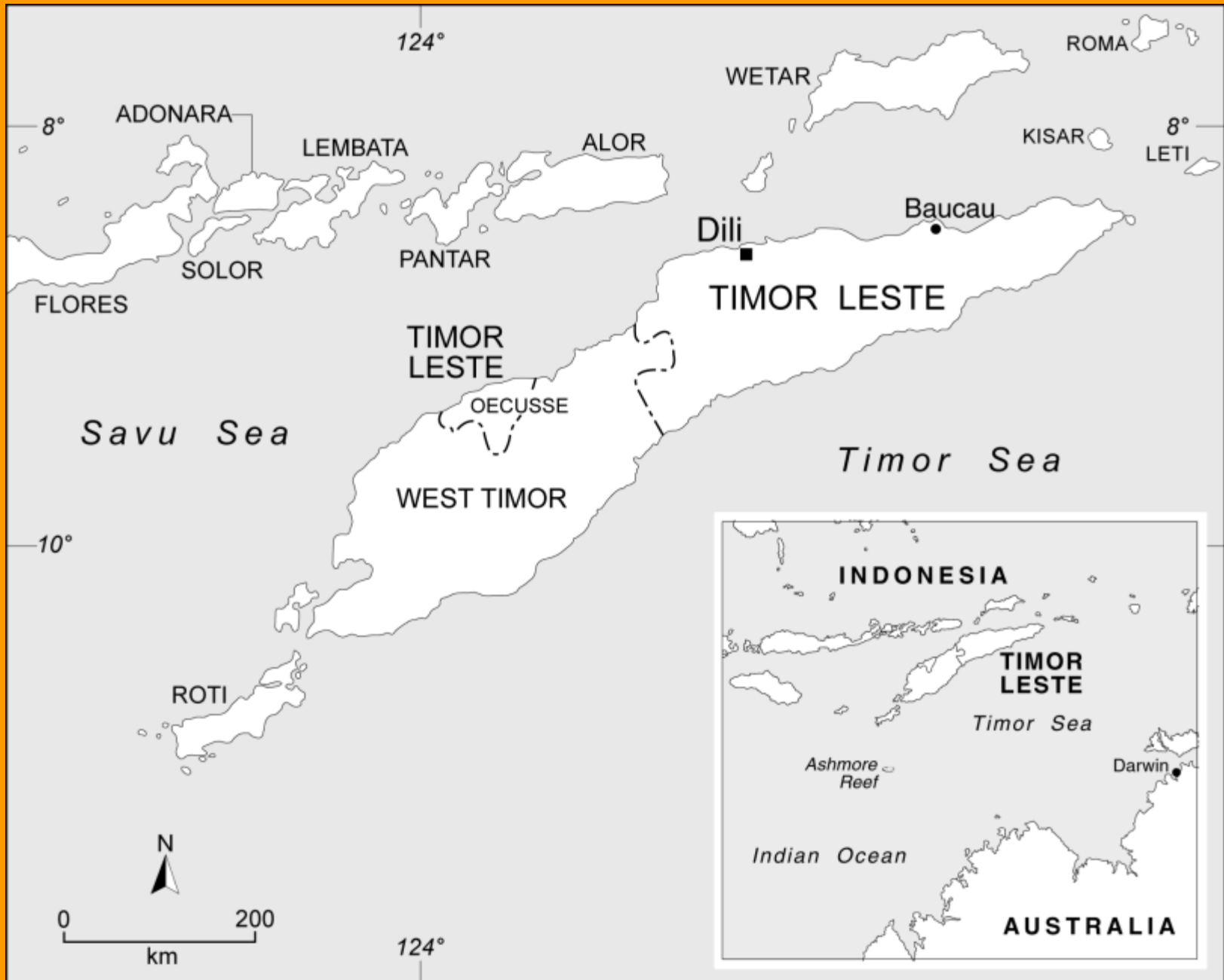


The return to custom:
Nation-building and
environmental governance in
post-conflict East Timor

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PLUMBING
GAS
WELDING
BUILDING
SUPPLIES
PAINTS



Husi Cultura Ita Hatene Ita Nia Identidade

My Research

- Ethnographic detail to elucidate the 'life of things' and non-standard ways (Tsing 2009); diverse economies (Gibson-Graham 2006).
- Extra local/extra regional connections, mobilities and influences.
- How is the state/development sector in Timor Leste recognizing and working with the existing governance and exchange capacities of customary institutions?

The diverse economy

‘all of those practices excluded or marginalised by a strong theory of capitalism’ (Gibson-Graham 2006: 60).

Includes the informal economy and within that the customary economy.

Reading for diverse economic practices and how they are enmeshed in a larger whole.

Customary rights and interests which ‘sustain clan identity, maintain rights to land, redistribute income, and cultivate community’.

Also termed ‘ritual-market economy’, ‘hybrid economy’, ‘customary economy’, ‘community economy’ .

