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# Supporting Democracy: Women's Political Leadership

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Drawing on selected readings, this review introduces key theoretical positions and assumptions about women's political leadership and translates them into the context of CDI activity in Melanesia and elsewhere



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# *Supporting Democracy: Women’s Political Leadership – A Literature Review*

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**Prepared for the Centre for Democratic Institutions**

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## **Acronyms & Abbreviations**

<b>AusAID:</b>	<b>Australian Agency for International Development</b>
<b>CDI:</b>	<b>Centre for Democratic Institutions</b>
<b>CEDAW:</b>	<b>Convention on the Elimination of all Discrimination Against Women</b>
<b>CIDA:</b>	<b>Canadian International Development Agency</b>
<b>LPV:</b>	<b>Limited Preferential Voting</b>
<b>NGO:</b>	<b>Non-Governmental Organisation</b>
<b>ODE:</b>	<b>Office of Development Effectiveness</b>
<b>PACMAS:</b>	<b>Pacific Media Advisory Scheme</b>
<b>PNG:</b>	<b>Papua New Guinea</b>
<b>PR:</b>	<b>Proportional Representation</b>
<b>PWSPD:</b>	<b>Pacific Women Supporting Pacific Development</b>
<b>RAMSI:</b>	<b>Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands</b>
<b>Sida:</b>	<b>Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency</b>
<b>SIG:</b>	<b>Solomon Islands Government</b>
<b>SPC:</b>	<b>Secretariat of the Pacific Community</b>
<b>TSM:</b>	<b>Temporary Special Measures</b>
<b>UNTAET:</b>	<b>United National Transitional Administration in East Timor</b>
<b>USAID:</b>	<b>United States Agency for International Development</b>

## **Introduction**

This paper is an extract from a larger piece of research about Theory of Change and contributes to Phase One of an impact assessment study commissioned by the Centre for Democratic Institutions (CDI). It identifies assumptions underpinning key questions relating to the appropriateness of donor assistance to activities and programs designed to support democratic governance in CDI's focus countries (Indonesia, East Timor, Papua New Guinea (PNG), Vanuatu and Fiji). The extract commences with a discussion of some underpinning themes and then moves to particular issues relating to the promotion of women into political leadership. The review concludes with a full bibliography of sources used.

## **Section 1: Underpinning theories and approaches**

### **1. Politics, Democracy and Development**

There is growing agreement that '**politics matters**' in the development process – and recognition that it always has (Laws & Leftwich, 2012). But there are **multiple understandings** of what this means; Sumner & Mallett (2013) identify 3 schools of thought:

- (a) Aid should stay out of politics completely and be focused on **service delivery** – vaccinations, doctors, food, bridges, books for schools, etc. However, as pointed out by Carothers and de Gramont (2013a), even '**technocratic**' aid has political impacts
- (b) Aid can be directed at **political processes** (e.g. budgeting or procurement) but delivered **technocratically**
- (c) The promotion of democratic values and associated political procedures and processes is **central to improving the effectiveness of aid**. This includes the framing of poverty as a human rights issue and positioning development (assistance) in **avowedly political terms**, which may include promotion of democracy.

Some authors have noted the importance of the formation of '**inclusive**' economic & political institutions as a key factor in explaining economic success or otherwise of nation states (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012). In his discussion of '**new institutional economics**' North (1993) explains the distinction between 'institutions' and 'organisations':

*Institutions are the rules of the game of a society or more formally are the humanly-devised constraints that structure human interaction. They are composed of formal rules (statute law, common law, regulations), informal constraints (conventions, norms of behavior, and self imposed codes of conduct), and the enforcement characteristics of both*

In addition, Acemoglu and Robinson argue that addressing politics increases aid effectiveness. Aid will have little real impact on the lives of those who need it

most if the countries in which they live foster **extractive** rather than **inclusive** institutions. Further, they identify that a number of factors contribute to the emergence of institutional change: pre-existing institutional differences, the arrival at a **critical juncture** and decisions made by leaders and elites, particularly around the **forming of coalitions**.

Gaventa (2006) describes how understanding the linked nature of **visible**, **hidden** and **invisible political power relations** across different spaces and levels is important in understanding the potency, or otherwise, of reform coalitions and change processes.

However, as noted by Fukuyama (2011) institutional change is **context-specific** and often based on **historical contingencies**. In addition, Laws and Leftwich (2012) remind us that how institutional change or transition comes about is **unclear** and **highly contested**. They also note that the potential for change is characterised by a complex interaction between aspects of **agency** and **structure** - both of which have causal power.

