead of the 2003 elections. In 1998, 17 percent of the candidates for the national assembly election were women, a percentage that increased to 26 percent in 2003. In the 2008 election, however, the percentage of female candidates went back down to 19. Whether or not this is symptomatic of the trend in the political debate is difficult to assess, but figures on the number of candidates put forward by the three main political parties remained

relatively stable between 2003 and 2008. In the 2003 election to the National Assembly, 15 percent of the candidates representing the Cambodian People's Party were women, 9 percent of FUNCINPEC's, and 9 percent of the SRP's candidates were women (CGA 2004). A total of 26 percent of the candidates in the election were women (COMFREL 2003). Women won 9.8 percent of the seats, which increased to approximately 20 percent by the end of the mandate period (Vong and Strangio 2008). In the first commune council election⁷⁹ in 2002, only 9 percent of the candidates were women, and they won 8.4 percent of the seats in the councils. Compared to the previous system of commune chiefs however, this was a huge increase. Women held only 0.5 percent of these posts prior to 2002 (CGA 2004:135).

The increased number of women running as candidates indicates that political parties are increasingly taking seriously the message of women as political actors. An opening in the political debate was offered on International Women's Day 2007 when the Prime Minister stated that it is important that political parties place women in electable positions on candidate lists. Considering the Prime Minister's resistance to a quota system, this statement is considered to be very important. (Interview no. 17a). It implies that the Prime Minister is increasingly engaging in human rights talk. The women's movement and the Ministry of Women's Affairs, as we shall see, have used this to pressure the government to engage in rule-consistent behavior. Nevertheless, the prime minister's commitment was limited to such verbal support. A new Election Law was adopted in 2007 for the purpose of establishing electoral organs and procedures for the election of members to the National Assembly (Law on the Election of the Members of the National Assembly 2007), but the law does not specifically mention women. Ahead of the 2008 national election, the Cambodian People's Party (CPP) included 20 women on their party list (16 percent); FUNCINPEC had 10 female candidates (8 percent); and Sam Rainsy Party (SRP) 17 women (14 percent) (Thet 2008). One representative for a women's organization stated that although the total number of women standing for election in 2008 was less than the previous election, the number of women placed in positions 1 through 6 increased for all political parties except FUNCINPEC, which was a positive development (Interview no. 8b).

In the 2008 national election 16 percent women were elected to parliament, but 6 months after the election the number of women parlia-

⁷⁹ The communes and sangkats are administered by Commune/Sangkat Council. The first democratically Commune/Sangkat Council election was organized in February 2002. The commune/sangkat councils have both administrative and developmental responsibilities. For their own policies, each commune has its own financial resources, budgets and assets, although they can receive a share of national revenues (CGA 2004:124).

mentarians was up to 22 percent.⁸⁰ The number of women in ministerial positions nevertheless stayed at two after both the 2003 and 2008 elections. In fact, there has never been more than two female ministers in the cabinet at the same time in Cambodia, and one of them has always been the Minister of Women's Affairs. Female secretaries of state increased from 7 percent to 8 percent and under-secretaries from 10 to 15 percent between the two latest elections. An indirect election to the Senate in 2006 resulted in a decrease of female members, from 18 percent to approximately 15 percent.⁸¹ It has been noted that women who do get elected to the national parliament usually represent one of the three main political parties, and no independent candidates are allowed to stand for elections. Women in smaller political parties rarely get elected because they are not placed high enough on the parties' lists (Thet 2008). Using a quota system could thus open up a space for women in smaller political parties to also get elected. One national gender advisor stated that she was convinced that in the future, a quota system of some sort would be put in place, directly or indirectly (Interview no. 9a). On the other hand, considering the increase in the number of women elected to the National Assembly and commune councils without the use of quotas, others are becoming more convinced that such measures are less important today (Interview no. 8a).

For the 2007 commune council election, all parties increased their share of female candidates; the total for all parties was 21 percent. CPP had 20 percent female candidates, FUNCINPEC 24 percent and SRP reported 16. Civil society organizations were hoping for at least 30 percent female candidates and noted that although only 21 percent of candidates were women, the number of female candidates placed in the top 3 positions in the 12 political parties participating in the election had increased since 2002 (CGA 2008:153).⁸² The number of female candidates ranked first also increased markedly (CGA 2008:154). Ahead of the 2007 commune council election, CPWP had a vision of 15 percent women being elected, and the outcome was 14.7 percent female commune councilors. Some found this result encouraging and others thought it less acceptable. For example, one representative of a women's organization stated that: "[w]e have reached our goal. It is very great. Our donors are very happy and also motivate us to do this for the elections 2008, for the general elections" (Interview no. 8a), whereas an international gender advisor stated that "it is an improvement, but they had close to zero representation before and now they get just little

⁸⁰ This increase is explained by political appointments following the election and thereby opening up vacancies in parliament that women have filled to some extent.

⁸¹ Document provided by interviewee no. 28.

⁸² More precisely 2,328 female candidates were ranked in the top 3 positions on 12 party lists in 2007 as compared with 1,161 in the 2002 elections.

more than zero representation in this election” (Interview no. 17a). Another interviewee, an international policy advisor, agreed with the latter assessment; if women had only 8 percent prior to the election, then 15 percent is an increase but is still very low (interview no. 15a). This illustrates a gap between different expectations and what was discussed in Chapter two on the power of the norm enforcer (international actors) to determine when sufficient changes within the host state have occurred. We will return to this in Chapter nine. Still, according to a UNDP report, “Cambodian women [are] clearly underrepresented in relation to their electoral or demographic importance” (UNDP 2008b:50). At the same time, developments between the first and second commune council elections cannot be ignored. In 2002, 66 percent of the communes had no female councilor, whereas after the 2007 election, only 23 percent had no woman council member. As of 2007, four percent of commune chiefs were woman, which is an increase from two percent in 2002 (in absolute numbers an increase from 34 to 69 of all 1621 commune chiefs). Women also make up 161 of the first deputy commune chiefs and 110 of the second deputy commune chiefs (CGA 2008:154). Although the number of women who are commune chiefs is still low, it is nevertheless increasing and this might be a sign that rhetoric has resulted in action. Women’s political representation and participation is becoming more accepted, also at the local level. As for the village level, 453 village chiefs are women (out of 13,890) and 9,450 village committee members are women (CGA 2008:151).

National women’s machinery

When UNTAC was deployed in 1992, the window opened for allowing multiple voices and visions to be represented, as described above. Through the human rights component, UNTAC was tasked with “fostering an environment in which respect for human rights [were to] be ensured” (Agreement on a Comprehensive Political Settlement of the Cambodian Conflict 1991: article 16), but it did not include a specific gender unit. In fact, little attention was given to gender issues as such, apart from the implicit developments mentioned above (Vannath 2003). Although none of the seven components comprising UNTAC was headed by a woman, and despite the fact that no women were placed in decision-making positions within the mission, UNTAC did hire large numbers of Cambodian women to staff components. This helped mobilize women’s participation in the public sphere, although much of this space was lost when UNTAC withdrew in 1993 (McGrew, Frieson et al. 2004:5-6).

As was mentioned in Chapter four, a National Women’s Association was established in 1979. Financial support ceased in early 1992, but this eventually led to the establishment of the Secretary of State for Women’s Affairs (SSWA) when a new government was formed in 1993. SSWA was set

up in consultation with UNDP, indicating that this important institutional change occurred with international support. Several women left the now financially independent women's association and joined the SSWA. The mandate of the new unit was to conduct activities related to advocacy, for example monitoring, protecting and promoting women's rights; increasing women's participation in the economy, health sector, education, and social services; skills-training; ensuring women's participation at every level of planning, reconstruction and development; and creating a nation-wide network of women (SSWA 1994:25; ADB 1996:45). One of the first tasks of the SSWA was to draft a comprehensive women's code to strengthen women's legal position and to lobby for the appointment of gender representatives in every ministry, city and province in order to protect women's interests (SSWA 1994:25-26). When the Secretary of State for Women's Affairs was established, it was headed by a male minister from the minority Buddhist Liberal Democratic Party and a conservative vice-minister from the Cambodian People's Party. According to Santry, "the combination of the appointment of a male leader and a strongly conservative female under-secretary who denigrated women's capabilities neatly captures the prevailing Cambodian attitude to women's potential to contribute to the society" (Santry 2005:192). Other more qualified candidates were identified, such as Mu Sochua who was the FUNCINPEC Advisor to Women's Affairs, but she was considered too liberal and Western-influenced. She had also been accused of looking down at Khmer women, which illustrates a point made above about norm entrepreneurs and the clash between returning women from the Diaspora and women who had stayed in Cambodia.

In 1996, SSWA became the Ministry of Women Affairs with the task of monitoring the gender-sensitivity of policies, programs and projects of all government and NGO activities. The ministry's mandate included raising awareness of women's needs and women's rights, promoting women's participation in the productive and social sectors, and providing training to other ministries and NGOs (ADB 1996:47, 55; MWVA 2000). The creation of a ministry of women's affairs was part of implementing the Beijing Platform for Action adopted in 1995. The Ministry of Women's affairs helped disseminate information about the Beijing platform through the use of television, radio and print media. Another post-Beijing result was discussion during the mid-1990s about the development of a national policy for women. The Asia Development Bank provided technical assistance to the formulation of the *National Policy for Women*, which found support in article 31 of the Constitution. It was highlighted that all ministries and agencies of the government were responsible for implementing the national policy. The policy as such provided guidelines and directions for planning and implementing of development programs and legal reforms to benefit women and raise awareness of gender issues (ADB 1996:36-37). This was taken onboard

by a few ministries and some ministries started working with these issues in the mid-1990s, although most did not attend to “gender issues” until later (Interview no. 23; Interview no. 30). This is discussed further below.

When SSWA was elevated from being Secretary of State for Women's Affairs to Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA), it guaranteed membership in the Council of Ministers. This means that representatives from the Ministry of Women's Affairs now attended a number of policy-making forums and could thus influence priorities for drafting new laws and getting “gender onto the table” (CGA 2008:176). Although MoWA had the mandate to take the lead in promoting women's rights and gender equality, Frieson reports that in 1998 her impression was that women's affairs was met with “an extraordinary level of apathy” and the Ministry itself did not see it as part of its mandate to bring women's issues to the attention of the government (discussed in Santry 2005:224-225). In 1998, veteran affairs was added to the mandate and the ministry became the Ministry of Women's and Veteran's Affairs (MWVA 2000). One of the first initiatives by the newly formed ministry was to adopt a national five-year strategic plan 1999-2003 called the *Neary Rattanak* (Women are Precious Gems), which was later extended to cover 2004-2008 in *Neary Rattanak II* (MWVA 2000). *Neary Rattanak* conducted a nation-wide evaluation on the status and rights of women and examined how women are brought into decision-making at different levels. It provided recommendations on issues in terms of capacity-building within the ministry and what development and policies that were needed to meet the commitments in the Beijing platform for action. After adopting *Neary Rattanak*, the Ministry of Women's Affairs developed a four-year framework program – *Partnership in Building Together: Towards Achieving Gender Equity and Social Development* - to implement *Neary Rattanak* and the wider mandate of the ministry. More specifically, *Building Together* stipulated the policy formulation for the ministry and aimed at strengthening the capacity within the ministry, promoting the rights of women through measures like legal advice and counseling services, awareness-raising and training on the rights of women, and providing mechanisms to strengthen legal institutions to secure women's rights (Mu 2000). According to the 2004 Cambodian Gender Assessment, the policy framework provided women with the potential space, opportunity and capacity to influence policy and offered a mechanism for women to demand their constitutionally guaranteed rights. Also, the government stated its support for gender equity, for example through its Governance Action Plan adopted in 2001, where one of five crosscutting areas was gender equity.⁸³

⁸³ The other four areas were judicial and legal reform, public finance, civil service reform, and anti-corruption.

Although gender equity was not included in the first draft of the action plan, comments from donors and NGOs resulted in its inclusion in the second draft, highlighting the influence international actors still had over policy formulation in the country. Four broad gender equity objectives were identified: to coordinate and implement programs promoting the rights of women and children; to oversee reform programs to ensure their inclusion of women's and children's particular needs; to identify women's contribution in society; and to promote the leadership roles of women (CGA 2004:137-138).

After the election in 2003, new changes awaited the Ministry of Women and Veteran's Affairs. The Ministry was once again reformed and veteran affairs were removed from its mandate.⁸⁴ This development was considered one step towards reorganizing the ministry to better address its priorities. Other measures included creating a Department of Gender Equality with a Policy Unit to take the lead in the government's gender mainstreaming efforts. The Unit was also tasked to serve as the Secretariat to the Technical Working Group on Gender (discussed further below) (CGA 2008:175). In short, the Ministry of Women's Affairs is still the national machinery for promoting women's status and gender equity in Cambodia. Some of the activities of the ministry relate to mobilizing support for gender-responsive action, establishing a variety of gender mainstreaming mechanisms, and providing input into national policy-making. A third update of *Neary Rattanak* (2009-2013) is being developed to keep enforcing the gender mainstreaming agenda in the government (Interview no. 32). MoWA also provides support to the line ministries to mainstream gender and acts as an advocate for gender-responsive policies and programs. Promoting gender equity also includes developing strategies to strengthen women's roles and capacity in the country (CGA 2008:175-176). A lot of the work of the ministry is regulated by *Neary Rattanak*, which is a well structured and comprehensive strategic plan, although, according to one interviewee, it is more of an ideal scenario based on the assumption that the Ministry actually has the capacity needed to implement it. The reality is more complex, and capacity-building within the Ministry is a priority as well, in particular strengthening ministry workers' knowledge about gender and the tools available to mainstream gender in their work. Capacity-building measures include training courses in planning, monitoring, management, leadership, advocacy-related issues, but also participation in international workshops

⁸⁴The Ministry of Women's Affairs is structured as follows: the Ministry is headed by a Minister with a Cabinet and Advisors. A Secretary of State sorts under the Minister (and an under-secretary of state). Three General Departments are responsible for administration and general affairs, gender equality and economic development, and social development. A number of smaller departments then sort under each General Department. Below the national level there are Provincial Departments of Women's Affairs, and District Offices of Women's Affairs. There is also a Women's Development Center at the national level (MoWA 2008).

and conferences to learn about what is happening in other countries (Interview no. 17a).

In the governmental *National Strategic Development Plan* from 2005 it is stated that *Neary Rattanak* is important for providing women with “faith, value and hope”. According to the development plan, *Neary Rattanak* helps enhance women’s social status, works as capacity-building for women, contributes to changing discriminatory attitudes, and promotes women’s right to participate in nationbuilding (NSDP 2005:64). The Ministry of Women’s Affairs has for several years worked in close collaboration with the government on the adoption of the national strategic development plan, ensuring its focus on gender equity and its compatibility with the Cambodian Millennium Development Goals (CMDG). This also includes ensuring that the CMDGs are gender responsive. The Ministry is pushing for all the line ministries to monitor and follow up and report to the Ministry of Planning on the indicators established in the NSDP (Interview no. 17a). Again, the institutional change that led to the establishment of the Ministry of Women’s Affairs has resulted in a potential norm entrepreneur at the highest level of power. However, as pointed out by the international gender advisor above, the Ministry is still rather weak, something that will be discussed further in the next chapter.

Part of what the Ministry of Women’s Affairs has initiated, with international support, are projects to increase gender awareness both within the ministry itself but also in other ministries. One such initiative is the establishment of Technical Working Groups, created in an effort to strengthen local ownership of the development agenda and increase its efficiency. At the end of 2007, 19 technical working groups covering key sectors existed.⁸⁵ Recommendations for the role and functioning of the working groups state that focal points for gender mainstreaming in each ministry (or agency) should be included in the working groups. There is also a working group explicitly addressing gender issues, which was established in 2004. The technical working group on gender is supposed to facilitate the establishment of comprehensive responses to Cambodia’s gender concerns by bringing together line ministries, NGOs and donor agencies. The working group is headed by the Minister of Women’s Affairs with UNDP and the Japan International Cooperation Agency serving as donor facilitators. Joint Monitoring Indicators for measuring success in gender mainstreaming and

⁸⁵ The were initially 17 technical working groups, one for each of the following issues: Legal and Judicial Reform, Public Administration Reform, Partnership and Harmonization, Public Financial Management, Decentralization and Deconcentration, Agriculture and Water, Land, Mine Action, Fisheries, Forestry and Environment, Infrastructure and Regional Integration, Private Sector Development, Education, Health, HIV/AIDS, Gender, Food Security and Nutrition. A technical working group on Planning for Poverty Reduction was created in 2005 and Rural Water Supply and Sanitation was added in 2007, bring the total number to 19.

gender-responsive action have been developed (CGA 2008:179-180), and, most importantly, the indicators are “nationally owned”; that is, the line ministries develop them and it is also the ministries’ responsibility to reform them (Interview no. 15b). The 2008 Gender Assessment states that the technical working group on gender has helped make the National Strategic Development Plan fairly gender-responsive (CGA 2008:180).

Another result of the Technical Working Group on Gender is the establishment of *Gender Mainstreaming Action Groups* in each line ministry. This was an initiative that was brought onto the agenda at the Beijing +5 meeting in 2000, where the Ministry of Women’s Affairs recognized that having gender focal points in each ministry was not enough (Interview no. 27). These action groups are responsible for taking the lead in gender mainstreaming issues within the line ministry, and at the end of 2008 all line ministries were believed to have such action groups, although varying degree of activism was noted (Interview no. 32). According to MoWA guidelines, a secretary of state or under-secretary of state is in charge of the group, which should also include the department of planning within each ministry because they have the possibility to incorporate *Gender Mainstreaming Action Plans* into six-year strategies and report to the Ministry of Planning (Interview no. 17a). As of the end of 2007, nine line ministries had developed gender mainstreaming action plans and five line ministries were preparing such plans.⁸⁶ The Ministry of Women’s Affairs cannot force the implementation of the action plans, but can provide training for the group and assist in the process of applying for financial aid, both from the national budget and from international donors. Strategically selected men and women participate in the gender mainstreaming action groups. Ideally, one of the gender mainstreaming action group delegates also participates in the Cambodian National Council for Women to link the national policy with reporting on the CEDAW convention (Interview no. 17a). After the CEDAW committee meeting in New York in 2006, a number of the 42 recommendations were forwarded to each responsible line ministry, who are to work with them until the next report is finalized in 2009 (Interview no. 9b).

Local government structure

Efforts to develop and strengthen the local government structure was not something that got any attention during UNTAC days (Hohe 2005:59). The idea of holding local elections was tabled at the Paris Peace Conference and

⁸⁶ The Department of Local Administration located in the Ministry of Interior and the Department of Fisheries in the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries had developed gender mainstreaming strategies of their own (CGA 2008:165).

re-surfaced again in the 1993 election (COMFREL 2007:8). Although discussions regarding decentralization reform were brought back onto the political agenda in the 1993 election, efforts to decentralize and deconcentrate power officially commenced in 1996, and a real milestone was reached with the local elections in 2002 (CGA 2004:124; Rusten, Sedara et al. 2004:13). The 1996 SEILA-program was the initial starting point for decentralization and deconcentration. The program was based on the Cambodian Area Rehabilitation and Reintegration (CARERE I and II) projects established after the Paris Peace Agreement.⁸⁷ The program was sponsored by the government, with support from a number of international donors. Until the new organic law on decentralization had been adopted (in 2008), SEILA continued to operate as the country's main decentralization and deconcentration program (Interview no. 5). In order to manage the SEILA program at the provincial and municipality level, Provincial/Municipal Rural Development Committees were also established (Prakas 292 2002). Assistance to the committee's day-to-day work was to be provided by *Provincial Executive Committees* (Ex-Com). The Ex-Com consists of governors, deputy governors and the directors of each provincial department (of each line ministry). As mentioned above, prior to 2008, few women held any of these positions and were thus marginalized in these committees. The increased number of female deputy governors as of late 2008 drastically elevated the number of women represented in the Ex-Coms. The Provincial Department of Women's Affairs is always headed by a woman (CGA 2004:129), which means that at least one woman has always had a guaranteed presence in each Ex-Com. With 23 female deputy governors, there are now at least two women in most Ex-Coms.⁸⁸

Within the SEILA program there was a gender mainstreaming strategy, for example advocating the appointment of women and children's focal points in the villages. According to an assessment in 2005, the Ministry of Women's Affairs realized that SEILA was a well-needed entry point for mainstreaming gender at the local levels (provincial, district and commune level) (Brereton 2005:9). Among other things, the gender mainstreaming assessment evaluated three components of the program and its expected and real outcomes. These components were institutional commitment and

⁸⁷ The CARERE-projects initially focused on humanitarian requirements and later turned to trying to meet long-term development needs and CARERE II turned into a support program for the provinces in the implementation of the SEILA program. SEILA was a government initiative to strengthen Cambodian local governance in order to achieve sustainable poverty alleviation. At the final phase of the SEILA program all 24 provinces/municipalities were covered by SEILA.

⁸⁸ Having said that it should be highlighted that in late April 2009, the relationship between the Ex-Coms and the newly established Provincial Board of Governors was not clearly established (email correspondence with SIDA representation in Phnom Penh, April 22, 2009). It might thereby be the case that Ex-coms have been abolished.

capacity-building, women's participation in local development planning and governance, and capacity for gender monitoring and database management. Taken together most of the initiatives sorting under these three components were either achieved or partly achieved (Brereton 2005:11).⁸⁹ Marked by the general political discourse, SEILA did not include a debate on a quota system, although it did focus on enhancing women's political representation and participation. A national policy advisor explained that this was the result of SEILA being a government program. Since the government is against using a quota system it was impossible for SEILA to advocate such measures (Interview no. 5). The SEILA gender mainstreaming strategy was presented to different line ministries, but there was no formal mechanism to mainstream gender into the work of SEILA line ministries. Instead, the Ministry of Women's Affairs focused its energy on the sub-national level (Brereton 2005:16). The MoWA SEILA working group developed six guiding principles for mainstreaming gender and empowering women. These principles included efforts to strengthen gender mainstreaming support and leadership at the decentralized level, increase budget allocations to facilitate gender mainstreaming at the provincial level, improve support for female Commune Councilors and Women and Children's Focal Points, and raise the number of female candidates in Commune Council Elections (MoWA 2005).

Appointing female commune councilors to be responsible for women and children's affairs was put forward in article 19 of Sub-Decree no. 22 on Decentralization. The sub-decree states that if no woman is represented on the council, a woman from the commune should be appointed to assist in this task, although without the privilege of being able to vote in council matters (Sub-Decree no. 22 on Decentralization 2002). The woman is to be selected after discussions with the Ministry of Women's Affairs and the Ministry of Interior's Department of Local Administration (CGA 2004:136). The women and children's focal points were responsible for ensuring the flow of information between the commune council and other provincial focal points on issues affecting women and children. They were also tasked with raising awareness about women's and children's rights in the commune; ensuring female participation in local development planning processes and gender mainstreaming in preparation and implementation of development plans; promoting school enrolment and attendance; and supporting women's participation in decision-making and access to resources (CGA 2004:136). In order to be a women's and children's focal point, a woman must be able to read and write, which makes many women ineligible for the

⁸⁹ A full description of the assessment can be found in Brereton 2005. It should also be pointed out that even though most of the activities are considered achieved or partly achieved, neither activity should be considered completed or finalized, as this is a process and no end-state can be determined.

position. According to an international gender advisor, even though projects focusing on providing women with literacy training has been proposed at the commune level, specifically for the purpose of increasing the number of women eligible for the commune councils, little has been achieved (Interview no. 17a).

The women's and children's focal point-initiative has turned out to be a rather weak effort to try to highlight women's and children's concerns and enhance women's participation and access to decision-making. Brereton's study reveals that several gender focal points had never been involved in the planning processes of their departments, gender training was insufficient, few women had volunteered to become a gender focal point, and there was a high turnover of focal points (Brereton 2005:38). This was also emphasized by some of my interviewees, for example some of them noted that the focal points are often very poor; they are not provided any incentives for taking on the job and they face real problems supporting others due to lack of resources (Interview no. 5). Furthermore, by under-funding women's and children's focal points, the issue is further marginalized, as these women, regardless of how motivated and engaged they might be, cannot bear sole responsibility for mainstreaming gender and providing a gender perspective on local policy formulation and implementation (Interview no. 17a). According to the 2008 gender assessment,

It is not uncommon for a sole woman councilor to be a member of the Planning and Budgeting committee, the Women and Child Focal Point, the Female M&E Focal Point and increasingly engaged in conflict resolution related to domestic violence. These women are overloaded and lack the support they need to fulfill their tasks. (CGA 2008:192)

The lack of incentives makes it difficult to find women willing to take on the job of women's and children's focal point and thus explains the high turnover. In other words, there is a lack of role models at the local level that affects local representation. According to one representative for an international aid organization, all this results in severe problems recruiting strong leadership at the local level (Interview no. 5). Arguably, the government is rhetorically supporting women's political rights but seems less inclined to provide the necessary support mechanisms for their realization. That is, a system of gender focal points/women's and children's focal points has been established but few resources are provided for them to actually do their job.

These focal points are interesting in theory as they are thought to represent women's and children's interests and needs at the commune level and as such also work as norm entrepreneurs. However, having just one woman responsible for "women's and children's affairs" in a commune has turned out to be a daunting task. A pilot project was initiated in 2002 to establish women and children committees in six provinces. These

committees were provided a high level of investment and technical assistance. The project was deemed successful and new guidelines were passed in 2007 that established *Commune Women and Children Committees* in all provinces. By making women and children's issues a main concern for a committee and not just a single woman it is believed that these issues will be better mainstreamed into the commune council planning process. Also, the women and children focal points can play a bigger role in this process because they now enjoy the support of an entire committee (CGA 2008:165).

In 2005, the government adopted a *Strategic Framework for Decentralization and Deconcentration Reform*, providing a broad overview of the decentralization strategy (MoWA 2005; RGC 2005). The strategy drew on lessons learned from SEILA and supported the adoption a new organic law. A 2006 Royal Decree established the National Committee for the Management of Decentralization and Deconcentration Reform to take the lead in the decentralization reform until a new organic law was enacted (CGA 2008:165). A draft Organic Law on Decentralization was endorsed by the council of ministers in February 2008 and submitted to the National Assembly for consideration and adoption; a process that was finalized in May 2008. The Organic Law on Decentralization⁹⁰ divides the capital (Phnom Penh) into khans and sangkats. The Provinces of the country are divided into municipalities (urban) and districts (rural). Municipalities are further divided into sangkats whereas districts are divided into communes. The capital, provinces, municipalities, districts, and khans have their own councils that are indirectly elected by the commune councils. Elections were held in May 2009. These councils will prepare development plans for their area of responsibility, and they are also responsible for the implementation of such plans. In constructing such development plans, development needs within the jurisdiction have to be assessed and the draft law also states that the needs of women, male youths, children and vulnerable groups should be prioritized. The councils are also responsible for managing finances to meet the needs of these groups. The law also states that each council is to have a Women's and Children's Affairs Committee whose members are either selected from female council members or female and male officials (Law on Administrative Management of the Capital, Provinces, Municipalities, Districts and Khans 2008: article 127). These committees will provide recommendations to the councils on "women's issues". If the committee members are councilors they have the right to vote in the meetings, a right

⁹⁰There are actually two laws included in what is referred to as the "Organic Law": The Law on Administrative Management of the Capital, Provinces, Municipalities, Districts and Khans; and the Law on Elections of Capital Council Provincial Council, Municipal Council, District Council and Khan Council.

not available to non-council committee members. However, the number of women in the commune councils is still small, which means that the number of women who can get elected to the provincial and district councils is limited. Thus, if no women are elected then there are no women with the right to vote in the Women's and Children's Affairs Committees (Interview no. 25).

The women's committee is to submit an annual report, to be included in the council's main report, describing the situation of women's participation in democratic development. The report is to highlight strengths and weaknesses and review measures taken to improve women's participation (Law on Administrative Management of the Capital, Provinces, Municipalities, Districts and Khans 2008: article 133-134). In the draft process, it was argued that the women's and children's committees should be eliminated and replaced with a minimum requirement of 40 percent men and 40 percent women on every council. It was also argued that if the committee is not eliminated, it ought to be viewed as a temporary mechanism to ensure women's presence. Then, once there are sufficient female councilors, the women's committee could be abolished (Interview no. 21). In the end, the idea of a committee remained without any provision for its abolishment when the time was right.

The organic law also states that recruitment and appointment of personnel to the councils must "ensure appropriate representation of women for the positions of chiefs or deputies of the units and other personnel in the council" (Law on Administrative Management of the Capital, Provinces, Municipalities, Districts and Khans 2008: article 176). The rather soft language in the law was criticized by one women's organization, which stated that nothing in the law explains what is meant by "appropriate representation of women" (Interview no. 25). There were discussions about a quota system, but it failed and efforts are now focused on getting a sub-decree that addresses the issue of equal participation (Interview no. 17b). One representative for a women's organization stated firmly that the new organic law brings democracy to Cambodia, although she agreed that the new law was not very gender sensitive (Interview no. 8b). The interviewee went on to explain that the new law makes the commune councils more powerful, which she believed was a good thing. One international gender advisor with insight into the new organic law stated that the law is just an embryo of the original draft. According to this interviewee, the only real thing accomplished has been the adoption of a law that strengthens the Ministry of Interior and CPP

(Interview no. 17b).⁹¹ This consequence was noted during the drafting process, when few outsiders were allowed to provide input and most stakeholders were only permitted to express their views on what was already included in the proposed law (Interview no. 17a).⁹² The main stakeholders (NGOs, donor agencies and governmental representatives outside of the Ministry of Interior) were only allowed to see the law in late 2007, and they were told that the law was to be adopted prior to the 2008 election. This was the first time that some of them had seen the law, and the consultation period provided was extremely short (Interview no. 18; Interview no. 21). The law was seen as politically sensitive because it takes a lot of power from the central level and distributes it to the sub-national, but it turned out to be very “politically vague”. One representative of a women’s organization argued that since stakeholders were not involved in the drafting of the law, the end product does not reveal the entire picture and does not describe Cambodian society as it is (Interview no. 10b). Once the main stakeholders got to see the law, the sensitive issues had already been agreed upon and no further negotiations were allowed (Interview no. 21). Recommendations from civil society organizations were sent to the Ministry of Interior but the law is still gender insensitive (Interview no. 10b).

In sum, as the discussion above has indicated, throughout the 1990s, the norm of women’s political rights gained some ground in Cambodia, a development that cannot be separated from international developments, for example the Beijing Platform of Action in 1995. Cambodian electoral rules and regulations do not include the use of affirmative action, but more women are being elected to both national and local assemblies. The Ministry of Women’s Affairs is trying to increase its capacity and to function as a norm entrepreneur at the highest political level. Intra- and inter-ministerial initiatives to get others to “think and act gender” have been undertaken, although with mixed results. Efforts to strengthen the local government structure bear signs of gender-sensitivity and the latest development, the adoption of a new organic law, could serve as a continuation of the enforcement of women’s rights at the local level. Analyzing the efforts to strengthen local government structures indicates that initiatives to enforce women’s political rights at the sub-national level seem to be implemented more frequently than at the national level. “It becomes less abstract at the local

⁹¹ This interviewee highlighted several flaws with the law, such as the lack of discussion on different functions and services at the local level. Furthermore, the law says little about who decides what and reports to who. Furthermore, accountability is not really discussed (Interview no. 17b ; also raised by Interview no. 31). In general, one national policy advisor stated that there is a problem to translate concepts such as accountability since there is really no Khmer meaning for such concepts, which in part then is what has to be educated to authorities (interview no. 11).

⁹² According to Sok Sam Oeun it is generally very difficult to access a draft law in the Cambodian legislative process (Sok 2007:20).

level, people are closer to the issues in the provinces and in the communes than at the national level,” argued one international gender advisor (Interview no. 17a). Taken together the three institutional developments analyzed here have served the cause of institutionalizing the norm of women’s political rights, albeit to a varying degrees. I now turn to the question of how well these developments have promoted the harmonization of national developments with the international norm as such.

Harmonization between national developments and the international norm

A norm’s journey along the scale of institutionalization is essentially an analysis of national developments aimed at evaluating how well they have promoted the translation of the international norm into practice at the domestic level. An analysis of the institutionalization of women’s political rights in the democratization process of Cambodia reveals some positive developments and progress in the harmonization of national policies and practices with the international norm of women’s political rights. Although the UNTAC mission did not have a specific gender component and UNTAC staff themselves had problems understanding the concept of *gender*, the importance of including both men and women in the development process was emphasized. With the entrance of international donor agencies, gender equity and women’s rights started to find a place in the national rhetoric (argument raised by for example Interview no. 4; Interview no. 6). It therefore seems that in Cambodia, the norm was initially enforced from above, although not through the UNTAC mission but rather through other international actors such as donor and UN agencies. For example, international donors helped establish women’s organizations and UNIFEM trained potential female political candidates ahead of the 1993 election. That is, international actors took the lead in norm diffusion and initially also set the agenda and priorities. However, national women’s organizations became important norm entrepreneurs in the early 1990s when they started to emerge with the help of international support and returning Cambodian women. Although women were organized in party-affiliated organizations prior to the entrance of the international community, women’s organizations have played an important role in the institutionalization of women’s political rights primarily since 1992. Through their lobbying they have helped institutionalize women’s political rights and put pressure on the government to adhere to a political discourse of women’s rights and ensure coherence between international conventions and national legislation. Many of the men and women who returned in the early 1990s from years in exile around the world were empowered with new ideas and used the momentum offered by the presence of international actors to establish new civil society organizations. Some of these men and women have joined politics and have thus had

the possibility to influence elite learning as well. However, party politics are powerful in Cambodia, and they often impede possibilities to push certain agendas forward. As will be discussed at greater length in Chapter six, key political positions can be bought, indicating that it is not necessarily the most competent men and women who hold senior governmental positions. This naturally affects norm institutionalization and internalization.

The number of civil society organizations thus increased dramatically with the entrance of international actors, and several of them focused on gender issues and women's rights specifically. Women's organizations were involved in peace marches, trained women to become political actors and used a wide range of technology to disseminate their message, for example ahead of elections. National congresses and summits were organized, and they produced statements and Agendas for Action that were presented and circulated to political parties and other national elites, including the Prime Minister. One of these national conferences laid the groundwork for the establishment of the Secretary of State for Women's Affairs, highlighting how pressure from below, together with international support, can produce important institutional changes. A national women's machinery has been in place since pre-UNTAC times, but was transformed into a State Secretary for Women's Affairs in 1993.

Early measures to institutionalize the norm are seen in the drafting a comprehensive women's code to strengthen women's legal position and to lobby for the appointment of gender representatives in every ministry, city and province in order to protect women's interests. This can be understood as examples of efforts to incorporate the norm in the political debate and policy, which in turn lead to important institutional changes and the establishment of norm entrepreneurs at various societal levels. A further institutional change was the creation of a Ministry of Women's Affairs in 1996. The Ministry of Women's Affairs is the national machinery for promoting women's status and gender equity in Cambodia. Its establishment can be seen as a way to ascribe higher status to the issue of women's rights and gender equality. As such it is an important step in institutionalizing the women's rights norm and a sign of the government engaging in rule-consistent behavior. Of course, it can also be seen as a way to segregate issues of women's political rights and gender equality in a single ministry, thus hindering gender mainstreaming. It might also be the case that the government has only made tactical concessions rather than promoting the norm irrespective of audience. Indeed, considering the ministry's "apathetic" response to gender issues in 1998 it seems as if the developments at that time were more a sign of tactical concessions than an indication of the norm's prescriptive status. Therefore, to draw conclusions about rule-consistent behavior versus tactical concessions we need to consider other developments as well.

New leadership and a more focused mandate have strengthened the Ministry of Women's Affairs. In recent years the Ministry has been developing means to facilitate collaboration with other line ministries, donor agencies and civil society organizations. The ministry monitors the gender-sensitization of government policies, projects and programs, but it also works with gender awareness-raising, promoting women's participation and providing gender training and capacity-building. It influences policy formulation, increases cooperation and collaboration between line ministries, NGOs and donor agencies. It has developed a system of gender focal points, and inter- as well as intra-ministerial working groups focusing on gender issues have been established to increase both horizontal and vertical awareness of gender issues. As a result, an increasing number of line ministries have established gender mainstreaming action groups and action plans. The Ministry of Women's Affairs has also lobbied the government to adopt a gender mainstreaming policy. The adoption of the *Neary Rattanak* as a government-sponsored policy indicates serious, at least rhetorical, commitment to the norm. This policy framework provides women with the potential space, opportunity and capacity to influence policy and offer a mechanism for women to demand their constitutionally guaranteed rights. *Neary Rattanak* was set up as a strategic plan to meet the commitments articulated in the Beijing Platform for Action, and since the government has endorsed this plan it can be considered a way to start this process of harmonizing state policies with international norms on women's rights. All such initiatives point in the direction of the Ministry enforcing the norm as part of rule-consistent behavior.

The discussion above has indicated that through the use of various tools, the norm of women's political rights seems to be moving along the scale of institutionalization. Although the norm seems to have been brought by the international community or returning exile women empowered with international rights' rhetoric, the government was happy to sign off on a number of international treaties and the rhetoric of women's political rights started to appear more frequently in the political discourse. Progress can be seen in integrating gender into key policy documents, such as the National Strategic Development Plan and the nationalization of the Millennium Development Goals. The Constitution endorses CEDAW and provides a solid ground for gender equity and gender mainstreaming. There is also evidence of institutional engagement for gender, as shown through the technical working group on gender, gender mainstreaming action groups and their action plans.

Women are increasingly being accepted as having a selection of rights, for example the right to participate in politics. Indeed, tools for promoting the implementation of women's political rights seem to be in place at the national level, although there are still no specific mechanisms to facilitate the election of women to political office. Reference is made to the Constitution,

which states that both men and women are equal, and the Prime Minister has commented on the need to put women on candidate lists in electable positions. Hun Sen stated that “[promoting women as leaders] is a request and commitment which all of us need to fulfill for the sake of women as well as the ones of our families” (CGA 2008:161). Successful election results from the 2007 Commune Council election and close to 20 percent female representation in the national parliament after the last election in 2008 have caused some to say that Cambodia does not need affirmative action to increase women’s political representation. Indeed, maybe Cambodia is heading towards the much-longed-for thirty percent female representation without a quota system; it is just a matter of time. The new government has appointed 23 women as provincial deputy governors, which is an increase from only 2.7 percent in 2007. This initiative seems to be an example of words being followed by action, which would indicate that in this instance the norm of women’s political rights is quite highly institutionalized and part of rule-consistent behavior. The Cambodian Gender Assessment from 2008 states that good progress has been achieved in the representation of women on directly elected bodies. Increased rhetorical support for promoting female political candidates over the years thus indicates that the norm is near the stage of prescriptive status, and placing women in electable positions indicates a move towards rule-consistent behavior. Nonetheless, fewer women have been appointed to selected positions, which could be a sign that the norm is not actually considered fully valid. It could also be an example of action lagging behind rhetorical support, again indicating that the norm remains at the stage of prescriptive status.

Recently some measures have been adopted for the purpose of promoting both women and men in decision-making at the local level. In general, the decentralization reform, from SEILA to the new organic law, includes some clauses covering women’s rights, and gender mainstreaming is being promoted as something that should be included in these societal changes and legislative developments. The SEILA program adopted a gender mainstreaming strategy that was presented to the different line ministries. The MoWA SEILA working group also developed guiding principles for mainstreaming gender at the sub-national level. SEILA was a donor-driven project from the start, and this could explain the incorporation of gender mainstreaming strategies. However, as the new Organic Law was formalized, it is possible to trace the legacy of SEILA. The new organic law establishes capital, province, municipality, district, and khan councils who, as part of their work, have to produce development plans. Among other things, these plans must to give consideration to women’s needs and interests and manage resources in a way that addresses them. Each council is also supposed to establish a women and children affairs committee to provide recommendations on “women’s issues”. They are also supposed to produce an annual

report that reviews the situation for women and women's participation in democratic development. Thus, even if donors externally enforced the gender-sensitivity of SEILA, Cambodian actors seemed to have learned these issues as well. The new Organic Law actually incorporates some of the ideas promoted in the SEILA program and can thus be seen as a sign of moving away from tactical concessions towards prescriptive status. If the requirements in the Organic Law are realized, this can even be seen as a move towards rule-consistent behavior. It can be argued that international donors have influenced the drafting of the law, promoting/forcing the incorporation of women's rights in the end product. However, most stakeholders, including international donors, were allowed to comment on the draft law only six months prior to the estimated adoption, thus decreasing considerably the possibility for such international influence.

The lack of consultation in the drafting process has been criticized by women's organizations. The result of such minimal input from stakeholders is a less gender-sensitive law than what women's organizations wanted (issue raised by for example Interview no. 8b). The women's movement raised a number of concerns regarding the draft Organic Law, but the drafters addressed none of the issues highlighted (CPWP 2008). However, despite its flaws, it is a law that has the potential to further promote women's political rights if there is political will to do so.

Gender-sensitive decentralization reform has indeed provided a political space, at least in theory, for women. For example, in the 2007 commune council election the share of women elected increased from approximately 8 to 15 percent. However, despite this increase, several communes still have no elected women on their councils. Kim and Öjendal (2007:38) argue that "the [commune councils] are mainly composed of men acting on a 'masculine' rationality". In other words, it seems as if much of this gender-sensitization is still somewhat tactical; i.e. the Cambodian government representatives at various levels know what language to use and how to please international donors and pressures coming from civil society organizations. They have learned the talk, the question is if they are willing to engage in rule-consistent behavior and show a commitment to women's political rights. The institutional developments can be summarized as below regarding to the outcomes of norm institutionalization.

