In what ways and to what extent is the global oil and gas industry able to deliver enduring empowerment outcomes for women in Asia-Pacific?

A case study exploring the
employment and skills development of
Timorese women on Timor Sea offshore facilities

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Abstract

The sustainable development agenda seeks to enlist big business as a development agent to help redress persistent and pervasive conditions of women's disadvantage in the developing world. Global corporations are being urged, among other imperatives and initiatives, to open decent work opportunities for females, thereby enabling them to traverse the basic empowerment thresholds of enjoying dignity of and in work and of becoming economically self-reliant. Rare to find in the development literature, this case study brings to light a corner of global industry (that of offshore oil and gas operations in the Timor Sea) in which, irrespective of sustainable development's grand vision for women's empowerment, opportunities have opened for host-country women to enjoy capabilities gains beyond the crossing of these thresholds. Moreover, the study, atypically to the *dis*-empowered portraits of women that abound in the development literature, brings to life the existence and experiences of dissident female (Timorese) identities imbued with high levels of agency who have been able to navigate the mesh of patriarchal belief structures and norms in their society and enter, earn respect and realise potential in the nontraditional, historically masculinised job field of offshore oil and gas.

The case study has considerable breadth of scope in its pursuit of two main interconnected avenues of inquiry relating to the Timorese females' work skills development and employment. These are: a) the associated agendas, workplace protocols, decision-making and ensuing actions within the stakeholder organisational networks of the Timor Sea oil and gas projects, and: b) the women's own aspirations, efforts and achievements. The research methods used, of qualitative, open-ended interviews combined with long-term on-going communication with many of the group have provided a considerable depth of insight into the women's empowerment trajectories, and a detailed illumination of the human and organisational influences on these within their training and work spaces. Near-40 Timorese women took part in the study along with 20 respondents from the stakeholder companies involved directly or indirectly with their oil and gas industry learning and earning journeys.

What this research says helps to construct a more textured narrative around how gender and development is framed. It does this by capturing in multidimensional

(personal, relational, social and economic) and multifaceted (cognitive, psychological and practical) ways the meanings of the empowerment gains of women from a male –dominated society who have trained, worked and been well-paid in gender-equal employment spaces. The conceptual lens is shaped using as a starting point Sen's Capabilities Approach, feminist notions of power, theory on self-determination and around the meeting of employees' cognitive, psychological and social empowerment needs in the workplace. The dissertation introduces a new methodological tool of the women's owned 'human capital portfolios' (as their offshore-enhanced caches of knowledge, skills, abilities and attributes) to encapsulate the ballast of their capabilities sets as these contribute to their empowerment status. With its main aim being to evaluate not simply the achievement of but, importantly, the durability of the women's empowered identities into uncertain futures, the knowledge produced in this research provides critical meaning around women's empowerment often neglected in gender and development discourse.

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List of Acronyms

AIM – Asset Integrity and Maintenance

ANP - Autoridade Nacional do Petroleo Timor Leste

ANPM – Autoridade Nacional Do   Petroleo e Minerais Timor Leste

ASV – Accommodation and support services vessel

CAJV – CloughAMEC Joint Venture

CEDAW - Committee for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women

CoP – ConocoPhillips

CPP - Central Production and Processing Complex

CSR – Corporate Social Responsibility

CUQ – Compression, Utilities and Quarters

DPP – Drilling, Production and Processing

EEO – Equal Employment Opportunity

FIFO - Fly-in-fly-out

FSO – Floating storage facility and offloading vessel

HSE - Health Safety and Environment

ILO – International Labour Organization

IPIECA – International Petroleum Industry Environment Conservation Association

IOC – International Oil Company

JPDA – Joint Petroleum Development Area

LNG – Liquid Natural Gas

O&G – Oil and Gas

OIM – Offshore Installation Manager

PoB – Person on Board

PSC – Production Sharing Agreement

STEM – Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

T-BOSIET – Tropical Basic Offshore Safety Induction & Emergency Training

UN – United Nations

UNGC – United Nations Global Council

WA – Western Australia

WPI – Wellhead platform

WSD – Work skills development

Chapter One: Introducing the topic and the thesis

Prologue

In 1948 my mother was one of four young women to become a qualified Chartered Accountant in New Zealand at a time when female accountants numbered less than 2% of the profession (Whiting, 2012, p. 302). She had wanted to be a biologist (also rare for a female at that time) but her mother, whilst enlightened for her times in wanting her daughter to have a career, exerted parental influence to persuade her into joining a local accountants' firm in a normatively female role of clerk (her brother incidentally was encouraged to become an engineer – a career field that was prestigious and masculinised at the time). Her male boss, also enlightened, exhibiting an atypical equal opportunities perspective in times when the profession was overwhelmingly male, encouraged her to study to become an accountant. Additionally, he encouraged her to learn to drive, an unusual skill for women to possess, so that she could travel to clients in rural areas all of whom were male (as characteristically small businesses and farms tended to be owned by men). The dress code for all office women was strictly skirts or dresses. My mother, when she worked out of the office, would pull over as she left her town to change her skirt for trousers that she found warmer and more comfortable. Whilst I never heard her mention being disrespected in her work amongst mostly males, I also knew that she believed in standing up for herself as a skilled woman - one with a voice and opinion who was not going to be relegated to the background in work or social settings, as a female expected to be the one serving cups of tea. She told me her insistence that she and my father have joint bank accounts was not a common move amongst her peers, many of whom did not have access to even a personal account. Nonetheless, as a working mother she also assumed responsibility for cooking, cleaning and washing in the home which was the normative female domestic role in New Zealand in the 1950s, '60s and even '70s. Non-normatively, for males, my father was happy to bath the four babies they had and change their nappies. When she left my father in the early '80s, finding their relationship no longer satisfactory, to study at university and become a full-time, economically self-reliant potter, this was a very

unusual step to take for a provincial woman of her generation. By now she identified herself as a feminist. Her empowered status endured into her old age, as she took part in human and women's rights activism, continued to earn her own income (albeit small), owned her own home and perfected her craft.

In 2005 a young Timorese woman from a small township, who I shall call Joanina, was one of a very few females in Timor-Leste at the time to graduate from university as an environmental engineer – via a scholarship to an Australian university. She had wanted to study medicine but her basic knowledge and English were not good enough.   Her parents, valuing her brother's post-secondary educational advancement over that of her and her sisters, were not encouraging. However, her illiterate grandfather encouraged her to see herself as equal to males and materially supported her aspirations when he had surplus income. At university, inspired by the leadership and confidence demonstrated by female Australian students, she became a leader herself in promoting the interests of international students. When she returned to her home village during her university years to spend time with her family, she would have to sneak out at nights to attend social events in the nearby town, changing her clothes on the way into a more contemporary look than was culturally acceptable for females. Upon graduating she subsequently got a job as the only female (and Timorese with the requisite skills for what was a Health, Safety and Environment (HSE) position) on a Timor Sea offshore drilling rig. The workplace dress code was overalls, work boots and a hardhat. Most of the company's female employees were in onshore secretarial positions with what she described as a distinct 'glass ceiling' limiting their promotional opportunities. She found herself in a work environment where she was well paid and respected and valued by Western male co-workers. She was able to stand up for herself when Malaysian male crewmembers made sexualised or sexist comments to her. Nonetheless, when she returned to onshore employment working in a government job the socio-cultural norms dictated that at work, as a female, she should act in a deferential manner to her male boss and in family and social settings she assume a background place compared to her husband and not expect him to share domestic responsibilities. She left her husband when her daughter was young because she felt she could no longer tolerate being treated as a second-class citizen by him and his family despite her

having a full-time professional job. In 2009, Timor-Leste, this was an unusual step for a woman to take. When I met Joanina she exuded the confidence of an empowered woman.

When I heard this Timorese woman's story (one of the oldest of the female Timorese interviewees of this study) I could see many parallels between her journey and my mother's. Both had become confident outspoken women in societies where in the period of their growing up the prevailing patriarchal ideology saw males enjoying decision-making power and positions of privilege and authority over females and the aspirational horizons of most girls limited to the primary role of becoming a wife and mother. In both their countries women who were in paid employment were concentrated in the low-paid service sector, clerical and retail jobs, those engaged in agricultural work were unpaid, and a woman's reproductive role was expected to take precedence over a career, thus rendering her dependent upon her husband. Whilst as adult females they shared the non-normative (of the times) challenge of juggling motherhood with formal work responsibilities, there are obvious divergences in the socio/ historical settings my mother and Joanina traversed in their journeys into adulthood, which coloured their choices and opportunities. For example, my mother's young womanhood was lived in a post-World War II democratic country that had developed education, health and social welfare systems and a growing economy with low unemployment levels. Joanina's young womanhood began in a poor, post-conflict newly independent country where education and health systems were rudimentary, high unemployment levels accompanied a nascent struggling economy and the majority of the population were living below the poverty line. However, in becoming qualified, highly skilled, economically independent working women they were both trailblazers for gender equality in their societies, advancing occupational frontiers for women and bringing visibility to new female identities.

In informal conversation with Joanina during my fieldwork when I mentioned my mother's journey there sparked between us a warmth of mutual understanding. I was aware of an important historical thread residing in my cell memory that I brought to my research - of a lived experience of advancing gender equality in my

country that was infused with the narratives, essentially feminist opinions and observations of a previous generation of women who had paved the way for women like myself in New Zealand to have the confidence to seek and enjoy our own empowerment freedoms. I was aware that the Australian 'sisters' of my own generation of feminists had paved the way for the growth of Joanina's consciousness of gender equality and her freedom to be outspoken whilst at university and for her benefitting from the traction that gender equality has gained within the western oil and gas (O&G) industry. Having been a young woman myself who had defiantly navigated unequal power dynamics in relational, social and political settings, in institutions and the labour market of the 1970's and '80s in New Zealand that were still pervaded by sexism and gender discrimination [1] (like post-independence Timor-Leste), I could identify with the clear signs within Joanina's person of a consolidated defining empowerment. This was exemplified in her palpable sense of self-worth, her career accomplishments, her autonomous decision-making in important areas of her and her daughters' lives, and in the confident way she moved about in the world and related with males. I had already witnessed the process of social and institutional change towards more gender-equal relations and structures in my country, and the positive influences this change had had on the attitudes of my three daughters and two sons. Furthermore, as a teacher of girls and young women with some 40+ years' experience, I have watched two new generations of women grow into the empowerment freedoms enabled by this change. The gender lens, through which the research aim and objectives of this study are addressed and the fieldwork approached, is therefore infused with my personalised understandings.

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[1] The New Zealand government ratified the UN Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1985 (L. Hill, 2004). The first report in 1986 stated that despite the absence of legal barriers to women's equality with men 'in practice the barriers created by traditions, history and structures still existed' (McGregor, Bell, & Wilson, 2005, p. 72). Since then reports have continued to raise serious concerns about the continuing wage differentials between men and women, women's representation in politics, judiciary, public service and the corporate sector, and violence against women (CEDAW, 2012; McGregor et al., 2005). It was not until 1995 that the Domestic Violence Act was passed, which covered physical, sexual and psychological violence (Te Ara, 2017).

1.1 Introduction

The prologue introduces the reader to the phenomenon of women navigating diverse (particularly with respect to degrees of gender equality) and intersecting institutional and organisational structures, formal and informal, along their empowerment journeys, and the notion that their status and actions within one domain can influence their status and actions within others. Further, the allusion in the prologue to the relationships with and roles played and decisions made by other social actors (and particularly male) within these overlapping contexts, that can positively influence women's capabilities gains and life trajectories, introduces the important *social resources* dimension to the empowerment equation that informs this study. This foreshadows a key theme threading through the exploration of Research Objective (A):

- **To explore (within the stakeholder networks of Timor Sea oil and gas projects) the ways in which organisational agendas and decision-making processes, as well as the attitudes, agency and actions of industry and associated actors, have influenced the empowerment journeys of Timorese women through their offshore employment experience and related work skills development.**

The telling of my mother's and Joanina's story deliberately sets the positive, agentic tone for this thesis. It offers an invitation to the reader to imagine, at the point where the research meets the target group of Timorese women with offshore oil and gas industry experience, that they have already been for some significant time in the driver's seat of their lives - in fact at least since finishing senior high school. It is upon the notion of empowerment gains built upon *existing* empowerment strengths that this study is premised. It is about women living in a chronically less-than-gender-equal world of female disadvantage and male privilege who entered their adulthood already imbued with self-belief and motivated by, amongst other things: a need to escape the traps of poverty and gendered socio-cultural norms many of their female peers were constrained by; a belief in their right to be treated as equals to males; a thirst for learning, to acquire new skills and achieve occupational competencies, and; a desire for economic autonomy.

The prologue, in encapsulating the notion of women's capabilities gains built upon existing empowerment strengths of agency and a sense of self-worth, importantly signals the departure of this study from the bulk of discourse, research and practice around gender and development - in which the ubiquitous focus is on women who are poor and patriarchally subjugated, needing to lift themselves or be lifted out of states of *dis*-empowerment. Further, the privileging of work skills development and the achievement of occupational competences as powerful consolidators of empowerment signals the deviation of this study from the typicality of emphasis, within the gender and development paradigm, on the purely economic entry point as the transformational doorway to pathways of empowerment for women workers.

The prologue is an echo of the Timorese women's narratives gathered in this research. As such, it provides retrospective windows on the subjects' learning and earning empowerment pathways across time, highlighting beliefs, behaviours, actions and achievements that have compounded into empowerment well-being growth and are implicated in the realisation of their aspirations and potential. These windows set the scene for addressing Research Objective (B) of the case study:

- **To evaluate the ways in which the experience of working in the offshore oil and gas setting has contributed to enduring empowerment gains for women in a Least Developed Country[2].**

Additionally, the pairing of my mother's and Joanina's stories, embellished by the resonance they have with my own personal and feminist empowerment pathway, prompts an understanding that permeates this research of a universality of women's empowerment meanings and experiences of sexism that crosses cultural/country boundaries. At the same time, the prologue raises awareness of the differences in situational socio-cultural, economic and political contexts in which women make and rationalise choices and decisions and take actions that carve their

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[2] The classification of Timor-Leste as a Least Developed Country (LDC) is one used by the United Nations that denotes 'countries confronting severe structural impediments to sustainable development ... highly vulnerable to economic and environmental shocks and have low levels of human assets' (UN Economic Analysis and Policy Division, 2018, p. 1).

life paths forward (or not). This suggests that any conceptualising and analysis of women's empowerment journeys must be able to accommodate these both shared and different experiences and furthermore give respect to the in-situ empowerment meanings and priorities as articulated by women themselves.

The in situ socio-cultural, economic and political setting for Timorese women (as will be described in Chapter Three) is that of a country that, while having made significant strides towards gender equality in areas of education and formal policy, faces huge challenges in raising the majority of its female population out of states of subordination, victimhood from gender-based violence, discrimination and disadvantage. This study is nestled within the overarching gender and development paradigm which has women's empowerment goals of: the realisation of potential and dignity; freedom from discrimination, control and violence, and; the valuing of women's contribution to, and sharing equally with males of, the benefits of growth. These goals are out of reach or only partially achievable for the majority of Timorese females and for vast numbers of women across the developing world[3] (Eriksson, 2016; Kabeer, 2016; Munoz Boudet, Petesche, Turk, & Thumala, 2013; UNDP, 2015). Considerable authority and utility are vested in the conceptualising of empowerment within the gender and development paradigm, discursive territory that it is explored in depth in Chapter Two of this thesis as it relates to the empowerment journeys of the Timorese women offshore workers. Some

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[3] The terms *developing world and developing country* have become contested in recent years arising from dissatisfaction that its usage has been too loose and that the binary of developing-developed is inadequate for capturing the diversity of countries' development outcomes across the globe (Gbadamosi, 2018). For example, the World Bank has ceased to use the term, preferring to rank countries based on their Gross National Income (GNI) per capita from low-income, through lower-middle- and upper-middle- to high-income (World Bank Data Team, 2017). Whilst the United Nations continues to group countries as developing (such as when discussing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) it has a classification system based on the multi-faceted Human Development Index (HDI). This includes GNI per capita, but also health and education data and ranks countries as having low- medium- or high-development (UNDP, 2016). The International Labour Organization (ILO) tends to apply the term *developing* to countries in which there are significant decent work and workplace gender equality deficits (Lansky, Ghoshi, Meda, & Rani, 2017). As the countries that have been the subjects of this literature review fit into the UN's low- to medium-developed and the WB's low- to lower-income classifications as well as those ranked by the ILO as developing, the taxonomy that this thesis has adopted in order to justify the use of the term 'developing countries' or 'developing world' is one that accommodates all of these categorisations. Of note is that whilst Timor-Leste has been ranked by the WB as lower-middle income and by the UN as low-medium developed, when other factors are taken into account it has been further classified by the UNDP as a Least Developed Country (LDC) (The World Bank, 2018; UN Economic Analysis and Policy Division, 2018; UNDP, 2016).

considerable space will now be devoted to introducing the reader to a broad contextual backdrop of the realities of the lives of millions of women across the globe that has led to their empowerment becoming a dominant theme on the international development agenda.

1.2 Realities of dis-empowerment for women across the developing world

The bigger picture of the experience of vast numbers of women in the developing world is one of sharing a status of disempowerment and disadvantage. This is reflected in: epidemic levels of violence against women and girls (VAWG) including intimate partner violence (IPV), sexual violence by a non-partner and genital mutilation; the higher mortality of females due to inadequate maternity care; women's lack of autonomy over their sexual relations and reproductive health; gender disparities in education (particularly secondary); gender disparities in labour force participation and waged incomes; women's unequal access to resources and economic opportunities; the under-representation of females' political voice in parliaments and community structures; the low numbers of businesses in poor countries who have female owners (and those that are women-owned tending to be small and home-based), and; women's lack of authority in the household (Eriksson, 2016; Kabeer, 2016; Klugman & Tyson, 2016; Munoz Boudet et al., 2013; OECD, 2008; UNDP, 2015; UNFPA, 2017; United Nations (UN), 2017; World Bank, 2012). Powerlessness and low status, and for many the trauma and fear associated with being victims of gender-based violence, are serious inhibiting factors for girls and women being able to make their own life choices and enjoy empowerment well-being.

For those women who make up 60% of the world's poorest and 60% of the world's illiterate people (UNFPA, 2017, p. 1) poor nutrition may have resulted in compromised cognitive development, which along with illiteracy is undermining of their abilities and capacity to take up training and work opportunities. These factors, combined with financial stress and lack of resources, have also been considered to impinge on individuals' ability to aspire and make well-defined goals (World Bank

Group, 2015). While the gender gap is closing in education (represented by enrolments in secondary school), in many poor countries (including Timor-Leste) there are still high drop-out rates for girls due to a range of factors including: teenage pregnancies; lack of sanitary facilities in schools that cater to females' needs; sexual harassment, and; the economic needs of the family requiring them to undertake domestic responsibilities (Desai, 2010; Eriksson, 2016; SEPI, 2013). Furthermore, the 2015 estimate of over 750 million women aged 20-24 years who were married before their eighteenth birthday points to a lack of control over fertility and normative gender role expectations as key factors leading to adolescent girls transitioning directly from school into motherhood (United Nations Statistics Division, 2015, p. 3).

Early marriage and continuous child bearing thereon have the effect of ruling out the further education of many women, consuming their time with activity in the domestic sphere and unpaid food production for the family (Buvinic, Guzman, & Lloyd, 2007). On average women do three times as much unpaid care and domestic work as men, but in low-income countries this reaches as much as ten times (SIDA, 2015, p. 21). For women wishing to earn an income, having the primary responsibility for care and household work often means being engaged in work that is compatible with these responsibilities. Women's lower education levels and time poverty can therefore disadvantage them in competing in the formal labour market, rendering them a source of cheap, low-skilled labour in the informal sector[4]. Hundreds of millions of women now fill the ranks of the informal labour market in low-income countries, deemed 'vulnerable' workers due to the widespread lack of both social and industrial protection, long working hours and the risk of abuse from males (Jutting & de Laiglesia, 2009; Klugman & Tyson, 2016). In 2010 in Timor-Leste 78% of the 28% of women participating in the labour force were engaged in the informal sector (SEPI, 2013, p. 46). Of women who are able to opt in to the formal labour force the working conditions, for many, are not dissimilar to those in the informal sector.

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[4] The informal sector of the labour market encompasses own-account workers or contributing family workers and includes those engaged in sex work, domestic work, temporary, casual, seasonal or part-time work, home-based activities or sub-contract assignments in global manufacturing supply chains such as the garment industry (ILO, 2012).

Inequalities and poor conditions for women in the formal workforce
While women in low- and middle-income countries have been entering the labour force in large numbers in the last quarter century they are concentrated in different economic spaces to men due to gender segregation and discrimination (Barrientos, Kabeer, & Hossain, 2004; World Bank, 2012). Economic opportunities that have opened up for women in the formal labour market have marginalised them in gender-segregated, low-paid, low-skilled occupations lacking social and industrial protection, with fragile job security, long working hours and in many cases unsafe working conditions (Cornwall & Edwards, 2015; Eriksson, 2016; Kabeer, Mahmud, & Tasneem, 2011). Export-led manufacturing has resulted in many instances in the feminisation of labour, such as in the *maqiladores* - Export Processing Zones (EPZ), in Central America, where horizontal segregation is characterised by gender wage gaps with no guarantee of a job after taking time out from work for childbearing (Desai, 2010; SIDA, 2015).

In the People's Republic of China, the structural transition from an agriculture-based to an industry- and services-based economy has been accompanied by huge rural to urban migration (of which females make up one third) and an increase in the gender wage gap (ADB & ILO, 2017). The female migrants are largely, disproportionately, located in the low-wage services sector that is characterised by high decent work deficits (ADB & ILO, 2017). Millions of women in Asia Pacific have been migrating from rural subsistence living into urban factory employment in the hope of a better life for themselves and their families (ILO, 2016a; Nimbalker, Mawson, Lee, & Cremen, 2017). The concentration of the global apparel and textiles manufacturing industry (including its supplier chain) in this region has seen the vast (female) majority of the more than 40 million clothing workers working in unsafe conditions and receiving wages well below what is required to lift themselves and their families out of poverty (Nimbalker et al., 2017, p. 6). Evidence of significant numbers of female clothing and shoe factory workers in Cambodia fainting at work, for example, points to issues of overwork, over-heated work environments and mal- or undernourishment (Arnold, 2011). One of the industry's worst performing areas is in prohibitions and constraints around women workers joining Trade Unions. Outsourcing to female home workers in the Indonesian garment industry is largely

unregulated and has resulted in job insecurity and short-term contracts (ILO, 2017b).

As well as horizontal segregation, working women in countries such as the aforementioned face vertical segregation, for example in the manufacturing sector where they commonly have little opportunity to up-skill (Desai, 2010). For the small number of women working in industry this is also likely to be the case, such as the Indian women who make up around a third of the 40 million workers in India's construction sector. Along with facing hostility, disrespect and sexual harassment when they have entered this non-traditional job field, they have little prospect of being any other than low-skilled and low-paid labourers working long days in the absence of workplace safety protocols and practices (Devi & Kiran, 2013; Patil, 2015, p. 9). Less than one third of senior- and middle-management positions in low- and middle-income countries are held by women (United Nations Statistics Division, 2015). Where gender norms define appropriate behaviour for females as being compliant, undemanding and pleasant, the cost/risk of becoming unpopular with a manager or boss can deter women from engaging in negotiations for promotions or for up-skilling in the first instance (Klugman & Tyson, 2016).

The situation of gender disadvantage for women in labour markets has been allowed to continue to a disturbing degree even in the presence of legal and policy frameworks around gender equality, equal opportunities and anti-discrimination. This is due to women's work continuing to be undervalued and the lack of implementation, enforcement and/or institutional intransigence around respecting their rights to dignity at work and social protection around childbearing (Eriksson, 2016; Kucera & Xenogiani, 2009; Lansky et al., 2017). A glimpse at some examples across South East Asia and Africa gives some idea of how patchy labour market changes have been for women.

One step forward....
The introduction at least of a minimum wage might be seen to have established a bottom line to working women's exploitation, or acceptance of exploitation (Kabeer, 2012). However, while there has been a trend in garment industry companies to invest in paying fairer wages (growing from 11% in 2011 to 42% in 2017, albeit in

only certain sectors of the supply chain) this income is still well below the 'living wage' [5] (Nimbalker et al., 2017, p. 6). Bucking this trend is the garment industry in Indonesia, which is characterised by non-compliance in the payment of the minimum wage (ILO, 2017b). Where trade union influence has had some effect, such as in the Cambodian garment industry in which the minimum wage for clothing workers has doubled since 2013, (from USD75 to USD 153 a month), there has been little corresponding attention paid to workers' safety in some part due to sewers' reluctance to use protective equipment and needle guards as this slows their work down and reduces piece rates (Oka, 2016). Further, despite a *Better Factories, Cambodia* initiative introduced by the ILO [6] in 2001, a trend in improvements reported in working conditions between 2005-2010 has stalled and even reversed in some cases such as in areas of fire safety, child labour, and workers' health and safety (Davis, 2013). It is worth noting that Cambodia, with predominantly foreign owned factories, has been lauded as a leader in bettering its (mostly female) factory workforce's pay and conditions (Arnold, 2011; Davis, 2013; Oka, 2016). The growing trend in non-compliance to health and safety standards has been attributed to a lack of enforcement of labour laws (Arnold, 2011).

The introduction of a (relatively high) minimum wage for domestic workers in South Africa in 2002 led, after 16 months, to wages increasing by 20% and a doubling of the probability of an employee having a formal contract (Klugman et al., 2014). However, of the estimated 67 million domestic workers worldwide, 60 million lack any social security (of these workers 55 million are women) (Durán-Valverde, 2016, p. ix). Gender norms sanctioning predatory behaviour by males against female domestic employees continue to undermine the security of many at work. Targeted training programmes on sexual harassment in the garment industry in Indonesia appear to have had little impact. A recent survey of clothing factories found 85% of women (who make up 90% of the workforce and are overwhelmingly supervised by males) to be concerned about sexual harassment and little

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[5] The living wage is that which is sufficient for workers to be able to afford the basics (food, water, healthcare, clothing, electricity and education) for themselves and their families (Nimbalker et al., 2017, p. 11)

[6] Better Work, Cambodia was an independent joint factory monitoring project involving the ILO, the Cambodian Government, garment manufacturers and trade unions (Arnold, 2011). The ILO has initiated 8 other Better Work programmes in different developing countries.

understanding amongst male management-level personnel of what constitutes sexual harassment (ILO, 2013b, p. 1). However, a laudable example of women in industry being up-skilled and protected from hostility and predation by males has been initiated for a small group of poor female Indian women construction workers in a rural area who now have the skills to erect structures and have been provided by their employers with free transport to and from work sites (Deodhar, 2015). Moreover, some thousands of Indian women construction workers have become unionised through the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA), with the results that, while the majority still has no awareness of their rights, they have been given on-the-job training to develop masonry, carpentry and plumbing skills (Bhalla, 2015).

In times of economic crisis, gender norms that perceive men as the more legitimate jobholders tend to result in women being the first to be laid off when businesses retrench (Carr & Chen, 2017). Further, the global advances in digital technologies and in automation in lower-skilled labour intensive sectors threaten to shrink the numbers of women in the workforce. This is due to female redundancies being the default action or through gender bias relegating new opportunities to males in training and job fields related to science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) (Klugman & Tyson, 2016). Given the reputation the offshore oil and gas industry has for being a male dominated, macho environment with poor representation of females in traditionally male and senior roles in the field, it would not be unreasonable to assume that this global industry sector is pervaded by gender bias and discrimination against females and by the undervaluing of their abilities. An example to illustrate is of women in the onshore oil industry in Uganda having low paid, casual jobs such as 'cooking and serving tea to the oil workers, picking litter, cleaning and digging along the roads within the exploration sites, displaying guiding signs at these sites and as well making beds and washing clothes for the expatriates staying at the sites'. This scenario would seem to point to a lack of interest amongst international oil companies' (IOCs) in the social responsibility of fostering the empowerment of women in poor host countries through their skills capabilities development (Global Rights Alert, 2013, p. 7).

Gender equality gestures

It can be seen from this backdrop that the predominant pattern in many countries is an overwhelming lack of decent work for women seeking paid employment (ADB & ILO, 2017; Desai, 2010; ILO, 2012; Jutting & de Laiglesia, 2009; Kabeer, 2012; UN Women, 2015a). This is despite changes in the global political backdrop that depicts the endorsement by all 193 member states of the UN Women Addis Ababa Action Agenda in 2015, which commits them to creating an enabling environment for working women's empowerment in their country through decent work (Eriksson, 2016, p. 21). It is of note that 90% of economies still have at least one gender-differentiated law (Klugman & Tyson, 2016, p. 5). For over 30 years the UN Women Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) has been advancing gender equality by challenging structural gender discrimination – that is discrimination as "...any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field" (Klugman & Tyson, 2016; UN Women, 2009, p. 1). By ratifying the convention, 186 out of the 193 countries (including Timor-Leste) have effectively committed to the dismantling of structures of constraint and power at legal, policy, labour market and socio-cultural institutional levels that perpetuate gender inequality and inhibit women's agency, capabilities and opportunity to participate fully in all aspects of life and to realise their potential (Assi et al., 2014, p. 1).

The persistent prevalence of structures of gender discrimination and male privilege and power in many countries still continue to constrain women's freedom and confidence to choose their own life path, in particular of learning and earning, and render them undervalued, marginalised and exploited when they have been able to exercise that freedom. It is therefore unsurprising that gender and development discourse and practice has been propelled and compelled to respond to the epidemic malaise of women's experience of *dis*-empowerment and lack of equal opportunities with men across the developing world. The prevalent response has been to promulgate initiatives based around what is required, intrinsically and

extrinsically, for women to break through 'entry level' agency thresholds in order to participate in society with equal dignity to males and experience previously unknown empowerment well-beings.

The fact that the women in this case study have moved beyond this entry level degree of agency and have known empowerment in some way and to some degree along learning and earning pathways does not render these understandings un-germane to the study's conceptual framework. Despite their subversive performance of gender, manifest in their new female identities as women with employment and work skills development (WSD) experience in a non-traditional job field, they still inhabit a patriarchal society wrought with challenges even for women with their heads above the gendered socio-cultural waters, as Chapter Three of the thesis explains. Rather it opens new discursive terrain around the *depth and breadth* (in cognitive, psychological, social and material dimensions) and *sustainability* of these positives for these women - terrain that Research Objective (B) addresses in the exploration of the employment and empowerment experiences of the small but significant group of Timorese offshore women workers. The untypicality of these women's human capital development, as being influenced by their inhabitance in historically male-dominated isolated western workspaces, adds a sharper edge to the challenges they have faced in their empowerment journeys than the majority of their female peers in the developing world.

Further, Research Objective (A) has compelled a sharpened focus of the gender lens to more explicitly explore the degrees to which the ostensibly 'equal opportunities' codes of practice of the employing organisations have, have the intention to, and are able to tangibly deliver *building block* work skills development (WSD) as a substantive human capital component of their female workforce's enduring empowerment well-being. This sharpened focus encompasses both: a) the practical, objective processes of women's WSD capabilities gains as these result in their 'owned' enhanced human capital caches of knowledge, skills, abilities and attributes, and; b) the subjective viewpoint of industry stakeholders on the efficacies of global corporations' business-as-usual gender equality/equal opportunities practices versus an affirmative action approach based on a social responsibility or corporate

citizenship agenda of fostering host-country female employees' empowerment in a patriarchal society.

1.3 The structure of the thesis

The front end of the thesis consists of the three chapters following this introduction. Chapter Two explores the conceptualising of women's empowerment - looking at the power of gendered norms in patriarchal societies, the power it takes, as agency, for girls and women to withstand and subvert normative femininities in order to inhabit new empowered identities, and the importance of social, political and material capital/resources as well as learning and earning opportunities to support their empowerment progress. A cue is given for the need for women's empowerment research to embrace the situated rationale that lies behind the decisions and choices made by girls and women in countries where constraining gendered norms are powerful and opportunities are limited. Areas of resonance and relevance (or not) within the gender and development paradigm and feminist thinking for the Timorese female target group and their employment context are discussed, as too are concepts of self-determination, relatedness, self-efficacy and competency deriving from positive psychology literature and social cognitive theory. Through a synergy of these ideas and concepts a comprehensive multidisciplinary conceptual framework is developed with which to address the study's research aim and objectives.

In Chapter Three the reader is given an in-depth historical, socio-cultural, labour market and economic account of the Timor-Leste country context (including discussion on the government's management of the country's petroleum revenues), with the position of Timorese women taking centre stage. The paucity of available and potential career development opportunity, critical for women aspiring to grow capabilities and experience empowerment gains in the formal labour market, and particularly in non-traditional job fields, is highlighted.

The position of women in the global oil and gas industry is next detailed in Chapter Four - from a historical perspective and with cognisance of the worldwide drive for

gender diversity within the sector. A window is opened on the world of the offshore petroleum facility and the lifestyle experiences of fly-in-fly-out offshore employees, and especially females. The reader is then provided with an account of the development of the Timor Sea hydrocarbon resources that has resulted in the Timor Sea activities, Kitan oil and Bayu-Undan gas condensate fields and associated seismic exploration, with which the women target group are associated. The regulatory *local content* framework within which the employing stakeholders of both projects are conjoined with the Timor-Leste government is outlined, with reference to the training and employment of Timorese and the opportunities it has opened for female participation in the industry.

Chapter Five outlines the methodology and research methods, explaining why and how the case study design has been employed in addressing the research aim and objectives. The novel metaphor of a human capital portfolio is presented as a tool for encompassing the breadth and depth of the women's offshore-enhanced capabilities sets as they impinge upon enduring empowerment gains. The fieldwork experience is described along with discussion around researcher positionality and processes of reflection and ethical issues concerning the research endeavour.

Chapters Six and Seven present the findings (the former relating mostly to Research Objective (A) and the latter to Research Objective (B)) along with analysis and conclusions around these. Chapter Eight concludes the thesis along with presenting a main limitation of the research and directions for future research.

Chapter Two: Building a conceptual framework for women's empowerment through pathways of learning and earning in nontraditional job fields

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter has introduced the atypical phenomenon of women in patriarchally defined societies pursuing learning and earning pathways through non-traditional job fields. The chapter has provided the gendered backdrop reflective of such societies pervading the developing world – one which portrays a majority of women's experience as that of a deficit social category living lives of unrealised potential. It is against this backdrop that the theatre of the empowerment journeys of the women in this study (atypical in their home country) is explored – their choice-making and purposive action-taking that leads to their straddling of the two starkly contrasting worlds of a patriarchal Least Developed Country (LDC) and the non-traditional, masculinised, high-tech job field of the Western offshore oil and gas industry.

Interrogating a breadth of empowerment literature, this chapter builds a multidisciplinary conceptual framework suitable for understanding the empowerment and achievement experience of women whose lives have traversed these overlapping contexts. This framework has an underlying empowerment rubric of potential, agency and structures of opportunity. It has been customised to align with a focus upon women's entry into a non-traditional job field in which they have gained economic benefits and work skills development (WSD). It embraces both the empowering nature of these employment-related achievements, as well as the antecedent capabilities required of women following non-normative empowerment pathways towards the fulfillment of strategic interests that include these achievements. Incorporated into this framework is the central concept of global business acting as a development agent – that is, in generating a gendered development footprint founded upon working women's empowerment in the host countries in which it operates.

The chapter has five broad areas of discussion. It begins by locating the above two interrelated spheres of inquiry within international development discourse – in particular the gender project of the sustainable development agenda which gives centrality to women's economic empowerment and foregrounds the role of the private sector in fostering this empowerment. The next section explores the notion of gender as a discursive construction. It looks into the power of gendered norms in shaping femininity and masculinity, the fluidity of gender and how its subversive performance creates dissident male and female identities in societies (such as women entering non-traditional job fields) that can make inroads into the advancing of gender equality in their societies. The chapter then moves into discussing concepts of empowerment from within the gender and development paradigm, and feminist discourse (including Amartya Sen's influential Capabilities Approach). It highlights areas of resonance and dissonance with respect to the particular focus of the gender lens of this study (that is on women who have already traversed significant agency and decent work thresholds and advanced new skills and job frontiers for women in their country).

Theories from psychology discourse concerning self-determination and self-esteem, and self-efficacy and empowerment in the workplace, are next integrated into the conceptual framework. Allusion is made to the need to factor in to the universalist 'women realising potential' empowerment principle women's own situated empowerment meanings and rationales around their choice-making. The chapter concludes by highlighting the empowerment themes arising from the conceptual/contextual framework that are woven through the research endeavour, providing guidelines for evaluating the degrees to which the Timorese women research respondents' empowerment might be deemed sustainable and enduring.

2.2 Situating the study within international development

Women's empowerment takes centre stage in international development
The response in international development discourse to the unacceptable levels of need, fear, discrimination, injustice and exploitation that represent the gendered experience of vast numbers of women in the developing world has been to elevate gender as the greatest human rights challenge of our time (Klugman & Tyson, 2016,

p. iii). Women's empowerment is well established as a 21st century development priority, enshrined hand-in-hand with gender equality in UN Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG5) (United Nations, 2015). Encompassing both rights and capabilities, privileging notions of inclusion, equity, dignity and freedom of choice, the concept of women's empowerment has dislodged economic growth as the centerpiece under which the improvement of women's lives was previously subordinated (Clark, 2005; Fukuda-Parr, 2003; Gasper, 2002; Ibrahim & Alkire, 2007; Kabeer, 2012; Kangas, Haider, Fraser, & Browne, 2015; Mosedale, 2005; Sen, 1985; Stewart & Deneulin, 2002).

As a response to the pressing need for pro-poor growth, sustainable development is seen as being predicated upon the realisation of women's human capital potential. Essentially equating with women's economic empowerment, this realisation is premised upon the enhancement of their capacity 'to participate in, contribute to, and benefit from growth processes in ways which recognize the value of their contributions, respect their dignity and make it possible [for them] to negotiate a fairer distribution of the benefits of growth' (GENDERNET, 2011, p. 6). Within the scope of focus of SDG5 is the ending of all forms of gender-based discrimination, violence, exploitation and control, the reduction of women's domestic workload and improvements to their access to economic resources and technology. Complementing this gender-specific SDG are SDG4, which includes women's and girls' equal access to inclusive, equitable and lifelong learning opportunities and SDG8, incorporating full and productive employment and decent work for women including equal pay for work of equal value (SDG8) (United Nations (UN), 2017). These latter SDGs are particularly salient factors for the women in this study whose empowerment pathways have been influenced by formal, decent work employment experience and an accompanying strong vein of WSD learning opportunities.

A fundamental gender and development subtext behind the SDG scaffolding concerns the dismantling of systemic constraints that continue to exclude women from growth processes and limit their economic opportunities - such as adverse social norms, discriminatory laws and practices, lack of legal protection, and the failure of structures (informal and formal) to acknowledge, reduce and redistribute

women's unpaid household responsibilities and women's unequal access to productive resources (Buvinic & King, 2007; Duflo, 2011; Eriksson, 2016; Kabeer, 2012; Klugman & Tyson, 2016; Mayoux, 2006; Tornqvist & Schmitz, 2009; United Nations (UN), 2017). This subtext incorporates the paying of attention to women's triple role (as mothers, income-earners and participants in community affairs) and their practical as well as strategic needs and interests[7].

Indicators for the measurement of progress in the gender-focused SDGs include: reduced disparities in education outcomes and the closing of the gender gap in formal work; the presence of legal frameworks and enforcement mechanisms around non-discrimination on the basis of gender; gender responsive budgeting (such as towards the promotion of equal employment opportunities (EEO)); reductions in the incidence of violence against women and girls (VAWG) and in the prevalence of teenage marriages for females; fairer distribution of time women and men spend on unpaid domestic and care work; women's enhanced say in household decisions and their capacity to have savings, and; women's ownership of mobile phones (representing a level of autonomy) (United Nations (UN), 2016a, 2016b, 2017). This measurement framework has not been without criticism, which has relevance to this research. These include concerns over: the fuzziness around the time-boundedness of measurements (for example, a failure to assess how consolidated and enduring an empowerment outcome might be); the exclusion of males as part of the gender equality/empowerment solution; the narrow and dated range of computer skills representing achievement progress; the non-inclusion of

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[7] In the late 20th century gender and development (GAD) discourse drew attention to the triple role of women in low-income households and made the critical distinction between women's practical and strategic needs and interests (Moser, 1989). Attention was focused on women's work as including their reproductive role (of child-bearing and child-rearing responsibilities), their productive role (such as in agriculture or informal work, and often as the secondary source of household income) as well as their rank and file involvement in community management. Their practical needs were seen to relate to their concrete conditions – such as income, nutrition, health services, housing and access to clean water, the satisfaction of which need not automatically make inroads into their unequal status with males. Their strategic interests arose out of their position of subordination to males and experience of disadvantage due to gender discrimination and the sexual division of labour. These latter interests required women's emancipation and the dismantling/transformation of structures of gender inequality. With respect to the key themes of this study, the meeting of the women's practical needs might be seen in their acquisition of knowledge and skills that has lead to their employment, whilst the meeting of their strategic interests would be fulfilled by their having equal opportunities to enter, and achieve WSD in a 'decent work', non-traditional job field as well as their subsequent economic independence.

advanced skills in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) in targets for women's acquisition of technical skills, and; the absence of indicators for tracking the dismantling of structural barriers such as sexist mindsets in labour markets that perpetuate gendered horizontal and vertical occupational segregation (Betteridge, 2015; Evans, 2015; Harper, Nowacka, Alder, & Ferrant, 2014; Redman, 2017; United Nations (UN), 2017).

In 2014 the then Secretary General of the UN, Ban Ki-Moon, described the privileging of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in a stand-alone SDG (SDG5) as representing a step forwards from the Millennium Development Goals that he deemed were 'narrow and misaligned from the full spectrum of women's and girls' rights' (United Nations (UN), 2014, p. 13). Indeed, the SDG gender project can be seen as a more holistic, complex and multi-facetted approach looking to both material and non-material dimensions of women's empowerment (Betteridge, 2015; Scheyvens, Banks, & Hughes, 2016). Moreover, it is bolstered by the accountability (albeit soft) machinery of CEDAW (as outlined in the first chapter), the ILO's Decent Work platform, UN Women and the UN Global Compact which represent comprehensive frameworks for pushing and evaluating women's realising potential progress.

Unpacking the rationale for privileging women's economic empowerment
Women's economic empowerment has been widely conceptualised in gender and development discourse as a process in which there are both ends and means encompassing intrinsic and extrinsic aspects (Alsop, Bertelsen, & Holland, 2006; Eyben & Napier-Moore, 2009; Golla, Malhotra, Nanda, & Mehra, 2011; Kabeer, 2012; Kucera & Xenogiani, 2009; Mayoux, 2000; Narayan, 2002; SIDA, 2015; UNESCO, 2015). It can represent a means or instrumental function in enabling women to better (materially) support their own and their families' well-being and futures and to contribute to their nation's growth, as well as in their having greater power to influence household decisions around spending and who can work outside the home. As an end, there are the intrinsic psychosocial rewards of expanded rights, enhanced self-esteem, self-confidence, economic autonomy and social status and positive shifts in household power dynamics between males and females.

Recent research across 20 developing countries involving conversations with over 4,000 women and men around the subject of gender role norms and women's agency concluded that: "Women's ability to work for pay ….may be one of the most visible and game-changing events in the life of modern households and communities" (Munoz Boudet et al., 2013, p. 190). Studies on women's empowerment outcomes based around an economic entry point, be it in formal or informal work, or micro-financed self-enterprises, support claims that women working for income outside the home has the strongest transformative potential. The key strategic need of gaining an enhanced sense of control over their lives is fulfilled, particularly where they experience improvements to their household bargaining power over spending and saving, and also for some where their economic self-reliance enables them to leave patriarchal familial settings or unhappy marriages (Donald, Koowal, Annan, Falb, & Goldstein, 2016; Kabeer et al., 2011; Mogadam & Senftova, 2005). The identification, in much of the gender and development discourse, of household and familial relations as being the central locus of women's disempowerment has led to a priority evaluative focus in many studies being on agency as operationalised through changes in women's power in household decision-making (Malhotra & Schuler, 2005). This is not a primary focus of this case study.

Khader (2008) argues a contrary perspective to these ideas – suggesting that increases in women's agency through enhanced economic options (in this instance through access to microcredit) might simply represent material gains through welfare agency (as increased cash resources). These might not necessarily impel a process of empowerment across other dimensions such as psychological self-worth or a cognitive awareness of and willingness to challenge inequalities embedded in patriarchal values. She cites evidence of many men in South Asia who see their wives' Grameen Bank micro-finance loans as their own property and suggests that when microcredit tracks women into poorly compensated tasks that they have already been engaged in this will not result in an expansion of awareness of their potential (Khader, 2008). The same might be suggested for women engaged in feminised, low-skilled, low-income employment in the garment or footwear manufacturing sectors where, as the first chapter has described, their experience

has been of significant decent work deficits with little opportunity to up-skill. Recent micro-credit research by Buvinic and O'Donnell (2016) using indicators for agency in having savings, having business skills training and having childcare produced inconclusive results around poor, rural women's economic empowerment generalising across other domains of their lives. Effects on women's self-confidence were seen to be fleeting and difficult to assess, especially where the increase in income was not enough to counteract traditional gender norms (Buvinic & O'Donnell, 2016). Their findings did, however, reveal that women's capacity to save was proven to have lasting behavioural effects, reducing financial leakage due to pressures from family and providing buffering for weathering economic shocks. For women in patriarchal societies engaging in productive work for income in different social spaces to familial and community, there might be expected to be more compelling impacts on their personal empowerment.