There is also a long and largely unresolved debate about the contribution of **democracy** to the establishment of **inclusive institutions** and more **effective governance** and the extent to which democracy **necessarily** leads to better **development outcomes**. Laws and Leftwich (2012) refer to the need to support '**the local politics**' that will shape institutions that can foster sustainable and inclusive growth, political stability and **transformational** social development.

Previously, Sen (1999) had argued that rather than seeing political freedoms/democracy and economic development as some sort of **dichotomy** it was more important to acknowledge and accommodate numerous **levels of interconnectedness**. He argues that political/democratic freedoms are **integral** to economic development and should be considered **pre-eminent** on three grounds:

- their **direct** significance – e.g. in relation to social and political participation
- their **instrumental** significance – they improve citizens' opportunity to have their needs (including economic needs) heard
- their **constructive** significance – they allow for a conceptualisation of need, including economic need.

Carothers and de Gramont (2013a) note that donors more generally support democratic reform and practice in countries to which they give aid for both **intrinsic** and **instrumental** reasons. There is a political dimension to both of these spheres.

However, Carothers and de Gramont (2013a) suggest that there is a '**deeply unresolved debate**' about whether governance through democracy necessarily

leads to better development outcomes. Some countries which are considered successful in developmental terms have achieved that success without embracing democracy and/or eschewing it entirely, e.g. China, Ethiopia, Rwanda.

This is linked to two other key debates, both of which inform activities to assist and support democracy. The first is in relation to **what drives democratisation** at its various stages (see below). Rakner *et al* (2007) identify that there are changing dynamics between **structural factors** (e.g. economic growth, emergence of a middle class, increasing urbanisation), **agency-based factors** (e.g. interactions among key political actors to bring about transition in '**unlikely places**' or **critical junctures**) and **exogenous factors** (e.g. the effects of diffusion in a particular region – the Arab Spring may be an example of this). The dynamics between these types of influences vary at the different stages of democratisation: **liberalisation**, **transition** and **consolidation**, with the last of these being the hardest to achieve.

In addition, there are different understandings of **what democracy is**. At the theoretical level, Rakner *et al* identify that democracy may be described as **minimalist**, more **substantive** or **maximalist** (where '**real**' democracy is equated with economic equality and social justice). In practice, democracy manifests itself in numerous forms (e.g. parliamentary democracy, presidential democracy) and further aspects of this debate include the relative importance of **democratic ideals** or **values** and whether democracy is a means of decision-making (the Swiss version of direct democracy is an example of this) or a vehicle for appointing a government.

Bray (2013) presents a typology of democracy comprising the '**principle of justification**' for each type, some key features and a description of the general conditions required to facilitate its appearance. The typology comprises the following:

- **Liberal Democracy:** representation of the majority protects individuals from arbitrary government and ensures liberty when subject to the rule of law<sup>1</sup>
- **Participatory Democracy:** equal rights to liberty and self-determination requires a societal commitment to '**political efficacy**' and development of informed citizens concerned with collective problem solving and able to be involved in the governing process on a long-term basis<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This is the democratic model which has informed CDI activities

<sup>2</sup> See, further, Pateman (1970), MacPherson (1977) & Barber (1984)

- **Deliberative Democracy:** '**Democratic deliberation**' is a better way to develop '**legitimate policies**' than simply aggregating the interests of a society as a means of making decisions democratically<sup>3</sup>
- **Monitory Democracy:** Decision-makers are held accountable through public monitoring of what they do.<sup>4</sup>

Bray (2013) has argued that rather than simply accepting democracy as a '**self-evident good**', it is necessary to reflect on what normative reasons exist for valuing democracy. Drawing on the work of Dahl (2000), he identifies the following attributes of democracy, many of which can be and are contested (p2):

- Prevention of government by '**cruel and vicious autocrats**'
- Guarantee of fundamental rights not provided for in non-democratic societies
- Assurance of more personal freedom than the '**feasible alternatives**'
- Assistance for people to protect their own '**fundamental interests**'
- Maximisation of opportunity for citizens to be self-determining, i.e. be governed by laws they have chosen for themselves
- Fostering of human development more fully
- Fostering of a relatively '**high degree of political equality**'
- Avoidance of conflict – '**democracies do not fight wars with one another**'
- Tendency to be more prosperous than non-democratic countries
- Tendency to have greater protections of the environment than non-democratic countries

Finally, Carothers and Youngs (2011) reflect that some '**rising powers**' are also '**rising democracies**' who bring their own narrative of how democracy can be achieved and/or sustained to the discourse – there are **multiple versions of the democracy story** not just one (the '**western liberal**' one). Indonesia provides an illustrative example of this.