Table 5.1 Institutional developments in Cambodia

| Areas for institutional development | Outputs |
|--|---|
| Electoral rules and regulations | No gender-specific rules or regulations; Placement on candidates’ list dependent upon resources; More women on electable positions ahead of elections; More women elected at local level; Appointments increased total number of women in the National Assembly. |
| National women’s machinery | MoWA lacking capacity, becoming stronger; Intra- and inter- ministerial working groups in process of becoming functioning; Work plans not always implemented. |
| Strengthening the local government structure | Signs of gender-sensitivity, although new organic law criticized for lacking gender-sensitivity; Signs of lessons learned from successful SEILA program (seen as needed entry point for gender mainstreaming); Focal point system developing but women still do most of work relating to “gender” issues; Fear of being a paper construction. |

All of the developments discussed above indicate that women’s political rights seem to be gaining ground. This indicates that the government is not just talking the talk of women’s rights. However, whether this is a sign of true commitment is difficult to assess, and much might still be mainly a matter of tactical concession. Even so, however, as argued by Risse and Sikkink, as the government becomes increasingly entangled in the rights’ rhetoric, it will find it harder to not deliver on its promises. This is something that the ratification of the CEDAW convention has shown. Women’s organizations are increasingly putting pressure on the government to deliver on its commitment to women’s rights. For example, in the NGO CEDAW shadow report, the inconsistency between Cambodian legislation and CEDAW was highlighted. The need for clarification regarding the relationship between the international convention and Cambodian legislation was also highlighted by the New York CEDAW Committee’s response to the Cambodian government’s combined initial, second and third periodic report. The New York CEDAW committee response commended, among other

things, the establishment of MoWA and the adoption of *Neary Rattanak*. Some of its recommendations to the Government of Cambodia included its concern regarding the lack of knowledge about the CEDAW convention within the judicial system. The Committee also highlighted the importance of providing a complete definition of what constitutes discrimination against women and what mechanisms for sanctions that are in place to battle this type of discrimination; the need for increased implementation of gender mainstreaming efforts, and the problem caused by some aspects of the traditional code for women. As regards the latter, the Committee recommended eliminating discriminatory elements and initiating a campaign to raise awareness of the stereotypes regarding the roles of men and women. The Committee also called on the government of Cambodia to highlight the important role played by women in society and recommended efforts to increase the space for women in decision-making at all levels in society (CEDAW 2006a). In total, the New York CEDAW Committee presented 42 concluding comments that were brought back to Cambodia. Cambodian National Council for Women tried to classify these comments and distribute them to the relevant line ministries in order to facilitate proper actions (Interview no. 9b; Interview no. 25). In its response to CEDAW, the Cambodian government reaffirmed its commitment to the convention and stated that efforts were underway to “ensure the consistency between national laws and the convention” (CEDAW 2006b). According to one women’s organization with insight into the CEDAW reporting process, so far, none of the recommendations have been fully implemented (Interview no. 33). The Cambodian Government is scheduled for review again in 2010 and the government is already working on its report. Several line ministries are working on aspects that relate to their ministries, and all the different ministerial reports will be combined to one national report (Interview no. 23). Due to internal problems, the NGO CEDAW Committee seems to be doing less well in writing their shadow report (Interview no. 25; Interview no. 33). One women’s organization explained that the member organizations of the committee disagree about how to do the report, so little being done at all (Interview no. 25).

The initial signing of CEDAW can probably best be understood as a tactical concession made by the government. However, as noted above, civil society organizations and MoWA are increasingly using CEDAW to push the government to engage in rule-consistent behavior. Some believe that the appointment of 23 female deputy governors is a tactical concession by the government to “look good” ahead of the upcoming CEDAW reporting (Interview no. 8b). The important role played by “shaming” is thus highlighted. The government is still not fully committed, but increased pressure, both from outside and inside of Cambodia, can ensure that there is

continued pressure on it to fully adhere to the norms and values it signed off on.

When looking only at the institutional developments and what was summarized in table 5.1, the norm should probably be placed somewhere between the stages of prescriptive status and rule-consistent behavior. However, there are fears among both international and national actors that legislative developments and gender-sensitive policies are only paper constructions that will never be implemented. Furthermore, several interviewees also raised the issue of a weak civil society unable to consistently play the role of a policy community and lobby for change. Lack of commitment was another issue frequently raised. Gender issues and women's rights are often sidelined if there is no policy champion and enforcement and adherence is dependent upon the audience. This is true both within the government and in the donor community, which is discussed more below. Another problem affecting the enforcement of women's political rights is the lack of resources – financial, personnel and time. This was particularly raised when discussing gender mainstreaming action groups and women's and children's focal points. There is also what can be referred to as a lack of consistency between law and practice. For example, women are able to run for political office, but due to lack of connections and resources they often find it difficult to be placed high enough on parties' candidate lists. All this would indicate that despite all the institutional developments, the norm is not part of standard operating procedures. Thus, considering that it is still very much up to individual norm entrepreneurs to push for women's political rights it would seem premature to consider norm adherence de-personalized or always part of standard operating procedures. The overall assessment of the process of institutionalizing women's political rights in Cambodia is thus that the norm is more likely found at the stage of prescriptive status, although at times moving towards rule-consistent behavior and tactical concessions. This is illustrated in the figure below where the shaded area should be understood as an illustration of approximately where the norm of women's political rights is today. The circle indicates that it is impossible to pinpoint exactly where the norm is, although we can say something about the area in which norm institutionalization in Cambodia is as of mid-2009.

Internalizing women's political rights in Cambodia

In fact we have law, but this is the country of lawlessness. (Human Rights Advocate in Cambodia)

Chapter five provided an analysis of the process of the institutionalizing women's political rights in Cambodia. Norm entrepreneurs were identified and institutional developments discussed. This chapter draws on the conclusions from Chapter five and adds to it a discussion of women's capability to function. What are women's real opportunities for political functioning in Cambodia? More specifically, norm entrepreneurs and their activities are discussed more in-depth in order to analyze their possibility to affect norm internalization and facilitate women's room for agency. Also, many of the norm entrepreneurs are women, and their capability to function should be positively affected as a result of norm diffusion. Thus, by looking closer at the role and activities of national (including ex-Diasporas) norm entrepreneurs we can also get a sense of how women's capability to function actually plays out. By discussing women's capability to political functioning we can assess the status of norm internalization in the case of women's political rights in Cambodia.

Democracy brought new insecurities to Cambodia, but with the benefit of hindsight, many positive developments can also be detected. Many women returned from exile empowered with western feminist ideas and a faith in women's rights as human rights. The international climate in Phnom Penh made it possible to establish NGOs, many of which focused on gender equality and women's rights. Although this momentum did not translate easily into political power, women are slowly gaining increased access to political decision-making as well. Still, one international gender researcher has pointed out that "women's rights are enshrined in Western institutions but not in the neo-patronage system in place in Cambodia" (Interview no.

13).⁹³ In other words, the norm can appear in policies and legislation, and national institutions might have changed to incorporate the norm, but this is not necessarily something that has been fully embraced by the general public or national elites because it is still seen as contrary to Cambodian culture and tradition. A similar argument has been raised in a report from the Cambodia Development Resource Institute and in the conclusions drawn by Jacobsen (Kimchoeun, Vuthy et al. 2007; Jacobsen 2008b). As noted in Chapter five, with time and international support, a number of institutional developments can be identified that have the potential to lead the government towards rule-consistent behavior and serve as a basis for women's capability to function. The Cambodian government has ratified a number of international conventions, which has sparked a number of legislative and policy developments. Indeed, as noted by one female politician, "Cambodia has come a long way in understanding gender, at least in policy" (Interview no. 29). Still, there are signs that initiatives are paper constructions that lack implementation and enforcement. One women's rights advocate stated that positive developments in the country include the willingness of the government to gender-mainstream policies and some laws. On the negative side, there is a lack of understanding about how to implement the policies because the implementers are not gender-sensitive (Interview no. 10b). We therefore have to analyze how norm entrepreneurs can affect women's capability to function further.

In order to be considered highly internalized, the norm has to have begun to impact on people's everyday lives and rhetoric, there should be fewer negative adaptive preferences among both women and the general public and discriminating ways of life should be changing. More specifically, the norm should be adhered to irrespective of audience and discriminatory ways of life and attitudes must be addressed and changed. Women must achieve "agency", i.e. the power to act upon their political rights. In general the international norm should be translated into national practices, which at this stage includes that people are aware and accept the norm regardless of their personal views. Furthermore, urban-rural divisions should also be minimized.

National norm enforcement

Chapter five noted that international actors play an important role in providing support to civil society organizations to develop and enforce the norm of women's rights. Returning Cambodians have also been prominent

⁹³ A patronage system can be described as "transactions between politicians and citizens whereby material favors are offered in return for political support at the polls" (Wantchekon 2003). In Cambodia this is expressed through the patron-client relationship discussed in Chapter four.

norm entrepreneurs. Many of them became involved in women's organizations and later in politics. During and following the UNTAC mission in the country, women's organizations, with international support, were the main actors trying to reach out to women. As a whole, the women's movement has played an important role in raising awareness about women as political actors, teaching women about their political rights, and trying to increase women's participation in elections, both as voters and as candidates. The same movement also keeps women's rights and capabilities on the national agenda.⁹⁴ Women's organisations have often influenced national elites by pushing gender equality/equity issues. This push from below must, however, also be seen as a push coming from international actors, because they provide essential support to these organizations, both in terms of financial resources, human resources and organizational support. Chapter five also noted that an increasing number of national elites have started to take the norm of women's political rights onboard. This has to some degree followed as a consequence of the establishment of a national women's machinery and the intra- and inter-ministerial working groups that have developed as part of the government's gender mainstreaming agenda. In this chapter the Ministry of Women's Affairs and its work are discussed under national norm enforcement, because the establishment of this machinery has provided the country with a new potential norm entrepreneur. Focus in this section is on national norm entrepreneurs because they are the key to facilitate norm internalization, i.e. to facilitate the spreading and rooting of the norm of women's political rights into the daily lives of Cambodian men and women, both in urban and rural areas. Nevertheless, these norm entrepreneurs still enjoy international support, although international norm entrepreneurs are not discussed separately in this chapter.

I start off by looking closer at the women's movement and its role in norm enforcement and how its various activities affect women's capability to function. Looking at what activities women's organizations are involved in highlights a commitment to increase women's access to decision-making and the enhancement of their rights, something that was illustrated in Chapter five. The need for civic education, gender awareness training and capacity-building were mentioned in Chapter three as important for internalization of women's political rights. Cambodian women's organizations have been involved with all of the above. In fact, one interviewee argued that this is something that is completely NGO driven, although with government support:

⁹⁴ One such example is the pressure from civil society on the government to adopt a domestic violence law, which was achieved in 2005.

The government is trying to join in [on educating people about their rights], but it is completely NGO driven [...] In respect to women's rights, NGOs are working very hard but together with the government [...] the issue of women's rights is a bit advanced in teaching human rights to the people, but it is still very dominated by the civil society. (Interview no. 6)

Being involved in training activities such as the ones mentioned above includes trying to battle and change discriminatory attitudes and traditions, something that is addressed more in-depth below. For Cambodian women this means addressing the Chbap Srey, the traditional code for women mentioned in Chapter four. Changing such deeply rooted views on the role and status of women is a difficult task and something that both civil society organizations and the government are trying to achieve. However, according to one representative of a women's rights organization, the government still has not picked up on the problems with the women's code. They do not want to look like they are destroying culture (Interview no. 25). According to the interviewee, this does not mean that the government does not understand the problematic nature with the code, but they would rather see civil society organizations lobby for change (Interview no. 25). Educating the community is prioritized, but also "[building] mechanisms where the younger generations can get education to change the attitudes they were taught when they were young" (Interview no. 3). The same interviewee also highlighted the importance of educating men to be more gender sensitive: "[...] it's important not to only educate the younger generation but also students at different levels, to know about women's issues, about gender" (Interview no. 3). Men are now being directly targeted by some organizations to participate in training on women's rights, but this development is still in its infancy. This is discussed further below and in the final chapter.

Another issue about civil society organizations relates to the type of activities they are involved in. As stated in Chapter five and above, much focus has been aimed at gender awareness-training and civic education. The 2008 Cambodia Gender Assessment notes this as well and criticizes the fact that women are primarily treated as *recipients* of training (CGA 2008:186), whereas less focus is actually devoted to *empowerment*. It is believed that once someone understands gender they will be able to apply it and mainstream it into policies and activities. A gender consultant I interviewed raised a similar argument. Although the (provincial) organizations she referred to were actually claiming to focus on the empowerment of women by increasing their access to decision-making, it was still the case that a limited number of women actually participated (Interview no. 6). In other words, these organizations were involved in gender awareness training in order to strengthen women's capacity to engage in decision-making, but the women nevertheless did not feel empowered enough to participate. There are, in other words, negative adaptive preferences at play that impede

women's political participation. According to the gender assessment report, "there remains resistance to the term 'women's empowerment', as this is generally interpreted as taking power away from men and against traditional culture" (CGA 2008:186). We return to this issue further below.

As noted above, national elites, primarily through the Ministry of Women's Affairs, but also members of parliament, are increasingly taking the message of women's political rights onboard, at least rhetorically. Still, women elected to political office, both at the national and local level, face serious challenges battling traditional views on their role in society. These views impede their agency as norm entrepreneurs and consequently hinder their own capability to political functioning. For example, although women's representation increased in the commune council election in 2007, women are rarely chiefs, nor first or second deputy chief (Interview no. 17a; confirmed by official election results from the National Election Commission, NEC 2007). One representative for a women's organization noted that more women are now in decision-making positions, but they do not always have the power to act (Interview no. 8b). Many women are still the sole female representative in many commune councils, or there are only a few in each council, both of which makes it difficult to bring about any real changes, despite the fact that there are some very talented women at the local level (Interview no. 13; Interview no. 10b).

Because the number of women elected to political office is still rather small (although increasing), it is difficult for them to be heard as norm entrepreneurs when they advocate women's political rights. This is ultimately a problem of (human) resources, which is easily visible in the commune councils. Often there are just one or two women on a council and female commune councilors reveal that they feel lonely and often cannot make themselves heard:

Women councilors elected in 2002 said that it was difficult for them to fulfill their roles as councilors and advocates. The challenges they faced were many—they were usually in the minority in the councils, they faced open and subtle discrimination by their colleagues, and had limited experience with public decision-making and negotiation [...] Despite the increase in the number of female commune councilors in 2007, these factors will remain barriers to their active participation. When given opportunities, women councilors are very active and very eager to bring women's issues into commune planning processes. (CGA 2008:156)

The situation described above indicates that women do not always have the capability to function even when they have access to the political decision-making assembly, in this particular case at the local level. Still the story also underlines that women are active once they are given the possibility to engage in politics without such constraining factors (CGA 2008:152).

A national gender advisor highlighted efforts by the Ministry of Women's Affairs in cooperation with women's organizations to increase the capacity of

women involved in politics, for example in commune councils and women's and children's committees at the commune level. One example of such activities is to arrange a forum at the commune level to motivate women to speak out. According to this interviewee, women who are elected need training to be more confident to do their job and stand up against the discriminating views of male commune councilors, i.e. training focusing on empowerment. She also noted that now that women have been appointed as deputy governors, they must be trained so they can do their job (Interview no. 27). One interviewee, a representative of a women's organization, was critical that most of the training regarding gender issues focused only on training women, instead of both women and men. Again, this indicates that training is not focusing on empowerment as such, but rather on women as recipients of training. This interviewee raised concerns about the law that requires that the women's and children's committees in each commune council are to be led by women, as if women are more gender-sensitive by default, something this interviewee did not subscribe to (Interview no. 10b). According to the Cambodian Gender Assessment, the translation of "gender into women" results in a view that women are the one's who ought to work with issues relating to gender and women's rights:

The term 'gender' can not be easily translated into Khmer and tends to be conflated with 'women'. Thus, for example, Women and Child Focal Points, Gender Mainstreaming Action Groups and the Ministry of Women's Affairs are held responsible for mainstreaming gender, rather than commune councils, ministries and the government assuming responsibility and allocating the necessary resources to do so [...]. (CGA 2008:192)

This conflation between women and gender is discussed further below. However, one representative of a women's rights organization stated that, at least under the current circumstances, she believed that women were more gender-sensitive and as such the best norm entrepreneurs: "if women are not involved in decision-making then men will not care about women's issues" (Interview no. 22). The Cambodian Gender Assessment similarly concludes that "the (mostly male) decision-makers are generally gender-blind and find it difficult to assess their work from a gender perspective [...]" (CGA 2008:192).

At the same time, an international gender advisor with insight into the activities of different line ministries explained that some of the women found in the Ministry of Women's Affairs are not necessarily the most dedicated (Interview no. 17a), which affects their potential as norm entrepreneurs, because they were not necessarily appointed because of their commitment to the cause. This also supports the view that women are not necessarily good norm entrepreneurs by default. According to Frieson, "[w]ives of male leaders are viewed as especially powerful" and, in general, a woman's

authority is determined by her relationship with powerful men (Frieson 2001:3). It is not uncommon that people buy their positions in ministries, including the Ministry of Women's Affairs, although this ministry is not as highly coveted as other high profile ministries (this was discussed by interviewee no. 17a and no. 32). However, other highly positioned women in the ministry are sometimes very outspoken about women's rights, but they do not necessarily understand the fundamentals of women's rights (Interview no. 17b), indicating that training is indeed very crucial at this point.

Looking at the role that the Ministry of Women's Affairs plays in promoting norm internalization more specifically, the 2008 Cambodian Gender Assessment summarizes it fairly well: "while good progress has been achieved at [the micro, - meso, - and macro⁹⁵] levels, MoWA continues to struggle with balancing project implementation with policy analysis and advocacy" (CGA 2008:178). A major concern with the Ministry is that this machinery only provides the tools and mechanisms for gender mainstreaming; the rest is up to each individual, each line ministry and the local authorities. Thus, communication between different levels of society is essential, but a lack of understanding and resources often obstruct implementation. Furthermore, although other line ministries are increasingly recognizing the work of the Ministry of Women's Affairs, the ministry is still not a priority one, and people prefer to work in other ministries (Interview no. 32). Moreover, even though the ministry has been successful in gender-sensitizing national legislation and policies, there is still no real gender mainstreaming policy for the government. *Neary Rattanak* has been highlighted by the government as important for enhancing women's social status and capacity-building. Still, the strategic plan is more of a description of an ideal scenario than a reality-based picture of the work of gender mainstreaming and gender equality in Cambodia today. The strategic plan is not strong enough and the capacity of the plan and the entire ministry is limited (Interview no. 17a).

The CEDAW Committee recommended an assessment to evaluate the effectiveness of the Ministry of Women's Affairs and related institutions in order to identify strengths and weaknesses and provide recommendations for improvement (CEDAW 2006a). One problem facing the ministry that was addressed by several of the interviewees is the lack of capacity within MoWA to actually provide technical advice on gender analysis and to develop gender-responsive strategies and policies (see similar conclusions in CGA

⁹⁵ Macro-level activities relate to influencing policy-making at the national level, meso-level activities focuses on supporting line ministries and collaborate with international donors, and micro-level activities focuses on the role and strength of women directly (CGA 2008:175).

2008:195-197). One national gender advisor interviewed argued that the Ministry of Women's Affairs is not strong enough and the ministry is still very dependent on consultant support. Still, she emphasized that the commitment of the ministry is remarkable, which is an important part of increasing its capacity (interview no. 16). An international consultant also emphasized that the ministry still lacks the capacity to do in-depth gender analysis and translate it into policies (Interview no. 19). Similarly, as stated by another international gender advisor,

A lot of work has to be pointed at strengthening capacity among MoWA staff [...] there is still a lack of capacity to analyze and plan [...] [they] have to increase the knowledge of those who are suppose to be responsible for mainstreaming gender [...] many of the people working in MoWA are not motivated to work with these issues, they work in the ministry because they bought themselves a position [...] people with technical skills are found first among the general directors and directors of department. (Interview no. 17a)

The lack of capacity within the Ministry of Women's Affairs might be explained by the fact that gender mainstreaming has not gained a taken-for-granted status, which also affects the norm of women's political rights. Many of the key personnel within the ministry seem to lack an understanding of what needs to be implemented and an understanding of the role of MoWA itself. The lack of capacity is thus the main problem raised both by interviewees and in other assessments. Resources are not as big of a problem: "[there are] quite a lot of financial resources within the ministry; the problem is rather that there is a lack of capacity within the ministry to handle the resources and prioritize" (Interview no. 17a). Another gender advisor also commented on this, stating that "all the donors want to put money into MoWA [...] MoWA still needs capacity-building" (Interview no. 27). This lack of capacity within the ministry is also apparent in the production of a national gender assessment. The World Bank, in collaboration with other international donors and the government, prepared the *Cambodian Gender Assessment, A Fair Share for Women*, in 2004. The 2007-2008 process of updating the gender assessment was more "nationally owned" although the report was facilitated (or basically written as one interviewee argued) by international advisors (Interview no. 15b; Interview no. 19). One international gender advisor explained that the 2008 update was requested by the Ministry of Women's Affairs, which wanted a newer analysis that was also a government document. However, the government later agreed to accept external assistance to write the background to each chapter, a decision based in part on the scarcity of Cambodians who actually have the right qualifications to write such a report (Interview no. 17b).

One of the tasks of the Ministry of Women's Affairs is to provide necessary support to the line ministries to mainstream gender and develop strategies to

collaborate with the donor agencies, in essence facilitating norm enforcement in the various line ministries. As noted in Chapter five, many such activities can be detected in Cambodia, gender mainstreaming action groups and technical working groups have been developed, as have been action plans and mainstreaming strategies. One international policy advisor stated that “there are some very brave attempts to mainstream gender through the line ministries [...] there are all these different modalities that are being tried out.” However, success with gender mainstreaming depends a lot on whether there is a “champion” in the group or ministry who can push the issue forward (Interview no. 15a; Interview no. 15b). In other words, there seems to be an inconsistency in the argumentation for gender mainstreaming that depends on who is present in a specific situation. Not everyone is “thinking and acting gender”. The 2008 gender assessment concludes that:

[w]hile notable progress has [...] been achieved in strengthening the institutional mechanisms to support gender mainstreaming (e.g., TWG-G, GMAGs and GMAPs) institutional linkages need to be strengthened to ensure that the priorities reflected in the GMAPs are incorporated into the design and implementation of sectoral programs and projects. (CGA 2008:xxiii)⁹⁶

The technical working group on gender was established in 2004 but according to the 2008 gender assessment, it does not function properly. Donor projects are not harmonized within the Ministry of Women's Affairs, and efforts by the ministry to promote and support the integration of gender into national, sub-national and sectoral policies and plans have not been effective (CGA 2008:190). The original idea was that each technical working group should have a representative in the technical working group on gender (Interview no. 19), but the linkages between the other technical working groups and the one specifically addressing gender issues are weak (CGA 2008:190). This leads to an isolation of line ministries' gender mainstreaming action groups, as they are not well connected to the sectoral technical working groups. The relationship between gender mainstreaming action groups and the technical working group on gender is thus not very strong; “when the [gender mainstreaming action groups] were formed it would make sense for them to be represented in [the technical working group on gender], but this is not [necessarily] the case” (Interview no. 19).

One international gender researcher stated that the gender mainstreaming action groups have been quite successful in some line ministries, although gender mainstreaming seems to be something that is achieved in theory, but less so in practice (Interview no. 13). In other words, there seems

⁹⁶ TWG-G refers to the technical working group on gender, GMAG the gender mainstreaming action group, and GMAPs are the gender mainstreaming action plans.

to be a gap between rhetoric and action. One national gender advisor noted that most gender mainstreaming action groups are new on the job and have had little training prior to taking on the task, which affects how well they can actually work with gender mainstreaming issues (Interview no. 27). One member of a gender mainstreaming action group explained that for most of the members in the action group, gender is not their primary duty; gender is seen as an add-on (Interview no. 23). A representative for a women's organization stated that the gender mainstreaming action groups do not always understand what they are suppose to be doing: "leaders do not advocate for women. They know how to do it but they need support. Members need to know how to make a plan and then hand it to their leaders" (Interview no. 25). Each line ministry is supposed to have a sectoral plan into which the gender mainstreaming action plans are to be integrated, but most line ministries do not have such plans. This is something that the gender mainstreaming action groups should be engaging in, argues one international gender consultant (Interview no. 19). By mid-2008, 15 of the line ministries had gender mainstreaming action plans, with four in the process of preparing such plans. However, only 7 of the 15 action plans were believed to be implemented as of mid-2008. The 2008 gender assessment states that several of the action plans show "a certain consistency" in their analysis of the situation of women in the ministry and also in their proposed strategies to promote women in leadership (CGA 2008:162). However, as stated by Haile (2007, cited in CGA 2008:162),

In most [gender mainstreaming action plans] the aspect of engendering the institution receives the most detailed analysis. In terms of developing a practical strategy the analysis should also distinguish between the gender issues that can largely be solved within the ministry itself, and gender issues which reflect larger structural concerns. Gender gaps which have their roots in larger social conditions would require collaborative action from other line ministries and other agencies.

This was also noted by a number of gender consultants and advisors, who stated that many of the action plans focus on women in the line ministries rather than gender issues in the entire sector.⁹⁷ All in all, the action plans are generally rather flawed (Interview no. 19; Interview no. 27). One national gender advisor stated that the gender mainstreaming action groups and their action plans have a broad understanding of their purpose, but although they all address gender equality and women's rights to some extent, they say little about how to actually promote these issues, indicating a lack of understanding of the issue (Interview no. 32). Strategies identified in the action plans often focus on gender awareness training while increasing the number and

⁹⁷ This goes back to the nature of training and lack of focus on empowerment.

capacity of women in the public administration, whereas “the Government’s international policy commitments (i.e. CEDAW, BPfA) in sectoral areas are not clearly reflected in the plans” (CGA 2008:190).⁹⁸ Thus, although the gender mainstreaming action plans represent a positive step for gender mainstreaming, they are still only plans with gaps. Some of the activities identified in the action plans need financial resources to be implemented, but most line ministries have misunderstood how to get money for such activities, argued one national gender advisor. The result is that gender is seen as an add-on and not in the line ministries’ regular budgets (Interview no. 27). However, one interviewee argued that the gender mainstreaming action groups are starting to bring CEDAW into their work plans as a result of training on the convention (Interview no. 9b). Such developments indicate that state policies are being harmonized with international norms, if slowly.

As noted above, part of the problem as identified by some interviewees is that there is still a lack of capacity and knowledge within the line ministries, despite the establishment of gender mainstreaming action groups. One national gender advisor argued that several line ministries are working on gender mainstreaming documents, including but not limited to the gender mainstreaming action plans, but “[...] they have limited resources to understand. The MoWA has an important role in at least training them to find experts to help them produce the document” (Interview no. 9a). Another interviewee stated that, “people repeat gender mainstreaming and talk about GMAGs [gender mainstreaming action groups] and GMAPs [gender mainstreaming action plans] and gender, but if asked about what gender equality concerns that exist within for example the Ministry [...], few would be able to answer” (Interview no. 17a). One leader of a women’s organization stated that the government shows its willingness to “do gender” but often experience technical difficulties in implementing it. One issue, according to this interviewee, is that the people in power positions believe they are educated enough to already know “gender” and refuse to participate in gender training sessions held by people with lower levels of education (Interview no. 10b). The lack of capacity to assimilate the concept of gender also reveals itself in the work with the CEDAW Committee recommendations. Although this information has been distributed to the line ministries, the understanding and the implementation of the concluding comments have not been deeply understood within each relevant line ministry (Interview no. 9b).

In sum, national norm entrepreneurs are trying, in various ways, to increase women’s capability to function. As noted above, however, some of them face obstacles in trying to promote the internalization of the norm, as

⁹⁸ *BPfA* is the abbreviation for the Beijing Platform for Action

well as in their own capability to function. One issue affecting the strength of the women's movement as a norm entrepreneur is the urban-rural divide:

There is a huge gap between two groups, the Phnom Penh partners and the provincial partners. [...] the partners in Phnom Penh have a lot of knowledge about many things, including gender. But the partners in the provinces, their access and information are so limited. (Interview no. 6)

Considering the development of women's organizations, they are perhaps the most prominent norm entrepreneurs in the country today, at least as far as providing training and trying to increase awareness amongst national elites and the general public. Still, however, a weak women's movement that is characterized by a number of high-profile NGOs led by charismatic leaders that rural Cambodian women cannot really identify with also impedes the movement's role as a norm entrepreneur. One interviewee summed up her views of the consequences of having a weak civil society and women's movement: "that's another thing that might be a factor to why it is so difficult to translate ... or the localization of gender norms, or gender equality norms. There is no local anchor, or it's very thin, put it that way" (Interview no. 15a). This indicates that the argumentation for women's political rights is not necessarily irrespective of the audience and still very dependent on a "policy champion", or someone to keep pushing the issue.

Women's organizations also have to succumb to the political climate at times, in particular as it plays out in Phnom Penh: "[t]here are a lot of political issues going on; they cannot just bring gender issues into their activities. This is easier in the provinces" (Interview no. 6). Thus, despite having the knowledge of women's political rights, capital-based organizations still face problems executing programs and projects aiming at enhancing women's capability to function. This naturally constitutes a hurdle for their role as norm entrepreneurs. Donor dependency is another issue, and as will be discussed further below, it almost seems as if "gender" has lost its "buzz" even amongst some of the donors, which means that women's organizations are struggling to find financial support to carry out their trainings and awareness-raising campaigns.

As for the Ministry of Women's Affairs, there are still serious flaws related to its role in helping internalizing the issue of women's rights. There are implementation gaps that have to be addressed, through further capacity-building and other tools. The lack of understanding of such concepts also makes it difficult for women to increase their political agency and capability to function at large. The action groups and working groups themselves are important resources for gender mainstreaming and do, in theory, enjoy sufficient mandate to facilitate gender mainstreaming throughout the line ministries. The problem is that this mandate has not been executed as it was planned.

As for the overall effect of national norm entrepreneurs in promoting women's capability to function, the Cambodian Gender Assessment from 2008 notes that there is increased awareness of women's rights and perceptions of gender equality are changing, much of it due to media, government and civil society initiatives (CGA 2008:ii). Still, as noted, there are several problems that impede the enforcement of women's political rights. Apart from the lack of capacity identified within the Ministry of Women's Affairs, the line ministries and civil society, there is also a heavy donor dependency, indicating a lack of local ownership, although this is changing. The interviewees also highlighted the lack of communication and coordination among line ministries, among civil society organizations, and between civil society and the government. There is also a general lack of understanding about what to implement, for example as illustrated by the lack of understanding of the concept of gender and empowerment. This lack of understanding is also present among gender advocates in the Ministry of Women's Affairs and its sub-national offices, in the Cambodian National Council for Women, among gender mainstreaming action groups and focal points, as well as within women's organizations (CGA 2008:193). Thus, although the norm of women's political rights is increasingly appearing in national legislation and national political institutions are changing to incorporate the international norm, there are still hurdles to overcome before women's political rights are highly internalized.

External circumstances affecting implementation are several but the most significant is probably the role of discriminatory culture and tradition. The traditional code for women, the *Chbap Srey*, constitutes a massive hurdle for women to access their rights and exercise their capability to function. These discriminatory traditions have been internalized by women as well, a phenomenon that is referred to as negative adaptive preferences. These issues all affect women's capability to function.

Discriminating ways of life

There are strong traditional views on the proper roles and responsibilities of men and women in Cambodian society. One international policy advisor explained that when international actors try to push for a reform agenda the government often waves the flag of nationalism and refers to "national sovereignty". "In respect to gender, it's the same thing: this is our culture, this is our country, this is the way we are..." (Interview no. 15a). Relating to women's political rights, enforcing this norm is sometimes believed to go against Cambodian culture and challenging the discriminating parts of this culture means addressing the *Chbap Srey*:

We look at a lot of the cultural stereotypes, for example the Chbap Srey. If you translate that into English it actually stands for 'women's law' and it is taught in school, from 6-year olds and up. Right from birth, women are taught to be submissive to their husbands and she accepts whatever happens. (Interview no. 2)

There is a woman behavior code educated to young generations in primary schools. This code says that women are inferior to men, and it seems to educate to women that men are the only ones who can make final decisions in the family. (Interview no. 3)

The role played by this traditional code in contemporary Cambodian society is contested, but the fact that it is in part taught in school from age 6 does mean that it still influences views about how women should behave. According to Lilja, women of all ages still tend to follow the Chbap Srey, although older women are more strict in their adherence than younger women, who “ignore some of the rules” (Lilja 2007:84). Women who challenge the traditional view of how women are supposed to behave are often criticized for not acting according to Cambodian culture. Women who spent years in the Diaspora and returned with new ideas and behavior still feel like they can only confront discriminating traditions within certain limits in order to not alienate themselves too much from the ordinary Cambodian woman (Interview no. 29).

In Cambodia, men are considered the natural political actors, while women have an economic responsibility and take care of the household and the family (Lilja 2006). According to a male politician interviewed by Lilja (2007:87), “[...] men do not think that women have any capacity [...] Women should stay at home [...]”. Indeed, concerns have been raised regarding women’s capability to actually represent their society, and also relating to their traditional responsibility of taking care of the household:

because so far Cambodian women have not [had the] opportunity to study or get more education as men, so their education or knowledge is [lower] than men’s; that is why they always thought that only men can work in society and women can only do the housework [...] politics is very dirty and violent, so some families do not want women involved in politics. (Interview no. 8a)

An interviewee in Lilja’s study stated that “men do not like their wives to become politicians, as then they would travel too much and spend time away from home [...] If the woman is in politics she cannot take care of old and children [...]” (Lilja 2007:88). Furthermore, politics are often characterized by violence and dirty tricks that women are not considered able to manage in such an environment. In other words, the security situation is considered a

major obstacle.⁹⁹ Lilja (2007:71) highlights the contradiction that arises in Cambodia as regards women's political participation and leadership: “[b]ecause women are constantly considered weak and in need of protection, the idea of leader women protecting the villages becomes a paradox”.

Furthermore, lack of time, training and education are often listed as reasons why women are less suitable for politics (KID 2007:28). Nonetheless, an increasing number of Cambodians seem to accept women in politics, at least rhetorically; according to an Asia Foundation survey, approximately 90 percent of the respondents said they would like to see more women as members of the National Assembly. How genuine this positive attitude really is is hard to determine, but according to the survey, close to 50 percent state that they would like to see more women in the National Assembly for the sake of gender equality, and 43 percent give as their reason to help women. Despite this positive attitude, most still prefer a man if they have to make a direct choice between the two (The Asia Foundation 2003), which is also confirmed in the 2007 and 2008 election results. The fact that people are talking about gender equality and women's political rights is nevertheless promising and can, in time, work to change discriminating attitudes and help decrease adaptive preferences that impede women as political actors. However, we can never reveal if the people participating in the survey answered honestly or according to what they thought the recipient wanted to hear, i.e. their answers might have been dependent on the audience, which would indicate that as yet there is no true commitment to enforce women's political rights.

According to one female politician, a woman who wants to fulfill her role as a politician has to make an extra effort to be credible:

if a female member of parliament makes a mistake, then the male members of parliament will look down on women. Female members of parliament have to prepare their thoughts better and make better interventions. Accountability is important; men do not feel the same pressure. (Interview no. 29)

This politician went on to explain that she believes that there are many stereotypes at play in Cambodian politics: “if women are assertive they are labeled pushy and aggressive. If men are aggressive [...] they are not labeled anything” (Interview no. 29). This goes back to perceptions about how men and women should behave. According to a female politician interviewed by Lilja, “[m]en do not like when women are ‘chatty’. Women are raised to respect men and be quiet [...]” (Lilja 2007:103). Another female politician

⁹⁹This was discussed by one representative of a women's organization (Interview no. 22), who told a story of a friend of hers who decided not to run for a second term in politics since she was concerned about her security.

interviewed stated that women who want to become involved in politics have to be committed enough to “battle stereotypes” (Interview no. 24). Female politicians interviewed both by Lilja and myself talk about women being held to a higher standard than their male colleagues in politics, something that also goes back to different views about how men and women are supposed to behave and what their traditional roles are.

The women who have entered politics (including women who are appointed as gender focal points) testify that they are generally over-worked and under-resourced and that they find it difficult to actually break free from traditional stereotypes. Because women are not believed to be the typical politician, they experience issues that relate to their traditional role as mothers. For example, little is done to really facilitate women’s access to decision-making, such as providing more day-care facilities or making transportation available. In other words, while people are increasingly accepting women in politics, rhetorical support is not followed by appropriate action to facilitate this new role for women. External constraining factors thus hold women back in their efforts to increase their political agency. This indicates that discriminatory ways of life have not really been eradicated. People support the institutionalization of women’s political rights, but find it harder to make the necessary changes in their ways of life in order to facilitate women’s capability to function and thus increase the likelihood of internalization of the norm of women’s political rights.

According to one gender mainstreaming action group interviewed, there are still negative attitudes towards women and each ministry has to find ways to develop strategies to change them (Interview no. 30). Indeed, rooting ideas of gender equity and women’s rights takes time. One organization launched a campaign to tell stories about women, gathered from the past:

it is very difficult to change the perceptions of people, maybe the people in Cambodia think that gender is from the foreign countries, so that’s why we collect our history from the past and let them know. We would like to show the people that we promote women not from the foreign, it is from our past. (Interview no. 8a)

One national gender advisor argued that even if women’s rights is part of an international effort, it can still find adherence in Cambodian history. Historically, women used to be famous and powerful (Interview no. 26), something that is also discussed in Jacobsen’s study (2008b:284-289). One women’s organization believed that traditional stereotypes are changing with time. Yet the same organization also talked about how, in developing their programs to empower women, they must do so in a way that respects Cambodian culture. As stated by this interviewee: “Cambodian culture does not forbid women to be independent, and as the country develops, both men and women need to participate” (Interview no. 28). Another interviewee

agreed, stating that Cambodian culture today is more liberal to women. Historically, Cambodian women were leaders and this has to be put forward (Interview no. 25).

There are also geographical differences regarding how well accepted women are as political actors. One national gender advisor stated that discourses about women's rights are very different in the provinces compared to Phnom Penh (Interview no. 32). One women's organization working a lot in the provinces explained that in the rural areas, women are still primarily wives and daughters; they take care of the household and the family. Changes are taking place here as well, although not as much as in the urban areas (Interview no. 22). One woman interviewed by Lilja stated that "women in Cambodian society are seen as inferior to men. They are considered mentally weaker. This view is stronger in the rural areas than in the towns [...]" (cited in Lilja 2007:84-85). A women's organization interviewed in my study believed that close to 100 percent of people in urban areas would support women's leadership, whereas people in rural areas would be more reluctant to support women in leadership positions (Interview no. 8b). However, a different women's organization stated that people in the rural areas are more aware of human rights issues, because they are the ones primarily reached by NGO training programs. According to this interviewee,

The community people have difficulties accessing information but can access it through NGOs. Urban people have access to information but they do not get the information because NGOs have more difficulties reaching out to them. (Interview no. 10b)

In an ideal world, this would indicate that both urban and rural women have the potential of being empowered with ideas of their rights. There are, however, still differences in how this actually translates into accessing these rights. As noted above, a woman might be aware of her rights, but not have the freedom of agency to access them and strive for change. In Cambodia, a majority of the population lives in rural areas and is poor. Talking about human rights is often considered a luxury. In such cases, human rights are often seen as something that was brought from outside of Cambodia, and something that does not necessarily translate easily into the everyday lives of Cambodians. Still, women are increasingly becoming involved in local level politics, indicating a shift that can pave the way for further developments in both rural and urban areas.

Challenging adaptive preferences

As noted above, women are not believed to be the "natural" political actors in Cambodian society. Politics is considered violent and "ugly" and not safe for women. According to Lilja (2006, 2007), both men and women believe that women are less capable and less suited to participate in public decision-

making. One women's organization explained that women are believed to be shy and are often not politically active because involvement in politics is not considered a women's area (Interview no. 22). This is something that is also internalized by Cambodian women themselves; the negative understanding of women's lack of capability to leave the household and access the public sphere is accepted by many women (Lilja 2006). One interviewee explained that even well-educated people consider the traditional gender roles as something normal, even though they know that women and men have the same rights and should be equal. This traditional understanding of roles is "difficult to change in reality [as is] hav[ing] them realize that they already have the gender stereotypes within themselves" (Interview no. 6). A representative of a women's rights organization working with the training of women ahead of elections and women's empowerment in general argued that:

I think that now we have a lot of change. Before we always think that women need not to work outside. Some of my friends say that we are women, we just do not go to work, and we stay at home. Before we think that but now it has changed a lot [...] even the old parents have changed. (Interview no. 8a)

One female politician I interviewed stated that she believed that the climate was changing for young women to become involved in politics, something she had experienced when running in the last national election. Although some men believed she was too young and inexperienced to run as a candidate, she found encouragement in other female politicians who have challenged traditional views of women's "proper" role in society (Interview no. 24).

The general view of women is that they often lack confidence and are shy; "we have serious problems with the attitude towards women and their position in society, even from the women themselves who do not think that they are capable to be in a decision-making position", stated one international gender advisor (Interview no. 17a). One interviewee stated that "[...] I think a lot of women don't understand that they are born with these rights" (Interview no. 2). Another interviewee, a national gender advisor, stated that women do not always prioritize the enforcement of their rights (Interview no. 32). This is truly a negative trend since women need role models to dare challenge the traditional views of their roles and position in society, but few women actually manage to fight this battle and become role models for others (Khus 2004:31). The women who do enter politics are often seen as wealthy and well-educated, and many women do not recognize themselves in such successful women (Interview no. 5). On the other hand, many also see that very few women actually have a political say at all. As one interviewee in Lilja's study states: "... [w]omen are raised to respect men and be quiet. This is the case with women in the National Assembly. Women in the National

Assembly never use their rights or their ability 100 percent” (cited in Lilja 2007:103). In other words, participating in politics takes more than just being present but this agency is something that is not always possible in the Cambodian context.

Addressing such discriminatory tradition is crucial for the internalization of women's political rights. This is why so many organizations focus on providing gender awareness training and address civic education, as well as capacity-building exercises for women to increase their understanding of themselves as political actors with agency. As pointed out by one women's organization, men also have to be included in such efforts: “we have to explain to men as well why it is important to have women in decision-making” (Interview no. 22). According to some of the organizations interviewed, this work seems to be paying off. One organization that does a lot of work with gender awareness training stated that it could see this change in its public forum:

[t]here are lots more women now participating and more and more are willing to speak. It's an interesting trend, it seems like you could see the difference. Whereas four or five years ago, pretty much no women wanted to come [...] it was too political and women were not suppose to be political, they are not suppose to be demanding [...] it's changing, women now know their rights [...]. (Interview no. 12)

Other interviewees made similar comments. One women's organization stated that women's situation has indeed changed a lot compared to before the Khmer Rouge days; today “women are members of parliament and women are working outside the house” (Interview no. 22), which was unthinkable 30 years ago. Another representative of a women's organization stated that although political hierarchies characterize Cambodia, women are starting to demand a position in politics (Interview no. 25). She went on to explain that “women are there, and women are always active, especially now that they have the capabilities to become involved” (Interview no. 25). One national gender advisor also reflected upon this “space” for women and ascribed the change mainly to different gender training; “assessments reveal that women feel more empowered and confident after training on women's rights and empowerment. They now advocate and lobby the commune chief and provincial departments” (Interview no. 27). However, despite positive changes it seems as if Cambodian women in general are still lacking important knowledge about the political mechanisms and networks needed in order to have their voices and concerns heard. For example, there is still no formal female political caucus in the National Assembly (Khus 2004:18). There have been initiatives to unite female politicians to increase their power base and implicitly their role as norm entrepreneurs. Such initiatives have, unfortunately, often been subject to party politics. Although women's organizations have tried to chair informal meetings between female

politicians from different political parties, women have a harder time standing united in formal meetings (Interview no. 8b). According to an interviewee in Lilja's study, "women who have positions in politics create no networks or fight for women's rights. These women only adapt to the parties and play by their rules. They play according to men's rules [...]" (cited in Lilja 2007:149). One female politician interviewed for my study explained that women from different political parties often see each other as enemies and find it difficult to challenge their own political party and unite as women on certain issues (Interview no. 29).