Qualitative research into women earning regular incomes in the manufacturing sector in South Asia and Central America has brought to light the empowerment of women through their being able to re-negotiate power dynamics and the domestic workload in the home, and also to leave abusive marriages and enjoy wider social networks (Kabeer, 2005b; Rowlands, 1997). Kabeer's (2012) synthesis of findings from three studies in Africa, the Middle East and South Asia of women in the formal labour force who were in decent work situations (in the public service) revealed positive empowerment outcomes of enhanced self-worth, respect from others, knowledge of rights and greater capacity for having a say in household decisions. She has expressed doubts that there will be empowering effects where women take up work as a distress sale (that is where they will take on any job at any cost) and that there is any likelihood, for those working in global value chains, of their having an expansion of awareness of their potential (Kabeer, 2016). Further, as SIDA (2015) has pointed out, the benefits for women in full-time paid work are often offset by gender discrimination, poor working conditions with little job security, lower wages relative to males, insufficient Maternity Leave and difficulties returning to the labour market after having children.

In the light of the systemic and widespread persistence of women's disadvantage and *dis*-empowerment in the developing world, whether in paid productive work or not, it is unsurprising and understandable that the sustainable development gender project has set the bar for the achievement of gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment at an entry-level threshold of basic rights and capabilities. For example, these thresholds include girls' equal opportunities to complete primary school, women's and girls' freedom from fear, violence and control, and women's equal access to economic resources reflected in their land ownership rights or the equal opportunity for decent work (United Nations (UN), 2017). Given the prevalence of socio-cultural, economic and political structures that fail to accord women dignity, inclusion and equity, the prioritising of the transformation of these structures is also understandable. Of less a priority has been the promotion of the importance for women workers in developing countries to experience, additionally to dignity, safety and fairness in the workplace, opportunities for ongoing, structured and managed work skills development (WSD) and the realisation of their cognitive and skills potential in significant ways. Notwithstanding this, there is increasing visibility being given to women (typically in ones and twos) across the developing world, who are learning 21st century technical skills, including women (like those of this study) who have entered and become skilled in traditionally male job fields (UN Women, 2017).

A sobering criticism levelled at the SDGs has been around the contradiction between the complicity of global corporations with the prevalence of decent work deficits for women in developing countries and the centrality now given to the private sector in pursuit of the sustainable development agenda – one which equates gender equality with good business and smart economics (Klugman & Tyson, 2016; O'Manique & Fourie, 2016; Scheyvens et al., 2016; WIDE+, 2015). Nonetheless, the potential for business to align its goals with poverty alleviation and the creation of a more equal world such as through supporting women's economic empowerment and providing decent work opportunities has been lauded. At the same time, caution has been raised that there are limitations to the extent to which global corporations should and could contribute, as development actors, to tackling the structural barriers such as gender inequality, that hinder sustainable development progress in host

countries (Kramer, 2014; Newell & Frynas, 2007). The scope for global industry to do more for women workers than the baseline human rights of paying them a minimum wage, offering them social protection and providing a safe workplace, is the tenor of this inquiry. The chapter will now explore the theme of the gendered nature and extent of the development footprint of global industry.

2.3 Contesting the potential for big business to foster women's empowerment

The title of this thesis *"In what ways and to what extent is the global oil and gas industry able to deliver enduring empowerment outcomes for women in Asia-Pacific?"* puts the development footprint of a corner of global industry under gendered scrutiny. Underlying is the question: in what ways do the practices of big business intersect with the empowerment needs and interests of women in host developing countries where females are typically under-valued, subordinated, and marginalised? The question in this case study canvasses the extent to which it is incumbent upon or realistic for international oil companies (IOCs) and their tiers of stakeholder contractor organisations to factor into their agendas and decision-making processes, with respect to the training and employment of host-country females, considerations of gender equity and sustainable women's empowerment outcomes. The spotlight is upon exploring the correlations between capabilities and 'realising potential' gains of the women offshore workers (as they contribute to their enduring empowerment) and the employer stakeholders' business-as-usual practices, mandatory 'social license to operate' requirements, corporate citizenship/social responsibility (at intra-, inter-organisational or individual actor levels) or a combination of these approaches.

Making the business case for corporations to contribute to women's empowerment as sustainable development

There has been much debate in scholarly, international development and business circles about the relationship between global corporations' activities in developing countries and their development footprint, be it in their business-as-usual strategies, promulgation of codes of conduct or activities that fall under the banner of corporate social responsibility (CSR) (Blowfield, 2007; Blowfield & Frynas, 2005; Coleman, 2002; Gjolberg, 2009; Grosser, 2011; Grosser & Moon, 2005; Hopkins,

2004; Kilgour, 2007; Kuhn, Horne, & Yoon, 2017; Lund-Thomson, Mansur, & Lotia, 2007; Newell & Frynas, 2007; Pedersen, 2006; Porter & Kramer, 2011; Schwab, 2015; Snider, Hill, & Martin, 2003; Thompson, 2008; UN Women & UN Global Compact, 2010; Utting, 2008). The notion of co-opting the private sector with its leverage of 'vast amounts of investment capital … cutting edge technologies, big data, and specialized skills to address unmet needs' to play a key corporate citizenship role in the task of tackling barriers to development has been embraced in international development (Kramer, 2014, p. 2). A corresponding paradigm shift in CSR discourse has been to see CSR as a 'before profit' obligation (Hopkins, 2007) and of business increasingly being constructed as a 'consciously engaged *agent* of development' [emphasis added] (Blowfield, 2012, p. 375).

Herein lies an inherent tension – between the primary raisin d'etre of businesses as fulfilling their responsibility to shareholders by maximising profits and the notion of businesses making social investments as development agents. The much-touted win-win growth formula whereby core business objectives can be aligned with development goals has not been without its doubters. Blowfield (2007) sees no strong correlation between business doing well financially and doing well by society nor that companies will be motivated to understand the benefits of sustained CSR investment in anything other than ways that deliver instrumental gains. Hopkins (2007) highlights the major hurdles to companies becoming involved in the work of development as being: profit taking first priority; cost-benefit considerations; resources, and; perceptions of limited benefits (for example in the offshore O&G industry where operational phases tend to have a limited time frame and core crew numbers are not large). Kramer (2014) states that companies are not charitable organisations and should not be expected to solve all the developing world's social and environmental problems. Moon (2014) asserts that CSR should never usurp the essential role of governments in development (such as in the enforcement of non-discrimination in labour markets) and further casts aspersions on the development effectiveness of CSR when it is used as mere strategic positioning by businesses in partnerships with governments. CSR scholars warn of problems arising when businesses attempt to intervene as social development actors in complex development issues that have persisted for decades (Blowfield & Frynas, 2005;

Newell & Frynas, 2007; Pedersen, 2006). Coleman (2002), however, argues from the feminist perspective that if corporate citizenship is to mean anything businesses need to confront complexities such as those surrounding structures of gender inequality in societal externalities. This research has an interest in the range of potential intersections in which global corporations can meet the strategic interests of host-country women.

The role of the private sector as a development agent in fostering women's empowerment is squarely foregrounded on the sustainable development agenda. This arises from the understanding that global business creating employment for females in developing countries and thereby lending them economic autonomy has a positive social impact on poverty alleviation (Blowfield, 2012; Newell & Frynas, 2007). To the contrary, it has been suggested that asking big business to contribute to redressing inequalities they have been complicit in creating is counterintuitive (Ghosh, 2015; Scheyvens et al., 2016). For example, as has previously been highlighted, the empirics suggest that the business case for global corporations' activities in developing countries has for the past few decades been the financial benefits arising from (amongst other social injustices) the perpetuation of women's decent work deficits - where low wages, less regulation and/or the absence of enforcement mechanisms for business compliance with international human rights and labour standards have acted as incentives for foreign direct investment (Ghosh, 2015; Moon, 2014; Pedersen, 2006). The corollary to this is that making global businesses accountable for adhering to international human rights standards (such as the creation of quality, empowerment-enhancing jobs where the bottom line is the payment of a living wage, pay parity and equal opportunity between male and female employees and the instigation of comprehensive measures ensuring women's dignity, social security and safety at work) might constitute a *dis*-incentive for their establishing commercial and industrial ventures or engaging in development partnerships. Notwithstanding the contradictions and tensions associated with big business acting as a development agent, there has been a flowering of instruments (such as business/government/civil society/donor partnerships) in which the notion of CSR as a globalised concept based on shared values has been disseminated.

The gendered playing out of corporate citizenship

The world's largest multi-stakeholder corporate citizenship initiative, the UN Global Compact (UNGC), in partnership with UN Women effectively commits its signatories (in a voluntary capacity) to a raft of Women's Empowerment Principles. These principles include inclusion, nondiscrimination, health, safety and freedom from violence, equal opportunity in education and employment, equal access to skills, vocational and information technology training opportunities and encouragement to enter nontraditional job fields (UN Women & UN Global Compact, 2018). The principles are designed to provide a gender lens through which businesses can view and assess current practices and establish, monitor and self-report on progress around women's empowerment benchmarks. The instrument is also meant to function as a forum through which exemplars of best practices can have a snowballing effect, bringing non- or under-performing businesses in to line with the principles. Several oil and gas industry transnational companies are signatories to the UNGC, including Chevron, BP, Total, ExxonMobil, Shell and Eni (United Nations Global Compact, 2017, 2017a). Italian oil giant Eni is a stakeholder in both of the Timor Sea petroleum operations of this case study.

It would appear that global companies are increasingly committing to the notion of creating shared value, incorporating this approach into their core business strategies and seeing their social responsibility reputation as giving them a competitive edge – that is, taking a proactive rather than defensive approach to CSR (Blowfield, 2012; Hopkins, 2007; Kramer, 2014; Lucci, 2012; Pedersen, 2006). This represents a shift away from the traditional model of CSR as typically voluntary, discrete fringe activities of a company, either philanthropically motivated or designed to mitigate the risk of negative host-community responses to business activities, de-coupled from core business activities and often disconnected from host-country governments' strategic development priorities (Grosser, 2014; Moon, 2014; Newell & Frynas, 2007; Scheyvens et al., 2016). Ironically, there is a tension whereby the responsible business practices the UNGC solicits from it members, integral to its voluntary corporate citizenship mandate, might simply fall into the category of legal/regulatory compliance in the developed countries in which the members have their corporate headquarters. Nonetheless, whilst formal CSR

continues to occupy a supplementary or non-core corner of multinational corporations' strategies, a growing number of global businesses have internalised corporate citizenship values of fairness and dignity as an integral part of their core day-to-day business activities in developing countries and traction has been gained around the notion that commercial objectives can be married with development goals (Gjolberg, 2009; Leipziger, 2016; Lucci, 2012; Moon, 2014). The extent to which traction has been gained around fairness and dignity as explicitly implicated with women's empowerment outcomes will now be discussed.

Grosser (2014) is not alone in suggesting that CSR has tended to be gender-blind. For example, it would not be unheard of that a company could sponsor the building of rural latrines or of bicycles for schoolchildren whilst at the same time neglecting to provide adequate toilet facilities for women behind the doors of its garment factory or to address sexual harassment of its female employees on their way to and from work. Contemporary CSR occupies a continuum ranging from values and codes of conduct (such as those around non-discrimination and gender equality) to commitments to sustainable social impact goals (such as fostering women's empowerment). Three examples relating to gender are: transnational oil company Statoil, which in line with its commitment to create 'lasting value for local communities through [its] business activities', has been seen to incorporate socially responsible practices into contract procurement in developing countries whereby local suppliers must adhere to non-corruption and labour rights standards and to integrate gender diversity protocols into its host-country company spaces (Skedsmo, Bade, & Lunde, 2013; Statoil, 2017, pp. 9,10); US global cotton-trading company, Cargill, has likewise been evidenced to have fulfilled its promise of creating shared value in Zambia by adhering to decent work guidelines, providing above average Maternity Leave, observing high levels of workplace health and safety and providing transport to and from work for its female employees (Finnegan & White, 2016), and; the sentiments enshrined in transnational consumer goods company Unilever's sustainable living goals - of enhancing the empowerment of millions of women in countries where it operates, through embracing the 'UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights' (Unilever Australasia, 2018).

Whether corporate citizenship rhetoric such as expressed by Unilever, or the engagement of global business with self-reporting 'soft' initiatives such as the UNGC, will raise the bar on corporate practices tangibly enabling women's empowerment in the developing world is a moot point. Some of the drawbacks with the UNGC have been identified as: low barriers to entry; lack of adequate monitoring and accountability of participants; minimal requirements for sex-disaggregated statistics (only relating to companies' global workforce and to female representation at management/leadership levels), and; its 'broad sweep' tick-box approach to areas like pay parity and nondiscrimination policies (Gjolberg, 2009; Kilgour, 2007; UN Global Compact, 2008; Utting, 2008). This would suggest that members of the UNGC are neither encouraged to pursue a commitment to fostering women's empowerment progress from an equity perspective or beyond making gender diversity gestures nor that gendered structures that embed female disadvantage such as the women-concentrated (feminised and marginalised) sectors of labour markets would be challenged. The aim of the UNGC is to foster a broad consensus through dialogue and networking of what constitutes best practice (for companies as development agents) and to influence laws and business agendas. However, Kilgour (2007) suggests that the under-representation of female voices in the UNGC hampers its capacity to both build a critical mass of big business commitment to fostering gender equality and to effecting real empowerment change in the lives of women.

This study involves an analysis of intra- and inter-organisational decision-making around O&G industry business investments into female employees' human capital. There is therefore an interest in the organisational spaces in which there might reside a consciousness of the empowerment needs of women living in a patriarchal society. Where a gender equity consciousness might exist, it seeks to ascertain who might have agency (individually and/or together) in promoting, through business agendas, decision-making and activities, the strategic interests of host-country women around dignity of and at work, career development and empowerment. To the contrary, there is a corresponding interest in whether gender-equal, business-as-usual practices based on 'best person for the job' can unintentionally serve the empowerment interests of host-country females living in these societies.

Corporate citizenship meets gender equity

Coleman (2002) suggests that if gendered corporate citizenship is to mean bringing about positive change for women then businesses need to be aware of their own social practice as either exacerbating harmful gendered social patterns of power or challenging them. A strong argument has been made that, in order for business practices to be more gender-sensitive, global corporations employ the tool of gender analysis at the agenda-setting stage of their activities in the developing world in order to diagnose the differential status of host-country women and men (Grosser, 2011; Grosser & Moon, 2005; Herman, Geertz, & Alongi, 2017; Kilgour, 2007; Newell & Frynas, 2007; Thompson, 2008). Blowfield (2012) argues that, while contemporary CSR does not encourage more detailed understandings of the structural causes of poverty and inequality, when businesses can see that their investments have the potential to deliver genuine sustainable development value, they will be better able to become engaged as development agents. This might suggest that, if companies are aware of the critical value to individual female employees of empowerment gains and of consequent positive changes to familial and societal male/female power dynamics and gendered norms, then this could engender proactive approaches towards attracting and recruiting, as well as protecting, supporting and up-skilling women workers. Such a proactive approach is analogous to engaging with notions of gender equity and potentially affirmative action[8].

Thomson (2008), in discussing CSR in relation to women's strategic interests, argues that global corporations have a moral duty to acknowledge gender equity claims and the efficaciousness of initiating protocols and processes that align their activities with those claims. There is a wide range of opinion about what gender equity might look like, how it might be achieved and who is responsible for fostering it (Coleman, 2002; Thompson, 2008). For companies operating in the developing world, it may be about: equipping individual women to navigate and prosper in the world of work by offering scholarships, opening training opportunities and offering

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[8] This research uses the New Zealand Human Rights Commission definition of affirmative action as: different treatment that may be necessary to enable a particular group of people to achieve equality with others (Human Rights Commission, 2018).

support to enable them to compete equally with men for jobs and promotions; addressing gender bias, creating equal opportunities spaces and instigating policies around parental leave in order to level the playing field for females and males, and; creating workplace cultures in which women feel safe and valued and masculinities that exclude or denigrate women are discouraged. In countries where there are considerable barriers to women entering, staying and flourishing in the workplace it may be about company management personnel having pastoral awareness of socio-cultural causes of a female employee's absenteeism (such as husband or family pressure to take primary care of a sick child or conflict due to a partner/husband's jealousy over her working in a male-populated workplace) or lack of interest in/capacity/social support to advance a career (which might originate from socio-cultural norms that inhibit her assertiveness in approaching her boss for a promotion or discourage her from being more successful than her partner/husband in order to protect his ego). Processes could be put in place to mitigate against such gendered constraints. Women's Empowerment Principle 3, alongside addressing issues around the security of women (for example, in protection around their travelling to and from work and establishing zero-tolerance policies towards sexual harassment in the workplace) asks businesses to train security staff and managers to recognise signs of violence against women (UN Women & UN Global Compact, 2010). With respect to gender equity being addressed by direct affirmative action, Women's Empowerment Principle 2, proposes a 30% quota for women's participation in decision-making and governance at all levels and across all business areas (UN Women & UN Global Compact, 2010, p. 4). The ILO also urges the private sector to have targets and quotas for female recruitment and advancement in the formal workforce as a means to address gender equity and gender equality deficits for women (Kuhn et al., 2017).

It may be, however, that global companies' business-as-usual practices, in the final analysis, equate with their being a development agent for women's empowerment irrespective of the grand vision of gender and development, thus rendering the incentives provided by initiatives such as the UNGC superfluous. For example, consistent company ethos, policies and processes around equal opportunities, creating a gender diverse workforce and discrimination-free workspaces may

translate unproblematically, in patriarchal host-countries, into the enhancement of female employees' sense of dignity, self-confidence, self-efficacy and socio-economic status. In the absence of an explicit intra-organisational understanding of the value to the women and their communities of a spillover empowerment effect into their ex-employment family and social domains, a positive gendered development footprint is nonetheless established.

Ultimately, corporate citizenship is a business-orientated phenomenon, one that is dependent upon a number of factors: compliance and regulatory environments; stakeholder relations; leadership; commercial fortunes, and; the values and willingness of stakeholder actors. Whilst all of these factors will have had an impact (to varying degrees) on the involvement of the women in this case study, the research is nonetheless located within the terrain of contemporary CSR discourse. Herein lies the notion that it is feasible that socially responsible, business-as-usual practices and ethical codes of conduct (including through regulatory government-business frameworks[9]) of big business can accommodate intent, approaches and practices that look to leaving behind a potent gendered development footprint of women's potential realised and their empowerment enhanced.

To conclude this area of discussion it is, however, important to iterate that, while a key theme of this research is global corporations representing structures of opportunity within which women in host countries can achieve capabilities and empowerment gains, underpinning the study is the premise that women's material and non-material empowerment gains are not stati that are conferred downwards upon them through good, socially responsible business practices. It is rather that their 'owned' achievements represent the fruitful union of their own agency, abilities and self-efficacious efforts with women-friendly, enabling training/employment spaces and business practices. The chapter now unpacks the discursive terrain around socio-cultural structural barriers that inhibit or deny women exercising their freedom of choice and action to shape their lives and

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[9] Chapter Four discusses the contractual and voluntary aspects of the 'social license to operate' framework of Local Content, as a shared value O&G industry-host government arrangement, within which the training and recruitment of women in developing countries on O&G projects is generally integrated.

explores the phenomenon of females (and males) enaging in the subversive performance of gender in order to circumvent or navigate them.

2.4 Discussing the discursive construct of gender

As explained in the first section of this chapter, the emergence of women's empowerment as a dominant theme on the international development agenda arises out of the continued existence in many developing countries of endemic patriarchal structures and associated legacies of discriminatory regimes that disadvantage and subjugate females. Martha Nussbaum defines *patriarchy* as a social system in which males hold primary power and predominate in roles of political leadership, moral authority, social privilege and control of property (Nussbaum, 2011). It is a complex, multi-leveled distribution of automatic power and privilege for men located in interpersonal relations and institutional structures (formal and informal) (Mac an Ghaill & Haywood, 2007)[10]. Patriarchal kinship ordered and agrarian societies such as Timor-Leste ascribe the central role/labour activity of women to childbearing and have a predisposition for females' docility under the dominance of men (Mogadam, 2004).

In order to appreciate the qualities, strengths, decisions and reasons that underlie empowerment pathways undertaken by women living in patriarchally defined societies (such as those of this study's target group) it is important to understand the mesh of pressures (relational, socio-cultural, religious, economic, political) forcing the women around them to accept lower status and limited life choices - pressures that they themselves have been able to bypass or cut through. Understanding the power of gender norms that have embodied in many cases spectacular inequalities for women - that is, rules governing roles, responsibilities and the distribution of resources that are made to appear legitimate and natural (Hart, 1995) helps us to understand the power it takes to contest and subvert them.

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[10] As a 60+ year-old woman who has grown up with, swum against the tide of patriarchal gendered norms, and been involved in feminist struggle to dismantle patriarchal structures in my own society, I have no hesitation in applying the term patriarchal to characterise such societies in the bulk of the developing world (including Timor-Leste) that exhibit similar (albeit to differing degrees and in different complexions) gendered dynamics of power and norms of femininity and masculinity.

The next section canvasses theory and concepts, many of which fall under the umbrella of social constructivism, as these inform understandings of gender – that is, gendered roles, behaviours and power relations as these are the 'products of a particular culture and period of history and are dependent on the particular social and economic arrangements prevailing in that culture at that time' (Burr, 2006, p. 3).

The construct of socio-cultural norms
Social theorist Pierre Bourdieu explains norms through the concept of a durably inculcated system of structured and structuring dispositions, or *habitus,* which is shaped by one's history and which also shapes social practice (Bourdieu, 1977; Hurtado, 2009). Norms constitute a matrix of perceptions, beliefs, behaviours and practices based on a social script that shapes how the world should be viewed and how one should behave in it. This script is tacitly acquired through socialisations in childhood or in different social domains or *fields* (cultural, religious, social, economic, political) (Hurtado, 2009; Marion, 2008). The role of culture (be it traditional, organisational, social) as a social structure within which shared patterns of assumptions and behaviour reside, is of significance to this study. This is due to the tenacious continuance of customary structures and practices based on patriarchal ideology in large tracts of the society in which the female target group live (as is discussed in the following chapter). International development discourse appreciates customary norms as the glue holding societies together but also as having the propensity to produce discriminatory equilibriums of sociality (Hohe, 2003; Kangas et al., 2015; World Bank Group, 2015). Increasing attention has been focused on the cognitive/psychological wiring of societal members' adherence to norms, such as is behind stereotypical gendered decision-making behaviour in many cultural domains of the developing world (World Bank Group, 2015).

Behavioural science's social norms theory points to the power of norms embedded in cultures to be so pervasive that members do not consider going against them (Harper, Harper, Brodbeck, & Page, 2015). Further, people can conform to social norms because they value others' approval or acquire status (even when they do not agree with a norm) or because they fear negative reactions (such as gossip, anger, ostracism, shaming, economic hardship or being marginalised) (Charmes &

Wieringa, 2003; Donald et al., 2016; Harper et al., 2015). Cultures characterised by hierarchical structures of social positions and power relations tend to generate intractable norms, through formal and informal rules regarding codes of conduct and shared expectations around roles and responsibilities (Hurtado, 2009). These are held in place through inflexible systems of social rewards for conformity and punishment for failure to conform (Charmes & Wieringa, 2003). In cultures that are based on patriarchal ideologies, males' social position is normatively that of head (of household, community, institutions, nations), decision-maker and breadwinner and women's role is primarily motherhood with their rightful position being subordinated to males in the home.

Patriarchal norms can be rendered more intractable when they are reinforced by religious authority (such as Catholicism in Timor-Leste) that designates, for example, that women are the natural home makers whose role is to keep the family together and whose behaviour should be modest and obedient to males (Charmes & Wieringa, 2003). Power dynamics within patriarchal settings are thus based on male superiority and are played out through men having authority over women and girls (and often their bodies) and control over assets and resources. Gender is the basis on which rules and shared expectations of behaviour, roles, responsibilities and the distribution of power are distinguished and mental models of femininity and masculinity are established. Widespread, culturally-based gendered norms or informal institutions based on binaries of male power/female subordination, male superiority/female inferiority, male privilege/female disadvantage tend to permeate all spheres of life (relational, familial, social, economic, political) and can take decades to disperse, due in particular to male intransigence around change and reluctance to cede privilege and power (Alexander-Scott, Bell, & Holden, 2016; Kangas et al., 2015)

The power of gendered norms
Feminist Judith Butler (2006) conceptualises gender as 'identity tenuously constituted in time' through the stylised repetition of acts, conditioned by shared social structures. Genders are a 'legacy of sedimented acts stabilised, polarised and rendered … [seemingly] intractable' (Butler, 2006). Gender norms of masculinity and femininity are produced and reproduced over time in discursive patterns and

are an important part of one's identity (Charmes & Wieringa, 2003). However, gendered norms can be based on inauthentic information or fictional beliefs about males' and females' natural and legitimate place and capacities, creating limiting boundary states to what girls and women can think, do and think they can do (Alexander-Scott et al., 2016; Dercon & Singh, 2011; van der Gaag, 2011). Feminist theorists have focused on social structures and practice that 'devalue, subordinate and marginalize' women (Thompson, 2008, p. 91), and on the power of constraining social norms to narrow the realm of females' preferences, and diminish degrees of autonomy and capacity for self-realisation (Cornwall & Edwards, 2015; Kabeer, 2012; Nussbaum, 1999; Thompson, 2008).

In male dominated or gender unequal societies there are 'visible architectures of patriarchal epistemology and value systems' whereby women are defined differently from men and that difference is deemed deficient (Thompson, 2008, p. 91). The gendered roles and responsibilities that are consequently allocated to men are assigned a superior value to those of women, and the abilities defined as feminine have inferior status (Kabeer, 2012). Girls in these settings are socialised to think they have no aptitude, that they must be good and obedient, that their activity space is confined to around the home, that it is not appropriate to seek paid work and that if they are too educated it will damage their marriage prospects (Lansky et al., 2017; Mosedale, 2005; SEPI, 2013). Early pregnancies are more often due to adolescent girls thinking they have to give in to pressures from males to have sex even if they do not want it (Cummins, 2017). Boys are socialised to think they must grow up to be tough, strong leaders, that it is not appropriate or masculine for males to contribute to domestic and care work in the household, and that it is appropriate for a male to control his wife's activity space and to punish her if she does not perform her domestic role adequately (Alexander-Scott et al., 2016; Asia Foundation, 2016; Kabeer, 2012). They believe it is males' right to have sex with girls or wives whenever they should desire it (Cummins, 2017). At worst, gendered norms of masculinity and femininity that render females inferior and powerless and valorise male virility and superiority are significant factors that legitimise and sustain violence (physical, psychological and sexual) against women and girls (VAWG) (Alexander-Scott et al., 2016; Charmes & Wieringa, 2003).

Women entering the world of formal work may not necessarily escape the reach of discriminatory norms that assign women less than their value, designate certain work roles and skills as feminine and others as masculine, and prevent them from competing on a level playing field with men. As Nussbaum has simply said, 'sometimes women's work shows respect for their equal human worth and sometimes it does not' (Nussbaum, 2017, p. vii). Kabeer (2012) writes of social norms and rules in workplaces in the developing world that contribute to durable gender inequalities, such as labour market practices of paying women less, laying them off first and promoting men above them (Thompson, 2008). Women can either be seen as unreliable or uncommitted by employers due to childbearing/rearing commitments or able to be paid less because they see themselves as secondary household earners (Kabeer, 2012; Lansky et al., 2017). Sexual harassment by males in many workplace settings is normalised as a male prerogative, as is the acceptance that the female victim will not complain (ILO, 2013b). Discriminatory stereotyping of women and gender bias towards promoting males can combine to create a 'glass ceiling', or impenetrable barrier that limits the skills and competence development and career advancement of women (Miller, 2003; Thompson, 2008). Masculine and feminine norms in labour markets are often associated with a male archetype of physical strength and technical cleverness and women's incompatibility with big machinery and technology and compatibility with the caring professions, resulting in males being over-represented, for example in higher-paid engineering and building job fields and women in the lower-paid service sector (Wajcman, 2010).

Honouring men and women's capacity to swim against the tide
What an individual girl or woman believes others expect of her or that she can expect from others (and the sanctions or rewards that may accompany her compliance in this) can be a more powerful driver or constraint, that is, an external locus of control (LOC), for her choices, preferences or acceptances in life than any alternative beliefs she may hold (Charmes & Wieringa, 2003). The same might be said for males in societies where hegemonic masculinities associated with social, economic and political power that assume hierarchical centrality in patriarchal societies 'presume the subordination of non-hegemonic masculinities' or delegitimation of masculine alternatives such as versions that are open to equality

with women or to taking on domestic roles (Connell & Merrschmidt, 2005, p. 846). Conversely, as Bourdieu argues, when an individual enters a new social field (such as an urban peer group, the diaspora or nontraditional job field) different ways of thinking and behaving to previously habituated cultural norms can be perceived as possible (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Further, inherent in socially constructed gendered hierarchies is always the potential for contestation and the presence of subterranean seams of dissident beliefs and attitudes awaiting the triggers to conflate.

Sen (1999) has written with respect to people's conformity to social norms and acceptance of the inequalities they can manifest in traditional societies that, '…the unquestioned presumptions are merely unquestioned – not unquestionable' (Sen, 1999b, p. 10). For example, normative controls on women, while powerful, can be malleable in the face of economic imperative (Kabeer, 2000). Furthermore, as the women in this study's beliefs and actions exemplify (and those of my mother and Joanina), there will always be rebels or individuals and groups within social structures who are capable of reflective consideration of limiting, 'taken-for-granted', inherited scripts of femininity and masculinity and who will swim against the cultural tide, creating their own new norms and divergent identities. Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) point to the capacity of people to cognitively and agentically deconstruct gender binaries and influence the democratisation of gender relations. Further, they bring to our attention evidence of the durability or survivability of non-hegemonic patterns of masculinity within male-dominated societies, such as in the subversive performance of gender in the everyday lives of some boys and men. The corollary of this is the reasonable assumption of the durability of alternative female identities to a gendered disempowered norm.

The conceptual framework is therefore mindful of the risk of homogenising or essentialising women, men and culture in poorer, traditional societies. For example, characterising men as the problem and viewing women as an analytical gendered category or stereotype of ignorant victims living a truncated life or cheap, docile and dispensable sources of labour, incapable of analysing and challenging power dynamics (Kabeer, 2000; Lansky et al., 2017; Mohanty, 2003). Or, of essentialising

traditional cultures as patriarchally monolithic in which there are no spaces in which women (and men, such as Joanina's grandfather) can subvert conventions such as problematic masculine and feminine roles and sexist attitudes (Alexander-Scott et al., 2016; Connell & Merrschmidt, 2005; Cornwall, 1997; Nussbaum, 1999). Nonetheless, there is no triviality in the usage in this study of the somewhat hackneyed term 'patriarchy' to articulate and generalise male-dominated societies (in which abound the truncated lives and subordinated realities of women and girls) as a contextual socially-constructed foil against which the journeys of this study's working women respondents are highlighted. However, the theoretical preference for this research is to view the psychosocial functioning of individuals as regulated by the interplay between external sources of information and those that have been self-produced (Bandura 2001). The study rests upon the premise that it is entirely possible (indeed probable) that there will be within patriarchal cultures young women who have been endowed with certain definable, discernable (essentially rebellious) attributes (Burr, 2006). This might be an inner strength that atypically propels them along dissident empowerment pathways - such as a motivating self-efficacy and an internal locus of control (LOC) whereby they understand themselves to be the authors of their own destiny, capable of defining their own life choices.

Women's subversive performance of gender

As has been discussed, gender identities are highly responsive to specificities of socio-cultural contexts, locally, historically and politically situated, and can become intractable through the habitual practice of the normative masculinities and femininities prescribed and ascribed in these contexts. And yet they are essentially unstable and mutable, therefore capable of being contested and reconstructed, even ignored (Charmes & Wieringa, 2003; Cornwall, 1997; Ehrlich, 1997; Hoskins & Artz, 2005). Bandura (2001) in discussing *agency freedom* prefers to conceive of this, not negatively as the absence of external coercion or constraints, but rather positively as the exercise of self-influence based upon a person's capacity to manipulate symbols such as feminine stereotypes and generate new mental models. Within Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* is contained humans' capacity for rational reflection which can lead to changing dispositions (Hurtado, 2009). The positive psychology school of thought echoes this notion, arguing that humans have an innate capacity

for agency based on the existence of our inner, reflective, autonomous self (Chirkov, Ryan, & Sheldon, 2011).

Mosedale (2005) writes of 'insurgent mental models' arising out of this capacity to reflect - of groups of women who share similar understandings of injustice or dissatisfaction with prevalent gender stereotypes who, through the performative difference in their behaviour, roles and responsibilities, bring visibility to new feminine identities. Their subversive performance of gender in effect expands the cultural field of femininities and masculinities (Butler, 2006). This can be exemplified in female role models such as young women achieving tertiary level education in the developing world bringing visibility to the capacity for females to gain knowledge and competence other than that which is required for reproductive work (UNESCO, 1999). It can materialise in males filling the household role spaces opened when women spend less time in the home due to their having outside formal jobs.

Thus, the shifting complexion of gender, as a discursive construct, can be evidenced in the growing numbers of women (and men) across the globe that are challenging discriminating gender norms (Harper et al., 2015). Van der Gaag (2011) points to the increased questioning of attitudes and behaviour within the household by women who work outside the home and how the changing roles of fathers are re-shaping gender relations and hence gender identities. The capacity for household power dynamics around the distribution of resources and tasks to change in developing countries when a woman takes up an income-earning role, thus generating a new complexion to her (and her husband's) identity, has been much highlighted in gender and development and feminist discourse (Buvinic & Furst-Nichols, 2015; Hart, 1995; Kabeer, 2015; Mayoux, 2000; Moser, 1989; World Bank, 2012). In Timor-Leste society where it is unusual to see a man holding a baby, women working offshore for a month at a time have spoken of husbands who had assumed childcare and cooking roles during the month's they were away at work (Adams, 2014). Investing in women's learning, improving their mobility, and 'developing a critical mass of women and men pushing the boundaries of entrenched social norms' is seen as crucial for enhancing other women's agency and capacity to

aspire. (Munoz Boudet et al., 2013, p. xi). Changing normative attitudes (male and female) around VAWG has been shown to be successful within a few years when concerted efforts are directed at specific social groups (Alexander-Scott et al., 2016). The promotion of Timorese women to offshore positions was shown to bring about positive change within months in doubting attitudes that had been held by their Timorese male co-workers' around their abilities and capacity to adapt to the harsh, overwhelmingly male offshore work environment (Adams, 2014).

Shifting identities across domains

The fluidity of the performance of gender can also contain contradictory meanings (Hart, 1995) as women perform gender in different ways across the different domains they traverse – for example, a woman might be a breadwinner working in a full time, responsible job and when at home assume primary responsibility for preparing and cooking food and washing clothes for the family, getting the children to and from school and liaising with teachers. Kabeer (2000) suggests that working women who adhere to normative gendered household roles when at home might be seen as competent, purposeful social actors who are also mindful of the real boundaries within which their agency can operate. It is also entirely possible that, in the presence of normative prescriptions that females should assume the primary role for family care and household maintenance, a woman may make the purposeful, non-coerced choice to adapt her paid work activities in order to be able to devote herself to that role and, further, be fulfilled by it.

The contrast of femininities a woman can assume can be no more visually depicted than the photos I have seen on social media of one of the female respondents (an offshore mechanical engineer trainee) in which she is wearing work garb of orange overalls with 'hi-vis' stripes, hard hat, steel-cap boots and safety glasses at work and those of her in her make-up, stiletto shoes and white wedding dress - sleeveless, heavily embossed with sparkle with a 'Princess Diana'-style very wide and full-length skirt. Another example is of the Timorese femininity that is equally comfortable with having meals prepared for them by male chefs in the offshore setting as with assuming customary female roles in the kitchen at cultural gatherings whilst the Timorese men sit around and talk.

Women at the interface of cultures

The (following) Timor-Leste background chapter paints a picture of a traditional patriarchal society emerging from conflict into independence and a new era of development – one where the continuance of customary practices co-exists with inroads of new ideas based on principles of gender equality. It explains how international influences have fused with local women activists' endeavours to create movement for change around, for example, enhancing women's political voice and eliminating VAWG. This study has a tangential relevance regarding the societal impact of the aggregation of new attitudes and actions of individuals (such as those amongst the research respondents), which, according to the sociological theory of diffusion, might contribute to a tipping point in communities (in this case patriarchal) that then engenders a sea change in social norms (Malhotra & Schuler, 2005).

Bandura (2001) describes cultures as being porous to new ideas, with a tendency to become less and less insular. Advanced telecommunications are now disseminating ideas, values, and knowledge of how people live and behave across the globe at an unprecedented rate. Transnational interdependencies and global political and economic forces are weakening normative socio-cultural systems and changing the social landscape of societies. The increasing accessibility of global travel is facilitating the diasporic flow of ideas and cross-cultural interactions, understandings and relationships. Girls and women from countries where women's usual status is as passive, second-class or inferior citizens are being exposed to new role models of women, for example, as extolled, confident leaders, as tertiary educated, or as achieving competence in non-traditional job fields (Harper et al., 2015; Mosedale, 2005; van der Gaag, 2011).

Being exposed to new ideas of gender equality and exemplars of independent successful women can have a profound and lasting impact on young women's consciousness, self-image, aspirations and self-efficacy. Timorese offshore women workers who had never left their country prior to their recruitment to the oil and gas industry reported being inspired at seeing Western females in the offshore positions of medic, rigger and supervisor of a team of male blaster/painters (Adams,

2014). When women who have grown up in patriarchal worlds such as Timor-Leste enter and experience dignity and respect from males in institutional or organisational worlds, where the modus operandi is predicated on principles, policies and practices of gender equality, there is the potential that they will adopt (if they have not already) clear thresholds of negative male behaviours they will not accept or tolerate elsewhere in their lives and become aware of (if they have not already) and prefer the company of males who perform gender in ways that are respectful and anti-controlling of women. Correspondingly when women with self-respect, self-confidence and expertise in their job field populate historically male work places their presence, behaviour and competence can not only alter the gendered orthodoxy of the setting but also change entrenched organisational cultures based on narrow normative ideas of women's abilities and occupational roles. As Bourdieu has theorised, change in *habitus* co-evolves with change in *field* conditions (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), raising the notion that women gaining respect in male-dominated job fields can act as a catalyst for opening other opportunities for women to follow in their footsteps. This study therefore pays attention to the dialectical dynamics between women's identities and the overlapping and contrasting social domains in which these identities develop and have an influence.

The chapter will now explore the areas of discursive resonance within the feminist and gender and development paradigms that have helped to furnish the conceptual framework and shape of the gender lens of this research.

2.5 Gender and development and feminist empowerment concepts

The catchphrase that best captures the essence of women's empowerment definitions, as it underpins gender and development planning, practice, research and evaluation, is 'the expansion of freedom of choice and action to shape one's life' (Narayan, 2002, p. xviii). This notion, originating in Amartya Sen's welfare economics theory and permeating both feminist and gender and development literature contains two converging themes: *freedom of choice and action* which when unpacked contains such notions as self-determination, self-reliance and agency,

and; *shaping one's life* which means the translation of agency into the achievement of women's strategic goals and valued well-being outcomes (Alkire, 2002; Alsop et al., 2006; Eyben & Napier-Moore, 2009; Kabeer, 2000; Sen, 1999a; Strandberg, 2001; World Bank, 2012).

Sen's themes of people's freedom of choice and action (as *capabilities*) to achieve well-being outcomes they have reason to value are threaded into his capability approach (CA) - a theoretical framework that has had an appreciable and widespread influence in academia and international development. For instance, it has been integrated into the curricula of a breadth of social science and economics disciplines (including gender studies and education) and has formed a conceptual foundation of the UNDP's annual Human Development Reports for over 20 years (Alkire, 2011; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Robeyns, 2006a). As such its scholarship is an important source of ideas for the overarching 'gender and development' theme of this study, in particular those of agency, potential, resources and opportunity (Alsop et al., 2006; Eriksson, 2016; Ibrahim & Alkire, 2007; Kabeer, 1999; Robeyns, 2003; Sen, 1985; Strandberg, 2001).

Women's freedom of choice and action to shape one's life as capabilities
The CA is an articulation of a 21st Century paradigm shift in international development from the former primacy given to income-maximisation and economic growth as human well-being proxies (and subsequent development programmes which rendered people passive recipients of utility-based aid resources) to a focus on humans as the authors of their own destinies (that is, having the freedom, and expanded, effective opportunities to lead the lives they have reason to value) (Alkire, 2011; Bryson & O'Neill, 2009; Comim, 2008; Fukuda-Parr, 2003; Hart, 2013; Robeyns, 2006). The CA was formulated as a way of addressing the problem of social structures of inequality manifest in what Sen has called the *un*-freedoms of poverty, social deprivation, lack of opportunity and structures of tyranny and inequality that hinder people's agency, the realisation of their potential and achievement of well-being (Kabeer, 2005a; Lansky et al., 2017; Nussbaum, 2003; Sen, 1999a). In the CA, freedom has two aspects: a process aspect of *agency* as the ability or authentic self-direction of individuals to act on behalf of what matters, and; real opportunities, as

capabilities to achieve desired *doings and beings* from amongst a range of good and valued possibilities (Alkire, 2011; Robeyns, 2016).

Capabilities (encompassing a cache of abilities and freedoms) are what people are able to do and to be, the potential they have for aspirations to be converted through the exercise of agency into valued well-being outcomes (Robeyns, 2006a; Sen, 1985). Ultimately, they are an expression of the range of opportunities and choices open to an individual in shaping her/his own life trajectory (Comim, 2008). Capabilities, as notional opportunities are shaped by *conversion factors* (or resources) in three dimensions: personal (as cognitive and physical capacity); social (social institutions such as educational and political structures and families, traditions and social norms and the behaviour and attitudes of others), and environmental (such as arable land, weather shocks or the availability of fresh water) (Robeyns, 2008). The construct of human capital (which is calculatedly utilised in this research in the metaphor of a human capital portfolio) has been associated with a person's personal resources, the emphasis being upon knowledge, skills and effort as resources that can be converted into valued personal or economic goals (Sen, 1999a; Unterhalter, 2007). Material resources such as income or a tertiary scholarship are deemed important adjuncts for the capabilities that can be generated from them, such as building or buying a house or acquiring a Master's degree. Capabilities have intrinsic value for the 'real, actual' possibilities they represent as a set of vectors of achievable well-being goals (Alkire & Deneulin, 2009, p. 8).

Sen (1999) and Nussbaum (2001) have deemed that working for an income is a key capability. The ILO's Decent Work thresholds of a living wage, social protection, equal opportunities and the freedom from discrimination and sexual harassment might be considered a universal capability set for working women. Nussbaum has spoken of universal capabilities that are 'informed by the intuitive idea of a life that is worthy of the dignity of the human being' and of which being an agent and thinking for oneself is central (Nussbaum, 2001a, p. 5). Agency is a term that has its own authority in the CA, as the ability to take action on behalf of what matters (which for the women in this study has been the pursuit of learning, WSD and

economic self-reliance goals) (Alkire & Deneulin, 2009). According to capability theory people have an *inherent* agency to be all that they can be (Sen, 1999a).

Sen has been reluctant to specify any metric upon which to allocate capabilities, arguing that operationalising the CA is the art of adapting it to the different contexts in which people live and of being open to accommodating of the diversity of perspectives people have on what are valued beings and doings (Alkire & Deneulin, 2009; Qizilbash, 2008; Sen, 1999a). From Sen's perspective, evaluative space is needed to allow for people's relative valuations of what is important, which might be the Timorese women's desire to have fluency in English as a foreign language (Adams, 2014), which Sen himself suggests is a capability giving access to the globalised labour market (and which, for example, is a pre-requisite skill for entry to many global offshore O&G operations). People's well-being goals/achievements are seen as highly context-dependent, having intrinsic value and as important for the extent to which they expand freedoms (Alkire & Deneulin, 2009). From the CA perspective, little intrinsic value or freedom of choice would be seen to result from adaptive preferences that are ways of being resulting from coercion, habituation or resignation arising from the interaction of social, psychological and/or material constraints (Ibrahim & Alkire, 2007; Nussbaum, 2001; Sen, 1990).

Sen made it clear that the CA is deliberately incomplete, from the perspectives of: a) respecting people's autonomy in choosing their situated desired or preferred beings and doings, thus leaving space for diversity and for the validity of well-being value that may be derived in the absence of resources or opportunity, and; b) allowing for its utility in different arenas - such as the capabilities of literacy, labour force participation or having a voice in parliament being used as indicators of women's empowerment at the macro-level, or the capability of respect from others (such that this might represent expanded freedom in pursuing a chosen career) or access to a motorbike (as the ability to ride, presence of the commodity and the absence of constraining norms that only associate machines with masculinity) which may be deemed indicators at the micro- individual level (Robeyns, 2016).

Areas of synergy with the Capabilities Approach

The CA has been criticised for a degree of obfuscation, such as around the distinctions between capabilities and resources (Hart, 2013; Qizilbash, 2008). This is something that I too have found problematic, as, for example, in CA adherent Robeyns' (2016) deeming of respect from others as a capability when this has been deemed a well-being achievement by several of this study's target group. Additionally, there is ontological dissonance with, firstly: Sen's notion that opportunities are subsumed within a person's capabilities set rather than being acknowledged as real and outside the boundary states of people's aspirational thinking and, secondly; that a person's personal resources (such as abilities, knowledge and skills) are deemed to be catalysts for achieving well-being outcomes such as a job, when already they might reflect an intrinsic yet tangible bedrock of empowerment elements of enhanced self-worth, self-belief and social status. However, this dilemma is not unsolvable if one is mindful of the fluidity implied in the key theoretical underpinning of the CA - that of the multiplicity of capabilities and well-being outcomes that are relevant and important to people as social actors in diverse evaluative spaces (Nussbaum, 2001a; Qizilbash, 2008; Robeyns, 2016; Sen, 1993).