## 2. *Donors & Aid Agencies*

**Politics, aid and power are intricately linked.** Sherlock (2011) has identified that the ideas of the powerful may become '**orthodox**' because of where they come from rather than because they are necessarily the most cogent or appropriate. This is apparent in the orthodoxy that has been attached to notions of the Weberian state.

However, Acemoglu and Robinson (2012) have cautioned that external attempts to promote reform (economic/political/both) typically fail because the

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<sup>3</sup> See, further, Dryzek (2000)

<sup>4</sup> See, further, Keane (2009)

internal institutions are not sufficiently inclusive - the '**aid**' is not grounded in sufficient context about why the '**bad policies and institutions**' are there to start with.

The first phase of democracy assistance commenced in the early 1990s and was led by mainstream aid agencies such as the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and the World Bank. It was strongly marked by the same technocratic methods as socioeconomic assistance, based on templates designed to help institutions become like those in established democracies. Finding and backing '**champions of reform**' was often part of this process. Among others, Carothers and de Gramont (2013) have critiqued this approach for a number of reasons. First, **governance** was added to the donor agenda in order to sustain the **market consensus** rather than challenge it. This led to an over-focus on those aspects of governance considered central to economic progress, such as budget & fiscal management rather than '**politics**'.

Secondly, as discussed by Rakner *et al*, **democracy assistance** often treated governance as a product of state institutions rather than as the result of complex relational processes. Efforts were therefore undermined by the realities of **entrenched power structures** resistant to real change.

Furthermore, Pritchett, Woolcock and Andrews (2011) remind us that the evolution of governance in developing countries is a long and very slow process, with some countries caught in a **capability trap** where there is almost no improvement. They argue that the efforts of aid agencies to improve this situation have brought about a situation of **isomorphic mimicry** whereby **western** institutions of governance are reproduced in form but lack any functional substance. External inputs in this space are often characterised by a mismatch between expectations and actual capacity leading to an increased burden on already weak state institutions and processes.

There are a number of reasons that militate against aid agencies working **politically**, even if we assume it is an appropriate or beneficial thing to do. As noted by Carothers and de Gramont (2013a), working politically has a number of characteristics that sit uneasily with the '**standard**' donor approach: it has high overhead costs (research, analysis, etc), it requires a long term (10 years plus) investment, it is very **high risk**, it is difficult to link 'inputs' to 'outcomes' and 'impacts' and it does not fit easily within **constrained programming** imperatives and methods. They also comment that working and thinking politically is often undervalued within aid agencies, with it sometimes being seen as a rhetorical goal rather than a substantive one.

Dinnen (2012) refers to a '**new lens**' for envisioning the concept of 'state failure' with direct links to security at regional and global levels, further to the greater

presence of Foreign Affairs ministries in the debate. This broadens the **political understanding** of development, but ties aid more closely to bilateral relationships and international relations issues.

The Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID 2009) draws on international evidence<sup>5</sup> which shows that improved governance leads to higher growth which in turn results in better development outcomes. In addition, AusAID has recently recognised the significance of **acting politically** in relation to its policy dialogue activities (see AusAID/Office of Development Effectiveness (ODE) 2013) with reference to international literature and practice.

Much of AusAID's governance work, however, has focused on the **machinery of government** and presumed links to economic growth. Whilst the recent *Governance Strategy* (2011) goes some way to recognising the limitations of this approach, the centrality of government institutions as a focus for assistance remains.

Elsewhere, AusAID recognises the need to work politically and specifically refers to the need for aid management to be informed by an understanding of the politics of international development as well as encouraging the use of **political economy analysis** as the basis for policy dialogue (AusAID/ODE, 2013). There are also moves to make more use of **politically smart** methods, with a focus on the refinement and extension of political analysis and looking for more sophisticated ways of supporting change processes (e.g. the Pacific Leadership Program). However, it is not clear how different elements of '**governance**' focused work are '**joined up**'.

### 3. *Melanesia*

Boege, Brown and Nolan (2008) draw on a range of Pacific experiences to delineate the existence of **hybrid political orders** in the region. They are characterised by a bringing together of elements of Western governance models and aspects of local indigenous traditions in a contestable, contextualised and fluid process of **mutual adaptation**. They contend further that, '*any attempts at state-building that ignore or fight hybridity will have considerable difficulty in generating effective and legitimate outcomes*' (p36). Instead they highlight the need to '*identify functioning systems within existing local institutions and work to strengthen these*' (p36).