Women who are ready to reverse negatively adapted preferences and claim their political rights have to be strong enough to battle discriminating views about how women are supposed to act, something that requires support from men as well. However, there are still a lot of misunderstanding regarding the concept of women's rights in general and gender, and it is sometimes argued that these do not fit with Cambodian culture. This lack of understanding seems to be reinforcing traditional views about how men and women should behave and what their different roles in society are, or ought to be. One gender advisor working for a Cambodian NGO explained that there seems to be a general view among Cambodians, the majority of them men, that "when people [start to] understand their rights, especially women, then women will do violence to men, like men used to do to women" (Interview no. 10a). This was also highlighted by another women's rights organization; "men are not too happy about women's empowerment" (Interview no. 22). In other words, the understanding of women's empowerment and women accessing their rights is related to the disempowerment of men. Again this highlights the need to include men in training as well. If not, discriminating attitudes will be difficult to alter and women's capability to function will remain limited.

Translating the international norm into national practices

How successfully an international norm is translated into national practices and as such also internalized is affected by how the international norm is perceived in the receiving society. Throughout this chapter we can see the idea expressed by several interviewees, that there is still a gap between ideas perceived to be brought from outside of Cambodia (such as gender equality and women's rights) and what is considered applicable within the country. There is, in other words, a perceived gap between the international norm of women's political rights and Cambodian practices and tradition. This becomes obvious when discussing the origin and meaning of the issue of gender and women's rights. According to several of my interviewees, people rarely used the concepts of gender equity, women's rights or even human rights in Cambodia prior to the beginning of the 1990s; this is something that seems to have been brought by the international community (Interview

no. 7; Interview no. 9a). One women's organization explained that it has stopped referring to the word "gender" since it is considered by the general public (mostly men) as something that is imposed from the outside; "it is believed to be a UN wording and not natural to Cambodian society". This particular organization uses "gender" as an overall heading but then breaks it into something that people understand and can relate to. After various training programs, the participants have to modify what they have learned about gender (although not using that concept) into their reality (Interview no. 28). Similarly, another women's organization stated that because people think "gender" is from foreign cultures, the solution has been to use different concepts while sticking to the root of the concept (Interview no. 25). Other interviewees argued that gender is a new concept per se, but the underlying understanding of it is not new. For example, as stated by a Cambodian human rights advocate:

[t]he content [of human rights] existed since a long time ago, but we didn't use the concept of human rights. It said that women and men are equal before the law, they had the right to vote and be voted for – it didn't say it was human rights [...] So we started to know the concept of human rights when UNTAC came and all the training of human rights. (Interview no. 7)

This international push was highlighted by several other interviewees as well, both nationals and internationals. "Gender as a concept was introduced by donors in the 1990s", stated one national gender advisor (Interview no. 32). In other words, it is believed that with the arrival of UNTAC came the concept of human rights (Khmer Women's Voice Centre 2000:112), but people are still trying to comprehend what this actually means:

[t]he majority of the people are indifferent to human rights; they are too busy surviving so they are not involved in the issue as such. Then there are people who are interested to promote human rights, but they are driven by the donors. Particularly in respect to women's rights, it is very difficult to say that we have a national movement in Cambodia. There are several key women who are leading but the majority of them are from foreign countries, they are expatriates, they left Cambodia during the war and then came back. (Interview no. 6)¹⁰⁰

First we do not think about women's rights and democracy [...] everybody, we think about culture more than women's rights, because we did not know about women's rights. However, [...] when the UN came, we got some understanding about it, so from international law [...] it influenced Cambodia. (Interview no. 9a)

¹⁰⁰This interviewee also highlights what has been discussed under "norm entrepreneurs", that women returning from the Diaspora have not necessarily been greeted with open arms, but are considered to be "co-opted" by foreign ideas and are just as much outsiders as foreigners are.

One Cambodian gender advisor argued that there has been international pressure on both donors and the government to address human rights issues. The problem he identifies is that this is externally imposed and not something that has grown from within Cambodia: “gender is a western concept; how do we implement this into local knowledge?” (Interview no. 4). Another national gender advisor stated that even if gender equality and women’s rights was donor driven, it has been well received and it is not considered imposed from the outside anymore (Interview no. 32). However, several interviewees stated that the debate regarding how the concept as such relates to Cambodian culture has affected its outlook for implementation. “There is generally a lack of understanding of ‘gender’ in Cambodia”, argued one Cambodian working in an international aid organization (Interview no. 5). One international gender consultant explained that a real understanding of gender is limited. People rather argue in terms of “we have to do things to take care of women” (Interview no. 19). According to a representative of a women’s organization, gender is still understood as women only (Interview no. 8b). She continued by stating that people want to recognize women’s rights and most people agree that it is something that should be prioritized. The problem is when the issue of gender equality or women’s rights is up against another issue and one is prioritized ahead of the other. Gender issues often get the worse end of such a deal (Interview no. 32). When asked about women’s access to rights and their understanding of it, one gender advisor stated that “for the theory, they know. Then we need to have them analyze the relationship between theory and practice” (Interview no. 10a). Another gender advisor agreed, stating that there is progress and women have access to some rights: “it has been 15 years since UNTAC; people are aware of human rights and gender as such” (Interview no. 4). According to one interviewee, “women now enjoy *all* their rights here; it is not like in the past” (Interview no. 7). This statement should probably be understood in the light of what some of the other interviewees have stated as well, that women enjoy their rights on paper, but still struggle to access them in reality, due to the reasons discussed above. However, another Cambodian human rights advocate stated that, “I think now that I can still say that a majority does not understand the concept of human rights, but I think they are starting to” (Interview no. 12). According to one gender advisor, training about the CEDAW convention has brought about increased awareness of gender and human rights and now gender is not always translated into women (Interview no. 9b). A representative of a women’s organization also mentioned this, stating that there is improved understanding about gender issues but it is not a deep understanding; the question is how to go from rhetoric to action (Interview no. 10b).

One international gender consultant explained that “[t]he idea of human rights is very difficult for them to understand because freedom is so limited,

they have no options for survival” (Interview no. 6). The same interviewee went on to argue that men and women have little experience of claiming their rights from the government because they do not know how it functions. Indeed,

This is a country that until recently did not have a voting system [...] it had a monarchy that ruled by whim, it has been ruled by military dictates and colonial powers [...] it's a country that is barely seven years old¹⁰¹ [...] we're a young country, and into that, human rights... interesting. (Interview no. 14)

Another gender advisor explained that,

I think there are unrealistic expectations regarding how fast change can occur in a country such as this [...] everyone above 40 has memories [...] they survived a genocide [...] It affects the individuals, it affects all life-choices they make, insecurity of people in power, combined with Buddhist faith [...] it is such a huge gap. We have to think in a long-term perspective and address the younger generation and support them regarding education and international experiences and exchanges where they see how you can work with rights-issues, including women's issues [...] Today, it is not the strategic gender equity issues that are in focus [...] Poverty is such a huge problem that it is considered a luxury to talk about equality. (Interview no. 17a)

This was also highlighted by another international advisor, who said that “thinking about issues of right and equality is a luxury at this point” (Interview no. 15a). The issue of time is also something that is raised by Risse and Ropp, who acknowledge the length of the process of norm diffusion – i.e. that it can take a long time for states to move from repression and denial to prescriptive status and rule-consistent behavior (Risse and Ropp 1999:258). In other words, it raises the question whether we might be asking too much too soon of Cambodia?

Thus, time is one factor that can explain the lack of internalization. This is a process and Cambodia is on its way, but we cannot expect the country to have successfully internalized this somewhat foreign concept already. However, there are other explanations that also help us understand the process of norm diffusion as it is unfolding in Cambodia. Several of the interviewees pointed out that the concept of *gender* has lost its buzz, and this has had a negative impact on the struggle for women's rights as well. One Cambodian gender advisor working for an international aid organization explained that gender is a concept that used to be driven primarily by donors (interview no. 16), but now gender is not important any more. Another Cambodian gender advisor explained that it is not even considered important

¹⁰¹ This particular interviewee referred to 1997 as the starting point of some sort of democratization process because until then (or 1998 to be exact) the country was still experiencing some serious political turmoil and clashes between Khmer Rouge soldiers and others as described in Chapter four.

within the international community, and it is not considered a human rights issue. He went on to state that “gender is the last step, even though it is highlighted as important” (Interview no. 4). In other words, international organizations, donor agencies and the government know that gender is politically correct and it is used in rhetoric, but it is less frequently translated into action. One gender advisor noted, bluntly, “the policies are clear from the government and donors; they acknowledge gender equity, but this does not mean that they are implemented” (interview no. 16). This indicates that gender rhetoric is used in the political discourse and by donor agencies, but it is not independent of who the audience is. National decision-makers seem to use gender rhetoric towards donors, while donors seem to have moved on to other buzz words but brings *gender* back in whenever it is considered politically correct to do so. One international policy advisor working with an international aid organization stated that “this year the Germans are doing gender [...]” (Interview no. 15a), illustrating that gender is not mainstreamed within the donor community either, but rather is a specific component that can be prioritized by one single donor rather than the entire donor community. Another gender advisor working with a Cambodian NGO stated that “[i]t seems like the donors are already tired and that they have changed to another issue [...] The donors themselves are not gender sensitive [...]” (Interview no. 10a). Similarly, another interviewee, an international gender consultant, argued that several of the UN agencies have gender programs, but gender mainstreaming is not very well developed (Interview no. 19). This highlights a very important issue: the lack of political will, both international and national. This raises the question of the importance of setting the standard and being a role model. If the international community cannot set a good example, then why should the Cambodian government worry about gender-sensitivity? And if the Cambodian government is not gender-responsive and does not translate gender rhetoric into action, then why should ordinary Cambodians break free from traditional codes ascribing different roles and discriminatory values to men and women?

As has been discussed above, several key mechanisms for increasing awareness of women’s political rights and promoting gender mainstreaming are in place and testify to mid- to high levels of institutionalization of the norm of women’s political rights. Laws, policies and institutions have been adopted and established. However, as one international policy advisor noted, “[...] you can pass the law, you can have a plan, but what happens, what matters is really what happens on the ground” (Interview no. 15a). After the deployment of UNTAC the Cambodian government signed some of the major human rights conventions, such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and CEDAW. Enforcement of these conventions has been less successful. One prominent leader of a human rights organization stated

that although CEDAW has precedent over national laws in court, probably less than half of the judges have ever heard of the Convention (Interview no. 33). Although this is not a scientific estimation of any kind, it is interesting to note that a person working with human rights issues on a daily basis, including supporting victims to take cases to court, believes that the justice system has little knowledge of one of the most important conventions relating to women's rights. The same interviewee continued by stating that the government has ratified all core international treaties, but it does not make a difference because no one inside Cambodia is pushing for their implementation. International actors pushed for ratification (Interview no. 33), or as stated by one international policy advisor: "the government ratified a wide range of international conventions and declarations, and the international donors applauded the progress of Cambodian politics" (Interview no. 15a). This political goodwill to ratify a series of international conventions should most likely be understood as a tactical concession by the government rather than a sign that human (and women's) rights were being ascribed prescriptive status or part of rule-consistent behavior. At least this is true for the initial harmonization between state policies and the international norm. For example, one interviewee argued that the ratification process was probably pushed by donors: "the donors' potential to influence policy and politics in this country is amazing" (Interview no. 17a). This goes back to what Grugel (see Chapter two) stated about national actors' lack of power to contest new rules pushed for by international actors. This works as a powerful incentive for national actors to sign off on whatever is brought before them, something that was also mentioned by an international advisor, who stated that

[t]his is the thing, everyone is happy to sign [...] some new convention, you do not want to be the one not to sign. People are quite happy to do that, but then when it comes to actually implementing the reforms you need to put in place in order to honor those commitments [...] Everyone was quite happy to rush to Geneva and stamp everything, but when it actually comes down to it [...]. (Interview no. 15a)

In part then, bringing the norm of women's rights into Cambodia seem to have been somewhat of a process of forced imposition (illustrated here by norm enforcement from above), but the adaptation of the norm was seen as tactical by the Cambodian government and provided donor money to the country. This would indicate that there is a sense of gender issues and women's rights being something that the government signed off on without really understanding what it involved. Or it can be seen as a tactical concession on the behalf of the government.

The quotation above highlights the power of "shaming", i.e. the importance of not being the non-signator; the importance of avoiding the label "norm-violator" in the eyes of the international community. This was

also highlighted in the previous chapter as an important mechanism for initial concessions by the government. The lack of enforcement of legislation and harmonization with international law is often blamed on lack of national capacity. Indeed, the impact training conducted by MoWA or different NGOs is often limited. Even if gender awareness is raised, participants often find it difficult to apply the concepts to their individual work and the issue is thus lost in implementation. One representative of an international organization used a similar argument, stating that: “all the declarations on human rights are signed. They are not, however, articulated at the village level. At the village level people are trying to survive and they are not going to use the language of human rights” (Interview no. 14). In other words, there seems to be a lack of communication between the different political layers and that the various tools used to spread and root the norm of women’s political rights have either not been used frequently enough or are inadequate to communicate the importance of human rights in general and women’s political rights specifically.

The problem of not communicating this sufficiently at the local level is something that several interviewees return to as a huge problem for the internalization of rights. One Cambodian policy advisor explained that many people in the villages do not know about the concept of human rights; they do not have an exact understanding of human rights, although they are well aware of something as good or bad behavior (Interview no. 1). One national gender advisor stated that people in the provinces are increasingly talking about CEDAW (Interview no. 9b). One Cambodian gender advisor noted that even though awareness of gender at the local level seem to be increasing, as argued in some interviews, practice is not (interview no. 16). Discussing the domestic violence law, one interviewee argued that “[w]e feel that the people who implement the law do not know the law. The law only [...] was kept in the shelf and for the planners and the high people, and who’s going to use it unless the people at the grassroots level know the law?” (Interview no. 10a). Referring to the international human rights conventions, a human rights advocate explained that “[t]here are no mechanisms to enforce [the international conventions], to make them happen. Violations can happen and all these conventions sit and stay in the book” (Interview no. 12). Another human rights advocate described the situation as:

In fact we have law, but this is the country of lawlessness. We have law but we do not apply it [...] We have good laws; the constitution is very good. Even women’s rights, children’s rights, equality, everything, all the fundamental rights. But the implementation or application is still very questionable. (Interview no. 7)

In other words, there seems to be a huge gap between adopting and enforcing legislation, which of course affects the internalization of rights. The picture painted by most of the interviewees is that in theory human

rights and women's political rights are somewhat institutionalized, but they are far from being internalized. Indeed, based on the discussion above, human rights in general are not at the stage of rule-consistent behavior yet, because words are not followed by actions. Why practice is not following rhetoric is difficult to explain, but one interviewee stated that, "[i]t's is not necessarily a problem of lack of political will and how it is articulated in legislation and policies [...] the big step is to understand and enforce it" (Interview no. 17a). Again, it is not enough to have a gender-sensitive rights-enforcing legislation if the laws are not enforced. So despite having ratified a range of international human rights conventions, human rights in general and women's political rights specifically are not guaranteed a natural place in a society; "[t]hose documents [international conventions and national legislation] are a necessary but insufficient response to the implementation of human rights", explained a representative for an international aid organization (Interview no. 14).

The future of internalizing women's political rights

The flaws of internalization have been illustrated above; the legislation often exists and institutions are developing to accommodate for women's as well as men's rights. Development in all areas, in particular women's rights, depends on the mood of the Prime Minister, stated one representative of a women's organization with a lot of experience from government negotiations (Interview no. 33). That is why the increased acceptance of gender and rights in the political discourse, illustrated by the Prime Minister's statement on gender, is a very important step: "before [we] could not even use gender in our language, [the] Prime Minister rejected [it] very strongly. Now he says 'this [something] is a gender indicator'" (Interview no. 10a).¹⁰² As was noted in the previous chapter, the Ministry of Women's Affairs has used the Prime Minister's statement on the importance of women's participation as leverage; a phenomenon that is also mentioned in the spiral model presented by Risse and Sikink (1999:15). This means that the government gets caught in its own rhetoric and it becomes more difficult for the government to deny the validity of women's political rights. Thus, we might be witnessing a small, yet important, change regarding the acceptance of the political role of women in Cambodia. For example, it has taken three to four elections for people understand "democracy", "elections", and "governance" (Interview no. 18). Given enough time, women's rights might be understood and internalized as well; "[...] it takes a long time for society to catch up with its own documents, its own right to voice" (Interview no. 14).

¹⁰² This should be understood in the light of the Prime Minister also stating that it is important that women are placed in electable positions on parties' candidate lists, as described in Chapter five.

Overall, as has been illustrated above, Cambodian citizens have started to learn their rights and be increasingly vocal about them, but one representative of an international organization stated that because Cambodia is now “democratic enough” and women are “vocal enough” (Interview no. 18), there is a risk of decreased support to gender mainstreaming initiatives. This can also be noted in the perceived loss of importance of the norm among international donors, indicating that the number of international actors committed to enforcing the norm might be decreasing. Women’s awareness of their rights is increasing, but they still face agency problems. Women involved in politics are increasingly challenging women’s lack of access to rights, whereas the average rural woman is too busy fighting for her family’s survival to worry about rights. Nevertheless, women are entering local level decision-making and are increasingly daring to speak up, highlighting an important shift in both negatively adaptive preferences and discriminating attitudes towards women. In other words, women are increasingly starting to see their situation as bad, but their space to maneuver to increase their agency is still limited to a rather small number of outspoken women. National elites are also picking up on the norm and individual champions increasingly promote it (although still on a rather ad hoc basis), whereas others still seem to lack the commitment, capacity and understanding of what to enforce. Discriminating ways of life still ascribe women a very limited political role, which affects attitudes towards women’s political participation. Men in general are increasingly learning about women’s political rights, but are often not participating in training, so the possibility to change discriminating attitudes is still limited. In general, discriminating traditions and culture still impede the enforcement of women’s political rights, which, together with the obstacles discussed above, places the norm rather low on the internalization scale. The norm is at times moving towards medium-levels of internalization. Depending on whether or not adaptive preferences continue to be reversed and discriminating culture and tradition changes, the norm of women’s political rights might become more formalized at this level. Still, as long as the Chhbab Srey continues to play a crucial role and impedes women’s capability to political functioning, internalization will remain low.

This is illustrated in the figure below, where the shaded area illustrates approximately where the norm of women’s political rights is situated today. The circle indicates that it is impossible to pinpoint exactly where the norm is, although we can locate the general area that describes the state of norm internalization in Cambodia as of mid-2009.

Figure 6.1 Norm internalization in Cambodia

In sum, the previous chapter testified to rather high levels of institutionalization of women's political rights due to the institutional and legislative changes made and the increased harmonization between state policies and the international norm. Nevertheless, as this chapter has shown, it would be premature to say that women's political rights are highly internalized. Women still often lack capability to function despite efforts to challenge negatively adaptive preferences. A closer scrutiny of the diffusion process further indicates that adherence to the norm is often still audience-dependent or that rhetorical support for women's political rights is not always followed by appropriate action. It is believed that "gender" has lost its buzz, indicating that it is not really a prioritized issue today. There is still a view that gender equality and women's rights are foreign concepts (a cultural mis-match of norms), and women's organizations actually use different words to avoid such sentiments. The gender assessment from 2008 concludes that "progress in addressing gender concerns has been concentrated in higher income groups and urban areas, particularly Phnom Penh, including positive changes in gender attitudes [...]" (CGA 2008:iv). It continues to state that there is greater awareness of women's rights in Cambodia today, but that it is mainly among younger urban women (CGA 2008:4). Again, women's negative adaptive preferences thus seem to have decreased and women are increasingly starting to claim their rights, but this is not true for the entire country. Although it is positive that younger urban women are challenging discriminatory gender roles, it should be kept in mind that approximately 80 percent of the Cambodian population lives in rural areas where women's political rights are still considered a luxury. High internalization has thus not been achieved, despite fairly high levels of institutionalization.

Now that norm institutionalization and internalization has been analyzed up-close in the Cambodian setting, it is time to look closer at norm entrepreneurs and institutional developments in Timor-Leste as well as how the norm has been internalized in terms of capability to function.

Institutionalizing women's political rights in Timor-Leste

As head of the UN effort in Timor-Leste, I saw the remarkable impact that promoting the participation of women can have in peacebuilding and development[...]. (Sergio Vierra de Mello, cited in "No Women, No Peace" 2004)

In the last two chapters I examined the process of spreading and rooting women's political rights in Cambodia in detail and identified both strength and weaknesses in the process. The next two chapters take us to Timor-Leste and I present an analysis that covers the years from 1998 to mid-2009. This first Timorese chapter addresses the process of norm institutionalization and, as in the Cambodian case, this means looking more closely at the main norm entrepreneurs and the three areas of institutional developments. The chapter ends with a discussion of whether or not national developments are in harmony with the international norm. Do the institutional changes analyzed seem to be genuine or merely cosmetic? Is rhetoric followed by action? Are these changes occurring irrespective of the audience being addressed? Together the answers to these questions help capture how the process of institutionalizing women's political rights has developed since 1999. Just as in the Cambodian chapter, norm entrepreneurs and institutional developments should be understood as constituting necessary pieces in the norm diffusion process. Again, norm entrepreneurs are actors who help the process of spreading and rooting the norm of women's political rights and they can be either international or national actors (national elites or civil society agents). The chapter ends with a broader discussion of the outcome of norm institutionalization organized in terms of whether and how the norm of women's political rights is moving through the stages of tactical concessions (norm adherence is audience dependent), prescriptive status (norm adherence irrespective of audience but action may lag behind rhetoric), and rule-consistent behavior (rhetoric and action match).

International and national norm entrepreneurs

When it was decided that the Timorese were to decide themselves whether or not to remain a part of Indonesia or become an independent country, several developments relating to democratization were initiated. A wide range of norm entrepreneurs emerged and women's rights was put "out there" on the political agenda as an issue to be addressed by both international and national actors. As mentioned in Chapter two, the main norm entrepreneurs I focus on are international organizations (such as the UN), national elites, and national women's organizations. In the case of Timor-Leste, a lot of the discussion focuses on women's organizations because they, together with dedicated internationals and returning men and women from the Diaspora, played a crucial role as norm entrepreneurs both before and after independence in 2002. Just as in Cambodia, men and women returning from the Diaspora are considered to be a hybrid between international and national actors.

The discussion is divided into three specific phases. The first period I look at is 1998 to 2002. This period starts just before the popular consultation about independence and ends the year the country officially gained independence. The Constituent Assembly election in 2001 is an important event in this period, but Independence Day in May 2002 marks the official end of the first period and the transition to the second period, which lasts until the National Assembly elections in 2007. The third period starts with the establishment of the IV Constitutional Government in mid-2007 and covers the period until mid-2009. During this period we can see that norm entrepreneurs play varying roles in the norm institutionalization process.

1998-2002

A number of actors played crucial roles in trying to promote women's rights before the UN arrived in Timor-Leste. Chapter four told the story of a women's movement slowly emerging as part of the clandestine struggle against Indonesia. Although women were mainly organized in political parties, they nevertheless brought "women's issues" to the table, which confirms that the norm of women's rights was not completely foreign to the Timorese before the deployment of UN mission. The struggle for emancipation had never really focused on political rights per se, but these early days of organizing did create a solid base from which women could start advocating for their political rights as their country gained independence and started a process of democratization. This was the origin of a women's movement that has come to play a crucial role in trying to promote the norm of women's political rights. We need to go back to the year before the popular consultation, 1998, in order to understand how the women's movement worked as a norm entrepreneur and pressured national elites and the international community to start taking women's concerns seriously. In

other words, although the specific norm of women's political rights was initially more enforced from above, there was strong pressure from women's organizations, who quickly took the message onboard and used the momentum provided by the entrance of the international community and the support of empowered Timorese women (and men) returning after years in exile.

In April 1998, an "East Timorese National Convention in the Diaspora" was held in Portugal and a working group was formed to discuss the "feminine condition". National elites, although not in power, thus raised the issue of the situation of women in the country prior to international intervention. These elites were part of the Diaspora, individuals who had spent years in exile around the world and made contact with concepts such as gender equality and human rights in general. Parallel to this Convention, a group of 13 Timorese women activists from both *Frente Revolucionária de Timor-Leste Independente* (Fretilin - Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor) and *União Democrática Timorense* (UDT - Timorese Democratic Union - the main competitor of Fretilin)¹⁰³ wrote to the organizers to propose mechanisms to facilitate the direct participation of women in decision-making at the Convention. The Convention adopted a "Magna Carta" on freedoms, rights and duties, and guarantees for the people of East Timor. The Magna Carta endorsed the Convention on the Elimination of All Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and it mainly focused on maternity and widows' rights (Cristalis and Scott 2005:56, 76). This was one of the initial steps in the process of institutionalizing women's rights, and the norm as such was put on the political agenda. However, the focus was on general rights for women, not women's political rights specifically. Despite its success in bringing women's rights onto the political agenda, the women's lobby regarded the Convention as a great disappointment because male political elites retained all decision-making power (Cristalis and Scott 2005:56). The National Convention also established *Conselho Nacional de Resistência Timorense*¹⁰⁴ (CNRT - the National Council of Timorese Resistance), and despite disappointment about the Convention's failure to promote women's empowerment, women activists eventually managed to persuade the CNRT to push for the establishment of a gender equity commission as part of the transitional structure (Cristalis and Scott 2005:76). (This commission was not, however, pursued by the UN or CNRT, as will be discussed further below.) This discussion illustrates the development of an emerging collaboration between national elites and civil society

¹⁰³ See Appendix 2 for details about political parties

¹⁰⁴ CNRT was seen as representing the Timorese people, although the UNTAET was reluctant to see CNRT this way to begin with since it was not an elected sovereign authority (see for example Garnson 2005; Hohe 2004:306).

organizations in trying to enforce the norm of women's rights. This collaboration has been kept somewhat alive over the years, although it has faced various hurdles, as we will discuss further below.

As women's organizations started to become increasingly rooted, several of them enjoyed the support of international donors. The heavy international presence in the country between 1999 and 2002 meant that there were a lot of resources available for addressing gender-based violence, and international actors looked for local organizations to assist. Although women had started to organize during the resistance, they gained much strength as a result of the presence of international actors in the country. According to Trembath and Grenfell, about 20 organizations can be considered to be working with gender equality issues today, compared to only a handful prior to UN arrival (Trembath and Grenfell 2007). The end of Indonesian occupation and the entrance of the international community also meant that people previously living in exile started to return to the country. This included politically active women and men who had spent years primarily in Portugal, Australia and Mozambique, learning about the international feminist movement's struggle for women's rights. Upon returning to Timor-Leste several of these women and men were recruited to the emerging political establishment and some became norm entrepreneurs within the group of national elites. Others joined existing, or founded new, NGOs, giving voice and strength to the women's movement as a norm entrepreneur. One leading Timorese women's rights advocate, mainly active within civil society, explained that women in the Diaspora had gotten a taste of how things could really be, and they joined with women who had stayed in Timor-Leste to realize this vision (Interview no. 49b). One politician, now a member of parliament, explained that men and women from the Diaspora were quite forceful in pressing their views, for example regarding anti-discrimination and fighting gender-based injustices (Interview no. 58). Some of the women who had stayed in the country during the occupation did not necessarily like the forcefulness of Timorese who had not stayed and fought for independence. For example, some argued that the women now returning did not know of, or understand, the suffering that Timorese women had had to endure. However, one women's rights advocate explained that others like herself managed to convince the skeptics that it was not relevant to individualize suffering. What was needed was a united front, focusing on how Timorese women, regardless of where they had lived during the past 20 years, had suffered collectively and that now was the time to do something about it – together (Interview no. 49b)¹⁰⁵. People returning from the Diaspora after years in exile also learned

¹⁰⁵ This particular interviewee told a very emotional story about how Timorese women tried to reunite after the popular consultation and not divide people based on where they had spent the last 20-25 years.

how oppressed women had become. According to one member of parliament, when he returned to the country, he could really see that women had lost a lot of ground between 1975 and 1999 (Interview no. 58).

As women became increasingly organized during the independence struggle they started to raise their joint concerns and argued for increased participation in various decision-making bodies. In mid-2000, *Rede Feto Timor Lorosae* (the East Timorese Women's Network, commonly referred to as Rede Feto) was established and brought 16 women's organizations together under one name to lobby for their common interests (today 18 organizations sort under Rede Feto). The new organization represented the Timorese women in the joint CNRT/UNTAET administration. In June 2000, a "Women's Congress of East Timor" was organized in Dili (Cristalis and Scott 2005:77). The Congress analyzed the situation of women in Timor-Leste and concluded that even though women constituted more than 50 percent of the population, they did not participate proportionally in political decision-making nor enjoy the same rights as men (Pires 2002). The Women's Congress established a national plan of action for women's rights based on the Beijing Platform for Action from 1995 and on the commitments outlined in the 1998 Magna Carta. The "Platform for Action for the Advancement of Women of Timor Loro Sae" was the first national attempt to analyze women's situation in Timor-Leste and to adopt strategies to promote women's rights and empowerment (Charlesworth and Wood 2002). The Platform for Action addressed the need for special programs to support women and programs to ensure women's participation in political decision-making (Wandita, Campbell-Nelson et al. 2006:293). Rede Feto presented the Platform for Action to the Special Representative to the Secretary-General and it was circulated as a policy and implementation document to all departments within the Governance and Public Administration Pillar of UNTAET (Roynestad 2003).¹⁰⁶ In other words, pressures and activities from civil society influenced policy-making.

International influences in promoting the norm of women's political rights can be illustrated by the work conducted by UNIFEM ahead of the 2001 elections. UNIFEM partnered with local women's organizations before the 2001 national election and conducted training and outreach sessions. One women's organization provided support to all female candidates regardless of party affiliation. One of the main objectives of the organization was to increase the number of women registering as independent candidates and it also conducted training sessions on "women and politics" in six districts

¹⁰⁶ UNTAET was originally organized into three pillars: the Military pillar, the Humanitarian Assistance and Emergency Rehabilitation pillar, and the Governance and Public Administration pillar (see for example Smith 2003:62-63).

ahead of the election, aimed at providing training for women's grassroots groups. Other women's organizations also organized prior to the election to engage in, among other things, civic education for female voters (Roynestad 2003; Cristalis and Scott 2005:80). Such civil society initiatives have been initiated as an effort to raise awareness about women as political actors with the right to both participate and be represented in decision-making assemblies. Interesting to note is that most of such awareness-raising was aimed at women specifically; that is, raising their awareness of themselves as political actors. Less focus was put on raising awareness amongst the general public. This, as will be argued in the next and the final chapter, has had some effect on the norm diffusion process.

As mentioned above, Timorese women (through Rede Feto) lobbied for the formation of a Gender Equity Commission within the National Council of Timorese Resistance (CNRT). The aim of the commission would be to work directly with UNTAET to influence the empowerment process for women. The UN did not prioritize the proposed gender equity commission and CNRT never pursued this as a goal (Cristalis and Scott 2005:76). National elites and international actors present in the administration of the country did not, in other words, pursue an agenda that, according to the women's movement, would facilitate the enforcement of the norm of women's political rights. Women's possibility to actually influence the work of the CNRT and UNTAET was thereby weakened (Brites 2000:144), although, according to one women's rights advocate that I interviewed, the women's movement did all it could to make its united voice heard by UNTAET (Interview no. 49b). However, Rede Feto lobbied successfully for women to be included in the National Council, established in 2000 as a temporary legislative body – 13 of the body's 33 members were women (Cristalis and Scott 2005:76; see also Charlesworth and Wood 2002). Women thus constituted a large group in what was at the time the legislative body of the country, and had the potential to serve as norm entrepreneurs among the national elites.

As the Timorese governance structure was developing from 1999 and onwards, women did gain enhanced political power. One important institutional change during this period was the establishment of a Gender Affairs Units within UNTAET, which was eventually given formal status, as discussed below. It is believed that after seeing the positive results of women's involvement in general and the effects of the Gender Affairs Unit, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General wanted to prioritize the participation of women at all levels of decision-making within UNTAET and

the East Timorese Transitional Administration (ETTA).¹⁰⁷ ETTA was considered the “government” until elections could be held in 2001 (Chesterman 2004:139; Garnson 2005). A total of two women (one national and one international) were responsible for two portfolios in the ETTA. After the Constituent Assembly election in 2001, the Second Transitional Government was set up in September with an all Timorese Cabinet with two female ministers (Justice and Finance) (Ospina 2006:28).¹⁰⁸ Women were also appointed to other high-level positions¹⁰⁹ (Ospina 2008:61).

In general the UN-led transitional administration did not seem to prioritize the representation of women in their work. Women were included in the UNTAET structure, but no women occupied key positions, causing critics to raise concerns about the lack of will of the Transitional Administration to provide equal opportunities for both men and women in its internal structure. Brites (2000:142) argues that

[o]ne would expect that the UN would observe some gender balance in its administration, but this example shows that it has no interest in doing so and ensuring that women are part of the administration, post-conflict reconstruction, and decision-making in East Timor.

In an effort to get the UN mission to practice as they preached, the CNRT decided in 2000 to recommend to UNTAET that it ensure that 30 percent of the Timorese contingent of the international mission were women (Charlesworth and Wood 2002; Cristalis and Scott 2005:77). The CNRT Congress in 2000 also adopted a general *Resolution on Women's Rights* that had been negotiated at the National Women's Congress discussed above. The Resolution encouraged elected members of the CNRT to put pressure on UNTAET to consider the allocation of sufficient resources for the development and empowerment of women; to establish laws prohibiting violence against women; to establish national mechanisms to ensure gender equity; and to develop and implement an education campaign on the rights of women and children to eradicate discrimination (Charlesworth and Wood 2002; Chinkin 2003). National elites, as illustrated by the CNRT, thus seem to have picked up on the rhetoric concerning women's rights, although this was not necessarily translated into action.

¹⁰⁷ See footnote no 121. ETTA was under the direction of an eight-member Cabinet of the Transitional Government, established in July 2000. Four international and four local members made up the Cabinet, which had ‘executive authority’ over offices and departments under its respective portfolios. A new Timorese portfolio was added in October 2000: foreign affairs (Caplan 2005:116).

¹⁰⁸ Both these women were from the Diaspora. Ana Pessoa, Minister of Justice had returned from Mozambique and Fernanda Borges, Minister of Finance, had spent several years in Australia (see Ospina 2008:61).

¹⁰⁹ Such positions included Secretary of the Planning Commission, Vice-Minister of Internal Administration, Adviser on Human Rights, and Adviser for the Promotion of Equality.

As mentioned in Chapter four, a new constitution was created as one of the initiatives during the UNTAET-period, and the international mission heavily influenced it. For women, the Constitution was seen as an important instrument to enhance women's rights and equality (Pires 2002). Throughout the process, Timorese women campaigned to ensure that the final constitution included key clauses on women's equality and a commitment to international legal norms. It was argued that including this in the constitution would serve as a future guarantee for gender equity and women's rights equal to men's (Roynestad 2003). A gender-specific initiative in the constitutional process was the formation of a "gender equity working group", established by the Independent Electoral Commission to ensure full participation of women in the process. UNIFEM also sponsored a project called "Engendering the Constitution Process", which reached out to 35 women from eight districts and trained them in constitutional and legal issues from a gender perspective (UNIFEM 2003). A working group on "Women and the Constitution" made up of several civil society organizations was established as well, and it cooperated with the UNTAET Gender Affairs Unit to organize consultations with women's groups all over the country. This eventually resulted in a "Women's Charter of Rights" and the Women's Caucus and several other Timorese women's groups lobbied for it to be included in the Constitution (Roynestad 2003; Cristalis and Scott 2005:80). The Charter received 8 000 signatures and some of the points were incorporated in the new constitution, although not nearly as detailed as they were formulated in the Charter. This shows how the women's movement and international actors collaborated to gender-sensitize one crucial piece of legislation that has affected further norm institutionalization.

As has been indicated above, the role of both women as a group and individual men and women in lobbying the government and empowering national and international organizations was crucial for the initial process of institutionalizing women's political rights. It can be argued that because of donor dependency, civil society organizations – including women's organizations – are ideally suited to be norm entrepreneurs because they can bring norms closer to people on the ground. On the other hand, depending too much on international funding is also risky, for example if donors lose interest or have different priorities. Nevertheless, pressures from civil society (with international support), rather than through the UN mission directly seem to characterize norm diffusion in this initial period studied. The argument stressed in the beginning of this study was that international actors often bring a specific norm into a receiving state through their role in statebuilding. The somewhat reluctant attitude in UNTAET to place women in key position could actually indicate the opposite. Although the UN used the rhetoric of gender mainstreaming, less seems to have been implemented when push came to shove. Still, through the powerful UN mandate in the

country, international actors have shaped much of the development agenda, and are believed to have opened up a space for women's rights as well.

2002-2007

The arrival of independence in 2002 meant that the UN took a step back and handed over the administration of the country to national elites. The UN nevertheless remained in the country and, together with other international actors such as donor countries, it could provide support and still influence policy-making. Independence also ushered in a new phase in civil society development, according to Hall and True (2009:163-165). International donors started to scale down their presence and resources in Timor-Leste and there was eventually more competition over international funds. A Norwegian project evaluation states that international support to civil society organizations in general was not prioritized in international assistance provided between 2002 and 2006 (NORAD 2007:2). In 2005 it was estimated that over 275 national and 72 international NGOs were registered with the main umbrella organization for NGOs in the country, FONGTIL (UNDP 2006b).

In July 2004, the second Women's Congress in East Timor was organized. Five hundred Timorese men and women participated in the Congress, representing the government, the Church, youth, women's groups, religious congregations, police, ex-combatants and a few women parliamentarians. The Congress was preceded by a number of regional congresses to ensure the inclusion of as many women and views as possible. The Congress developed a "Women's Platform for Action", based on the plan drawn up at the first Congress in 2000. The Platform addressed, among other things, strategies on how to best lobby the government for the implementation of various UN treaties and resolutions regarding women's rights, how to improve women's everyday lives, and the importance of increased women's participation in politics (PeaceWomen News 2004; Cristalis and Scott 2005:183). The women's movement thus continued to play an important role in trying to enforce the norm of women's rights and the harmonization between national policies and the international human rights framework.

International norm enforcement can, for example, be identified through the UNIFEM-initiated program "Programme for Enhancing Rural Women's Leadership and Participation in Nation Building in Timor-Leste" (PERWL). UNIFEM's role in promoting women's political participation and representation was a continuation of the work and support provided ahead of the 2001 election, as mentioned above. The program aimed at enhancing rural women's leadership and participation in nation-building and enhancing women's capacity as electoral candidates, officials, and voters (Ospina 2007). Parts of this program included educating women at the local level in leadership and encourage women in the suco councils to participate in train-

ing sessions and then return to the villages and train other women (Ospina 2008:50). Although the program itself has now been terminated, the focus on rural women's leadership and decision-making has been incorporated into the UNIFEM-led "Integrated Programme for Women in Politics and Decision-Making", in an effort to improve the linkages between the national and local level (Interview no. 39b).

Before and after the suco council elections¹¹⁰ in 2004-2005, UNIFEM, together with support from the Office for the Promotion of Equality (OPE, discussed further below), undertook training of potential women candidates and elected women. Training and information material was produced, aimed at encouraging women to participate as candidates and exercise their right to vote (SEPI 2007). Other initiatives ahead of the suco elections included a series of workshops to encourage women to become leaders in local government. In an Oxfam-initiated project, carried out in collaboration with national women's organizations, several workshops were conducted in a number of sub-districts where women were informed about their right to stand for election. Hundreds of women registered as candidates and received candidate training from the project (Oxfam 2005). One interviewee explained that women's organizations would visit women participating in the elections and,

[a]ssist them and provide regular assistance and have discussions with them and what is their role and function if they become head of the village or a member of the suco council [...] It should be long-term assistance so that they get encouraged and are motivated to participate and be a leader in their community. (Interview no. 41)

In the end, 76 women ran as candidates to the 442 suco chief positions in 2005 (7.4 percent of all candidates), but only 7 of them were elected (Ospina 2006; 2008:51). The perhaps somewhat disappointing 1.5 percent representation of women as suco chiefs should be contrasted to the fact that men previously occupied all community leadership positions. We return to this in the next chapter.

As the country was gearing up for a new round of parliamentary elections in 2007, we can once again identify the role played by international agents – often in collaboration with the national women's movement – as norm entrepreneurs, influencing the political discourse by highlighting the importance of having women in politics and how women can become agents of change. One UNIFEM-led initiative was to organize a final debate in support of women's participation in the election. Two female candidates from each of

¹¹⁰ In the suco elections, the suco chief and the aldeia chief are elected through the use of first-past-the-post system. As for the youth representatives, the candidate who receives the highest number of votes in each gender group wins the seat (Law No 2/2004: article 25). The village law also enables women to become head of the village or to be elected to the suco council (SEPI 2007).

the 14 parties running in the election were to address challenges and expectations of female politicians. Another UNIFEM-supported initiative was carried out by a national women's organization who monitored and documented the election campaign in 13 districts, assessing the campaign from a gender perspective (UNIFEM 2007). Furthermore, the Office for the Promotion of Equality, co-sponsored by USAID, organized a workshop in February 2007 to promote women's participation in the general elections (TimorPost 2007). One prominent women's organization was also involved in training candidates ahead of the elections. The training focused primarily on building the capacity of women so that when elected they would know the basics of politics. Issues addressed included what a parliament is, how legislation is formulated, how to engage in public speaking and how to become a leader and a good decision-maker (Interview no. 48). Similarly, the UNDP Elections Project included a component that supported civil society organizations in all 13 districts in providing voter education, both before and after the election. Together with the efforts undertaken by UNIFEM, the ambition was not only to encourage women to vote but also to raise women's awareness of what voting entails in order to get more women politically engaged in the post-election period as well (UNDP 2006b:18-20). Focus, in other words, was put on training women to be able to act on their rights once they reached decision-making positions.

As stated in Chapter four, Timor-Leste ratified a number of international human rights conventions and declarations as it became an independent country, one of them being CEDAW. Women's organizations have participated in UNIFEM-led training on how to report on CEDAW, which also includes training about how to prepare the shadow report (Interview no. 39a; Interview no. 51). Some of this training addresses how to compose a report and what it should include. As explained by one international gender advisor, even though most people working with the CEDAW reporting understand the concept of CEDAW as such, they still find it somewhat hard to translate this into the Timorese setting. Much of the training therefore looked at how the different articles can be analyzed and how they affect women in Timor-Leste (Interview no. 51). There are positive results of this and similar training programs. According to one women's organization, CEDAW was used as a control mechanism when the new election law for the national assembly was to be drafted and approved; "we used CEDAW to ensure [the adoption of a quota] [...] we said that if you have signed CEDAW you should include a quota in the law. Some did not agree but they could not say anything" (Interview no. 41). CEDAW has also trickled down into line ministries with gender focal points taking the message onboard. In one line ministry, for example, there was a seminar on CEDAW to relate it to the competencies within that specific ministry (Interview no. 53).