Further, given the paucity of opportunities for young women wanting to learn and earn in a Least Developed Country such as Timor-Leste, this study requires a broader understanding of agency than that of the CA (as self-regulated actions towards well-being goals) – that is, one that factors in the 'agentic management of fortuity' (Bandura, 2001). Bandura (2001) suggests that fortuitous situations (as real opportunities) can figure prominently in prescriptions for individuals realising valuable futures. An example might be the social milieu of a group of Timorese waitresses in a restaurant in which recruiters for offshore O&G crew were able to talent spot them for their potential and suitability and offer them the (unexpected) opportunity to apply for (and subsequently secure) offshore platform positions. The ensuing personal and skills development they experienced more satisfied the women's general aspirations to learn and earn than represented the achievement of a self-targeted capability.

There is some alignment with Sen's assigning of social resources (such as workplace mentoring by a supervisor) as effectively instrumental conversion factors or catalysers along a linear path of capabilities growth and goal attainment. However, the approach to this study also embraces the richness and synergistic nature of interactions to be found in individuals' relationships with others that are empowerment-enhancing social resources in themselves (such as evolving social networks, support, camaraderie and respect from others, mutualities of pride for women's workplace achievements in non-traditional job fields and the attitudes/motivations behind decisions made or the role played by significant other social actors). Further, this deeper appreciation of humans as social resources allows evaluative space for considering the dialectic of the (often unimagined or unanticipated) co-evolution of *habitus* and the culture or *doxa* of social and organisational fields (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) which potentially expands the realms of possibilities for well-being outcomes - such as when women enter and do well in non-traditional job fields they may positively alter the gendered orthodoxy of the workplace in ways in which females experience a greater sense of being valued as well as pave the way for other women to be recruited and open aspirational space for young girls to imagine non-normative futures for themselves.

Nonetheless, the main essence of the CA as a gender-sensitive, evaluative framework has resonance for this research, with its concepts of agency and freedom of choice, the situatedness of meanings around valued well-being aspirations and achievements. There is resonance also in capabilities sets including such intrinsic elements as the enjoyment of equal rights which (in addition to the instrumental function of, for example, being able to compete equally and have pay parity with males) enhances the potential a woman has to freely envision and shape her destiny. This resonance is, however, tempered by the suggestion by Robeyns (2008) that the CA is primarily a framework for thought that needs integrating with additional theories according to the overlapping paradigms implicated in any study. The conceptual framework of this research is thereby informed by psychological and cognitive theory as well as concepts of empowerment from within feminism, the latter of which are now explored.

Empowerment threads from feminism

Early feminist influences in gender and development discourse identified women's poverty as not simply lack of income but as being integrally linked with gender inequity evidenced in their deprivation of capabilities - of being educated, healthy and having avenues for participating in economic life and decision-making on an equal basis with men (Fukuda-Parr, 2003). Feminist discourse, deriving from analyses of the formal and informal patriarchal structures, practices, values and norms characterising much of the developing world, drew attention to the unequal power relations between men and women that restricted women's capacity to participate in, influence and benefit from the processes of development (Batliwala, 1994; Hart, 1995; Kabeer, 2000; Molyneux, 1985; Moser, 1989; Sen & Grown, 1988; Thompson, 2008).

From feminism came the conceptualised, politicised and now commonly operationalised distinction between women's practical needs and their strategic gender interests. The scope of women's strategic interests (which are of primary interest in this research) encompassed the dismantling of institutional structures of discrimination that restrict women's equal access to education and to economic resources and opportunity, their enjoyment of a fairer sharing of the domestic workload, political equality, their right to choose with respect to marriage and their reproductive lives and their freedom from control and violence from males (Kabeer, 2000; Molyneux, 1985; Moser, 1989). These interests therefore arose out of the deficit states of female *dis*empowerment – that is, in which 'previously denied' choices had negatively impacted on their lives (Kabeer, 1999, p. 437).

Feminist contributions have highlighted the different ways in which power might play out to advance women's strategic goals, these being: *power over* – women growing the capacity to resist manipulation and control by socio-cultural and political systems and social actors that have power over them; *power to* which represents the creation of new possibilities and taking action around opportunities, such as gaining access to resources and land ownership rights or training in mechanical engineering; *power from within* – as enhanced self-esteem and self-belief, and; *power with* as collective action with other women towards achieving

gender equality (Ibrahim & Alkire, 2007; Mosedale, 2005; Rowlands, 1997). These distinctions of power are highly relevant to the empowerment journeys of the women in this study, albeit with a divergent angle of conceiving the last, of *power with.*

Feminist discourse places a high premium on the imperative of the essentially political *power with* of women's collective action or activism to challenge, hold to account and act to bring about the transformation of patriarchal and power structures that perpetuate discrimination against and the subordination of women. (Agarwal, 2001; Batliwala, 1994; Cornwall, Gideon, & Wilson, 2008; Desai, 2010; Eyben & Napier-Moore, 2009; Kabeer, 1999; Mosedale, 2005; Moser, 1989). My experience of consciousness-raising groups in New Zealand in the 1970s and '80s where women drew strength from sharing their stories of, for example, domestic violence and rape, was indeed one of *power with* in social spaces where the members lost their sense of isolation and the seeds of resistance were planted and flourished, resulting in direct action for change. The salience of collective political rights action to this research (such as in the historical role played by Timorese women's groups in making inroads into redressing the imbalances and addressing the abuses created by power dynamics that privilege males in their society) is, however, one step removed from the empowerment journeys of the female target group.

The political element to the multidimensional scope of their empowerment journeys is not one that is directly addressed in the research, rather that there is an implicit understanding threaded through that in their very positioning along their empowerment pathways there is an integrated sense as young women of their political right to equality with males. Their rights vis a vis the relational aspect (particularly with male partners) are touched upon in exploring the extent to which their journeys are supported by the social capital potential in these relationships.

The discursive positioning that real change can *only* come about through women's political mobilisation has tended to deny: a) the power of empowerment-supporting relationships girls and women might have with like-minded other social (but not activist) actors who have rejected problematic gendered norms, such as other family

members, teachers/trainers/employers, work colleagues and peers (Mosedale, 2005), and; b) the potential for the aggregation of the unorganised, individualised behaviours and actions of women (as subversive, empowered feminine identities in their societies) to make inroads into eroding normative patriarchal socio-cultural belief structures (Kabeer et al., 2011). When these new identities are visible and draw strength and solidarity from each other as a group going about their daily business their shared behavior and actions can be deemed the *power with*, in that they contribute to breaking down mental models of the stereotypical female (such as evidenced in the social media photos I have seen of some female Timorese oil and gas employees receiving certificates of competence in basic fire-fighting skills at a mixed-sex course, and of others indulging in the rarely witnessed female group activity, for women in their country, of a weekend fitness trek). One might argue that these 'non-activist' women are demonstrating a 'capacity to participate effectively in shaping the social limits that define what is possible' for females in their society (Hayward, 1998, p. 32). Their identities represent their having *power over, power to, power within* - capabilities that are manifest in the behavioural, cognitive and psychological dimensions of the construct of agency which features as an empowerment cornerstone in both the feminist and gender and development paradigms

The importance of agency underpins this study, as reflected in its guiding rubric of *women realising potential, agency and structures of opportunity.* This construct is now unpacked.

Agency as the power within and the power to

The need to understanding the powered dynamics of socially constructed gendered patterns of behaviour, in particular the psychology behind women's lack of agency and constrained preferences, has gained considerable traction within both feminist and contemporary gender and development discourse (Kangas et al., 2015). Agency is essentially a forward-looking empowerment indicator – that is of the extent to which an individual feels in control of his/her destiny in the absence of fear, control and coercion (Dercon & Singh, 2011; Klugman et al., 2014), or the ability and freedom s/he has to define goals that s/he has reason to value and to act on them (Kabeer, 1999; Sen, 1985). In other words, agency is the degree to which an

individual might regard him/herself as the authentic author of his/her actions in any domain (Ibrahim and Alkire, 2007). Agency is deemed the binding between resources (personal, material and economic) and well-being achievements (Donald et al., 2016; Kabeer, 2005a; SIDA, 2015). In the 2012 UN World Development Report the notion of agency included having control over resources, decision-making, freedom of movement and from the risk of violence and retribution arising out of the exercise of choices. As has been previously mentioned, the most common operationalising of agency in women's economic empowerment assessments is in their enhanced bargaining power in household decision-making.

A recent comprehensive, multidisciplinary report to the World Bank has argued that the commonly used conceptions of agency fail to capture all components of agency, including three critical psychological dimensions of goal-setting: a) defining goals that are in line with what one values; b) one's perceived sense of control - whether one's self-efficacy and motivations underlying goals are driven internally by oneself, are externally influenced by others, or are shaped by habituated normative mental models, and; c) agentic behaviour towards goals (Donald et al., 2016). Where a woman's perceived sense of control and goal-setting behaviour are based upon a cognitive awareness of her rights to equal treatment and opportunities with males, this would be considered to be an indicator of empowerment.

An inner sense of agency – that is a self-belief that a woman has the freedom, entitlement and ability to define her aspirations and act upon them is seen in feminist discourse as an important precursor to agency. This self-belief represents (for previously disempowered women) a new cognitive consciousness of the morality of gender equality and of the human right of women to fulfill their potential. When combined with psychological attributes of self-esteem and self-confidence, this agency enables them to challenge traditional ideology and face obstacles as they seek to change their condition for the better (Khader, 2008; Mayoux, 2000; Rowlands, 1997; Sen & Grown, 1988; Strandberg, 2001; Stromquist, 2002). Gender and development empowerment discourse now links women's agency in choosing and pursuing strategic goals with their capacity to question, analyse and act on the structures of patriarchal constraint in their lives - to see realms of possibility beyond

an internalised acceptance of power and confinement to the household space (Kabeer, 2012; Mosedale, 2005).

Mosedale (2005) argues that expanding the realms of what is possible (which is also central to the CA) is a straightforward indication of empowerment. Having the capacity to envision alternatives, question and analyse motivations, rules and norms dovetails with the positive psychology school of thought's association of human's agency with their (naturally) reflective autonomous self, a concept that is discussed in the chapter's next section (Chirkov et al., 2011; Zimmerman, 1995). Mosedale's (2005) broadening of the range of meanings around the *power within* to include confidence in the capacity to learn and having curiosity about the wider world is an echo of social-cognitive theory around agency and self-efficacy (Bandura, 1989) and self-determination theory (SDT) that assumes people are naturally inclined to be curious and to learn (Ryan & Deci, 2011). These theories will now be discussed as they contribute to the empowerment conceptual framework that guides this research.

The next section introduces these psychosocial, social-cognitive perspectives as they serve to have a moderating influence on the seeming dominance of a social constructivist approach in the women's empowerment literature as discussed, and as such, serve as important influences in the shape of the empowerment conceptual framework that guides this research.

2.6 Self-efficacy, self-esteem, self-determination and empowerment in the workplace – explanations from psychology

Bandura's social cognition theory of self-efficacy

Personal or self-efficacy is a psychosocial attribute associated with agency that has gained some attention in empowerment discourse within international development (Dercon & Singh, 2011; Donald et al., 2016; World Bank Group, 2015). The notion of self-efficacy was advanced in psychologist Alfred Bandura's social cognition theory to conceptualise empowerment in motivational terms with respect to the achievement of skills or goals (Bordin, Bartram, & Casimir, 2006; Conger & Kanungo, 1988). It relates to an individual's 'belief in their capabilities to mobilise

the motivation, cognitive resources and courses of action needed to exercise control over given events' (Bandura, 1989, p. 472). This is based on the view that humans have the capacity for forethought, for conceiving future scenarios and cognising goals as incentives for purposeful action (Bandura, 2001). If the strength of a person's self-efficacy is due to authentic information about their capacity and potential to achieve then it is deemed to support an enduring sense of empowerment (Bandura, 1989). Through the process of achieving goals or skills performance, self-efficacy beliefs are enhanced along with self-esteem (Bandura, 1995).

People's judgments of their own capabilities to achieve certain goals are central amongst the types of thoughts that affect their aspirational behaviour, the activities in which they engage and the selection of environments into which they enter (Ozer & Bandura, 1990). Self-efficacy beliefs have the power to influence individual's career path trajectories, helping to shape whether they attend to opportunities that life circumstances present (Bandura, 2001; Bandura, 2009). On the one hand positive efficacy beliefs tend to go hand-in-hand with self-motivation, resourcefulness and persistence in gaining some measure of control even in circumstances where there are constraints and limited opportunities, whilst on the other, perceived in-efficacy (which may not reflect actual abilities and may be a result of normative ascriptions of inferiority) inhibits choice behavior (Bandura, 2009). For example, the Timorese women who took advantage as adolescents of NGO-run post-secondary English and IT courses in their small townships, even when there was no visible related employment opportunity, demonstrate self-motivation and resourcefulness based upon their self-efficacy (Adams, 2014).

A person's ability to reflect on and assess their abilities or capacity for self-appraisal is integral to their self-efficacy and critical when she/he approaches new tasks or skills. An efficacious person is someone who has a 'can do attitude' towards task performance success and who views difficult tasks as something to be mastered not avoided (Ozer & Bandura, 1990, p. 475). This can be no better illustrated than by the 'can do' attitude of the Timorese women when for the first time faced with having to complete the (terrifying for most) compliance certification in underwater

helicopter crash escape and exiting smoke-filled areas in the Tropical-Basic Offshore Safety Induction & Emergency Training (T-BOSIET) (Adams, 2014). People who face self-doubt may give up before achieving competency, set lower goals for themselves or settle for mediocre solutions (Bandura, 1989). This self-doubt can be mediated by the social capital of encouraging or role-modeling others that helps to shape efficacy beliefs.

Sources of efficacy beliefs

Efficacy beliefs arise out of a complex cognitive process of self-persuasion in response to a range of sources of efficacy information, including:

- One's own mastery experience (or failures) which are enlightening about the abilities and effort required for a task's performance
- Seeing others perform a task
- Verbal persuasion from others (which is only effective if it is realistic and authentic and reinforced by real experience).

Bandura (2009) promotes the idea that organisations (as structures of opportunity) can provide employees with guided mastery experiences, effective co-workers as role models and enabling performance feedback processes to enhance employees' self-efficacy, performance and associated emotional well-being and job satisfaction. Workplace leaders or mentors who establish norms for achievement-oriented behaviours, for the use of initiative and goal attainment promote self-efficacy (Ozaralli, 2003). However, they need to be credible persuaders – that is, they are knowledgeable, provide authentic efficacy information and avoid putting employees/trainees prematurely into situations where they are likely to fail[11]. This enhances what a recent World Bank report has defined as the psychosocial competence of *trust* that others have one's best interests at heart, which, along with *self-efficacy*, *pride* in one's achievements and *self-esteem* are advanced as four key

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[11] An example from this study is the reluctance of a manager of one of the Bayu-Undan contracting companies to send a competent female Timorese radio operator to a highly regarded Australian Navy training course out of concern that she might feel a failure if she could not keep up with the speed of spoken English over the intense period of days. She subsequently completed the same training elsewhere with others for whom English was also not their first language. Another example is of Caltech building a mock-up of the Bosiet helicopter underwater crash scenario on the Dili premises when he realised how scared most of the Timorese trainees were of being in water so that they could become acclimatised to the experience before travelling out of Timor-Leste to perform the formal certification exercises.

indicators of empowerment (Dercon & Singh, 2011). Spreitzer (1996) links high levels of social support in the workplace with enhanced levels of employees' psychological empowerment.

Under-stimulated and resilient self-efficacy

Where employees' work experience is characterised by non-optimal challenges then self-efficacy remains dormant, which can be undermining to their intrinsic motivation (that is doing the work for the inherent satisfaction it brings) and sense of self-determination (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Underutilised skillsets due to occupation-skills mismatch has been shown to result in skills erosion or depreciation (OECD, 2001). Where women are unable to advance their careers due to time out with childbearing and rearing, their re-entry to the workforce can be characterised by the 'in-expansion of self-efficacy' (Gorlich & de Grip, 2009). Where social spaces reinforce self-inefficacy, low self-worth and depression are likely to ensue. One might suggest that women marginalised in low skill jobs in feminised workplaces such as the globalised garment industry in South East Asia, where working conditions are unsafe and unhealthy, wages are low and there is no opportunity for up-skilling, would have stagnated levels of self-efficacy, low levels of trust in their employers and limited scope for feeling pride in achievements. This is not to disparage the self-confidence and competence required to perform low-level skill tasks such as machining pockets onto jeans at speed but rather to suggest that this work provides no opportunity for women to experience the empowerment gains of enhanced self-efficacy that arise from having ongoing opportunities to seek mastery and advance cognitive and competence frontiers – of realising their potential (Ozaralli, 2003).

Of interest also to this study is the development of what Bandura calls *resilient* self-efficacy – where the mastery of difficulties has been achieved through perseverant effort (Bandura, 2001). It is not unreasonable to assume that young women who grew up surrounded by poverty and constraining norms and have experienced the traumas associated with conflict and who have strived and managed to get ahead would have high levels of the attribute of resilience or persistence of self-belief. Additionally, the attribute of *optimism* has been evidenced as being a key psychosocial companion to efficacy well-being (Bandura, 2001).

Attributes of resilience and optimism have been packaged with those of perseverance and self-efficacy as a key set of psychological capital that, when nurtured in employees, predicts enhanced performance and job satisfaction (Luthans, Avolio, & Norman, 2007). This would imply that individuals who can demonstrate these attributes have greater employability potential over those who cannot but also that they represent an intrinsic well-being predictor for women's empowerment in employment. In this study, meanings around resilience and optimism, perseverance and self-efficacy, as components of their capabilities sets or human capital portfolios, are sought both for the strengths they add to women's sense of empowerment and for their employability currency or value to employers. Ultimately, the interest is in how these attributes and achievements might contribute to enduring empowerment across time.

Empowerment in positive psychology

Contemporary research into psychological empowerment has articulated the empowerment process in terms of competence (as self-efficacy) and autonomy (Bordin et al., 2006). Self-efficacy is the agentic component of a self-motivational control system for goal setting, effort and attainment that engenders self-esteem (Bandura, 2001). Positive psychology discourse has empirically established that self-esteem (as the belief in one's potential, ability and value arising from competency achievements) and an internal locus of control (LOC) lend stability to empowerment across time (Spreitzer, 1995). LOC (which refers to the degree to which people believe that they, rather than external forces determine what happens in their lives) as it positively affects empowerment, is not strongly influenced by dominant socio-cultural belief systems but rather by personal efficacy and the intrinsic desire to learn.

Autonomy and competence are deemed to be fundamental well-being needs, the fulfillment of which is essential for psychological empowerment growth. This concept underpins self-determination theory (SDT) that has guided much research into the contextual conditions that enable or constrain what Ryan and Deci (2000) have described as 'the natural processes of self-motivation' based upon the understanding that intrinsically motivated humans at their best: 'are agentic and inspired, striving to learn… extend themselves [and] master new skills' (Ryan &

Deci, 2000, p. 68). This theory predicts the positive inner resources and self-determination behind the competence-based empowerment gains of the group of Timorese women along their learning pathways. Thus, SDT has an important resonance for this study with its notions of self-realisation driven by intrinsic motivation, deriving from a eudemonic view on human nature whereby humans' pursuit of well-being is driven by the need for actualisation of their potential via personal growth and development - of being challenged and exerting effort in relation to valued goals (Ryan & Deci, 2001).

According to SDT, *autonomy, competence,* and additionally *relatedness,* are three key psychosocial empowerment needs that require satisfaction for humans' optimal functioning and enhanced well-being to be achieved (Ryan & Deci, 2000). In SDT autonomy is broadly the feeling of volition that accompanies action towards self-endorsed goals. Autonomy is viewed as a natural universal human capability to be the mistress of one's actions and behaviour and one that, once emerged, has enduring properties (Chirkov, 2011). Whilst not denying that cultures play an important role in shaping the manifestation of autonomy, SDT sees the dialectical relationship between autonomy and socio-cultural environments as meaning that individuals and groups negotiate their levels of autonomy according to their endorsement or rejection of influences and the cost-benefit considerations of their exercise of autonomy (Chirkov, 2011). The fulfillment of the well-being need of relatedness refers to the universal need of humans to be affiliated in secure, stable and caring social groups, and that of the need for competence refers to self-efficacy. SDT research (and also this research) pays attention to the ways in which social scaffolding supports the eudaemonic fulfillment of potential as an empowerment process of meeting the three psychosocial empowerment needs.

In the discourse around the meeting of psychosocial empowerment needs in the workplace there is considerable overlap of notions of autonomy, self-efficacy and competence in the industrial psychology and organisational and human resources management literature - further supplemented by psychological elements of cognition around meaning and impact.

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Psychological empowerment in the workplace

Psychological empowerment in the workplace has emerged as a key concept in organisational management and human resources discourse – the focus overwhelmingly being towards positive organisational outcomes arising from the enhanced motivation, self-efficacy, and initiative (read performance) of employees (Bordin et al., 2006; Conger & Kanungo, 1988; Joo & Lim, 2013; Spreitzer, 1995; Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). Research into psychological empowerment in the workforce related to these paradigms has tended to pay little attention to personal characteristics of employees such as resilience, optimism (which for women navigating learning and earning pathways in a poor, post-conflict and patriarchally-inclined LDC are key proactive empowerment companions) or to personal goal orientation (for example where a woman's fulfilled empowerment aspiration of having any job in a poor country for her and her family's economic well-being may outweigh empowerment considerations of job satisfaction). Nonetheless, the attention that has been paid to identifying workplace conditions that foster powerlessness and to styles of leadership that are associated with psychological empowerment (as increased intrinsic performance motivation) has yielded important knowledge to be integrated into this study's conceptual framework.

Empowerment in the workplace, reflecting an employee's proactive orientation to her/his work role, has been shown to have four cognitive facets, these being:

- Meaning (the congruence between the purpose and requirements of an employee's work role and her/his values, that inspires the approach to work)
- Competence (as self-efficacy and confidence in performance abilities)
- Self-determination (the feeling of autonomy or control over initiation and carrying out of work tasks)
- Impact (the degree to which an employee feels her/his work makes a difference to organisational outcomes) (Spreitzer, 1995; Thomas & Velthouse, 1990).

The concept of *meaning* must be seen, in this study, in relation to the context where the women respondents are living in an emergent economy with high unemployment levels and in which there are neither industrial/manufacturing sectors nor high-tech employment spaces. There is therefore relevance in the notion

that meaning might be found in the fruitful union of their thirst for learning and earning with their entry into offshore, developed world opportunity structures (whether in their chosen field of work or not) in which they are paid well, can become familiar with advanced technology, be surrounded by experts who share their knowledge and experience skills development. The gender lens is also focused on the sense of (empowerment) meaning that may be engendered through being integrated into and valued as equals within teamwork systems in a non-traditional workplace. With regard to autonomy, there is an interest in the degree of psychological space for experiencing a sense of autonomy there might be for women linked into the immutable and compelling chain of command that characterises the offshore work environment (Adams, 2014). However, there is mindfulness in this research of Ryan and Deci's (2001) assertion that hierarchical structures need not, per se, be suppressive of their members' sense of autonomy - which leaves evaluative space for exploring the nuances of autonomous self that might, for example, be experienced by an employee in an entry-level position such as an offshore bridge controller.

Psychological empowerment manifested in these four cognitions has been shown to directly predict job satisfaction well-being (and by inference empowerment) (Kanter, 1993). To the contrary, having jobs which require little mental effort and in which individuals are passive (with respect to decision-making) can lead to gradual atrophying of abilities and the will to face challenges, which further diminishes meaning and impact (Kanter, 1993). In many studies the realisation of employees' potential has been closely related to the influence of transformational leaders in the workplace structure (Conger & Kanungo, 1988; Joo & Lim, 2013; Spreitzer, 1995). These are leaders who value and take an individualised interest in the learning and growth of others, have high standards of performance they expect from employees and motivate them to take on up-skilling challenges, and who act as exemplars in their own achievements, values and behaviour (Joo & Lim, 2013). Through empowering leadership employees' aspirations, identities, needs and job satisfaction can be advanced to higher levels. CA adherent Hurtado (2009) emphasises the importance of 'change agents' or leaders within settings or fields who have the capacity to change organisational culture for the better. There is an

interest in this inquiry in the influences on the Timorese women respondents' capabilities gains by transformational roles played by individuals in leadership positions within the network of employing stakeholders of the Timor Sea offshore O&G operations. There is also an interest in their influence on the intra- and inter-organisational cultures through the boundary-spanning infusion of ideas that place value on women's psychological empowerment in the workplace as an expression of the gendered development footprint of global industry.

These empowerment explanations from social learning theory, positive psychology, management/organisational theory and human resource discourse have highlighted the dialectical relationship between human agency (as founded on internal LOC and self-efficacy) and structures of opportunity. What are of interest to this inquiry are the sets of social conditions in organisational structures that are likely to enhance self-efficacy and satisfy important psychosocial/cognitive empowerment needs, the relationship of self-efficacy with life-path decision-making and progress, and the correlation between competency achievements and self-esteem. What is also of interest is whether psychological empowerment gains experienced in the workplace, as a set (or partial set) of cognitions shaped and changed by a work environment, are generalisable across different social domains or relational interfaces in a person's life and the extent to which these might contribute to a generalised sense of empowerment that can endure through time.

Identifying some gaps in the gender and development literature
Increasing attention has been paid within gender and development discourse to the psychological dimensions of agency, such as women's critical consciousness of their equal rights, and the inner workings of and motivations around poor, disenfranchised people's goal-setting and decision-making behaviours, and internalisation of self-efficacy, trust and self-pride (Cornwall, 2015; Donald et al., 2016; Esplen & Brody, 2007; Fernandez, Giusta, & Kambhampati, 2015; Golla et al., 2011; Ibrahim & Alkire, 2007; Kabeer et al., 2011; Klugman et al., 2014; Malhotra & Schuler, 2005; Mosedale, 2005; Munoz Boudet et al., 2013; World Bank Group, 2015). However, with one of the ubiquitous foci of gender and development initiatives being upon establishing decent work thresholds for women's empowerment pathways in developing countries, there has been a dearth of

attention paid to women's psychological empowerment gains in the formal workplace (Buvinic & O'Donnell, 2016). As the backdrop in the first chapter has indicated, in the bulk of globalised supply chains where women experience decent work deficits and females' 'minimized worth is remote-controlled from a corporate boardroom thousands of miles away' (Lansky et al., 2017, p. 32) one would not expect to find agendas promoting women's sense of relatedness, autonomy, meaningfulness and impact or of workplace enhancements to their self-efficacy. Within the CSR instruments such as the UNGC there is also an absence of prescriptions around the fostering of high quality workplace competency achievements and job satisfaction for women in globalised employment settings, let alone around the deployment of cadres of mentors or coaches with the role of enhancing women's self-efficacy and sense of autonomy and relatedness in the workplace.

The theme of women *reaching* empowerment thresholds (such as experiencing gender equality, having an income, decent work or access to resources, having a voice and having the ability to make strategic choices) drives the sustainable development gender project. Goals of expanding women's aspirational horizons and empowerment growth beyond the crossing of these thresholds are rarely within the scope of the gender and development radar. Gender and development research carried out into women crossing empowerment thresholds has largely based the analyses at an end-of-programme single point in time, most often following an economic entry point (predominantly as women's access to microcredit) but in some cases a skills entry point (such as adolescent girls attending a vocational/life skills course). Outcomes sought (largely quantitatively-measured) have been in the areas of material benefits for families and enhanced agency for individual women based on changes in their bargaining power around household spending (A. Hunt & Samman, 2016; Malhotra & Schuler, 2005). Malhotra et al (2005) have argued that the best hope of capturing the empowerment process is to follow it across two points in time. Further, whilst there has been an acknowledgement that the empowerment process is subject to ebbs and flows, there is a gap in the gender and development literature on what might sustain and what might threaten the long-term integrity of both materially- and non-materially-founded empowerment gains.

Processual indicators used to determine, incrementally or substantively, how far along the empowerment spectrum women have advanced have rarely extended to capturing a critical mass of intrinsic and extrinsic empowerment indications that might usher in end-states of durable empowerment (Buvinic & Levine, 2015; Ibrahim & Alkire, 2007; Kabeer et al., 2011; Khader, 2008; Malhotra & Schuler, 2005; Meyers, 2008).

Additionally, it is hard to find studies that look into women in developing countries with eudaemonic motivations for entering formal employment based equally on desires for the intrinsic cognitive and psychological rewards of becoming more competent, knowledgeable and valued in the workplace as on the extrinsic capability rewards of becoming economically self-reliant and being able to support families' well-being. Given the reasonable expectancy that there will be young women in developing countries 'agentic and inspired, striving to learn… extend themselves [and] master new skills' (Adams, 2014; Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 68), the paucity of attention given in the gender and development paradigm to empowerment outcomes arising from opportunities for quality (to international standards) work skills development and psychological empowerment through workplace experiences for women, beyond the decent work threshold, represents a neglect of a strategic interest (that of shaping one's identity around acquiring a cache of workplace competences, respect from others, relatedness and responsibility) of an important sector of womanhood that this study seeks to address.

2.7 Chapter conclusion: an amalgam of conceptual and contextual threads

From this chapter has emerged a conceptual and contextual framework of women's empowerment that is applicable to the journeys of a group of women living in a patriarchal LDC who have entered and experienced WSD in a decent work setting in a non-traditional job field. Guided by an underpinning rubric of realising potential, agency and structures of opportunity, a multidisciplinary approach has been taken in customising the framework, resulting in a synergy of ideas from: gender and

development and feminist thinking relating to patriarchy, power, agency, resources (as social capital and economic capacity) and decent work thresholds; Sen's Capabilities Approach; Bandura's social cognition theory based around individuals' self-efficacy; Self-Determination theory, and; psychological theory around the meeting of psycho-social empowerment needs in the workplace.

The framework embraces, holistically, the notion of women's empowerment as a process that evolves in multifaceted (cognitive and psychological) and multidimensional (personal, social, political and economic) ways. The framework, its depth and comprehensiveness of scope atypical within empowerment discourse, opens evaluative space for capturing a sum-of-all-its-parts arrival point for women along an empowerment spectrum (using decent work, skills development and economic entry and milestone points in the analysis) that might be conceived as being consolidated and enduring. The synergy of ideas presented in the chapter therefore provide shape and focus to the gender lens that is applied in addressing the research objectives of the study.

With respect to Research Objective (B) the gender lens is guided by the rationale that no one approach to understanding and evaluating women's empowerment progress is suitable. Thus, a raft of themes and sub-themes have been presented (as summarised below) that, when threaded together, can go a long way towards building a 'whole picture' of women's empowerment (as the sum of all its multi-faceted and multi-dimensional parts) and its durability:

- women having the *power within* (of a critical consciousness around gender equality, confidence in abilities and a sense of self-worth), the *power to* (of being able to take purposive action towards fulfilling strategic interests – in this case study being learning/work skills development and of achieving economic self-reliance) and the *power with* (of the social capital of supportive others including the solidarity of shared dissident female identities, which, in their aggregation can influence change in societal mindsets towards a greater valuing of females' worth and in the advancing of cognitive and career frontiers by which other women benefit)

- women's empowerment being signified by their growing capabilities sets (as caches of freedoms, abilities and resources that enable them to make their own choices and exercise agency in pursuing and achieving valued ways of being and doing)

- the role of self-efficacy (especially when accompanied by individuals' attributes of resilience, perseverance and optimism and fostered by authentic efficacy information in the workplace) as a companion to intrinsic motivation in overcoming challenges in the pursuit of goals and skills mastery

- the importance of workplace structures of opportunities for the expansion of women's self-efficacy and the realisation of their potential - engendering empowerment gains of job satisfaction, self-confidence and belief in their abilities

- the linking of enhancements to empowerment in the workplace with the meeting of psychological needs or cognitions of autonomy, competence, meaning, impact and relatedness (or trust)

- the notion that having an internal locus of control and self-esteem lends stability to empowerment across time

- the important value, for their empowerment, of women having economic self-reliance and the capacity to bring about material gains that support their and their families' well-being.

An attempt has been made in Appendix (1) to depict these themes in a diagrammatic sketch.

The chapter has also provided a set of thematic threads from international (sustainable) development and corporate citizenship discourse that guide the gender lens as it focuses on addressing Research Objective (A). These threads relate to the capacity and responsibility of global business (such as the oil and gas industry) to act as a development agent in fostering sustainable empowerment outcomes for women in the host countries in which they operate. They span a range of corporate approaches that may or may not result in a gendered development footprint of enduring women's empowerment. These are: business-as-usual practices (which at the least should be based upon decent work and EEO principles

but may also include the structuring of female employees' WSD and career advancement); pursuing a proactive gender diversity agenda to attract female talent and redress gender imbalance; incorporating gender into the social license to operate that might be required of a host-government (such as in the local content frameworks of the O&G industry), and; adopting an affirmative action approach to recruiting and training female employees based on an understanding that basing practices upon gender equity is necessary in order to embrace the empowerment needs of women in patriarchally defined societies.

The chapter has been clear to establish that underlying its discussion of women's empowerment is the understanding, based upon knowledge from the previous research, that this is not a study where at the entry points to the analysis the women in question were in a deficit status of empowerment – rather that the conceptual framework is such that the notion of women enhancing their empowerment status upon existing empowerment strengths of agency and achievements can be explored. Moreover, the chapter advances the notion that whilst the means and ends of women's empowerment can be viewed from a universalist perspective (such as the universal rights of women to be free from gender-based violence and discrimination, have childcare support, control over income and to experience dignity in the workplace) it is equally important to factor in the women's own context-dependent perspectives on the well-being outcomes they themselves have reason to value and their situated rationalising of the choices they make, given the availability of opportunity to realise their potential.

Fortuitously, this research benefits from prior cognisance of the situated conceptualising of empowerment of a group of Timorese women (of differing education levels, different marital status, some mothers, others childless), which they articulated as '*Success as a Woman'* (Adams, 2014)*. The picture these women painted, which is kept within line of sight throughout the study, encompasses the following components:

- Having self-belief
- Having self-confidence

- Feeling strong inside yourself

- Having respect from others

- Having support from parents, husband, brothers, sisters

- Having a good salary

- Having savings as more opportunities for your children

- Improving your mind

- Working in a safe environment

- Having responsibility in your work

- Having English language fluency

(Adams, 2014).

This study is timely in its main focus being about bringing to light understandings around the capacity of women's capabilities gains (material and non-material), as mediated by the rationales behind their choice-making, to maintain their empowerment equilibrium into uncertain futures. This focus captures the following key factors: the apparent weighting of importance given to learning and earning evident in the (above) Timorese women's depiction of empowerment; the predicted departure of the global oil and gas industry from the women's country within the next decade; the potential absence of similar industry in the local public or private sector; the women's societal context of a country struggling to move on from conflict and lift itself out of chronic underdevelopment, and; the continued pervasion of patriarchal values and practices within their society.

The next chapter provides a historical, socio-cultural and economic background of Timor-Leste -largely from a gendered perspective and including its relationship with the petroleum industry, in which the women's lives have been lived and influenced and their futures are implicated.

Chapter Three: Timor-Leste Background

when we look back at my culture
where the man actually dominate women
women stay at home, men are higher than you
they only value girls not boys
I think, oh they live in the countryside

even today I find in my own family
still some unfairness there
like boy is everything in the house
but I always tell my father
who still have this point of view

I say: "my grandfather is an illiterate
but when he make a decision about money he got
he actually count the granddaughters"
at the time he didn't know about gender equality
but he share equally. He is ahead of time!

we used to live with my parents
but then I didn't want my kid to think life is a struggle
at home I feel like a minor, they value men more
I have to move out
my daughter has to feel that she is not limited by anything
(Interview: KI2, 2016)

3.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to situate the research topic and the empowerment journeys of the target group of Timorese women offshore workers within the historical, political, economic and socio-cultural context of their home country, Timor-Leste. It begins by describing the development challenges that face Timor-Leste, as a Least Developed Country (LDC)[12]. These are then discussed in relation to the impacts on the country of a long and devastating history of colonial neglect and foreign domination, followed by a description of the nation's economy and explanations around its natural resource dependency.

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[12] LDCs are defined by the United Nations as low-income countries confronting severe structural impediments to sustainable development, highly vulnerable to economic and environmental shocks and with low levels of human capital (UN Development Policy & Analysis Division, 2017).

The chapter moves onto revealing the nation-building tensions brought about through the uneasy relationship between new ideas of modernisation and equality and traditional, customary beliefs and practices. Particular regard is given to the pervasive gendered norms of male and female roles and responsibilities that have hindered progress in the pursuit of women's rights, dignity and equal public voice. The high prevalence of violence against women by men and persistence of masculinities based on male authority and female subordination is discussed along with examples of where norms have been subverted by alterities of male and female attitudes and behavior.

Next, the chapter highlights the struggles, since independence, of women activists to gain recognition of women's equal rights at state and community levels, and acknowledgement of the human rights of girls and women to live lives free from violence and fear. This is followed by an examination of the position of women working for incomes and the status (general and gendered) of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in Timor-Leste. The chapter concludes by directing the reader's attention to the rarity, and importance, of the example provided in this study of Timorese women achieving competences and dignity within a non-traditional job field.

3.2 Geography, demography, and developmental challenges

Timor-Leste is a small country with a territory of approximately 15,000km2 comprising the eastern half of the Island of Timor, Atauro and Jaco Islands and Oecussi, an enclave within Indonesian West Timor (see Fig. 1 p. 72). The country's largely Melanesian population of 1,066,409 is distributed across 13 administrative districts each incorporating between 2-18 villages or *sukus* (the administrative sub-districts), with 234,000 living in the national capital, Dili (Government of Timor-Leste, 2017, p. 14). Whilst 99% of the population identify as Catholic, animistic spirituality is widely practiced in the rural areas (JICA, 2011, p. 7). There are approximately 25 indigenous languages spoken, with two national languages Tetun (alternately Tetum) and Portuguese, and Bahasa Indonesian and English considered to be working languages (Asia Foundation, 2016).

Figure 1: Map of Timor-Leste.
Source: (United Nations, 2019)

The country is largely mountainous and prone to flooding, landslides, destructive winds and drought, with only 25% of the land being arable (Munoz Boudet et al., 2013, p. 5). Most of the 80% of the population living in the rural areas depend on

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subsistence farming for their livelihoods – where persistent poor crop yields due to infertile soil and seasonal volatility undermine food security and annual deficits in rice and maize contribute to the country having malnutrition rates amongst the highest in the world (Asia Foundation, 2016; Munoz Boudet et al., 2013, p. 5).

Undernourishment (with a hunger index of 29.6 in 2013, manifesting in widespread stunting of children and 27% of women aged 15-49 years being malnourished) (ADB, 2013, p. xiv) is one of the factors that have led to the United Nations (UN) classifying Timor-Leste as a Least Developed Country (LDC) (UN Development Policy & Analysis Division, 2017). Other factors are a very high under-5 mortality rate, high adult illiteracy rates (over half of women over 25 years have never been to school along with 43% of males) and inadequate secondary school enrolments (around 50% males and females in 2013) (SEPI, 2013, p. ix). Repetition of school years is high (malnutrition is believed to be a leading cause of the 20% illiteracy among children at the end of Grade 3), as too are late primary and secondary dropout rates due to teenage pregnancies and economic reasons whereby children are required to work for the family (ADB, 2013, p. xiii; Cummins, 2017). Sexual harassment and violence in schools is also an issue for some students, in some cases perpetrated by teachers whose actions are met with impunity (CEDAW, 2015). Recent research into violence indicates that over half of ever-partnered women (rural and urban) have routinely suffered multiple dimensions of violence, over 20% of men had committed rape on a non-partner (most suffering no legal consequences) and 24% of females and 42% of males had endured childhood sexual abuse[13] (Asia Foundation, 2016, pp. 49-75).

In addition to poverty Timor-Leste has huge development challenges. The country has one of the highest dependency ratios in the world at 78 children and 9 elderly for every 100 people of working age (Ford, 2017, p. 234). At 5.89 it has one of the highest fertility rates in the world (this is even higher for poor women at 7.3)(WHO, 2015, p. 4) and while there have been laudable improvements in the maternal mortality rate, this still remains high and only 29.9% of women (11% for the poorest

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[13] One of the main reasons given for this childhood sexual abuse figure was that young girls are watched more closely by their mothers than boys (Asia Foundation, 2016).

women) are receiving skilled care at birth (UNFPA, 2015, p. 1). Much of the population is living in inadequate housing without clean drinking water and sanitation facilities and limited access to roads, communications and power. Further, a massive demographic bulge of 44% of the population aged under 15 years presents the likelihood of a future exacerbation of rural-urban migration levels that already stretch the capital's institutional capacity, inadequate welfare services, labour market and economy (Asia Foundation, 2016; Umapathi & Velamuri, 2013, p. 10). In addressing these problems, Timor-Leste's government has benefitted since independence from an abundance of international aid and petroleum revenue.

External aid programmes have buttressed government outlays in areas such as improved clean water access (reaching 220,000 people thus allowing Timor-Leste to reach the MDG target in 2015), however achieving the MDG target for improved sanitation is still a long way off (Office of Development Effectiveness, 2014, p. 49). Whilst the incidence of malaria has been dramatically reduced and tuberculosis detection programmes have resulted in significant numbers of sufferers receiving treatment (Anderson, 2014), only 58% of people living outside Dili surveyed recently reported that their health clinic either always or very frequently had power and running water (Failor & Leahy, 2017, p. 1). In the same study 32% of rural dwellers reported that basic infrastructure such as roads, bridges and water pumps were very rarely or never repaired while a third of those who worked on farms could not access fertilizer or water (Failor & Leahy, 2017, p. 1).

Further, for the 75% of households that rely on farming as their main source of income, low soil fertility renders the bulk of arable land non-conducive to high-production agriculture. Coffee exports are declining (Scambary, 2015) and the introduction of high-yield rice and maize seed varieties and development of irrigation schemes have yet to result in significant improvements in agricultural production and food security (Beck, Wilde, Carvalho, & Alarico, 2015; Cabri, 2061; Office of Development Effectiveness, 2014). Despite the roll out of rural roads rehabilitation projects the still poor condition of many roads continues to leave rural people isolated from services and economic opportunity.

3.3 A devastating history of domination, destruction and death

From colonial to military occupation

The East-Timorese people's first efforts to gain independence as a country were in 1975 when Portugal abandoned it as a colony after 400 years of exploiting its natural resources. Up until the late 1800s Portuguese colonial rule was indirect, allowing inter-clan warfare to continue and the local leaders, *liurais,* to retain a high degree of independence outside of Dili where the colonial administration was based (Leach, 2017). While East Timorese leadership at the kingdom and clan levels during the Portuguese era was predominantly male there were two distinctive periods in the early 19th century when the majority of local rulers were queens (Hagerdal & Kammen, 2017). When Portuguese military rule was imposed in the late 19th century only a small percentage of arable land had been appropriated and the authorities had shown little interest in modernisation, improving agricultural methods or in developing an infrastructure (Leach, 2017; Nixon, 2008). Catholicism, accompanying Portuguese colonisation, however gained significant influence after the establishment of a Roman Catholic Diocese in Dili in the early 20th century, which had the primary role of educating the Timorese elite (Richards, 2017). Due to the lackadaisical Portuguese administration, by the time of World War Two the colony was described as the most economically backward country in South East Asia (Nixon, 2008).

During WWII a 'merciless Japanese food collection policy' resulted in a famine in which nearly 50,000 Timorese died, and those Timorese that offered support for the Allied Forces suffered brutal acts of retribution (Nixon, 2008, p. 74; Silove, 2000). By 1974 when the Portuguese authority abruptly disintegrated, leaving behind a weak administration and newly-formed political parties with young inexperienced Timorese leaders, the population was defenseless and beleaguered by neglect and disease (CAVR, 2005; H. Hill, 2002). A lack of international interest in assisting with East Timor's de-colonisation process and internal political instability paved the way for neighbouring Indonesia to invade at the end of 1975, declaring East Timor officially an Indonesian province in 1976 (Nixon, 2008; Vinck & Pham, 2016). It is believed the total number of conflict-related Timorese deaths from killings, famine and disease in the following quarter century of Indonesian occupation neared

115,000 (CAVR, 2005, p. 44). While torture and arbitrary detention were visited mostly upon men, women suffered disproportionately, abused by the Indonesians through beatings, rape, sexual slavery and forced prostitution (Asia Foundation, 2016; Corcoran-Nantes, 2009, p. 183). Women were not just victims, however, with many playing a significant role in the East Timorese resistance movement – as fighters, spies, propagandists and messengers (Asia Foundation, 2016; Cristalis & Scott, 2005).

In order to undermine the influence of the Timorese guerilla campaign one of the Indonesian military's tactics (with the help of its East Timorese auxiliaries) was massive relocations of hill dwellers to coastal areas often for up to a year (CAVR, 2005). By 1980 between 300,000-370,000 Timorese were being held in internment camps, their property, food crops, farms and livestock destroyed and widespread famine and illness was evidenced (CAVR, 2005; Nixon, 2008, p. 169; Silove, 2000). At the time of the overwhelmingly positive UN-supervised independence referendum in 1999 (which arose out of the combination of international pressure, shifts in Indonesian politics and the internal East-Timor resistance efforts influenced by the overseas-educated Timorese diaspora) record-high infant mortality and record-low life expectancy rates were being recorded, reflecting the country's dire state of development at the opening of its door to nationhood (Nixon, 2008).