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<sup>5</sup> They cite in this regard: S Knack and P Keefer, 'Institutions and Economic Performance: Cross-Country Tests Using Alternative Institutional Measures', *Economics and Politics*, 7(3), November 1995, pp. 207–27 and B Newman and R Randall, 'Economic Growth and Social Development: A Longitudinal Analysis of Causal Priority', *World Development*, 17(4), 1989, pp. 461–471.



There are countries whose influence is increasing in the region (e.g. as donors) but who are not democratic (e.g. China) or whose experience and narrative of democracy is distinct (e.g. Indonesia) as noted by Carothers and Young (2011).

With the achievement of independence by Melanesian countries, the introduction of democratic political systems have, as argued by some (e.g. Harris, 2007) worked against the **inherent strengths** of traditional governance systems and amplified some of their dysfunctional aspects. The impact of colonial rule was to introduce the **forms** of democratic governance but it was soon apparent that pre-existing political and social relationships had been neither extinguished nor transformed in this process.

Some authors, e.g. Fukuyama (2011) suggest that the countries of Melanesia have in place a number of the components required for **successful liberal democracies** as identified by Fukuyama (2011): a state, the rule of law and accountable government. However, as noted by some including Pelto (2013), there are numerous examples to illustrate how these things may **exist in form but have no realistic substance**, i.e. holding members of political elites to account in relation to corrupt behaviour.

The framework put forward by North, Wallis & Weingast (2009) would deem the countries of Melanesia to be **limited access order** or **natural** states, i.e the state does not have complete control, and political and economic systems are not completely open. There are risks associated with transplanting **open access order** institutions (such as open markets and open political systems) into **natural** states, including that this may cause social disorder if fragile **rent-seeking arrangements** (which are helping keep political stability in place) are disrupted.

#### *4. Indonesia & Timor-Leste*

Reilly (2004) in considering the democratisation of the wider Asia-Pacific region points to common aims that underpinned key institutional reforms in relation to electoral processes, political parties and parliaments. They were to enhance political stability, reduce '**political fragmentation**' and prevent the rise of ethnic politics. What he describes as the '**Asian model**' of democracy is characterised by a large number of '**mixed member majoritarian**' electoral systems, institutional attempts to develop strong, aggregating political parties and constraints on the ability to create smaller regional parties.

Fraenkel and Aspinall (2013) note the recent transition to democratic rule as effected in **Indonesia**. The country emerged from a period of conflict and economic crisis (during the late 1990s and 2000s) and has since stabilised as an emerging middle-income country with national institutions that are quite well developed. Across the population as a whole they point to a widely shared sense of national identity and purpose. During the transition to democracy there

was a degree of **political engineering** designed to constrain fragmentation and ethnic division.

Sherlock (2009) notes further that Indonesia's system of democracy has been tested over the course of three election cycles and been found to be functioning. In addition it appears not to have suffered the '**democratic rollback**' experienced in other new and emerging democracies.

Brown (2012) has identified hybridity as a defining feature of the democratisation of **Timor-Leste** with customary governance and formal government being enmeshed or entangled in practice. This has a direct affect on the political order of the country and the nature of the emerging state. Systems of customary governance and authority do not necessarily foster the type or degree of inclusion that is associated with democratic political life. Culture and democratic systems and institutions intersect in non-uniform ways at various levels which means that they are '**in flux and contested**'. State-building is a highly centralised activity with the imposition of democratic institutions, including elections, at village level seen as a means of projecting democracy out to the periphery. However, elections are not necessarily seen as conferring authority with continuing reference to the significance of customary governance. The interaction between custom and '**liberal institutional order**' creates spaces in which there is confusion, friction and the potential for manipulation.

## **Section 2: Women's Political Leadership**

### **1. Theories about Western liberal democracies assume that women and men can participate equally as representatives**

Fraenkel (2006) has argued that excluding women from decision-making undermines both democracy and **political credibility**. The Council for International Development (2012) notes that **formal** mechanisms such as ratification of Convention on the Elimination of all Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) do not necessarily translate into more **equal participation** in political leadership by women. Similarly, **constitutional provisions** that appear to enshrine equality are insufficient.