In this second period studied, international actors handed over power to national elites but still influenced policy-making through the support provided to national actors. Women's organizations continued to enforce the norm of women's political rights, especially in regards to elections, but again with the support of international norm entrepreneurs such as UNIFEM and UNDP. Making women eligible and aware of their right to participate and be represented in politics has been one of the main issues. This essentially means that through civic and voter education campaigns, and through awareness-raising initiatives, various norm entrepreneurs (mainly women's organizations with international support) have tried to spread and root the idea of women as political actors. During this second period there were some important institutional changes that helped put women's rights "out there", for example the establishment of the Office for the Promotion of Equality (OPE), which is discussed further below. When OPE was established it promoted gender equity from the perspective that women are both actors and beneficiaries in the process, contributing to the enforcement of the norm of women's political rights. Indeed, both the CEDAW convention, the National Development Plan for Timor-Leste, and the Platform of Actions produced at the Women's National Congresses in 2000 and 2004 underpinned the work conducted by OPE (and the UNTAET Gender Affairs Unit) (Trembath and Grenfell 2007:8). The Office for the Promotion of Equality as such can thus be seen as a norm entrepreneur, but the establishment of OPE, as will be discussed below, was very much a product of women's lobbying. Again, pressures from civil society organizations, with international support have been the main norm entrepreneurs.

2007-2009

After the elections to the national assembly in 2007 a new government came to power. The UN is still present in the country and can influence policy-making, although it is the sovereign state of Timor-Leste that is responsible for legislative and executive power. There are, nevertheless, a number of international policy advisors positioned in various line ministries and the parliament. These advisors also include a number of international gender advisors with the task of promoting women's rights in policy-making and legislation. As of late 2008, international gender advisors were appointed in the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Education, as well as within the Office of the Secretary of State for the Promotion of Equality (SEPI).¹¹¹ There is also an international gender

¹¹¹ There are also gender advisors to be appointed to the Ministry of Economic and Development as well as in the Office of the Prime Minister, but these had not yet been appointed as of April 2009 (email correspondence with SEPI, 22 April 2009).

advisor in the national parliament. These were considered “key ministries” and SEPI is trying to coordinate their work through regular meetings (Interview no. 36b; Interview no. 52). The idea is that the gender advisor should work in close collaboration with the gender focal point (discussed further below) and as such serve as a norm entrepreneur. In one ministry, for example, the focal point and advisor were involved in an annual action planning team and helped promote a gender perspective in the team’s work. This essentially means that they were responsible for reviewing the policy from a gender perspective (Interview no. 46). One international policy advisor working for an international donor agency argued that the system of international technical advisors was not capacity-building the Timorese (Interview no. 34). However, as argued by an international gender advisor, these technical advisors should be seen as catalysts for gender mainstreaming within the ministries (Interview no. 52). In the country today, such international norm entrepreneurs, together with dedicated individuals and the women’s movement keep striving for the diffusion of the norm of women’s political rights. A number of these potential norm entrepreneurs are discussed further below under institutional developments such as gender focal points or the Office of the Secretary of State for the Promotion of Equality.

Women’s representation in the national parliament after the 2007 election numbered close to 28 percent and these female national elites thus have the potential to work from within the political centre and serve as role models for other women to engage in politics. One of the outcomes of the elections was the establishment of the Women’s Parliamentarians’ Caucus, GMPTL (Grupo das Mulheres Parlamentares de Timor-Leste), which was established through a resolution adopted in Parliament in October 2007 (Interview no. 39b).¹¹² The Caucus involves 19 women across party lines with the ambition to promote and pursue engendered legislation and policies. The role of the caucus as such is thereby to function as a norm entrepreneur. Women in parliament had tried to unite prior to this, starting in 2002 with a meeting between female members of parliament and the Office for the Promotion of Equality to analyze key gender issues. Furthermore, a group of women parliamentarians tried to establish an Ad hoc Commission for Gender Affairs, Equality, and Children in 2004. They presented their proposal to the Parliament on International Women’s Day. Despite concurring with the

¹¹² The parliament also consists of a number of working committees and Committee E is assigned to issues relating to poverty reduction, rural development and gender equality, for example, procedures of GMPTL have to go through Committee E. It is the committee that brings issues to the government, not the GMPTL (Interview no. 39b; Interview no. 50; Interview no. 57). Another initiative to unite women outside of parliament is the establishment of a collective of women’s wings of political parties in September 2008. The *Haforsa Feto Politika Haburas Demokrasia no Unidade* is made up of 45 female politicians from 14 political parties (Inter Press Service 2009).

Constitution, CEDAW and other human rights treaties ratified by the government, the resolution was defeated in a plenary vote. As highlighted by Ospina, it is interesting to note that a majority of women representing FRETILIN (the ruling party at the time) rejected the proposal (Ospina 2008:40-41).

One initiative launched by the Women's Parliamentarians' Caucus, once it managed to be formalized, is a Gender Resource Center (Centro de Estudos de Genero) that was inaugurated in October 2008. Here, members of parliament "have a dedicated facility to help them enhance their skills to support the development of rural women, promote gender equality, and empower women" (UNMIT 2008). The Gender Resource Center can help other members of parliament take the issue of women's rights and gender equality onboard and as such influence their role as potential norm entrepreneurs. According to one national policy advisor, the Women's Parliamentarians' Caucus argued that establishing a gender resource center would make gender mainstreaming more efficient in the parliament (Interview no. 50). As stated by the President of the Caucus, Maria Paixão Da Costa, "through the establishment of the Centre, Timorese women have created an institution that reflects their commitment to achieving gender equality and women's empowerment in the country (UNMIT 2008). More specifically the Center will be facilitating research, training and networking activities, aimed at improving "the capacity of [members of parliament's] understanding on gender issues and enlighten the public about gender in Timor-Leste" (MP Osorio Florindo, cited in UNDP 2008c).

The above-mentioned initiatives are signs of elite learning and outcomes of such increased awareness. This final period analyzed also shows signs of continued norm enforcement in the civil society arena. In 2008 the third National Women's Congress was held. The national congress was preceded by 13 district conferences chaired by different members of the Rede Feto network. The consultations involved at least two representatives from each suco council, which resulted in a closer collaboration with the local level in preparing for the national congress. Prior to the 2000 and 2004 congresses, consultations were conducted on a regional basis, which involved fewer people. Ahead of the 2008 congress, more women were thus involved (Interview no. 39b). It is estimated that 150 women participated in each district congress (Interview no. 59). Similar to the earlier congresses, the third national women's congress also produced a Platform of Action, this one covering the years 2008-2012. The Platform is based on recommendations and priorities listed by women in the district consultations, and it was distributed to the government for endorsement after the national congress (Interview no. 59). Although the government was in no position to change the Platform, it could comment on it and see how the issues raised in the Platform of Action corresponded to the National Development Plan

(Interview no. 39b; Interview no. 59). This was always the aim, as explained by an interviewee about six months prior to the congress; “the platform produced there, we will ensure that it is incorporated into the National Development Plan of the government. We will produce a platform for action and we will ensure that the NDP will integrate some of the issues and recommendations” (Interview no. 41).¹¹³ In an attempt to secure its implementation, the congress also created a Monitoring and Evaluation Team. Lessons learned from 2000 and 2004 showed that there should be evaluations examining how the government is implementing issues raised at the congress (Interview no. 59).

The result of the National Women's Congress bears signs of women's organizations and grassroots uniting to lobby for political changes. Arguably the women's movement was more united in 1999 than it is ten years later, but the movement as such has also become more diversified. According to one women's organization, the women's movement today is “united in diversity” (Interview no. 54). One interviewee remembers that it was difficult to find a women's organization focusing on women's political rights or advocacy in 1999. At that time, most women's organizations focused on gender-based violence, particularly domestic violence (Interview no. 58). However, most women's organizations in the country still focus their activities on gender-based violence, although a number of women's organizations also address women's role in nationbuilding, allocating resources to increase women's capacity to become active and free citizens of the country. This includes providing skills- and literacy-training to women, as well as teaching them and the community about women's rights and gender equality (see for example Trembath and Grenfell 2007:55). Women's organizations are thereby still considered one of the most crucial norm entrepreneurs in the country. For example, one representative of an organization explained that different women's organizations “always have meetings with the community, every week or every month. It will raise awareness among the people, slowly... Because if we conduct regular discussions they will become aware. Slowly it will change” (Interview no. 41). Thus, the issue of women's rights as a general concept has started to trickle down to individual women in local communities, facilitating their ability to help others in their own villages. This can be seen as an effort to build a stronger grassroots movement to increase pressure on the national elites to enforce institutionalization of the women's political rights' norm.

¹¹³ As will be discussed further below, a new National Development Plan has not yet been approved but has been replaced by the National List of Priorities (initially as a temporary measure but still used as of mid-2009).

Various norm entrepreneurs have thus functioned as a policy community, where, at times, they have been able to influence policy outcomes. However, the relationship between the government and civil society organizations has not always functioned without problems. One policy advisor stated that

the previous government was rather centralistic [...] there were a lot of accusations from civil society that they were not being involved, were not being asked, they could not participate in the decision-making process because they did not have the information. (Interview no. 34)

One national NGO confirmed this, based on its own experience. Although functioning as a major think-tank in the country, it experienced examples of situations when the former government did not trust civil society. This became clear when the government implemented programs without having a dialogue with civil society organizations. Naturally this resulted in increased criticism of the government from civil society, causing the government to distrust civil society organizations even more (Interview no. 47). Another representative from a prominent civil society organization explained that her experience was that the government sometimes does not understand the role civil society organizations are supposed to play;

[...] sometimes the government thinks that NGOs are the enemy but we are partners. NGOs can be monitoring government and how we can increase our good services to the community. Because we all work towards the community. Community members are the rights-holders. (Interview no. 38)

This sentiment of distrust was also picked up on in a UNDP report from 2006, which stated that the government and civil society organizations do not always fully understand the role of the other. Just as was highlighted in the statement by the NGO above, the UNDP report highlighted that civil society organizations are often seen as challengers of the government. But, according to the report, the blame should not to be put completely on the government, as “lack of experience with advocacy and networking has weakened the capacity of civil society organizations to effectively dialogue with the government” (UNDP 2006b:9).

The IV Constitutional Government has not managed to completely bridge this gap between civil society and the government, although one gender advisor stated that since the office of the Secretary of State for the Promotion of Equality (SEPI) is now increasingly institutionalized, there is also greater understanding of the role that civil society organizations are supposed to play in a democracy (Interview no. 36b). In the study by Hall and True it is highlighted that some of their interviewees think that SEPI actually consulted civil society organizations less than previous equal opportunity machineries did. Their study was conducted just a few months after the establishment of SEPI, which effected evaluations of SEPI’s activities, but it

still highlights important issues. According to a women's organization interviewed for their study in late 2007, the leader of that organization had no ideas what SEPI had planned for 2008 (Hall and True 2009:167). Several of the women's organizations I interviewed nevertheless stated that they believed that the relationship and cooperation between civil society and the government was improving. When issues relating to gender equality are on the agenda, civil society organizations – often through the organization of the East Timorese Women's Network, Rede Feto – are invited to governmental meetings. Furthermore, whenever women's organizations meet formally, they also invite representatives from the government in order to “remind them about gender equality” (Interview no. 41; also discussed by Interview no. 59). For example, it is generally believed that the process of drafting the decentralization proposal was carried out in close collaboration with civil society and NGOs participating in discussions held in the districts and sub-districts (CoM 2008). There was also an inter-ministerial working group discussing the decentralization law (Interview no. 39b). Once the district consultations ended in November 2008 and the draft law was to be presented to the parliament, civil society organizations believed they would be able to comment on the draft and still make valuable changes (Interview no. 39b). Indeed, national elites are to varying degrees recognizing women's organizations' roles as norm entrepreneurs in Timor-Leste. One representative of a women's organization explained that “sometimes they [the government] include us [women's organizations] as consultative members ... sometimes they ask us to be partners in programs” (Interview no. 38). Another spokesperson for a women's organization explained that women's organizations were asked for input on village law and one organization argued for the need to guarantee women's positions in the village elections. As a result, according to this interviewee, women's presence is now guaranteed in village law (Interview no. 48). The collaboration between the government and civil society is also evident in the process of developing the National Development Plan. One gender advisor emphasized the importance of trying “to facilitate the involvement of women's organizations in the process” (Interview no. 45).

These examples underscore the view that women's organizations play an important role as norm entrepreneurs by putting pressure on the government to raise certain issues and promote gender sensitization of legislation and policies. One representative of a women's organization explained that because some of the women now involved in national politics have a background from the NGO world, this gender sensitization of policies and legislation might be enforced not only by pressures from below (Interview no. 38). However, as is discussed further in the next chapter, unfortunately this is not always the case.

Another area in which women's organizations also serve an important role as norm entrepreneurs relates to CEDAW reporting and monitoring. Several organizations have taken the message of CEDAW onboard and devote a considerable portion of their resources to training both women and men on the virtues of the convention. For example, as stated by one women's organization:

I think it is important to share and give the information to women so that women know that they are protected by [CEDAW]. Even if there is also a covenant on civil and political rights and social and economic rights, but I think that we are very privileged to have CEDAW. (Interview no. 38)

This also includes monitoring government policies, making sure that the policies are adopting a rights-based approach;

We see what policy, if the policy is discriminating or does not promote or protect women's rights, we ensure that this should be referring to the CEDAW-convention that our government signed and ratified in 2002 and the National Parliament ratified in April 2003. (Interview no. 41)

There is currently much ongoing work with CEDAW; the government submitted their initial report to the Council of Ministers who approved it in January 2008, and the CEDAW shadow report was also finalized by the CEDAW Alternative Report Working Group (consisting of 15 organizations) in early 2009. According to one gender advisor, CEDAW gained renewed national interest in 2008 after the Secretary of State for the Promotion of Equality went to Geneva for a visit (Interview no. 36b). The Government of Timor-Leste was reviewed by the New York CEDAW Committee in July 2009. The CEDAW reporting "gives opportunities to NGOs to provide comments and give information about whether or not the government really is implementing the CEDAW convention in Timor-Leste or not" (Interview no. 41). In November 2008, the NGO Working Group on the CEDAW Shadow Report presented a List of Critical Concerns for the CEDAW Pre-Session. The brief stated that eight critical issues had been highlighted during 13 district consultations, emphasizing that "women's situation is still far from the convention's principles" (NGOs Working Group on CEDAW 2008). The list of concerns also highlighted questions to be asked to the state. The final NGO Alternative Report submitted with the Government's report to the New York CEDAW Committee elaborated on these concerns, indicating that the NGO Working Group on CEDAW functions as a norm entrepreneur trying to push the government of Timor-Leste to engage in rule-consistent behavior and harmonize state policies with the international norm of women's rights (cf. NGOs Working Group on CEDAW 2009).

There are still, however, some concerns regarding the organizational capacity of women's organizations. In order for them to take prime respon-

sibility of their own programs, this capacity needs to be strengthened. Many of the women's organizations in Timor-Leste are still very young, which affects their role as norm entrepreneurs. All but a few were established less than ten years ago and during this time several of them saw a disruption in their work as a result of the 2006 crisis. In other words, some organizations still need on-the-job training so they can improve their capacity (Interview no. 41) and become more efficient in their role as norm entrepreneurs. However, through organizing under the Rede Feto umbrella, women's organizations have created a unified voice for the government to negotiate with, and they can also reach out to more women outside Dili. Many NGOs are Dili-based and are specialized on specific issues (Interview no. 47), but outreach to the districts is not always well-developed according to one international policy advisor (Interview no. 34). One international gender advisor told me that, grassroots groups outside of Dili, meaning the district-based organizations that do not have a base in the capital, have little back-up (Interview no. 46).

In sum, since 2007 there are signs of increased elite learning and norm entrepreneurs are now to be found both among national elites and women's organizations. International actors continue to influence policy-making, but more and more responsibility has been transferred to national elites, with international advisors providing support. The women's movement is more diversified, but issues such as CEDAW reporting unites a number of organizations. Through the writing of a CEDAW shadow report women's organizations have the potential to influence policy-making, and district consultations make the process fairly inclusive. Despite some urgent concerns, such as lack of capacity and resources, the outlook for continued norm diffusion is promising. How this affects institutional developments is analyzed in the remaining discussion on Timorese norm institutionalization.

Institutional developments

As indicated above, over the years covered in this study, a number of norm entrepreneurs have emerged and pressure from women's organizations, with pressure from outside Timor-Leste (including people returning from the Diaspora) has forced national elites to start making institutional changes to secure the realization of women's political rights. This section addresses the institutional developments surrounding the change of electoral rules and regulations, the formalization of a national gender equality machinery, and the strengthening of the local government structure. As was argued in Chapter three, electoral rules and regulation can facilitate women's access to political decision-making; a discussion that in the Timorese case primarily has evolved around the quota debate. The local level is often where women get their primary access to decision-making and decentralization in itself is considered crucial for bringing democracy closer to the general public. As

will be discussed below, efforts to transfer power to the local level has been ongoing since the late 1990s, but women have not necessarily reaped the benefit of such developments. Establishing a machinery of some sort, be it a gender desk or a ministry in its own, to address gender equality issues is also a development that was raised as important for gender mainstreaming, which in turn is important for securing women's rights. The discussion regarding gender machinery in Timor-Leste focuses specifically on the Gender Affairs Unit, the Office for the Promotion of Equality, and the Office of the Secretary of State for the Promotion of Equality. Apart from this, efforts to improve inter-ministerial cooperation are also included in the analysis, as this also serves as an important avenue for the institutionalization of women's political rights.

Electoral rules and regulations

Starting in 1999, discussions regarding rules and regulations for national and local elections were primarily focused on an electoral quota system for the election to the Constituent Assembly in 2001. Women activists highlighted the importance of ensuring women's political representation and the women's network Rede Feto campaigned for the inclusion of mandatory quotas in the election rules developed by the National Council. Thirty percent representation in political decision-making was called for, based on the discussion in the Platform for Action developed in 2000 (Pires 2002; Cristalis and Scott 2005:79). More specifically, at least 30 percent female candidates were to be placed on political parties' lists with at least every third candidate from the top being female. Ensuring women 30 percent representation was seen as a way to fast-track women's participation in political decision-making and it was proposed only as a temporary measurement (Pires 2002, 2004; Cristalis and Scott 2005:79). Moreover, since the Constituent Assembly was tasked with drafting a new constitution, including both women and men would make the process more representative and legitimate, it was argued.

The issue of quotas ran into opposition despite the fact that affirmative action was not a new institutional measurement. Under UNTAET, for example, the UN Administrator issued a directive requiring that at least two of the four nominees from each district and civil society organizations were to be women, resulting in the National Council consisting of 13 women and 20 men. A 30 percent quota was also used to ensure women's participation in public administration and measures to ensure female participation in the newly established police force resulted in 40 percent women in the first wave of new recruits (Pires 2002, 2004). The National Council initially supported the proposal, but the question was later subject to a vote in the Council. The quota-question divided the country as well as the international community. Whereas proponents emphasized the need to ensure women's participation,

opponents argued that it was degrading for women and that their inclusion should be based on merit. Some argued that it contradicted parties' right to freely choose their candidates, whereas others stated that there were no competent women to put on the party list. Another argument was that it would prevent smaller parties from participating in the elections (Cristalis and Scott 2005:80). According to a study by Ospina,

The head of the Electoral Unit in UNTAET and the Director of the Electoral Affairs Division at UN HQ were against the introduction of statutory quotas, arguing that it would contravene the process of free and fair elections, as political parties would be constrained in their choice of candidates. Some observers say the head of Political Affairs Unit in UNTAET actively lobbied Council members to vote against the quota. (Ospina 2008:25)

Ospina also notes that some reports indicate that Council members had been told that the UN would not be able to support the elections if a quota was enforced (2008:25). In the end, the National Council voted against the use of quotas. Interestingly enough, many women in the National Council, who themselves obtained their seats through the use of a quota, voted against it (Pires 2002; Cristalis and Scott 2005:80). This, according to Hall and True (2009:169) and Pires (2002), was primarily because the UN Department of Political Affairs at the UN head quarters had ruled that "electoral quotas for women (or any other group) do not constitute international best practice for elections" (Pires 2002).

When the use of quotas failed to get enough support in the National Council, new strategies had to be developed to promote women's political participation. Women's organizations based in Dili protested the decision outside UNTAET's office and requested a meeting with the Transitional Administrator (who was the same person as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General) (Ospina 2008:25-26). Rede Feto lobbied to convince political parties to place female candidates high on their lists and UNTAET provided extra radio airtime to parties who supported at least 30 percent women on their lists (Pires 2002; Roynestad 2003; Cristalis and Scott 2005:80).¹¹⁴ The Special Representative of the Secretary-General also underlined the importance of including women's concerns in political party manifestos (Ospina 2008:26). In other words, both international pressure and activities undertaken by civil society organizations tried to achieve what quotas would have accomplished – women's increased political representation. Furthermore, the UNTAET Gender Affairs Unit and UNIFEM conducted training workshops for approximately 150 potential female candidates from all 13 districts (Pires 2002; Roynestad 2003; Cristalis and Scott

¹¹⁴ However, Milena Pires reports that most of the messages read out by female candidates did not make reference to women's rights and only repeated general party messages (Pires 2004).

2005:80). Three-day workshops were held to increase women's awareness of themselves as important actors for national development, to increase women's understanding of politics from a gender perspective, and to raise awareness of their ability to participate in politics. Ten percent (26 candidates) of the participants in the workshops later registered as candidates for the election. All in all, 27 percent of all the party-affiliated candidates were women (260 of 963), 60 percent (3 out of 5) of the independent candidates were women, and women comprised 7 percent (7 out of 94) of the district candidates (4 were linked to political parties and 3 were independent candidates). The election to the Constituent Assembly resulted in a 26 percent female representation in the Assembly.¹¹⁵

As part of finding new strategies to promote women's political participation the Independent Electoral Commission, established by UNTAET to prepare and oversee the 2001 election, provided, among other things, gender-oriented voter education material, promoted gender-sensitive timing for all of its training activities, designed special training for women's groups on electoral issues and conducted special training for the women running for office (Pires 2004). The Independent Electoral Commission was later replaced by the National Electoral Commission, which was temporarily created as an independent organ to supervise voter registration and voting ahead of the local elections in 2004 and 2005. In January 2007, the temporary National Election Commission was re-created as a permanent election body (Dinis and Maguire 2007). The election commission now consists of 15 non-partisan commissioners¹¹⁶, 4 of which has to be female (EU/EOM 2007). While the National Election Commission supervise the elections, the Technical Secretariat for Electoral Administration administers the elections and sorts under the Ministry for State Administration.¹¹⁷ Part of the mandate of the Technical Secretariat for Electoral Administration is to conduct voter registration and civic education ahead of elections. During the *suco* elections, the technical secretariat, with the support of UNDP, engaged civil society organizations in the process of disseminating information on the

¹¹⁵ A mixed electoral system was used in the election in 2001, with 75 seats distributed through a proportional system and 13 seats reserved for each of the districts through a first-past-the-post system. A total of 16 political parties and 5 independent candidates competed over the 88 seats in the Assembly and FRETILIN won 56 seats.

¹¹⁶ Three of the commissioners are appointed by the President, three are elected by the Parliament, three are appointed by the government (of the foregoing, at least one from each group must be a woman), one judge elected by the judges, one public prosecutor elected by the prosecutors, one public defender elected by the defenders, and three representatives of civil society, including one from the Catholic Church, one from other religions, and one from women's organizations (EU/EOM 2007).

¹¹⁷ The Timorese government established the Technical Secretariat for Electoral Administration ahead of the 2004 and 2005 local elections, mandated to organize and carry out the elections, and to consult and provide electoral support for all elections. As this was not an independent organ it needed to be controlled by a superior organ as well, thus the National Election Council.

electoral process (UNDP 2006b:9). The voter education material produced in 2007 put specific emphasis on women to encourage them to participate in the election (Chinaud 2007). For example, in the voter education material, women were seen voting, explaining the voting process and highlighting the importance of female representation. Other material was directly targeting women by using specific slogans to female voters and airing radio spots featuring women discussing the upcoming elections (Chinaud 2007).

As noted above, the political debate regarding women's political rights around the time for independence was thus increasingly working in favor of women, despite the fact that a quota system was rejected. The number of women elected to the Constituent Assembly was a remarkable success, especially considering that a quota system had not been used. FRETILIN, who won the 2001 election, made some changes in the government after independence, with women appointed as head of two ministries.¹¹⁸ The Council of Ministers was further restructured in 2005, which among other things resulted in nine women appointed to senior positions. A third female minister was also appointed to head the Ministry of Public Works.

The failure to adopt a quota system, followed by increased political attention to the issue of women's political representation and participation, sparked an incentive to continue to push for changes as the local government structure was being formed. Before the Suco Election Law was adopted in 2004, the Office for the Promotion of Equality and the organization Women's Political Caucus was invited to a meeting to share their ideas about how to guarantee women's inclusion. It was argued that "[...] if we do not guarantee women seats then men will not give women the opportunity to be involved in political life or make a decision to register as a village head [...]" The result is that we have to guarantee women's position" (Interview no. 48). In June 2003, the Minister for State Administration, Ana Pessoa, promised that affirmative action would be used to ensure female participation in local level elections. Women's organizations and national elites thereby served as norm entrepreneurs to deliver a major institutional change. The argument presented by these actors was that women are needed in local level decision-making. They managed to communicate their message and article 2 and 3 of Law No 2/2004 "On the Elections of Suco Chiefs and Suco Councils" states that women and men can both be candidates for suco chief and suco councils, and that the suco councils have to include two women and one male and one female youth (Law No 2/2004). As noted above, 7 of 76 women were elected as suco chiefs in the election and in 2005, 1 342 women were on the suco councils. In the elections, 27 women were elected as aledia

¹¹⁸ Ministers for the Ministry of State Administration, Ministry of Planning and Finance. Women were also appointed as Vice-Minister of Education, Culture and Youth, and Vice-Minister of Planning and Finance.

chiefs; 16.3 percent of the number of women who ran in the election. The total number of aldeia chief posts is 2,228, so women make up 1.2 percent of village chiefs (Ospina 2008:51).¹¹⁹ Although only reaching just above one percent representation as suco and aldeia chiefs, it can nevertheless be seen as a change in the political debate regarding women's rights to political participation and representation since these positions had previously been reserved for men only.

Perhaps the enforcement of a quota system at the local level affected the political discourse in favor of the use of such affirmative action measures at the national level as well. The institutional change demanded, but never achieved, in 2001 met less resistance five years later. Ahead of the 2007 parliamentary election, Law No.6/2006 was adopted stating that every fourth candidate on a party's candidate list has to be a woman. One interviewee recalls that

first the government suggested that one in five should be a woman in the list of candidates [...] what we say is that they should not mention in the law about the number of women to be included in the lists [...] They changed the number so it was in every group of four candidates one had to be a woman. (Interview no. 48)

According to one women's organization, the women's movement was very busy enforcing women's rights in the new election law. They reviewed the new national election law "to ensure that women should be in the lists of candidates" (Interview no. 41). Once adopted and applied, female members of the national election commission could review the lists of candidates; "when the parties gave them their lists, they could see if women were represented or not. If not, then they had to revise it" (Interview no. 41). Indeed, the law states that parties that do not follow the criterion that one in four names has to be a woman have to revise their lists in order to participate in the elections (Law No.6/2006).

The 25 percent nomination quota for the 2007 parliamentary election provided an opportunity for political parties to promote female candidates and make sure that words were followed by action. However, most parties put a female candidate as every fourth name; rarely higher on the list or two female candidates consecutively. Three parties placed women higher, with the result that CNRT, the social democratic alliance ASDT-PSD and PUN (Partido Unidade Nacional)¹²⁰ are now represented by 33 percent, 36 percent, and 33 percent women respectively (Chinaud 2007). The political

¹¹⁹ As an example, in the district of Baucau, two women were elected as suco chief and four as aldeia chief. According to Ospina (2008:53), the elected women had participated in UNIFEM training through the PERWL program.

¹²⁰ Please consult appendix 2 for details on the major political parties in Timor-Leste. PUN is a new Christian democratic centre party.

party PUN actually argued that the clause in the election law stating that one of four names had to be a woman's was limiting because they did not have enough qualified candidates; "they wanted to put more women at the top of the list, but they had to have female candidates all through the list" (Interview no. 45). Indeed, some political parties argued that requiring a minimum of one female in every group of four names might even work against supporting women to be elected. A smaller party with a limited number of female candidates might want to put more women higher on the candidates' list, but since female candidates have to be evenly distributed throughout the list, this forces the political party to move women down the list of candidates (Interview no. 61). In the end, 27.69 percent of those elected to parliament were women (18 women) (CNE 2007). Thus, women did manage to increase their presence at national decision-making level. As for the new government appointed in 2007, women serve as Minister of Finance, Minister of Justice, and Minister of Social Solidarity. As for Secretaries of State, only the Office of the Secretary of State for the Promotion of Equality (SEPI, discussed further below) has a woman as its chief (Interview no. 48, see also NGOs Working Group on CEDAW 2009).

The political debate surrounding the use of a quota system has helped place the norm of women's political rights on the political agenda. Although the quota discussion has not been uncontroversial, as illustrated in 2001, when both international and national actors argued both for and against a quota, it started a process of rethinking the roles of women and men. According to one Timorese women's rights advocate,

the failure of implementing [the quota in 2001] created a debate and it was put on the agenda. It was made into a public issue. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General lobbied political parties to include female candidates, and it created a positive spin on having women involved in politics. (Interview no. 45)

Women's organizations used the CEDAW convention to force the government and parliament to listen to their demands for a quota, a clear case of trying to harmonize state policies with the international norm. However, Ospina notes that in the discussions leading up to the 2001 vote in the National Council, no political party related the discussion of a quota to that of gender equality. Although all political parties expressed support for gender equality as such, they did not see a quota as a possible mechanism to fast-track equality between men and women (Ospina 2008:73). Today this is starting to change. One member of parliament interviewed stated that she was not necessarily in favor of a quota system as such, but also stressed that it had to be used in Timor-Leste at this point. If not, then only men would be in the parliament, she argued (Interview no. 63). Another parliamentarian was less dramatic, but concluded that without the quota, there would not be 19 female members of parliament today (Interview no. 61). One anecdote

tells about a female member of parliament who explained that even though she was probably more qualified than many other of her male party colleagues, she believed she would not have been placed on an eligible position had it not been for the quota system (Interview no. 61; Interview no. 63). Thus, regardless of qualifications, this parliamentarian believed that she would not have been elected to parliament without a quota system. We can never know if this is true or not, but clearly this member of parliament founds her suspicion on something, most likely related to internal party discussions. This anecdote underscores the view that although political opinion shifted in favor of a quota system it might not necessarily have shifted in favor of women's political participation and representation irrespective of audience.

The critique against the quota system has included concerns that women elected are not "equipped" for the task. Indeed, as noted by one women's rights advocate, in some villages, women are not active and they need support and training in order to do a good job (Interview no. 45). Women are generally still less educated than men, which serves as an obstacle for women's political representation and participation. Women need support, training and capacity-building in order to become active and good leaders. One member of parliament highlighted that it is important to mentor women who are just getting involved in politics (Interview no. 61), which would make women more qualified (Interview no. 45). However, one female politician believed that often well-educated women are bypassed for less educated men, for example when it comes to placing names on candidates' lists ahead of elections (Interview no. 64). Women's organizations and politicians are already gearing up for debates regarding the revision of the quota system, and as such keeping the political discussion alive (NGOs Working Group on CEDAW 2009). Similarly, the New York CEDAW Committee raised concerns that the nomination quota could actually be discriminatory against women, because they were now placed only as every fourth name on candidate lists. The recommendation to the Timorese government was to review Law No. 6/2008 and increase the number of women required (CEDAW 2009a). This is relevant both for the national, emerging municipal, and suco level elections. One interviewee, representing a women's organization, stated that they want to change the requirement that one in four names should be a woman, to not mention a number at all; "just have equality in the number on the list of candidates" (Interview no. 48).

National gender equality machinery

In the discussion above about norm entrepreneurs during the period 1999-2002 it was mentioned that women's organizations lobbied for the formation of a Gender Equality Commission to work in close collaboration with the UN

mission. This did not happen, however, nor did the UNTAET mission initially pursue it. Resources were instead allocated to other areas which were given higher priority. Fearing that gender issues would be sidelined as a result of the postponement of the establishment of a Gender Unit, Timorese women lobbied persistently and, with international support from UNIFEM and the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Women's Advancement, finally persuaded the UN mission to establish a separate Gender Affairs Unit under the Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for the Governance and Public Administration Pillar of UNTAET (Whittington 2000; Roynestad 2003).¹²¹ The former UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for East Timor, the late Sergio Vieira de Mello confessed that:

I was against the creation of a Gender Affairs Units for the UN's Transitional Authority in Timor-Leste. I did not think a Gender Unit would help rebuild institutions from the ashes of what the militia left. I was wrong. The first regulation I passed guaranteed human rights standards, including CEDAW as a foundation of all new government institutions we created. The Unit brought this to life reaching out to East Timorese women, and, together with UNIFEM, provided support that resulted in a higher percentage of women in the Constituent Assembly than in many other countries. (UNIFEM 2006)

The aim of the unit, once in place, was to promote equality and women's right to equal participation and to benefit from sustainable development, peace and security, governance and human rights. All UNTAET programs, policies and activities were to be designed and implemented in a gender-sensitive fashion (Ospina 2006:19). The Gender Affairs Unit and the East Timorese Women's Network, Rede Feto, conducted consultations regarding the development of draft legal instruments. In cooperation with key partners in UNTAET, the unit facilitated capacity-building for gender mainstreaming within the transitional administration. They also facilitated women's leadership training and oversaw the implementation of gender mainstreaming policies in different ministries (Whittington 2000; Roynestad 2003; Ospina 2006:20).

The Gender Affairs Unit adopted an *Action Plan* that included focus on capacity-building and awareness-raising through workshops and gender sensitization sessions for international and national UN staff and local grassroots organizations. The unit also initiated a *Gender Database Project* to gather sex-aggregated data and conduct baseline studies to inform policy formulation. Furthermore, the unit established a *Gender and Law Working*

¹²¹ The Governance and Public Administration Pillar of UNTAET was replaced by East Timorese Transitional Administration (ETTA) in August 2000 and was to be considered the "government" until the Constituent Assembly election made it possible to establish an elected government (Chesterman 2004:139; Garnson 2005).

Group to increase local capacity in lawmaking and ensure that legislation (both UNTAET and national) was gender-sensitive. Related to this were efforts to mainstream gender in the emerging judicial system. The Gender Affairs Unit also established a network of gender focal points. The gender focal point network was tasked with raising awareness of gender issues and gender mainstreaming at the district and sub-district level, providing leadership training for women, and supporting local women's organizations. Cooperation with civil society was identified early on as essential for the success of the Gender Affairs Unit. Using the grassroots was seen as an effective channel to facilitate implementation of UNTAET policies and programs and to include all levels in the process of nationbuilding (Ospina 2006:20-21; 30). The gender unit also supported women's participation in the electoral process, facilitated women's participation in the first National Women's Congress in 2000, and worked in close collaboration with Rede Feto to support capacity-building and the implementation of the Platform for Action developed at the congress (Ospina 2006:30).

The UNTAET Gender Affairs Unit ceased to exist six months after the Constitutional Assembly election in 2001. A successful campaign to secure the establishment of its successor machinery was conducted and the Head of the Gender Affairs Unit and the Secretary-General's Special Representative argued for the need to establish a ministry of women located at the highest level of political decision-making. Voices were raised from the women's movement to establish a women's ministry but the Secretary-General's Special Representative Sergio Viera de Mello and Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri were convinced that a smaller policy unit was more desirable. A senior gender advisor within the UN mission, Sherrill Whittington, argued that having a special women's ministry risked marginalizing gender mainstreaming into that specific ministry. Furthermore, she believed that Timor-Leste was too small a country for a specific women's ministry (interview cited in Hall and True 2009:166). In the end, the Office for the Promotion of Equality (OPE) was located within the Office of the Prime Minister and a Gender Advisor was appointed who reported directly to the Chief Minister (Roynestad 2003). A major institutional change had thus again taken place, although it happened with the help of international lobbying. Placing OPE within the Office of the Prime Minister was considered adding weight to the issue of gender equality, but an assessment carried out by Pereira and Sternberg concluded that placing the machinery within the Office of the Prime Minister did not necessarily facilitate gender mainstreaming ambitions and its diffusion into all levels of government. In the end, much responsibility was put on the Prime Minister to advocate for the acknowledgement of gender issues since the gender advisor did not participate in the meetings of the Council of Ministers (Pereira and Sternberg 2007).

The OPE was tasked with developing strategies to mainstream a gender perspective in policies and programs, to promote increased participation of women in politics and development, and to develop a gender-sensitive perspective in policy and law reform programs (ADB and UNIFEM 2005). OPE initiated efforts to develop strategies and methodologies to mainstream gender within governance institutions, which included providing training and assistance. OPE also worked closely with civil society organizations and the international community in Timor-Leste (Trembath and Grenfell 2007:8). To facilitate its task, the Office appointed gender focal points in all government ministries and departments, as well as at the district level (World Bank and ADB 2007:32). An *Inter-Ministerial Group* was also set up, and together with the gender focal points, to mainstream gender within the public administration. Training on gender awareness and analysis was initiated to facilitate gender-sensitive policy formulation and implementation (Ospina 2006:36). According to Ospina's study, under this government, "all Ministry Action Plans had an integrated gender perspective and key line Ministry officials had attended gender awareness and analysis training" (Ospina 2008:64). This indicates that once established OPE played an important role as a norm entrepreneur that initiated further institutional changes through its efforts to gender sensitize other line ministries and its officials. However, a disruption in the work of OPE took place in 2002 when the international staff left. Implementation of programs slowed down and few new programs were developed. With the assistance of Ireland Aid, the OPE regained some of its former strength (Ospina 2006:45). With the 2006 crisis, OPE's work was once again disrupted and all its functions were put on hold until the new government was elected and a "new" gender machinery was established (Hall and True 2009:167).¹²² Thus, despite the norm's increased institutionalization through OPE, the uncertainty of such gains is

¹²² The head of OPE resigned in protest against how the government handled the 2006 crisis (Ospina 2008:61) and was replaced by a woman nominated by the women's movement with little experience in policy-making and gender analysis of such work. As things turned out, the national equal opportunity machinery did not function properly until after the 2007 parliamentary elections and the establishment of SEPI (Hall and True 2009:167).

apparent as much of the work of OPE was lost when external support scaled down.¹²³

After the parliamentary elections in 2007 further institutional changes awaited that affected the spreading of women's political rights. For example, the Office for the Promotion of Equality was turned into the Office of the Secretary of State for the Promotion of Equality, SEPI, by the new government. The Secretary of State was now given power to make policy recommendations and speak at the Council of Ministers, a clear step forward in regard to formalizing women's political rights and providing the equal opportunity machinery with a clearer mandate and resources. SEPI formally enjoys more power than its predecessor, but much of the work initiated by OPE has continued and been developed further under SEPI. However, at this point in time, SEPI works less with implementation and more with coordination and providing guidance to other actors who implement gender mainstreaming initiatives. Also, much effort is being put on trying to increase the capacity within the machinery to be able to move from gender rhetoric to action (Interview no. 36a). The upgrading of the machinery to a Secretary of State-level has meant an increase in status, according to one gender advisor (Interview no. 36a). This was reaffirmed by another gender advisor, who emphasized that the upgrading was a signal of importance from the government (Interview no. 45). Although still located within the Office of the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State now has access to the Council of Ministers and can bring gender into policy-making directly, without having to pass through a middle layer.

One international gender advisor explained that an international advisor has helped SEPI solve some institutional issues, such as writing job descriptions. Now the question that has to be raised is how SEPI manages to incorporate this in its daily work. This includes capacity-building within the ministry itself. It was pointed out by this gender advisor that "the Timorese themselves have to take it onboard and not just do it because donors tell

¹²³ One cross-ministerial institutional development during this period was the initiation of Sector Investment Programs, sprung out of the 2003 Road Map to the 2002 National Development Plan. These Sector Investment Programs were initiated to strengthen the linkages between agencies and sectors and also to develop comprehensive statements, objectives, policies and programs for each key sector of the economy (MoPF 2005:i). The investment programs provided donors and the government with sector-specific priorities and programs and strategies for implementation (GoTL and UNDP 2005:6). There were initially 15 Sector Investment Programs sorting under 4 main themes (later expanded to 17 programs in 2007). The theme relating to "strengthening governance" encompassed the SIP of "Rights, Equality and Justice issues" which included gender issues (MoPF 2005:26; WorldBank and ADB 2007:32). The Government also initiated the formation of sectoral working groups; a total of 11 such working groups supported the various investment programs (NORAD 2007:37). In 2006, OPE was assigned a permanent seat in each sectoral working group, which, according to the evaluation of the government's work with CEDAW-related issues, resulted in gender mainstreaming gaining important ground (SEPI 2007). The Sector Investment Programs were dissolved with the establishment of the new government.

them to, or international organizations” (Interview no. 52). In other words, the institutional changes accommodated with the establishment of SEPI have to become internalized amongst the Timorese. A five year Strategic Plan for SEPI has been revised where it is stated that key issues for the period 2010-2015 are to

[b]uild SEPI's institutional capacity, [...] advocate for gender responsive policies and legislation in government, [...] advocate for gender mainstreaming in government institutions and state agencies, [and to] raise the level of awareness among stakeholders and the general public at the national and local levels. (SEPI 2009)

According to one international advisor, working towards such a strategic plan has given Timorese some sense of ownership of the development process and also encourage them to be part of the agenda-setting for the next five years. It is believed that the recommendations from the CEDAW committee will also help SEPI and the rest of the government highlight critical focus areas. However, related to the CEDAW discussion, it is important that the entire government understands that this is the responsibility of all ministries, not just SEPI (Interview no. 52). According to one gender advisor, progress is slow, but both SEPI and other actors are learning that SEPI cannot, nor should it, do everything relating to “gender” (Interview no. 36b). However, one interviewee in Hall and True’s study touches upon an interesting point, wondering whether “the creation of SEPI was an effort to sideline gender mainstreaming and place all the responsibility for mainstreaming with SEPI and not all of government” (Hall and True 2009:167). This interviewee questions the government’s true commitment to gender mainstreaming, and, by extension, also women’s political rights.

As was discussed in Chapter one, a government often adopts some type of gender mainstreaming strategy to show their dedication to the issue of gender equality. The former Timorese government adopted a gender mainstreaming policy covering the period 2002-2007 (NGOs Working Group on CEDAW 2009). This policy was incorporated into the 2002 National Development Plan where it was highlighted that gender mainstreaming was an important strategy to increase gender equality in Timor-Leste (NDP 2002:26). According to the NGO CEDAW alternative report, the strategy covering 2002-2007 was ineffective, largely because of the weak system of gender focal points discussed further below (NGOs Working Group on CEDAW 2009). With the new government entering into power in 2007, work was initiated to adopt a new strategy addressing the issue of gender equality. This work has been affected by the delay in the renewal of the National Development Plan that was supposed to be adopted in 2008 to cover the next four years. One international gender advisor explained that the alternative to a National Development Plan is five-year strategic sectoral

plans produced by each ministry. These would replace the previous Sector Investment Programs discussed in footnote 123. Until it is decided which path to take, there is a list of “National Priorities”, covering a number of priority areas. In December 2008 it was established that seven priority areas would be in focus for 2009, covering areas such as food security, rural development, justice, human resource development and service delivery. The yearly planning process of addressing these National Priorities involved all line ministries, with technical support from the UN mission. All line ministries identify their key issues as they relate to the pre-identified priority areas (SEPI 2009). Gender is considered a crosscutting issue to be addressed in all priority areas. Each area can be considered an inter-ministerial working group and SEPI, through relevant gender focal points (see below), is involved in all working groups (Interview no. 56; Interview no. 39b).