During the Indonesian period, little developmental progress was made, leaving the economy overwhelmingly based on subsistence farming. While Indonesian schools were established with a mainly Indonesian teaching cadre, and scores of Timorese students attended Indonesian universities, very few formal jobs were filled by Timorese. Indonesians filled the key government positions while Timorese civil servants were largely in junior roles leaving severe capacity deficits at the high levels of state administration amongst the local population (Gunn, 1997; Nixon, 2008; Office of Development Effectiveness, 2014). Further, distrust amongst the Timorese populace of state mechanisms, combined with internal fracturing (reflected in the power wielded by pro-Indonesian Timorese militia and in the mistrust between factions within the independence movement), had left the

population psychologically scarred (CAVR, 2005; Vinck & Pham, 2016). This was intensified by the eruption of violence immediately following the referendum.

Scorched Earth and transition

The period surrounding the 1999 referendum saw over 1400 Timorese killed (CAVR, 2005, p. 68) and an estimated 75% of the population displaced to the mountains and to refugee camps in West Timor to escape violence mostly perpetrated by pro-Indonesia Timorese militias (CAVR, 2005, p. 85). The interruption to the planting of food crops exacerbated the already chronically under-nourished state of the population. Additionally, a 'scorched earth' tactic by the withdrawing Indonesian military, supported by Timorese allies, resulted in nearly 75% of the country's infrastructure being destroyed (Asia Foundation, 2016, p. 22). Entire towns and villages were burned and looted and livestock killed, 95% of schools and 80% of health centres were destroyed and deserted by teachers and professionals, and electricity and water services were rendered inoperable (CAVR, 2005; World Bank, 2013b, p. 1).

The country was left with no formal judicial system and non-functioning public, banking and market systems. Additionally, abductions and individual and mass rapes were perpetuated against many girls and women by Indonesian military and local militia (especially women related to pro-independence activists) (Charlesworth, 2008). There was subsequently a swift international response to the humanitarian crisis with the deployment of an international peacekeeping force. The United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) oversaw the transition to statehood and post-conflict reconstruction until the first elections in 2002 led to the establishment of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste (Charlesworth, 2008).

After an interregnum of peace, nation building was severely jeopardised in 2006/7 when unresolved divisions in the political leadership, dissidence in the military and regional hostilities resulted in the collapse of state security, gang warfare, house burning and the destruction of property and the displacement of 150,000 people (Nixon, 2008, p. 264). In the presence of an international peacekeeping force political stability and public confidence in the state were restored and by 2012 near-

peaceful democratic elections were possible (World Bank, 2013b). As a post-conflict nation, Timor-Leste now faces the formidable challenge of growing its severely weakened economy.

3.4 Timor-Leste's fledgling economy and resource dependency

An emergent economy

Timor-Leste's fledgling non-oil and gas economy remains largely undeveloped, with a tiny manufacturing sector (which along with the agricultural sector shrank between 2007-13) and a predominance of foreign-owned micro-businesses and state-owned enterprises (Scheiner, 2015; World Bank, 2013b). Only 9% of the working age population works for companies and less than one-fiftieth of those jobs are in the petroleum industry (Scheiner, 2015, p. 77). Most products are imported and city rents and property prices have been artificially inflated due to high rates paid by well-intentioned foreign aid agencies (Umapathi & Velamuri, 2013). While the banking sector has adopted international best-practice standards, the financial services sector remains underdeveloped (Vinuela, 2014). Poor infrastructure hampers the operation of the private sector, particularly with respect to unreliable electricity and water supplies and inefficient rectification systems (World Bank, 2015). Recent rapid economic growth (accompanied by double-digit inflation) has been driven almost exclusively by public spending fueled by petroleum revenues, particularly in the construction sector (ADB, 2013; Scheiner, 2015). A high percentage of private businesses in Dili have reported that in order to get government contracts gifts and 'informal payments' are expected by officials (World Bank, 2015).

A recurring theme has been of poor planning and implementation of government-led development initiatives due to insufficient systems and skills within the Timor-Leste bureaucracy and tenderers and unrealistic expectations around non-oil GDP growth. This, combined with a command-style government expressed through the channeling of state funds into clientelist networks has led to concerns that accelerating spending will continue to result in waste (such as poorly maintained roads and electrification systems) and misappropriation of funds (Beck et al., 2015;

Costa & Sharp, 2017; La'o Hamutuk, 2015c; Scambary, 2015; Triwibowo & Saixas Miranda, 2016).

Timor-Leste becomes petroleum resource-dependent
After Timor-Leste achieved independence, much hope was placed on the prudent management of its hydrocarbon resources 'for the benefit of both current and future generations' (Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, 2005, p. 1). By 2016 Timor-Leste had received around US\$20.7 billion in petroleum revenues from two main developed oil and gas (O&G) fields - Bayu-Undan and Kitan (La'o Hamutuk, 2015a, p. 10). Oil moneys have indeed spurred development albeit at the expense of growth in the non-oil, non-state economy which has barely improved since independence. The reality is that Timor-Leste has become one of the most petroleum resource-dependent countries in the world, with, for example, nearly 93% of its state revenues in 2014 deriving from the conversion of non-renewable oil and gas wealth into cash and from returns on investing oil and gas income received in earlier years (La'o Hamutuk, 2015b, p. 1). The petroleum revenue boom due to oil and gas extraction in the Timor Sea has been responsible for financing 90% of public works since 2007, including rural roading, electrification, construction and extraction industry infrastructure (La'o Hamutuk, 2015c, p. 1). Timorese government officials and much of the populace believe their country to be very oil rich (beliefs not shared by experts in the industry) and have high hopes that future development of petroleum resources will provide jobs and raise all citizens' living standards (Bovensiepen, Filipe, & Freitas, 2016; D. Evans, 2016; La'o Hamutuk, 2016a; Scambary, 2015, p. 475).

Aside from Bayu-Undan (Timor-Leste's biggest producer of hydrocarbons revenue) and Kitan (which until 2015 provided 3% the revenue of Bayu-Undan), over the past sixty years of extensive offshore exploration by oil companies only one other commercially significant reserve has been found - in the Greater Sunrise gas field (of which development plans are currently stalled) (La'o Hamutuk, 2016a, p. 9). The petroleum reserves that have fueled government spending to date have already been depleted or are fast-depleting and the uncertain prospect of new O&G or mining revenues is believed to offer, at best, temporary respite from the urgent imperative of diversifying the economy in order to make creditable dents in the still

alarmingly high levels of poverty (La'o Hamutuk, 2017a; Scheiner, 2015; World Bank, 2017). Further, a combination of unsustainable drawdowns from the Timor-Leste Petroleum Fund (PF), government borrowing and the outlook of huge infrastructure spending outlays on what commentators have deemed unviable and unrealistic mega-projects (such as Tasi Mane integrated petroleum infrastructure based on Greater Sunrise field coming on stream, which is discussed in Chapter 4), at the expense of fundamental human development areas such as health and education, has compounded the not unfounded likelihood of the country succumbing to the 'resource curse' (FONGTIL, 2015; Kingsbury, 2017b; La'o Hamutuk, 2017a; McKechnie, 2013; Neves, 2016; Scambary, 2015; Scheiner, 2015; Triwibowo & Saixas Miranda, 2016). The phenomenon of the resource curse is essentially the counterintuitive tendency of resource-rich countries to fail to benefit from favourable resource endowments (Auty, 2002; NRGI, 2015; Robinson, Torvik, & Verdier, 2006).

Nearly all of Timor-Leste's O&G income gets deposited into the Petroleum Fund (PF)(established in 2005) which is invested in the global stock market and bonds, the returns from which investments are then redeposited into the PF. The PF reached USD16.6 billion in 2016 and has been evaluated as operating in a transparent manner (Bernado, 2016; Office of Development Effectiveness, 2014, p. 10). Every year a benchmark is estimated of sustainable income that can be drawn from the fund to finance the state budget (McKechnie, 2013). The Petroleum Fund Law (2005) does not define or determine how petroleum revenue is spent. Decision-making around this is made by Parliament (Drysdale, 2007).

Of concern is the consistent excessive overspending by the Timor-Leste government on this benchmark, which, combined with dwindling petroleum revenues and lower investment earnings, has reduced the PF balance, thus compromising its future investment earnings (La'o Hamutuk, 2017a; Scheiner, 2015). By 2017 Timor-Leste had already received 98% of the total expected revenues from its producing O&G fields. PF returns had never exceeded 5.7% (and were negative in 2015) (La'o Hamutuk, 2016a, p. 5) and the 2017 State Budget contained plans for the government to withdraw nearly four times the estimated sustainable income from

the PF each year from 2018-2021 (La'o Hamutuk, 2017b, p. 3). The prevailing consensus amongst commentators is that, given the current unsustainable rate of budget drawdowns combined with diminishing oil revenues (these peaked in 2012), the PF will be depleted by 2026, causing government spending to be drastically slashed (ADB, 2015; Beck et al., 2015; La'o Hamutuk, 2015c; Scheiner, 2015; Triwibowo & Saixas Miranda, 2016). The Timor-Leste Institute for Development, Monitoring and Analysis, *La'o Hamutuk*, is not alone in expressing concern that even if promised or hypothetical O&G resources do materialise (from on- and off-shore sources such as oil seeps or Greater Sunrise gas field) further revenues will not be able to finance the state for much longer than a decade and will only prolong unsustainable resource dependency (ADB, 2015; Kingsbury, 2017b; Scambary, 2015; Scheiner, 2015). Nonetheless government spending of petroleum revenues has boosted employment in the public sector, albeit for the most part characterised by its short-term nature. For example, labour-intensive public works programmes in 2012 provided temporary employment, averaging one month, for 78,000 young rural people (Office of Development Effectiveness, 2014, p. 54). However, in the years that Timorese women have had opportunities to enter to Timor-Leste oil and gas industry sector, the state of the labour market can be characterized as being fraught with job creation that has been unable to accommodate a burgeoning unemployment rate.

A weak labour market
The latest Labour Force Survey (LFS) reported a 15.6% increase in the working age population (those over 15 years of age) in the years from 2010 to 2016 (Mehran, 2019, p.3). During that time, whilst the labour force doubled – growing by 188,000 to a total of 339,500, employment only increased by 164,000 (Mehran, 2019, p.3). The degree to which the employment figures represent meaningful jobs is obscured by the definition of employment itself, which only requires someone to be working for a minimum of one hour a week (SEPFOPE, 2013, p.vi). Additionally, the seemingly significant measured increase in employment is misleading as, under new international statistics standards, operations of subsistence food production had been re-framed as employment (Mehran, 2019, p.4). Thus, much of the 70% of the nation's population engaged in the agricultural sector, previously deemed self-employed, had now entered the labour force figures. A similar re-framing had also

occurred for own-account workers or contributing family workers in the informal sector. Many of the latter, (rising to 58% of the labour force in 2016) lack formal work contracts which renders them 'vulnerable workers', experiencing deficits in pay, productivity and decent working conditions (Mehran, 2019, p. 11).

Of real concern is the youth (15-24 years) unemployment rate, at 32.9%, reaching six times that of the adult rate in 2016 (Mehran, 2019, p.17-18), with a disturbing 71,600 of youth (or 29.2% of the total youth population) being represented in the category 'not in employment, education or training' (Mitchell, 2019, p.1). Additionally, the latest ILO LFS has alluded to the risk of rising unemployment amongst educated youth due to a perceived preference for waiting to get a decent-paying job than accepting any employment – in 2016, young Timorese with secondary education classified as unemployed had risen to 44% from 27% in 2013, whilst for those with a tertiary education the rise was from 10% to 57% (Mehran, 2019, p.18).

Of relevance to many of the subject group in this case study has been, in the years between 2013 and 2016, the sharp decline in jobs in occupational areas of professional, technicians and plant and machine operators (from 19.5% of total jobs to 10.4%), the moderate increase in service jobs, and the sharp increase in the share of industrial employment as in mining and quarrying (from .6% to 6.1%) (Mehran, 2019, p.7-8).

Essentially, these most recent employment figures depict the concentration of employment within a narrow range of economic activities in Timor-Leste and reflect the 'extreme lack of diversity in the structure of the economy' (Mitchell, 2019, p.1). Low levels of private sector investment and activity (with most of this focused on serving the direct and indirect demand created by government spending) and declining primary industry production have contributed to the slow growth of jobs in the non-oil economy (World Bank, 2012). Low levels of educational attainment and job-related skills and low-productivity, relating to a lack of investment in education and poor nutrition and health, are believed to be significant supply-side factors inhibiting labour market growth (Mitchell, 2019; Umapathi & Velamuri,

2013; World Bank, 2012).

Job creation is an urgent priority to avert the rise in social problems such as petty crime, alcohol abuse and drug use, and gang hooliganism (McWilliam, 2014). An associated high priority recognised by the government is workforce development through technical vocational education and training (TVET) - as an essential pre-condition for Timor-Leste to achieve its human capital and economic development goals (RDTL, 2011). Skills mismatch (where employees are operating beneath or above their skills/educational levels) appears to be a serious problem, which suggests that the return on what investments heir have been made into education and skills training has not been optimum (Mehran, 2019). Skills, competence and career development for Timorese working women (especially in nontraditional job fields) and the attainment of employment in which there is job satisfaction (as a psychosocial empowerment need) is a key focus of this study. Further discussion around the gendered status of Timor-Leste's TVET programmes, tertiary education sector and labour market, in particular the position of females in relation to these, can be found later in the chapter.

Despite the enormous development challenges Timor-Leste still faces, considering that the World Bank (2013a) estimates the time a country is expected to take transitioning out of post-conflict fragility to extend up to thirty years, the enhancement of political stability through social dialogue and community engagement since 2008 and incremental progress in poverty and vulnerability reduction achieved since independence in 2002 have been deemed remarkable achievements (ADB, 2015; Anderson, 2014; Office of Development Effectiveness, 2014; World Bank, 2013b). It would seem that achievement in dismantling barriers to Timorese girls' and women's enjoyment of gender equality, to their freedom from fear and violence and to make strategic life choices is lagging some way behind progress in other areas.

3.5 Gender equality and nation building – an uneasy hybrid of old and new

With respect to Timor-Leste's female population, nation-building for large swathes of the country can be characterised as the grafting of contemporary ideas of rights and realising human capital potential onto the traditional, essentially patriarchal belief systems and customary laws and rules, *adat,* which had shaped the country's cultural context throughout the colonial and Indonesian periods. The notion of gender equality as a political project filtered in, post-independence, through the conduit of international aid organisations and blended with similar mindsets amongst urban Timorese women in non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and individuals returning from the diaspora (Cummins, 2011; Hohe, 2003; Niner, 2017). Meanwhile *adat* retained its legitimacy throughout the territory, guiding village and *aldeia* (hamlet or sub-village) community life and maintaining a strong influence as the popular basis for intra- and inter-family dispute resolution through the hybrid, post-independence *suku* [14] mechanisms of justice (Corcoran-Nantes, 2009; Cummins, 2011; Hicks, 2012; Leach, 2017; Nixon, 2008). Timorese women activists (of both pre- and post-independence eras) have described traditional customs of *adat* as reinforcing discrimination and legitimising male dominance and violence against women (Cristalis & Scott, 2005; Hall, 2009; Niner, 2017; Pires, 2004).

By 2000 the notion that affirmative action would be necessary to redress the near absence of women's voice in political decision-making and address gender inequality was being promulgated by networks of Timorese female representatives from all 13 districts of East Timor (Pires, 2004). These ideas were met with indigenous barriers of incomprehension amongst a large section of the populace and resistance from male political leaders and urban Timorese male elites, as being alien to Timorese culture and forced upon the customary values systems by foreigners (Charlesworth, 2008; Hohe, 2003; Niner, 2017; Pires, 2004).

Hohe (2003) has cautioned against an under-appreciation of the importance of familiar traditional institutions constituting a link with normality and source of

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[14] *Suku (or suco)* is the village administration unit (Niner, 2017).

security for fragile post conflict societies even if they might be perceived as anti-international standards of human rights. Vinck and Pham (2016) have alluded to the importance of cultural unity as bolstering resilience amongst traumatised populations. However, more than a decade after independence, there is a considerable body of opinion that considers *adat* to be deeply gendered, in ways that perpetuate women's disadvantage and subjugation (Allden, 2007a; Asia Foundation, 2016; Corcoran-Nantes, 2011; Cummins, 2011; Hicks, 2012; Wigglesworth, 2012). This has been reinforced by Catholic beliefs and values that view women's central role as being in the home as mother and wife, having babies, keeping the family together and deferring to male decision-making. Further, a hegemonic masculine narrative of male heroism and virility upon which nation building has been founded has complemented the pervasive patriarchal ideology and mindset of male superiority (Charlesworth, 2008; Corcoran-Nantes, 2009; Cunha, 2017).

Thus, on the one hand, the majority of Timorese women remain trapped in vicious circles of subordination to men and limited aspirational horizons, and yet, on the other, there has arisen an alterity of contemporary female identities who have rejected constraining gender norms, expectations, roles and relations. In order to understand this dichotomy, it is necessary to appreciate a range of socio-cultural, historical, religious, political and economic factors as well as the fluidity of the inter-relationship between external forces and internal social dynamics within Timor-Leste society.

Gendered customary legacies and contemporary realities

Gender in Timorese indigenous cosmology is based on a complementarity rather than equality between the sexes (Corcoran-Nantes, 2009; Niner, 2017). Woman's symbolic role is as wife and mother –the interior realm of the home is feminine space and women's fertility is of central importance, a powerful and sought-after asset (Hicks, 2004; Niner, 2017). The male role is to be the main provider and decision-maker and the outer world of secular affairs is masculine space. Here the custodianship of *adat* is in the hands of male elders, the *lia-na'in* and *liurai*[15] whose

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[15] The *lia-na'in* is a traditional leader who is responsible for remembering and passing on clan customs and laws and ruling on/resolving conflicts and disputes. The *liurai* is the highest social class

authority is based on ancestral guidance along with status at birth (Hicks, 2012). Community welfare operates through a complex system of extended family houses, which themselves are structured around an intricate set of relationships, obligations and reciprocity relationships incurred through marriages in which rituals of gift exchanges, *barlake,* take place between the wife-taker and wife-giver families (Greenberg & Zuckerman, 2006; Kovar, 2011). The 2015 Asia Foundation *Nabilan* Health and Life Experiences Baseline Study (hereinafter referred to as the *Nabilan* study) found that for 2/3 of ever-married women (urban and rural) *barlake* exchanges has been a part of their marriage, whether it was traditional and/or Catholic (Asia Foundation, 2016, p. 44).

There are competing views on what the practice of *barlake* means for women. These range from those who stress it is a form of mutual exchange, even a business arrangement, which can be interpreted as a way of honouring or valuing the bride[16] (Hohe, 2003; Kovar, 2011; Nixon, 2008), to those who argue that in 'buying' his wife, a husband believes he owns her, can therefore expect her obedience and is justified in punishing her if she fails to perform her role or behave satisfactorily (Allden, 2007b; Corcoran-Nantes, 2009; Wigglesworth, 2012). The *Nabilan* study, the most comprehensive study to date on domestic violence in Timor-Leste to date, found that while *barlake* was not a trigger it did contribute to heightened tensions within the household as part of the "patriarchal 'architecture of power'" (Asia Foundation, 2016, p. 145). This architecture is manifest in a strong pattern amongst traditional marriages, reinforced by Catholic values, of normative expectations that the wife's role is to keep the home in order and be submissive to her husband, co-existing with a high prevalence of male retributive acts carried out when she fails to fulfill her role (Asia Foundation, 2016; Kovar, 2011).

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and hereditary political authority such as an indigenous king or male member of a royal class. The contemporary roles of *aldeia* and *suku* chiefs, whilst in many cases elected, tend to be filled by those with ancestral links with or patronage by the *liurai* (Cummins, 2011; Niner, 2017).

[16] One of the Timorese women participants in my Masters study who reported her husband's family having to contribute buffalo in the marriage proudly said to me "Because I'm worth it!" Incidentally, with her offshore salary she had bought her immediate family's home in Dili and reported having equal say in decision-making around household spending.

While the purest interpretations of *adat* present a metaphor of women and men being different but equal, this is belied by the gender *un*equal and subjugated realities in which the majority of females live their lives (ADB, 2013; Asia Foundation, 2016; Corcoran-Nantes, 2009; Cristalis & Scott, 2005; Cummins, 2011; Cunha, 2017; Kovar & Harrington, 2013; Pires, 2004; T.-L. UNDP, 2017). Gender inequalities are evidenced in the roles and responsibilities of men and women, decision-making power at household, community and national levels, in women's lack of access to justice and in the intergenerational perpetuation of male domination and privilege.

Corcoran-Nantes (2009) reported that while traditionally men are expected to be the main providers and to work outside the home, in fact women in farming households in areas where male unemployment is high are complaining that they carry the load of the income-generating work while the men sit around and gamble. It is women who do most of the heavy work in the fields, then have to come home to cook and wash for the family, while the men are free to just eat and sleep. The only time the husband is expected to take on women's productive work is when his wife has just given birth (in the absence of other family support) and he might look after the children when she is at the market (Corcoran-Nantes, 2009). The double burden of engaging in productive work (in food production, informal or formal work) and having primary responsibility for domestic and care work is also the lot of the majority of both urban women (Adams, 2014). However, evidence from Adams (2014) has pointed to husbands looking after children when their wives were away working in the offshore petroleum industry and to the existence of households where sons and daughters were expected to do equal shares of domestic work.

The discourse around Timorese traditions and culture suggests one can expect there to be some variety and flexibility across localised Timor-Leste social systems (Cummins, 2011; Niner, 2017; Thu, Scott, & Van Niel, 2007) which raises the cautionary flag that one should not essentialise all community/household structures as ones where women are passive and relegated to the background

occupying inferior positions [17] with no decision-making power. Whilst the evidence suggests that this is more often than not the rule (Adams, 2014; Cummins, 2011; Hicks, 2012; Kovar & Harrington, 2013; Pires, 2004), there is some ambivalence around, for example, Timorese women's power in household settings. On the one hand, anthropological research into gendered access to customary land in Timorese patrilineal and matrilineal groups has indicated that even where women have rights to land, apart from in the management of household finances they have less influence than men in overall decision-making (Thu et al., 2007). On the other, however, the 2010 CEDAW report into gender equality in Timor-Leste showed that 63% of married women made decisions alone about daily household family matters and a higher percentage of men thought that important household decisions should be made jointly (including how many children to have) (SEPI, 2013, p. 28). Recent research into young rural and urban Timorese men's attitudes and perceptions around gender equality revealed 55% thought the man should have the final say in all household decisions (Wigglesworth, Niner, Arunachalam, Boavida dos Santos, & Tilman, 2015, p. 320).

The sharply defined normative gender roles and responsibilities begin to be practiced in childhood, where girls are expected to take part in raising their younger siblings (Adams, 2014). Many young women move directly from adolescence to marriage and childbearing (often without finishing secondary school) and a central role of carrying reproductive responsibilities and providing for their husbands' families through food production and supplementary economic activities. Often a young woman's marriage is to a man 7-10 years older whose authority over her sphere of activity is accentuated by his superior age (Wigglesworth, 2012). Recent research reveals 19% of young women (20-24 years) were married before 18 and 24% already having had a child by 20 years (Cummins, 2017, p. 4).

In the majority of cases young women fall pregnant first then are married. For some, a marriage is arranged or forced upon a young couple after the daughter was

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[17] My Masters study revealed, for example, an instance where a Lia-na'in, (father of one of the male respondents) strongly advocated that women should be treated equally to men and sit at the table to eat rather than stay in the kitchen (Adams, 2014).

discovered with a boyfriend. In the case of pregnancy arising from rape, the perpetrator is often expected to marry the victim. The main causes of teenage pregnancy are believed to be ignorance around sexual activity and a lack of agency of the young women to resist male pressure to have sex, compounded by lack of access to contraception (Cummins, 2017). Whilst young women are not reported as likely to initiate sex, community attitudes place the blame on an unmarried woman who falls pregnant, deeming her too free and not able to control herself (Cummins, 2017). Many young women believe that marriage will bring a better life even if a man who promises to take the consequences if she has sex with him has no economic prospects. Once married, the expectation is on the woman to frequently produce children, which precludes many teenage mothers from returning to school. The few that do must have first secured their husband's and/or in-laws' support. A young girl is often deemed to have 'destroyed her future' by getting pregnant whilst still at school (Cummins, 2017, p. 11). Thus, not only is she unlikely to have had any say in sexual decision-making, she then has no decision-making power over her ensuing future nor time to do other than bear and raise children. She can also expect to have little democratic experience in community life.

Despite women's increased representation in public life, such as on the formal *suku* councils (this is discussed later in the chapter), the lack of capacity and limitations in the reach of the modern justice and policing apparatus has meant that in many parts of the country their political voice is likely to be over-shadowed by *adat.* Thus, in most areas it is still the traditional male leaders, the *lia-na'in,* that are considered to have the highest socio-political legitimacy to officiate the rule of law and mediate between families to resolve disputes (Tilman, 2012). Some writers have suggested that East Timorese customs need not have been seen as *per se* antagonistic to concepts of gender equality (Trembath & Grenfell, 2007). Cummins (2011) research into female representation on the *suku* councils, however, points to elected women having little bargaining power around the allocation of community resources and that only men can speak in dispute-resolution processes, even where women are aware of their equal rights. This has considerable repercussions in the resolution of cases where violence has been perpetrated against women.

Adat privileges family and collective rights over those of the individual in the maintenance of social order and community survival. Therefore, everything that happens within a marriage is regarded in the light of the network of solidarity that the marriage is seen to have created between the bride and groom's extended families. Flouting accepted behavioural norms within marriage not only risks tarnishing one's family's name but also attracting the wrath of ancestors on individuals, families and whole communities (Kovar, 2011). In much of contemporary Timor-Leste society when a woman transgresses what is deemed culturally acceptable behavior, such as in flouting her husband's authority or failing in her duties as wife and mother (for example, burning the food or resisting her husband's sexual advances), intimate partner violence (IPV) [18] is seen as a normalised male response (Allden, 2007b; Asia Foundation, 2016; Cunha, 2017; Kovar & Harrington, 2013).

Norms of masculinity and gender-based violence

At the time when the 2010 Law Against Domestic Violence (LADV) was enacted the empirics showed that 86% of women and 80% of men believed a husband to be justified in hitting his wife for the above reasons (SEPI, 2013, p. 24). A third of women believe marital rape to be acceptable (SEPI, 2013, p. 31). Controlling behaviours from husbands around their wives' activities outside the house and conversations with other men had been the experience for at least 1/3 of nearly 3,000 women respondents in the 2010 National Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) (SEPI, 2013, p. 29). Violent backlashes from men are not uncommon when they perceive a loss of control or gender role status when wives become the main breadwinner, and research has found 27% of women to have been prohibited by intimate partners from earning an income (Asia Foundation, 2016, p. 55). Two of the main reasons young women have given for not seeking vocational training are related to normative femininities - the burden of domestic work which leaves them no time and the belief that if a woman is too successful in education or employment it will be hard for her to find a husband (SEPI, 2013).

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[18] Intimate Partner Violence is behaviour within an intimate relationship that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm, including acts of physical aggression, sexual coercion, psychological abuse and controlling behaviours (Asia Foundation, 2016).

Female victims of sexual or domestic violence choosing to seek justice face a double-edged sword – on the one hand they are likely to be blamed for causing the violence to be perpetrated and on the other, if they discuss the violence with others, they could bring shame to and cause negative repercussions for their families. In dispute resolution cases where a man is found guilty of domestic violence the female victim's family is paid compensation, not the woman herself, and she is likely to be expected to remain in the relationship (Brown & Gusmao, 2009; Cristalis & Scott, 2005; Kovar & Harrington, 2013; Tilman, 2012). If a young rape victim becomes pregnant the perpetrator is either obliged to marry her or pay her family compensation (Nixon, 2008). The capacity for women who experience IPV in the home to negotiate less abusive relations is likely to be weakened by their economic dependence on their husband which, along with the threat of the social stigma attached to breaking up the household, is also a deterrent for them to leave violent marriages (Kovar & Harrington, 2013).

The 2015 *Nabilan* study found that while the causes and persistence of systemic gender based violence (GBV) are complex and intergenerational and can perhaps be traced to an aberration of traditional guiding principles around gender roles and relations, at the basic level the fact that most men and women equate manliness with toughness illustrates the link between contemporary norms of masculinity and male violence against females. This belief had already been enshrined in the patriarchal patriotic narratives that have dominated Timorese nationalist discourse in which male virility and heroism is extolled as the basis upon which the nation is believed to have been founded (Corcoran-Nantes, 2009). The rise of masculinised gangs and martial arts groups during the 2006-2007 civil unrest, combined with escalating drug and alcohol abuse amongst males have had an incendiary effect on the already high tolerance amongst men for certain levels of violence against women as expressions of masculinity (Asia Foundation, 2016). These expressions not uncommonly manifest in male perpetration of sexual IPV and/or rape against non-partnered females, where the most common reasons given by men for this behavior are sexual entitlement, boredom, anger and punishment (Asia Foundation, 2016, p. 68). The *Nabilan* study revealed 48% males surveyed in Dili and 36% in a district outside Dili between the ages of 15-19 years had raped a female at least once (Asia

Foundation, 2016, p. 63). In a 2014 study of young males' attitudes towards females, around 50% of those living in Dili were found to believe a woman should always obey her husband and that he has the right to punish her if she 'makes a mistake' (Wigglesworth et al., 2015, p. 46).

Cunha (2017) bemoans the fact that contemporary Timorese nationalist discourse is not only based on a hegemonistic masculinised interpretation of the struggle against Indonesian occupation but has the corollary of the narrative of the nation's women's suffering as passive victims which has rendered invisible the historical active and courageous role they played in the resistance. Her contrasting narrative extolls the 'complex and cosmopolitan understanding of sociability' or sophisticated social cognition of the women who played significant roles in the Timorese independence movement, with their bi-linguistic competence (due to inter-clan marriage) in being able to envision plural perspectives of different sub-cultures. This lent them the capacity to build links of solidarity across communities during the resistance and re-construction periods. Carving out a space for women's contribution to be recognised, women's human rights to be acknowledged and women's voice to be heard and responded to has been an uphill struggle for Timorese women activists since before independence (Corcoran-Nantes, 2009).

Timorese women's activism and collective organisation for rights and gender equality

Timorese women's *her*story in the resistance movement is one of females playing multiple important roles during the Indonesian occupation. Yet from the onset of independence they were expected to return to a full-time domestic role within the sphere of the home and were not expected to play a role in the transitional government (Charlesworth & Wood, 2001). The prevailing culture of violence legitimated men using aggressive and controlling means in reasserting their leadership in the household. The corollary of this has been the women thinking they had to respect men's decisions and obey them in the home, even when as females they had been valued and respected as resistance activists (Cristalis & Scott, 2005).

Further, whilst the patriotic blood spilt by Timorese men during the resistance has been extolled as a symbol of heroic sacrifice, the symbolic blood spilt by the thousands of female victims of sexual violence during the Indonesian occupation (and the permanence of suffering from this) is not rated as the sacrifice of heroines (Cunha, 2017). To address the female suffering at the hands of the Indonesian forces an independent Timorese women's non-government organization (NGO), FOKUPERS (*Forum Komunikasi Untuk Perempuan Timor*), was established in 1997 with the focus on women's health and human rights issues, such as support for victims of sexual violence, war widows and female political prisoners (J. Hunt, 2017). To date there has been no justice or reparation for female victims of sexual and gender-based violence at the hands of Indonesian security forces and their Timorese auxiliaries (Amnesty International, 2016).

After independence FOKUPERS spearheaded an anti-domestic violence campaign that culminated in the enactment of the LADV in 2010, which made domestic violence a public crime and gave victims the right to access medical help, shelter and legal support services (Niner, 2017). The Timor-Leste Women's Network (*Rede Feto*) was another network of Timorese women active in mobilising around women's rights during the UNTAET period, in particular in pressuring the transitional government and Constituent Assembly for gender equity and the full participation of women in decision-making (Niner, 2011). Nearly all of the key positions in UNTAET were held by males and women were minimally represented in UNTAET staff and the civilian peacekeeping and police forces (Charlesworth, 2008).

Rede Feto's platform of the introduction of special quotas for women candidates for political office met with resistance based on claims that East Timor was not ready for gender equity. Members of the senior male political leadership and male elites denounced this as a new (anti-Timorese culture) idea being promulgated by 'international experts' and Timorese women returning from the diaspora [19]

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[19] Of note is the one dissenting voice (Portuguese female) amongst this study's respondents, who, contrary to all others who indicated their awareness of the lack of gender equality in much of Timorese society, avowed that East Timorese culture was based on gender equality and that gullible young Timorese had been duped by foreigners into thinking otherwise. Her comments resonated

(Charlesworth, 2008; Niner, 2017; Pires, 2004). Hall (2009) reported that western modernity with its adjunct of women's human right to participate in public life was seen as a destroyer of traditional culture. This was in spite of the notion of a female quota arising from a congress held in 2000 of 400 Timorese women from all 13 districts (Pires, 2004, p. 4) and the determined contestation of Timorese women activists to suggestions that the space should remain masculine.

In fact, Timorese women's organisations, such as Alola Foundation which works in areas of GBV and IPV, women's empowerment, health and education, argue they have benefitted from the opportunities members have had to engage in international forums around gender issues, from not being treated as second-class citizens (as they might be by male compatriots) and from the support of international NGO partners in their providing of technical support for Timorese women's capacity building (Verdial, 2007). It has been argued that members of generations who have experienced some degree of trauma associated with poverty and conflict can benefit from the support of outsiders that bolsters their resilience in facing and overcoming the challenges involved in moving ahead, and their sense of hope and agency in achieving success in their goals (Sharkey, 2008).

Further progress in the formal recognition of women's rights to be treated as equal to men was made with the 2003 ratification by the Timor-Leste government of the UN Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). In addition to the establishment of the Gender Affairs Unit in UNTAET, 2002 saw the creation of the Office for the Promotion of Equality (OPE), (later SEPI, the Secretary of State for the Promotion of Equality and now SEM, Secretary of State for the Support and Socio-Economic Promotion of Women) which drove gender mainstreaming in the promulgation of new legislation, policy and procedures along the lines of CEDAW (Corcoran-Nantes, 2009). In 2008 gender equality was enshrined in the Dili Declaration, signed by the government, National Parliament, civil and church bodies, with Gender Focal Points institutionalised at ministry and

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with those of Xanana Gusmao (East Timor's first President and subsequently Prime Minister from 2007-2015) when he was President of the National Council of Timorese Resistance concerning "an obsessive acculturation to standards that hundreds of international experts try to convey to the East Timorese, who are hungry for values" (Gusmao, 2000, p. 2).

district levels. In 2011 a Gender Working Group mechanism was established encompassing national and local levels to integrate a gender perspective in the development of strategies, policies, programmes and legislation with a view to preventing discrimination against women (CEDAW, 2015).

Corcoran-Nantes (2009) was among a number of commentators who expressed doubt that independence would act as an entry point for new ideas to change mindsets around gender equality. Certainly, SEPI has rolled out a comprehensive raft of education and information dissemination programmes around gender awareness and promoting positive non-stereotypical portrayals of women, the CEDAW convention and LADV, across the country to reach community leaders and groups, educational and health institutions, the police and national level bodies. However, the notion of discrimination against women remains untested by any judicial interpretation and many legal representatives have low awareness of this. Further, many traditional leaders have a lack of understanding of the LADV and still believe VAWG is best dealt with by traditional systems (SEPI, 2013). Despite Gender Working Groups having been set up in all 13 districts, it is males who fill the role of chair of 12 of these (SEPI, 2013, p. 7).

While gender equality became enshrined in the national constitution post-1999, it was not until 2007 that a 25% quota for women on party lists was secured (Costa & Sharp, 2017) and 2011 when the laudable election of 38% female Parliamentarians came about through electoral reforms stipulating 1/3 of candidates be women (SEPI, 2013, p. 49). Whilst these results represent remarkable progress in women achieving political voice, it appears that this voice does not necessarily translate into equal power (Ford, 2017). Niner (2017) refers to the admission by senior male politicians (in particular 2014 Prime Minister Xanana Gusmao) that women's playing a full role in parliament is a considerable way off. This is corroborated by the observation that the role of women on the *suku* councils (of which in 2010 there were 2% in chief positions and 28% occupying council seats) (SEPI, 2013, p. 37) seemed to be often that of note-taking and serving refreshments which points to the persistence of barriers for women navigating rigid patriarchal systems of local politics (Cummins, 2011). Corcoran-Nantes (2007) suggests that even where

women have a consciousness of their rights, faced with the daily grind of poverty and working to support their families there is little energy or motivation left for many to devote to challenging gendered power structures.

It would appear that in important areas of gender equality, institutional capacity to enforce laws and policies and to improve the condition of girls and women is lagging behind intent. For example, Costa and Sharp (2017) report that the pursuit of Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) has been hampered by weak governmental capacity, limited gender disaggregated data and corruption at the service delivery end. The 2008 National East Timor Women's Congress recognised women's economic empowerment as a priority gender issue. However, neither the relationship between the provision of childcare services and working women nor institutionalised childcare or preschool education were focused upon in the National Strategic Development Plan 2011-2030 (Ford, 2017). While the 2012 Labour Law guarantees 12 weeks paid maternity leave, in the formal sector working women bearing children are likely to be granted leave but without pay or with only a portion of their pay. There is evidence that some large companies (including banks) are stipulating new female recruits do not marry in their first year or fall pregnant in the first five years (Ford, 2017, p. 237).

Additionally, while the New Civil Code (2011) established a minimum legal age of 17 years for males and females to marry (SEPI, 2013) in more remote areas, girls are still marrying younger than this (Cummins, 2017). And, while the LADV gives rights to victims of domestic violence (including sexual violence), there are considerable barriers to women accessing justice including lack of knowledge of the LADV by community leaders, lenient sentences for perpetrators, limited outreach of the police, and low numbers of and long distances to courts which lead to lengthy delays in women getting a hearing (ADB, 2014; CEDAW, 2015). Just 25% of women victims of violence are believed to have accessed some kind of justice (SEPI, 2013, p. 24). Meanwhile, the Asia Foundation (2016), whilst acknowledging significant advances in legislative reforms around GBV and gender equality, suggests that the findings of its *Nabilan* survey point to there being little translation of the sentiments of the reforms into behavioural change amongst the populace.

Programmes are now in place around encouraging school students in several districts to think critically about socially constructed gender norms that perpetuate GBV (CEDAW, 2015). Of particular note is a corner of the young male Timorese populace, Asosiasaun Mane Kontra Violensia (AMKV), that are working actively to challenge what they perceive as traditional patriarchal roles and a post-conflict machismo culture – reaching 100s of men throughout the territory via weekend workshops (de Araujo, 2005). These progressive male attitudes were amongst the seven male interviewees of my Masters case study (ranging in age from 23-57 years, of whom three had had diaspora experience) who revealed similar pro-gender equality views, expressed in both a sense of pride in their Timorese co-workers who were forging new female identities as skilled offshore workers as well as sadness for the subjugated lives of most Timorese women (Adams, 2014). These examples suggest that there are likely more Timorese men who are willing to deviate from normative masculinities that are predicated upon attitudes of superiority and dominant and aggressive behaviours towards females.

On the other hand, however, women in this study with experience working in or engaging with the Timorese public sector and/or being involved with the Timorese business sector reported continuing cultures of male superiority and disdain for women's abilities, particularly amongst senior bureaucrats and employers. The realities of women's vocational skills development and participation and positioning in the labour market compared with men's reflect a gendered orthodoxy that, despite small changes brought about by Timor-Leste's equal opportunities and anti-discrimination laws, still has a long way to go before it is transformed into an enabling structure in which women can enjoy decent work opportunities and realise their career and earning potential.

3.6 Skills, vocational and occupational status of Timorese women

Women in the labour market
In examining the position of women and work in the Timor-Leste labour market it is necessary to distinguish between formal and informal sector jobs and the types of work encapsulated within labour force surveys and censes as well as factoring in employment definitions. Formal sector jobs cover wage and salaried workers and

employers, whilst informal[20] (often referred to as vulnerable workers) includes own-account workers and contributing family workers. Domestic workers, such as nannies, are not included in any Timor-Leste labour force studies, and nor are those involved in subsistence agriculture. Of the total of working age women, 80% are engaged in unpaid subsistence agricultural activities (World Bank, 2013a, p. 5). As has been previously mentioned, the definition of employment applied in the Timor-Leste Labour Force Surveys (LFS) only requires someone to work for a minimum of one hour a week. The labour force participation rate represents those of working age who are considered economically active, which includes both employed people and those unemployed who are looking for work.

The latest Labour Force Survey's re-classification of agricultural workers to include those producing food for the market has accounted for an apparent drop in women involved in subsistence food production (of 38,200 women) and the increase in female labour force participation from 21.3% in 2013 to 40.6% in 2016 (Mehran, 2019, p.14). However, on average women are engaged in less than 3 hours of waged work a week (Costa & Sharp, 2017). The gender gap of male-female employment to population rate was 14.2 points in 2016 (Mehran, 2019, p.14). In the years between 2010 and 2016 the labour force participation of women rose from 45,000 to 145,000, reflecting that the change in status of subsistence foodstuff producers to labour force participators affected women more than men (Mehran, 2019, p.13). However, between 2013 and 2016, there was a sharp rise in female unemployment, from 10.4% to 14.3% (Mehran, 2019, p.14). Of those women working for pay, at least 25% earn less than USD181 a month (Ford, 2017, p. 234). Four times as many men as women work in the public sector and three times in the private sector, whilst of public sector jobs at the highest level only 16% are filled by women (ADB, 2014; SEPFOPE, 2013, p. 121). Gender disparity is also reflected in the types of contracts in the formal workforce – of those workers with oral agreements, 19.5% are women and 80.5% men and of those with written 26.1% are women and 73.9% men (SEPFOPE, 2013, p. 121).

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[20] Informal employees are those who do not benefit from paid sick leave and paid annual leave nor formal contracts. Employers and own-account workers in informal sector enterprises are those operating economic units engaging less than five workers and are not registered under specific forms of national legislation (SEPFOPE, 2013).

Both horizontal and vertical occupational gender segregation characterises the paid workforce. There are half as many women as men in professional and managerial jobs or as employers, male technicians outnumber females 3-1 and there are eight times more male plant and machine operators and assemblers than female, males outnumber females in the teaching and health professions while women tend to be over-represented in clerical and non-teaching/health service/sales positions although (SEPFOPE, 2013, p. 114). It is perhaps more illuminating to visualise the situation in the non-agricultural sector, where the main concentrations of occupations are security guards, car, taxi and van drivers and concrete placers and concrete finishers (the latter representing industrial work), all of which are male dominated (SEPFOPE, 2013). There are no statistics for women working in industry as the numbers are too low to be represented.

Combatting stereotypes of working women

It appears, though, that it is not only in the western private sector enclave of the oil and gas industry in Timor-Leste that some progress is being made in the area of equal opportunities for males and females (Adams, 2014). Within the Ministry of Petroleum and Mineral Resources (MPRM) 67% of the staff are women and four hold top-level positions, while three women are in top positions in the National Petroleum Authority and two in the national oil company of Timor-Leste (Timor GAP) (CEDAW, 2015, p. 8). Further, since the introduction of scholarships by MPRM between 2008-2015, 195 Timorese women have undertaken studies in engineering, petroleum, environment, geophysics, geography, chemicals, and aircraft pilot training (CEDAW, 2015, p. 8).

In other areas women are being targeted in equal opportunity (breaking gender stereotypes) initiatives such as receiving training in water and sanitation management and in rural road construction. In 2015 women's participation in the management of water and sanitation systems was 40% and in the Roads for Development (R4D) programme there was a 30% quota of working hours (ranging from one-week to one-month contracts) allocated for women and 20% female contractors were chosen for training (CEDAW, 2015, p. 22). While no change occurred in the women's responsibility for domestic duties after a day's work, some of them reported enhanced self-confidence and status in household decision-

making as a result of their training and income-earning work (ILO, 2016c; Office of Development Effectiveness, 2014).

Vocational education, work skills and decent work
There is a dearth of literature on the social and economic empowerment of women through work skills training and employment experience in Timor-Leste. The low labour force participation of women has been recognised as an Achilles heel for pro-poor growth, a critical issue to be addressed in the pursuit of the vision and goals of the government's Strategic Development Plan (ILO, 2016b). The Timor-Leste government has ratified the International Labour Organization's (ILO) conventions concerning discrimination in respect of employment and occupation and pay parity between women and men performing work of equal value, and has initiated a Decent Work Country Programme with employment promotion, social protection of workers, rural socio-economic development and good labour market governance as priorities (ILO, 2016b). However, the development agenda is lacking any focus on the importance of building Timorese females' human capital and capabilities through work skills development (WSD) and decent work experience. Historically, technical vocational education and training (TVET) – the WSD context that aligns the most closely with the empowerment focus of this study, has not had a high visibility in Timor-Leste with the result only 13% of people in employment had attended a vocational training programme (World Bank, 2014, p. 7).

TVET in Timor-Leste has been characterised as made up of largely unregistered, unregulated training providers providing training of varying levels of quality with gender disparities in the type of training (SEPFOPE, 2010; World Bank, 2014). There is a significant lack of appropriate training courses and organisations for providing skills for manual and service, technical/professional, and administrative workers, with male attendees outnumbering female and the relatively few Timorese females being over-represented in feminised job areas (ADB, 2014; World Bank, 2012). The most popular courses that are available are learning to drive light motor vehicles, operating heavy equipment and masonry. However, one of the most recognised training centres, Tibar Training Centre, has been encouraging female participation in non-traditional skills areas like plumbing and construction (up to Certificate level 2) reporting that in 2013 23% of its construction course students were young

women (Francis, 2013).