Numerous reasons for increasing the number of women in parliaments have been put forward as documented by Waring (2011) including:

- arguments of **justice** – all members of the society have equal opportunity to participate in national decision-making
- the promotion of human rights/equality – i.e., **intrinsic** value
- **symbolic** arguments, e.g. the inclusion of women adds to the legitimacy of the institution
- the importance of compliance with **international obligations** such as the CEDAW
- and (increasingly) **utility** arguments focusing on an increased pool of talent and a new 'clean' image, i.e., **instrumental** value

This last argument appears to derive from an assumption that having more women in decision-making roles reduces corruption overall. However, as Planth (2011) & Waring (2011) point out, whilst some studies do appear to show a correlation between an increased number of women in national decision-making bodies and a reduction in corruption, this may actually be as a result of factors other than women being less corrupt than men. They identify things such as women's exclusion from all-male networks involved in bribery, women being less risk averse and/or the correlation actually being with the increasing openness of a society rather than with increased political participation by women *per se*.

### **2. The relationship between women in positions of political leadership and development outcomes, especially those that are pro-women**

Waring (2011a) has commented that the experience from Africa is mixed and that overall:

*Large numbers of women in elected office have not translated into significant legislative and resource gains.*

Furthermore, an increased number of women in parliaments does not necessarily lead to more/better democratic ideals overall. For example, in 2008 women made up 56.3% of the national parliament of Rwanda (up from 17.1% in 1988) but over the same period the government became increasingly authoritarian and repressive creating a disconnect between the '**symbolic**' and '**substantive**' representation of women.

However, in Ghana where the number of female MPs has decreased, the quality of governance has improved (i.e. there is less corruption) and numerous initiatives that enhance the position of women have been adopted (e.g. passage of the *Domestic Violence Act*). Waring contends that the reason for this is that Accra is a regional hub for multilateral organisations to whom women have access and which enhance the '**enabling environment**' in which they operate. They can provide support to formal and informal networks from which '**critical actors**'<sup>6</sup> can emerge.

Beaman *et al* (2007) examined a randomised installation of women as village leaders in India. They collated a range of data to show that resource allocations in those villages with women leaders favoured spending on health, education and pro-children infrastructure such as provision of drinking water. In addition, people living in the villages headed by women reported that they paid fewer bribes than those living in the villages with male leaders.

### 3. *What militates against women's participation as political representatives?*

There are numerous arguments against **increased political activity** on the part of women. Waring (2011 & 2011a) identifies:

- **cultural barriers** (including family pressures, exclusionary practices by political parties and wider social attitudes about gender, power and leadership);
- the **high risks** associated with entering political life (which can range from loss of reputation to threats and/or incidences of physical and sexual assaults);
- **resistance** by political parties because men are reluctant to give up positions of power and influence.

The Council for International Development (2012) also refers to the fact that women may be reluctant to leave secure, well-paid jobs to take on the risks associated with campaigning and that the impact of domestic obligations may lead women (particularly those with children) to decide to put their families first.

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<sup>6</sup> See below regarding the significance of '**critical actors**'

True *et al* (2012) identify further barriers to women participating in political representation, with particular reference to the experience in Asia and the Pacific:

- **political exclusion** reflects other aspects of exclusion and marginalisation of women, including economic exclusion which include limited access to resources and technology
- parties have a tendency to avoid female candidates because they come with access to fewer resources (giving them a limited ability to buy votes) and/or links to **influential consistencies**
- traditional (including cultural/religious) **stereotypes** about gender roles and leadership which lead to a perception that women who want to be in parliament are denying their backgrounds

#### 4. *Why do we need to look beyond technocratic measures?*

Childs and Krook (2008) have argued that prevalence of '**critical mass**' theory has largely fed into a preoccupation with using quotas to get more women into parliaments and other decision-making bodies. However, they note that this is based on a number of assumptions about how women will or will not form alliances around policy proposals and decision-making once they are elected. They put forward the need for a more nuanced approach to the relationships between '**descriptive**' and '**substantive**' representation. There are multiple possibilities in this space and, again, power relationships at non-formal levels are highly significant.

Building on this, Cellis *et al* (2008) highlight the need to identify '**critical actors**' (whether male or female) who are involved (whether directly or indirectly – e.g. by supporting others) in promoting policy options and legislative decisions, which will benefit women. Whilst Childs and Krook focused their discussion on elected representatives, Cellis *et al* argue that the concept of '**critical actor**' (whether an individual or an organisation) can apply in other spheres, e.g. civil society, media representation. They highlight the significance of the environmental factors, noting the importance of interrogating the conditions required in order for '**critical actors**' to emerge.