During my visits in 2008 and 2009 it was stated that no blueprint for a gender mainstreaming strategy existed that could replace the 2002-2007 policy. Several interviewees with insight into the work of the government still considered the government to have a clear gender mainstreaming policy, although not in print (for example Interview no. 39a; Interview no. 36a). One international gender advisor stated that she believed that the formalization of a gender mainstreaming policy or strategy would be launched during 2009 (Interview no. 36b). In the government’s report to the CEDAW committee in New York, it is stated that “SEPI is in the process of revising the Gender Mainstreaming Policy” (SEPI 2009). Part of this work has included establishing gender mainstreaming guidelines in the government, as well as training manuals (SEPI 2007). As noted above, the government has also established a number of (international) gender advisors in different line ministries who “[...] can help review the ministry’s programs and policies and help develop a gender strategy for the ministry” (Interview no. 45).

The most solid work done so far when it comes to gender mainstreaming activities at the national level is the establishment of gender focal points at ministerial and district level (Interview no. 36b; Interview no. 52), which is a continuation down the same path as the previous government and what was developed as part of the gender mainstreaming policy 2002-2007. One international gender advisor noted that few of the institutional changes now occurring are new, but “the institutional memory is short” (interview no. 36b). According to a number of interviews, the gender focal points in the former government faced many limitations. A gender advisor explained that these focal points were not necessarily at a senior level, they had no terms of references, no work plans and lack of training (Interview no. 36a). One representative of a women’s organization criticized the former gender focal point system on the basis that,

[t]he GFP [gender focal point] is not a decision-maker, just a regular staff member. Because of their level they cannot influence decision-making. When they have a meeting, the state secretary can ask for advice, but it depends on the minister. They have no influence to ensure that policies promote women's equality. (Interview no. 41)

The same organization went on to explain that they would lobby for the strengthening of the gender focal point system, to begin with by raising the level of the gender focal point, so that gender mainstreaming could be strengthened in all sectors (Interview no. 41). As explained by one gender focal point, if the focal point is not at a senior level in the ministry, it will have difficulty carrying out its task because it has no real power to influence policy and planning (Interview no. 53). It might have been the result of such lobbying that led to the policy that gender focal points in the new government should all be at senior level of staff (director level), preferably located within the policy and planning division (Interview no. 36b; Interview no. 53). The revised gender focal point system was established by a decree in the Council of Ministers, stating that the gender focal point system is the key administration for gender mainstreaming in the country (Interview no. 36b; Interview no. 39a). The gender focal points can thus be understood as potential norm entrepreneurs within the specific line ministries. In the appointment of gender focal points, SEPI had to accept some names that perhaps were not the most appropriate, in the opinion of one gender advisor. However, she also pointed out that at least it started a process of thinking about issues relating to qualifications and training needs. SEPI also discussed the appointments with the Prime Minister, "who seemed very dedicated" (Interview no. 36b). If the criteria set up by SEPI were not fulfilled the names were sent back to the ministries. However, according to a gender advisor with insight into the process, most names were accepted in the second round (Interview no. 36b). A gender focal point system has also been established at the district level. SEPI meets with district gender focal points every third month.¹²⁴ Just as with the gender focal points in the line ministries at the national level, district gender focal points have to hold a senior level position within the district administration, They also had to submit a work plan in order to be appointed. There are suggestions that gender units should be established both at the ministerial and district level, but this is only encouraged by SEPI at this stage, not imposed (Interview no. 36b).

There are no formalized inter-ministerial working groups in place addressing issues of gender equality or women's rights, although this is something that is under discussion. As for now, the monthly meetings

¹²⁴ Personal communication with SEPI 10 November, 2008

between SEPI and the ministerial gender focal points are the most formalized inter-ministerial collaboration, although one of the gender focal points showed some disappointment over these meetings with SEPI, as it believes that SEPI did not really ask for progress reports or demand to see what activities each ministry planned for the future (Interview no. 53). One gender advisor explained that there are indeed some inter-ministerial working groups, but established more on ad hoc basis to discuss certain issues, such as the State of the Nation Report or decentralization reform (Interview no. 52). There are also inter-ministerial collaboration regarding the National Priorities, as noted above. Although more collaboration is being formalized over time, one interviewee explained this lack of collaboration between ministries as a post-conflict legacy:

Information is power and under the resistance you needed to be very careful with whom you shared your information [...] there is no communication within ministries, in-between ministries and not between the districts and the center and vice versa [...] it is really minimal. (Interview no. 34)

The lack of collaboration also becomes evident in the limited government access in remote areas, including distribution of information (Interview no. 40). An international policy advisor stated that “most of the ministries and members of the government want to reach out more to the districts; the Prime Minister wants to strengthen the district offices, having them much more involved in implementation, making it much less centralized” (Interview no. 34).

Strengthening the local government structure

Strengthening the local government structure was something that the UN, together with other international actors, engaged in right from the start, although with varying outcomes. The districts enjoyed some implementation responsibility during Indonesian rule, but it was not until the arrival of the UN that a formal decentralization process was initiated. UNTAET decided to establish a non-politicized district administration, headed by an internationally appointed District Administrator and district field officers. Internationals were later replaced by Timorese counterparts; a process that started with the appointment of Timorese deputy district administrators (Chesterman 2004:137). The District Administrator was to enjoy supreme executive authority in the district and possess judicial powers until a functioning judiciary was in place. The aim of the district administration was to be accessible to the local population and to integrate the work of the UN into the daily lives of people, even in the most remote areas (Chopra 2003:230; Hohe 2005:60). The international district field officers were to be the main link to the grassroots as they consulted the population at the sub-district level and communicated with village chiefs (Hohe 2002).

Whereas the UNTAET local government structure focused on the district level, the World Bank-initiated, UNTAET-supported, "Community Empowerment and Local Governance Project" (CEP), was established in 2000 in order to fill the void below the districts.¹²⁵ CEP provided a model for the local communities to take part in decision-making in a participative and transparent fashion. Development issues regarding hamlet and village levels were to be addressed by elected village development councils, where both women and men were equally represented (Ospina and Hohe 2001:9-10).¹²⁶ The technical requirements of the CEP were that the village development councils had to have 50 percent female representation, something that was perceived as strange by a majority of the population (Hohe 2005:68). It was never difficult, however, to achieve this level. However, despite the fact that 50 percent of participants in the village councils were women, their access to decision-making was still challenged by traditional views on the role of women (Ospina and Hohe 2001:9-10; Ospina 2008:48). In other words, initial institutionalization was never the problem per se, but internalization has become a more challenging issue. This is discussed further in the next chapter.

The CEP has been questioned on several issues, one of them being the exogenous enforcement of democratic concepts such as gender equality (Ospina 2008:49). However, according to one Timorese gender advisor and women's rights advocate with experience from both civil society organizations and politics,

CEP is [probably] where the major difference started for women. The program itself was not successful, but having one woman and one man in the village councils highlighted the importance of women's inclusion; it showed that women had a role to play. It started a process of need to include women, it created an expectation [...] But still there is a risk of creating 'bad role models', and women are often tasked with the gender specific tasks, but it did break the idea that women did belong in politics. (Interview no. 45)

Similarly, as stated by Ospina, when CEP ended in 2004, sucos around the country had started to become accustomed to women's participation in the village development councils. Even though women's participation was still constrained by social norms and tradition, Councilors had started to recognize women's equal rights in decision-making. "[T]he precedent of gender equality in decision-making was well established and cannot be easily reversed", states Ospina (2008:49). Furthermore, once the legislation for

¹²⁵ For a more thorough discussion of the CEP, see for example Ospina and Hohe (2001) or Hohe (2004; 2005). The CEP has now closed down (personal communication with Tanja Hohe, October 31, 2007).

¹²⁶ According to Hohe (2005:69), the village development councils "were not perceived as part of the political sphere of the world, nor of ritual life. Anybody could be elected to the councils. As the council members turned out to be young people from random families, they remained powerless".

suco level elections were being developed, the Office for the Promotion of Equality, together with international actors such as UNIFEM and Oxfam, and the grassroots organization Women's Political Caucus, lobbied the government to continue the gender-sensitization initiated through CEP (Ospina 2008:49). This corresponds to the argument raised in the theoretical chapter. Once having started to provide rights, it is difficult to not continue with rule-consistent behavior.

When the country gained its independence in 2002, decentralization became an issue primarily to be executed by the sovereign government of Timor-Leste. Decentralization was highlighted in the government development plan in 2002, and the Timorese Constitution from 2002 also shows a commitment to it. CEP ended in 2004, but the government had undertaken continued decentralization reform, a process that has since continued, even though it was somewhat disrupted by the 2006 political crisis (LGSP-TL 2007). A pilot program for decentralization and deconcentration reform was initiated in 2004, jointly funded by UNDP and UNCDF, to develop an inclusive and participatory local government structure. The Local Development Programme has, according to evaluations, proved effective in its establishment of local "legislative" assemblies at the district and the sub-district level, including suco council representatives. A closely related program, Local Governance Options Study, was initiated in 2004 (LGSP-TL 2007). Both the Local Development Programme and the Local Governance Options Study have helped inform the government on alternatives to a local government system.

The Local Development Programme included an analysis of the current system of suco councils and district and sub-district administration. One conclusion was that the suco councils were not as functional as they could be (LGSP-TL 2007). The suco is the only institution that has remained intact during the history of Timor-Leste, and as such, the suco level and the legitimacy it enjoys in the traditional community provide an opportunity to build a local governance structure that enjoys local identity (UNDP 2008b:66).¹²⁷ As mentioned above, the suco council consists of the suco chief, the chiefs of aldeias within the suco, two women, one young woman and one young man, and one village elder. In other words, a minimum of three seats are reserved for women, one of which is for a young woman, between the ages of 17-35 (Decree-Law No. 5/2004 on Community Authorities 2004; UNDP 2008b:132). Nevertheless, despite affirmative action initiatives that guarantee women seats in the councils, women face

¹²⁷ When the Portuguese colonized the eastern half of the island of Timor during the 16th century, the country was divided into 40 autonomous kingdoms. In 1860, Timor-Leste was divided into districts (*conselhos*). From 1934 a new civil administration was established and each district was composed of sub-districts that comprised of hamlets (*sucos*) and villages (*aldeias*) (Ospina 2008:13-14).

considerable obstacles in voicing their concerns. However, one international policy advisor interviewed underlined the importance of the suco councils and their inclusion of women: “local assemblies have opened up political space for women to actively participate. There are only so many seats in the parliament” (Interview no. 44). This statement highlights the institutional change that the quota for the suco and aldeia councils has resulted in. Although the number of women elected is still minimal, a potential space has opened up for women at the local level.

Despite the possibilities provided by initial institutional developments, a lesson learned from the Local Development Programme was that local citizens do not engage in local representative bodies as actively as one would hope (LGSP-TL 2007). Based on these and other lessons learned, the Local Governance Support Programme was initiated in order to continue the successful establishment of a local governance structure (LGSP-TL 2007). The Local Governance Support Programme aimed at expanding the pilot project into four new districts and then continued expansion depending on how fast the local government was phased in. The proposed governance structure presented in 2006 was based on municipalities where the 13 districts would be abolished and replaced by municipalities. The suco councils would continue as usual and local assemblies would be elected above the suco level. The Council of Ministers approved the Policy Paper on Decentralization and Local Government in October 2006, which *inter alia* meant creating 30 to 40 municipalities, establish municipal assemblies, appointing municipal mayors and establish municipal administrations (LGSP-TL 2007). As discussed in regards to the Local Governance Support Programme, *Gender Standing Committees* were to be established in the pilot areas in order to ensure “gender screening of local development plans” (LGSP-TL 2007; Interview no. 44). It was also suggested that there be capacity-building activities targeted at female members of the local assemblies for the purpose of enhancing their participation as well as ensuring the incorporation of gender issues into local decision-making. The Local Governance Support Programme also advocated affirmative action measures to facilitate women’s access to decision-making bodies. Special emphasis was put on providing leadership training and “gender confidence building” for women assembly members “so as to enable them to be more actively involved in assembly discussions and better informed thus increasing their capabilities and expanding the range of choices open to them” (LGSP-TL 2007).¹²⁸ It was also noted that it is not enough to train

¹²⁸ The initial plan was that by 2008, women, through training and capacity-building activities, would participate more actively in assembly discussions and deliberations and by 2011 the quality of such participation were to have improved (LGSP-TL 2007).

women about gender issues, but the need for greater awareness and acceptance by male representatives was also underlined. This was also something that was brought up in some of the interviews, for example by one national policy advisor who stated that,

[m]en tend to lack sensitivity to women's issues. It is up to women to bring women's issue forward. Therefore it is also important to train men to become gender-sensitive. Further training on gender is therefore important. (Interview no. 43)

One interviewee (an international gender advisor) underlined that there has been important ground gained through, for example the UNIFEM-sponsored PERWL¹²⁹ program that has provided important lessons and made substantial progress regarding women's local leadership. "Regardless of what the new organic structure looks like it is important to incorporate this knowledge and experience and as such strengthen women at the local level" (Interview no. 39a). However, the risk of backtracking on policy proposals on decentralization was identified as highly likely as a result of a potential change in government following the 2007 national assembly elections (LGSP-TL 2007; Interview no. 44).

During a presentation at a workshop on local government in Oslo, the Minister of State Administration and Territorial Ordinance emphasized the importance of moving the decentralization process forward (Arcangelo Leite in UNDP 2007). Although it would continue, it was not unchanged (MSATM 2008). In February 2009, the Council of Ministers approved a total of three law proposals that were then sent to parliament for approval (MSATM 2009).¹³⁰ In a statement in July 2009, the Minister of State Administration and Territorial Ordinance stated that hopefully all three laws would be approved by the parliament in August (Local Governance Monthly Bulletin, July 2009). The discussion in the Council of Ministers was preceded by district consultations on the draft decentralization laws held in November 2008. The draft laws on decentralization rest on several years of work, and although different from what were originally presented in the Local Development Programme, they still draw on lessons learned from this pilot project.

The original decentralization plans called for fundamental change in the current system, but the new government has decided upon a reform agenda that is less transforming, but still includes the establishment of a municipal level. The draft laws turn the 13 districts into the same number of

¹²⁹ Programme for Enhancing Rural Women's Leadership and Participation in Nation Building in Timor-Leste, discussed above.

¹³⁰ The three laws are: law proposal on Administrative and Territorial Division, on Local Government, and on Municipal Elections. Together they constitute what is referred to as "the organic law".

municipalities. In the first stage four districts will be part of a pilot program – Bobonaro, Dili, Oecussi and Baucau. These four districts will hold municipal elections in December 2009, provided that the organic law is approved by the parliament in August (Local Governance Monthly Bulletin, July 2009). The plan is that the remaining districts will become municipalities during 2010, and in the meantime only hold suco elections in October 2009 (MSATM 2009, SEPI 2009). In other words, the present district division will function as a principal point of departure for the creation of the new municipal units. A municipal assembly will be established, consisting of directly elected deputies and headed by a Mayor and chaired by a speaker (Law Proposal on Local Government 2009). A municipal administration will be under assembly control. The size of the assembly varies between 15-21 people, depending on district size (Law Proposal on Local Government 2009: chapter II, Section I, article 6). Furthermore, sector departments will be established which are co-supervised between the assembly and the parent ministry. The proposal also emphasizes that the municipalities should establish close links with the suco authorities (MSATM 2008). As for women's representation, the Draft Law states that one in three names on the candidate lists has to be a woman (Draft Law of Municipal Electoral Law 2009: chapter II, article 12), but there is no mentioning of, for example, the *gender standing committees* discussed under the Local Governance Support Programme. The new organic law had just been passed in the Council of Ministers and not yet approved by the parliament when I did my last field visit to Timor-Leste in March 2009. For this reason, I cannot assess any potential changes for women's political representation and participation at the local level. However, according to Timorese media in July 2009, the president, José Ramos Horta, made a public call to encourage women to participate as candidates in the upcoming local elections (Radio Televisaun Timor Leste 2009). As I write this, in september 2009, the result of this appeal is still uncertain.

In general, however, people have raised concerns about women's capacity to participate in local government decision-making, which can be understood as an urban-rural divide as well as intra-regional differences.¹³¹ This skepticism has resulted in a rather small number of women in local decision-making assemblies. However, as mentioned above, the overall low number of women represented in suco and aldeia councils should be viewed in relation

¹³¹ One member of parliament explained that there are, for example, huge differences between Baucau and Lospalos, both in the east of the country (Interview no. 58) In Lospalos (the district capital of Lautem), 3 women ran for 34 suco chief posts, equating to 8 percent female candidates compared to 17 percent nationally (Ospina 2008:57). Being the second largest city in the country, Baucau is a bit further developed, for example in terms of infrastructure, and several NGOs are active with educational issues. The city also has the experience of having an outspoken female head of village who "is very active, she always distributes information from the district" (Interview no. 48).

to women's previous absence from local level power positions. Thus, as Ospina points out, "the local election results [from 2007] suggest some attitudinal changes among local community members in relation to women's participation in politics and also to independent candidates" (Ospina 2008:57). Indeed, as stated by one Timorese women's rights advocate, "having seats reserved for women have made them able to run for political positions and have made them realize their worth. It has started to question the ignorance of women, or the status quo" (Interview no. 45). This is discussed further in the next chapter.

In sum, institutional developments in Timor-Leste indicate that the norm of women's political rights is moving forward on the scale of institutionalization, but this has predominantly been a result of pressures from civil society (as the establishment of Gender Affairs Unit and Office for the Promotion of Equality) and from international actors in collaboration with women's organizations (such as 50 percent women in the Village Development Councils). The quota discussion revealed that affirmative action was initially not considered to be related to achieving gender equality, and there is anecdotal evidence that people were pressured to vote against the quota in 2001. The failure to enforce a quota system in 2001 did not result in disappearance of the norm in the political debate, but rather the opposite. The enforcement of the electoral quota in 2006 is an institutional change that helps ensure the presence of the norm of women's political rights in the political realm. Once the new election law was adopted there was more leeway to enforce women's rights in the political discourse in the months leading up to the 2007 national elections. As for formalizing a gender equality machinery, high-level support was given to a successor to Gender Affairs Unit, although the placement of the OPE in the Office of the Prime Minister has been questioned for its impact on efforts to facilitate norm diffusion. Many of the gains up until 2006 were lost as a consequence of the crisis of that year, but the institutional developments from mid-2007 show continued movement along the scale of institutionalization. Several initiatives are founded on what developed under the previous government and there seems to be some lessons learned. Norm enforcement both from women's organizations and international actors is indeed becoming increasingly rooted and as part of this, national institutional developments have the potential to be harmonized with the international norm, something I discuss in the next section.

Harmonization between national developments and the international norm

As was stated in the discussion of Cambodia, analyzing norm institutionalization (and its internalization) is essentially a question of how well national policies and activities correspond to the international norm; i.e.

their harmonization. Since the popular consultation in Timor-Leste in August 1999, much has happened in this small island-country.

Norm enforcement from above as through the UN missions does not seem to have been the primary channel through which the norm of women's political rights was introduced in Timor-Leste. Although it is true that international assistance helped transfer international norms and practices in general in Timorese society (see for example NORAD 2007:6), the role played by women's organization and dedicated individuals must be emphasized when it comes to promoting women's rights specifically. Essentially, it was women's involvement and pressure that helped the UN to keep its focus on gender. Indeed, the Transitional Administration sometimes worked against the promotion of women's rights.¹³² As noted in this study, it was mainly Timorese themselves who mobilized and organized to increase the institutionalization of women's rights and made sure that the norm did not stop at the stage of tactical concessions within the UN mission and within the emerging Timorese leadership. The story of gender-sensitizing in Timor-Leste is thus a story with a twist. The women's movement was empowered by the international rights' rhetoric, but it was not the UN transitional administration that pressured Timorese national elites to start adhering to the women's rights' discourse. In other words, Timorese women's organizations have played a crucial role as norm entrepreneurs, for example in educating women to get them to participate in local and national politics and persuading political parties to endorse female candidates (Cristalis and Scott 2005:82). The women's movement in Timor-Leste was fairly organized by the time of the independence vote and had started to engage in lobbying for women's emancipation and rights. Efforts to institutionalize women's rights prior to 1999 seem to have resulted in at least the initiation of a process of moral awareness-raising to the extent that it started to appear in some of the political debate, at least once Indonesia left the country. It was not women's political rights specifically that were at the center of attention, but the issue of women as rights-holders was nevertheless brought to the table.

Many of the organizations are still heavily reliant on international funding and many organizations suffered when the international community began to scale down its presence in the country in 2002. On the other hand, competing for resources could also result in less serious actors being pushed out and the remaining organizations being particularly concerned with women's (political) rights. Different organizations have spent resources

¹³² Richard Caplan (2005:170-171), for example, discusses the establishment of development councils and how UNTAET actually argued against gender balances on the councils as it was deemed "culturally inappropriate". UNTAET later had to yield under lobbying and pressure from Timorese women.

trying to raise people's awareness, both that of the general public and government officials. Women's organizations have also put pressure on the government of Timor-Leste to start engaging in rule-consistent behavior; that is, to follow through on their international commitments such as CEDAW. Although much of the gender education has been commissioned to civil society organizations, there has nevertheless been political emphasis put on the importance of getting women to vote and also educate women who are elected. There is also collaboration with civil society organizations, although some argue that this has decreased with the new government. In general, women's organizations often consider themselves partners or consultative members with the government.

The entrance of international donors and the UN mission in 1999 saw an increase in organizations focusing on women's rights and gender equality. Women's political rights was eventually promoted by the UN administration between 1999 and 2002, which can be exemplified by the Special Representative of the Secretary General's statement in 1999 that he wanted to prioritize the participation of women at all levels of decision-making. Although he was initially against the establishment of the Gender Affairs Unit he later admitted that it was important to have such a unit. Still, it was women's organizations, and individual international and national norm entrepreneurs who had to put pressure on UNTAET to include a goal of 30 percent women in elected bodies and to allocate sufficient resources to empower women. When the UN mission established the Gender Affairs Unit, they actively started to pursue a more gender-sensitive rhetoric and emphasized the importance of including women in political decision-making. According to Hall and True, "the GAU [Gender Affairs Unit] provided the institutional structure and rationale for integrating gender perspectives in Timor-Leste's government" (Hall and True 2009:166). Through various tools and mechanisms the unit tried to raise awareness and ensure the appearance of the norm in the political discourse. The gender unit engaged in consultations with civil society organizations, capacity-building exercises and women's leadership training. When the international actors started walking the rights walk themselves, they could, together with civil society organizations, pressure the emerging Timorese government to start adopting the rights' agenda as well. Institutionalization was on its way and efforts to raise peoples' awareness had begun. So with the help of convinced women, the UN structure managed to keep its focus on women, establishing a ground for the Timorese government to develop further.

When the Office for the Promotion of Equality (OPE) was established, much of the work initiated under the Gender Affairs Unit could be continued although this time under Timorese control. Priorities were given to increased participation and the development of strategies to mainstream a gender perspective. However, by not enjoying a seat in the Council of Ministers,

little could be done by the Office for the Promotion of Equality itself to ensure gender-sensitization of legislation and policies. OPE also lacked the capacity to enforce a gender mainstreaming agenda. This limited mandate indicates that in 2002, the norm of women's political rights as such was closer to prescriptive status than rule-consistent behavior. It can be considered established as a tactical concession, based on international pressures after the success of the Gender Affairs Unit, as well as pressures from below. The fact that the Office for the Promotion of Equality was placed in the Office of the Prime Minister has been considered a sign of importance to the issue, which would indicate that the norm of women's political rights enjoyed some sort of prescriptive status after all. On the other hand, closer scrutiny reveals that it may not have benefited norm diffusion very much. The Office of the Secretary of State for the Promotion of Equality, SEPI, is believed to have added weight to the issue of women's rights and gender equality, and it has been argued that the upgrading of the Office for the Promotion of Equality into a Secretary of State with a seat in the Council of Ministers shows an increase in status of the issue at stake. This upgrading can be understood as action following rhetoric, i.e. placing this particular development towards rule-consistent behavior. Although not functioning without problems, the SEPI plays an important role in striving for gender mainstreaming in ministries and departments.

In attempts to strengthen the local government structure, several measures were taken to disseminate information to the village levels, as well as transfer some decision-making power to the local level. This has also included raising specific awareness of women as leaders at the local level. However, the system established in 1999 was not considered very successful. According to a NORAD evaluation, some sort of local government was established in name by UNTAET, but by not enjoying any authority and lacking resources to respond to local needs, it only further marginalised the issue of local governance (NORAD 2007:6). The entire concept of a district administration was a way for the international community to link all the different levels of Timorese society together, a link that, according to some practitioners, was already in place through the CNRT (Hohe 2002; Chopra 2003:235).¹³³ The confusion caused by the establishment of the district administration has, according to Hohe, spilled over into the local governance structure that developed after the UN gave back power to the Timorese (Hohe 2004:306). The real move forward in the decentralization reform was initiated in 2000 with the establishment of the Community Empowerment and Local Governance Program (CEP). Although a criticized program as

¹³³ When the CNRT dissolved itself in 2001 just ahead of the Constituent Assembly election, confusion among the CNRT district and sub-district representatives was created.

such, it has been considered the breakthrough for women's political participation, because it requires equal representation of both women and men in the village development councils. It thus provided a space for women, although it did not change discriminatory attitudes *per se*.

By strengthening the local government structure in a gender-sensitive manner, initial efforts to institutionalize women's political rights have been quite successful at the local level. Women are guaranteed at least three seats in the *suco* council and emphasis has also been put on trying to encourage women to vote, for example by training women about the elections. This can be understood as an effort to raise people's (mainly women's) awareness of themselves as political actors who have the right to participate in elections and be represented in politics. The result also indicates that state policies are increasingly being harmonized with the international norm. Some women are also using the space provided for them at the local level, which was indicated by one interviewee who explained that the heads of village in Baucau, Bobonaro and Suai are all very active; "we are very lucky because we have three women who are very active as heads of village" (Interview no. 48). However, as noted by election statistics, there are rarely many more than the three mandatory women found in a *suco* council. This could indicate that rule-consistent behavior is probably not happening by default. That is, electing women into local leadership positions is not part of standard operating procedures and something that happens as a habitualized behavior, but rather something that needs an external push, for example through the quota system and international and civil society lobbying. The fact that women are often only represented by the required minimum can be understood as evidence that the norm of women's political rights is not truly being "depersonalized" and pursued regardless of individual belief systems. If so, then the norm is probably better understood as being at the stage of prescriptive status.

The three elections held since the popular consultation in 1999 have provided an important base for the institutionalization of women's political rights. Establishing clear rules and regulations for elections that also promote women as voters is a sign of the institutionalization of women's political rights, and political parties have been forced to engage in rule-consistent behavior. The election in 2001 was disappointing in terms of trying to adopt a 30 percent quota to guarantee women's representation in national decision-making. However, reaching 26 percent without the use of affirmative action is a result that took many by surprise. Institutional changes to ensure women's representation did not succeed, but the end result was almost the same in terms of numbers. This development indicates that the norm of women's political rights was moving along the scale of institutionalization. The adoption of a new election law that includes a candidate quota system indicates further institutional development, and

although women rarely made it onto any other position than every fourth name on the candidate list, political parties nevertheless had to engage in rule-consistent behavior, irrespective of audience and adherence to the norm itself. The institutional developments can be summarized as below:

Table 7.1 Institutional developments in Timor-Leste

| Areas for institutional development | Outputs |
|--|---|
| Electoral rules and regulations | Initial quota debate resulted in a “positive spin” on having women in politics; National quota for candidates list – women rarely placed more than as every 4 th candidate; Local level quota; Women well represented in parliament, less in suco councils. |
| National gender machinery | Gender Affairs Unit, OPE and SEPI with increased capacity and mandate; Gender focal point system under formalization; No formal gender mainstreaming strategy or inter-ministerial working groups; Capacity-building still major issue. |
| Strengthening the local government structure | Opening up a space for women (CEP) but considered going against tradition; Focal point system developing; Organic law no mentioning of women specifically; Quota suco level elections – rarely more than minimum elected. |

Since independence in 2002, women's political rights and gender equity have thus been in the spotlight of the government and a series of policy initiatives have been adopted. This can be indicated as early as with the adoption of the Magna Carta at the National Convention in the Diaspora in 1998. The Magna Carta endorsed CEDAW and since then, the convention has been ratified by the government and also used by the women's movement to force the government to engage in rule-consistent behavior. The Special Representative for the Secretary-General underlined the importance of CEDAW for Timor-Leste's development, and the work conducted by both OPE and SEPI is underpinned by the convention. However, the concluding observations of the New York CEDAW Committee recommend

that the government of Timor-Leste “clarify the status of international conventions within its domestic legal framework” (CEDAW 2009a). The Committee also underscores the importance of disseminating the CEDAW Convention among government officials, parliamentarians, and within the judicial system, as well as to the grassroots.

Harmonization between the international norm and state policies can also be identified in the parliament election law 6/2006 as well as the use of affirmative action for the suco council elections. All three National Women’s Congresses has produced platforms for action that have been circulated to political decision-makers. As such they have provided important ground for the norm of women’s political rights. In other words, the Women’s Congresses continued the efforts to institutionalize women’s rights and used the transnational women’s rights movement in this process. The Platform for Action in 2004 called for the implementation of UN treaties and resolutions, i.e. ensuring the norm of women’s political rights prescriptive status and also calling for rule-consistent behavior. The Congress raised the issue of continued national institutional changes and harmonization of state policies with the international women’s rights norm. The National Development Plan from 2002 took this message onboard, and it emphasizes the importance of gender equality. The National Priorities identify gender as a crosscutting theme to be addressed in all the areas, although the extent to which this has been accomplished is as yet unclear.

The institutional developments in Timor-Leste so far indicate that women’s political rights are indeed gaining ground, both at the national and local level. The fact that the independent government of Timor-Leste is adhering to the rhetoric of women’s political rights does seem to indicate that the norm is promoted irrespective of the audience most of the time. However, it should be underlined that international donors and aid agencies are still playing an important role in the democratization process of the country, and it is too early to tell if the initial concessions and the seemingly prescriptive status of the norm will be followed by rule-consistent behavior once international pressure is not put on national elites. The overall assessment of norm institutionalization between 1999 and 2009 is thus that the norm of women’s political rights is found at the stage of prescriptive status but leaning towards higher levels as some of the developments above have indicated. This is illustrated in Figure 7.1, where the shaded area illustrates approximately where the norm of women’s political rights is to be found today. As was stated by several government officials and UN representatives in November 2008: “Timor is at a cross-road”. When it comes to women’s political rights, this means that if norm enforcement is subject to sincere commitment, the norm might indeed be moving further towards the stage of rule-consistent behavior.

Internalizing women's political rights in Timor-Leste

Traditionally in Timor, gender is seen as Malae concept that foreigners are imposing on people as a trade off for support in terms of funding and technical assistance. Along with terms such as 'human rights' and 'democracy' the term gender sits on a bookshelf with a donor logo plastered in front. (de Araujo 2005)

In Chapter seven I presented an analysis of the process of institutionalizing women's political rights in Timor-Leste. This chapter draws on the conclusions from that chapter regarding the institutionalization of women's political rights and adds to it a discussion of women's capability to function. What are women's real opportunities for political functioning in Timor-Leste? National norm entrepreneurs are discussed more in-depth because of their important role in promoting women's capability to function. Furthermore, several of these norm entrepreneurs are Timorese women themselves and, as such, they are trying to increase their own capability to function as well. The chapter also addresses tradition and culture, and how some practices might impede women's agency and possibly also affect women's views of themselves as right holders, i.e. adaptive preferences. Taken together this analysis can help us assess norm internalization in Timor-Leste.

Timor-Leste is a young country that is trying to become a functioning democracy. After all the years of foreign rule, Timor-Leste finally won independence in 2002. The development of the last ten years are remarkable, and women's political rights have made it onto the national political agenda. As was discussed in Chapter seven, many women returned from exile empowered with western feminist ideas and a faith in women's rights as human rights. The number of women's organizations increased with the help of the international assistance pouring into the country after 1999. Some of these organizations have been very vocal about women's political rights, for example pushing for the establishment of a 25 percent nomination quota for political parties ahead of the parliamentary election in 2007. The norm of women's political rights is increasingly appearing in national legislation, and

national political institutions are changing to incorporate the international norm. Several indicators point in the direction of women's political rights moving towards the stage of rule-consistent behavior in Timor-Leste. However, as will be elaborated on further below, women's capability to function still lags behind institutional developments, and culture and discriminatory ways of life create problems for norm internalization. In general, the people I interviewed believe that politically active men and women, regardless of whether they are working at the national level, in sub-national government or in civil society organizations, have learned the human rights' talk and frequently refer to women's political rights.¹³⁴ Several international interviewees confirmed that their understanding was that people are "eager to do gender" and to learn. For example, when recruiting civil servants to the Office of the Secretary of State for the Promotion of Equality or as gender focal points, one interviewee explained that focus has really been on those who are interested in and receptive to gender mainstreaming, which has resulted in a mix of younger and older people (Interview no. 52). Another interviewee told a story from the celebration of International Women's Day 2008, where the Prime Minister "showed his commitment":

SEPI organized a big event with civil society organizations [...] Key issues were highlighted and a letter of commitment drafted and signed by Rede Feto and members of parliament. There was also a special session in parliament on March 10. Ministries and the Prime Minister attended; there were speeches by ministers and other high level people. There was a room full with people such as the President, the Prime Minister, senior level ministry people and CSO. It is not common that the most important people in a society are present. They discussed what could be done for gender equality. (Interview no. 36b)

However, despite this and similar signs of commitment, the interviews also identified a situation in which deeper understanding of issues related to women's rights was still lacking. This would indicate that the norm is not really habitualized and part of standard operating procedures. How this plays out more specifically is analyzed in this chapter.

In order to be considered highly internalized, the norm has to have made an entrance into people's everyday lives and rhetoric, be subject to decreased negative adaptive preferences among both women and the general public, and discriminating ways of life have to be altered. More specifically, the norm should be adhered to irrespective of audience and discriminatory ways of life and attitudes have to be addressed and changed and women must possess "agency", i.e. the power to act upon their political rights. In general

¹³⁴ For example, this was brought up by an international gender advisor (Interview no. 57), but was echoed by others as well.

the international norm should be translated into national practices, which at this stage includes that people are aware of and accept the norm regardless of personal views. Furthermore, urban-rural divisions should also be minimized.

National norm enforcement

As was stated in the previous chapter, women's organizations, as well as dedicated international and national individuals have been important entrepreneurs for the norm of women's political rights. With the institutional changes occurring, such as the establishment of the Secretary of State for the Promotion of Equality or a gender focal point system, norm entrepreneurs are now potentially found at various political levels and institutions. Indeed, several interviewees emphasized that women's organizations and individual men and women, both international and national, are taking their role as norm entrepreneurs seriously. One international gender advisor explained: "there are some very empowered women in Timor. They are very keen on gender issues [...] so there are individual policy champions" (Interview no. 51). Another international gender advisor stated that "there are some very bold women in Timor" (Interview no. 46). As a whole, the women's movement and similar norm entrepreneurs have played an important role in raising awareness about women as political actors, teaching women about their political rights, and trying to increase women's participation in elections, both as voters and as candidates. As was discussed in the previous chapter, more than in Cambodia, there is in Timor-Leste a push for women's political rights that comes from civil society organizations and influences national elites. Nevertheless, there are strength and weaknesses both within the group of norm entrepreneurs per se, and in the activities they undertake in order to spread the values of women's political rights throughout Timorese society. These are worth examining further.

Chapter seven noted that women's organizations are involved in various activities that focus on enforcing the norm of women's political rights, such as increasing awareness of the importance of women's access to decision-making and the enhancement of their rights. Although the number of organizations focusing specifically on political rights for women is limited, the work done by these few highlights their role as norm entrepreneurs capable of using a wide range of tools to enforce institutionalization, pressure the government to engage in rule-consistent behavior and promote an increase in women's capability to function in decision-making. One national gender advisor stated that through various activities, people are starting to learn about their rights:

because of this information we put forward all the time through radio, workshops, seminars, and news people. We even created a song about women's rights. We distribute a lot of posters in the districts ... it opened up their minds a little bit, not all, but little. Step by step it is changing. (Interview no. 37a).

This interviewee is not a representative for all Timorese women, but she is working in an organization with several activities directed towards women in the rural areas. Her understanding that women are increasingly learning about their rights should therefore be understood as an indication of that the norm is making it into women's daily lives; the norm has entered women's sphere of awareness and is becoming increasingly habitualized, at least in the areas in which this woman and her organization is active.

One women's organization reflected upon the effectiveness of the training it conducted of women ahead of elections, stating that there were indeed differences between the women who had attended their training and those who had not; "the women not involved in [...] training were quieter. The women involved in [...] training speak up more, they have ideas [...]" (Interview no. 48). The importance of training was also highlighted in a UNIFEM debriefing conducted with over seven hundred women who had participated in the local elections in different hamlets; both women who were elected and those who were not participated in the workshop. The aim was to get some insight into the support structures in place to facilitate women's participation in the elections. Regardless of whether they were elected or not, women participating in the elections (and in the debriefing) said that they were satisfied with their experience running for office and that they had learned a lot about rights and responsibilities. Some of the women who were elected mentioned obstacles they encountered, including lack of communication, information, family support, and funding (Ospina 2008:56).

The role of women and men who spent years in the Diaspora was identified as important by several interviewees, both international gender advisors, civil society representatives and national politicians. An international gender advisor stated that a number of the women and men who were educated abroad already know about gender issues and talk about them in a coherent way (Interview no. 36b). The same interviewee also explained that

there has been an incredible learning process supported by international actors. There was also a nurturing Diaspora with leading women coming back after 1999. Women were living abroad just waiting for independence together with the women active in the resistance movement. (Interview no. 36b)

As was described in Chapter seven, several of the returning Timorese gained prominent government positions and joined existing or started new civil society organizations. Indeed, several of the NGOs are headed by charismatic

leaders, some of which have returned from years spent outside of Timor-Leste. However, these are women (and men) that the general public cannot always identify with, due to their higher level of education and empowerment. This, in turn, sometimes alienates some women because they find it difficult to relate to the stronger norm entrepreneurs within organizations and in politics. One NGO representative noted that “many women have a submissive role, even in several NGOs where women are outspoken” (Interview no. 47). One politically active woman explained that some of the women who stayed in the country during the occupation do not think that women who have returned from the Diaspora are role models. These women (and men) are considered arrogant and pushy in their efforts to enforce what is considered “western ideas” (Interview no. 64). This interviewee explained further that women are jealous of other women’s success, and this would explain why the women who stayed during the occupation have difficulty supporting the women who have returned from the Diaspora and taken prominent roles as norm entrepreneurs. A similar line of argument was raised by a women’s organization, stating that the big challenge in Timorese politics is between women rather than between men and women. Women fight each other within and between political parties to get the best positions and many women do not care about promoting women’s rights at large (Interview no. 54). The message then risks getting lost if the enforcement of the norm of women’s political rights takes a backseat to personal intrigues and jealousy.

Several interviewees highlighted that having more women in political decision-making will help bring women’s issues forward and facilitate gender mainstreaming. One interviewee, a representative for a women’s organization, stated that “we hope that women who are sitting in parliament are women, not women with a man’s thinking” (Interview no. 38), indicating that women are the ones who are supposed to bring attention to women’s needs and issues. One female politician argued that it is up to women in politics to show the Timorese people that gender equality is important (Interview no. 61). This was echoed by a women’s rights advocate, who stated that strategic and strong women are needed in politics to get things done and have issues pushed through. In other words, the need for key people to take the lead on this issue is important (Interview no. 45). The same interviewee stressed that she believed that men do not raise the issues as women do, and that no man would raise the same issues as women if women were not present (Interview no. 45). However, according to Ospina’s study (2008) on women in decision-making in the country, “most female [members of parliament] have been reserved and insensitive to gender concerns”. In general she describes the (former) parliament as consisting of mostly gender neutral, or gender blind, parliamentarians, rarely addressing gender as a cross-cutting theme in their policy discussions (Ospina 2008:41). This was

described by one politically active woman as a consequence of the fact that the most competent women are not those who get elected (or placed at eligible positions on candidates' lists). What seems to matter more is having the right connections in the party elite. This means that female members of parliament are not necessarily good norm entrepreneurs, since they are not dedicated to the enforcement of women's political rights per se (Interview no. 64). One women's organization estimated that about half of the women in politics are doing it for purely selfish reasons and not in order to strive for gender equality and promote women's rights (Interview no. 54).

One female politician described national politics as not very family-friendly, which affects the number of women who are willing to become politically active. There are long working hours, no child-care facilities, and no holidays, just to mention some of the issues that might scare women away from politics (Interview no. 61). According to her, if women are to get political positions, they must be aware of this constant battle and be prepared to take it (Interview no. 61). Another female politician stated that a woman who wants to be in politics has to be a "gifted woman" and be able to address the complaints raised by the family, community, church and culture. The way to respond, according to this politician, is to dress in a long skirt, behave well, be a good mother and go to Church every Sunday (Interview no. 65). Needless to say, many women cannot deliver in all four arenas. However, as noted in the UNIFEM debriefing, women are increasingly engaging in politics. According to several interviewees, there are some really strong and competent women in Timor (Interview no. 36b; Interview no. 58). One politician stressed that there are some really good women coming up at the national level but that they are rarely given the support they need, from their families, their political party, society etc. (Interview no. 61). This is discussed more in-depth towards the end of this chapter.

It is interesting to note that the number of women represented in local level government is still very limited, compared to the national level. Indeed, as noted in the previous chapter, the number of women represented in suco and aldeia councils is rarely more than the required minimum of three women, although this in itself is a big change. But women's limited presence in these councils is believed to affect how women's issues are promoted: "traditionally women's needs have been neglected in their villages, largely due to men's monopoly on councils", states a study conducted by Oxfam (Oxfam 2005). The same Oxfam-study also reveal that there has been mixed response from the village regarding women's participation and representation; some men "say that the woman councilors are not able to do anything for our village, but we say that we can do something very important for our village as a councilor" (female suco councilor, cited in Oxfam 2005). One national policy advisor interviewed raised her concern about women's capability to participate to a satisfactory way in local level politics: "many

women are illiterate which makes it difficult for them to understand messages and bring messages [from and back to the village]" (Interview no. 43). Again, often women in the suco councils are not very out-spoken, something that a gender advisor mentioned to me, stating that "we have always been emphasizing the point that women representatives in the suco councils are almost like the voices of the women in the village, and if they are not very active then..." (Interview no. 39a). The 2005 Oxfam study concluded that female suco councilors have an important role to play as role models for other women; "as councilors, if these women are very active and help their fellow women, then maybe these positive activities can encourage other women to become candidates in the next election" (women's organizations, cited in Oxfam 2005). In other words, even if women are not necessarily more gender sensitive than men, the importance of having women involved at the local level is stressed as these women serve as important role models for other women. At the same time, the NGO Alternative CEDAW Report states that women "are not trained to carry out their duties regarding public administration once they are elected" (NGOs Working Group on CEDAW 2009), which impedes their potential as norm entrepreneurs.