Recent empirics have shown 22% of Timorese in employment had received training through a friend or family member, 47% were self-taught, 8% had received on-the-job training and 3.4% had undergone a training programme with an NGO (World Bank, 2014, p. 7). While progress has been made in establishing a National Qualifications Framework and quality assurance systems for accredited providers, follow-through to the delivery of high quality TVET with all training providers, operating along certification systems aligned with international standards, is lagging behind strategic intent (World Bank, 2014). The fact that there is very little skills-occupation mismatch in the labour market (such as where individuals are working in jobs beneath their skills/qualification levels) reflects the reality that most employed Timorese are low-skilled working in low-skill jobs (SEPFOPE, 2013).

Large scale youth training and employment initiatives (with integrated gender dimensions) have either failed to identify the skills market, focused on low-level skills or entailed unsustainable job creation (DFAT, 2016). The weakness of the economy combined with the very high number of unemployed youth (80% of young people aged 15-29 years are economically inactive) severely limits the number of youth that can access work (Office of Development Effectiveness, 2014). It is therefore not surprising that the outcome of the recent ILO's Youth Employment Promotion Program (YEPP) that targeted nearly 25,000 youth with basic job skills training saw only 4.7% being successfully 'linked to employment opportunities' (Office of Development Effectiveness, 2014, p. 54). While low levels of educational attainment and job-related skills are key supply-side factors inhibiting employment opportunities for Timorese (Umapathi & Velamuri, 2013) of those employed with high educational attainment 60% have reported occupation-education mismatch (SEPFOPE, 2013, p. vii).

There is very limited access to data on labour market outcomes of job placements for students with TVET or tertiary qualifications or those who have had scholarships to study at universities abroad (World Bank, 2014). Between 2010-2013 37% of tertiary scholarships to study abroad went to young women (CEDAW, 2015, p. ix).

In 2013 42% of youth in the labour force had secondary education and those with tertiary education numbered 1.4% (SEPFOPE, 2013, p. vii). The fact that employees with secondary education are averaging higher monthly earnings than those with tertiary qualifications reflects the higher level of demand for the former in the labour market. However, one of the main labour hire companies in the oil and gas sector with a workforce of less than 300 has revealed, in this research, having over 3,000 CVs in its database of mostly skilled or higher educated job seekers (Interview: SH1, 2016).

Concern has been raised over the lack of dialogue between government and the private sector leaders around labour supply and demand issues (Office of Development Effectiveness, 2014; World Bank, 2014). The next chapter describes a contrary *local content* space in Timor-Leste (and a key focus of this research) where there has been structured discussion between government personnel and local and foreign employing stakeholders targeted at capacity building of Timorese nationals. With a focus on WSD (to international standards) these local content negotiations have been subsequently followed up with training initiatives via which Timorese (and of particular relevance to this study, Timorese females) have achieved generic and industry-specific skills and competencies and related offshore employment.

3.7 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has provided a précis of the historical, socio-cultural, economic and political developments in Timor-Leste that have shaped the position and prospects of Timorese girls and women. Out of a turbulent history of degradation and violence social structures and ideologies have evolved differently across the territory with the rural base, riddled with poverty and unsustainable subsistence livelihoods adhering to customary systems and an urban leadership imbued with nation-building ideas based on modernisation. Modern ideas of gender equality and women's human rights, tenaciously pursued by Timorese women activists and NGOs, while making inroads into the political framework with anti-discrimination, anti-gender based violence laws and reforms, have made little impact upon the public voice, protection from violence and pathways out of poverty and

subordination for the majority of women, especially in the rural areas where traditional mores around gender prevail. The chapter has described the prevailing normative behaviours, beliefs, attitudes and customary practices that continue to reinforce masculinities of superiority and control over females and femininities that place women's role and responsibilities within the household sphere, bearing many children and subject to the authority of, and often violence from, men.

However, against this backdrop of formidable pressures for girls and women to conform to restrictive gender roles and behaviours with barriers and lack of opportunity to their being able to make their own strategic life choices, a recent study revealed some young Timorese women as having found the initiative to find 'pathways towards a different life from that of their mother and grandmother' (Wigglesworth, 2012, p. 49). The life trajectories of Timorese women in this study, of pursuing learning and earning pathways of empowerment via the offshore oil and gas workplace setting, reflect this sense of initiative and have been deemed remarkable (Adams, 2014). The comment from a Timorese respondent is an indication of the ripple of changed female mindsets that is infusing Timor-Leste:

> *"Now women want to have more skills. I say I will do what I want to do. I have to work"* (Interview: FR12, 2016).

The next chapter discusses the phenomenon of women working in the global oil and gas (O&G) industry sector, and in particular the offshore workplace setting with its masculinised profile and the efforts that have been made to improve gender diversity across the sector. It provides insight into how local content has been conceived as the social license for international oil companies (IOCs) to operate in developing countries and the positioning (or not) of gender as a component of this. The development of Timor-Leste's offshore hydrocarbon resources is described, along with that of its local content parameters as they relate to the training and employment of Timorese nationals.

Chapter Four: Engaging women in the oil and gas industry: global and Timorese experiences

4.1 Introduction

The growing attention being paid to gender diversity within the global oil and gas (O&G) industry in the 21st century can be attributed to the following combination of factors: criticism being leveled at the industry for its historically poor representation of females across the board and particularly in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), senior, management and field positions; the advent of legal regimes around Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO); growing numbers of women making career choices to join the petroleum sector, and; a worldwide industry-specific skills shortage (Kammerzell, 2011; Knott, 2015; McKee, 2014). How the industry's broadening reach into the global talent pool of women translates into the opening of opportunities for women in host poor countries to experience empowerment gains is of primary interest in this case study, as encapsulated in Research Objective (A):

- **To explore (within the stakeholder networks of Timor Sea oil and gas projects) the ways in which organisational agendas and decision-making processes, as well as the attitudes, agency and actions of industry and associated actors, have influenced the empowerment journeys of Timorese women through their offshore employment experience and related work skills development.**

The phenomenon of Timorese women with experience of training and recruitment associated with offshore oil and gas operations is integrally linked into 'local content' arrangements between international oil companies (IOCs), contractors and the Timor-Leste government. The social performance agenda of the International Petroleum Industry Environment Conservation Association (IPIECA) defines local content as added value brought by oil and gas projects to a host nation through:

- Workforce development [by international companies/national companies, contractors/sub-contractors]: employment of local workforce and training of local workforce; and

- Investments in supplier development: developing supplies and services locally; and procuring supplies and services locally' (IPIECA, 2016, p. 1).

Whilst gender is rarely an agenda item within the parameters of local content discussion and commitments, this study is based upon the premise that the empowerment gains (in particular those of an enduring nature) for women in a patriarchally-characterised developing country brought about through their involvement as employees on global oil and gas operations may be deemed 'added value' to the host nation. This chapter sets the scene of the O&G industry structures of opportunity within which women's capabilities gains and empowerment growth, through employment, work skills development (WSD) and career advancement, have become increasingly possible.

The chapter is broadly divided into five sections. It begins by exploring the gendered orthodoxy of the global oil and gas industry and the experience of women who have entered the world of offshore oil and gas. The horizontal and vertical segregation that characterises the industry is highlighted and explanations given for this phenomenon. It touches on the masculinised realities of the offshore workspace, the Fly-In-Fly-Out lifestyle and how women have navigated these. It then moves on to discuss the manner in which the O&G industry has attempted to address the gender disparities in the sector and whether 'diversity' drives by global extractive industry corporations may or may not support the realisation of the potential of women who live in patriarchally defined societies, such as Timor-Leste.

Next the chapter explores the local content structure that defines the relationships within the stakeholder networks of O&G operations in developing countries (of owner/operator companies, contractors and subcontractors and host country governments) along with comment on the near absence of gender as an element in these. The chapter then narrows its focus onto the development of and development hopes for Timor-Leste's hydrocarbon reserves, including an outline of women's place in the local petroleum sector. The two projects in the Timor Sea with which the female target group of this case study has been involved – Bayu-Undan gas recycling and Kitan oil, are then described along with information about the roles

the Timorese women have assumed. Lastly, the chapter canvasses the complexion of local content associated with these offshore operations with respect to investments in Timorese nationals' work skills development and employment.

4.2 Women in global oil and gas

How and where women are represented in the global industry

In order to understand the challenges women from an LDC might experience entering the non-traditional job field of the offshore oil/gas facility, some broader context of the gender imbalance pervading the global petroleum industry is required. Recent research commissioned by the World Petroleum Congress shows women to represent 22% of oil and gas (O&G) industry workers worldwide (including at entry-level, midcareer and senior management) (Rick, Marten, & Von Lonski, 2017, p. 5). The study found no significantly different statistics across companies in different countries. In areas of offshore and marine, refining and petrochemicals the numbers are even fewer, with 15% of entry-level technical and field positions held by university-educated women (Rick et al., 2017, p. 5). The gender disparity is more glaring at the top echelons where only 1% of CEOs are female, amongst companies' expatriate personnel where 10% are female and on boards of directors where women make up 9.6% - the latter figure delineating the O&G industry as lagging behind all other industries worldwide (Rick et al., 2017, pp. 9,10; Tenant, 2012). However, the Boards of Directors of five major international oil companies (Shell, Chevron, ConocoPhillips, ExxonMobil and BP) have 14% females (Williams, Kilanski, & Muller, 2014, p. 8), whilst Norway's largest company Statoil has 40% (Huse, 2015, p. 1; Williams et al., 2014). Brazil's state-owned oil company, Petrobras, and National Petroleum Agency are, however, headed by women (Ponton, 2016) whilst in Nigeria the first female Minister of Petroleum Resources was appointed in 2010, and both India and Indonesia have women heading their state-owned oil companies (WPC, 2015). Timor-Leste has nine Timorese women in high-level positions in its petroleum sector (CEDAW, 2015, p. 8).

In the North American O&G industry 82% of jobs are held by males, 80% of engineers are men and those jobs that women hold tend to be a few at the top highly paid levels with a majority clustered at the bottom of the pay scale in entry-level

positions in services (McKee, 2014, pp. 168, 173). Of the Western Australian (WA) O&G industry workforce 26% are women, mostly in areas of support, sales and service, with only 10% in engineering jobs and related technologies (Lord, Eastham, Jefferson, & Wardale, 2014, p. 63). Of the overall WA workforce, 26% of males are technicians and trades workers compared with 5.2% females, 12.5% of men and 1.8% of women are machinery operators and drivers and 24% of the female workforce is clustered in clerical and administration areas compared with 5.7% of men (Lord et al., 2014, p. 83). However, in the broader WA labour market women and men are evenly represented in the sciences, such as geology and geophysics. It is of note that in 2014, ConocoPhillips Australia, which is the owner/operator of Bayu-Undan offshore facility on which several Timorese women in this study have been employed, was recognised by the Australian Government Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) as an Employer of Choice for Gender Equality (AMMA, 2014).

Sectoral segregation, glass ceilings and gender discrimination

There is a common belief that women need to have spent time in the field on the oil patch to be credible in leadership positions (Price, 2015). Men therefore tend to have the advantage as they have more often been offered leadership technical and operating field roles during their careers (Rick et al., 2017). The recent World Petroleum Congress study found three main reasons for women's O&G careers tending to wane at the 3-5 year, mid-career mark, these being: a lack of access to job opportunities; a lack of sponsorship for career advancement, and; lack of ability to balance career and family leading to interrupted careers through taking time out for childbearing (Rick et al., 2017). A third of women surveyed reported difficulties in succeeding to management or leadership roles on their own merits because of latent sexism or gender bias amongst men. The same survey, however, showed men as having high regard for women in the top echelons, and believing that a shortage of qualified females is the reason for their under-representation at these levels (Rick et al., 2017). A study of women in a Malaysian IOC has found 72% of female employees to believe the industry is inhospitable to females and that women wanting to advance their careers have to work harder and longer than men to prove their credibility (Ismail & Ibrahim, 2008). A recent study of female geoscientists in the US oil and gas industry found that there was a glass ceiling 'firmly in place' and

that 'women stall out in midcareer and eventually leave their jobs in the major companies' largely due to their experience of gender discrimination in the STEM workplace setting (Williams et al., 2014, p. 5).

The technological and scientific complexity and specialisation required of many positions in O&G exploration and production means employees must have attained certain levels in STEM, an area of gender imbalance that the O&G industry claims it is trying to address (Williams et al., 2014). The Williams et al (2014) study found a widespread sexist culture in major US oil and gas companies based on a perception that women are less competent than men in STEM areas. Marinelli and McGrath (2015) found that there was a lack of STEM interest from females in Norway at the recruitment stage of the industry. To counter this trend oil companies are employing women in groups to make the prospect of work in the field more attractive. However, the turn of the century did see more Norwegian women moving into non-traditional jobs such as in technology and engineering (Burke, Mattiesen, Einarsen, Fiskenbaum, & Soiland, 2008). Of the UK population only 12% of STEM graduates are female (Lo, 2013, p. 2). In regions where the numbers of women qualifying in STEM are highest such as the Middle East (where there is 39% female participation) they are not entering male dominated STEM-related job fields such as in O&G due to social and cultural factors (Rick et al., 2017, p. 20). In Timor-Leste males far outnumber females in technician, engineering and machinery operator jobs but opportunities to study in the science, engineering and finance areas have been taken up by a growing number of women since independence (CEDAW, 2015; SEPFOPE, 2013).

The logistical shortage of accommodations due to person-on-board (PoB) capacity[21], has been a reason commonly given for overlooking women to work on offshore facilities (Rick et al., 2017) and the potential for women crewmembers to fall pregnant and hence not be available to work in the field due to HSE protocols

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[21] Maximum person-on-board (PoB) is strictly limited on rigs and platforms due to space constraints and lifeboat capacity where accommodations most commonly comprise a dormitory, two/four bed cubicle layout. Cost efficiencies and crew role requirements often demand that all beds are filled, thus where there is only one woman on the crew, to place her in a 4-person cubicle by herself can be untenable. Of interest is Caltech Offshore Services' solution to this of ensuring there were always four Timorese women available to go offshore on the same swing.

and maternity leave provisions, has contributed to the gender bias towards employing men (McKee, 2014). Other barriers deemed of relevance to women entering the O&G workplace setting have been mostly related to the exclusivity of the male workplace culture - where bonding has historically been fraternally-based, social conversation is dominated by male interests and humour and women have to hold their own and prove themselves as good as men (Austin, 2006; Bailey, 2013; Faulkner, 2009).

Women working in offshore oil and gas
Across the globe, women working on offshore facilities are very poorly represented. In 2014, the UK continental shelf offshore workforce had 3.6% women, 29% of whom were in catering and 10% in technical maintenance (Oil & Gas UK, 2015, p. 25). This is comparable with the Dutch and Danish offshore sectors in which women made up, respectively, 3.7% and 5.2% of workers (Oil & Gas UK, 2015, p. 25). Only around 1/3 of UK women working offshore are core crew – that is spending longer than 100 nights per year offshore (Lo, 2013, p. 1). In the Norwegian offshore workforce female numbers are higher at 9%, however 54% of these are in catering jobs (Oil & Gas UK, 2015, p. 25). Women working in Atlantic Canada's offshore sector number 5% of a 700-strong workforce and are also to be found mostly in kitchen or housekeeping jobs (Bailey, 2013, p. 1). Austin (2006) notes that while many female offshore crewmembers work in the galley, they are also to be found in administrative, IT, radio operations and medic roles. Of the female target group for this study the job field the highest concentration of offshore roles is in catering/housekeeping, the next highest proportions are in bridge control and administration with ones and twos in other positions ranging from radio operations to health, safety and environment (HSE), materials control and fabric maintenance, trainee electrical and mechanical engineers, laboratory technician and marine mammal observers. It is hard to find English language reports containing sex-disaggregated statistics concerning women offshore workers on non-Western operations. However, what literature has been accessible mirrors the aforementioned scenarios, for example in the Trinidad and Tobago industry where women are concentrated in administrative roles, and make up only 10% of non-administration contract roles (Graham, 2010, p. 38) and in Campos Basin, Brazil's

largest oil basin, where males make up the majority of offshore workers (Ribiero da Gama Barbosa & Alvarez, 2016, p. 1).

It is against this backdrop of a slow-to-change gendered orthodoxy within the global O&G industry, traditionally considered a male domain run by male fiefdoms (Feltus, 2008; Rick et al., 2017), that the target group of some 50 Timorese women, some with tertiary STEM qualifications, some with industry-fostered trades training and some with only secondary school level education have entered the offshore field. Their ability to make capability and empowerment gains in this largely masculinised environment is to some extent contingent upon their capacity to adapt to working amongst predominantly male crews as well as the rigours of platform life.

Masculinised workplaces and the FIFO lifestyle

The offshore environment has been portrayed as a particular bastion of 'strong man' masculinity. Drilling and production facilities are no frills steel structures, characterised by 24/7 functioning, noise and vibration, heights, chemicals, and hazards, with little privacy for crewmembers living their offshore lives. Often located in some of the remotest, harshest and dangerous places in the world where extremes of temperature, hurricane force winds and extremely high seas are not uncommon, these workplaces demand that crewmembers are intrepid and for many that they have high physical strength. It comes as no surprise that the majority of the post-world war two US rig workers were ex-military and merchant marines men (Austin, 2006).

All of the aforementioned factors have been identified as stressors with the potential to impact negatively on offshore workers' well-being (Adams, 2014; Chen, Wong, & Yu, 2009). For some workers integrated into this intense world of tight pressured task schedules, the somewhat counterintuitive stress of 'rust out' has been identified – where under-stimulation, boredom, feeling under-utilised and having little variety in the work has led to dis-engagement from job roles and feelings of job dissatisfaction (Sutherland & Cooper, 1996)[22]. Two characteristics shared by many offshore crew members are a pervasive sense of anxiety around safety and ongoing

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[22] The entry-level role of bridge controller on one of the Timor Sea platforms has been evidenced as a potential rust out case in point (Adams, 2014), whereby women's empowerment growth based on the realisation of their potential could be undermined.

fatigue due to the taxing environment and 12-hour work shifts (days or nights) continuing for weeks on end (Parkes, 2013; Sutherland & Cooper, 1996). The emotionally and psychologically demanding Fly-In-Fly-Out (FIFO) schedules demand that crewmembers are on the facility for lengths of time ranging from a week to a month at a time[23], which means they miss significant family and social events, and their social and intimate relationships are interrupted and disrupted, which when combined with the work environment stresses, creates a potentially problematic interface between away and at-home life (Chen et al., 2009). On the positive side, studies of offshore workers have shown a pattern of sanguine adaptation to the offshore life, self-belief and a buoyant attitude along with their experiencing the rewards of the camaraderie of teamwork and lifelong friendships, not to mention the tendency for the jobs to be relatively well paid (Carter & Kaczmarek, 2009; Chen et al., 2009; Sutherland & Cooper, 1996).

Most of the studies about the positive and negative aspects of the lifestyle are about male FIFO workers (Carter & Kaczmarek, 2009; Chen et al., 2009; Gallegos, 2006; Handy, 2010; Parkes, 2013; Parkes, Carnell, & Farmer, 2013; Shrimpton, 2001; Sutherland & Cooper, 1996; Tang, 2012; Taylor & Simmonds, 2009). However, it is not unreasonable to expect that the offshore worksite stressors and the patterns of partings and reunions and of repeated re-negotiation of roles in the household when FIFO workers return home would apply to females alike. It is of note that a study of Norwegian offshore workers found little difference between the psychological well-being of male and female offshore workers (Burke et al., 2008).

Carter and Zaczmarek (2009) report that the challenging offshore environment demands a high level of versatility and mental and physical toughness. With no superfluity of personnel, every role from document control to driller, data entry to deck-hand, from radio operator to roustabout and medic to offshore Installation manager (OIM) is integral to the running of the operation. The tenor of workplace relationships is defined by teamwork, efficiency and safety imperatives, rigid document trails such as the permit-to-work system around hazardous types of work, and learned, practiced responses to potential emergencies – all of which

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[23] The employees on the Timor Sea facilities, Kitan and Bayu-Undan, function around a month-on-month-off roster.

demand continued alertness, good mental and physical health and a proclivity to handle and survive the tensions and rigours (Adams, 2014; Parkes, 2013). It is of interest that the Offshore Installation Manager (OIM) of Bayu-Undan at the time of data collection for this study, who was ex-Merchant Navy (another bastion of masculinity) of many years spending large swathes of his work life on ships amongst mostly males, believed that women could play a dominant role in running an offshore O&G facility. The World Petroleum Congress has gone so far as to describe offshore women as an elite group of individuals imbued with attributes of fearlessness and resilience (Rick et al., 2017).

How women have 'fitted in' to the masculinised settings
The workplace reality for many offshore women appears in fact not to be one where they feel they have to fit in to a male preserve. Women breaking into the offshore environment in the Norwegian O&G industry have reported that if they exhibit high self-efficacy, they will get much support from male peers (BP Global, 2016). In fact, offshore Norway is no longer characterised as a male world. Faulkner's (2009) study of women engineers working in the UK oil fields that found little systematic evidence that they felt they had to 'fit in' to a masculine culture, and that not all men were comfortable with a masculinity that was exclusive of females. In none of the stories of offshore women breaking the 'gas' ceiling in Ponton's (2016) dossier of O&G industry females were there reports of discrimination experienced in the field. The reverse seemed to be true - gender did not seem to be a problematic issue and almost all of the women mentioned reported valuing the input of a male mentor (Ponton, 2016). Price (2015) reports that whilst senior engineers in the United States tend to exemplify a 'boys' club' this does not represent a major obstacle for women's success in their work. Bailey (2013) notes that female Canadian offshore workers enjoy the same camaraderie with male co-workers that men do. In the harsh, demanding environment with tight production and maintenance deadlines of operations relying on streamlined teamwork and crewmembers looking out for one another's safety, offshore women today appear in the main to be valued and respected as much as men (Adams, 2014; Austin, 2006; Carlisle, 2011; Ponton, 2016). It must be noted that there is a gap in the literature on the experiences of offshore women employed in catering and housekeeping roles – roles which a significant proportion of the target group of this case study have filled.

Policies and grievance procedures around sexual harassment and sexism in the workplace are becoming more common amongst companies in the global O&G industry suggesting that there is a shift towards more women-friendly workspaces. In the WA petroleum sector 60% of O&G companies have sex-based harassment grievance policies and procedures (Lord et al., 2014). ConocoPhillips, for example, monitors its Employee Assistance Programme in order to identify problem areas and initiate targeted training related to sex-based harassment (Lord et al., 2014). Respondents in my Masters research highlighted the 'zero tolerance' regime in the offshore workplace for sexual harassment and sexism and only one woman reported an incident - one that she was able to satisfactorily deal with herself (Adams, 2014).

Thus, in the last decade it has been noted that 'big oil's macho image has started to fade … as skills and talent trump gender' (Feltus, 2008, p. 72). In the Canadian O&G sector the track records of successful women are changing attitudes and it has been suggested that men in the industry wanting the same opportunities for their daughters have also contributed to a culture shift (Magnan, 2007). Ponton's (2016) accounts of female industry workers suggest that the most positive change has been in individual men's attitudes towards women who have accepted the challenge to make career choices that have taken them to new female frontiers within O&G. However, there is some female sentiment that corporate policies around gender equality (more commonly coined as gender diversity) in the O&G industry are not consistently pro-actively actioned, rendering it lagging behind other industries where 'male fiefdoms have been cracked open' (Nadeau, 2016, p. 1).

Diversity, merit and affirmative action
International oil companies (IOCs) are now very public about wanting gender diversity in the industry and have instituted programmes that include targeted recruitment, mentoring, gender bias evaluations and diversity training at management levels (Williams et al., 2014). Amongst WA O&G companies 70% provide leadership training that their women employees participate in, 80% have mentoring programmes for women and 90% have trainings in EEO and non-sexist workplace behaviour (Lord et al., 2014, p. 60). Due to the risk of male backlash through litigation (from men holding perceptions of women being unfairly favoured over them), the 'gender' part of gender diversity tends to have been dropped for a

preferred 'diversity' approach. Criticism has been leveled at diversity programmes for being mere window dressing or public relations exercises, as rhetoric that obscures gender disparities and renders major inequities in society simply 'difference' (Williams et al., 2014). One of the most successful types of diversity programmes (that has resonance with the notion of affirmative action) is one in which a corporation assigns the responsibility of achieving diversity targets to an individual or committee (Kalev, Kelly, & Dobbin, 2006),

As has previously been discussed, the major gender inequities in developing countries where globalised industry is active reflect not gender difference but rather gender disadvantage for women with respect to their participation and representation in the formal labour market. Chapter Three outlined the sustainable development agenda that incorporates the recruitment of the private sector (in particular via the CSR instrument of the UNGC) in contributing to the dismantling of barriers to gender equality in the developing world and creating decent work environments in which women can experience empowerment. The gender diversity drives of the O&G industry would tend to suggest that it has already established the gender equality thresholds of the UNGC - of equal opportunity and decent work for women. The International Labour Organization (ILO) argues that in order to challenge occupational and sectoral segregation and gender stereotypes in the labour market women must be in a position to shape and influence workplaces (Kuhn et al., 2017). Suggested initiatives are quotas and targets (with respect to both quantity and quality of jobs, work skills development and promotional ladders) for women's participation and leadership along with leadership training, mentorship and fast-tracked career measures (Kuhn et al., 2017).

A key point of discussion of this research concerns the efficacy of the global O&G industry having (explicit or implicit) affirmative action approaches or agendas aimed at attracting and promoting women in an LDC into training and jobs. These approaches would arise from corporations having the commitment to contribute to addressing the gender inequities and constraining gender norms that prevail in their country, and further, to fostering the emergence of empowered new female identities. To litigation-averse IOCs, it might be expected that the spectre of

affirmative action of having targets and quotas for female recruitment and advancement as a means to address gender equity and gender equality deficits for women would appear to be anathema (Kuhn et al., 2017). Additionally, the assertions of women engineers and scientists that they do not want preferential treatment in the O&G workplace, preferring gender-neutral hiring decisions based on their technical competence, would suggest that the notion of affirmative action is anathema to them also (Ponton, 2016; Williams et al., 2014). Whether the Timorese women offshore workers have been, wish to be or should be recruited on the basis of gender rather than merit is an important line of inquiry in this study. Whether a global O&G industry enclave in an LDC, alongside having goals for improving gender diversity ratios, could or should also incorporate hiring/training initiatives directed towards fostering empowerment outcomes for host-country female employees is also of interest.

Negotiations around targets and quotas for training and hiring local workers in developing countries on global oil and gas industry projects are often at the heart of relationships between international oil companies and host country governments. However, the notion of improving women's participation and work skills progress through an affirmative action approach, or even a gender diversity ethos, is not one that appears to have gained traction in local content discourse, arrangements and strategies. Further, there is a near invisibility of gender equality as an issue in local content guidelines, production sharing contracts and reporting. The next section will discuss the workforce development terrain of local content as it pertains to O&G projects in the developing world and to the gendered local content focus of this study - that is on the training and employment of host country females.

4.3 Social responsibility framed in (non-gendered) 'local content'

The social license to operate for global oil and gas ventures in developing countries
It has been estimated that 90% of new oil and gas production projects between 2010 and 2030 will be situated in developing countries (IPIECA, 2016, p. 7). It used to be that in the business of extracting wet oil from the developing world IOCs only had to pay taxes and royalties (Patusek, 2012). Now they can expect to be required by

legislation to also support human capital and capacity development and expand economic opportunities in the host countries of their operations (Kazzazi & Nouri, 2012; Ngoasong, 2014). The trend for the past decade has been for governments of developing countries to require IOCs engaging in exploration and production operations on their soil and in their seas to enter into formal local content arrangements through production sharing contracts (PSCs). This represents a shift away from the corporate social responsibility (CSR) approach IOCs have tended to use in the past to militate against negative perceptions in local communities around the activities of the extractive industries (Bastida, 2014).

The term local content describes the range of measurable benefits the O&G industry can deliver for the countries in which it operates. Supporting community development may be included as an optional, more philanthropic component (IPIECA, 2015). The International Petroleum Industry Environment Conservation Association (IPIECA) defines local content as: '…the added value brought to a host nation … through:

- Workforce development [by international companies/national companies, contractors/sub-contractors]: employment of local workforce and training of local workforce; and

- Investments in supplier development: developing supplies and services locally; and procuring supplies and services locally' (IPIECA, 2016, p. 1).

Local content thus essentially represents IOCs' social license to operate through their fostering of skills and technology transfers, capacity building, infrastructure and community projects in host countries and establishing supply chains and revenue sharing agreements (Tuodolo, 2009). It is a framework that spans a complex of industry, business, financial, political, training and employment and social linkages (Tordo, Warner, Manzano, & Anouti, 2013). This social license to operate can, in addition to direct recruitment of host country nationals, encompass such initiatives as capacity-building in new technologies management, the funding of STEM training/education programmes, the establishment of industry-specific skills development centres adhering to international standards, and on-the-job-learning (Bastida, 2014; Wise & Schtylla, 2007). A growing number of corporations are embracing the concept of local content and including their commitment to its

delivery as a key value proposition at the tendering stage of O&G projects in developing countries (Bastida, 2014; Esteves, Coyne, & Moreno, 2013; Overseas Development Institute & Engineers Against Poverty, 2007).

The IPIECA links local content with sustainable development advising IOCs to look to long-term benefits to host countries from their operations (IPIECA, 2016). The public relations narratives of IOCs around local content are increasingly echoing this theme such as Total's goal to 'sustainably enhance local skills' and Chevron's commitment to 'empower local competences' (Ngoasong, 2014, p. 475). However, expectations that the O&G industry align its activities with the strategic development goals of host governments have led to companies feeling pressured into delivering unrealistic local content targets around the numbers and types of jobs on operations that can be filled by locals (IPIECA, 2016; Wilson & Kuszewski, 2011). The relatively short timeframe from the acceptance of an exploration tender, to a drilling contract, to the onset of production often precludes the achievement of a thorough analysis of local workforce capacities and accurate forecasting of workforce development. Shortages of a skilled workforce and underdeveloped technical infrastructures characteristic of developing countries can make it problematic for IOCs to sustain their operations without using expatriate staff and imported inputs (Warner, 2011).

Standards in the O&G industry today are stringent and specific with no room for negotiation and failure to apply these across an entire contractor chain of an operation can lead to increased risk, unbudgeted costs, delays and contractual disputes (Wilson & Kuszewski, 2011). In the light of this, local content relationships might involve, for example, building trust between the global operator and local labour-hire employer that local candidates for offshore employment have been adequately vetted for their suitability. Preference, therefore, tends to be given to local companies that operate with aligned codes of conduct (such as around gender discrimination and sexual harassment), adhere to international safety and employee certification standards and have local knowledge of workforce capacities (Overseas Development Institute & Engineers Against Poverty, 2007).

The offshore petroleum industry is not labour intensive, which further limits the extent of direct recruitment of locals to operations. Ovadia (2014) has described the local O&G industry workforces in several African countries as a tiny percentage of their labour forces and mostly made up of expatriates and members of the foreign-educated local elites. However, a recent collaborative initiative to boost indigenous capacity levels involving IOCs Shell, ExxonMobil, Chevron and Eni has seen training programmes in key skill areas being divided amongst them, such as assembling valves, welding and marine services (Ovadia, 2014). Warner (2010) explains that PSCs increasingly cover a minimum number or proportion of locals on an O&G operation's workforce (sometimes disaggregated by skill level), a minimum amount of training provided to nationals (either by monetary value, proportion of contract value or number of training hours per person) with mandatory reporting on compliance and progress. Outreach activities such as scholarships and internships might be included as non-compliance projects as too might be planning around the retraining or retrenching of local workers after demobilisation (IPIECA, 2016; Warner, 2010).

Gender and local content

It is rare to find mention of gender in association with local content even with the IPIECA's (2011) blueprint for local content performance mentioning women – albeit itemised as a 'minority' category to be considered for workforce development. Only one instance could be found in the local content literature where gender is highlighted – this being Ghana's 2011 Local Content Plan in which was stated: 'While Government will provide equal opportunities for all citizens of the Republic of Ghana, the participation of women in the oil and gas industry will be actively encouraged, facilitated, promoted' (Ovadia, 2013, p. 12). In what capacity Ghanaian women will be encouraged to participate is not made clear. Evidence of how Ugandan women have been integrated into the development of onshore oil fields has seen them engaged in low paying casual labour, cooking and serving tea to oil workers, doing housekeeping for expatriates, picking up litter, cleaning and digging along roads and displaying signs within exploration sites (Global Rights Alert, 2013). There is neither mention of gender in the Timor-Leste PSCs nor the appearance of sex-disaggregated figures showing numbers of women recruited and/or trained in company reports. And yet the O&G industry stakeholders in the

three projects that this study encompasses appear to have taken a proactive approach to include a female dimension.

The chapter now moves into describing the development of the petroleum sector in Timor-Leste, discussing the potential availability of future opportunities for Timorese with oil and gas industry experience and highlighting the role of women in the sector.

4.4 The development of Timor-Leste's hydrocarbon resources

The history

The history of oil and gas exploration in the Timor Sea (south of Timor-Leste and north of Australia's Northern Territory) pre-dates independence - with the discovery of the small, low-producing Elang-Kakatua oil fields in 1994, (producing 1999-2006), high-producing Bayu and Undan gas fields in 1995 (first production 2004, with an estimated field life of 20 years) and the Sunrise and Troubador hydrocarbon fields in 1974 (collectively referred to as Greater Sunrise and as yet undeveloped) (ConocoPhillips Australia, 2016; La'o Hamutuk, 2002). Kitan oil field was discovered in 2008 with an estimated field life of seven years (INPEX Tokyo Office, 2011). There had been no other commercially-viable discoveries by 2016 and seismic testing carried out in the Timor Sea since 2005 tends to indicate that further discoveries of significant fields are unlikely (La'o Hamutuk, 2015b).

The extent to which Timor-Leste has benefited from developing offshore O&G reserves has been framed within a history of dispute with Australia over maritime borders. In 1989, prior to Timor-Leste's independence, Australia and Indonesia had negotiated a joint zone of cooperation (ZOC) in the marine area designated the Timor Gap which had been unresolved since the end of the Portuguese Timor era and Indonesia's illegally occupation of East Timor. This was via a treaty whereby revenues from petroleum resource exploitation would be shared equally between the two countries (Triggs & Bialeck, 2002). In 2002, after independence, the Timor Sea Treaty (TST) was signed between Australia and Timor-Leste which established the Joint Petroleum Development Area (JPDA) (Fig. 2 p. 120) (Schofield, 2007). This zone mirrors a portion of the previous ZOC and has allowed for joint development

of the petroleum resources with a 90/10 oil and gas revenue split in Timor-Leste's favour (Rothwell, 2017).

Elang-Kakatua oil fields provided a small amount of revenue to Timor-Leste, but the oil bonanza came when Bayu-Undan gas condensate field began producing in 2004 (ConocoPhillips Australia, 2016; La'o Hamutuk, 2002). The petroleum fund coffers were further bolstered when Kitan production came on stream in 2011. Kitan ceased production in December 2015, whilst Bayu-Undan is expected to continue producing at a declining rate until 2021 (La'o Hamutuk, 2016a). Under the 2006 Certain Maritime Arrangements in the Timor Sea (CMATS) Treaty between Australia and Timor-Leste the proceeds from the Greater Sunrise field, of which 20% falls in the JPDA and the remaining 80% within Australian territory, would be split 50/50 between the two countries (Grenville, 2016, p. 2). Damon (2016) has estimated the net worth of revenues that could be channelled to Timor-Leste to exceed US$8billion in a best-case-scenario (based on backfilling to ConocoPhillips' existing LNG export plant in Darwin). Due to legal and fiscal uncertainties surrounding Greater Sunrise, Australian oil major Woodside Energy Ltd, which headed the consortium holding rights to develop the field, had shelved the Sunrise project in 2005 (Schofield, 2007).
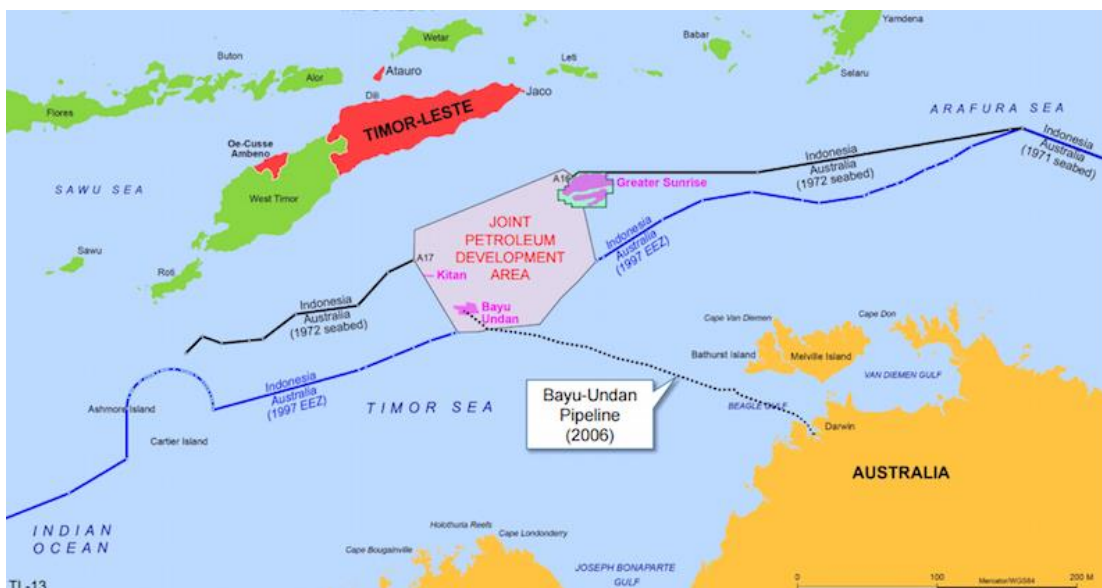
Figure 2: The Joint Petroleum Development Area
Source: (Permanent Court of Arbitration, 2016).

The Timor-Leste government, in the prolonged negotiations with Australia to establish a permanent maritime border between the two countries has pursued a claim that would see the entire JPDA, extended laterally to encompass all of Greater Sunrise, fall under Timorese sovereignty. Concern has been expressed by a range of commentators that renegotiating the lateral boundaries carries the risk that Indonesia could enter the dispute and make a claim to Greater Sunrise field (Grenville, 2016; Schofield, 2007; Strating, 2017). As this thesis went to press Timor-Leste and Australia had signed a draft treaty at the United Nations which sees the small country receiving 70% of revenue from Greater Sunrise Field if the gas is piped to its south coast or 80% if it is piped to Australia for processing. (Da Cruz, 2018). In the expectation of a pipeline being built from the as yet untapped Greater Sunrise field to an onshore Timor-Leste facility (deemed to be an unlikely event by some commentators), the government's 2011-2030 Strategic Development Plan (SDP) rolled out a plan to develop a USD2 billion petroleum infrastructure corridor along the south coast, named the Tasi Mane Project (La'o Hamutuk, 2016a, p. 7). TIMOR GAP E.P. (Timor-Leste's national oil company established in 2011) was mandated, on behalf of the petroleum resources ministry, *National Petroleum Authority/Autoridade Nacional do Petroleo* - ANP (which in 2016 became the *Autoridade Nacional Do Petroleo e Minerais Timor Leste* – ANPM), to manage and administer the day-to-day activities of the Tasi Mane project.

The future
Tasi Mane is to be an integrated petroleum infrastructure in Timor-Leste's south coastal zone. It will include the Beaco LNG-Plant cluster, the Betano Refinery and Petrochemicals industry complex and the Suai Supply Base cluster comprising a port, airport, fabrication yards, supply base, heavy metals workshop, shipbuilding/repair facilities and a housing complex (Palatino, 2011). Budgeted costs for the project for the period 2015-2019 alone exceeded USD433 million (ADB, 2015, p. 13) and to supplement that figure tens of millions of USD worth of loans from multilateral agencies and foreign governments had already been signed up by 2017 (La'o Hamutuk, 2017b).

While the Timor-Leste government remains adamant that its flagship Tasi Mane project is a legitimate development strategy, considerable scepticism has been

expressed from petroleum experts and political economists about its rationale, viability and social and economic benefits to the Timorese people (ADB, 2015; Bovensiepen et al., 2016; D. Evans, 2016; Kingsbury, 2017b; La'o Hamutuk, 2014, 2016b; Palatino, 2011; Scambary, 2015; Strating, 2017). Scambary (2015) suggests that the project is politically rather than economically motivated, and points out that the 2014 budgeted allocation for Suai Supply Base and Airport alone was five times the allocated spend for infrastructure for agriculture, education, water and sanitation and that no feasibility study has weighed up potential financial and employment returns of Tasi-Mane project against the outlay, nor has any sufficient assessment of environmental risks of the south coast project been carried out. A government commissioned study of socio-economic benefits of the LNG plant build and operations has suggested that in the construction phase up to 600 jobs requiring limited skills would be created, whilst during operations only 50-100 positions would be required (D. Evans, 2016, p. 2). Several key respondents in this study also had serious doubts on its feasibility, and additionally the likelihood of future opportunities arising for those Timorese with existing O&G industry-specific skills and competences.

Even if Timor-Leste were to gain complete control of Greater Sunrise, development plans based around the south coast onshore LNG refinery are likely to meet with lack of interest from foreign investors, and in particular the joint development partner Woodside (Kingsbury, 2017b). Concerns over the risks associated with piping the gas across the very deep Timor Trench to the south Timor coast combined with a preference for the considerably more cost-efficient option of a floating processing platform linked via the existing pipeline from Bayu-Undan oil field to the LNG plant in Darwin are behind this lack of interest (D. Evans, 2016). This preferred option has the advantage of being able to produce revenue for Timor-Leste in time to address its declining income stream from Bayu-Undan (Kingsbury, 2017a). Additionally, the cost of developing the resource via the backfill to an existing LNG facility has been estimated to be a quarter of that to pipe to a new Timor-Leste one (D. Evans, 2016). A sobering scenario if the gas were to be processed in Timor-Leste is the calculated USD28 billion loss over a 30-year production period (D. Evans,

2016, p. 3). At the time of writing Key Informants of this study indicated that imminent development of Greater Sunrise appeared to be beyond the horizon.

Meanwhile TIMOR GAP has been a stakeholder in recent seismic testing exercises in two offshore blocks in the Timor Sea (one in the JPDA and one in the Timor-Leste Exclusive Area – TLEA), (TIMOR GAP, 2016). Additionally, in early 2017 TIMOR GAP also joined forces with Timor Resources Holdings (a subsidiary of Australian manufacturing and engineering company Nepean Group) for the exploration of two onshore blocks in south-western Timor-Leste where oil seeps have been evident (TIMOR GAP, 2017).

Women's representation in the Timor-Leste petroleum sector

In the main body of the 2016 TIMOR GAP Annual Report there was a gendered breakdown of its onshore government department employees but not in any ANP reports (although the 2015 ANP Annual Report had sex-disaggregated figures for trainings, scholarships and internships located in an annex). In 2015 the ANP employed 80 staff and engaged in a raft of technical and management training programmes (Autoridade Nacional do Petróleo Timor-Leste, 2015, p. 10). A cursory examination of the 2014 and 2015 ANP Annual Reports revealed that at the top echelons of the institution females numbered only ones and twos (this has been validated by one of the Timorese female respondents, an intern in the ANP, who described the bureaucracy as being top heavy with older Timorese men). Lower down the hierarchy, in 2015, of 50 staff who underwent management and technical trainings females numbered 10, and of 18 final year ANP-supported undergraduates engaged in petroleum industry-related studies and 12 ANP graduate interns females were 8 and 10 respectively (Autoridade Nacional do Petróleo Timor-Leste, 2015). In 2016 TIMOR GAP employed 128 staff of whom 40 were female and 88 male – with prospects for ongoing trainings in Systems, Application and Product Software (SAP), Health Safety and Environment (HSE), T-BOSIET, LNG Process Operation and Maintenance and seismic data interpretation (TIMOR GAP, 2016, p. 13). It is of note that in 2016 TIMOR GAP received the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) certification in the areas of HSE Management Systems, Quality Management Systems and Environmental Management Systems (TIMOR GAP,

2016) which represents an important empowering standard of safety culture within which staff are engaged.

The final two sections of this chapter relate specifically to the Timor Sea operations and local content scenarios with which the female target group of the study has been associated.

4.5 The case study Timor Sea operations

Kitan oil project
The Kitan oilfield was located in the JPDA of the Timor Sea at a water depth of 310m, 170km off the coast of Timor-Leste and 500km from the Australian coast (Offshore Technology, 2008).

Figure 3: Blue Water *Glas Dowr* Floating Production Storage and Offloading (FPSO) vessel. Source: (La'o Hamutuk, 2016, p. 1).

Italian oil giant Eni was the operator (with a 40% interest), producing on behalf of co-venturers Inpex (35%) and Talisman Resources (25%) (Offshore Technology, 2008, p. 1). First oil was produced in October 2011 from the reserves that were estimated to be at 68.8 million barrels with a 50% recovery factor (Kammerzel, 2011, p. 1). After drilling was completed, the Kitan oil field was developed through

the installation of three subsea completion wells tied back to the Floating Production, Storage and Offloading (FPSO) facility, *Glas Dowr,* which was chartered, operated and maintained by Bluewater Energy Services B.V. (Offshore Technology, 2008, p. 1) (see Fig. 3 p. 124). The *Glas Dowr* facility, permanently moored throughout field-life operations, was based on a new oil tanker hull and provided accommodation for up to 96 people (Offshore Technology, 2008, p. 5). It was here that the separation and treatment of crude oil, water and gases, arriving on board from the sub-sea wells via flexible pipelines, was carried out using hydrocarbon-processing equipment. The treated oil was then transferred to cargo tanks in the ship's hull to be offloaded to tankers for shipment to refinery. Due mainly to the field nearing depletion, Kitan production ceased in December 2015 (La'o Hamutuk, 2016). The Timorese women working on *Glas Dowr* have been in the job areas of laboratory technician, medic and catering and housekeeping.