Rao & Kelleher (2005) identify the need to move beyond **gender mainstreaming**. They argue that most institutional reform tends to be administrative in nature and as such does little to change underlying power structures or what they refer to as the '**paradigm of patriarchy**'. The paradigm has several components including socio-cultural norms and organisational structures, which reinforce the power of the few who are unlikely to want to give up that power and its associated privileges. What is needed is to engage in the necessarily political processes associated with changing the **rules of the game**, whether they are stated,

unstated, formal or informal. For aid agencies, programmes focused on education or women's entrepreneurship should not be seen as ends in themselves but as means by which the required institutional change can be effected in order to bring about improved equality.

**5. *Given an appropriate enabling environment, technocratic reforms (e.g. use of temporary special measures) can have an impact***

Dufflo (2012) makes a robust case for the importance and efficacy of **quotas** by way of **temporary special measures** (TSM) as a way of getting more women into decision-making bodies, drawing on apparent success in India. She argues that use of quotas forces a re-thinking of traditional views about gender roles and leadership and this in turn works to reduce or eliminate prejudice. As an economist, she models that if voters see women in leadership positions and observe them making **better policy choices** than their male colleagues then they will be more likely to vote for them even when not constrained to do so. The model assumes that **policy** is the key determinant for voters deciding who they want to represent them.

Waring (2011a) has argued that TSM (including special candidate training, introduction of party quotas and use of reserved seats) can be effective in terms of effecting **short-term change** but removing cultural barriers and systemic barriers posed by parties/organisations/electoral systems will bring about change in the longer term. She notes in particular the impact of the type of electoral system on the ability of women to get elected. For example, use of candidate quotas combines best with a '**zippered**' list within a **proportional representation** (PR) system. Where parties are weak, she argues that reserved seats in the legislature are the only fast track solution.

**6. *Prevailing social norms about gender and power contribute to the under-representation of women in national parliaments***

Quay (2013) acknowledges that culture can be a barrier to women in Pacific islands countries exercising leadership (including political leadership) but contends that women see potential to use culture to access **spaces of leadership** or to bring about change, including that relating to policy, practice and legislation, to provide substantive support for women's rights.

AusAID (2012) noted the importance of **customary governance**, particularly in rural areas of PNG. This means that in order for a woman candidate to succeed, she would need the support of the relevant traditional leaders.

The Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) (2010) identified the impact of the **intersection** between traditional culture in Pacific island communities, the rise of **modernity** and the **colonial legacy**:

*...the traditional decision-making power of women in the private sphere, as well as publicly in matrilineal societies, was eroded with the advent of patriarchal colonial powers and has still not been acknowledged by post-independence male dominated parliaments*

Similarly Whelan (2012) noted that the exclusion of women from decision-making is often justified by reference to culture, religion, tradition or some combination of these.

Establishing what **prevailing social norms** actually are is complex and it is necessary to draw on a range of information sources to construct a fuller picture. For example, Solomon Islands Government/Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (SIG/RAMSI, 2013) documents that 91% of respondents said that women make good leaders, 89% of respondents thought that there should be women MPs in National Parliament, with 80% of that group believing that there should be reserved seats for women candidates.

Work done in relation to violence against women in Pacific island countries also indicates **prevailing norms**. Violence against women (physical and/or sexual) appears to be endemic with UN Women (2011) reporting two out of three women in the region as victims.

Attitudes towards domestic violence can be hard to evaluate. The Pacific Media Advisory Scheme (PACMAS, 2013) presents some challenging findings from research undertaken in Vanuatu. An average of 86% of males and 80% of females agreed with the statement that they would call the police if they witnessed a domestic violence incident. However, an average of 81% of males and 79% of females agreed with the statement: '*There are times when women deserve to be beaten*'.<sup>7</sup>

## **7. Women in Melanesia have experience of representation and leadership in arenas other than national parliaments**

Scales and Teakeni (2006) identify some spheres of **informal governance** where there appear to be opportunities for women to participate, and that this participation may prove good preparation for participating in more formal arenas. Examples include school committees, church groups and community-based non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

Similarly, Quay (2013) identifies that sub-national and non-formal spaces provide opportunities for women to exercise leadership, noting that women in Solomon Islands and Bougainville have a relatively good record of participation at local

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<sup>7</sup> The research report includes a warning that 'social desirability' may have influenced responses

government levels. She notes further that outside national politics, women leaders are more visible (e.g. in the public service, civil society, business, local government). In a similar vein, Tung (2013) points to the rise of women in the **public service** of Solomon Islands, noting that five of 24 ministries have Permanent Secretaries who are women. This corresponds with a growing number of older public servants and younger women obtaining tertiary education qualifications overseas.