At both the national and local level, it is still very much the case that it comes down to individuals (both women and men) and their success in bringing issues on to the table. One member of parliament explained that she feels as if she has a duty to stand up for other women and that she often feels personally responsible for what she says in political forums and how she handles macho attitudes in politics (Interview no. 61). In an effort to increase female parliamentarians' capability to unite and enforce the norm of women's political rights together, the Women's Parliamentarians' Caucus (GMPTL) was established, as described in Chapter seven. All female parliamentarians belong to GMPTL, but this does not mean that they are all advocating women's rights, one member of parliament told me (Interview no. 58).¹³⁵ This underscores the discussion above, that women do not necessarily promote women's rights just because they are women. Another member of parliament described the Women's Parliamentarians' Caucus as a good venue for women to come together and look beyond party differences and discuss issues relevant to them. One such issue, for example, would be the perceived belief that female politicians have to be much more vocal to show they are worthy to hold political office (Interview no. 45). It is believed that the caucus could help women master such demands through uniting as a

¹³⁵ According to the interviewee, two women in the caucus had just recently (mid 2008) made "outrageous" statements relating to women's rights. For example that women in general should wear more formal clothing so that they do not "encourage" men to do bad things, or what can be done to control "loose Timorese women" who give other women's husbands STD and HIV/AIDS, and as such giving other Timorese women a bad reputation (Interview no. 58).

group of women rather than women from different political parties. On the other hand, once in plenary session, this momentum is often lost and issues discussed in the caucus' meetings are rarely addressed because "solidarity among women is then lost to party politics" (Interview no. 63). One member of parliament explained that party politics are indeed very visible in plenary sessions:

There are 19 women in parliament, with the characteristic of not submitting to anybody. But the issue is then how to do this consistently and not succumb to the party line if in disagreement. The government coalition is fragile and there is a strict party discipline. This affects how much women can speak up. As a result, they might end up voting against their own conscious. (Interview no. 61)

A current member of parliament was critical of the power of the Women's Parliamentarians' Caucus as a norm entrepreneur; among other things criticizing that women by default are supposedly more gender sensitive. According to this politician, men trying to promote gender sensitivity are not heard to the same extent as women (Interview no. 58). At a workshop with a women's organization it was emphasized that it is not enough to just add women and expect them to bring women's rights or gender issues onto the agenda (Interview no. 54). One women's organization emphasized that its experience was that some male parliamentarians are indeed gender sensitive and supportive of women and can thereby be just as effective norm entrepreneurs as women (Interview no. 48). While it is not possible to draw any conclusions about this because it is very much dependent on individuals, it can be stated that both women and men in parliament are gender sensitive as well as insensitive and that ignoring men's support for gender equality might result in backlash for securing human rights for both men and women.

As for women represented in the parliament today, it is not surprising that some are active and able to make their voices heard, whereas others "need more encouragement to manage their role", as explained by one representative for a women's organization (Interview no. 41). A women's rights advocate also discussed this, stating that "some women in politics are really strong whereas others are not. If they are not that strong it is because they lack information and knowledge of women's role and needs, and more training is needed" (Interview no. 49b). This is not a unique situation for women. However, as noted above and as will be discussed further below, apparent signs of weakness might not only be due to ignorance, but rather an effect of the political climate. One politician described her role as a female politician as a constant struggle. She always felt like she had to be on top of things, doing a much better job than her male colleagues (Interview no. 61). Another member of parliament explained that female parliamentarians were held to a higher standard than male members of parliament (Interview no. 63). This is not a specific Timorese phenomenon, but it nevertheless high-

lights that even though women are allowed a political space, and might even be supported through a quota system, they will not necessarily be playing by the same rules as men. Clearly women's political rights are then paid lip service by political parties, perhaps because they know they have to according to CEDAW, the Constitution, and the electoral laws. However, adherence to the norm as such is not irrespective of audience and rhetorical support of women's political rights is not necessarily followed by relevant action.

As noted in Chapter seven, the Office of the Secretary of State for the Promotion of Equality (SEPI) is supposed to be taking the lead at the state level in enforcing a gender equality agenda. One women's rights advocate reflected upon the creation of a specific national gender equality machinery and how effective it could really be as a norm entrepreneur. She stated that having a ministry, or an Office of the Secretary of State as in Timor-Leste, does not mean that the entire Council of Ministers will think and act gender; "[g]ender issues are an ongoing battle in the council of ministries and it is going to take some time for people to change" (Interview no. 45). When the Office for the Promotion of Equality (OPE) was established it was appointed to be the main institutional body responsible for promoting gender mainstreaming. However, according to Hall and True (2009:167), OPE was not able to successfully carry out its task and promote gender mainstreaming throughout government policy, despite high level of international support. Also, since the Office for the Promotion of Equality was just an Advisory Office under the Prime Minister's Office, the Advisor had no access to the Council of Ministers and had to rely on the Prime Minister to raise issues regarding gender equality. Furthermore, the Office was under-staffed and many of the staff working there lacked the right skills and capacities to actually review policy and legal reforms from a gender perspective (Hall and True 2009:167). There also seemed to be some misunderstanding as to what the OPE was supposed to be doing. As one prominent Timorese women's rights activist explained, "OPE was thought to have a strong implementation role but it [was] more about monitoring and trying to mainstream the issue. Implementation is up to each ministry" (Interview no. 45).

When SEPI was established with the new government after the 2007 election, the machinery was elevated into an Office of the Secretary of State with access to the Council of Ministers. Several interviewees underlined that SEPI is more independent and stronger than OPE ever could have been (for example raised by Interview no. 56; Interview no. 36b). One gender advisor stated that under its first 18 months, a lot changed within the institution. Even though the team initially installed in SEPI was committed to gender, they were still lacking the appropriate skills (Interview no. 36b). Now there is new staff, although several more have to join the team before SEPI can function as it is supposed to according to the organic law of the government

and can deliver on the goals highlighted in the Strategic Plan for 2010-2015. Still, even now there are several things SEPI cannot do because it lacks key personnel. One issue that causes big problems at this point is that throughout the country there is only so many qualified staff one can recruit from. The human resource pool is not big enough for the civil service and international organizations looking for qualified personnel. Indeed, as pointed out by an interviewee with insight into the functioning of SEPI, the problem within the Secretariat is not financial resources but human resources (Interview no. 56). So at the end of 2008 it was believed that although the structure of SEPI was in place, the Secretary of State was basically on her own in trying to deliver on the mandate provided for SEPI (Interview no. 52). The New York CEDAW Committee also expressed concern that SEPI still lacks adequate resources, a concern also raised as regards the ministerial gender focal points (CEDAW 2009a). During my last visit to the country in March 2009, more staff was onboard and SEPI could increasingly engage in the tasks assigned to it, such as advocacy, monitoring, and training.¹³⁶

As was discussed in Chapter seven, establishing a gender focal point system has been the main initiative to mainstream gender and place norm entrepreneurs in all line ministries to help promote the norm of women's rights. One of the criticisms directed at the previous gender focal point system was that the focal points lacked training. According to a women's organization, while discussing the role of the gender focal points in analyzing the state budget, the focal points "really need training to ensue that policies adopt a gender perspective [...]. Gender focal points should know gender so they can see if the budget helps women or not" (Interview no. 41). One international gender advisor I interviewed seconded this, stating that it is important to use the momentum that comes with a new government in place and the establishment of the gender focal point system; "the [gender focal points] need training soon" (Interview no. 46). Only three ministerial gender focal points were interviewed for this study, but some of them are focal points in ministries that are considered having taken the lead in "gender mainstreaming" through the gender focal point system, and none of them had received any official training prior to taking on the role as a focal point. One stated that she/he had received some training at an international workshop conducted by an international organization, but that was all (Interview no. 55). It seems that training is something that comes on-the-job at the best, or it is more a matter of learning by doing. In one line ministry, the gender focal point was considered not "all into gender" at first, but through training and experience the gender focal point started to understand

¹³⁶ Personal communication with SEPI staff, Dili March 1 and 3, 2009.

the relationship between gender and development (Interview no. 46). As explained by one gender advisor, the gender focal points need capacity-building and gender has to be internalized, at least within the focal points as a start. The interviewee emphasized that “gender” has to become less theoretical and more related to people’s work (Interview no. 46).

The gender focal point system, in its revised form, had only been in place less than one year when I conducted these interviews, and the gender focal points had similar experiences when asked to reflect upon how others in their ministries understood the work conducted by the focal points. One interviewee explained that there was no resistance within the ministry to “do gender”, but not all civil servants in the ministry understood the relevance of gender issues in the development process of the country. This also included senior level staff within the ministry (Interview no. 55). In another line ministry, people were believed to talk about “gender” and understand the basics of it, even though the gender focal point did not believe that all directors actually cared about “gender” (Interview no. 53). One gender focal point stated that even though the minister supported “gender”, the focal point still felt the need for more and better coordination mechanisms throughout the ministry in order to be able to implement activities (Interview no. 55). Another obstacle identified was the lack of financial resources (Interview no. 62), although this was not a problem for all gender focal points interviewed. One gender focal point stated that thanks to support from an international organization, and because the gender focal point was located in the policy and planning directorate of the ministry, the budgeting for gender activities was not a problem (Interview no. 55). Another gender focal point complained that there was no time to “do gender” in this particular ministry. Gender focal point activities was an add-on for this focal point (Interview no. 60). The other focal points also addressed the problem of just one person being responsible for “gendering” an entire ministry. An international gender advisor explained that in some of the line ministries, the interest for gender is high and the gender focal points are dedicated, but they have so many other issues to work with as well. Consequently, even if they want to take their gender portfolio serious, there are not enough people (Interview no. 51). One gender focal point said that it was difficult to find information about what was going on in this area in the different departments, because the departments might feel like they were being investigated by the gender focal point (Interview no. 53). Also, some of the ministries are quite big, making it extremely difficult for one individual to be responsible for gender issues. One of the focal points raised this argument and also pointed out that this had been discussed both within this particular ministry and with SEPI. However, the focal point believed that it was SEPI’s responsibility to push for multiple gender focal points in bigger ministries and to facilitate organizational issues (Interview no. 55). A gender

advisor stated that she agreed that it is not possible for one person to generate change in a ministry, but also noted that it is not an easy task for SEPI to make the line ministries understand this. She explained that efforts had been initiated to mobilize directors and have them think in terms of gender units. One such initiative is that gender focal points have established informal working groups in some line ministries (Interview no. 36b). One gender focal point said that at this point in time a full gender unit within the ministry was not possible, because the ministry was not ready. According to this focal point, capacity and awareness within the ministry must increase so that people in the ministry understand why gender is important for the ministry and how they can mainstream gender in all ministry activities. When this has been achieved, the ministry could establish a full gender unit (Interview no. 55).

Translating the idea of women's rights within individual ministries has had varying degrees of success. One of the first ministries to take gender onboard was the former Ministry of Labor and Community Reinsertion, through its establishment of an operational gender unit and a gender analysis within the ministry itself (World Bank and ADB 2007:32; Ospina 2008:64). Although an increasing number of ministries seems to have taken gender onboard, one woman in a line ministry stated that it is important to ensure that other colleagues work with gender. "There is not really resistance towards gender; it just needs to be ensured that it is done", she stated (Interview no. 45). A 2007 World Bank/ADB brief on economic and social development in the country stated that in general the issue of gender mainstreaming needs to enjoy a much higher level of support in order to encourage line ministries to address gender within their sectors (World Bank and ADB 2007:32). One gender advisor, at that time affiliated with one of the line ministries, also highlighted the lack of capacity within ministries. In her estimation it will take at least "a couple of years" before the ministry had become somewhat gender-sensitized. She believed that there was very low capacity within the ministry at the time of our interview, in early 2008. One of the issues raised was that people in the ministry knew that women, as well as men, should participate in training and meetings etc. but she believed that they could not really explain why this was important (Interview no. 46). In other words, the right buzzwords have been picked up, whether to use with donors, international advisors, or even just within the ministry. However, the gender advisor believed that people had not internalized why they should talk about gender; "not that it is not seen as important, but they do not see how it is linked to all the other issues" (Interview no. 46). This should be understood in the context of what is discussed further below, that gender is seen as something to address once a country has reached a certain level of development and not part of that same development process.

In sum, norm entrepreneurs are gaining ground and efforts to increase women's capability to function are undertaken at various levels of society as a result of such norm enforcement. However, there is a risk that the norm entrepreneurs are over-burdened and without any success in their efforts to increase norm diffusion. The women's movement was already a prominent norm entrepreneur when international actors entered the country and is still playing an important role today. The movement is now more diverse and arguably less united, but still functions as an important norm entrepreneur in trying to influence policy-making and disseminate information to the grassroots and educate the general public about women's political rights. SEPI has at times been criticized for its lack of collaboration with civil society organizations, but as it has increased its capacity and become more institutionalized, it is believed that this collaboration has begun to function better. Increased capacity within SEPI is raised as a major issue that has to be addressed, and other ministries and actors must begin to promote of gender equality and women's rights. One issue raised in the interviews is whether or not people talk about gender and women's rights automatically, because they have developed an understanding of the issues, or simply because they have to. As a gender focal point stated above, people have still not internalized why gender is important. This sums up the sentiment that several interviewees have expressed: is there a genuine commitment to women's rights as part of a gender mainstreaming discussion, or do people only talk about it because they have learned the right discourse? In order to get closer to answering this question, and to get a better understanding of norm internalization in Timor-Leste we have to look closer at how women's capability to function plays out in the country.

The discussion so far has revealed that despite being highly institutionalized, it is still a struggle to get women's political rights internalized in the Timorese context. The female politicians interviewed for this study all told similar stories of how they feel that women have to fight harder than their male colleagues in order to be credible in politics, which illustrates the problem of lack of internalization. Although the interviewees are not a representative selection, they are nevertheless some of the most outspoken and most experienced female politicians in Timor-Leste. Considering that very few women in parliament are vocal at all (five female members of parliament in the previous government were reported to be somewhat outspoken according to Ospina's study (2008:39)), the experience of these women makes it possible to at least get a hint about what it might be to be a woman in the Timorese political system. This, then, would indicate that women have to keep on struggling to actually enjoy their capabilities to function.

Discriminating ways of life

Several interviewees in this study have stated that women are increasingly starting to claim their rights and challenging traditional views on how they should behave. The risk, however, is that this emancipation effort is not rewarded if others, in particular men but also older generations, are not included in the process and also subject to awareness-raising projects. The Government's initial CEDAW report states that "women are not expected or encouraged to become traditional leaders" (SEPI 2007). This is also true for women coming from matrilineal clans. Only if women are as capable, or more, than a man in the same position is she accepted as a leader (SEPI 2007). This corresponds to the views expressed by the female politicians I interviewed, which were discussed above. Some other interviewees, however, stated that they believed that women are increasingly being accepted as leaders in the community. One woman working with women's political participation through an NGO stated that because village law says that women should also have the right to be political leaders, men also understand this (Interview no. 48). Whether or not they understand and support women's political rights just because it is included in village law might be a subject for discussion, but the statement should be understood as meaning that men are increasingly accepting the fact that women can be political leaders, although not necessarily supporting it and enforcing it themselves irrespective of the audience. This indicates that although legal developments have played an important role in securing women's access to decision-making at the local level, genuine understanding of why women should be involved seems still to be lacking. This is the same pattern discussed at the national level by female politicians – i.e. that despite being qualified, women would probably not make up 27 percent of the national parliament without a quota system.

As was highlighted in the previous chapter, promoting women in the village development councils under the Community Empowerment and Local Governance Project (CEP) was the first initiative to enforce women's participation in decision-making assemblies. However, many of the women elected to the village development councils were inexperienced and lacked capacity and quality to actively participate in public office discussions (Ospina 2008:48). Promoting female leaders required a re-definition of the traditional roles of men and women, something that was not easily accomplished:

[o]ur traditions tell them (the women) to stay in the kitchen, as it is at the moment. Women now have to overtake part of the development, but they also still have to take care of the house. If we stay with the conservative values we cannot develop. The same the other way round, if we suspend the traditional values we will lose our identity. (Intellectual from Bobonaro district, cited in Ospina and Hohe 2001:79)

Thus, even though women now had access to decision-making at the village level, they still lacked *de facto* influence over politics. In council meetings, women reportedly remained quiet, allowing male council members to speak instead (Ospina 2008:48). A study from 2001 reports that at CEP village meetings, female council members were seen serving food and drinks, all according to traditional gender roles. They rarely spoke themselves, and several female council members knew very little about the community empowerment project as such (Ospina and Hohe 2001:138-139). Similarly, the NGO Alternative CEDAW report states that in *suco* councils, “when guests visits the villages, women in village councils are only given domestic tasks to deal with [during] the visit” (NGOs Working Group on CEDAW 2009). According to Ospina’s study, women, when asked for their opinion, often replied that they agreed with what the men had said (Ospina 2008:48). This pattern can also be identified in the district and sub-district administration, where, according to one national policy advisor, women lack the capacity and skills to analyze the situation and projects (Interview no. 43). Another international policy advisor explained that “some women are very vocal, but on the average, in general they do not participate much” (Interview no. 44). A female politician gave the same picture at the national level; women join political parties because their husbands are involved, or they join to cook and support the men (interview no. 64). However, in Ospina’s study it is argued that although many of the female administrators did not know a lot of the work they were supposed to be doing when they started, the women interviewed in that study claim that they learn a lot through their experience in decision-making (Ospina 2008:66). This can serve as a basis for continued involvement in politics and might enable them to become norm entrepreneurs. Similarly, although women did not seem to participate explicitly in the village development councils, women were believed to be just as vocal as their male counterparts at internal CEP meetings. Mostly older women were seen proposing ideas, criticizing male partners, and raising important issues, and, according to one woman, also enjoying the respect of men (Ospina and Hohe 2001:138-139). It is important to highlight the potential small changes that occur among the women themselves, as described above. By participating in politics, regardless of at what level, a learning process is initiated. Changing structural constraints for women’s political participation requires fundamental changes of mentality in both men and women. Such measures include training in communication techniques and management skills to make women more confident in speaking their minds and raising their concerns, as well as to provide them with the basic skills for effective leadership (Ospina and Hohe 2001:142).

As discussed in Chapter seven, female political participation within the local governance structure remains low, even though women are guaranteed at least three seats on each *suco* council. According to de Araujo, there is still

uncertainty about being represented by a woman, especially at the local level. One village leader from the Bobonaro district explained it as: “[c]an those long haired members of our community really offer us the security we need as a community?” (cited in de Araujo 2005). According to Ospina’s study, traditional leaders argued against women’s participation in local decision-making on various occasions (Ospina 2008:57). One interviewee explained that this urban-rural divide could in part be explained by distance from the center, isolation, poverty, lack of access to education and transportation (Interview no. 58). Rural areas are also more conservative and more religious, even though this differs depending on whether an area is under patrilineal or matrilineal heritage lines. Even though traditional roles are the same in the two systems, there is, for example, no bride price in the matrilineal system, which might make those women more independent from their husband and families. However, despite reforms and empowerment of women, traditional chiefs still dominate and traditional hierarchies are not easily eradicated (Interview no. 58). One gender advisor explained that family tradition and culture is very strong and for many it serves as an impediment. She continued by stating that social norms and values are strong and often difficult to bypass, and even though women are making progress through different organizations, many of them still find it hard to fight culture for the sake of societal change (Interview no. 46). This was also emphasized in the NGO Aternative CEDAW report; “cultural values, norms and practices constrain women’s full participation in national development [...]” (NGOs Working Group on CEDAW 2009). Ospina retells a story of how, at a community meeting in Lospalos, some men reportedly told former Minister Ana Pessoa that women had no place in politics, but should rather be in the kitchen (as told in Ospina 2008:57). According to an international gender advisor, “there is still an idea that local government positions are for men and a perception that women’s capacities are low, although this has improved a lot” (Interview no. 39b). Interviews in Ospina’s study reveal that this problematic picture is something that is acknowledged by political parties, who increasingly are referring to “the patriarchal system in culture and tradition” as one of the main obstacles for women’s representation and participation in politics (Ospina 2008:73). The former president of the National Parliament stated that legislative mechanisms such as a quota system are not enough; “what is important is to change mentalities” (cited in Ospina 2008:81).

Changing attitudes is a daunting task and resistance towards women’s political rights can be linked to prevailing understandings that “gender” and “women’s rights” is something that is not considered “natural” in Timorese society, which impedes internalization (Interview no. 36b). In 2001, President Xanana Gusmão is noted to have stated that “standards relating to the rights of women, particularly the right of women to determine their own

lives, did not find *natural affinity or reflection* in East Timorese culture” (paraphrased in Charlesworth and Wood 2002, emphasis added). He went on to criticize the way certain international standards, in particular when it came to women’s rights, were introduced in Timor-Leste.¹³⁷ Milena Pires, on the other hand, argues that:

[c]ultural discourse is invoked frequently to quash attempts to introduce discussions on women’s rights into the East Timorese political equation. The incompatibility between East Timorese culture and what is popularly cited as western feminist imposition is used to dismiss even the notion that Timorese women’s rights may need to be nurtured and defended so to become a reality [...]. (cited in Charlesworth and Wood 2002)

This potential lack of *natural affinity* of women’s rights in Timorese society was also highlighted in Ospina’s study from 2008, although in this case there was a difference between women’s political rights at the national and the local level. In her study she tells a story of an Oxfam community worker in Same who at a group discussion in political leadership witnessed the following exchange of words:

when asked whether a woman could be a president or Prime Minister, community members replied that they could, as the Constitution guarantees gender equality. When asked whether a woman could be Village Chief, however, their response was different: ‘Ah no, it’s not possible ... the work is very difficult’. (as told in Ospina 2008:57)

According to the NGO Alternative CEDAW report, “[...] the majority of the population, including older women, thinks that Timor-Leste’s women in the local level are not yet ready to be community leaders such as village leaders and hamlet leaders” (NGOs Working Group on CEDAW 2009). Although both men and women are increasingly coming around to accepting women in leadership positions, there is still a long way to go before attitudes and tradition has changed. The New York CEDAW Committee experts also raised the crucial issue of not only creating equal opportunities for men and women but also addressing discriminating attitudes and negative gender stereotypes (CEDAW 2009b). A number of my interviewees believed that attitudes were changing, which supports what Ospina states in her study. One national gender advisor stated that she believed there have been changes in people’s attitudes, especially in the urban areas where access to information is easy. In the rural areas, on the other hand, it is difficult for people to access information. However, she believed that as people access more of it, “they are very open to changes” (Interview no. 37a). Another interviewee stated

¹³⁷ It should be noted that since then, the former President (now Prime Minister) has made several statements in favor of women’s rights.

that men are starting to realize that women are more vocal and ask questions as part of participating more in community activities. Although some men complain about this increased community involvement, men are coming around and increasingly accepting women's participation (Interview no. 39a). A Timorese gender advisor also discussed this:

In the past, men considered themselves the boss. Women should take children to school, do this and that, but now there are men sharing the job, men take children to school and they are part of the children's activities in school and outside of school [...] hopefully it can be reached and changed in the remote areas as well. (Interview no. 37a)

The same interviewee also stated that in her experience, people sometimes tended to listen more to women than men. In her work with peacebuilding activities, she had noticed that the women who do become involved are often women with influence in society. These women are often older, and men tend to respect older women rather than the younger ones (Interview no. 37a). That women are powerful at least in certain community issues is of course a development in itself, but the power ascribed to older women rather than younger women is still in accordance with Timorese culture, as discussed in Chapter four. This should be discussed in relation to the fact that the women who are increasingly becoming involved in politics today, and the ones eager to learn more about gender issues, are usually younger women (and men).

Adaptive preferences

Views on politics and the roles women are supposed to play do not always add up. Having enjoyed limited political opportunities in the past obviously affects women's perceptions of themselves and their capabilities. At the same time, because women were part of the clandestine struggle and fought for independence alongside men, they know they have the capability to be strong.¹³⁸ As was discussed above, several interviewees testified about the number of strong and competent Timorese women out there. Still, as noted above, discriminating ways of life stand in the way of many women who might otherwise become political actors.

People interviewed for this study agreed that women are increasingly aware of their rights, at least on paper. One gender advisor working towards women in the districts, trying to increase their sense of leadership, stated this firmly; "yes, women are aware [of their rights]" (Interview no. 39a). A

¹³⁸ However, interviewees in Olsson's study revealed that "women's participation in the struggle for independence [was] not used as an argument by women's organizations in Timor in favor of increasing women's rights (Olsson 2007:95). Still, several of my interviewees highlighted the fact that women had fought alongside men, and this was important for the understanding of women's rights.

female politician stated that women now know their rights, in part as a result of TV and radio (Interview no. 56). But it is one thing knowing that you should have access to rights and quite another thing to actually claim them. This is exactly what adaptive preferences calls attention to. One interviewee, working as a policy advisor for an international organization, put this into the Timorese context. According to her, “every woman wants to have access [to rights]. However, they are not used to having it so they are not demanding it [...]” (Interview no. 34). Another Timorese interviewee, working with a peacebuilding project explained that

If you compare Timorese women with other women ... it is quite hard for them to engage in peacebuilding because of this traditionally constructed culture that is very male-dominated. We have a patriarchal system that puts women as a second-class citizen ... secondary status in the family. It is very hard for women to engage themselves in peacebuilding because of beliefs that women should be doing domestic household work rather than engage themselves in the public sphere. (Interview no. 37a)

One Timorese woman working for a women's organization stated that “[d]ecision-making is a very big challenge for us, to say: yes I want this, I do not want this...” (Interview no. 38). The same woman continued explaining that “[women] do not see how women can be a leader for themselves, in their families and also in their community” (Interview no. 38). This was also brought up by another women's rights organization. The interviewee there explained that due to lack of education and information, many women at the grassroots level have adopted negative preferences for themselves: “I am a woman, I cannot do everything, whereas my husband can do everything” (Interview no. 59). Another interviewee agreed, stating that due to lack of education, women have limited skills and knowledge if they want to participate in the development of the country, both related to political and economic activities (Interview no. 37a). Another Timorese woman working in a women's organization stated that even if women become leaders in their societies, they still have to perform their roles as a woman and as a wife (Interview no. 41). This corresponds to the view put forward by female politicians discussed above.

An increasing number of women are starting to become involved in leadership training and decision-making at various levels, which helps change attitudes. Much of this is due to the work of NGOs, which encourage women to become actors for change. One national gender advisor confirmed that she believed that attitudes are changing and women are realizing that they do not have to have their rights violated (Interview no. 37b). One gender advisor in an international organization working to increase the number of women in decision-making positions told me about some of the rewarding results she had experienced: “[y]ou get very pleased

when you see the realization in women ... when they see that they should really be asking the government questions [...]“ (Interview no. 39a). Women are thus increasingly demanding their rights; “women’s levels of awareness have been raised as women are starting to claim their rights [...] men’s levels have not been raised to the same extent”, explained one international gender advisor (Interview no. 39b). One representative of a women’s organization reflected upon this, highlighting the need for women and men to work together in realizing women’s rights:

We have to struggle for women’s rights in Timor. 24 years ago, during Indonesian time women did not have power; they were dependent on their husbands. So now it is time for women to struggle [...] I think women have to struggle for their rights, and women have to work with men to struggle for women’s rights, not only women. (Interview no. 48)

Women’s increased claiming of their rights was also evident at the second International Women for Peace Conference organized in Dili in March 2009. A number of women from different districts took the opportunity to ask critical questions to government officials and members of parliament, claiming their rights and criticizing national politicians for not delivering on their promises to enhance women’s rights throughout the country. One incident that was particularly interesting to note was when the Deputy President of the National Parliament had to answer for herself. One district woman stood up and asked what all this talk about democracy actually brought to the women of Timor-Leste, who are still suffering. She criticized the women in parliament for not representing the women at the grassroots level and she invited the Deputy President to visit her district to learn about the needs women have. An unofficial translation of her contribution to the debate states “don’t be afraid to come out and see us. Use the cars that you have as you are supposed to use them”.¹³⁹ In other words, women are increasingly starting to claim their rights and are challenging traditional views on how they are supposed to behave. Still, such developments can only lead to high levels of internalization if both urban and rural, old and young men and women take the norm of women’s political rights onboard and in so doing alter discriminating ways of life.

¹³⁹ International Women for Peace Conference, 5 March, 2009. Comments to presentation by Maria Paixão, Deputy President of the National Parliament. The comment referred to the controversial cars that each member of parliament had received, supposedly to improve their possibilities to reach out to the districts and their constituencies.

Translating the international norm into national practices

The international norm's spread to and enforcement in a country depends on whether it is perceived as valid. In Timor-Leste there are still misunderstandings surrounding the norm of women's political rights. For example, there is still a debate about the applicability of the concept of gender and women's rights in the Timorese context. This ultimately affects whether or not the norm is promoted irrespective of audience and whether rhetorical support for the norm will be followed by action. It also affects how well people are able to take the norm onboard as part of their "habits of the heart". If the norm is seen as something that is not applicable to the Timorese context and is considered externally imposed, translating the international norm into national practices will be unsuccessful and the norm will not become rooted amongst domestic actors.

As was highlighted in the previous chapter, women's organizations were talking about women's rights prior to the entrance of international actors in 1999, although "gender" seems to be a concept that was rather new to Timorese society. According to Ospina's study, few, if any, mentioned the concept of gender equality before the Indonesian occupation. According to one interviewee in her study, gender equality was brought onto the political agenda with UNTAET (Ospina 2008:38). This is something that several of the interviewees in my study discussed as well, emphasizing that during Indonesian times, everybody struggled for independence, and as part of this, the emancipation of women. Women and men fought together for the independence of their country, but never discussed it in terms of gender equality. However, as women's organizations developed, women's rights and gender issues specifically started to appear on the agenda (Interview no. 49a; Interview no. 38). The fact that women faced specific problems was thus highlighted by the few organizations addressing women's emancipation (Interview no. 41). One interviewee pointed out that the Popular Women's Organization of East Timor (OPMT) actually worked with commercial sex workers as early as the 1970s, something that was also confirmed in Ospina's study (Interview no. 45; Ospina 2008:17). This indicates that issues relating to women's rights as such were indeed discussed prior to 1999 and not just brought into the country by foreigners, "malae". One women's rights advocate emphasized that ever so often they still come across claims that "women's rights" and "gender equality" is something that is foreign, and that "it is comforting to attribute issues as malae if one is against change" (Interview no. 45). One representative from a women's rights organization told a story about how when her organization goes out into the districts they often hear community people say "oh now the women's movement want to promote women's rights that they have brought from abroad". According to this interviewee, the concept of women's rights is still considered "malae and contradictory to our culture" (Interview no. 41). Another women's rights

advocate tried to explain that when it comes to the concept of “gender”, the word itself might be rather new to Timorese society, but the content is the same as the issues that were discussed during the fight for independence. But still, even if civil society and international actors, as well as the Timorese government, have been talking about gender since independence, women’s rights advocates still have to raise consciousness about what gender actually is (Interview no. 49a). I will return to this shortly.

Regardless of when the issue of women’s rights and gender equality started to emerge on the Timorese political agenda, it can be established that in 1999, independence from Indonesia, international influences through the UN and other international organizations, as well as through people returning from the Diaspora, opened up a space for the issue of women’s rights and gender equality. Indeed, an interviewee in Olsson’s study stated that “the UN created big change in terms of [...] women’s rights [...]” (Olsson 2007:103). However, it is one thing to talk the talk, and quite another to see action follow words. According to Ospina’s study, and confirmed by several of my interviewees (as presented above), most members of parliament are gender neutral at best, but most likely gender blind (Ospina 2008:41). For example, one international gender advisor explained that in meetings with members of parliament, they were still debating what “equality”, “discrimination” and “anti-discrimination” really means. The same thing happens in discussions of CEDAW; “people can apply it to certain situations and cite it quite well, but when asked about its specifics...” (Interview no. 51). Another international gender advisor agreed, “people refer to gender mainstreaming, but not everyone knows what it means” (Interview no. 36a). Yet another international gender advisor also echoed this, and stated that people still seem to lack knowledge of *why* it is important to also include women, beyond the fact that women also suffered during the occupation (Interview no. 57). According to one interviewee, talking about gender is very dependent on the audience; “some politicians talk about gender only when it is about campaigning; they do not understand gender either” (Interview no. 49a).¹⁴⁰ The same interviewee, a Timorese women’s rights advocate, estimated that only about five percent of the people in Timor-Leste understand “gender”. Now this is a subjective estimation, but it nevertheless highlights that within the “sphere of women’s rights advocates”, many believe that there are a lot of misperceptions about the concept of “gender” in the political discussion, and that this impedes mainstreaming gender and therefore adherence to the norm.

¹⁴⁰ Such sentiments of misunderstandings of the meaning of “gender” and that politicians only talk about gender equality ahead of elections is not a Timorese phenomenon, but considering that this is the context that we are analyzing closer, we have to discuss such developments and how it relates to norm diffusion in Timor-Leste.

Several of the informants and respondents in this study confirmed this lack of understanding of “gender” and highlighted it as a problem to succeed with gender mainstreaming. For example, one gender focal point explained that gender is often translated into looking at women’s issues. This focal point speculated that this had to do with the fact that women are the main advocates for gender issues (Interview no. 55). Another gender focal point added that because a lot of gender activities focus on opportunities for women and educating women about their capacities, then gender is understood as only focusing on women (Interview no. 53). The result, as pointed out by one gender advisor, is that promoting gender equality is seen as a power struggle where men lose power as gender relations become more equal (Interview no. 46; also raised by interview no. 49a). The main problem in this equation was highlighted by a gender focal point in one of the line ministries: many “gender activities” focus on women only without the aim being communicated to the wider public. “Part of the work with gender then becomes to explain to people” stated the gender focal point (Interview no. 53). Indeed, “gender needs have to be taught to both men and women in Timorese society”, argued one local NGO (Interview no. 47). However, the answer is not to have international actors push the issue; it has to become rooted within the Timorese society. One international gender advisor, critically scrutinizing her own role, stated that it is not a solution to bring outsiders in to do gender; it has to be addressed by everyone in Timor. She emphasized that since not all donors are gender sensitive, focus has to be put on all levels (Interview no. 46). According to one donor country, although all donors have gender mainstreaming as an objective in their activities, only a few donors actively bring the issue onto the political agenda, for example at donor meetings. This donor representative also stated that if this country did not raise issues relating to women’s rights, then she believed that no other donor country would, even if they agree the importance of the issue in general.¹⁴¹ One member of parliament stated firmly that gender was only paid lip service by many donors (Interview no. 58).

One gender advisor stated that both among some of the donor agencies and the political elite in the country, gender is seen as something that, for example, UNIFEM addresses and that “can start when other things are in place” (Interview no. 52). Another gender advisor echoed this. She argued that gender equality is not perceived as an avenue for development, but rather something that comes as a result of development (Interview no. 36b). This indicates that there are hurdles that hinder the norm of gender equality as such (and within that, women’s political rights) from becoming rooted in the Timorese setting, much due to misconceptions of what it is and who

¹⁴¹ Personal communication with donor representative, Dili 19 November, 2008.

should be enforcing this agenda. When asked to reflect upon why this might be, the gender advisor raised the issue of how gender equality was being held back because the fight for independence was the main goal. Already during the occupation, gender concerns were something that would be addressed at a later stage, when the Indonesian occupation had ended. After that, the UN administration took over and focused on efforts to democratize the country, but gender equality was not seen as a primary issue that should be addressed explicitly. According to the gender advisor, the gender equality machinery was therefore confronted with a huge task, trying to promote the importance of addressing these issues simultaneously with other development issues (Interview no. 36b). Another issue raised was the problem of quantifying results of gender mainstreaming, which might discourage people from pursuing this agenda and bring it into political communication, since there really is no end-state. An international gender advisor suggested that the political elite and international actors have to be better at recognizing success when it happens, so that people feel encouraged to keep striving for gender equality through mainstreaming gender in all of their activities and bringing it into their discursive practices (Interview no. 52). The situation in Timor-Leste is pretty well summarized by one international gender advisor, who despite her optimism about people being recruited who are keen to learn about gender mainstreaming, stated that “there is consciousness of gender at the political level but this is not always translated into action. There are so many competing areas to focus on and gender is still seen as an add-on” (Interview no. 52).

Looking only at the policies and legislation that has been adopted, women’s rights do get attention in a lot of the institutional developments. As has been discussed above, people are in general very keen to learn about gender issues. At different political levels, people talk about human rights, women’s rights and gender mainstreaming. Also, as discussed in the previous chapter, the women’s movement used CEDAW to lobby for the establishment of a quota system ahead of the 2007 Parliamentary election. According to Ospina, the ratification of CEDAW, without reservations, was in fact the result of the work of the Office for the Promotion of Equality together with the support and lobbying of civil society organizations and human rights advocates (Ospina 2008:64). However, as we have learned by now, it is one thing to sign off on something and quite a different thing to enforce its implementation. One women’s rights organization stated that “the government approved CEDAW in 2002 and the National Parliament ratified it in 2003 without reservation, so all articles are approved and accepted by the National Parliament and then became our law. Then the implementation since then is limited...” (Interview no. 41). Similarly, another representative for a women’s rights organization stated that “my government and my state has ratified seven conventions but they do not know what it

means ... they do not know how to guarantee [CEDAW]" (Interview no. 38). In other words, translation into something that can be related to the local context is crucial, as was highlighted by several interviewees. One of the women's organizations explained that when trying to harmonize the Constitution with CEDAW and then promote its implementation, it has to be emphasized that "women" are part of "all people" as stated in the Constitution, and that means that CEDAW should be part of the understanding when discussing the constitution (Interview no. 38). Another women's rights organization clarified this issue, relating to gender-based violence:

[i]t is a political decision that the government should promote human rights [...] because if we approve [CEDAW], then the national law cannot be contradictory to it. In reality, some national laws still contradict [CEDAW]. Sometimes the law and the policy are not very good in promoting human rights. We see that in terms of [the] penal code, they still adopt the Indonesian penal code, and the articles in the penal code from Indonesian times are very discriminating against women, but we still use it. So it does not protect women's issues, or protect women who become victims of domestic violence, of rape, or sexual violence. It is still discriminating and not protecting women.¹⁴² (Interview no. 41)

The same interviewee claimed that in the judicial system, laws are very much interpreted as they are stated, regardless of their potential violation of human rights or the CEDAW-convention (Interview no. 41).¹⁴³ CEDAW should be enforced because it is part of the Timorese legislation, but since a lot of the national elites still do not understand what the Convention actually says, laws are enforced that might actually violate the basics of CEDAW, i.e. discriminate against women. As Timor-Leste was reviewed by the New York CEDAW Committee in July 2009, these issues were being discussed more frequently in various forums and the translation of CEDAW into people's everyday lives has been a prioritized area of focus. For example, according to one international gender advisor, a lot of efforts during 2007 and 2008 focused on bringing CEDAW into ordinary people's lives, communicating how they can understand CEDAW and basically making people aware of the existence of the convention and the Government of Timor-Leste's ratification of it (Interview no. 51). It remains to be seen how the government will respond to the concerns raised by the CEDAW Committee and if efforts undertaken to implement it will trickle down to influence individuals in their daily lives.

¹⁴² Note, however, that a new penal code has been in place since mid-2009. The quote is still valid however, since it highlights the problem that has been prominent in the country until the new penal code was promulgated.

¹⁴³ One human rights organization also highlighted this, stating among other things that existing laws are sometimes difficult to interpret and that wrong articles often are used; "sometimes international law should be used but it is not" (Interview no. 42).

The increased focus on and support of gender since 1999 has resulted in the adoption of several policies relating to gender and women's rights. "Gender is always a cross-cutting theme [...] but it is not really a major focus", explained one policy advisor working for a donor agency (Interview no. 34). Again, gender is often seen as an add-on, or a burden. As was noted above, the misunderstandings of what gender equality means and whom it is for are widespread in the country today, although an increasing number of people are learning that both women and men have to be involved in the realization of rights for both women and men. Gender equality is still understood by many to be a zero-sum game. Consequently, both men and women have to be educated and included if the enforcement of a gender equity agenda is to succeed. The aim and substance of women's political rights and gender equality has to be better communicated. To overcome this problem, people have to be given the right tools in order to translate these concepts into their lives: "we have to bring policy down to implementation and focus more on monitoring and evaluation", stated one women's rights advocate (Interview no. 45). An international policy advisor argued that it is not just about sharing information, but also about educating people about what to expect from politics in general and the government in particular. According to this policy advisor, if the population was better educated then it could make demands on leadership; today people's expectations are very low (Interview no. 35).

Several interviewees discussed the importance of translating gender policies and international conventions and declarations into something tangible. An international gender advisor explained that there is an interest in gender issues, but it is very difficult to maintain this interest if it is not translated into something people can relate to (Interview no. 36a). If not, then it becomes a concept that is left on the bookshelf with a UN logo on it, as the quote in the beginning of the chapter stated. One NGO raised the need for both Timorese and international actors to analyze what different agreements and international conventions actually mean for the country itself (Interview no. 47). Again, this also means doing follow-ups to see how that translation of gender or human rights works in specific sectors and activities (Interview no. 45). This was also raised by a woman from one of the districts represented at the second International Women for Peace Conference in Dili in March 2009. In a question to Maria Paixão, the Deputy President of the National Parliament, she asked what CEDAW actually meant for the culture of Timor-Leste; a question the Deputy President unfortunately never answered. The issue raised by this district woman was nevertheless striking. It shows that the concept of CEDAW has started to trickle down to the district level, but it is still not obvious how the convention relates to the everyday lives of women and how politicians plan to implement and enforce it locally. The fact that the woman raised this issue also shows

that people are applying pressure from below to force politicians to engage in rule-consistent behavior. The importance of implementing policies was thus highlighted, but this cannot be achieved if there is no understanding of what to implement. For several years, international advisors helped the previous government draft a number of pieces of legislation that were never implemented. One NGO explained that this was probably not an act of defiance, but more the result of an inability to analyze what had been drafted and how it could be applicable to the Timorese context in order to ensure enforcement and implementation (Interview no. 47). This means that although international help is needed, it has to be put into the Timorese context. One women's rights organization expressed it this way: "[...] we need good things from outside Timor, but we have to make it our own" (Interview no. 48).

Just as was pointed out in the case of internalization in Cambodia, the gap between norm institutionalization and internalization is still prominent in Timor-Leste. There is an eagerness to learn and "do gender" and promote women's rights, but there are still problems in understanding what this actually means in reality. There are many examples of rule-consistent behavior in Timor-Leste, at least partially. This can be seen in several of the developments discussed in Chapter seven. There are still gaps in trying to translate words into action, placing the norm in a local context and increase awareness of it, but the interviewees support the view that people have learned the rights' talk. For example, people increasingly refer to the concept of human rights. Concerns are still raised regarding the applicability of the norm to Timor-Leste, as well as different views on when the norm should be promoted in the development process, but all the interviewees testified to the importance of promoting women and men's equal rights. They were also very positive that people in general knew about this.