Bayu-Undan gas recycling project
The Bayu-Undan gas-condensate field was discovered in 1995 in the Timor Sea within the JPDA with an estimated field life of 20 years. The field is 25x15km, located in 80m of water, 250km south west of Suai in Timor-Leste and 500km north west of Darwin, Australia (Offshore Technology, 2017b, p. 3). The field was developed in three phases with commercial production of condensates and liquid petroleum gases (LPGs) beginning in 2004, of liquefied natural gas (LNG) in 2006, and further subsea production wells producing in 2015.

The Bayu-Undan offshore facilities (see Fig. 4 p. 126) comprise three primary components – a Central Production and Processing Complex (CPP) which incorporates a highly complex liquid stripping plant using state-of-the-art processing technology, an unmanned Wellhead Platform (WPI), and the world's first multiuse separate hydrocarbons (propane, butane and condensate) floating storage facility and offloading vessel (FSO) (Rigzone, 2007). The operational complexity has been compounded by the remoteness of its location and its sheer size (when built its two main platforms combined were the world's largest open-water float-over installation). Gas that is produced from the reservoir is stripped of condensate and LPGs that are then piped to the FSO where they are stored before being uploaded onto tankers for export to international markets (Offshore Technology, 2017a).

Lean or dry natural gas (mainly residual methane left after the heavier hydrocarbons have been condensed) is transported via a 500-km sub-sea pipeline to a facility in Darwin, where it is processed to produce LNG that is then transported to Japanese markets (ConocoPhillips Australia, 2017a).

Figure 4: Bayu-Undan Gas Recycle Project.

Source: (La'o Hamutuk, 2016, p. 1).

The CPP itself consists of two separate bridge-linked platforms – the Drilling, Production and Processing (DPP) platform and the Compression, Utilities and Quarters (CUQ) platform (Offshore Technology, 2017b, p. 7; Tokyo Gas, 2017). DPP platform provides two thirds of the raw liquid gas from the reservoir via four production wells and also separates the well fluids into the respective gas and liquid products (Tokyo Gas). On CUQ platform, which has a helideck and living quarters for 80 people, the processed gas is compressed to be either re-injected back into the reservoir or exported via the Darwin pipeline (Tokyo Gas). The WPI is situated at 7km from CPP, and serves as a secondary production centre, providing around a third of the raw liquid gas to the DPP via a sub-sea pipeline while the FSO, at 2km from CPP, is linked to the DPP via four sub-sea pipelines, has a helideck and can accommodate 60 POB (Offshore Technology, 2017a, p. 7; Tokyo Gas). An additional unit connected to CPP via a bridge is *Seafox Frontier*, a 3-legged jackup (that is, it can

be linked to a structure at any desired point in operations) accommodation and support services vessel (ASV) owned and operated by the company, Seafox. Frontier has a POB capacity of 290, a helicopter deck and leisure, health and well-being facilities (Seafox, 2017, p. 1).

Global company ConocoPhillips (CoP), which has a 57.2% stake in Bayu-Undan, operates the field on behalf of co-venturers Santos (11.5%), Inpex (11.3%), Eni (11%), Tokyo Timor Sea Resources (9.2%) (Offshore Technology, 2017a, p. 3). Global contractors involved with Bayu-Undan who, along with CoP, have been associated with Timorese women's industry and offshore employment experiences are Clough AMEC (asset support, operations and maintenance services to the field development), Millenium Offshore Services (MOS) and Seafox (accommodation units), WorleyParsons (engineering services), Dili-based transportation logistics company SDV East Timor (crew transport to and from the offshore facilities) and ESS/Compass Group (catering and housekeeping services).

The Timorese women who have worked on Bayu-Undan have been located on the CUQ and ASV units, employed in a wide range of roles spanning hospitality, HSE, logistics, bridge control, administration, technical, materials and fabric maintenance job fields.

Bayu-Undan seismic survey

In October 2015 ConocoPhillips contracted Norwegian company, Petroleum Geo-Services (PGS), to acquire 3D seismic data in the JPDA. PGS used *Ramform Sovereign* for the operation, a 102m-long purpose-built seismic survey vessel with PoB capacity of 70 (Ship Technology, 2017, p. 1)(see Fig 5. p. 128). Two Timorese women respondents spent time on the vessel in marine mammal observation (MMO) positions.

Figure 5: Ramform Sovereign seismic vessel.
Source: (Ship Technology, 2017).

The Kitan and Bayu-Undan ventures are framed within production sharing contracts (PSCs) through which local content benefits accrue to the Timor-Leste government (through revenues) and to Timorese people (through work skills development, employment and supply chains). It is within this context that the opportunities for local female employment have arisen.

4.6 Local content: Establishing a pipeline of Timorese nationals

Kitan and Bayu-Undan Production Sharing Contracts

Kitan and Bayu-Undan are the only petroleum operations that have to date entailed Timor-Leste local content arrangements. Their Production Sharing Contracts (PSCs) have been between the ANP (latterly ANPM) and the main stakeholder companies involved in the fields' development. When the ANP was established in 2008 its was mandated with the responsibility to maximise Timor-Leste's revenue from and participation in its petroleum sector and to manage and regulate all petroleum activities in the JPDA and the country's exclusive jurisdiction areas (onshore and in the Timor-Leste Exclusive Area of the Timor Sea – TLEA which is between the JPDA and the south coast). This would entail supervising compliance with the rules and

regulations relating to exploration, development, production, distribution of oil and gas resources and has included the engagement of owner-operator and contractor companies with the ANP/ANPM in aligning, endorsing local content principles and vision, setting parameters and targets and evaluating progress in the training and employment of Timorese in the industry and enhancement of engagement with local suppliers.

Thus, as well as laying down the revenue-sharing parameters of field yields, the fine print of the PSCs commit the Kitan and Bayu-Undan owner/operators and contractors to giving preference to: 'the acquisition of goods and services from persons based in Timor-Leste, provided they are offered on competitive terms and conditions', and; the employment of nationals and permanent residents of Timor-Leste on Petroleum Operations 'with due regard to occupational health and safety requirements' (Natural Resource Governance Institute, 2016, p. 26). Unlike other resource-rich developing countries, due to constraints around infrastructure inadequacies and skills shortages, there have been no fixed percentages for employing nationals in Timor-Leste's local content (Chee, 2015).

The ANP itself has acknowledged that the country has lacked a 'skilled workforce to correspond to the need of industry requirements' at national and regional labour market levels (Autoridade Nacional do Petróleo Timor-Leste, 2015, p. 38). Although there has been a bulge of graduates returning home after completing petroleum industry-related studies, their hands-on industry experience has been deficient (Chee, 2015). The consequence of this is that whilst there has been a high focus on training in local content priorities, many of the Timorese who have been longer-term employees on the offshore facilities have had entry-level, trainee or low-skill positions. Nonetheless, the result of consistent efforts over more than a decade by owner/operator/contractor companies of the two offshore installations, Bayu-Undan and Kitan, has been the skills certifications and on-the-job experiences of upwards of 500 Timorese nationals. Most of those employed in the blue-collar trades and in hospitality roles (mostly males but also three female trainees

beginning in 2016) have qualified to Level Certification II[24] (although one male has been promoted to an offshore supervisor role and a female to camp boss). Others (and particularly females) have been promoted to higher levels of responsibility in areas such as laboratory testing, materials supply and control, HSE and transportation logistics.

As has been previously mentioned, there are no sex-disaggregated figures in any official documenting of the training and employment of Timorese individuals via local content arrangements (although individual Timorese women's achievements have appeared in operator and contractor reports and company publications). However, the scope of this research allows for a reliable calculation to be made of upwards of 40 Timorese women having had offshore experience.

Kitan Local Content

In 2015 Kitan project had 94 Timorese employed in offshore positions and 11 onshore (Autoridade Nacional do Petróleo Timor-Leste, 2015, p. 31) and had peaked at 268 total Timorese in 2013 (Autoridade Nacional do Petróleo Timor-Leste, 2014, p. 29). Associated with the project has been on-the-job learning and training programmes including in areas of IT, administration, leadership, English fluency, engineering, electrical, mechanical, laboratory, HSE, T-BOSIET, hazardous substances, hydrocarbon processing and Able Seaman Deck, deck officer, kitchen hand, food handling and food safety (Autoridade Nacional do Petróleo Timor-Leste, 2012, pp. 73-79). Over 30% of offshore crew and helicopter logistics staff in 2013 were Timorese (Autoridade Nacional do Petróleo Timor-Leste, 2013, p. 32). This number swelled significantly during an asset integrity and maintenance (AIM) schedule in 2014. A Kitan-sponsored 5-year professional training and on-the-job

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[24] The skills levels required for offshore positions on Bayu-Undan and Kitan correspond with the Australian Qualifications Framework. Graduates at certification at level II, for example, will have: 'basic factual, technical and procedural knowledge of a defined area of work and learning'; 'basic cognitive, technical and communication skills to apply appropriate methods, tools, materials and readily available information to undertake defined activities and to provide solutions to a limited range of predictable problems', and; will be able to 'apply knowledge and skills to demonstrate autonomy and limited judgment in structured and stable contexts and within narrow parameters' (Governance Quality and Access Branch, 2017, p. 1).

experience local content programme produced 10 national graduates, of whom one was a female who became a lab technician position on *Glas Dowr.*

Bayu-Undan Local Content
In the 15 years until the end of 2016 Bayu-Undan project had directed in excess of USD49.2 million dollars towards training and employment career programmes for Timorese nationals and permanent residents (ConocoPhillips Australia, 2017a, p. 2). Trainings encompassed those aforementioned for Kitan project and further included areas of rigging, scaffolding, crane operations, dangerous goods, working in confined spaces and at heights, permit-to-work system, incident reporting, life boat and fast rescue craft procedures, and communication skills (Autoridade Nacional do Petróleo Timor-Leste, 2012, pp. 67-73). By 2016 CHC had trained Timor-Leste's first four licensed aircraft maintenance engineers, ESS qualified 12 onshore trainees in Certificate III in hospitality and implemented a structured up-skilling programme for offshore cooks and unit managers/camp bosses (one of whom is a female respondent), and CAJV had established an Operations & Maintenance Core Crew Trainees programme in Cert II in Mechanical and Electrical (called 'Site Skills' and based in the Philippines) through their local content plan and completed the first 18-trainee intake (ConocoPhillips Australia, 2017a, p. 3). Of the 2016 Site Skills graduates who were subsequently recruited to offshore trainee positions on Bayu-Undan 3 were females and are respondents in this study.

The employment of Timorese in roles on Bayu-Undan project peaked at 391 in 2014 (due to an AIM schedule) mostly in positions with ESS, CAJV (maintenance and operations), CHC Helicopters and Air North (Autoridade Nacional do Petróleo Timor-Leste, 2014, p. 29). Numbers of Timorese on offshore operations are forecasted to swell again by 40% in 2018, this contingent generally characterized as being at semi-skilled level (ConocoPhillips Australia, 2017a).

A critical facet of local content on both Kitan and Bayu-Undan operations has been the involvement of locally owned labour hire company, Caltech Offshore Services (Caltech), which acts as a conduit for the training, recruitment, certification, logistics and wages of Timorese locals in offshore roles for contractors (including CAJV, Seafox, Millennium Offshore Services (MOS), WorleyParsons and Bluewater) and

has played a key on-the-ground role for promoting the industry involvement of hundreds of Timorese since 2004. Other local actors involved with training and recruitment of local Timorese for offshore operations have been Konnekto employment agency, East Timor Development Agency (EDTA) Training Centre (providing hospitality training) and Lorosae English Language Institute. With a key focus of this case study being on the gendered 'development footprint' of the global O&G industry in Timor-Leste (through contributing to female nationals' capability sets and empowerment gains through and offshore employment experience and related work skills development) the role of these and all of the organisational stakeholders linked within the local content framework have been placed under its gender lens.

4.7 Concluding remarks

This chapter has provided an overview of the global O&G industry, in particular its offshore sector, and highlighted the representation and experience of the less than 10% of women working in the sector. The descriptive parts of the chapter, concerning the remote location, the structures, systems and technologies of offshore installations, their historically masculinised workplace environment and the lifestyle and challenges for crew, awakens the reader to the consideration of the unique fusion of cognitive, physical, psychological and gendered frontiers that have been advanced by the group of Timorese women offshore workers in this study – living as they do in a poor and patriarchal host country and training/working in a high-tech, non-traditional job field.

The discursive terrain around the key theme of the gendered development footprint of the global O&G industry has been introduced – embracing, on the one hand, the imperatives for the sector to pursue diversity drives in order to address and redress industry-wide gender disparities at the same time as maintaining merit-based decision-making around employment, and on the other, the potential need for affirmative action by global industry actors in this decision-making in order to make inroads into meeting the empowerment needs and interests of females in the host developing countries of their operations.

The local content parameters of global O&G corporations' social license to operate in developing countries have been outlined and discussed, with reference to gender. Timor-Leste's hydrocarbon resources development has been outlined, with details of the Timor Sea operations on which the female subject group of this case study have been involved and discussion of the complexion of Timor-Leste local content.

The following chapter outlines and discusses the research strategy employed in this case study – that is, for the gathering and analysis of the narratives and viewpoints of the female target group concerning their learning and earning journeys and achievements, as well as those of key individuals involved in the Kitan and Bayu-Undan stakeholder networks associated with their training and recruitment for offshore work.

Chapter Five: Research Strategy

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapters have provided contextual and conceptual framing within which the research topic of this case study is situated. This framework, with its underlying empowerment rubric of agency, potential and structures of opportunity, shapes the scope and focus of the gender lens as it is applied throughout the study. A set of themes has been outlined in Chapter Two that pertain to the Research Aim (this being to provide gendered understandings of the development footprint of an offshore oil and gas (O&G) industry enclave in a Least Developed Country (LDC)) and to the following Research Objectives:

- **To explore (within the stakeholder networks of Timor Sea oil and gas projects) the ways in which organisational agendas and decision-making processes, as well as the attitudes, agency and actions of industry and associated actors, have influenced the empowerment journeys of Timorese women through their offshore employment experience and related work skills development.**

- **To evaluate the ways in which the experience of working in the offshore oil and gas setting has contributed to enduring empowerment gains for women in a Least Developed Country.**

This chapter outlines and discusses the research strategy (its methodology and methods) that is employed so as to achieve the research aim and objectives.

Before outlining the shape of the chapter, the rationale behind the order of the Research Objectives needs some explanation. Firstly, there is no intention to overshadow the empowerment journeys and achievements of the women in the target group by foregrounding the role played by the Timor-Leste O&G industry stakeholders in these. Secondly, it makes analytical sense to explore and understand, linearly, the impact chains of inputs/investments into the women's WSD and employment starting from the decision-making processes, intents and actions within the O&G organisational structures as these have gained traction upon the women's agency and abilities. Following this with evaluation of the women's

own meanings around the subsequent (offshore-related) gains in their capabilities sets and empowerment as a result of these, and the exploration of narrative viewpoint on how their new empowerment status might endure seems to be the intelligent option. In the final chapter of the thesis this order is upturned, summarising firstly the (by then) known outcomes of the women's empowerment gains and then reflecting upon the main Research Aim: *"In what ways and to what extent is the global oil and gas industry able to deliver enduring empowerment outcomes for women in Asia-Pacific?"* and canvassing the potential for more to have been done (or not).

The chapter begins by explaining how and why this study emerged out of the knowledge presented, and knowledge gaps identified, in my previous Masters research. The shape of the new case study – its structural parameters and temporal reach is presented. This is followed by the rationale behind using the case study approach – that is, as most appropriate for capturing, holistically, the interconnected phenomena embodied in the research objectives.

The chapter moves on to explain the purpose and ontology of the construct of a women's human capital portfolio, as it is employed as a methodological tool in this research - to represent a critical cornerstone of their capabilities sets (and by inference an empowerment strength) as these might predict their future well-being. Next the choice of using the qualitative research method of semi-structured narrative interviews to gather the information-rich primary source data is discussed. This is required to illuminate the process of the women's empowerment journeys – that is, to build the multifaceted and multidimensional portraits of their offshore-experience enhanced empowerment status and the influence upon this of inter-relational and decision-making processes within their training/work settings. This is accompanied by allusion to the epistemology underlying the methodology - of humans knowing their stuff. There follow considerations of researcher positionality and of the need for the researcher to be open to embracing a divergence of meanings in the narratives.

The chapter then details the data sources, and outlines the sampling process and fieldwork activities. This is followed by discussion of the research ethics approval

process, ethical, power and data credibility considerations. The chapter then concludes by indicating the approach taken in the analysis of data.

5.2 A new case study emerges from previous research

This research builds on the findings of my Masters (2014) case study about the challenges and changes in 16 Timorese women's lives as a result of their employment experience (of up to 18 months) on Bayu-Undan offshore gas production facility. This previous study deemed the social phenomenon of the women's empowered female identities arising out of their experiences in non-service positions in a historically male, global industry as rare and remarkable (Adams, 2014). The study also highlighted the pivotal, catalytic development role played by a locally owned private sector entity, Caltech Offshore Services (Caltech), as one of the employing stakeholders of Bayu-Undan in opening up decent work and work skills development opportunities for Timorese females in this nontraditional job field (Adams, 2014). The study revealed that the women's empowerment progress ticked a significant raft of gender and development indicators in personal, social and economic dimensions. However, the study's conclusions left suspended two questions: the extent to which the women's empowerment progress might be considered consolidated and enduring enough to carry their well-being through into uncertain futures, and; the extent of the understanding and/or commitment amongst the wider network of stakeholders in the Timor-Leste global O&G industry enclave concerning the gender and development significance of fostering this progress.

Four considerations compelled a re-engagement with the topic, both broadening and deepening the scope and penetration of the gender lens for the new area of research. These were:
- The existence of a wider group of Timorese women with offshore Timor Sea experience (not just on Bayu-Undan but also on Kitan facility and the Ramform Sovereign seismic vessel and including a significant group in hospitality roles). This offered the research opportunity to compare and contrast the women's experiences on the different offshore work sites as well

as the hue of empowerment outcomes for the women employed in kitchen and accommodation service roles.

- The existence of a network of industry and labour-hire actors (largely foreign, beyond and interconnected with Caltech) who had had input into decision-making and investments with regard to the women's recruitment and work skills development (who may or may not have shared the same pro-development ethos). Bringing to light understandings around these actors' agency, attitudes and actions towards the fostering of the women's empowerment gains would provide a more comprehensive picture of intentions (at individual, between-individual, intra- and inter-organisational levels) behind the gendered development footprint of the industry enclave.

- The longitudinal element with respect to the differences in the lengths of times spent in the offshore setting within the wider group of women which promised both convergent and divergent meanings around the shape and strengths of their industry-enhanced human capital portfolios, as these have melded with their existing empowerment strengths and expanded capabilities sets, and, critically;

- The imminent downsizing of the Bayu-Undan crew (within two years of the conclusion of the Masters research and due to the completion of an asset integrity maintenance (AIM) phase on the facility) and ultimate de-mobilisation of both Kitan and Bayu-Undan operations (within the next decade)[25]. The prospect of Timorese redundancies from offshore roles, when imagined against the Timor-Leste backdrop of the non-existence of similar industry and of extremely high levels of unemployment, presented a not unlikely future scenario of shrinking opportunities for the women to be able to continue to realise their learning and earning potential. The prospect of uncertain employment futures for the women in a patriarchal society where the normative default role for women not in formal work is to stay at home cooking and cleaning for family (for those in relationships regardless of whether or not their partner/husband has a job) raised the issue of the

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[25] In fact, by the time I came to conduct the fieldwork, Bayu-Undan had already been downsized and Kitan field closed, with the result that most of the de-mobilised non-service female crewmembers had been relocated into onshore industry jobs and the female offshore hospitality crewmembers had been moved (at their request) into job-shared positions on Bayu-Undan.

capacity of the women's oil and gas industry-related capability gains to sustain their empowerment well-being into the future. The integrity and gendered value of the new Timorese female identities, reflective of their agency and positive experiences in navigating a high tech, nontraditional job field and reflected in their self-confidence, skills and competence levels and economic self-reliance appeared to be at serious risk of being undermined in the future and warranted the re-focusing of attention. This was particularly in terms of three levels of potential negative repercussions: the personal (such as in the depreciation of their skills, the loss of their self-worth and independence); the social (such as lowered socio/economic status and the dilution of the strength of their role modeling to other Timorese females), and; the wider societal importance of their positive experience in a non-traditional job field to continue to be a catalyst for opening decent work opportunities for other females in technical and industry settings in their country. The corollary of focusing attention on envisioning empowerment futures for Timorese offshore women workers is the examination of global oil and gas industry's capacity to offset potential negative prospects for women by leaving a sustainable gendered footprint behind after their operations cease.

The extended scope and depth of this new case study are in response to these considerations. Defining its shape (see Fig. 6, p.139) is the organisational network of the three Timor Sea industry structures of opportunity as they are interconnected within the parameters of the Timor-Leste local content umbrella.

It has been said about organisational networks that within them 'there are all layers of social structure and social causation, folded into each other, distinguishable only in analytical terms' (Castells, 2012, p. 154). Within this case study the organisational layers (local and global) and spaces where the layers fold into each other are explored (that is, at intra- and inter-organisational levels) in order to understand the mechanics of social causation that have contributed to the levels and complexions of the Timorese women's empowerment.
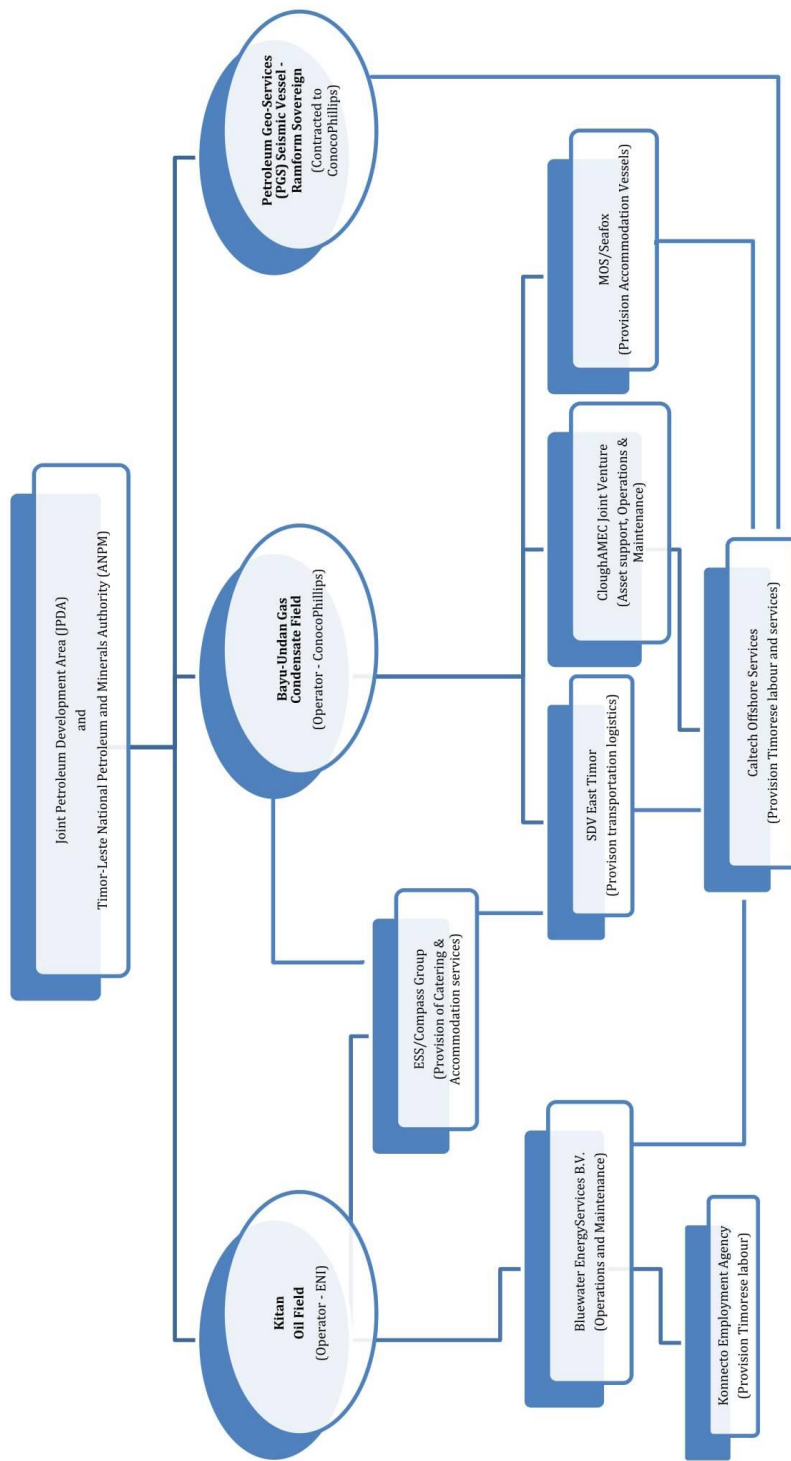
Figure 6: The case study organisational (structures of opportunity) parameters

There is some complexity in the shape and within the body of this case study as a theatre of action and relationships. Some areas operate independently from others (such as the physical workspaces and owner/operator company headquarters) and others have organisational overlaps (such as where they fall under the local content strategy and regulatory regime or have shared the labour hire services of Caltech). There are differences amongst the two main operations with regards to product (such as Kitan extracting oil and Bayu-Undan natural gas), parent owner/operator companies, amongst their first-tier contracting companies and local labour-hire contractors, as well as in size and life cycle. However, there are considerable overlaps of context, work regimes, skillset requirements of crew, policies and processes and contractual relationships [26]. Moreover, several of the research respondents have had decision-making roles associated with Timorese women on more than one of the facilities.

The preconceptions that: i) there would be a high degree of similarity between the three facilities regarding employee recruitment, management and operational processes, workplace culture and company approaches to gender equality as well in the projects' formal arrangements with the Timor-Leste local content regulatory body, and; ii) there would be significant shared meaning amongst the group of women around their experience of straddling (in a lived way) starkly contrasting worlds (the isolated high tech, masculinised offshore workplace and their poor, post-conflict and patriarchally-defined societal context) were key factors behind the methodological decision to combine the communities of all three operations under

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[26] The areas of overlap include the following: all projects have involved Timorese crewmembers working under a live-in FIFO system (for Bayu-Undan and Kitan the offshore swings are a month long, for the seismic operation, due to its short-term nature, the women's swings were shorter); the operators and major foreign contractors (with the exception of PGS) all have their headquarters in Australia; in all projects generic and industry-specific training is based on Australian qualification standards; for the extraction/production operations especially, there is similarity of operating systems and procedures and the range of required skillsets and job roles; for all three projects, there is adherence to Australian health and safety and industry employment regulations, policies and practices around equal opportunities, gender discrimination and sexual harassment and the rig/vessel-ready trainings necessary for crewmembers to have; there is similarity in teamwork arrangements and the nature of chain of command (such as for Kitan and Bayu-Undan being headed by offshore facility managers) with the women's immediate superiors being their supervisors or superintendents; all are integrated into the Timor-Leste local content organisational structure involving contractual arrangements (in the form of Production Sharing Contracts) with the regulatory body, the ANP; for both Kitan and Bayu-Undan operations Italian oil giant ENI has ownership roles and ESS/Compass Group is the major contractor providing catering and accommodation support services, and; all three projects have sourced labour through Caltech.

the one umbrella case study. In addition to the clear contextual/organisational demarcation the study has a temporal boundary within which there is both a wide and narrow temporal focus. The narrow, or sharper, focus captures and traces processes and developments over a timeframe that starts from when Timorese women began to be recruited to offshore positions in 2010 up until the end of the second data collection stage of the research in late 2017. The wide-angle lens extends outwards to capturing both a retrospective examination of the Timorese women's empowerment journeys, pre-entry to offshore spaces, and a forward-looking envisioning of their future well-being scenarios.

The structural embrace and temporal reach of the case study lend the research a breadth and depth of scope for comprehensively and holistically capturing the meanings of the aforementioned empowerment rubric as it has been threaded through the female target group's lived and worked experiences. Integrated within these meanings are the women's own purposive action towards realising potential goals and the purposive investments by the O&G industry structures of opportunity into this realisation of potential. The next section presents the methodological rationale behind the use of the qualitative case study design and the tool of the human capital portfolio construct.

5.3 Methodology

The rationale for the qualitative case study approach
The case study approach allows for the illumination of a 'whole' picture of interconnected social phenomena to evolve (Yin, 2009). In this study the whole picture encapsulates the women's personal and socio-economic empowerment progress arising from their agency, efforts and subsequent achievements, as well as the organisational networks they have traversed and inhabited. The fit of the of the case study lies in its purpose of tracing and highlighting the detail in the workings of relationships, social processes, operational links over time, whilst at the same time factoring in of the interpenetrating nature of contextual forces and realities, and not restricting attention simply to the apparent objective outcomes of these (Denscombe, 2010; Flyvbjerg, 2011; Stewart-Withers, Banks, McGregor, & Meo-Sewabu, 2014; Yin, 2009). The central tendency in case studies, Yin (2009: p.17)

points out, is of their 'trying to illuminate a set of decisions' - that is, *why* decisions have been taken, *how* they have been implemented and *with what results*. In doing this they focus on the human intentional world behind decision-making processes and ensuing actions in order to reveal *how* and *why* human development outcomes have come about (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2005; Denscombe, 2010).

With respect to decisions, the evaluative reach of this case study is two-pronged. Firstly: it explores the social capital of decision-making processes (including the intent and the agency of the decision-makers) within the organisations and organisational networks associated with the Timorese women's recruitment to offshore and their associated WSD, and, secondly; it looks to illuminate the decision- and choice-making at the personal level of the women themselves as they have pursued their strategic goals of being skilled workers and economically self-reliant (looking into such aspects as intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, agency and rationales behind choices and outcomes). Ultimately, the key interest is in the area of *with what (enduring empowerment) results* the impact chains of these decision- and choice-making processes have engendered.

The conceptual framework developed in Chapter Two that guides the research highlights how highly context-dependent women's empowerment can be and how its consolidation is most explicable with reference to the whole person. This framework contains the notion of a capabilities set[27] as empowerment scaffolding, a constituent cornerstone of which is the construct of an offshore-enhanced women's human capital portfolio. The utility and ontology of this construct is now unpacked.

The utility and ontology of the women's human capital portfolio
To give definition to the offshore-enhanced areas of the women's capabilities sets the research employs, as a methodological tool, the construct of a rich and dynamic women's human capital portfolio. Owned as a personal asset or resource, each

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[27] Chapter Two explained 'capabilities sets' as caches of abilities and freedoms combined with personal resources as knowledge, skills and the capacity for purposive action and social resources such as vocational training settings and family/peer support, and material resources such as cash for an English course that bind with opportunities (in the case of this study in formal employment) and materialise into valued well-being outcomes (Robeyns, 2008; Sen, 1985, 1999).

woman's portfolio represents her realising potential achievements (in multifaceted cognitive, psychological and practical ways) and the promise of an improved calibre and range of WSD, career and income earning choices (given the availability of opportunity) she might be able to make in the future. These caches are fleshed out descriptively into a set of elements of both objective and subjective qualities alluded to in Chapter Two. Termed KSAOs (to borrow from the Human Resources (HR) literature) these elements include: knowledge (and experience as knowledge); skills, both hard and soft and including competence as a level of skills attainment; abilities, and: other attributes, including those endowed and/or honed in their lived experience prior to their entry to the O&G industry setting (such as their critical consciousness around gender equality and their PSYCAP of resilience, perseverance and optimism), and these and others, such as self-efficacy and self-confidence, that have been fostered and/or have flourished in the offshore spaces.

The notion of the human capital portfolio was presented to the Timorese women participants in the metaphor of a briefcase[28]. This depiction turned out to be a most accessible concept when I drew its image in interviews with compartments for the KSAOs that we then proceeded collaboratively to fill in. The meaning and strength of the constituent elements was discussed with the women as well as any desires they might have or have had that these be developed further. As part of this exercise, in order to ascertain some idea of the women's own assessments of their abilities and their self-confidence, a rudimentary 1-10 scale was conjured up during the fieldwork to gauge the change in levels of *how clever* and *how confident* they feel now, compared with before they went offshore. As a tool to be used in the interviews this ranking concept, whilst not aimed at producing empirics, was useful in roughly revealing the women's own understandings around aspects of their empowerment progress as offshore workers. It was one that I had learned, from Bayu-Undan Timorese employees who had talked about the regular offshore personnel self-assessments they were required to write up, would be familiar with many of the women and one that was not likely to be undermined by any show of modesty.

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[28] This image was deliberately chosen over a perhaps more indigenous one in acknowledgement of many of the female Timorese respondents' aspirations to enter, and comfortableness around inhabiting, a 21st century corporate working world in which the briefcase is a potent symbol.

Whilst the women's human capital portfolios are seen as largely socially constructed, the elements have differing ontological status, which has relevance when discussing the meaning of their value. On the one hand, some might be deemed definable, measurable, and observable realities that exist, uninfluenced by researcher or research participants' values or assumptions. Their quantifiable value might be seen in their objective currency as internationally recognised tender when applying for a range of job or promotional opportunities – especially when compared with the non-accredited training of many other Timorese who might compete for the same jobs, but also in the diaspora. These might include Verifications of Competency (VOCs)[29] and industry certifications, English fluency and IT literacy assessments, logbook achievements, online learning module accomplishments, length of time in offshore roles, and even the visible resilience it takes to sustain work performance levels during 12-hour shifts over 4-week offshore swings in the harsh and isolated mid-ocean environment. On the other hand, there are less objectively definable, but equally significant portfolio elements such as potential abilities (perhaps newly appreciated) and personal attributes that might have been identified through subjective self-appraisals or appraisals of others - such as the intrinsic motivation to learn, self-efficacy, self-confidence, initiative, adaptability and intercultural and teamwork skills. These latter elements (some of which are alternately defined as 21st century skills) are, like the more tangible ones, understood (qualitatively) by employers to also carry significant employability currency.

However, it is appropriate for this study that any evaluation of the worth of the women's human capital portfolios must take into account their context-dependent status. For example, univocal claims by actors within the stakeholder network that the women's industry achievements have a 'taken-for-granted' non-gendered, objective value in their own countries might prove to be less valid in different settings. For example, in developing country labour markets where a woman might encounter sexism or gender discrimination when seeking a job, WSD or career

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[29] The Verifications of Competencies discussed in this study relate to O&G industry certificated verifications of capabilities (encompassing knowledge and skills) of individuals for specific job roles as assessed to the levels required by Australian accreditation standards, company procedures and Australian health and safety legislation (Site Skills Training, 2017).

promotion, an assessment that her set of KSAOs has high employability currency might be flawed. In a patriarchal society such as Timor-Leste, where customary norms or beliefs assign a lower value to female aptitude and skills or where gendered glass ceilings limit the advancement of women's careers, it is not an unlikely prospect that the women's human capital portfolios might be subjectively downgraded by potential employers other than in the oil and gas enclave (Ismail & Ibrahim, 2008; Kabeer, 2012; SEPI, 2013; World Bank, 2012). Thus, in the exercise of assigning value to these portfolios the gender lens scopes beyond them to explore the way in which they bond, contextually, with the political, institutional and organisational capital (or not) in the social domains the women might inhabit and traverse.

Further, the women's offshore-enhanced KSAOs are not only seen as conveying value for the fulfillment of their employment or career path aspirations (which in itself has the potential to be empowering), but also for the contribution they have made (in intrinsic and extrinsic ways) to the durability of their holistic empowerment well-being. The human capital portfolios, therefore, are not conceptually understood to be stand-alone evidence of empowerment but rather as going a long way (but not all of the way) to explaining an empowerment outcome that is greater than the sum of all its parts. They are analysed for the ways in which they might coalesce with the women's workplace empowerment gains (of job satisfaction, autonomy, impact, meaning and relatedness) and their enhanced at-home socio-economic status and ultimately boost the consolidation and equilibrium of the enduring, stable empowerment pillars of self-esteem and internal locus of control. Additionally, there is an interest in the situated alternative empowerment well-being meanings of their KSAOs that the women have reason to value are given weight as important outcomes. This interest looks further than the KSAOs' employability currency towards, for example, the transferability of skills and confidence into non-work domains that might manifest in their being able to confidently administer CPR to an ailing family member or project-manage the building of a house (due to industry and technical knowledge and skills) or be assertive in demanding rest time at the end of a work shift when family members might expect an immediate resumption of domestic/care responsibilities.

Whilst there is evaluative interest in how increments of changes in one area of the women's capabilities sets brought about through their experiences in the offshore O&G world (such as their enhanced self-efficacy or their becoming comfortable with working with many males in gender equal employment environments) has impacted upon other areas (such as widening aspirational horizons or a reduced tolerance level for sexist behaviour from males in their at-home lives), there is also interest in whether the converse has been true. For example, there might be (or have been) negative impacts on women's sense of self-confidence and dignity due to rust-out [30] or job-dissatisfaction or their skills and knowledge atrophying with disuse in skills/abilities-occupation mismatch scenarios or the potential for a raft of empowerment gains to be undermined or sabotaged through long-term loss of employment. For the whole group there were the all-important questions to be asked about whether previous aspirations for realising their potential had been fulfilled (if so in what ways and if not why not?) and about the relationships between their now-enhanced human capital portfolios and their plans, hopes and fears for their futures - all in relation to the opportunities available within the oil and gas industry, the Timor-Leste labour market or diaspora contexts. Additionally, there is evaluative interest in their rationalising processes around training/employment decisions and choices they have made.

Thus, in the final analysis, the research strategy is aimed at building a comprehensive portrait of the women's capabilities sets – containing their human capital portfolios as well as their wider empowerment growth as these have cohered with their aspirations and the political, institutional, organisational and social capital and material (offshore salary) resources that have been available to them. As has been mentioned, the methodology for the assemblage of these portraits and for drawing the whole picture of their interconnectedness with the WSD and employment investments made within the Timor-Leste O&G industry enclave, is based around rich narrative data sources.

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[30] *Rust-out* is a term used for a state of being associated with an individual's lack of engagement with an occupation. Often located in repetitive job role situations where there is a lack of challenge and autonomy, the worker feels de-motivated (Clouston, 2015).

Humans knowing their stuff and knowledge-generative exchanges

The use of narrative interviews as the primary means for data collection from epistemologically draws upon on the idea that humans 'in their ordinary ways' are 'very competent knowers' (Flyvbjerg, 2001, p. 73). Thus, it is believed that within the intimate, semi-structured interview setting reliable truths can be garnered from knowledgeable subjects (or participants/respondents) about events and 'stable attitudes or perspectives that govern people's behaviour' (Alvesson, 2003; Hammersley, 2007, p. 297). Moreover, within the dialogic of the interview, the participants' *knowing* of their social realities, value-systems, motivations, behaviours, beliefs and concerns, integrated with my knowing and interpretation as researcher, it is expected that there can arise credible explanation of social phenomena and their future implications (Harrington, 2005).

Duncan & Nicol, citing Lincoln & Guba (1985), argue that truth emerges from a consensus between participants and researcher of what constitutes the 'best informed and sophisticated construction' of social reality (Duncan & Nicol, 2004, p. 454). Social reality has thus been interactively described and re-construed through narratives and dialogue – that is, via the social interchange between researcher and subject, and is then textualised (via analysis) into knowledge (England, 1994; Flick, 2009; Hyett, Kenny, & Dickson-Swift, 2014). An example is where the social meaning given by respondents to the new agentic, industrially skilled and economically self-reliant feminine identities represented in the Timorese female offshore workers has been infused interactively with my own positioning as a female researcher who as a young women with a feminist mindset, like the Timorese women, represented a dissident female identity (Bohnet, 2016; Butler, 2006). In exploring what the meaning of this identity is for the women's future well-being the inquiry involved, for many of the women, their interactive engagement (with me as researcher) in narratively constructing the empowerment value of its personal and social distinction in aspirational, probable or possible future scenarios (Alvesson, 2003; Flyvbjerg, 2011; Young & Collin, 2004).

Gubrium and Holstein (1997) have suggested that the more 'active' interview, in which there is a spontaneous to-ing and fro-ing of ideas, lends itself to the co-

production of 'generative knowledge' out of the active assembly of meanings (Gubrium & Holstein, 1997, p. 127). Further, it has been argued that a greater level of honesty and depth can be achieved through a more 'debating', ideas-sharing form of interview exchange, adding to the production of knowledge and ideas and potentially contribute to theorising about social reality (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2005; Silverman, 2014, p. 191). This certainly occurred in some of the interview exchanges with senior males in the oil and gas operational network, where they spontaneously applied their cognition to debating with me the idea that an agenda of proactively fostering the empowerment of Timorese women need not be incompatible with the industry rules around selecting/promoting the best person for the job nor with women's preference for being defined by their abilities, skills and competence rather than their sex. Whilst remaining alert to opportunities to allow an openly dialogic and reflective exchange to flourish, I was also aware of the need to remain flexible around re-wording questions so that interviewees understood what was being asked or to probe for words that would resonate with the interviewee, and to be sensitive to nuance that might suggest the interviewee was uncomfortable with a line of questioning and to be able to change tack (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985; Murray & Overton, 2003; Rountree & Laing, 1996).

The business of interactively producing knowledge was enhanced by a rapport that was unproblematically established with all interviewees due to my positioned understandings as a feminist, mother, teacher and the partner of an offshore oil and gas industry worker, and due to my previous in-depth knowledge of the research topic.

Researcher positionality
My growing up in the 1960/70s in a society that was prescribed along patriarchal lines, albeit in a gender equal family setting, and subsequent experience as a feminist in the New Zealand women's rights movement gave me a heightened pre-conception of the strength of character that would have been required of the Timorese women respondents to pursue their pathways of personal, social and economic empowerment. This feminist filter lent fertile ground, in much of the fieldwork and interpretation of data, to what England (1994, 86) has explained as the 'betweenness' of the researcher-researched relationship in which there can be a

productive meeting of the already-interpreted world of the insider with the shape of the outsider's biography, whilst at the same time privileging the voice of the researched. My feminist positionality also lent an historic edge to my open-minded interest in hearing 21st century viewpoints on gender equality from a diverse range of individuals, male and female, of differing ages and socio/cultural backgrounds. Giving due respect to the interviewees' intelligence I felt no inclination to 'manage' my outside persona (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2005), such as avoiding mentioning my feminism when talking to males. Nor did I feel that my positionality in this respect was a contaminant in the data collection or interpretation processes. In fact, sharing the history of the place and experience of women in my society more often opened space for reflective dialogue where comparisons could be made with interviewees' own experiences – for example, the thesis Prologue reflects an interview in which much anecdotal resonance was enjoyed between interviewer and interviewee around the challenges and triumphs experienced by young women advancing gender equality frontiers in their societies.

I have also had enhanced familiarity with both the women's at-home experiences (due to several visits to Timor-Leste involving qualitative research work[31]) as well as the lifestyle and workplace systems, protocols and terminology experienced by them as offshore workers (due to my over 20 years' experience of living with a partner as he has worked, in blue-collar and operational roles, as well as being a trade union advocate, on Western oil and gas platforms, rigs and FPSOs). This knowledge has lent me the ability to sift out from the narratives what are 'orderly' and 'recognizable' as dominant industry discursive truths (Silverman, 2014) and what might require contestation as organisational public relations cultural scripts. An additional aspect, and asset, to my familiarity with the research topic is my previous formal experience in designing and coordinating vocational training programmes and employment placement for young unemployed in New Zealand. I

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[31] Following the completion of my Masters in 2014 I was contracted by Caltech to carry out 2 months of research involving qualitative interviews with 25 offshore male and female workers employed by Caltech on Kitan and Bayu-Undan in order to ascertain their job satisfaction as well as details of their living conditions in Timor-Leste. This information was combined with my Masters conclusions to both supplement the Caltech management's ongoing discussions with stakeholders of the benefits of recruiting Timorese to offshore positions as well as to support Caltech's bid to continue to act as labour-hire contractor to one of the operations.

could also add my lived understanding, through 40+ years as a teacher, of the cognitive, emotional, psychological and motivational aspects of learning and achievement. This experience, in particular, has lent me a deep appreciation of the importance of fostering self-efficacy in training environments, of how success, achievement and supportive teamwork can engender a sense of empowerment (individually and collectively), and also of how learned skills can depreciate with disuse. As a teacher of some considerable experience I was able also to bring to the study the skill of being able to identify the significance of nuances of demeanour, behaviour and attitude in others.

Whilst my positionality gave me valuable prior understanding on the research topic (Deer, 2008) and a head start in establishing rapport and trust with the respondents, as an interpreting outsider entering the life-worlds of others I did not assume that my own attitudes, belief systems and comprehensions of their worlds and experience could or should be ascribed to them (Murray & Overton, 2003). This research required that I remain open to understanding different perspectives on social situations and differing degrees of appreciation of the concepts involved in the study (Groenewald, 2004; O'Leary, 2005). For rich data to be gathered, the voices must be allowed to speak for themselves (Creswell, 2014).

Nonetheless, it has been argued that researcher bias has a place in research in international development (Sumner & Tribe, 2004). As a feminist engaging in research about a female experience/phenomenon through a gender lens there is an underpinning understanding that women should be seen as 'active agents of change, having the power to transform unequal gender relations' (Stewart-Withers, 2008, pp. 111-112). There is also the understanding that males with attitudes, beliefs and behaviours supporting gender equality (as a form of social capital) can contribute to this change. A bias that is acknowledged and deemed acceptable in this gender and development study is one that gives high status to the personal attributes (such as courage, self-belief and determination) women must have in order to contest negative gender stereotypes and male privilege and to successfully navigate and achieve in male-dominated structures. This bias was uncontested in the fieldwork experience and lent 'lived' insight to the gender lens.