However, significant constraints exist at these levels also. AusAID (2012) identified, in relation to PNG, that whilst there were numerous instances of **symbolic** representation this did not translate into **substantive** representation. So, whilst there may be women nominated to provincial and local levels of government (as stipulated by law) their actual participation is limited and largely tokenistic. In addition, very few women are appointed to **statutory boards**, thus preventing them from participating in decision-making at that level as well as building networks that may be supportive in other areas, including seeking election as MPs. Whilst **mainstreaming** activities were reflected in policy documents and plans, few were budgeted and implemented.

## **8. Women in leadership & representation in Indonesia & Timor-Leste**

As noted by True *et al* (2012, see below) women's participation in political representation and leadership is significantly better in Indonesia and Timor-Leste than in the countries of Melanesia considered previously. That is not to say there are not barriers to women's participation including prevalent **patriarchal attitudes** and gender stereotypes.

AusAID (2011a) note that in Indonesia women contribute actively to national and household economies but tend to be excluded from decision-making at family, local and national levels. Where they are involved in decision-making positions they are often kept at the margins or occupy low-level positions. Indonesia has a **State Ministry of Women's Empowerment** but it is generally considered to be weak in status and ineffective. They note evidence of women being active at a local level through participation in women's organisations but this does not generally translate to influence in terms of national decision-making. Households headed by women are recognised by virtue of an **umbrella group** that operates in 17 provinces.

Mydans (2010) notes that Indonesia has had experience of having been led by a woman, as have many countries in the Asian region. However, these leaders have almost exclusively benefitted from their family connections, including membership of **established political dynasties**.

Femina (2012) identified some degree of female participation in **leadership within business**. Their survey found that women occupied 6% of seats on boards and that 5% of CEOs were female.



Ospina (2006) comments that traditional power structures within Timor-Leste do not generally recognise a leadership role for women but that women have played a more significant part in decision-making more recently. This tends to be recognised more at the **national level** than at local and village levels. Women participated in the independence struggle and were represented in mid-level decision-making within all three of the resistance movements. They also took an active part in constitution making which led to Timor-Leste having an '**engendered constitution**'. In 2005, women occupied 7.5% of the jobs at the highest levels of the civil service. Tertiary education is an important means for women to achieve positions of power, particularly in the civil service where it is a requirement that candidates have a university degree in order to progress to the senior levels. Outside central government structures and prior to independence, women participated in **District Advisory Councils** (established by the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor – UNTAET) and on **Village Development Councils** (established through the Community Empowerment and Local Governance Project set up by UNTAET and the World Bank).

#### *9. The appetite for TSM is not well established and lessons learned are mixed*

Chandler (2013) comments that whilst there appeared to be some momentum for the introduction of TSM in PNG in late 2011 that has waned since the 2012 elections. Although provisions for reserved seats were included in the Ghai draft constitution for Fiji, they were not carried over into the revised draft subsequently prepared by the interim regime (Chetty & Newton Cain, 2013). In Solomon Islands, the prime minister has indicated that he favours a '**development based approach**' focusing on giving women more education and scholarships as a way of getting more of them into Parliament (Council for International Development, 2012)

Newton Cain (2013) notes some very recent developments in relation to TSM in Samoa and Vanuatu. In Vanuatu the plan to legislate for reserved seats on municipal councils has been criticised by the mayor of Port Vila, partly on the grounds of lack of consultation with the municipal councils and partly because it creates an imperative to guarantee seats for other groups (e.g. chiefs, churches, young people). The **Vanuatu Republican Party** has confirmed in local media that it will guarantee a quota of four female candidates for the Port Vila council election later in 2013. However, they will all contest the same ward.

Bani (2013) notes that the provision of a quota for female representatives on Bougainville (ten seats) has had **mixed results**. The presence of the ten women has had the effect of making the idea and practice of female leadership and decision-making more accepted but women rarely contest the open seats and when they do they are overwhelmingly defeated.

True *et al* (2012) claim that the most important factor in having women in parliaments in the context of new democracies is the type of voting system that is used and this appears to be borne out in relation to Indonesia and Timor-Leste.

True *et al* (2012) note that Timor-Leste has legislation in place that promotes gender equality and the use of gender quotas and TSM have contributed to a significant improvement in the participation of women in political representation at national and local levels. However, they also comment that part of the reason for this success was that the women's movement in that country consolidated and was supported to get behind the measures when they were first proposed.

With reference to Indonesia, True *et al* note that legislation relating to the use of **party quota lists** was introduced in 2003 and made compulsory in 2008.

### **10. What we know about women in Melanesian parliaments**

The Council for International Development (2012) note that women MPs constitute 5% of all parliamentarians in the Pacific.<sup>8</sup> This makes the region the lowest-achieving globally by reference to equal representation in national decision-making.