Nonetheless, norm implementation still seems to be dependent upon the audience. Timor-Leste is a young country that has come a long way in less than ten years, and the fact that so much institutionalization has happened so fast might bode well for the future. One interviewee stated that with the new government that had been elected six months prior to our meeting, there was a golden opportunity to break new ground (Interview no. 45). Between my two visits in 2008 the norm of women's political rights had become more institutionalized in just ten months. This was visible through the formalization of the gender focal point system, the strengthening of SEPI, a number of gender advisors in the line ministries, and the establishment of the Women's Parliamentarians' Caucus (GMPTL) and the Parliamentary Gender Resource Center. A persistent shortcoming, however, was the lack of women's rights at the local level and the huge urban-rural divide throughout the country. As stated above, tradition and culture are more conservative in the countryside where people are less educated. In such

contexts, legislative developments, regardless of how gender-sensitive they are, stand little chance of making a very big difference. As pointed out by one national gender advisor, people have very low levels of education in the remote areas and as a consequence people have problems understanding the law. “You can make lots of laws, but if they do not understand, they do not have consciousness, then it won’t help” (Interview no. 37a). This, in other words, seriously impedes women’s capability to function.

The future of internalizing women’s political rights

The main issues facing the internalization of women’s political rights in Timor-Leste have been illustrated above. Although the country has come a long way as an independent country in less than a decade, problems still need to be addressed in order to secure a better outcome of the norm diffusion process and to achieve higher levels of norm institutionalization and internalization.

Politically elected women, both at the national and at the local level, still face serious challenges due to traditional views of the proper role of women in society. Concerns have been raised regarding women’s capabilities to actually represent their society, and also relating to their traditional responsibility of taking care of the household. As was mentioned in Chapter four, in traditional Timorese society, decision-making power lies with the senior male in a social group in the hamlet. Senior women (*ferik*) have an important role to play in social exchanges and rituals, while younger women are not supposed to be outspoken (Ospina and Hohe 2001:140-141). As women are taking on a greater public role, they have to challenge these traditional roles, a task that is easier said than done. Most of the women elected to a seat in the parliament do not speak out publicly very often, and they hardly speak up against the party line (Ospina 2006:38). This is relevant both for women belonging to the major political parties and for female representatives of minority parties who are basically powerless. In early 2008, a group from one of the political parties called for the abolition of the Women’s Parliamentarians’ Caucus because they were dissatisfied with the statement of one female politician. They used this incident as “evidence” that women are not capable of being in political decision-making positions (Interview no. 45). Another politician stated that political parties sometimes put a less qualified woman on an electable position on the candidate’s list because they know this woman will not be able to contribute to the political discussion. Although present in the parliament, she will be used as an example of how incompetent and unsuited for politics women are (Interview no. 63). This is just one woman’s understanding of how things work, but this particular politician is very experienced. Although she might have misunderstood the reality for some women in politics, her assessment nevertheless points in the same direction as other interviewees’ assessments.

Women who are involved in politics have to survive in a very tough climate. The women who manage to enter the sphere of politics have to be better than men in order to be there, and be prepared to be better than men for the first five to ten years, explained one female politician (Interview no. 61). Women always have to be on top of things, be better prepared, and never fail to deliver on their duties as a wife, mother, Christian and politician (Interview no. 61; Interview no. 65). The female politicians interviewed for this study all testified about being held to a higher standard than male politicians. Several women do not feel that they can live up to the demands put on them and they either do not enter politics to begin with or decide to give up their political office to someone else. However, keeping these women in politics is key, argued one female politician, as Timor-Leste needs more female role models. In order to achieve this, these women need to be given a decent break when trying to realize their political rights (Interview no. 61).

As the story throughout these two empirical chapters has revealed, despite high levels of institutionalization that indicate that the norm seems to be moving towards rule-consistent behavior, Timor-Leste is still facing implementation problems and internalization is not deep enough to really increase women's capability to function. Roynestad argued in 2003 that even some women in top-ranked positions still had limited understandings of what, for example, gender mainstreaming means and limited knowledge of gender concepts as such, a conclusion that to some extent still holds six years later. At the end of 2008 it was still believed that ordinary people did not, despite rhetorical support, fully understand gender and women's rights, but that important changes were happening. One women's rights advocate explained that:

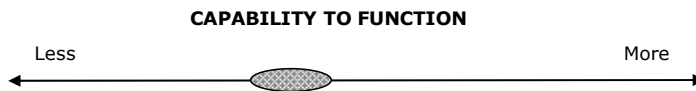
In the last years, gender has been more on the agenda. It is still not making a real difference to women's lives; it is not impacting women's lives. I think one of the problems is that you have a reasonable good policy package but implementation is still lacking. Again, the directors and the people responsible for the implementation within the ministries often do not read these documents. People do not refer to these policy documents and implementation is really on an ad hoc basis. (Interview no. 45)

Both men and women are believed to be supportive of gender equality in theory; a result of men and women's joint suffering during the Indonesian occupation (Interview no. 57). One international interviewee, who summed up what several other interviewees said as well, stated that despite rhetorical support for gender equality, gender and women's rights are met with varying acceptance and perceptions. Although women's political space has increased as compared to before, there is still a need to increase and strengthen this space in order to ensure the promotion of women's empowerment and gender equality in Timor-Leste (Interview no. 39b). Looking at the statistics, men still have the majority of power and do not voluntarily give important

key positions to women. Women are, in other words, still subordinated (Interview 56). However, as mentioned above, some developments can be detected and at this point, anything could really happen. One noticeable change is that younger women are more liberated today. Then again, there is still some social stigma if women are too liberated, explained one politician (Interview no. 58).

In other words, there seem to be an eagerness to do gender, both among civil servants and politicians, but is too early to tell whether or not this enthusiasm is solid enough to result in altered discriminating attitudes. In general however, increased awareness about gender issues and women's rights among both women and men move the norm up the scale of internalization, although the very prominent urban-rural divide underscores that women's possible capability to function is not nation-wide. The promotion of women's political rights is not necessarily irrespective of audience, and there is still a lack of general understanding of the international norm. Furthermore, although women are increasingly aware of their rights and try to access them (and thereby are starting to see themselves as in a bad situation), they often lack the capability to function due to discriminating culture and tradition. As for now, the norm of women's political rights should be placed close to mid-levels of internalization. It is possible that a higher level of norm diffusion will be reached, if positive developments continue and rhetorical support and the initial institutional developments are subject to continued norm adherence. This is illustrated in Figure 8.1 below, where the shaded area illustrates approximately where the norm of women's political rights is to be found today.

Figure 8.1 Norm internalization in Timor-Leste



In sum, the previous chapter evaluated the institutionalization of women's political rights as rather high due to institutional and legislative changes made and the increased harmonization between state policies and the international norm. Nevertheless, as this chapter has shown, women still often lack capability to function, even though they are starting to acknowledge that they have rights and that these rights should not be violated. Over the next few years, the commitment to enforcing different policies, institutional changes and legislation will be crucial. It will indicate whether or not the norm is indeed highly institutionalized and adherence to it is depersonalized. What is important to remember in the discussion of how well

institutionalized and internalized the norm of women's political rights is, what matters is weighing developments against the reality for women. In Timor-Leste, women come from a long way behind (Interview no. 58). The somewhat flawed norm internalization might thus just need more time to become rooted. Having said that, however, efforts are still needed to ensure that rhetoric is followed by action, irrespective of audience in order to increase norm habitualization in people's everyday lives.

Now that we have analyzed norm institutionalization and internalization in both Cambodia and Timor-Leste, it is time to make a more formal comparison between the two case studies in order to identify and explain similarities and differences.

Comparisons and conclusions

As the empirical chapters have shown, there has been norm diffusion in Cambodia and Timor-Leste, but there has been variation in both processes and outcomes. The empirical analysis has also revealed interesting similarities and offers lessons to be learned. In this chapter I summarize and analyze the empirical results from a comparative perspective in order to highlight similarities and differences. The chapter also includes a discussion of the fruitfulness of two theoretical innovations presented in Chapters one and two – the idea of stage jumping and capability to function – for understanding developments in Cambodia and Timor-Leste. Other theoretical conclusions are also discussed. I also consider what this study suggests for practitioners in the field and potential norm entrepreneurs. Finally, I discuss some ideas for future research that follow from the conclusions of this study.

As discussed in Chapter one, this study set out to analyze how the international norm of women's political rights has traveled into two post-conflict domestic settings with heavy international presence. The questions asked were: 1) How has the norm been manifested in the institutional developments related to electoral rules and regulations, the establishment of a national gender equality/women's machinery, and in efforts to strengthen local government structure? 2) Who were the main norm entrepreneurs in the process of norm diffusion and how did the relationship between international and national actors play out? and 3) How far have the countries succeeded in institutionalizing and internalizing the norm of women's political rights and how we are to understand the outcomes in Timor-Leste and in Cambodia? The first two questions are mainly addressed in the next section, which compares the empirical results of my study. The third question is primarily answered in the latter part of the chapter, which is devoted to a review of the analytical implications of the research.

Empirical comparisons

Norm institutionalization and internalization have been traced and analyzed throughout the four empirical chapters on Cambodia and Timor. The empirical findings are summarized in Tables 1, 2 and 3 in Appendix 1. The discussion below highlights some of the main empirical results related to norm entrepreneurs, institutional developments and norm internalization. In general the four empirical chapters reveal that the interaction between international and national actors have been predominantly based on

international actors setting the agenda and these internationals have to varying degrees included the norm of women's political rights in this process. Consultations with national actors were not common in the early days of statebuilding and norm diffusion, but have increased with time. Occasionally, local actors have been able to drive issues and priorities, such as the women's movement in Timor-Leste, which actually pushed several of the international actors to keep their focus on the norm of women's rights. However, the general assessment is that the interaction and relationship among international and national actors has not been characterized by inclusiveness and collaboration, although this has differed over the years. As the countries become increasingly democratized, national actors now set the political agenda. However, Cambodia and Timor-Leste are still heavily dependent upon the good will and resources of international actors, so it is impossible to disregard the international influences still in place in both countries.

Norm Entrepreneurs

As noted in the empirical chapters, international and national norm entrepreneurs in Cambodia and Timor-Leste have functioned in somewhat different contexts. Whereas there actually was a women's movement in place in Timor-Leste when the UN mission and other international actors arrived, women in Cambodia were less organized. In general, international actors have played similar roles in the two countries, with the main difference being the specifics of the UN missions. Neither in Cambodia nor Timor-Leste was the norm of women's political rights *primarily* enforced through the UN missions. Both missions nevertheless opened up a space for other international organizations, national women's organizations, and individual women and men to take the norm of women's political rights onboard and strive to increase female political participation and representation. It is fair to conclude that in both countries the norm in focus was enforced by international actors, although in collaboration and cooperation with national actors such as women's organizations and some national elites (mainly ex-Diasporas who became politically active). The UN mission in Timor-Leste was the first mission to have a specific gender unit, something that was nevertheless not achieved until a number of obstacles had been overcome. It was the women's movement, with international support from individual policy champions, that lobbied successfully for the formalization of the Gender Affairs Unit. In Cambodia, on the other hand, no specific gender focus was promoted by the UN, although it is generally accepted that UNTAC managed to open up a space for both women and men. The emerging women's movement, led by empowered women with international support, managed to occupy this space and to show that women can also play an important role in decision-making. Thus, the UN missions proved to be

important actors for norm diffusion in both countries, although not necessarily in the way I anticipated when I began my research, which was that the heavy international presence under the lead of UN complex peacebuilding missions would promote women's political rights as part of its mandate. Still, my conclusion is that in both countries it is less likely that the norm of women's political rights would have gained ground as fast as it did without the support of international organizations and the space created by the UN missions.

In both countries, women returning from the Diaspora with the support of international organizations have played an important role in trying to spread and root the norm of women's political rights. In the Timorese case, women organized in the Diaspora and functioned as an important lobbying force, trying to attract the attention of the international community regarding the struggle for independence (Ospina 2008:21).¹⁴⁴ In both Cambodia and Timor-Leste, women returning from abroad joined existing NGOs or started new organizations with international support and funding. Other women joined politics and tried to lobby for change by becoming part of the national elite. Some Cambodians and Timorese look at women returning from the Diaspora with suspicion, which has created a gap between women who stayed in the country during the conflicts and those who left and later returned. This raises the issue whether or not returning women who are active in politics are considered role models for other women. In Cambodia, some interviewees talked about how politically active women (often with decades-long roots in the Diaspora) are not role models for ordinary Cambodian woman. One important issue is therefore to bridge this gap between women, and over time, in both countries we observe non-Diaspora women becoming politically active. While it is difficult to assess the size of the gap between the two countries, Timorese women seem to be more accepting of ex-Diasporas. Although there were similar arguments raised against returning women in both Cambodia and Timor-Leste, centering on their lack of suffering because they were absent during the violent years, several Timorese women's rights advocates managed to highlight the importance of all Timorese women joining forces to promote their rights. In both countries, there is still a gap between the more educated women (often with some roots outside the country) and less educated women, but rural women are becoming more outspoken and claiming their rights as well.

Being a female political actor is not an easy task in these two countries, and discriminating stereotypes have to be challenged on a daily basis. Women who are involved in politics testify about similar experiences of being held to a higher standard, of having to be better than their male

¹⁴⁴ This is in accordance with the first step of the spiral model for norm diffusion as presented by Risse, Ropp and Sikink.

colleagues, and of always having to be on top of things. One Timorese politician explained that women must be “gifted” or in possession of super-powers because they are expected to deliver on their political duties, family responsibilities, and religious obligations as well as to succeed without challenging culture and tradition too much. The fact that the political realm is considered to belong to men is something that both Cambodian and Timorese women who want to engage in politics have to address, and this affects norm diffusion. The importance of having female role models was raised in both contexts, because role models encourage women to become politically active and their very existence promotes women’s right in political representation and participation.

As noted above, international actors helped establish women’s organizations in both Cambodia and Timor-Leste. In the latter case, there was already a rather well-functioning women’s movement that international actors could work with to spread the norm of women’s political rights. The push from civil society organizations has thus been much stronger in Timor-Leste than in Cambodia, which is best explained by the fact that the women’s movement in Timor-Leste functioned much better than its Cambodian counterpart when the space for agency opened up. In 1999 the women’s movement in Timor-Leste was considered united and rather powerful; women had participated in the struggle for independence and had focused on violence against women as one key issue. This was also one issue that international organizations prioritized when resources started to pour into the country. Concerns have been raised that the women’s movement was weakened after independence. Nevertheless, women’s organizations now cover a more diversified set of issues and the strong party affiliation that existed during the struggle for independence no longer characterizes these organizations today. In Cambodia, the women’s movement could only increase in strength from 1992, and it is believed to have done so. Today, women’s organizations are joined in networks and the Committee to Promote Women in Politics (CPWP) reports that there are examples of organisations’ engaging in successful activities. Nevertheless, women’s organizations in Cambodia are still considered rather weak and observers note that they play only a limited, albeit important, role in lobbying for change at the national level. The effect of having a weak “civil society” on the implementation of policies and ideas was noted by Chauvet and Collier, as discussed in Chapter two. In Cambodia, civil society organizations are still heavily dependent on donor support and when international donors lose their interest in “gender issues”, there is increased competition for scarce resources. Naturally this affects the number and quality of programs, for example training activities. In Timor-Leste this problem is less visible. One international gender advisor with experience in both countries explained:

Timor is a small country with a mix of donors regarding size and power. Due to size, donors can coordinate without competing with each other or duplicate much. In Cambodia, there are too many players and hence more competition. (Interview no. 52)

However, concerns have also been raised in Timor-Leste about the lack of commitment among donors to “do gender issues”, and that it is up to two or three donor countries to keep raising the issue. Furthermore, among international agencies it is also believed that gender issues are something that UNIFEM focuses on, so others do not need to address it. One Timorese politician stated that “UNIFEM is the poor child of the UN family”, and although women’s rights and gender issues have been formally institutionalized within the UN they have not been mainstreamed (Interview no. 58).

In general, trying to capture how international and national actors have interacted and how the relationships between the different set of actors have developed is not a straight-forward task in either of the countries. These relations have evolved over time and they are not the same in 2009 as they were in 1992/1999. Despite this difficulty, in Table 9.1 I provide a summary description of the relationship between international actors, national elites and civil society organizations. (I include the UN missions as international actors although, as noted above, they played a less prominent role than I expected. Nevertheless, they opened up an important space for continued women’s political agency). Both the Cambodian and the Timorese case illustrate the role played by men and women returning from the Diaspora, meriting the explicit acknowledgement of this group as crucial for norm diffusion, through its “hybrid role”, which was discussed in the empirical chapters.

In both countries, international actors have put pressure on and tried to influence national elites, while at the same time providing support to the development of civil society organizations and their programs. In both cases, national elites have primarily been the recipients of either training from civil society organizations or pressure from international actors to enforce the norm of women’s political rights. National elites are increasingly acknowledging the importance of women’s political rights, but the key norm entrepreneurs are those who either have a background in civil society organizations or have returned from the Diaspora. In both countries there is a group of national elites that puts pressure on other national elites, but the former must become more powerful if they are to carry out their role as norm entrepreneur more consistently. The group of former Diasporas have some members who either joined existing NGOs or established new ones, or became politically active. At the same time, some fellow national elites and people in the grassroots consider women and men returning from the Diaspora to be just as foreign as the international actors. For this reason I have not classified this group as being part of the group of national elites or

domestic civil society organizations. Civil society organizations in both Cambodia and Timor-Leste have received support from international actors to help spread the norm of women’s rights, both within the grassroots but also among national elites. Note that in Timor-Leste, civil society organizations (i.e. women’s organizations) have influenced norm diffusion in a somewhat extraordinary way by also putting pressure on international actors to “keep their focus on gender”.

Table 9.1 Norm entrepreneurs in Cambodia and Timor-Leste

| ACTOR | MAIN INFLUENCE PUT ON | |
|-----------------------------|--|---|
| | <i>Cambodia</i> | <i>Timor-Leste</i> |
| International actors | Civil society organizations, National elites | Civil society organizations, National elites |
| National elites | Other national elites | Other national elites |
| Returnees from the Diaspora | Civil society organizations, National elites | Civil society organizations, National elites |
| Civil society organizations | National elites, Grassroots | National elites, Grassroots, International actors |

What the table reveals is that the initial division of norm entrepreneurs as presented in Chapter three fails to capture the complexity of the empirical analyses. Consider, for example, the role played by people returning from the Diaspora, who join other groups of norm entrepreneurs but are nonetheless not always fully accepted by them. Another difference is the role played by civil society organizations (although with support from international actors and women and men returning from the Diaspora) in pushing international actors (such as the UN mission) to engage in rule-consistent behavior, which we see in Timor-Leste. Although this development has been identified as somewhat unusual (cf. Hall and True 2009), it nevertheless highlights the role that civil society organizations play in norm diffusion.

As the empirical chapters reveal, international actors have focused more on supporting civil society organizations than putting pressure on national elites, and civil society organizations have participated in efforts to try to root the norm of women’s political rights among national elites. Elite-learning has not been disregarded, but supporting civil society organizations have been more prominent and arguably more successful (compare this to

Checkel's argument presented in Chapter two). Although elite learning does not seem to have been the main avenue pursued by international actors in either of the case studies, UNTAET's more ambitious mandate and the fact that international actors heavily influenced policy-making before independence have nevertheless resulted in a greater focus on elite-learning in Timor-Leste than in Cambodia.

Institutional developments

The institutional developments addressed in this study reveal that in electoral rules and regulations the countries have chosen different paths, perhaps as a result of how the UN missions addressed the issue of women's rights and gender equality. Again, UNTAET promoted women's issues more explicitly than UNTAC did, although this was often an effect of pressure from below, i.e. from civil society organizations. However, when the quota debate ended with the rejection of this type of affirmative action measurement, UNTAET supported gender-sensitive voter education and provided extra airtime to political parties who openly addressed the importance of women's participation. The UNTAC-administrated election in Cambodia in 1993 did include some gender sensitive activities but mostly in the form of support to UNIFEM and national women's organizations who, in turn, actually provided training and information campaigns to raise the awareness of women as political actors. One difference between the two countries is that when quota discussions ran into opposition in Timor-Leste in 2001, the alternative mechanisms were nonetheless able to create a positive spin on having women involved in politics, which eventually facilitated the adoption of a quota in 2007.

In Cambodia, alternative measures to improve women's political representation have not resulted in the same "positive spin", although women's political agency is increasingly accepted today. However, the Cambodian men and women who Lilja interviewed still express some scepticism towards women's capability to be in politics. Such sentiments have also been raised in Timor-Leste, although mainly at the local level, which we return to further below. Nevertheless, recent developments in Cambodia include the Prime Minister's public support for and encouragement to political parties to put women on electable positions on their election lists, which could indicate that major changes are visible as regards women's political functioning. A quota system of any sort is still unthinkable at the national level in Cambodia. At the annual Government-Donor meeting (the Cambodia Development Cooperation Forum) in December 2008 it was noted that the Prime Minister dismissed all discussions of a quota system by stating that adopting a quota would be the same as betraying Cambodian women's competencies and capacities. Without a quota, it was argued, women have the possibility of being elected to all seats in the parliament. With a quota

women are restricted to a specific number, and to argue for 30 percent representation is to say that only this percentage of Cambodian women are competent enough.¹⁴⁵ At the same time, positive election results in the latest national and local elections have raised the question of whether or not a quota system is actually needed in Cambodia at all.

As for institutional developments relating to the establishment of gender equality/women's machineries, while the countries have chosen similar paths, it is possible to identify some differences and certain instructive lessons. Cambodia has chosen to have a machinery that focuses on "women". Timor-Leste has approached the issue as a question of "equality", although focus has still primarily been on women. In Timor-Leste, the formalization of a gender machinery was initiated through UNTAET, although as noted above, the establishment of the Gender Affairs Unit was mainly accomplished as a result of civil society lobbying. A National Women's Association already existed when UNTAC arrived in Cambodia, and out of this a Secretary of State for Women's Affairs (SSWA) was created in 1993. With international support and as a result of strong policy champions, both SSWA and the successors of the Ministry of Women's (and Veteran's) Affairs (MoWA) have produced strategic plans for gender equality, the latest being *Neary Rattanak III*.

Timor-Leste is still in the process of developing a gender mainstreaming strategy, a process that is believed to be gaining ground because the Office of the Secretary of State for the Promotion of Equality (SEPI) is becoming more formalized and increasing its capacity. According to Rai (2003:26, discussed in Chapter three), the strength and influence of national women/gender machineries is dependent on its location in the government structure, mandate, collaboration with civil society organizations, resources, and accountability. Both Cambodia and Timor-Leste suffer from limited capacity within the gender/women's machinery, a lack of human resources and, at times, limited understanding of what to implement. Both machineries have broadened their mandate and responsibility for gender mainstreaming rests mainly with them. This has turned out to be a daunting task. Today, however, both MoWA and SEPI are represented in the Council of Ministers, which is considered an important development. In both countries there is collaboration with civil society, and it is believed to function fairly well, although some indicators suggest there are some serious flaws in the partnership. Both Cambodia and Timor-Leste suffer some accountability issues, particularly because corruption is a major problem in both countries. However, this problem has not been ascribed specifically to MoWA and

¹⁴⁵ Personal communication with representative from an international development organization, 7 December 2008, Phnom Penh.

SEPI, although there are some concerns about people buying their positions, for example within MoWA.

Cambodia has come further than Timor-Leste in establishing intra- and inter ministerial working groups that address gender equality. Nonetheless, lack of training, commitment and funding often result in less action than rhetorical support of the issue. A system of gender focal points has also been initiated in Timor-Leste. They testify to the need to get more people onboard, for example by establishing working groups or committees in order to gender-sensitize entire ministries. Needless to say, both MoWA in Cambodia and SEPI in Timor-Leste have the potential to become crucial norm entrepreneurs who push for gender-sensitization of other ministries and policies. To play this role, however, they need more time, resources, training and support, as well as political commitment, both from outside and within the ministry/office.

People I spoke with in Timor-Leste said the ministries do not seem to suffer from an open resistance towards “doing gender”, but there are still a lot of misunderstandings regarding what to do, for whom and by whom. One difference between the two countries is that MoWA in Cambodia is very much part of a power struggle in which some ministries are ranked higher than others. MoWA is still considered a low status ministry. According to one international gender advisor, people are still able to buy high positions in the ministry, and the most competent staff members are found among general directors, directors of department, and below (Interview no. 17a). Another international gender advisor agreed, and stated that there is capacity among younger people in MoWA, but there is still a tendency to hire more senior people for high profile positions (Interview no. 52). This reflects the patron-client relationship in which older people are valued higher and enjoy greater respect than their younger colleagues. In Timor-Leste, a lot of focus has been put on hiring competent and dedicated staff into the civil service, even though many of them still have limited experience working with “gender issues”. Becoming a gender focal point requires some seniority within a line ministry, but the primary problem with the gender focal point system is not women’s lack of access, but rather the gender focal points’ lack of time, resources and experience.

The local government structures in both Cambodia and Timor-Leste have undergone significant transformation. Cambodia adopted a new “organic law on decentralization” in 2008, and the Council of Ministers in Timor-Leste adopted the “organic law” in 2009 and the national parliament is believed to approve the three laws early fall 2009. These new laws are the result of several years of decentralization efforts in two quite different settings. International actors have demanded the strengthening the local government structures, but recent developments suggest that decision-makers seem to have engaged in learning processes. It seems as if promoting women in

decision-making at the local level has met less resistance in Cambodia than in Timor-Leste, despite the latter having three seats reserved for women in the *suco* councils. In Cambodia, both interviewees and project evaluations suggest that gender issues and women's rights are seen as less abstract at the local level. In Timor-Leste, on the other hand, governing the local level is considered a far more difficult task than running the nation. As a result, women are considered to be suitable for politics at the national level, but are still fighting to become accepted at the local level. This is discussed further below. Both countries have gender focal point systems at the sub-national level and one lesson to be learned from the Cambodian context is the advantage of establishing women's and children's committees rather than appointing one individual, often a woman, as a focal point. This situation thus mirrors the one discussed above about gender focal points at the ministerial level.

Internalization

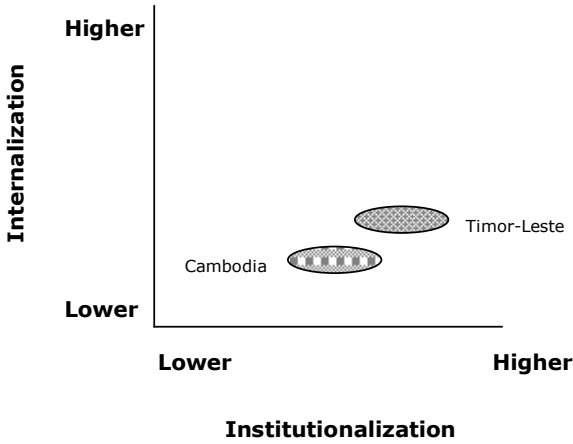
The processes of norm internalization, i.e. capability to function, displays similar trends in the two countries. Women in both Cambodia and Timor-Leste are struggling to reverse negatively adapted preferences and challenge stereotypes.¹⁴⁶ In Timor-Leste, women participated in the clandestine struggle, and the idea of women having agency was therefore already somewhat rooted when women began to claim political rights as well. Cambodian women also have a history of being powerful, although never in the political realm. Interviewees in both countries say that women are increasingly becoming aware of their rights, but that there is still a gap between having a right (and being aware of it) and accessing that right as part of capability to function. This gap remains to be bridged. Women still lack higher levels of education in both countries. This has many negative

¹⁴⁶ The Ministry of Women's Affairs in Cambodia (MoWA), in cooperation with other line ministries, has recently launched a new initiative a National Program on Promotion of Social Morality and Family Values. The program is aimed at reducing violence, drug abuse and trafficking (CGA 2008:16). Although the ministries seek to portray the program as a positive initiative, one international gender advisor stated that instead of approaching the problem of a weak social morality and young people's disregard for tradition by strengthening institutions and discussing social problems using a rights-based perspective, the new initiative takes a moralistic approach. The measures adopted to address the problem include closing brothels, but no consideration of the consequences of doing so or analysis of why people turn to prostitution to begin with (Interview 17b). Many women do so because they have been marginalized, for example as a result of rape. The social stigma facing women who have been sexually abused is very difficult for women to cope with, and many see prostitution as the only viable way of making a living. Other women are trafficked into prostitution. By not addressing these issues, there is a risk that discriminating views of both men and women are strengthened, and women will be further marginalized by efforts to promote family values. This would affect norm internalization, although it is not women's political rights in focus, but rather women's right more generally.

consequences, including that it makes it more difficult for women to change negatively adapted preferences.

In addition, a majority of women who do get involved in politics are neither very outspoken nor explicitly gender sensitive, which affects their ability to serve as role models. Some believe that this lack of agency is the result of lack of capacity and training, while others see it as a result of discriminating traditions and ways of life. In Cambodia, women who want to become politically active have to struggle against the traditional code for women, the Chbap Srey. Although this code rules fewer aspects of life today, parts of it are still taught in schools, and this influences views about how men and women should behave. No such formal code exists in Timor-Leste, although traditional views on what women's roles are deeply rooted in the rural areas, where tradition and religion are much more profound. Despite similar cultural frameworks regulating women's room for political agency, one international gender advisor with experience from both contexts thinks that the challenges in Cambodia are greater because the Chbap Srey defines women's role firmly and is a historically static code that is not easily changed. In Timor-Leste, on the other hand, women are allowed to be more open and, in some respects (primarily at the national level), the culture is more empowering, due to the fact that women played such an active role during the clandestine struggle (Interview no. 51). This provides a rather good, initial explanation as to why norm diffusion as a whole has been more successful in Timor-Leste than in Cambodia. This is illustrated in Figure 9.1 below, which compares the conclusions about norm diffusion in the two cases. As will be discussed in more detail below, Timor-Leste has come further on both institutionalization and internalization, although the visible difference lies predominantly in the latter. The figure should be understood as illustrating the comparative outcome of norm diffusion in the two countries, and the specific locations of the circles should not be understood as absolute positions.

Figure 9.1 Norm diffusion in Cambodia and Timor-Leste



To summarize the empirical comparisons, all international actors, from the UN missions to individual donor countries, have played an important role in opening up a space for the norm of women’s political rights to gain ground in Cambodia and Timor-Leste. In doing so, they have affected norm diffusion. By influencing policy-making and legislative developments as well as the establishment of political institutions, international actors, in collaboration with women’s organizations, have been part of the process of institutionalizing women’s political rights. Although less collaboration with national elites was evident in the early days of international involvement in the countries, the fact that both Cambodia and Timor-Leste are now sovereign states means that they now bear the main responsibility for continued norm institutionalization and improved internalization. As noted in the empirical chapters as well as in the discussion above, for real change to occur, national elites have to accept the message that international actors try to convey, and this has happened to varying degrees in Cambodia and Timor-Leste. In both countries, international actors have partnered with women’s organizations (existing or newly established) in order to promote elite learning. I have also identified women returning from the Diaspora as key actors in the promotion of the norm of women’s political rights. In neither state has norm internalization progressed as far as norm institutionalization, although Timor-Leste has been more successful in this. However, discriminating traditions and ways of life, together with women’s negatively adapted preferences makes it difficult for women to enjoy their capability to function. These results are discussed and explored further in the next section.

Analytical discussion

How international and national actors interact in the process of norm diffusion has played a central part in this study. The empirical results show that the norm of women's political rights and gender equality was mainly brought by international actors. There were local understandings of women and men's value and responsibilities when the UN missions and other international actors first came to Cambodia and Timor-Leste in the 1990s but they were not necessarily framed as women's rights, human rights and/or gender equality. The biggest difference between the two countries lies mainly in how these concepts have been adopted by local actors and how they have been framed. Several interviewees in Timor-Leste mentioned that there is an "eagerness to do gender". This was not mentioned in my interviews in Cambodia. On the contrary, several Cambodian women's organizations avoid using the concept of gender because there is a widespread sentiment that it is something that was brought from the outside and not translatable into the Cambodian context. Although both Cambodian and Timorese organizations addressed the situation of women prior to the arrival of international actors (through party-affiliated community livelihood groups in Cambodia for example), women's organizations in Timor-Leste focused more on issues such as violence against women during the occupation and the struggle for independence, both of which are indicative of a focus on women's rights, although efforts were not necessarily framed as such. The gap between what was promoted by international actors and what women's organizations had already been addressing was thus not so wide, although internationally sponsored pressure for women's rights and gender equality have still been questioned by some national elites, who suggest that gender is something that does not necessarily find *natural affinity* with Timorese culture. In Cambodia, the country was more focused on reinstating a "Cambodian culture" after the genocide and subsequent continuation of violence than on struggling for women and men's individual rights. (This is discussed further below.)

Although similarities can be found between the two countries as regards to the role played by international actors in articulating and promoting the norm as "women's political rights", national actors in Cambodia and Timor-Leste responded differently to this norm enforcement from above. Chapter two presented three scenarios based on the notion that international actors bring the norm of women's political rights to war torn societies as part of a peace- and statebuilding toolbox. Such a process can turn out to be very beneficial for norm diffusion because it is aimed at elite learning and getting the norm included in policies and legislation. Once national elites start making concessions, it is difficult to not behave accordingly. On the other hand, part of the literature also talks about the risk of norm conflict when a norm is enforced from above. This can lead to alienation or rejection of the

norm, or at least a slower norm diffusion process because the norm is misunderstood or does not receive sufficient national support. Illustrating these scenarios in Figure 9.1, a country would be placed in the upper right-hand corner (higher institutionalization and higher internalization) if the process of norm diffusion were successfully fast-tracked due to international actors involvement and crucial role in statebuilding (scenario one). Scenario three, where the norm is neither highly institutionalized or internalized would place a country in the lower left-hand corner of the figure. The second scenario, where the norm is highly institutionalized but not highly internalized is the scenario that best describes both Cambodia and Timor-Leste. As noted above, although both Cambodia and Timor-Leste can be said to have institutionalized the norm quite highly, internalization is lagging behind. The fast-tracking of norms by international actors can thereby be considered to be favourable for institutionalization (as in institutional developments), but not sufficient to ensure internalization.

The empirical comparison revealed that elite-learning has been more problematic in Cambodia than Timor-Leste, which could help explain why the international norm is seen as more foreign in Cambodia. This can be understood by putting it into the context of the weak state of democracy in Cambodia. Considering the low scores on the Polity IV index and the high score on Freedom House ratings, it is not surprising that elite learning has been less in Cambodia. Furthermore, the patron-client system in Cambodia also helps us explain rather low levels of internalization. As noted by Santry (2005:31),

the king has traditionally been seen as the great benevolent father and his subjects seen as his children [...] it is not difficult to understand why aid workers unwittingly become the more powerful patrons, making it extremely difficult for them to transfer the concept of 'empowerment' to those who perceive themselves as the powerless clients [...].

Perhaps as a consequence of the patron-client relationship, the most apparent approach for norm diffusion in Cambodia has been efforts to localize the norm (the international norm is made to fit into local hierarchy of norms), whereas in Timor-Leste the norm more has been subject to adaptation (local norms are made to fit with the international norm) (see Acharya 2004, as well as Chapter two). Naturally there are signs of both approaches in both countries. In Timor-Leste, for example, it has also been argued that in order to enforce the norm of women's rights locally it has to be translated into something that is applicable in Timor-Leste. Still, looking at programs designed and the message conveyed, as well as the perceived "eagerness to do gender", adaptation seems to be the main approach. In Cambodia, efforts by women's organizations to use locally accepted concepts instead of "gender" and linking such concepts to historic views and stories

about women as strong actors in Cambodian history fits the pattern that Acharya refers to as step two in the process of localization – i.e. *local initiative* (local actors try to frame the external norm in ways to make it interesting and understandable for the local population). The fact that the core concept – gender – is still seen as something foreign might also explain why intra-ministerial working groups on gender are still struggling to function properly and their action plans are still difficult to implement.

What we can identify in the Cambodian case is some lack of national support for the international norm, although this is not necessarily a resistance towards the norm as such. It is rather a question of opposition to the perceived foreign imposition without national “anchorage”, which causes a sense of alienation from the norm that the international actors are trying to enforce. The emerging women’s movement is working to remove the stigma of alienation attached to the norm of women’s political rights, but it is struggling to overcome cultural barriers in the form of ideas of how women and men should behave. Trying to spread and root the norm of women’s political rights has thus faced the challenge of perceived cultural mis-match between traditional Cambodian views on men’s and women’s roles in society and the role that the international norm ascribes women. There have also been concerns raised regarding the cultural match between the international norm and traditional views on Timorese women and men, and whether or not the norm can find natural affinity within the Timorese context. Still, there has been less manifest resistance to the norm in Timor-Leste than in Cambodia, and international actors could therefore quickly partner up with women’s organizations in starting to enforce the norm. Timorese people in general understood the essence of the norm as something that was already in place in the country (women were considered rather equal to men during the struggle for independence), making it a less neo-colonialist endeavour to try to spread this particular norm in this context.¹⁴⁷ At the same time, there are traditional practices (such as the bride price) that are believed to contradict the ideas put forward in the norm of women’s rights and that are not easily changed. For example, as noted by an Australian researcher in one of the districts of Timor-Leste:

It was in Viqueque district that the complexity of the transition to an international standard of law also became most apparent [...] [I]t became apparent that both men and women disputed the fundamental values being propagated by the two European UN women and their local assistants. Some men virtually described their ideas as a new form of colonialism saying that the Timorese were now free and laws should reflect their values, not those of the UN. Women told me, in the absence of any other men, that a reasonable level of violence towards a wife was acceptable if she

¹⁴⁷ Having said this, it should still be noted that international actors have generally been rather poor at collaborating with national agents in Timor-Leste.

misbehaved. Some of the women involved were well educated and very articulate but they remained committed to a worldview that the western women found incomprehensible. This extended to the desire to keep a bride price system 'because this shows how our parents value us, [...]'. (Mearns 2002:50-51)

This quote addresses the area of justice and how women's rights are incorporated into legislative reform. However, this dissertation has focused on women's political rights, an area where the interaction between international norm and national practices seem to have been less controversial.

The different national responses to the international norm manifest in the two countries can be understood in the light of what was discussed above: the context in which the UN mission and other international actors entered and how receptive Cambodia and Timor-Leste were to new ideas and influences based on them. It is also a question of the strategies undertaken by the international actors and how much national input that was allowed. In both countries the international actors have been accused of being culturally insensitive or lacking an understanding of the culture in which they are operating. Furthermore, there often seem to be few consultations between international and national actors. As a result, international actors may have contributed to sentiments of alienation and of the norm not having any national relevance in Cambodia and Timor-Leste. For example, as noted by Santry (2005:159), "among the influx of foreign aid-workers rushing to establish development programs in Cambodia, many displayed noticeable gaps in cultural sensitivity". Similarly a women's rights advocate in Timor-Leste argued that

[i]nternational people often think they know everything. They come with baggage from other countries and think it is the same in Timor. They are rarely culture-sensitive or ask what Timorese want. The international actors are not purely there for the interest of Timor. (Interview no. 49b)

This has also been noted by others, for example Trindade in his study on statebuilding in Timor-Leste. He notes that the international community has been prone to misinterpret Timorese cultures and traditions.¹⁴⁸ At the same time, in comparing the two countries, one international gender advisor I interviewed said that much more of the work on policy development and legislation was done in consultation with the Timorese, than was the case in Cambodia (Interview no. 52). On the other hand, in both countries the dominant view is that the deployment of the UN missions and the presence of other international actors in the countries took place with little prior consultation with national actors. In Cambodia,

¹⁴⁸ Personal communication with Josh Trindade, March 6, 2009, Dili.

international donors did not trust the government because of their high levels of corruption and nepotism [...] Local NGOs did not trust the donors' long term commitment or sensitivity to local needs, because in order to obtain and keep funding they were obliged to sign contracts that suited the donors' policies rather than the local people's needs [...]. (Meas Nee paraphrased in Santry 2005:223)

In Timor-Leste, the Timorese saw the CNRT (Conselho Nacional de Resistência Timorese), which was established in 1998, as representing them in relations with the UN mission and other international agents. However, UNTAET was initially reluctant to see CNRT as a partner since it was not an elected sovereign body (see footnote 104). The result was that many of the programs and policies adopted were not very successful because they did not enjoy popular support and were considered something that international actors tried to enforce without consulting the Timorese. As noted in Chapter two, “[n]o amount of external donor pressure or resources, by themselves, can produce sustained reform [...]” (Brinkerhoff and Crosby 2002:6). This also explains why concepts such as gender equality and women’s rights are at times disregarded as foreign concepts, although as noted above, different approaches to overcome such issues have been undertaken in both countries and there is more international-national consultation in Timor-Leste today.

The lag in norm internalization in the two countries and the differences between the two contexts can be linked to discriminating ways of life and attitudes that are not easily changed, lack of resources, and time. For example, 18 years have passed in Cambodia since the 1991 Paris Peace Accord brought an official end to conflict and UNTAC was deployed. The number of years for Timor-Leste is a mere 10. We might be asking too much too soon of these countries. Considering the fairly high levels of norm institutionalization, perhaps we should be patient and focus on the positive developments achieved thus far. For example, the promising election results that were achieved in Cambodia without a quota system might indicate that change has taken place through alternative mechanisms. This would suggest that it is important to support initiatives in advance of elections to promote female political candidates and encourage voters to continue challenging traditional views on women’s political roles. The same is true of efforts to facilitate the placement of women on electable positions on political party candidates’ lists.

The passage of time also affects how well institutional developments can facilitate norm internalization. Continued support and training directed at both women and men is needed. Resources, both human and financial, are also necessary, which requires commitment from international, national and local levels. Changing attitudes is not an easy task and if it is to happen, both time and commitment are needed. Again, training is crucial. Equally important, it cannot only focus on women, but must be directed at the

empowerment of both men and women, urban and rural. It must include, national elites and public servants, local authorities and grassroots. It is important to communicate what the norm actually means in practice, something that several interviewees in both countries raised as a crucial issue. In both Cambodia and Timor-Leste men and women stated that many men believe that as women gain political power, men will become marginalized and disempowered. In Cambodia it was even stated that if women come to power, they will begin to do violence to men as men have previously done to women. In other words, there is a belief that women's increased power means that men will lose out; that the struggle for women's political rights is a zero-sum game. This is similar to an observation that Chauvet and Collier (see Chapter two) have made about obstacles for policy implementation. They note that if national elites believe they will lose power, then they will resist reform initiatives. In the same way, if people are poorly informed of the benefits of policy change, and think they will be disadvantaged, then implementation will also fail.