Moreover, it might be said that it was the robustness of the sample size (see below), more than any researcher reflexivity engaged in, that mediated any bias or insider-outsider tensions in the research (Stewart-Withers, 2008). At the same time, there is an acknowledgement that different shadings of narratives and interpretation might have emerged and arisen if the same research had been carried out by a researcher with a different gender or personal history - for example, a Gen-Y female who had not encountered barriers to her making strategic choices and had only ever enjoyed equal opportunities and gender equality in her life, or by a male researcher. At no point, however, did my particular bias preclude my being open to the unfolding of a richness of diversity of meanings.

Openness to convergence and divergence of meaning
The research was approached with the arsenal of empirics from my previous research into the topic which provided baseline knowledge of empowerment antecedents and thresholds crossed by the 16 Timorese women participants and a dossier a sub-group had articulated of the situated empowerment well-being achievements they had reason to value (Adams, 2014). As has been previously explained, a reasonable assumption could be made that these empirics would broadly apply to the wider group. This baseline understanding provided some familiarity and clarity with which to establish sense-making, and thematic traction early on in the fieldwork (Alvesson, 2003). Similarly, prior evidence of the gendered development ethos and role played by the Caltech entity offered a credible and valuable entry point for pursuing areas of resonance or dissonance with the other industry actors interviewed.

This prior knowledge represented a tangible, empirical foil against which variances and contradictions that emerged in the interviews (such as what made some women more confident in putting themselves forward for trainings or promotions than others) could be immediately explored without waiting until the analysis to uncover explanations. A sense of how much 'noise' divergent experiences and viewpoints expressed in the interviews might intrude upon the analysis of the findings could be gauged at this early stage in the research and in-situ decisions made around the value of delving more deeply into these (Pelias, 2011; Steinke, 2004). Further, as narratives showed their proclivity to be confirmed or disconfirmed as contributors

to thematic patterns a nascent analysis emerged during the fieldwork (Patton, 2002).

Nonetheless, cognisant of the value of letting the story of the case study unfold in all its diversity, I approached the research with an openness to what Flyvbjerg, citing Nietzsche, referred to as the 'rich ambiguity' of human existence – an ambiguity that might contain other possibilities for explanation not within the scope of the research, but perhaps worthy of the reader's attention (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 239). Descriptive, introductory questions concerning such variables as the Timorese women respondents' marital status, husband's employment, prior employment experience, offshore workplace and job roles, and length of time in the offshore setting provided some basic reference points for exploring and analysing any variant meanings - that is as they contribute in 'bold' to the main themes or should be relegated to 'brackets' as less significant pieces of the bigger picture. It was important to remain open to elements of stories that appeared to be 'outliers' or 'rogue' narratives that contradicted the main body of evidence but exist nonetheless and may or may not have required analysis or further investigation as to their significance (Robson, 2011) - such as the adamant (atypical) assertion of a Portuguese woman respondent that Timor-Leste had always been a gender-equal society. The breadth of the data collection net and the qualitative methods provided ample opportunity for any significance of diversity of meanings to be uncovered.

5.4 Methods

Data sources, sampling process and shape of the fieldwork
A process of purposive sampling was used to gather the scope of narratives required to provide a qualitative, information-rich and in-depth case study profile (Denscombe, 2010; Patton, 2002). Knowledgeable respondents were sought whose characteristics met certain pre-determined criteria of having intimate experience or understanding of the topic and the particular contexts. The achieved sample size met this goal and included, spanning all three offshore worksites: a) most of the Timorese women with offshore experience in non-service roles and a representative group of those who had performed hospitality roles b) a representative group of local and foreign stakeholder actors involved with the

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women's offshore employment and related WSD/training, and; c) available key informants who had relevant knowledge and expertise on the topic. These respondents were to provide the primary source of narrative data through the qualitative methods of in-depth, semi-structured interviews, either face-to-face or via the Internet. This data was supplemented from secondary documentary sources provided by interviewees that included CVs, training schedules, performance appraisal templates and certification standards and regimes.

In total during the data collection period 29 out of 30 Timorese women with employment experience in non-service positions on Kitan, Bayu-Undan facilities and Ramform Sovereign vessel were interviewed (this sample encompassed all except for a Kitan medic who had left the facility and Timor-Leste some years before the fieldwork). A further sample of eight female hospitality crewmembers from all three operations was included. One other woman interviewed in 2016 had completed the T-BOSIET and First Aid training in Singapore in order to be rig-ready for a hospitality role but was not subsequently recruited to offshore work due to her limited level of English fluency. Her narrative was however deemed worth including in the findings as the training she received was very much offshore industry-specific and was expected to have some value in her current onshore position, to her aspirational horizons and to her sense of empowerment. The narratives of the Timorese offshore women workers were sourced in the physical location of Dili as well as the secure, private, online social media facility, Facebook Messenger.

Of the total sample of women, the ratio of single women (including four solo mothers) to married was close to 50-50. Of the single women just over half were in their 20s and the remainder in their 30s. Of the married women, just under a quarter were in their 20s (three of whom had one or two children, another was pregnant with her first child and another newly married with no children). Of the remainder of married women, all were mothers in their thirties, mostly with one or two children, except for two who had four children. Further demographic details of the women's educational, training and employment histories can be found in Chapter 7.2 (page 234). The following table shows the offshore numbers and roles that had been filled by Timorese women on the three Timor Sea facilities up until mid-2017.

Overview of Timorese female offshore workers

Position	Kitan	Bayu-Undan	Ramform Sovereign
Camp Boss (kitchen)	1	1	
Kitchen-hand/housekeeping	7	10	2
Laboratory Technician	1	1	
Junior HSE Officer		3	
Heli-Admin		2	
Radio Operator		1	
Materials Controller		1	
Fabric Maintenance Assistant		1	
Document Controller		4	
Timesheet Coordinator		2	
Bridge Controller		12	
Trainee Electrical Engineer		2	
Trainee Mechanical Engineer		1	
Marine Mammal Observer			2
Medic	1		

Table: 1[32]

Most of the women respondents were interviewed over a month's fieldwork in 2016 - in a face-to-face setting in Dili. A further nine interviews were conducted via Facebook Messenger over the two years from October 2016 to September 2018 - with five female hospitality crew, two electrical apprentices, a female Heli-admin crewmember. The coding for these female respondents, in the findings and analysis sections of the thesis, is FR1-37.

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[32] These figures require further qualifying thus: when Kitan operation was de-commissioned in late 2015 the female kitchen/housekeeping staff moved across to Bayu-Undan facility, mostly into job-share positions; one non-ESS woman spent time in the Kitan kitchen as well as doing bridge control on Bayu-Undan; a laboratory technician position was opened on Bayu-Undan for the woman who was performing this role when she was laid off from Kitan – she subsequently fell pregnant and at the time of data collection was employed in the Caltech onshore office with the option to return to the offshore position after taking Maternity Leave; the female Timorese Kitan medic (who left East Timor in 1975 and became a permanent resident of Australia in 1977 and who is not a respondent in this study) fulfilled the role for 18 months before returning to Australia; two Bayu-Undan bridge controllers also spent time doing document control and two others were promoted to junior HSE officer and assistant fabric maintenance roles, and; one of the Heli-admin women was previously a document controller. Taking into account these dual roles, the trainee electrical and mechanical technicians who were just beginning their first year tenure of offshore employment (having completed the six-month Site Skills programme in the Philippines) and the exclusion of a woman involved in subsea work and some hospitality women no longer in employment who may have slipped beneath the respondents' radar, the total of females entering the three offshore facilities exceeded 43. Those who were primary respondents in this research numbered 36.

During the month's fieldwork in 2016 eight local and industry personnel associated with the recruitment and WSD of Timorese women for Bayu-Undan and Kitan facilities and Ramform Sovereign vessel were also interviewed – companies they were involved with include Caltech Offshore Services, CAJV, ConocoPhillips and Konnecto. Additionally, in 2016 over a period of two weeks' fieldwork in Perth a further ten interviews were conducted with industry personnel associated with the Timorese women's progress on the two operations – spanning the companies ConocoPhillips, CAJV, ESS/Compass Group, Seafox and Bluewater. The range of positions held and areas covered by these 18 personnel ranged from: onshore trainers/log book supervisors and local content coordinators, to senior positions in recruitment and Health, Safety and Environment (HSE), to contracts and offshore installation managers and second-in-command, and company director and owner. The ratio of male to female is 50-50, with 37% of those located in upper management positions being women. This group of stakeholder respondents were coded SH with a number 1-18.

A further three individuals were interviewed as key informants, a Western male working for an engineering contractor to Bayu-Undan in the area of local content, and a Timorese female with many years' experience working in on- and off-shore positions relating to the oil and gas industry and, via Facebook, an Indonesian female chef from Bayu-Undan). They have been classified as key informants (coded as KI1, KI2 and KI3) as whilst they have not been directly involved with the structuring and management of the Timorese offshore women workers' work skills development or employment they were deemed to have significant understanding in areas of the oil and gas industry, the offshore workplace and Timor-Leste society contexts that could shed more light on the Research Objectives.

The interviews were based around a basic set of questions, specific to the grouping of respondents to which they belonged (See Appendix 2). The interviewing style was flexible enough to allow for the interchange to flow, with areas of inquiry receiving more or less focus in sympathy with this flow and with space for new relevant avenues of narrative and interchange to emerge. The voice-recorded in-person and online Facebook interviews were stored in password-protected Internet locations.

The voice recordings were transcribed verbatim on my return from the field – a process I prefer as it helps me to remember the person and note any subtleties that may assume importance on a second or third listening. Two face-to-face interviews were not recorded (at the interviewees' requests) and for these I took rudimentary notes during the sessions and supplemented these with remembered detail that same evening.

In order to reach the sample population, the research relied heavily on senior Caltech personnel as gatekeepers in Dili – that is, the female Timorese owner and male French-Canadian Managing Director. By the beginning of 2016 when I began the research, I had cemented a strong tie with this couple due to my Masters endeavours and also to my involvement in further qualitative research carried out in 2015 for them as a consultant. This latter involvement meant that I was able to have additional conversation with most of the 16 women participants of the Masters study. I had also become linked with most of these women on social media, which considerably facilitated the access to the wider group of women (some employed through Caltech and others on the payrolls of different companies) through the 'snowballing' or 'word of mouth' effect (Patton, 2002). Additionally, due to Caltech's involvement with Bayu-Undan, Kitan and the seismic operation, as the main host-country labour hire contractor, this led to my capacity to source relevant company personnel associated with the operations, also through the snowballing process (through personal face-to-face or email introductions). With some of the industry stakeholders I had previously had conversation, through Caltech introductions, and they were consequently pre-informed about the tenor of the study.

In fact, for both groups of respondents the personal sources of my introduction and recommendation enhanced my *bona fides* and paved the way for smooth access to them. To give an illustration of this legitimacy is an excerpt from an email sent by one of the Caltech Timorese women on the Bayu-Undan facility to a fellow female crewmember (in hospitality work) and forwarded me:

> *"Mana - Virginia Adams is looking for you for having chit chat regarding women in offshore. Based on my preference she is a very intelligent lady, nice, professional, open to growth ... Besides she really respect the journalism "ethic*

code". You will never regret for having a great discussion with her. At this moment, she's doing the research for her PhD degree. I hope we can help her to reach her target" (Personal Communication, 3/12/16).

This style of personal recommendation in many instances superseded the written invitation and introduction I extended to most respondents and engendered a warmth of willingness to be involved in the research endeavour. For the online respondents, where getting signed consent forms was problematic, bearing in mind that they had the ability to terminate an interview if they wished, this palpable willingness was ethically deemed to constitute their consent.

5.5 The dynamics of power, privilege and equality in the fieldwork

Research approval and informed participant consent

The research project was evaluated by peer review of senior members of the Development Studies Programme, School of People, Environment and Planning, Massey University and subsequently judged by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee (MUHEC) to be low risk (Ethics Approval attached - see Appendix 3). Where possible, an information sheet about the parameters and purpose of the research was delivered to the respondents prior to the interviews. Forwarding this document to the women I interviewed via Facebook proved problematic due to their inability to download it. For these interviews and for those face-to-face with Timorese women who had limited written English fluency I explained the research more briefly and simply. Whilst all the face-to-face interviewees signed Participant Consent Forms, for the Facebook Messenger women I asked them at the start if they were happy to participate and understood this to be 'informed' consent, for, as Stewart-Withers (2008) has argued, their 'turning up and participating was a much more powerful seal of approval than any signature' (Stewart-Withers, 2008, p. 116).

During the ethics approval process a key point of discussion was around the fact that I had in the previous year been employed by Caltech to carry out a month's research, through semi-structured interviews, into the standard of living enjoyed by 25 male and female offshore employees on Kitan and Bayu-Undan. The ensuing report on the findings was used in presentations to Caltech's industry clients to argue the case for the local content importance of trainings (in particular around safety, health and

first aid) and incomes for the employees' and their families' well-being. The report was not shared publicly and the respondents were given the opportunity to consent (or not) to what was written about them. In fact, the narrative material gathered only served to deepen my knowledge of the economic and social impacts the offshore employment had had upon the lives of the Bayu-Undan and Kitan employees. Nonetheless, I entered the field for this current study aware that I needed to make it clear to respondents that my research this time was purely academic and independent of Caltech, even though the management personnel were the gatekeepers and the in-person interviews with the offshore employees took place within the Caltech enclave.

Relationship with the gatekeepers

I was, additionally, fully mindful that as a result of my history of engagement with Caltech I had become somewhat enamoured of this labour hire entity - its gender equality ethos, decent work business practices and the potency of its development footprint (especially with respect to its fostering of Timorese women's achievements), and that this might have undermined the fieldwork of this case study with a handicapping bias. Taking a leaf from Sumner & Tribe's (2004) outlook (that researcher bias has a place in research in international development), I at no time felt uncomfortable with my enamourment, rather was confident that in this research there has been a legitimate place in which it has objectively and comfortably resided with my process without polluting the approach to the fieldwork nor the analysis of the findings.

In my previous engagements with senior Caltech personnel a strong relationship had developed of trust and mutual respect for the need to protect the privacy of employees and the confidentiality of information I was privy to in interviews with them and via documents. With respect to this close relationship with them as gatekeepers, at no point during the research did I feel that this impacted negatively upon the willingness of their employees or industry associates to either meet with me or openly share their experiences and viewpoints. In fact, the respect that they clearly have from their workforce, that of in-country 1st-tier contractor staff and from the foreign industry people to whom they recommended me went a long way to ensuring my ability to gain the overwhelmingly positive response from the

individuals I invited to participate in the research. Further, my embeddedness within the Caltech enclave[33] during the times I spent in Dili meant that I could supplement my spoken sources of data with my own observations of the women working and/or coming and going in an every-day way, of the relationships they had with their trainers and employers and of the interactions between training/employing actors. I was also in a position to easily source answers to follow-up questions I had with several participants and double-check training and WSD details.

In one instance, however, there arose a conflict for me between my interest in helping to advance the gendered interests of the women and university protocols around confidentiality. Three female bridge controllers who had confided in me their aspirations for skills training in new job fields (in blast-painting, welding and pipe-weld inspection) were insistent that I do not let Caltech management personnel know. By then I knew the women reasonably well and deemed their reluctance to be a gendered socio-cultural inhibitor around females putting themselves forward assertively to their bosses, a perception endorsed by a female Timorese Key Informant, thus: *"People bow down to their boss … the culture here is that the first thing you have to say is "sorry" – like "sorry for disturbing you"* (Interview: KI2, 2016). I also knew that there would potentially only be small windows of opportunities for them to train in these skills areas (especially to international standards of certification) and felt concerned at the prospect of their unrealised potential and dreams. I circumvented the problem by suggesting to the Caltech employers that they canvass, in a general way, their female employees in order to ascertain if any had new aspirations to enter the more 'male' occupations.

The positives of power in the research process
As the researcher seeking a particular avenue of knowledge I have: a) determined the sources and extent of data required in addressing the research objectives; b) set

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[33] The Caltech enclave consisted of offices, a conference room, Venture Hotel budget accommodation and restaurant facilities and private quarters – much of which has been constructed by Caltech tradespeople and trainees and which has housed an enclosed community of NGOs and O&G industry companies (including CAJV) as well as Caltech Offshore Services. It was a corporate and social hub - where many of the demobilised women now have onshore jobs, where the offshore women called in when they returned from the platforms and where interviews and some trainings were held and a steady flow of formal and informal meetings and gatherings took place.

the agendas, established the language to be spoken (English); c) largely governed the direction of interchanges in the interviews, and; d) had the monopoly of interpretation of the narratives from which to draw conclusions. This could be considered to constitute an asymmetry of power in my relationships with the respondents (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2005). Further, given the gendered societal context the Timorese women inhabit, it might be expected that in the presence of an authoritative outsider researcher they could feel inadequate or that their stories were not worthy of being told (Scheyvens & Leslie, 2000). Key to counter-balancing this potential power imbalance (or as England (1994) has described as the inevitable conflictual role of the researcher) has been a combination of a prior researcher knowing that most respondents would embrace the intent and scope of the research along with ongoing researcher (reflexive) attention to allowing the ways in which the respondents' narratively constituted their social world to unfold in their own terms (England, 1994).

Regardless of the above, my previous research experience had led me to expect that the Timorese women would be proud to be participants in the case study and happy to be frank and forthcoming with me as an interested outsider, applying conscientious cognition, reflection and attention to detail in their interview dialogues. In the Facebook interviews there was a palpable sense that the women felt safe and valued that a woman far away was communicating with them about things important to them. One woman wanted to extend her online interview from the length originally agreed upon as she told me it was a much better way to spend her time staying at home than being bored waiting for her children to finish school. Another seemed excited that our interview had stimulated her to really think about gender equality issues in her country. With respect to the spoken medium of the interviews being English, given that I knew how keen the Timorese women would be to have the opportunity to practice their fluency, this was the pragmatic choice. Additionally, with their level of fluency I felt they could communicate nuance and meaning well.

The eventual linking with most of the women as 'friends' on social media meant that I had an ongoing window into their personal lives and they into mine. This

relationship, I believe, enriched the researcher-participant relationship. On the one hand, it enabled them to loosely follow my PhD progress, appreciate my worldview and glimpse my family and social settings. On the other, I was able to keep relevant aspects of their lives 'real' in my consciousness - such as knowing about children's or husbands' birthdays that have been missed due to an offshore swing, about new trainings they have engaged in, of shared social/leisure activities such as outdoor hikes that demonstrated new approaches to work/life balance (untypical of women in their society), or of how the offshore-developed camaraderie between women still working offshore and those now onshore is still kept alive socially. The latter scenarios reinforced my understanding of the value of the social resource of female peers who have shared the same unique employment space of the offshore platform.

The awareness of many of the participants of the positive tone of my Masters research and of my in-depth prior experience and knowledge of the topic generated a willingness and comfortableness amongst respondents to tell their story and offer opinion in what I believe were largely unconstrained, egalitarian interview exchanges. This was the case even in an interview with two individuals from the owner/operator companies, where it appeared that they had been advised by the company legal team not to allow the interchange to be voice-recorded. The research process was further enhanced by the beneficial power vested in the skill of most of the industry interviewees in their being able to in-situ assess whether what they were about to share in an interview was within their brief (according to the level of disclosure that their employment contract, role or seniority permitted) or whether a frank personal viewpoint was important to contribute to the research's aim – for example, when talking about company practices, the women's progress, or gender bias in the industry. Conversely, I was aware that any interviewee has the power to deny information or viewpoint, avoid answering questions or to present a 'sanitised' version of the reality (Hooghienstra, 2001; Scheyvens & Leslie, 2000; Tracy, 2010).

Understanding the credibility of data
As all of the industry stakeholder personnel were interviewed 'as' their company positions, I approached the data gathering amongst foreign industry actors with some caution regarding the tendency corporations have to strategically plan and self-present positive identities of 'social legitimacy' to their wider audiences of

shareholders or the public, (Hooghienstra, 2001, p. 57). Meanings given in social interactions between insiders and outsiders of what organisations are can be reflections of uncontested, dominant patterns of understanding and it was not to be unexpected that this research could be negatively conceived as a contestation of projected industry images (Simpson & Mayr, 2010). It has been argued that when researching organisations, we should doubt everything we are told and look to assessing the 'follow-through' from opinions as it is expressed in the subjects' actions or outcomes (Silverman, 2013, p. 137).

Whilst I had been given no serious reason to doubt everything I was told, this did echo a concern of mine that, given the strict industry protocols around who can disclose what about operations, company practices or crewmember performance to outsiders, and also given the 'risk averse' nature of some corporations to having outsiders investigating their practices, the narrative data might constitute or be coloured by 'impression management' – that is, the conscious or unconscious effort to control a corporate image in social interaction (Hooghienstra, 2001). This might be self-laudatory, such as in CSR reporting of philanthropic programmes, or minimalist in disclosure in order to avoid potential negative legal or publicity repercussions, such as in suggestions of gender bias. In researching organisations, it is therefore important to be alert to 'cultural scripts' coming across in interview settings (spoken either through habit or design) that might require unpacking (Alvesson, 2003). For example, industry policies or mottos such as 'we hire the best person for the job' and 'everyone values each other' might obscure actual attitudes or behaviours in the offshore setting that contradict them. By the same token they may simply be accurate reflections of the reality.

I was, however, also prepared that there might be individuals (and especially females) who were happy to deviate from or contest the dominant discourse of the industry organisations by presenting oppositional knowledge based on their personal experiences or perspectives (Simpson & Mayr, 2010). As it transpired, the frankness of most of the industry and employing participants in offering comprehensive descriptive detail, explanation and opinion, some of which was 'offstage' of dominant company discourse (Alvesson, 2003; Hooghienstra, 2001)

made the interpretive work of evaluating 'follow-through' of expressed attitudes and viewpoints into actions and outcomes unproblematic. This frankness, which in some cases was expressed in post-interview 'corridor chat', gave valuable insight into the personal motivations or thought-processes that accompanied the individuals' formal roles and investments into the Timorese female offshore recruits. For example, one senior member of a 1st-Tier contracting company mused as he walked me to the lift after our interview, that our conversation had made him think about the empowerment outcomes for the women on his company's offshore facility. This same individual had just told me that in choosing a training setting for their radio operations woman (Australian Navy versus Filipino training providers) he had factored in the consideration that he would be setting her up for greater success by situating her in a group where, as for herself, English was not the first language of trainers or trainees. Another example is of a senior male in the owner/operator company of Bayu-Undan, who when interviewed initially appeared to me to be delivering practiced narrative presenting the gender equal approaches of his company and then subsequently appeared to lapse into a moment of deep reflection out of which came an emphatic statement that it made him really angry when he came across gender discrimination or inequality.

An important complimentary source of data became my observations of nuances of behaviour and facial expressions and the ex-interview sharing of personal thoughts or experiences, which were recorded in a fieldwork diary and then noted alongside the interview transcripts. This enhanced my capacity to understand in-situ the meanings or intentions behind some of narratives and to later be able to exercise some ethical proficiency (as in integrating my observations into the analysis as reliable truths) in the interpretation. For example, a young Timorese waitress, previously a street fruit seller, who had been selected to undergo rig-ready training in Singapore and was employed for one swing in a hospitality role, privileged me with meticulous, dramatic physical rendition of her First Aid training and Helicopter Underwater Escape and basic fire-fighting training (complete with whites of eyes showing when she talked of her fear). The enthusiasm of her enactment and her clear recall led me, in the interpretation of data, to place a high value on that learning

for her, in spite of the unlikelihood of her returning long-term to an offshore platform, and also to deem her to have a high level of courage.

5.6 Approaching the analysis

The breadth of the data collection net of purposively sourced, knowledgeable respondents, supplemented by documental evidence, and the comprehensiveness of the conceptual framework guiding the focus of the gender lens resulted in the emergence of clear and compelling patterns of themes in the coding and analysis stage. Transcribing face-to-face interviews occurred immediately on return from Dili and Perth whilst the Facebook interviews could be downloaded verbatim. The late 2016 preparation of a policy brief based on the fieldwork findings required by a research funding source time-lined a fortuitous early onset of the interpretation process. The coding of data into themes and sub-themes required much to-ing and fro-ing between the narratives and the interpretative endeavour in order to ensure the meaning of the voices were accurately understood and reflected. Due to the size of the sample, saturation[34] (Creswell, 2007; Mason, 2010) was reached around most themes. This to a significant extent mediated the tension between the filter of my positionality and the integrity of the respondents' shared and diverse interpretation of their (context-dependent) personal histories and relationships. In order to honour the richness of information contributed, and to fully, holistically illustrate the interconnectedness of the multifaceted/multidimensional empowerment gains (enduring or not) of the women and the complexities around decision-making and action with respect to their employment and WSD, the text in the following chapters of the presentation and discussion of the findings in the following chapters, is well supported with deep, rich narratives.

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[34] The object of qualitative samples is that they are large or complete enough to ensure most or all of perceptions that are important to the research topic or issues under study are revealed (Mason, 2010). Saturation is reached when there is no new information emerging from the data in relation to the themes (Patton, 2002).

5.7 Concluding remarks

In summary, this chapter has outlined and explained the relationship between the research's conceptual/contextual framework and methodology behind the research strategy. It has provided the rationale for the case study as a building on the previous knowledge of my Masters research and discussed how my deep engagement with the topic has enhanced the fieldwork and analysis. It has highlighted the interplay of my feminist filter (as researcher) with the research - the positives of its biases as well as how the risk of it intruding conflict or contamination in the data gathering and interpretation stages has been mediated by the sample size and the ways in which the dialogic interviewing style facilitated the frank and forthright 'true' voice of respondents. It has clarified the new knowledge territory into which the research ventures, with its holistic evaluation of the interconnectedness (in decisions made and action pursued) between the enduring (multi-faceted and multidimensional) empowerment of women in an LDC and investments into their material well-being and workplace achievements within a globalised structure of opportunity of the O&G industry. It has explained how the customised construct of the Timorese women's human capital portfolios, as a new methodological tool, is applied in order to capture a critical cornerstone of their capabilities sets. It has also explained how in the analysis attention is given to the ways in which these offshore-enhanced personal caches of resources might coalesce with empowerment gains in social and material dimensions in order to socially construct the portraits (and the meanings of such) of the new female identities they represent in their society. The qualitative methods, based on the case study design and semi-structured interviews, have been presented and discussed, and ethical, positionality, power and data credibility issues explored. To conclude, the chapter outlined the approach in identifying and analysing the thematic threads - of both the women's empowerment progress and the gendered development footprint of the global O&G industry. Brought to life by the rich narrative data gathered in the interviews, these threads are analytically woven together in the following three chapters into a tapestry representing new knowledge and understandings of the phenomenon of enduring empowerment outcomes for Timorese female offshore workers.

Chapter Six: Local content as a gendered development footprint.

6.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings that relate largely to the first Research Objective:

- **To explore (within the stakeholder networks of Timor Sea oil and gas projects) the ways in which organisational agendas and decision-making processes, as well as the attitudes, agency and actions of industry and associated actors, have influenced the empowerment journeys of Timorese women through their offshore employment experience and related work skills development.**

It begins by providing relevant background information on the network of employers, and the decision-making structures, associated with the Timorese women respondents' offshore employment and related training and work skills development (WSD). The chapter then presents and discusses the narrative evidence (arising largely from description and viewpoint of actors within these networks) relating to the progression of Timorese women's recruitment to offshore facilities and investments into their work skills development, and the range of factors that have influenced the associated decision-making. How the different stakeholder actors and organisations involved have approached the question of gender is then brought to light, followed by discussion of the impact of female-friendly training and workplace settings upon the women's empowerment progress. The chapter then moves into an in-depth analysis of the ways in which the social capital vested in the women's employers, management personnel and offshore crew members has contributed to the meeting of the women's cognitive and psychological empowerment needs. The chapter concludes with discussion of the narrative contributions relating to the place, within the network of oil and gas operation stakeholders, of social responsibility for host-country women's enduring empowerment.

6.2 Conduits and decision-making processes for recruiting offshore Timorese women

The main local conduits for the Kitan and Bayu-Undan non-hospitality women's employment have been labour hire entities Konnekto (for Kitan initially) and Caltech Offshore Services[35] (for Kitan latterly and for Bayu-Undan from the onset of production). The female hospitality crews on both facilities have been in the main (apart from three who were employed by Caltech) on the payrolls of global offshore services contractor ESS/Compass Group, through their in-country Dili office. The four women who spent time on the 2015 ConocoPhillips-contracted seismic vessel, Ramform Sovereign, were on Caltech's payroll. The actors involved directly with the recruitment of female Timorese into hospitality positions on both Kitan and Bayu-Undan have been the Perth-based general manager of Offshore Oil and Gas ESS Support Services Worldwide (subsidiary of Compass Group Australia Pty Ltd) and the human resources (HR) manager of Compass Group Australia (male and female respectively). Decision-making on Kitan for the promotion of a woman to the unit manager/camp boss role and the hiring of the two non-hospitality females (the medic and laboratory technician) involved male management personnel from Eni and the female Bluewater HR manager. Candidates for recruitment to non-hospitality roles on Bayu-Undan facility went through a shortlisting and finalising process via interview panels (consisting of both males and females) involving management personnel from Caltech Offshore Services (hereinafter referred to as Caltech), client contractor management/HR personnel (CAJV) and the ConocoPhillips field manager. Whilst the short-listing task has been largely in the

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[35] Caltech Offshore Services (named Caltech for the purposes of this research) is owned by a Timorese businesswoman and with her Canadian civil engineer husband, Jean Vezina (who had arrived in East Timor in 1999 with Medicins Sans Frontiers) as Managing Director. It is a branch of a Dili-based company that had been established by Vezina in 2001 as a project management company and evolved by 2003 into Caltech General Construction, co-owned by Jean and his Timorese wife Sheilla De Caldas. In 2004, Bayu-Undan contractor stakeholders identified Caltech as the only locally owned industrial organisation operating under international HSE standards and with no history of undertaking government projects – industrial safety and ethical aspects that rendered it the only suitable local entity at the time with potential to be brought into the loop as a potential stakeholder for Bayu-Undan project. When, in 2010, Caltech was able to secure insurances it began to operate as a labour-hire entity in its own right (through its Caltech Offshore Services wing now with the one local owner, De Caldas) servicing offshore operations initially to Bayu-Undan and a few years later to Kitan oil project (Personal communication: SH1, February 2015). Caltech was held up in the previous research as having played a critical role, as a causal mechanism, for the opening of offshore (non-hospitality) equal opportunities for women due to the gender equal development ethos of Vezina and De Caldas and the supporting roles of De Caldas' two sisters who were in management positions within Caltech and CAJV (Adams, 2014).

hands of contractor and labour hire company personnel, who have also played a role in the final interviews, it would appear that the field manager assumed considerable veto influence on those finally selected:

> "*Basically anyone who wants to work offshore, barring ESS, I need to get my hands on them … Because I know the jobs offshore I can associate someone's personality, someone's mentality, with that job … If I don't like 'em, sorry it's not gonna happen*" (Interview: SH 11, 2016).

This decision-making power of veto was also apparent for the selection of the eighteen Timorese who attended the six-month CAJV-established Site Skills training programme in the Philippines in 2016, three of whom were female. By all accounts the seeming autocratic aspect of power vested in this one individual was at odds with the more egalitarian and collaborative nature of interchange characteristic of the relationships between other actors involved in the decision-making processes. However, the exercising of this man's power was evidenced as facilitating the recruitment of women with the required skillsets and/or attributes for positions offshore. Associated stakeholder respondents have attributed this to his personal commitment to Timorese local content and openness and drive towards giving local females the opportunity to realise potential via the offshore setting. Veto for the recruitment of the four women to Ramform Sovereign was vested with Caltech management personnel (male and female). The realms of the decision-making around women working on the three facilities were coloured by subjective and objective, gendered and non-gendered aspects, the nature of which will now be explored.

6.3 Influencing factors on decision-making for recruiting and training Timorese for offshore

A range of factors (both intersecting and competing and of fluctuating weighting) has influenced the decision-making over time, around both the recruitment of Timorese to offshore roles and investments into their offshore-related WSD. These factors span:

- ANP expectations around the global stakeholders' social license to operate (in terms of local content)

- The degree of commitment of owner/operator and contractor stakeholders to enhancing local content

- Offshore labour demand and Timor-Leste labour market supply issues

- Cost-benefit considerations of the owner/operator companies involved

- Contracts duration and field life cycles

- Levels of confidence by foreign stakeholders in the local knowledge of local actors around identifying Timorese abilities/skills potential to meet industry requirements

- The women's own demonstration of their capacity to adapt and perform well in the offshore workplace

- Stakeholder companies' approaches with respect to equal employment opportunities (EEO), gender diversity and gender equity

- The motivations, efforts, drive and agency of individual actors and the coalescence of these at the organisational interfaces.

The findings relating to these factors and the interplay between them will now be explored, with the exception of the last, which will be discussed in a separate section on the women's offshore-related social capital.

Timorese women enter the 'gender-neutral' local content framework

As Chapter Four has explained, the over-arching framework within which Timorese nationals have been recruited to the Timor Sea facilities has been the local content aspect of Production Sharing Contracts (PSCs). These contracts have involved the Timor-Leste petroleum resources ministry, *National Petroleum Authority/Autoridade Nacional do Petroleo* - ANP[36] and owner/operator companies (ENI for Kitan and ConocoPhillips for both Bayu-Undan and as client to PGS for the seismic exercise involving Ramform Sovereign vessel). Within this regulatory framework ENI and ConocoPhillips have been required to present annual local content plans (LCPs) and regular progress reports to the ANP. Whilst having to provide their own LCPs and local content reports to these owner/operator companies the major contractors and labour hire companies have been contractually precluded from having formal contact with the ANP [37].

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[36] In 2016 the ANP became the *Autoridade Nacional Do Petroleo e Minerais Timor Leste* – ANPM.
[37] It appears, however, that ESS/Compass Group have had their own arrangement with the ANP that has involved additional meetings independent of the owner-operator parties every 3 months *"...off*

Chapter Four also alluded to the low capacity of the Timor-Leste labour market after independence to deliver Timorese workers with the skillset and experience to meet the international standards in safety and competence required of the O&G industry. This foreign industry actor describes his impressions of the status of the initial employee intake thus:

> *"[In 2003-4] there was no Internet, everything was burnt down still … everything was still traumatised – the equivalent kind of trauma was clear when you interviewed people. My first bunch of men … they were living in this dark kind of hole because of what they had just been through"* (Interview: SH11, 2016).

The low capacity aspect was highlighted in the previous research thus: *"When we started Caltech most employees were young, inexperienced and needed to be trained and have time to build up confidence … to come to terms with the fact that they were expected to make decisions rather than consistently having a malae [foreigner] telling them what to do"* (Adams, 2014, p. 116). This skills/competence deficit has been acknowledged by all other parties to the PSCs (Adams, 2014; Autoridade Nacional do Petróleo Timor-Leste, 2015). It has undoubtedly been behind the initial absence of mandatory targets being imposed by the regulator around the employment of Timorese nationals on the Timor Sea operations, as these comments by local and foreign stakeholder actors (involved from the early stages of Bayu-Undan field development) illustrate:

> *"It all came down to skills, knowledge and experience. We had requirements to meet with Conoco regarding the level of competency, English and what we required them to do. We needed to assess them against this and so they effectively competed with the Filipinos"* (Interview: SH7, 2016).

Even amongst the swelling number of Timorese graduates returning from the diaspora with petroleum-related degrees, few had had any significant, relevant hands-on industry experience (Chee, 2015). Moreover, one stakeholder respondent with considerable local knowledge expressed doubt over the validity of some of the

our own bat to let them know what we are doing, to work collaboratively" (Interview SH 15, 2016). Other contractors have, from time to time been required to undergo a local content audit by the ANP. For these they are expected to provide information on the employment conditions, remuneration and benefits of their Timorese employees, their overall training strategy, individual training plans, mentoring and coaching programmes and individual achievements, mechanisms for giving preference to Timorese and the financial spend (Personal communication: SH1, 2016).

degrees from some tertiary institutes in Asian countries (and including most in Timor-Leste): *"None of them are accredited, they have degrees that are not aligned with international standards, so the competencies cannot be unpacked and measured against other tertiary institutes around the world"* (Interview SH18, 2016).

The continuance of the un-mandated local content arrangements would appear to be due to the numbers of Timorese receiving training and being recruited to both on- and offshore positions consistently exceeding ANP expectations. As one Bayu-Undan owner/operator company respondent commented: *"Our local content plan submitted to the ANP is always accepted because it goes beyond what is expected"* (Interview SH12, 2016). An ESS/Compass Group respondent expressed a similar sentiment: *"We've never been challenged on the level of Timorese … we're one of the largest employers of Timorese in Dili … our biggest local content commitment has been up-skilling everybody to Level Cert II"* (Interview: SH15, 2016). In fact, at times the percentage of Timorese in offshore positions on Kitan exceeded 40% (Personal communication SH1, February 2015) whilst for Bayu-Undan it has reached 30% (ConocoPhillips Australia, 2017a, p. 2). In early 2015, Caltech had an over 120-strong full-time Timorese workforce spanning both facilities, of which 13% were female (Personal communication SH1, 2016). Apart from chef roles, the offshore staffing of catering services has been almost entirely Timorese, with around 25% female (Interview, SH15, 2016). However, it must be noted that the figures in the local content reports to the ANP (such as the combined Kitan and Bayu-Undan total trainees/employees exceeding 400 in 2013 (Autoridade Nacional do Petróleo Timor-Leste, 2013, p. 32)) will have included some Timorese who only worked in the industry for one or two swings [38] offshore, about which one respondent remarked: *"It's not really local content"* (Personal communication SH1, October 2016).

Nonetheless, even for those Timorese who only secured short-term, entry-level (or low-skilled) employment offshore (such as three females in hospitality roles and

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[38] The term 'swing' refers to the period spent working on the offshore facility – in the case of Kitan and Bayu-Undan, the standard length being one-month (with a corresponding month at home, onshore in between swings). A swing can, however, vary in length according to the work requirements.

some of the female bridge controllers), the investments in their 'fit-to-work offshore' status were seen by senior female Timorese stakeholder respondents to represent a not insignificant local content input resulting in a cluster of capacity-building outcomes[39]. These include the financing of their medical checks, T-BOSIET trainings (in Darwin, Indonesia or Malaysia), Radio Telephone (RT) skills trainings, and (for those employed by Caltech) preparation for and sitting of the Marlins English proficiency test and the Industry Safety Assessment and Training (ISAT) induction course. As one senior woman commented:

> *"The bridge controller is not like a rocket science but it is a stepping stone to give them the experience offshore. For the girls this has had a real impact. Even ticking the box for local content, it is still an important job and the outcome for the ladies is amazing. They are fixing their life"* (Interview: SH2, 2016).

Local content focus shifts from short-term numbers to long-term work skills development outcomes

For many years, (in particular for Bayu-Undan) local content has in fact been characterised by capacity building of Timorese nationals to a *basic* level (such as the attainment of Level Cert II in kitchen operations or a Verification of Competency (VOC)[40] for a blue-collar role such as deckhand) which for many has meant their securing of long-term, low-skilled jobs on the offshore facilities. This somewhat short-term strategy fulfilled those PSC requirements relating to getting numbers of Timorese employed in the industry and satisfied the regulator, as these comments reflect:

> *"We have to submit local content plans [to the parent company] which get submitted to the ANP – these talk about numbers of positions"* (Interview SH7, 2016).

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[39] These basic compliance attainments can cost the contractor in excess of USD4000 per Timorese candidate (Interview SH1, 2016). Further, a female Timorese employer of Bayu-Undan facility workers has explained how even though a job such as bridge controller that has a level that requires the least skills, it still demands high levels of accuracy, meticulousness, confidence and responsibility, and awareness of how it relates to the bigger picture of facility processes and safety protocols (Adams, 2014).

[40] Verification of Competency (VOC) is a method of assessment for ensuring staff are competent to operate equipment or perform a task to the standard expected in a work role in order for employers to meet OHS requirements . Competence is 'the ability to consistently perform activities to a defined standard of efficiency and safety. It is a combination of knowledge, ability, attitude and behaviour; derived from training and experience, and verified through supervision and assessment' (Australasian Training Company, 2018, p. 1).

"I only met with the ANP once when they were doing the audit ... they were only interested in the numbers" (Interview: SH6, 2016).

"When we pitched the rig-ready training [in 2012 which eventuated into the 2015/16 Site Skills Training course] we had four to five Timorese on the facility still in the basic, 'plus-one' role – you know: 'we don't really need you but we have to have some brown faces on the facility so you will be following this guy around, carrying tools and all that' – just filling the bottom" (Interview: SH1, 2016).

"It has seemed much easier to 'tick and flick' than to take them to the next level" (Interview: SH18, 2016).

For Caltech, holding a longer-term view (while also understanding from local knowledge and experience the amount of time it takes to develop Timorese capacity), having nationals occupying predominantly entry-level positions was only ever seen as a short-term fix:

"Caltech has always had a 'no foreigners in a job a Timorese can do' policy. Thus, whilst in order to fill crew numbers in offshore blue-collar contracts we have to recruit Filipinos where Timorese cannot fulfill the threshold of experience, we've seen this only as a temporary situation" (Personal communication SH1, February 2015).

One of the biggest initial challenges has been to elevate the levels of English competency to meet offshore requirements – one for which considerable investment was required to address, by local and foreign contractors, as the following explanations show:

"English is a pivotal skill - it was noticed it was a bit of a barrier. For example, I can recall we had a Timorese rigger doing an excellent job but when he was communicating with the crane ... if there's a miscommunication while he's doing the job that can have huge implications. We didn't want English to be a barrier for those guys so two years ago we started putting them through

further training via Jean [Managing Director of Caltech] when they were back at home so they met the Marlins standard[41] (Interview: SH10, 2016).

"It was around 2012 we were upping our levels of English competence. We use a tool called Marlins and I was pretty intimately involved with that – did a lot of research to see which was the best one worldwide. We came up with a matrix of five components, analysed comprehension as the key…English is the offshore language in the world and they've gotta be able to respond when someone says something…It's still a real challenge for us in my view" (Interview: SH7, 2016).

It was around 2012 that there was a qualitative shift in local content thinking and focus amongst the wider employing stakeholder network of Bayu-Undan (which at that point had optimistically another ten years of operation to go) towards structuring and delivering longer-term WSD outcomes, as the following comments illustrate:

"When I arrived in 2012 there was no real guts around it … there were four people in the local content plan for ASV. I saw from my background working in South East Asia there's potential in these people so let's mentor them and train them into doing a competent core crew role to replace Filipinos and expats. Next year half our core crew actually looking after equipment and performing the operation will be local Timorese people" (Interview: SH9, 2016).

"They [Seafox] wish to carry our shining stars to a better place in five years" (Personal communication SH1, October 2016).

"When we first worked out there, local content was a bit of … well we've got some available beds, some available down period and seats on the chopper, we would get them out on the rig. So it was a real ad hoc type of programme, but it is certainly not like that now. We're looking at future opportunities and career progress that suit the operation. Every year we seem to be pushing the barrier further and further to what we can work on … the plan, the intention is

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[41] Caltech is the only Marlins accredited centre in Timor-Leste, which enables it to score the English proficiency of its Timorese O&G industry candidates to an internationally recognised standard (Personal communication: SH1, February, 2015).

not to start someone in one thing, like a blaster/painter and then six months later move them into something else. We want them to become specialists in what they do, to be experts in that field – for an electrician not to just be able to change a light bulb but to be able to use that skillset anywhere" (Interview: SH10, 2016).

"Previously when the Timorese got reported it was box-ticking … we filled the beds but we didn't develop competencies at all …it was just all one brush for everyone's training, we didn't individualise much at all. There's no point putting people out there and then when the platform finishes, they go back onshore and they've got no work because they've got no skills. We are a much more mature system now and I am having the opportunity to sit down and speak with everybody that works offshore, 54-55 of them, to see what we could do for them, whether they might be ready for a challenge" (Interview: SH6, 2016).

"The thing we are doing, the one-on-ones, is to find out their current competency and ability, what their aspirations are, but also looking at what they are capable of. Not everyone will get to the top of the tree, some people will be quite happy to stay where they are, others may have reached their ceiling. We need to understand there's those people and then there's those who want to go to the next level" (Interview: SH7, 2016).

"The end-of-facility goal is to move Timorese HSE trainees into HSE Advisor positions through the fastest but structured way" (Interview: SH8, 2016).

Several hospitality crewmembers expressed their wish (in interviews) to be able to do training in Level Cert III in hotel operations. A respondent from ESS/Compass Group (whilst alluding to a common scenario where the women's at-home time tends to be full of family commitments that precludes their spending any significant time training) acknowledged that in exceeding its local content commitments the company had allowed most of the Timorese offshore staff to plateau at a certain (Cert II) level:

"I think we do a very good job at reflecting: 'Could we do better, yes we could'. I think we need to be starting to think about, well what additional skills can we help these women gain? And set ourselves some targets for females in supervisory or management roles. We do have targets to make sure all camp bosses are Timorese. Do we have Timorese chefs? No, we don't. We do have some [Indonesian] female chefs, but that's something we do need to take on board, to be our next focus - to get them to that next level, to give them every choice of opportunity" (Interview: SH15, 2016).

This sentiment has been echoed by senior personnel in the Bayu-Undan owner/operator company who have had involvement with Timor-Leste local content since before production began:

"We still have a bland statement in the PSC but earlier modus operandi have been rejected. We want to do more than basic local content. We want to build longevity into capacity building ... skills building that will give enduring value" (Interview: SH12, 2016).