Chandler (2013) notes that women who seek to participate as political candidates in PNG require a great deal of courage because they are seeking to move into a space which is **culturally alien**, one in which they are asserting leadership. Fraenkel (2006) has argued that women candidates are **systemically** disadvantaged by electoral systems.

There have been such a small number of women elected to parliaments in Melanesia that it is hard to identify any trends as to what influences success. Swan and Walton (2013) identify a number of factors that assisted **Julie Soso** in becoming the 3<sup>rd</sup> female elected to the PNG parliament during the 2012 elections. One factor was the **Limited Preferential Voting (LPV) system**, which provided benefit to Soso as a candidate who had broad support within the constituency as a whole but who would not have garnered sufficient primary votes to succeed in a first past the post system.

Whilst she also credits participation in training provided by **CDI** as a contributing factor to her success, the authors conclude that many of the factors that influence women candidates' success (which are largely similar to those that influence the success of men) – money, status, education, security, connections – are '*beyond the scope of donor interventions*'. The Council for International Development (2012) adds to this list the comment that successful female

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<sup>8</sup> Excluding the French territories where parity laws are applied

candidates may have fewer children and be able to benefit from international contacts.

True *et al* note that until 2006, 11% of the elected representatives in the Fiji parliament were women.

### **11. *What we know about women in the parliaments of Indonesia & Timor-Leste***

True *et al* (2012) note that in both Indonesia and Timor-Leste the use of **party list quotas** has contributed to women parliamentarians comprising a significant proportion of the national legislatures. Following the 2011 elections in Timor-Leste, women occupy 25 of the 65 seats in the national parliament. In Indonesia there were 104 women elected into the House of Representatives (out of a total of 560) in the 2009 elections.

They note that Timor-Leste has the highest proportion of women political representatives in South-East Asia. In 2001, there was no quota for women representatives but local advocacy and access to international funds to support women candidates contributed to a 25% representation. A formal **gender quota** was introduced in 2007 requiring one in four candidates put forward by a party to be a woman. That was amended in 2011 to the effect that candidate lists must include one woman in every group of three. Timor-Leste currently has a parliament whose make-up is 32% women. In addition, 23.1% of ministerial positions are held by women, including that of finance minister. In relation to Indonesia, they note that women comprise 18% of the House of Representatives further to the 2009 elections.

### **12. *A wider lens is required to foster an enabling environment and the emergence of critical actors***

Taking a wider view, the significance of other '**critical actors**' is evident. In a recent interview, Tara Chetty of the Fiji Women's Rights Movement (Chetty & Newton Cain, 2013) reflected that the **Fiji Women's Forum** brought together a number of civil society groupings whose ideological standpoints varied on many issues but who united to '*create a democratic space in a non-democratic context*' in order to engage with the process of formulating a new constitution for that country. This indicates the importance of those acting beyond parliaments and political parties (at that time there were no political parties in Fiji). It also illustrates the intersection between '**critical actors**' and a '**critical juncture**', which may or may not coincide with a political crisis.

The role of the media is also important. Llanos and Nina (2011) argue that lower levels of **media coverage** of women candidates and their policy platforms has the effect of compounding pre-existing institutional and structural obstacles faced by female candidates. Huffer (2006) identified the importance of

supporting Pacific media organisations and '**women into politics**' initiatives to increase the quality of coverage of the current status of women in Pacific politics and challenge **negative stereotyping** of women as political leaders.

In a recent interview (Herman & Newton Cain, 2013), Francis Herman identified that the lack of women in positions of leadership in media organisations has an impact on the way in which issues relating to women are portrayed and he noted that there was a need for media professionals to be '**sensitised**' to ensure that media coverage in the region was more inclusive.<sup>9</sup>

### **13. What role for donor support: Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development**

AusAID (2012a) recognises the significance of underlying political, cultural and social norms and approaches in the design of the '**Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development**' (PWSPD) programme. The centrality of power and politics is explicitly acknowledged.

In addition the theory of change references the fact that change of this type is generational and again recognises the significance of the '**enabling environment**' to promote reform. Furthermore, change is unpredictable and requires both underlying and direct interventions. Although PWSPD is a regional programme, recognition is made of the need to work with and within the local social and political context. In relation to the role of donors, they are considered to have a '**potentially catalytic role**'. However, outside agencies cannot impose change, for change to be long term and sustainable indigenous agents, groups and coalitions must drive it.

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<sup>9</sup> This raises questions about the role of PACMAS in this area.

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