Cambodia and Timor-Leste are two diverse countries with different religions, developments and conflict legacies. The UN missions enjoyed varying degrees of freedom in shaping the countries they were trying to assist, which in turn affected how national elites viewed international actors as well as the room for manoeuvre that other international organizations had to enforce the norm of women's political rights. UNTAET was more "interventionist" in its mandate than UNTAC, but entered a completely different context. For example, success in ending the Indonesian occupation strengthened ideas of a common Timorese culture that was still somewhat open to international influences. UNTAC, on the other hand, entered a country that was desperately trying to re-establish a functioning society, in part by reverting to the pre-revolutionary ideas of gender roles set out in Chbap Srey. Despite flaws in national-international collaboration and neo-colonial tendencies by some international actors in both countries, Timor-Leste seems to have been more receptive to the norm of women's political rights. Previous research on gender relations in the aftermath of violent conflict often highlight the tendency to return to pre-conflict traditions and practices as part of the process of healing in times of insecurity (cf. Sørensen 1998:36-37). Thus, one could argue that in Cambodia there was a push to return to pre-conflict traditions when peace had formally arrived in 1991. The new ideas of democracy, human rights and gender equality brought by international actors (as well as men and women returning from the Diaspora) thus clashed with nostalgic ideas of what Cambodia had once been and could be again. In Timor-Leste, on the other hand, the situation was somewhat different because the country had been under foreign rule since the 16th century. Becoming an independent country was the main goal and men and women fought together to achieve it; national identity was based on

resistance to Indonesian occupation (cf. Trindade 2008). When this was achieved, a new country started to form. Having limited experience of independence, the country was more open (whether voluntarily or by force is difficult to assess) to new ideas coming from abroad. On the other hand, as noted by Trindade (2008), efforts to form a nation-state in 2002 “ignored some of the vital elements of East Timorese social structure, culture and traditions that still influence the daily lives of East Timorese citizens today”. The constructed Timorese identity eventually led to further divisions in the country, and the diversity surfaced during the 2006 crisis. Still, in 1999 focus was mainly on having ended the Indonesian occupation and rebuilding the country after the destruction caused by the militias after the popular consultation. This could be achieved with international support, and the broad mandate invested in UNTAET gave international actors a lot of power to shape this young country. In Cambodia UNTAC enjoyed less power to influence such issues and the political institutions already in place were not as receptive as the new emerging institutions under UN rule in Timor-Leste.

Assessing the norm diffusion approach

It would be easy to revert to patriarchy as an explanation as to why the internalization of the norm of women’s political rights is facing difficulties in two post-conflict societies characterized by patriarchal ideas. However, such an explanation gives us limited insight into how we are to understand the differences between the two countries. The same is true for explanations that focus on time. Timor-Leste has reached higher levels of both institutionalization and internalization than Cambodia (although still only mid-level at best), but has had only about half the time to do so (if we take the arrival of the international actors as the starting point). Cambodia might be considered more patriarchal than Timor-Leste, although looking outside the political sphere Cambodian women are at times fairly empowered. For example, women are reported to make up 64 percent of main family breadwinners. Although there are problems related to women’s economic rights that cannot be covered here, in general, women’s relatively high level of economic activity (74.4 percent according to the UNDP Human Development Report 2007/2008) gives us an idea about how views on women in economic and political spheres differ. Discriminating ways of life and attitudes are naturally linked to patriarchy, but these explanations have to be complemented with something else in order to help us better understand the differences between the countries. In this case, the “something else” is facilitated by using a norm diffusion approach.

Chapter two presented a model for norm diffusion that included a more nuanced view of norm internalization that I argued can better capture the complex process of norm diffusion. I also argued that the context in which norm entrepreneurs are trying to spread and root norms in Cambodia and

Timor-Leste is important for understanding what happens at the national level. In particular, both countries can be characterized as post-conflict. This makes them different from the cases presented in the anthology by Risse, Ropp and Sikkink (1999), which is one of the most comprehensive studies on norm diffusion. The argument raised in Chapter one is that a post-conflict context with heavy international presence allows for stage jumping (through fast-tracking) in the norm diffusion process (based on the argument that international actors bring the norm of women's political rights into these settings as part of a statebuilding tool-box). Just as the spiral model posits, international and national actors work together to pressure the government to start adopting the norm, even though this relationship is more complex in reality. The idea of stage jumping, i.e. fast-tracking of the norm of women's political rights, finds support in my study, for example as illustrated by the space that UNTAC opened up in Cambodia, despite the fact that the mission did not have a specific gender focus. There were already local understandings that could be linked to the norm of women's rights (e.g. views of what is good or bad behavior, women, who struggled alongside men, should be valued for their work, women have been strong in the past, etc.), so neither UNTAC nor UNTAET came to a country with no prior understandings of women and men, and their situations. Still, as noted above, the *concepts* of gender equality and human rights (for both women and men) were (and in some degree still are) understood to be new ideas that were brought by international actors during the 1990s, even if the *content* as such was not completely new. As noted in both countries, the (emerging) national elites in Cambodia and Timor-Leste had few options but to start adapting to the norm. They ratified a number of international conventions with the approval of the international community, thus also avoiding the international shaming that not signing would have provoked. Stage three of the spiral model, tactical concessions, thus seems to be a valid starting point for our analysis and neither of the two countries have made efforts to completely deny the value of the norm, even though concerns have been raised regarding the norm's applicability in these countries.

The study thus took as a point of departure that international actors, personified by the UN, would take a leading role in norm diffusion due to the complex context in which norm diffusion (spreading and rooting) is being promoted. Although my study supports this argument, it should be noted that the case of Timor-Leste raises the question of who pushes whom. On several occasions, women's organizations actually took the lead and pushed international actors to "keep their focus on gender". This observation directs our attention to two issues in particular. Firstly, despite having a mandate that included gender mainstreaming all of its activities, UNTAET sometimes showed a lack of commitment to this task. This relates to what Kuovo notes in her study on gender mainstreaming in the UN, where it was revealed that

a lot of the personnel considered gender mainstreaming an add-on and that there was a “gender mainstreaming fatigue” (Kuovo 2004:179). Secondly, it still raises the issue of the role that civil society organizations can play in bringing issues on to the political agenda and pushing for change, even in the early days of statebuilding. The increasingly important role of Cambodian women’s organizations as they gained strength also underscores their importance for norm diffusion. More generally the results highlight the importance of norm, or policy, champions taking the lead in norm diffusion.

Another theoretical contribution of this study was to add capability to function as a necessary component to operationalize “internalization”. Such an addition complicates the analysis of norm diffusion and not many countries in the world would actually be considered to have reached high levels of both institutionalization and internalization of women’s political rights. Nevertheless, if we are to understand the entire process of norm diffusion and why, as Landman among others notes, there is a discrepancy between the development and enforcement of a human rights regime, we need to look closer at how these rights that are provided on paper are translated into agency on the ground. The empirical results from Cambodia and Timor-Leste reveal that women do indeed have political rights on paper. The constitutions guarantee equality between men and women, and both women and men are increasingly becoming aware of human rights for both women and men. The norm is well institutionalized (although flaws can be identified here as well), and following the logic of the Risse and Sikkink model (cf. 1999:33), the norm will increasingly become habitualized and thus internalized. However, my empirical analysis of Cambodian and Timorese shows that women are struggling to access these rights, despite all the proper institutions that are in place and national elites are increasingly expressing support for the norm. In this study I have argued that we have to look closer at the chain of events, i.e. prescriptive status – rule-consistent behavior – internalization, and include aspects of functioning and agency in order to be able to say something about how the norm is internalized. Politicians can accept the validity of the norm and send signals of habituation and of the norm’s status as standard operating procedure, but if the target group, in this case women, cannot access the right because of lack of knowledge, resources, or because of discriminating traditional practices, then internalization is deeply flawed.

Although adding capability to function to the analysis of norm diffusion has resulted in some methodological difficulties, without this analysis the research results would be much less nuanced. As such it would give outsiders a much more limited understanding of women’s situation in Cambodia and Timor-Leste. At the same time, it is important to ask whether interviewing a number of people about issues relating to norm internalization actually tells us more than what these individuals think. That is, does it give us an

accurate description of women's capability to function in a country? I think that it does. Throughout the course of this research I have interviewed women's organizations working towards women in rural areas, politicians, civil servants and international actors such as UN personnel, advisors to the governments of Cambodia and Timor-Leste, and donor country representatives. They have all been asked to reflect upon issues relating to capability to function and they have all indicated the same thing: women are increasingly becoming aware of their rights, but they are still facing substantial problems translating this into agency. My interviewees link these problems to lack of education, capacity or tradition and culture. I have therefore concluded that aspects of capability to function have been captured through these interviews. In addition, my impressions from spending time in the two countries supports the views expressed in the interviews.

In sum, the empirical results show that although levels of institutionalization are reported to be rather high (factual or moving towards such high levels), a lot more attention must be given to internalizing the norm of women's political rights in both countries. It is a question of time, resources, and commitment, functioning political institutions, and cooperation and collaboration. It also requires raising people's awareness, for example through training programs for both women and men. Finally, the norm has to be communicated throughout the country, not just in the capital. The conclusion regarding the norm diffusion approach is that it manages to capture the complex process of how international norms travel to post-conflict countries, and the empirical analysis supports the argument that in cases of heavy international presence involved in statebuilding, stage jumping is plausible and this fast-tracking should be analyzed further. Furthermore, in order to actually grasp internalization, we also have to look at how this process of habitualization and de-personalization of norm adherence actually plays out in reality. This study has shown that doing so can be facilitated by using the aspect of capability to function to operationalize norm internalization.

Lessons for practitioners

What more can we learn from having studied norm diffusion in Cambodia and Timor-Leste? Having read the discussion above, the cynic might exclaim that little is new as far as lessons learned goes. However, it often seems that we learn very little from one statebuilding situation to the next. If so, my research results should be seen as underscoring what might sometimes seem to be evident in rhetoric but is less so in practice. First and foremost, this study has highlighted that in order to say anything about norm diffusion at large we cannot assume that creating the "proper" institutions and adopting what seem to be gender-sensitive policies and legislation will automatically lead to norm internalization. Analyzing capability to function, or the ability

of (possibility for) rights holders to access their rights and act upon them, is crucial for understanding why norm diffusion is more or less successful. This arguably makes the analysis more complex but the end result is then more firmly rooted in the reality of ordinary people's daily lives. A lesson learned is that providing support for norm institutionalization is not sufficient as it does not necessarily lead to norm internalization. International actors have to provide longterm support to facilitate people's capability to function. Both Cambodia and Timor-Leste have developed more or less functioning institutions facilitating women's political representation and participation, and some of the initiatives for trying to mainstream gender throughout line ministries and society are quite impressive. Still, the value of the norm of women's political rights is still frequently questioned. Women's capability to function is not guaranteed in either of the countries, despite high levels of norm institutionalization. Timor-Leste seems to have come farther on the scale of norm internalization due to less negatively adapted preferences among women and less discriminating traditions. Because women participated in the clandestine struggle, men and women in Timor-Leste have fewer difficulties accepting women as political actors. The programs that were designed and implemented to increase women's rights could be used by an organized group of women. In Cambodia such programs have been hindered by strong traditional views about how women are supposed to behave, views that women have also internalized. Trying to change such discriminating ways of life and improve women's awareness and confidence is necessary if Cambodia is to move beyond institutionalization. If norm diffusion stops with the establishment of the "proper" political institutions, the norm of women's political rights can more easily be disregarded as something Western and completely foreign to the country. International actors then risk being considered culturally insensitive and their legitimacy will be called into question.

A related issue is that of who defines success and failure. Chapter two stated that a socializer (in this case the international community) believes itself to be the judge of when the changes that have occurred are sufficient to judge the diffusion process as successful and accomplished. In Cambodia some international actors considered the 2007 commune council elections a failure as regards women's representation, but Cambodian women's organizations believed the 15 percent female commune councillors elected to be a great success. By describing it as a failure, there is a risk that national actors will feel discouraged, and that the divide between international and national actors will increase. International actors must be able to criticize national actors and their activities, but at the same time they should evaluate success and failure with regard for the context in which they are working.

Another conclusion to be drawn from this study is that international actors play an important role for norm enforcement in post-conflict societies,

but they will be more successful if they cooperate and collaborate with national actors, both national elites and civil society organizations. As noted in the introduction, international actors know that national actors have to be included in statebuilding efforts if the process is to be viable. Nonetheless, effective strategies for doing so are still lacking. This is confirmed in my study, but it also allows us to identify some strategies that are worth pursuing. One such development is the technical working groups in Cambodia, which were established as a way to increase national ownership of the development agenda. The technical working group for gender is not functioning flawlessly, but allowing national actors to identify monitoring indicators could be one way of bridging the international-national divide. We also see this happening in Timor-Leste, with the List of National Priorities being one initiative with the potential of increasing the inclusion of national actors. International support is needed, but the key issue is for national actors to be part of the development process of their own country, and not just recipients who take over programs and initiatives that international actors have instigated, negotiated and tried to implement. Similarly, as noted in Allmén and Amer (2009 forthcoming), lack of national inclusion during early peacebuilding days in Timor-Leste resulted in a number of failed programs. However, initiatives such as nationally owned development indicators and lists of priorities should be scrutinized and their implementation must be monitored and evaluated to ensure that they do not become laundry lists with buzzwords produced simply to please international donors.

National actors must accept the message conveyed by international agents; if not, the host state will feel alienated and the norm risks being rejected or questioned. As both cases highlight, the people returning from the Diaspora seem to play an important role for norm diffusion. These women and men return to their native countries empowered with new ideas and in both Cambodia and Timor-Leste some of the most outspoken female politicians and key civil society actors have been women who returned from the Diaspora. In Cambodia, these women have found it quite difficult to adapt to the Cambodian way of life, and one female politician stated that she could not forcefully push some of her views on gender equality because of the traditional view about how women and men are supposed to behave (Interview no. 29). If she pushed too hard, she believed she would alienate women, which would make her unable to serve as a role model. In Timor-Leste, returning women who got involved in politics seem to find it a bit easier to become accepted, even among women who never left the country. Although concerns are still raised regarding ex-Diaspora women's understanding of the suffering that women who stayed in Timor-Leste had to endure, several women returning from the Diaspora have become role models.

International actors should support women and men returning from the Diaspora, but at the same time they must be aware of the risk of alienation. This study has shown that people returning from the Diaspora are sometimes considered just as foreign as individuals representing the international community. Resources have to be allocated to bridge the gap between people returning from the Diaspora and people who never left the country. As noted in Timor-Leste, initiatives from leading women's rights advocates resulted in better collaboration between ex-Diasporas and Timorese women who stayed. International actors should support such initiatives, for example by funding outreach conferences and workshops.

The empirical research also suggests that by supporting women's organizations (or other organizations working with women's rights) and empowering them, a well-formed push from below can support norm enforcement from the international arena as well. Taken a step further, international donors should support and strengthen civil society organizations in order to create a critical mass on the ground in host societies. This will ensure that in cases of more complex statebuilding missions, international actors will be able to find local partners to team up with. Again, such initiatives could also result in a better collaboration between returning Diasporas and those who stayed in the country.

Another issue raised that can serve as basis for policy-relevant recommendations is that both men and women are in need of training on human rights and gender equality and need to become better aware of what these concepts entail. Such training should be part of a long-term commitment to promote human rights, and as part of that women's rights. Gender mainstreaming has been a buzzword in international development for quite some time, but looking at the democratization of Cambodia and Timor-Leste it becomes evident that mainstreaming gender is seen as an end in itself rather than as a means to achieve an end – namely gender equality. This is true for international actors as well as for national elites and civil society organizations. Training on such issues should be culturally sensitive in order to avoid alienation and minimize accusations of neo-colonial tendencies. The important thing to remember, however, is that both men and women should be targeted for such training. Women might understand the issues and needs of fellow women in their countries to a greater extent than men might do, but women are not necessarily more gender sensitive than men. For example, most of the gender training in Timor-Leste was provided specifically for women rather than the general public. This means that although the rhetoric of gender was often used, women have been the main target group. A women's rights advocate noted that although gender has been on the agenda since independence, much still needs to be done to raise people's awareness of what gender actually means (Interview no. 49a). People refer to gender mainstreaming, but few know what it actually means. This was also

emphasized by Timorese ministerial gender focal points, who are responsible for trying to mainstream gender in various line ministries. We can see similar developments in Cambodia and this underscores the point that both men and women should be included in gender and human rights' trainings. If women are targeted specifically, the reasons for this should be communicated in order to move away from an understanding that efforts to promote gender issues are only relevant for women. Moreover, focus should be on empowerment, on both providing the right and the capability to access the right, rather than merely increasing the number of women in decision-making positions. Training should also focus on why it is important to strive for gender equality, and how this can be done successfully in each cultural setting. As for training directed at women specifically, international actors and civil society organizations should provide further training to female political candidates and elected women in order to encourage them to be more outspoken and become powerful norm entrepreneurs.

Establishing a gender unit or gender/women's machineries is one viable way to ascribe importance to the issue of women's rights and gender equality, both within a UN mission and a national government. However, there is also a risk that such institutionalization marginalizes the issue of women's rights and gender equality and separates it from the rest of the mission's or government's work. The same is true for other international organizations, international donor representatives included. UNTAC in Cambodia never had a specific gender unit but tried to enforce such issues under its human rights component. UNTAC is believed to have "opened up a space" where already outspoken women could make their voices heard, but less explicit focus was put on reaching out to the average Cambodian woman. Arguably, had the process leading up to Cambodia's first democratic election in many years focused more on why women constitute important political actors and how this is relevant for all women (and men), then the debate surrounding women's political representation and participation might have evolved faster than it did. In Timor-Leste, UNTAET's gender unit faced a different problem. Since it was the main actor responsible for gender mainstreaming, other UN components gave gender issues less attention, and the issue of gender was somewhat marginalized. We can see similar developments today, in cases where UNIFEM is seen as the UN agency that should focus on women's issues, thus "relieving" other actors from this task. Also, by the late establishment of the Gender Affairs Unit in Timor-Leste, gender issues were not as highly prioritized as was initially planned. UNTAET nevertheless managed to gender sensitize several developments, and the Gender Affairs Unit has served as a role model for other UN missions worldwide. My conclusion is therefore that a specific gender unit could be a necessary, although not sufficient, development for the mainstreaming of gender issues, but it should not be considered an excuse

for other units and departments within the UN system to disregard the issue. Furthermore, such a unit must have sufficient resources allocated towards its activities, and not a toothless tiger with no mandate or resources to become the crucial norm entrepreneur it has the possibility of becoming.

As for gender/women's machineries at the governmental level, both Cambodia and Timor-Leste have experienced misunderstandings of what the aim of such a machinery is. Once again the issue of gender mainstreaming risks being marginalized, and both MoWA and SEPI have struggled to get away from a role as "implementing machinery" and to focus instead on encouraging each line ministry, department and unit to take its own responsibility for mainstreaming gender. In order for gender machineries to be effective in their role as key promoter of women's (political) rights, resources and proper mandates are needed, as well as commitment, which comes through training and awareness-raising. International actors have to work in close partnership with national counterparts in order to avoid alienation. The two case studies have also shown that it is not enough to have one person (or one donor country) responsible for "gendering" an entire ministry or local governance structure, yet another observation that points to the importance of providing sufficient resources to enable institutions and individuals to carry out the tasks assigned to them. Translated into a line ministry or the local level government structure, a single gender focal point left alone to promote gender awareness has to be supported by both international and national actors in order to access training and have sufficient knowledge to translate this into practical action. This became clear in meetings with different gender focal points in Timor-Leste, where one stated that due to training and funding provided by international actors, she/he had a solid ground to work from. The gender focal point said that although it was still difficult to work on these issues in the ministry, the resources provided through international support, including training about how to develop a budget and how to organize training workshops, was invaluable. In contrast, another gender focal point received less international support and seemed more lost in its task as a gender focal point.

Also, in the unfortunate (but all too common) case of insufficient resources, focus should be put on programs and trainings that reach out to both men and women. That is, although it is important to raise women's awareness of themselves as important political actors (broadly defined), focusing on both men and women in striving to reach gender equality through gender mainstreaming will result in more viable outcomes. Such a *gender* focus will strengthen women's capability to function. In both Cambodia and Timor-Leste, development programs are now increasingly focusing on bringing men into the discussion of gender equality and women's rights. However, at this point, many (mostly men) still see gender as relevant only for women; a development that could have been addressed

sooner by actually including both men and women at an earlier stage in training and awareness-raising campaigns. Due to the unlevelled playing field, it is understandable that some initial efforts to raise rights-awareness and training programs focused primarily on women. However, this does not have to become an issue if there is an ongoing discussion and open communication as to why this is the case, and efforts to frame the rhetoric of gender equality as a win-win situation for both men and women. Men, as well as women, have to be included if some level of gender equality is to be achieved and human rights promoted for both women and men.

The study has also shown that strengthening local government structures can be favorable for women's political participation and representation, but it does not necessarily have this effect. In Cambodia, interviewees talked about how rights-issues are less abstract at the local level and that explains why women are enjoying access to political decision-making at the commune and village level. In Timor-Leste, on the other hand, there is less female participation at the local level and voices have been raised regarding women's capacities to rule on issues that are seen as so much closer (and more important) to people than those that are dealt with at the national level. The number of Timorese women involved in local level decision-making is nevertheless slowly increasing. The lesson learned is that strengthening the local level decision-making structures and doing it in a gender-sensitive fashion can serve as a starting point for women's political representation and participation, but it should be complemented with training and awareness-raising in order to help challenge discriminatory views on women's traditional roles and help disseminate the message of "women's rights". Again, both women and men should be targeted in order to achieve higher levels of both norm institutionalization and internalization.

Looking at the individual case studies, what are some of the implications of my research results? Apart from the general insights already mentioned, there are some recommendations for both national policy-makers and international advisors. Also, the countries can learn from each other. Timor-Leste has been very successful in the formalization of a strong women's movement which plays a crucial role in norm enforcement, something that Cambodian women's organizations can learn from. UNIFEM provides support to both countries, which means that some similar activities have been initiated, for example training women ahead of elections. This support should continue, although as mentioned above men need to be included as well. Efforts should be undertaken to recruit competent staff to the women/gender machineries in order to turn the machineries into the powerful norm entrepreneur they have the potential of being. This is relevant for both Cambodia and Timor-Leste, although it seems to be a more urgent task for MoWA due to its lack of capacity, whereas SEPI is focusing on recruiting more competent staff to increase its capacity. The intra- and

inter-ministerial working groups established in Cambodia, although still not functioning properly, could serve as a model for similar developments in Timor-Leste. The gender mainstreaming strategy, *Neary Rattanak*, needs to be strengthened in Cambodia (or the surrounding institutions in order to secure implementation), but the idea of such a gender mainstreaming strategy can also serve as inspiration to SEPI as it continues its efforts to formalize such a strategy. Efforts to gender-sensitize electoral rules and regulations in Cambodia should continue, either through the adoption of a quota system or other mechanisms. The upcoming elections should be monitored closely in order to secure continued success for women's representation, and resources need to be allocated to support female candidates and to sensitize both women and men to women as competent political actors. Related to this is the issue of the Chbap Srey. Although the younger generation is applying the code to fewer aspects of life, it still plays a key role in defining proper roles for men and women. It is critical to teach men and women (and boys and girls) about how society has changed from the days when the code, made up of a list of poems, was written. Projects focusing on such cultural heritage, such as producing children's books or plays, should be encouraged. This should also be strengthened in Timor-Leste, where women are still considered incapable of local level governing. International actors should increase their support to civil society organizations involved in such projects, since changing attitudes is essential if the norm of women's rights (in general) is to have a chance of reaching higher levels of internalization. This support should be characterized by international-national collaboration. A critical point to make is that even if political seats are reserved for women or efforts are undertaken to promote women's political participation, little will actually change unless accompanied by awareness-raising as to why this is happening. For example, Timorese women are rarely placed on any other position than every fourth name on candidate lists. International donor agencies should practice as they preach and support gender equality programs and continue striving for both women and men's rights. As noted in Cambodia, there is a risk that the country is now "democratic enough" and women "vocal enough" for donors to move on to other critical areas. However, doing so risks undermining the momentum already established. Pressure on political leaders to deliver on rhetorical support for women's rights must continue (for example the Prime Minister's statement to political parties to put women on electable positions on candidate lists).

Timor-Leste is believed to be at a crossroads. It is stabilizing after the violence of 2006 and international actors are once again handing back power to national elites. Positive outcomes for the diffusion of women's political rights can be increased if efforts are undertaken (by international actors, national elites and civil society organizations) to keep striving for improved institutionalization and internalization. As noted above, between my visits to

the country a lot happened with norm institutionalization, and there were also signs of women becoming more vocal, demanding their rights and putting pressures on their politicians. At this point in time, however, it is important for norm entrepreneurs (existing and potential) not to lose ground and for norm entrepreneurs to keep building strong coalitions. International support should therefore continue in order to increase women's capability to political functioning. There are also promising signs in Cambodia, for example the rise in the number of women elected or subsequently appointed to commune councils and the national assembly. International actors should continue supporting the spread and rooting of women's political rights in Cambodia as well, and the collaboration between international and national actors (elites) should be further strengthened in order to decrease feelings of alienation and norm mis-match.

Notes for future research

This study has contributed to previous research on, among other things, international actors' roles in statebuilding after violent conflict and research on norm diffusion. During the course of carrying out this study and in analyzing the results presented here, I have developed new ideas that should be studied further. This section is an initial attempt to formalize some of these questions, although without providing answers. It is also important to ask whether the results from Cambodia and Timor-Leste are applicable to other statebuilding contexts as well, and if other norms would benefit from the theoretical contributions provided in this study. In short, do the results and insights travel across space and issue?

For example, this study has only addressed women's political rights in Cambodia and Timor-Leste. Despite the somewhat positive implications for women's political rights that the study has uncovered (despite flaws and problems of norm internalization the countries seem to be moving forward, although at different speeds and with different levels of commitment), it should be remembered that women still face severe problems, for example in the area of domestic violence and access to justice. To get a more comprehensive picture of women's rights in these two countries, my research results should be viewed in the light of other rights' areas as well. It would be interesting to look closer at economic and social rights as well, and conduct systematic and locally sensitive comparisons. For example, Cambodian women are more powerful in the economic realm than in the political sphere, whereas Timorese women enjoy less economic power than political. How does this relate to norm diffusion and what differences can be identified between the two case studies as well as between the different rights' areas?

Another relevant path to follow would be to look closer at the issue of "democratization". For example, Coates notes that "[m]any Cambodians, understandably, have lost their faith in democracy – lost it before it ever had

a chance to flower. They believed in democracy in 1993. They had high hopes the UN would bring them peace and a stable future” (Coates 2005:111). This issue could be addressed further, for example by looking at what host societies expect from international actors on issues of democracy, human rights, or gender equality. Likewise, what are international actors’ (UN missions but also other international organizations) views on what is expected of them and what are their own expectations? A related issue is to conduct a more in-depth study on different interpretations of concepts like “democracy” or “human rights” and how international, national and local interpretations fit together and can be made to fit together to secure a better outcome. Such research is relevant in order to make development aid and statebuilding activities more efficient.

As for studying how international norms are translated into domestic settings, it would be useful to apply the norm diffusion approach used here to other cases to see if the results found in my cases travel to other countries. The conclusions regarding the theoretical model should be applied to more cases in order to assess whether or not the research results presented in this study are unique for Cambodia and Timor-Leste, or if we see similar trends and outcomes in other post-conflict cases as well. The norm diffusion model should also be applied to non-conflict countries to determine if it is applicable even outside post-conflict countries with heavy international presence. For example, perhaps processes of stage jumping and fast-tracking of norm diffusion are applicable in developing countries that have not experienced heavy international presence for peacebuilding purposes, but have been recipients of high levels of international aid. Arguably the issue of stage-jumping is less relevant for non-conflict countries with less international support, as indicated in the original discussion in the edited volume of Risse, Ropp and Sikkink. Furthermore, it is relevant to ask whether or not the success of using capability to function as a tool to operationalize internalization is limited to studying a norm that is somewhat contested and in cases in which it is likely that we see some sort of conflict between new and existing norms in a society.

Finally, this study initially emphasized the importance of looking closer at what actually happens as a norm gains prescriptive status and increasingly becomes part of rule-consistent behaviour and supposedly then becomes habitualized and internalized. Grasping norm internalization turned out to be a rather daunting task, and capability to function was used to operationalize this aspect of norm diffusion. How this worked in this particular study was evaluated above. Despite the conclusion that adding capability to function was a valid addition to the theoretical approach and that the way it was operationalized (adaptive preferences and discriminating ways of life) helped capture some of the major issues at stake in norm internalization, it would be interesting to conduct a survey and more in-depth focus-group

interviews with rural women to complement the information gathered through my interviews and to further develop the method to analyze capability to function. This method can then be applied to other cases and issue areas and used to better assess how international assistance in peacebuilding works in practice, focusing not only on formal institutions but also on people's capability to function.

Concluding remarks

This study took as its point of departure the new context that international actors operate within in their efforts to create stable democracies after armed conflict. The issue of analyzing the diffusion of women's political rights in two post-conflict societies is part of a broader question, namely: how do aspects of the new normative framework of democracy, human rights and good governance influence the actions and activities of international organizations? More specifically, how do international norms travel, via statebuilding efforts, into post-conflict domestic contexts? Furthermore, how much of this process can be externally driven and how do national actors respond to the international norms that outsiders seek to plant?

By identifying strength and weaknesses in institutional developments, and by analyzing norm entrepreneurs' involvement and activities, I have examined the norm diffusion processes in Cambodia and Timor-Leste. The previous chapters have all discussed aspects relating to the fate of the norm of women's political rights in Cambodia and Timor-Leste. In the discussion above I have presented empirical comparisons and an analytical discussion. In both cases the norm travelled via international actors, but the importance of finding local anchors in the receiving states has been highlighted throughout this study as crucial for "successful" norm diffusion. International actors can push for change (and norm adherence), but their efforts are not enough. In the end, national actors have to buy into the message that international actors try to convey. Consequently, international-national collaboration ought to frame the nature of international involvement in statebuilding, and therefore also norm diffusion processes. Ideas about how to do this, based on what we can learn from Cambodia and Timor-Leste, were provided as lessons for international and national practitioners. Although I have only analyzed the diffusion process of one norm in two post-conflict states, the strength and weaknesses that have been highlighted should be carefully considered as international actors, led by the UN, embark upon future statebuilding missions across the globe.

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- Interview no. 61, Female Politician. Dili, 25 November, 2008.
- Interview no. 62, Gender Focal Point. Dili, 26 November, 2008.
- Interview no. 63, Female Politician. Dili, 27 November, 2008.

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Interview no. 64, Female Politician. Dili, 4 March, 2009.

Interview no. 65, Female Politician. Dili, 9 March, 2009.

Appendix 1.**Summary of empirical findings****Table 1. Norm entrepreneurs**

| Cambodia | Timor-Leste |
|--|---|
| <p>UNTAC no explicit gender focus</p> <p>Women's movement not well organized prior to UNTAC – today more unified for example as in CPWP, CAMBOW and NGO Committee on CEDAW; problems working as a network; urban-rural differences</p> <p>International support led to new organizations; support activities + training</p> <p>Diaspora started new organizations (risk of being distanced from women who stayed in-country); involved in politics (not always being role models)</p> <p>Norm entrepreneurs spreading to every level</p> <p>National elites increasingly coming onboard.</p> | <p>UNTAET gender affairs unit (delayed, established after push from women's organizations and individual norm entrepreneurs)</p> <p>Women's movement organized prior to UNTAET; more diversified today; outreach outside Dili still limited</p> <p>International support led to new organizations; support activities + training</p> <p>Diaspora started new organizations (charismatic leaders, risk of being distanced from women who stayed in-country); involved in politics (not always being role models)</p> <p>Norm entrepreneurs take role serious – “keen to do gender”</p> <p>National elites increasingly coming onboard.</p> |

Table 2. Institutional developments

| Cambodia | Timor-Leste |
|---|--|
| <p><i>Electoral rules and regulations</i></p> <p>No gender-specific rules or regulations</p> <p>Gender-sensitive voter education mainly NGO driven although with UN support</p> <p>Alternative mechanisms (lobby, training → women as recipients of training, not focus on empowerment)</p> <p>Importance of putting women on electable positions – placement dependent on resources; discrimination female candidates</p> <p>More women elected than appointed.</p> | <p><i>Electoral rules and regulations</i></p> <p>Quota rejected in 2001 – led to alternative mechanisms such as gender-sensitive voter education → positive spin on having women involved in politics</p> <p>Gender-sensitive voter education mainly NGO-driven although with support from electoral bodies and UN</p> <p>Quota suco elections; women still not well-represented at local level (more conservative and religious systems)</p> <p>National quota adopted in 2007, women well represented but rarely placed higher than as every 4th candidate on the list.</p> |
| <p><i>National gender equality/women’s machinery</i></p> <p>MoWA/MWVA – part of implementing Beijing Platform for Action; presence in Council of Ministers; Neary Rattanak (international support)</p> <p>Intra- and inter ministerial working groups – responsible for implementation, gender often seen as add-on, focus on women, not gender</p> <p>Lack of capacity, lack of resources, lack of understanding of what to implement</p> <p>Individual policy champions</p> <p>“Gender” often still misunderstood.</p> | <p><i>National gender equality/women’s machinery</i></p> <p>GAU, OPE and SEPI with increased capacity and mandate</p> <p>SEPI – presence in Council of Ministers + gender advisors (catalysts or taking over?) and gender focal points (lack of training, gender often seen as add-on); more independent, still lacking human resources; lack of capacity; risk of marginalization?</p> <p>Lacking capacities within line ministries</p> <p>Formal strategy under development</p> <p>No inter-ministerial working groups</p> <p>No resistance towards “gender” but still misunderstandings.</p> |

| <i>Strengthening local government structure</i> | <i>Strengthening local government structure</i> |
|--|--|
| <p>SEILA – well-needed entry point for gender mainstreaming, focus on sub-national level</p> <p>Focal point system → committees by 2007</p> <p>New organic law in 2008 – women and children’s affairs committee → considered gender insensitive – law open for interpretation</p> <p>Gender issues and women’s rights less abstract local level</p> <p>Lack of communication, work over-load women focal points, insufficient training</p> <p>Lack of role models.</p> | <p>CEP – entrance of women in village development councils (50% presence), redefined roles for women; habitualized women in decision-making</p> <p>Local Development Programme → Local Governance Support Programme → new organic law: 1/3 women on candidates’ lists</p> <p>Quota for suco councils (seats reserved)</p> <p>District gender focal points (sufficient resources and training?)</p> <p>Women still not well-represented at the local level.</p> |

Table 3. Developments relating to capability to function

| Cambodia | Timor-Leste |
|---|---|
| <p>Women challenging stereotypes but still struggling to learn about their rights</p> <p>Traditional code for women's behavior still affecting ways of life</p> <p>Women in politics not very outspoken – have to become role models</p> <p>Women starting to demand a position</p> <p>Women have enjoyed power outside the political realm in the past</p> <p>Zero-sum game men and women's power.</p> | <p>Women and men know women are strong (clandestine struggle)</p> <p>Women aware of rights on paper; starting to demand a position</p> <p>Can become leaders but have to fulfill tasks of wife and mother as well; women still not encouraged to become leaders</p> <p>Urban-rural divide</p> <p>Zero-sum game men and women's power.</p> |

Appendix 2.**Major political parties in Cambodia and Timor-Leste****CAMBODIA**

| Name | Platform and Position |
|---|--|
| CPP Cambodian People's Party | Non-communist socialist party. The biggest political party in Cambodia. Won a majority of the seats in the 2008 National Assembly elections (90 out of 123). Was called Kampuchean People's Revolutionary Party between 1981 and 1991 and was the only allowed political party at that time. |
| FUNCINPEC Front Uni National pour un Cambodge Indépendant, Neutre, Pacifique, et Coopératif | Royalist Party with early affiliation to the former king Norodom Sihanouk. Formed a coalition with CPP until the 2008 election. Won only 2 seats in the National Assembly in the 2008 elections. |
| SRP Sam Rainsy Party | Liberal party, founded in 1995 as the Khmer National Party. Changed to SRP in 1998. Is the official opposition to the ruling Cambodian People's Party. Won 26 out of 123 seats in 2008 National Assembly Elections. |

TIMOR-LESTE

| Name | Platform and Position |
|--|---|
| CNRT ⁱ National Congress for Timorese Reconstruction | Social democratic party, established by Xanana Gusmão ahead of 2007 parliamentary election. Won 24 percent of seats (second after Fretilin) but formed a governing coalition with the Timorese Social Democratic Association-Social Democratic Party (ASDT-PSD) and the Democratic Party and rule the country under the name AMP (Parliamentary Majority Alliance). |
| FRETILIN Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor | Leftist party that began as a resistance movement against Portuguese and Indonesian occupation. Won the Constitutive Assembly election in 2001 and ruled the country until 2007. Won 29 percent of seats in the parliament in 2007 but lost power to the AMP coalition. |
| ASDT-PSD Timorese Social Democratic Association-Social Democratic Party | Social democratic alliance formed ahead of 2007 parliamentary election. Won 16 percent of seats in the election. |
| PD Democratic Party in Timor- Leste | Social democratic (social liberalism) party formed in 2001. Won 11 percent of seats in 2007 election. |

ⁱ Not to be conflated with The National Council of Timorese Resistance with the same acronym discussed in Chapter 7.

Appendix 3.**Time line of relevant major events****CAMBODIA**

| Year | Event |
|-------------|--|
| 1863-1953 | French protectorate |
| 1941-1945 | Occupied by Japan and Thailand |
| 1969-1973 | Bombed by United States on several occasions |
| 1970 | Prince Sihanouk ousted from power in coup d'état |
| 1975 | The Khmer Rouge under Pol Pot captured Phnom Penh and initiated a genocide |
| 1978 | Vietnamese forces invade Cambodia and the Khmer Rouge is forced from power (Nov.) |
| 1979 | National Women's Association established |
| 1979-1991 | Cambodia is subject to international boycott |
| 1989 | Peace efforts initiated in Paris |
| 1991 | Ceasefire agreement signed (May) UNAMIC deployed (Oct. stayed until March 1992) Paris Peace Accord signed (Oct.) |
| 1992 | UNTAC deployed (Feb.) CEDAW is ratified by Government of Cambodia |
| 1993 | National Women's Summit (March) First parliamentary election (May) Secretary of State for Women's Affairs established Constitution adopted |
| 1995 | NGO Committee on CEDAW established |
| 1996 | Khmer Rouge formally dissolved The Ministry of Women's Affairs replaces the Secretary of State for Women's Affairs Decentralization reform start through SEILA program |
| 1997 | Coup d'état (co-premier Ranarridh ousted from power by Hun Sen) |

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| | |
|------|--|
| 1998 | Pol Pot dies (April) National Electoral Commission established Election to National Assembly (July) Veteran Affairs is added to the Ministry of Women's Affairs |
| 1999 | National Conference on Gender and Development Neary Rattanak is adopted (covers 1999-2003) |
| 2000 | Cambodian Committee of Women established |
| 2001 | Cambodian National Council for Women established |
| 2002 | First commune council election (Feb.) National Conference on Gender and Development |
| 2003 | National Women's Summit Election to National Assembly (July). Turmoil after the election and the formation of a new government was blocked by SRP and FUNCINPEC until July 2004 (CPP and FUNCINPEC formed a coalition). |
| 2004 | Neary Rattanak II adopted (covers 2004-2008) Technical Working Group on Gender is established |
| 2005 | Committee to Promote Women in Politics is established National Strategic Plan adopted |
| 2006 | Election to the Senate (Jan) Present before the 34 th CEDAW session in New York (Jan) National Committee for the Management of Decentralization and Deconcentration Reform is established |
| 2007 | Election to commune councils (April) |
| 2008 | New organic law on decentralization adopted (May) Election to National Assembly (July) |
| 2009 | Elections (indirect) to capital, province, municipal, district and khan councils |

TIMOR-LESTE

| Year | Event |
|-------------|---|
| 1520 | Portugal colonizes the eastern half of the island of Timor |
| 1974 | Political turmoil in Portugal lead to preparations for East Timor's independence Civil war as a consequence of internal clashes between UDT and Fretilin |
| 1975 | Fretilin declare East Timor independent (November) Pro-Indonesian parties declare integration with Indonesia (November) Indonesia invade East Timor (December) Popular Women's Organization of East Timor established |
| 1991 | Santa Cruz Massacre (November) |
| 1998 | East Timorese National Convention in the Diaspora organized (April) CNRT (National Council of Timorese Resistance) is established |
| 1999 | May 5 agreement signed regarding popular consultation regarding East Timor's future status UNAMET established (June) Popular consultation (August) Post-referendum violence (September) Australian multinational force (INTERFET) launched (September) UNTAET established (October) The National Consultative Council established (advisory body) (December) Gender Affairs Unit established |
| 2000 | East Timorese Women's Network (Rede Feto) established Women's Congress of East Timor organized (June) East Timor Transitional Administration (ETTA, considered government until elections, established (July) National Council Established (temporary legislative body) Community Empowerment and Local Governance Project (CEP) initiated |
| 2001 | Independent Electoral Commission established Election to Constituent Assembly Office for the Promotion of Equality established |

HOW DO INTERNATIONAL NORMS TRAVEL?

| | |
|------|--|
| 2002 | <p>Independence Day (May) UNMISSET deployed (May) National Development Plan launched Constitution adopted CEDAW ratified</p> |
| 2004 | <p>Second Women's Congress organized (July) National Election Commission established as temporary election body Local Development Program (LDP) launched as pilot program</p> |
| 2005 | <p>UNOTIL deployed (May) Local level elections (2004-2005) Local Governance Support Programme (LGSP) initiated</p> |
| 2006 | <p>Almost 600 military soldiers (out of 1500) desert due to alleged discrimination (February) Approximately one-third of the military force is dismissed (March) A initially peaceful demonstration turns violent, lasting a couple of days, resulting in five dead and a large number of internally displaced people (April) Up-scaling of international presence (June) Prime Minister Alkatiri resigns (June) UNMIT deployed (August) New election law to National Assembly adopted, required one female in group of four names on candidates' list</p> |
| 2007 | <p>National Election Commission re-created as permanent election body (January) Presidential election (April/May) Parliamentary election (June) Secretary of State for the Promotion of Equality appointed Women's Parliamentary Caucus (GMPTL) established (October)</p> |
| 2008 | <p>Parliamentary Gender Resource Center inaugurated (October) National Women's Congress</p> |
| 2009 | <p>Organic Law on decentralization approved in council of Ministers (Feb.) International Women for Peace Conference (March) Municipal elections</p> |

Appendix 4

Interview manual

Themes discussed

Political climate/system today (issues – general and women specifically)

Policies acknowledging women

Government structure – National and local levels (decentralization)
(issues regarding decentralization was more frequently discussed with interviewees with insight into this process)

Gender Equality/Women's Machinery (discussed more frequently with relevant stakeholders)

Electoral rules and regulations (discussed more frequently with relevant interviewees)

Education campaign

Quotas

Local implementation

Educating local authorities

Educating women – awareness-raising

Examples

Strength and weaknesses

Effects

Involvement CSO and involvement international actors
(including ex-Diaspora)

Decision-making

Policy-making

Awareness-raising

Civic education

UN legacy

Norm empowerment

Institutional developments

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Translation of human rights/WR

Validation

Internalization (do women see themselves as political actors, role of female politicians, controversies?)

Implementation

Ideas on how to move from rhetoric to action