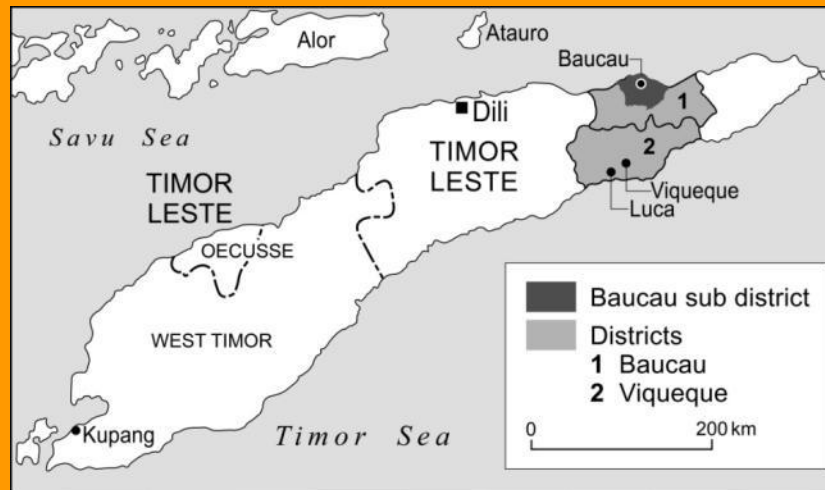
Today's presentation

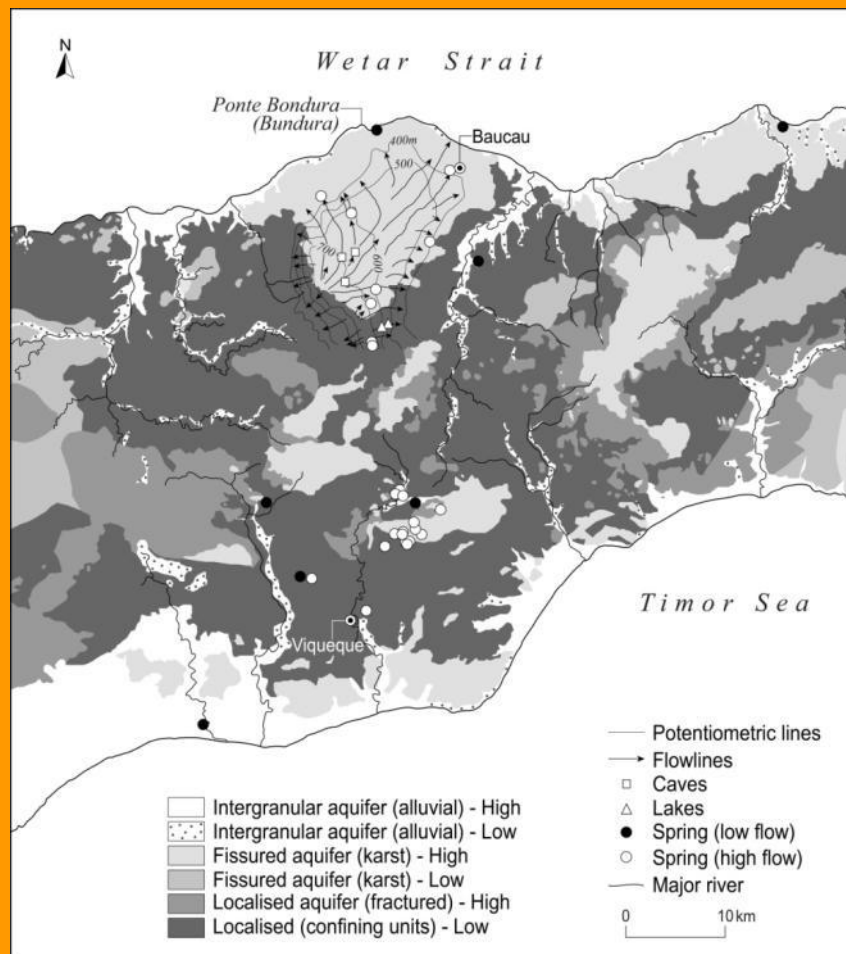
- How is the state in Timor Leste implementing the constitutional recognition of customary laws and how is this influencing current arrangements regarding natural resource management?
- Two Case Studies:
 - 1. *Tara Bandu* (Ritual regulation of resources)
 - 2. Water politics and spiritual ecology

Tara Bandu



Case Study 2: Water Politics and Spiritual Ecology: Custom, governance and development in the Baucau Viqueque Zone







Research Question

- How is the state in Timor Leste implementing the constitutional recognition of customary laws and how is this influencing current arrangements regarding land ownership and natural resource management?

Findings

- 1. It is local peoples themselves who are seizing the possibility of customary law recognition that the constitution provides and who are carrying out its implementation.
- 2. The value of customary institutions extends beyond any notion of them as adaptive institutions merely in transition to a westernized system of private land holdings.

Further issues for Research:

- How will the state and development institutions in Timor Leste recognize and work with the existing governance and exchange capacities of customary institutions?
- How can these customary institutions be supported to extend their political and economic reach and credibility (and adapt to other demands such as gender and resource equity)?

Comparative Research:

- What is the significance of 'spirit ecologies' and theories of a 'diverse economy' for environmental governance in other Asian contexts?
- How resilient is this customary governance aspect of the diverse economy and what lessons can we draw from it?