"We are a little bit different now to what we were in 2003... there's such a talent pool out there now ... Sure, I talk to them about their careers – I say 'We're gonna go places, girl!'" (Interview: SH11, 2016).

To this end, ConocoPhillips now sees its investment in training and employment as going beyond the requirements in the PSC into the development of 'skillsets of our workforce through on-the-job and formal training, thus providing opportunities for career advancement' (ConocoPhillips, 2016, p. 1). The ANP now also has its sights on career and higher skills development as the following anecdote reflects:

"When I had the ANP regulators offshore, also the Prime Minister, they want to see development. [To the Timorese they say]: 'That's great that you're a steward offshore but I want to see you become a night cook and then maybe a unit manager in catering'. That's what they want to see and it's what I want to see" (Interview: SH11, 2016).

One of the most significant initiatives reflecting this change of mindset towards local content, and one which has impacted upon the careers of three of the female Timorese offshore workers of the study, has been the establishment by CAJV

(through their LCP and ultimately funded by ConocoPhillips) of a six-month 'rig-ready' programme in 2015/2016 with Site Skills Training centre in the Philippines. The idea for this (to give Timorese candidates with extractive industries-related tertiary qualifications the opportunity to gain hands-on-tools skills) was originally mooted by Caltech Managing Director (himself a qualified engineer) and had sat on the table for several years before being taken up by Bayu-Undan's owner/operator. His vision is articulated thus:

> *"It's a little bit like back in the day if you finish your civil engineering degree you would be working on a trucking crew for a year. Sitting on machines – it's nothing like you learn in the classroom – suddenly you are trying to do it at minus 10 degrees and you say: 'OK now I get it'. So this is the idea, because there is no such thing in Timor that compares with a rig. In other countries you could be a fitter with experience in building a plant, so you could better your skills and that looks good on a resume for offshore. If you are an instrument technician – there is no instrument in East Timor at the moment. There's no factory. So, it was important to give them the opportunity to train"* (Interview: SH1, 2016).

Site Skills Training was the start point of an extended plan for advancing the Timorese candidates to more senior offshore roles:

> *"For career making … to choose those Timorese with the most potential to become production operators or senior management but train them in blue-collar work so they know what it's like to work on the deck, to know what the other crew roles entail. We want them to climb the ladder but this gives them credibility"* (interview: SH1, 2016).

The 18 sponsored trainees completed Level Cert II in Electrotechnology or Mechanical Engineering with the aim that the highest achievers (three of whom were females) would then work in trainee positions on Bayu-Undan facility. After a period in the offshore environment these trainees were to be assessed and the top performers sent abroad to undergo further training to Level Cert III[42].

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[42] At the time of writing this thesis two of the female Site Skills trainees had been selected, after over a year working on Bayu-Undan, to continue with their Level Cert III training in Darwin. The third female trainee (with Cert II in electrical engineering) had received a scholarship to complete her Masters in Electronics Engineering.

For Kitan project (on which oil production began in late 2011 and ceased on its decommissioning four years later) local content did not assume such a long-term interpretation. However, to coincide with the onset of production in 2011, a group of 15 Timorese (including one female who subsequently became the only Timorese laboratory technician on Kitan) were supported to attend the internationally recognised 'Able Seaman' course[43] at the Malaysian Maritime Academy in order for them to occupy deck positions on the FPSO, Glas Dowr. This training requires candidates, in addition to completing the onshore course, to accrue sea time in order to gain the final certification. Unfortunately, due to the FPSO being anchored and hence not classed as a vessel under this regime (a criterion only subsequently realised by Bluewater), whilst the Timorese attained critical skills and knowledge for their offshore roles, they were unable to attain the marine qualification.

Training/WSD with respect to Kitan oil project's local content has been described as somewhat unplanned and unstructured:

> *"Bluewater's local content programme was the first of its kind for the company and we really scrambled to pull it together. The deck crew were just taken on according to their position and trained to the requirements and that's what they stayed as. Whereas the production technician trainees we were able to provide with an online training delivery platform of POL [Petroleum Open Learning] modules[44]. You complete 10 of them and you attain a certificate in process operations"* (Interview: SH17, 2016).

With less emphasis on the structuring or management of on-the-job training, Timorese (non-deck) crew interested to learn more or become more qualified were simply steered towards completing (off their own initiative) online modules relevant to their work roles. With respect to the only female Timorese engaged in

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[43] The Able Seaman (AB) STCW certificate of competence covers working safely in enclosed spaces and at heights, vessel emergencies response, emergency first aid, advanced fire prevention and fire-fighting, survival techniques in the water, launch and operation of survival craft and rescue boats, familiarisation with vessel safety and security and medical fitness (International Transport Workers' Federation, 2012, p. 32).

[44] The POL system consists of online modular self-learning courses in Oil & Gas Well Technology, Petroleum Processing Technology and Oil and Gas Electrical Engineering Systems and Subsea Technology to Certification Level III (OPITO, 2018).

production technician responsibilities it was remarked by Bluewater's local content coordinator that:

> *"Her training was just a mish-mash of trying to give her the skills and the knowledge that could build her up ... my friend in Oleochem[45] facilitated her getting access to the internal Oleochem training modules - she travelled to Jakarta to complete ten of these. The production superintendent had named a couple of POL modules that might be relevant to her position as lab technician, like the water module, and she finished them really easily, so I'd been kind of pushing with the superintendents to allow her to complete the other eight – they weren't that proactive about pushing the modules that involved on-the-job training, more the ones that she could complete based on her work in the lab. Due to a lack of communication between off- and onshore personnel it was only when the project was winding up that I was able to say to Caltech that she had already been assessed as fully competent in the use of specific lab equipment"* (Interview: SH17, 2016).

Whilst ESS/Compass Group was unable to establish comprehensive ongoing WSD (beyond Level Cert II) for most of its Kitan Timorese crew in the four years of its operation, one female employee was promoted to a camp boss/unit manager role and subsequently supported, when she was transferred to the same role on Bayu-Undan, to complete her Level Cert III in hospitality [46]. According to a senior ESS actor with considerable experience in servicing offshore facilities she was quite possibly the first female camp boss in South East Asia.

Stakeholder confidence in local knowledge and local talent grows

The historical evolution of Timor-Leste local content corresponds with a growing confidence throughout the employing stakeholder network in the available talent pool of Timorese (and in particular females) with the requisite attributes and skillsets deemed suitable for offshore work. The following descriptions illustrate

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[45] Oleochem Project Management provides offshore laboratory services to the oil and gas industry and was a contractor for Bluewater on Kitan project.

[46] This woman had been promoted to Offshore Unit Manager on Kitan and then on the 2015 demobilisation was transferred to Bayu-Undan in the same position. She completed her Cert III in hospitality in February 2017 with ESS support but if she embarks upon her Cert IV training, (which would have to take place in Darwin) she believes she will have to support herself. She is also pursuing, self-supported, an online business management course (Interview: FR 34, 2016).

what amounted to a sea change in foreign stakeholder attitudes towards employing Timorese:

"The success we've had over the years in filling up these blue-collar jobs with guys that can actually do the job and replace steadily Filipinos or expats kind of opened up their eyes to 'hang on a minute we can maybe have guys that go a bit further'. It still took them five years to see that they were successful. The quality of people we are now sending – because there is no job opportunity in Timor-Leste we have had a lot of graduates doing the bridge control position and all that and it becomes clear to all the people on the rig that this person has a lot of potential" (Interview SH1: 2016).

"When the contract started, it's a new thing for the company and we are learning as we go, we have a third world country for starters. In the start we had four Timorese and we brought out more when we had more bed space and the opportunity and time to give to developing them. Just the growth in the skillset and the capabilities we've seen over the last four years is massive" (Interview: SH10, 2016).

Initially, those most aware of the female talent pool suitable for offshore employment have been senior personnel in the local labour hire entities and Australian ESS/Compass Group personnel who have spent considerable time within Timor-Leste. Two of the high-level skilled women in the case study were recruited through Konnekto employment agency, which claims to have had success in promoting the talents of its female candidates for jobs in traditionally male fields such as maritime, construction and engineering: *"because they are much more conscientious about what it takes to do the job – the boring, detailed work"* (Interview: SH19). In the early days of Bayu-Undan production phase an informal collaboration between ESS general manager and Bayu-Undan field manager (both of whom were spending considerable time in Dili) resulted in the beginning of a steady stream of Timorese waitresses to offshore hospitality roles. The skillsets of female hotel/restaurant workers (with their above average levels of English fluency and

comfortableness working amongst *malae*[47]) were also recognised by the Caltech owner and managing director as being of value for non-hospitality offshore positions such as in bridge control and document control roles. The following observation from a foreign stakeholder actor provides some insight into this thinking:

> *"I got ladies from Dili Beach Hotel offshore – if they were good, I know ESS really well, I'd say to [their area manager]: 'You've got these ladies working in hotels – great English. So, hire 'em!'. That's how it went basically. Jean [at Caltech] says the same as me – they're fresh, willing to learn"* (Interview: SH11, 2016).

Caltech, in particular has had a long first-hand history of understanding the calibre of those Timorese in whom it had identified potential - through its own programmes of delivering WSD (to international standards) to locals [48], of its witnessing over time the development of confidence and competence of its long-term employees, through its awareness of the talent vested in its database of thousands of Timorese curricula vitae and in its success at shortlisting candidates suitable for offshore roles. A critical element in the evolution of the Timorese female offshore presence in non-hospitality roles (for Bayu-Undan in particular, but also Ramform Sovereign) has been the increasing reliance by foreign contractors, as time has gone by, on the services of Caltech as preferred local supplier of host-country nationals for

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[47] 'Malae' is the indigenous Timorese term for foreigner.

[48] Caltech General Constructing for over a decade have run an ongoing programme for blue-collar work skills development. Personnel informally refer to this as 'employing the unemployables. I have personally witnessed the set-up where these trainings take place in Caltech's construction yard in Comoro, Dili – equipped and run to international HSE standards and with a group of men, who had come down from the hills behind, waiting at the gate hopeful of getting the opportunity to receive training. A funneling process distils those who fit the initial criteria of "*unemployable, no work experience, no English, into being taught basic carpentry, concreting, plumbing, welding. Averaging 18-25 years. Jean puts money towards that programme, and CAJV have pitched in. They are paired up with another guy and learn like an apprentice, on a low income … It's a 3-year programme and when they graduate there are plasterers, welders, blaster/painters … they came in in thongs, knew nothing, maybe selling bananas or phone cards or doing nothing and now can do work to standard, earning big bikkies. CAJV are very proud of Jean and the programme*" (Interview: SH3, 2016). Additionally, Caltech has an ethos of using recycled materials wherever possible in construction projects, large and small, which encourages initiative and creativity and discourages reliance on imported materials. Whilst not a formal training programme, the progressing of several of the waitressing staff of Venture Hotel and L'Aubergine restaurant to the level of experience and competence and English fluency to enable them to work in the offshore setting echoes the same approach to up-skilling locals as the Comoro yard arrangement.

recruitment. Caltech has long seen the potential in Timorese women to adapt and perform well in the offshore setting, valuing their understanding of punctuality, planning, attention to detail and their tenacity - which senior personnel attributed to their learning these skills by helping their mothers, assuming care and household production responsibilities from an early age (Adams, 2014).

The value placed on the local knowledge and track record of this company in screening/proffering female candidates suitable for the offshore environment can be evidenced in the following comments:

> *"When we had the asset integrity maintenance programme we saw there was an opportunity to employ a lot more Timorese in roles that would suit our understanding of their skillsets. So they were lower level tasks such as the bridge control but also the non-trade type skills … Jean had a workforce of ladies who had worked in the office doing data entry – so bridge controllers, document control, time-sheeting offshore, similar to what they did – seemed to be all sorts of roles that suited them. We also got some girls that were doing logistics management, making sure people come and go and they were quite clever so it was about giving them the opportunity. Jean proposed the names, and as contracts manager I interviewed them with him – we let Jean do the questions regarding the family situation, how they would handle being offshore, being surrounded by water"* (Interview: SH7, 2016).

> *"Jean is a great resource, so we really tapped into that resource. We thought here's someone who knows the local laws, the local conditions and governance, the training available … he is like us, looking ahead to what is beyond Timor for these women. He has a whole pool of talent that can work anywhere in the world"* (Interview: SH10, 2016).

These comments introduce the notion that some stakeholder individuals have brought the strategic interests of the Timorese women (to realise their potential through learning and earning) more into the local content picture - a theme that will be explored later in this section of the chapter.

An equally important factor influencing the growth of the female offshore industry contingent has been the Timorese women workers' own demonstration that they have the capacity to adapt well and flourish in the workplace setting – a development that, as the following raft of observations indicate, generated positive attitudes amongst the stakeholders around the value of investing in the offshore-related training and employment of females:

> *"Those women, [with degrees in industrial and mining engineering from outside Timor-Leste] when we interviewed them, they stood off the page because of their skillset but also their exposure to overseas – they were a bit more worldly-wise, they didn't have the scare factor of being sent into the middle of the ocean with 250 men"* (Interview: SH7, 2016),

> *"HSE, we've got a really good track record with female employees in these roles - they have made their mark, they have performed well. We have broken the barrier on some of the trades, now we have our first female radio operator. The bridge controllers – it's almost like the client is surprised when I send a male candidate"* (Interview: SH1, 2016).

> *"[The female camp boss on Kitan] – she was incredible, she is a big success story for us. She had the respect of the OIMs, everyone offshore. Her performance was way more efficient than her male counterpart at the time – she has initiative and cognitively she would think ahead, her understanding of pre-ordering lead times was far and away superior. [The female lab technician] – she made the job her own, she was brilliant"* (Interview: SH17, 2016).

> *"[The female lab technician on Kitan] – she's the next level up, the team leader quality. I will be fighting really hard to make people consider her that way"* (Interview: SH19, 2016).

> *"The first time CAJV recommend me to go offshore, ConocoPhillips say: 'Why this is a man's job. Why do you want a Timorese woman to have this job?' When they came to interview me, they were surprised on what I have done already"* (Interview: FR26, 2016).

"The two [ex-Ramform Sovereign] women who came to Perth for planning training – they gained a lot of respect from the [ConocoPhillips] office staff … The HSE trainee with no tertiary education – we are very proud of her success" (Interview: SH13, 2016).

"At an unofficial level in the industry circles it's widely acknowledged that the women are brilliant to work with. They have a work ethic, an understanding of what is required to progress that's far and away … I guess more compatible with the western way of looking at things, than the males" (Interview: SH18, 2016).

"The women have come from behind the men and they've just lapped them. They're stable, growing in confidence, keen to learn, they've got all the smarts" (Interview: SH11, 2016).

At the end of the day, however, there are two dispassionate factors that have not-insignificant bearing upon the recruitment, WSD and retention of Timorese offshore crewmembers - those of fluctuating demand for offshore personnel and cost-benefit considerations. Regarding the latter, these relate to contracts and global petroleum price fluctuations. Regarding the former, there are objective limits to the sizes of offshore facility crews (and hence the capacity to swell local content numbers) based on the Person-on-Board (PoB) capacity of the facilities and skillset requirements and they fluctuate with the life cycle phases of field development (such as during exploration, facility construction, production, asset integrity and maintenance (AIM) programmes and shutdowns and ultimately end of field life). These factors are discussed below.

Factoring labour supply-demand and cost-benefit considerations into local content

Stable offshore demand for labour on both Kitan and Bayu-Undan has seen 16 non-hospitality women and at least 14 hospitality women occupying long-term, secure

positions in the production phases of the operations[49]. During the Bayu-Undan four-year Asset Integrity and Maintenance (AIM) programme, (when crew numbers swelled to over 400, mostly in blue-collar roles) a further at least 18 Timorese women were recruited to occupy non-hospitality, non-blue-collar roles – some for the whole duration and some for shorter periods, with some eight of these expected to return for a 2018 shutdown. When Kitan field was closed, it appears that the longer-standing female crewmembers retained their classification as local content by being transferred to Bayu-Undan (for the kitchen hand/housekeeper women in job-share arrangements). Bayu-Undan field life is expected to last until the early 2020s at which time all crew will be laid off. As the exploration phase is only of a short duration, the women performing hospitality and MMO/internship roles on Ramform Sovereign seismic vessel could only achieve one swing of offshore experience.

Skillset demand, as well as regulating crew size, also tends to put a finite limit to the WSD investment foreign contractors are prepared to invest in local employees:

> *"Being a contractor, we skill to the requirement. We need to train based on our skills matrix, the right mix of skillsets … we also want multi-skilled people. But you can't just keep training for the sake of it"* (Interview: SH7, 2016).

Nonetheless, there has been an increasing interest amongst Bayu-Undan contractors to train selected Timorese workers to a level where they can replace Filipino or expatriate crewmembers and/or become core crew and continue to work for the company:

> *"We spend a lot of money on offshore people like your husband, it costs companies a lot of money and they become valuable. If local content didn't exist I'd do it anyway. To me it makes business sense – the Timorese are cheaper, they're closer, they're competent so why wouldn't you?"* (Interview: SH9, 2016).

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[49] Of these 16 women, one declined an offer to be retained as core crew after the completion of the AIM programme, 1 moved to Australia, 1 was stood down due to taking excessive time off, 2 got scholarships to pursue post-graduate studies, and 1 opted to stay in an onshore role after taking Maternity Leave.

"You do invest a lot of money to get these Timorese to have the right tickets to go offshore, before you know they are right for the job. Jean has a whole pool of talent that can work anywhere in the world … they are really quite employable beyond just locally. But if the rig was to move from Bayu-Undan to Africa or another region then you'd have to look at the cost-benefit of flying them from Timor" (Interview: SH10, 2016).

In meeting local content commitments (both in employment and training) the investments by stakeholders are both financial and temporal. For example, the raft of certifications required as a baseline in order to be able to work offshore has been estimated at costing between USD4,000-5,000 per individual Timorese crewmember, whilst for those female Timorese in higher skilled positions (such as Junior HSE, radio operations and Heli-admin) the investment up until 2017 has neared, per worker, USD25,000, USD12,000 and USD16,000 respectively. The outlay per Site Skills Training student exceeded USD45,000 (Personal communication: SH1, July 2016). The cost for rig ready trainings (and including compliance refreshers such as the 4-yearly T-BOSIET and bi-annual OGUK medical check and coxswain ticket), and time invested by company personnel in arranging these, is built in to the contract between the labour-hire entities and their contractor clients (such as between Caltech and Bluewater/CAJV/Seafox). The cost of any trainings deemed necessary after a Timorese has assumed work on the offshore facility such as Confined Spaces Entry, the Permit-to-Work system, using the SAP system[50] or additional English learning are borne by the client contractors.

A Caltech respondent reported some vulnerability for the company around the point of its initial outlay in getting its Timorese candidates to a rig-ready status, due to some offshore recruits not fulfilling their employment contract or to females falling pregnant and having to be replaced at extra cost to the company:

"I have to foresee how many people are likely to quit – it is not until the second year when the T-BOSIET is still valid that we come out on top … as a business,

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[50] Confined Spaces Entry training provides O&G industry workers with the necessary skills and knowledge to safely and competently enter and work in confined spaces. Under the Permit-to-Work system on Bayu-Undan (which is a control ensuring tasks are carried out by those most competent to do so and in the safest manner possible) a permit to carry out a job only lasts seven days before it has to be replaced. SAP refers colloquially to enterprise resource planning software in areas such as procurement and inventory, produced by German software company, SAP (CBR, 2018).

female are more loyal than male, so other than pregnancy we don't tend to lose them … We can manage pregnancies – it's not the end of the world. We don't drop them like dead wood, we cross-train them so when they come onshore, they can work for us" (Interview: SH1, 2016).

Pregnant women are not permitted to work on the offshore facilities, which means that until they are entitled to Maternity Leave, they may not necessarily have employment. Both Caltech and CAJV have offered pregnant women onshore positions until they have taken their leave. Caltech's response to a raft of pregnancies that followed the onset of their employing women on Bayu-Undan was to develop a system of having rig-ready female replacements already on their onshore pay roll. These additional costs have not been recouped from the industry.

Cost-benefit consideration is a compelling factor that can cut across the extent to which the global oil industry is able and/or prepared to invest in local content. The industry is driven by the need to maximise profit and satisfy shareholders and has a history of crewing up in expansive times and retrenching or downsizing when oil prices drop (Austin & McGuire, 2017). The plummeting of global oil prices in 2014-15 resulted in the global industry's immediate response of setting in place the lay-offs of over 100,000 workers worldwide (Austin & McGuire, 2017, p. 17). (This was a contributing factor to Kitan operation being terminated ahead of schedule (Autoridade Nacional do Petróleo Timor-Leste, 2015)). As one Seafox respondent remarked:

"Our local content has been higher than 14, but in the current climate we've had to shift numbers. We've projected to push it out to 20 but we are reviewing that, looking at future opportunities and career progress that suit the operation …We have to be a bit short-sighted unfortunately because we are only as good as the contract that has been given to us" (Interview: SH10, 2016).

"We had a rationalisation of our business in the downturn – so end of 2015 we needed to demonstrate savings on our part as well so we got rid of the administrator role and we combined it with the radio operator's role [for the same female]. So now she's dual-skilled" (Interview: SH9, 2016).

Service and contractor companies can thus find themselves in the position of having to respond to the spending vagaries of their oil-producing clients, a situation which Caltech found itself in at the end of 2015 when it was suggested by the owner/operator company of Bayu-Undan that the Timorese employees take a cut in pay. This scenario, and the offshore redundancies, has highlighted the difference in the response to economic shocks between the global and the local organisations - with the former having an eye to the profit line and the latter demonstrating its greater concern (based on local knowledge) for the impact these events would have on their employees' economic and social well-being, as the following comments reveal:

> *"A person is laid off from offshore and we employ him here for USD6-7000 a year[51]. He can still feed the most important ones of his family. Maybe the cousin doesn't get as much as he used to get but you would like to think that his kids would be able to continue at school and continue to eat and that he is still able to pay his rent. To save seven grand I lay him off? And he needs to feed off someone else? He goes from being the provider to being a burden. How pleasant must that be as a human? I can't bring myself to do it"* (Interview: SH1, 2016).

> *"It's so bloody volatile. It's volatile for all of us. It could have all stopped because Jean [Managing Director of Caltech] refused to sign a contract that was requiring him to accept a lower figure for the employees' wages due to the [global] downturn in company profits"* (Interview: SH3, 2016).

> *"Any cut on our employees' take-home money is unacceptable to us both morally and ethically … in addition we do not support staff reduction either. Laying off motivated, committed people goes against basic skills development principles. We intend to retain all our motivated employees in spite of the financial hardship this will bring to our business. It's an investment in loyalty and we will have committed people when they need to flare up again"* (Personal communication: SH1, September 2016).

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[51] This income, while around half of the income of most offshore Timorese employees, is nonetheless five times the Timor-Leste minimum wage.

The suggestion was made by Caltech that if it was acceptable to reduce employees' salaries during a global oil price slump then it should be acceptable to re-instate them or increase them when the prices rise back up or there is a boom. The proposed salary cut did not eventuate.

The over-riding impression contractor and local stakeholder and key informant respondents held was that it is ultimately the commercial division of the owner/operator companies (with no direct contact with host country stakeholders) that has the final, 'remote-controlled' say on investments into local content:

> *"The company will make a commercial decision about how much local content they are willing to invest in … and will pay the prevailing wages as they relate to the local cost of living"* (Interview: KI 1, 2016).

> *"The spend is very important – we have to report absolutely everything we spend in the country"* (Interview: SH6, 2016).

> *"Their [the owner/operator] local content advisor is more interested in how much did you spend than understanding the cultural importance of local content decisions. All decisions at the end of the day are commercially driven and we have no power to overturn these"* (Personal communication: SH1, October, 2016).

In a climate of offshore crew retrenchment local content commitment has segued into the retention of Timorese females on onshore payrolls, as this HR actor noted: *"…our view is that we want to retain the skills we've built in Timor and that's our investment in keeping them working"* (Interview: SH15, 2016). For example, ESS/Compass took the initiative of opening casual positions in shipyards in Singapore and South Korea for some of their laid off female employees and Caltech, after managing to secure a position for the pregnant Kitan laboratory technician on Bayu-Undan, employed her in an onshore role and paid her Maternity Leave when required. Caltech also created or re-instated onshore jobs (both O&G industry-related and in its wider business activities) for those women who needed work after the crew downsizing at the completion of the Bayu-Undan AIM programme. CAJV

was also able to absorb their offshore women performing administrative roles into their onshore office, along with the two females who performed MMO/internship roles on Ramform Sovereign. Further, Caltech created a job for a female Timorese Key Informant of this study (with considerable off- and onshore industry experience outside Timor-Leste) when she was laid off her onshore position with a Bayu-Undan engineering services contractor at the conclusion of its in-country term. Thus, at least 13 of the female respondents have been able to transition back into onshore O&G industry jobs, with over half of these being earmarked by Caltech for re-instatement (as still rig-ready compliant) into offshore roles during the proposed 2018 Bayu-Undan shutdown.

What is of global significance, as far as the evidence shows, is that the collective stakeholder organisation 'spend' on Timorese women has resulted in their numbers on the Timor Sea offshore facilities (within one country's local content domain and not simply concentrated in entry-level or catering roles) far exceeding the female percentages seen on petroleum operations in other developing nations and also those of offshore facilities in the developed world. It would appear that this outcome has arisen *in spite of (or irrespective of)* any explicit or formal local content agenda for promoting gender diversity or women's empowerment. Rather, it seems to have happened *because of* a combination of the business-as-usual equal employment opportunities (EEO) and gender equality protocols and practices of the employing stakeholder organisations with the influences of conscious 'development agent' inputs of actors interested in furthering the strategic learning and earning interests of Timorese women. These influences and inputs have coalesced at the organisational interfaces (spanning organisational boundaries) through formal and informal inter-relationships and in the decision-making and efforts of individuals in intra-organisational and workplace domains. The findings around this conclusion will now be further unpacked.

6.4 Approaches (gendered or not) to Timorese females entering the non-traditional job field of offshore oil and gas

It is clear from the narratives that discussion or consideration of gender has never been on the formal local content agendas at the stakeholder organisational interfaces, as the following comments illustrate:

"No-one has ever, from what I've seen with ConocoPhillips pushed the gender thing in local content, just Timorese. The ANP never ask for gender-disaggregated stats even though I always give them [in the contractor reports to the client]" (Interview: SH6, 2016).

"I'm not aware of any situation where the client has said: 'we want women or we want 50-50'" (Interview: SH3, 2016).

"There's never been a quota of so many women. Our Local Content Plans, which get submitted to the ANP talks about the number of positions and people but not gender. The discussions we've been in with ConocoPhillips, there's never been gender-based discussion. It's always been the right person for the job ... when we were selecting the Site Skills Timorese there were three females who were the right fit" (Interview: SH7, 2016).

In no owner-operator publications about the Timor Sea operations is there mention of the number of local women on these facilities, nor of this outcome being positive evidence of gender diversity in the industry, although Timorese women do appear in photographs amongst males in Bayu-Undan owner/operator newsletters depicting local content achievements - such as of petroleum-related traineeships and tertiary scholarship recipients associated with Timorese local content. In 2016 Seafox, however, published a one-page spread in its internal global magazine about one of its offshore female Timorese HSE trainees as acknowledgement of her success as a woman in the field. Two local actors wondered if the phenomenon of there being globally significant numbers of Timorese offshore women workers had in fact ever been deemed worthy of having attention drawn to it in wider industry circles:

"I would be gob smacked if ConocoPhillips wrote in their glossy magazine re their social conscience: 'by the way, we employ the largest percentage of women offshore of any third world country'. I think they are unaware" (Interview: SH3, 2016).

"The 13% female of Caltech's offshore workforce is down to us ... but I don't think our client are interested to publicise this achievement" (Personal communication: SH1, January, 2018).

As a tacit counter to the apparent invisibility of Timorese women as a gender outcome in local content agendas and reports, a senior personnel member of Conoco-Phillips explained:

"We don't report, we do. We are trying to set the Timorese up for success and we don't treat women differently. When there are hard lessons to be learnt, women must learn them like anybody else. We give them the opportunity. It's up to them to take the initiative" (Interview: SH12, 2016).

Many respondents would avow that rather than a gender diversity agenda being the driver behind the significant numbers of Timorese women entering the offshore industry field, it is the company protocols and practices around gender equality and equal employment opportunity (EEO) (and, as one owner/operator company respondent insisted, an absence of gender bias) that have provided the enabling opportunity structure for the women to compete on an equal basis with males for recruitment and promotion. This range of respondent contributions provides some illustration of stakeholder approaches:

"Do I factor in what happens to be the best person for the job? Who happens to be a female? Yes. But in hospitality, in any country we work in, gender doesn't seem to be a challenge needing to be addressed" (Interview: SH 15, 2016).

"When we appointed the camp boss woman to be honest, we never thought of it as gender – she was the best candidate. Then we heard she was probably the first female camp boss in South East Asia. It never occurred to me" (Interview: SH18, 2016).

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"I haven't seen anything about gender diversity in CAJV, but then our office here is mostly female. It's not an issue in admin. Last year they sent a whole table of women to the [global] oil and gas forum (Interview: SH6, 2016).

"As contracts manager I wouldn't make it about gender or affirmative action. If we selected 20 people and all happened to be women, so be it. If male, so be it. I think we are demonstrating that we are fair and equitable and it's not gender-driven" (Interview: SH7, 2016).

"We had no idealistic view, but it became obvious at the very early stages that women had an important role in the growth of the business …But it's up to the individual the speed they can grow – some will remain fitters and some will become team leaders. It depends on their ability and personality" (Interview: SH1, 2016).

"It's all about competence to me. We're committed to our numbers and that's tied, non-gendered, to a contracts performance. I'm not gender-specific really. I've no preference for a competent man or a competent woman I have to be honest. I just wanted the best person for the job and the HSE and radio ops women were. It is about honouring them more for their skill than their gender" (Interview: SH9, 2016).

The 'best person for the job' has thus been the compelling credo behind recruitment decisions, one that has been argued by women respondents throughout the industry network as reflecting a greater respect for women than, for example, a female quota, might imply. The comments from these women reflect this attitude:

"When I started in oil and gas I recognised that it was a male-dominated industry and that I wanted to be recognised for my ability and my work than my gender" (Interview: SH17, 2016).

"In this day of gender diversity, I would expect a quota for women but sometimes I think this would be a barrier because for me personally I wouldn't want to be employed because I'm a woman" (Interview: SH14, 2016).

However, in some corners of the stakeholder network there was evidence of sympathy with a gender equity or affirmative action approach as admissions from both male and female respondents suggest:

> *"I never think about gender and don't think it is important in HSE. Although if I had three males and one female applying for an offshore position and the woman was as good as the males, I would probably default to employing her"* (Interview: SH8, 2016).

> *"The person doing the selection of the Darwin five[52] has got no real insight into what's happening here in Timor. I would have ensured another woman was chosen, knowing how focused they are on their development – bottom line, female any time"* (Interview: SH11, 2016).

> *"Having been used to being the only woman in a [military] all-male environment – I had a great female mentor and part of what makes me is that I'm supporting women in the non-traditional fields. I'm a member of Zonta[53], so the whole woman thing has been pretty big for me and while I do try to hide the feminist side of me, every now and again it surfaces - we need more women. When I saw the women on the Darwin course were high performers, high achievers I was sending emails saying: 'Wouldn't it be great if we could have 5% of Site Skills Training as women?' But I got: 'I don't see it as a priority'. No-one has ever, as far as I could see, pushed the woman thing"* (Interview: SH6, 2016).

> *"I don't think the situation arises where we've got two good candidates and we choose the woman, but last week we had to choose eight candidates for an Australian company that is running a training programme here in forklift and safety and Cert II and III in warehousing and once we got through the first threshold of English proficiency and had whittled down to the shortlisting*

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[52] In 2014 11 Timorese (5 females and 6 males) attended a 6-month course in Dili/Darwin covering English, petroleum and rig-ready basics and business skills. 5 of these (of which 1 was a woman) were then selected to further their training in Perth.

[53] *Zonta International* is global organisation of professionals (with three branches in Australia) empowering women worldwide through service and advocacy (Zonta International, 2016).

stage, the Caltech owner and I made sure there was a good mix of women in there. Substantially more males than females applied (only four women) so we ended up with four females on the shortlist of 13 who then made up half in the final group of eight. You could say that was affirmative action – not all of the women were the best but they were all suitable, they fit the criteria and it was about women deserving 50/50 because that's fair" (Interview: SH3, 2016).

The three senior Timorese women in owner/management roles in Caltech and CAJV have expressed the clearest sentiments of the need for a gender equity approach that aligns with the strategic interests of Timorese women coming from a patriarchally-defined, gender-unequal society, as reflected in this contribution:

"I think what is most important is male and female are at the same level in here [Caltech and CAJV] because our culture always man on top of woman, men having the better job. I would suggest to the recruiters that they give more opportunity to women to do the higher skilled jobs" (Interview: SH5, 2016).

Opportunities have opened in the non-traditional job field of offshore oil and gas for Timorese women to demonstrate they can be the best person for the job and that they have potential for attaining higher skilled jobs normally held by males (such as camp boss, materials coordinator and radio operator). Nonetheless, for most of the advertised non-feminised positions, respondents have reported that male applicants far exceed female with the women tending to prefer the less masculinised jobs, a mindset this respondent has tried to redress: *"I try to get it through to the women that document control is not just a female thing and also that there are other jobs they can think about doing"* (Interview: SH14, 2016). Overall, it would seem that the women's normative preferences, that have precluded for many any aspiration to enter blue-collar roles, reflect the global gendered trends in the offshore O&G world where males predominate in these jobs. The following comments provide some illustration around this latter situation:

There's no reason why with sufficient experience and the right certifications the women can't work anywhere in the world … but if it's labour-intensive is that a good fit for a Timorese female? There's not a lot of interest for females to take up these roles to be honest" (Interview: SH10, 2016).

"We did the recruiting for the seismic company and we had to recruit 24 people as stewards, deckhands, motormen, MMO, geotechnical. In reality we were never going to find female mechanical or deck hands" (Interview: SH3, 2016).

"The problem with promoting the women is our contract is mostly for the blue-collar worker. When another type of job comes up, we can propose the women and if they are successful we will encourage them to take it" (Interview: SH4, 2016).

"When I offer the blaster/painter training to the office girls they say: 'Oh this is not our thing. What will the men think?' But the one who did it, she just have the high school education, she say: 'I want to be like the kiwi girl on Bayu-Undan FSO [who is supervisor of the blaster/painters]'" (Interview: SH2, 2016).

For Western women in the contractor network the barrier for women of entering a mesh of masculinity in the O&G industry blue-collar trades was of concern, as these thoughts indicate:

"Can I ask you a question? Those women who are interested in welding or fabrication, do they know if there are any other women interested? Because if I was going into a training with 50 other guys, I don't know I'd be that interested, I'd probably be a bit apprehensive … maybe they could run a female-only course? Even here [in Australia] it's assumed that if you're male you're going to be good at welding. It's all learnable stuff. The women can support each other in a female training setting" (Interview: SH14, 2016).

"[The woman doing the blaster/painter training] – I can't praise her enough, but she has to pass the VOC like any Timorese or Filipino male. I do know from my own experience it will be hard for her being in the blokey environment. Those men won't see her as doing as good a job as them. She will have to prove she is twice as good just to be equal with the rest of them. It's very physical work but we've had men who can't do the job. I will be trying to get her onto the kiwi woman's team so she has support" (Interview: SH6, 2016).

Reports of the environment in which the three women who completed their six months of electrotechnology and mechanical engineering training along with 15 Timorese males indicated that the trainers had taken care to inculcate a gender-neutral, supportive camaraderie amongst the group. The women achieved highly - the field manager of Bayu-Undan reporting, for example, that one has become a meticulous welder. Once on the Bayu-Undan facility working in the blue-collar teams, time will tell whether these women have to 'prove' themselves to be equal to or better than their male co-workers or not.

The narratives, thus, point to a conscientised awareness amongst many stakeholder actors (male and female) of the importance of O&G industry structures of opportunity needing to be overtly non-discriminatory and welcoming to the Timorese women in order to foster their strategic interests in such a masculinised work environment. The extent to which this sentiment has become manifest in the social capital (for the women) of women-friendly workspaces will now be explored.

6.5 Social capital vested in women-friendly training and workspaces

Women navigating masculine spaces

This research was approached with the understanding, based on the previous knowledge of Bayu-Undan and prior conversation with key local stakeholders of Kitan operation, that the experience of the Timorese non-hospitality females (at least) in the male-dominated offshore work places would be one of dignity and of feeling valued (Adams, 2014). The narrative evidence for the wider group of women with collective experience spanning the three Timor Sea facilities in this study overwhelmingly confirms this assumption as is evidenced in the following comments from ESS/Compass Group employees:

> *"Most often it is man steward offshore but Bayu-Undan man and woman nearly same … when I was on the boat from Bayu to the North Sea - only me a girl amongst 60 stewards. All the people are helpful, it feel like I also not a girl"* (Interview: FR 34, 2016).

> *"Because I know what I'm doing I feel the self-confidence. The people treat me well and make us feel comfortable"* (Interview: FR12, 2016).

In fact, as a prequel to entering the world of offshore oil and gas, many of the women who had had prior experience of studying and training alongside males in non-traditional engineering-related fields, appeared to have developed high expectations that they would be treated as equals[54]. To the contrary, the hospitality women were entering a masculine world where they were working alongside males in roles that might seem (to Timorese) to be traditionally female. However, they were employed by an organisation that was habituated to the phenomenon of females undertaking FIFO energy sector roles and claimed gender discrimination to be a non-issue for them. For the women who had come under the Caltech wing, as long- or short-term employees, they had had first-hand experience (also as a prequel to their entering the offshore oil and gas setting) of its equal opportunities ethos and practices, which several respondents claimed to be atypical of the Timor-Leste private sector. This might be expected to have lowered their tolerance threshold of unacceptable sexist attitudes and behaviours from males, to which this comment attests:

> *"In the Caltech enclave gender equality is just a given. It's a beautiful thing. The women know they've got support … it's a special place, not only with Timor-Leste but with oil and gas. These girls, they won't have it when the Timorese guys don't provide receipts for their expenses – even when the men get quite aggressive, they stand up to them"* (Interview: SH18, 2016).

One woman, whose (post-bridge controller) onshore Caltech job entailed her working mostly with males in blue-collar roles, exuded confidence in being accepted on her merit and had this to say:

> *"I like to say, if during your research you don't mind you let everyone know that Caltech is a good company – especially about the equal opportunity"* (Interview: FR18, 2016).

My own observations of the males who work onshore in the Caltech enclave, which also houses the offices of CAJV and other O&G industry contractors, has been that they engage with the women, professionally and socially, as equals. Reports from

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[54] This was several women's experience derived from both local and diaspora tertiary institute settings - such as at the University of Timor-Leste for the Bayu-Undan materials coordinator and in Indonesia or Australia for the women with degrees in mining, industrial or environmental engineering or geology. It was also the experience of the Kitan laboratory technician and Site Skills trainees through their extended O&G industry-specific training.

the women who have previously worked for NGOs in Timor-Leste indicate these settings to have been similar.

Nonetheless, many (especially in the earlier groups) were full of trepidation when they first arrived in the masculinised offshore setting (Adams, 2014). Moreover, even the reality that all of the women have had to succeed in passing, at the least, the non-traditional trainings of basic fire-fighting and underwater helicopter crash escape alongside Timorese males did not preclude an initial (albeit short-lived) level of doubt being held by some Timorese males that the women could cope with working in the offshore environment (Adams, 2014). It would appear that some offshore masculinities (and in particular amongst Timorese and Filipino men) have had to evolve further to developing a positive acceptance of women who have attained (higher-level) certifications and more responsible roles usually held by males in the industry as these reports suggest:

> *"I was the only woman offshore [outside of Timor-Leste]- like when woman goes alone, with the Asian people it's like the possibility for abuse is higher than the Australians … When you go there and it's pretty rare to find a woman, people like to look at you and talk to you, you feel like all the attention. They look at you like you're an alien or something. I used to get the wolf whistle and I had to be very assertive … They love the smile and I love the smile as well but when I ask the question: 'But where is your attendance sheet?' or I pick them for the random drug-test, I don't want to fool around, I have to be professional. I think for the people I know on Bayu-Undan … now things have changed, you don't have to be strong woman to go there, a lot of us go and we feel more comfortable"* (Interview: KI2, 2016)*.*

> *"At first I don't feel that confident because it's all new and I don't know people. When I have to call them at the muster, I have to discipline them like: 'OK you cannot sit down, you have to stand up and listen'. Because sometimes the guys don't listen because they think she just a woman you know? And then I have to really raise my voice and say: 'Look I'm sorry but you so loud we cannot hear what is being said on the speaker phone', and they say: 'Oh, she is serious! Oh*

sorry, it's OK'. And suddenly the whole room is quiet. So funny'" (Interview: FR29, 2016).

The latter woman also had to initially assert her knowledge of her role with a western superior:

"When I'm doing my Monday report, I'm normally dealing with my chief engineer … if there is some problem with the re-fueling, the trigger is not working so the fuel is not running I have to call him up to the helideck … He ask me what is going on, I say it is probably the trigger and he say no, no it's not the trigger, I'm just listening because he knows more than me, but I know exactly what is wrong in here and he won't listen to me. It was the trigger! And then he said: 'Oh shit, you should become a chief engineer', and I said: 'I'm not up to that but this is my area so I know better'. There's no pressure [to be better than the men] but you know sometime men in offshore they think they are God so it's like a challenge to show that it's not only you guys that can do it, we can do it as well" (Interview: FR29, 2016).

There was no echo, amongst the other female Timorese respondents, of having had this woman's offshore experience of encountering 'God-like' male behaviour (which in the end appeared to be unproblematic for her as a female with a high level of self-esteem) and nor was there evidence that men have exercised power in ways that might impact negatively upon the Timorese women's dignity as female crewmembers. In contrast to this, some respondents commented that in the Timor-Leste government and private sectors, top-heavy with older men, the woman is often the one who is sent to get the coffee:

"At home one time they were talking about working with the government – I was saying sometimes you have to carry the boss's bag around, he forgot his jacket and stuff, he don't ask, he just tell. You have to bow and scrape, put yourself down when you ask for help … That's why I can't work in that environment – it will affect you. They push you down mentally" (Interview: KI2, 2016).

For some women, however, there was the challenge of adjusting to having a working relationship with busy, pressured men – but with positive outcomes for their sense of dignity, as these comments indicate:

> *"My supervisor is very good. He is informing, not demanding. I never find a character of bossy in him. When something not right he came to ask for the reason and once he got the explanation, he is fine"* (Interview: FR32, 2016).

> *"When I start the new offshore position, I feel afraid of my onshore boss – he's a very serious man, when we do the job, we must do it exact. Now even when he get angry I feel fine. He's a good man, I like him, he cares about me. He say: 'If you have any problems with the job tell me. I'm the one, I'm the person looking after you'"* (Interview: FR3, 2016).

> *"My supervisor – not so much mentoring, it's too busy. Just tell me how to do the job. At first, I was afraid to interrupt him but we become best friends"* (Interview: FR2, 2016).

The women in observation/internship roles on Ramform Sovereign, whilst being encouraged to ask questions about the seismic operation, had only small windows of opportunity in which to engage with busy experts. Nonetheless, whilst this vessel and the other offshore facilities can be characterised as workplace settings that allow little superfluity of time for crew interactions that are not task-oriented, the findings reveal that the Timorese women (regardless of skill level) were in general deemed by senior crew to be worthy of devoting time to - in sharing knowledge of how things worked on the facility or taking time in passing to chat about facility activities, such as for this woman:

> *"My supervisor give me the opportunity to learn more in the office. Sometimes when I'm bored with the bridge control, I ask the people who make the chemical -l they take me to DPP and teach me what is this, how to add this, to explain the process"* (Interview: FR 20, 2016).

> *"The OIM – I bring some documents to him and we have the conversation [about the processes]"* (Interview: FR 9, 2016).

Two women with petroleum-related degrees who spent a short time in bridge control roles talked of how they were able to use this opportunity to learn from experts happy to talk with them about the production processes.

Several Bayu-Undan women said they preferred to mix with the western males in their downtime offshore - at least three because they liked to learn from the men about the operation, one because she felt safer and another because there was less gossip than amongst her compatriots. Whilst some reported that socialising with the western males could provoke disparaging comments from male compatriots about their behaviour (that they are, for example, being loose and flirtatious) none appeared concerned about this – rather they understood that this was due to the men never having lived in any other country than Timor-Leste and having had no opportunity to become familiarised with the notion that such social interaction does not imply a sexualised relationship. Two women had heard sexualised comments from Filipino males about their form in the overalls - with one reporting it to her supervisor whereupon the behaviour was not repeated and the other, who knew the Philippines language, *Tagalog*, telling the male to beware because she understood what he had said. In fact, the findings reveal there has been very minimal incidence of sexual harassment on the facilities, with only one being dealt with formally (on Bayu-Undan), the consequence for the Timorese male perpetrator being his immediate demobilisation under the 'zero tolerance' regime:

> *"That was the first time the Timorese learnt what our discrimination policy meant"* (Interview: SH6, 2016).

It is of note that one of the male key informants expressed doubts as to the likelihood of the gender equality consciousness of some of the Timorese women in the study being able to support their dignity in other less-than-gender-equal employment settings:

> *"You do need to create the right culture within the work environment to allow these lower educated women to flourish … If they had an abusive boss, misogynist reporting in performance evaluation, active sexual harassment going on, would these women have the skillset to address this? Would these*

women be more vulnerable and have less alternatives for dealing with it?"
(Interview: KI1, 2016).

This same respondent raised the question of how much of the women's empowerment status could be attributed to their (endowed and/or honed) antecedent caches of personal strengths and how much to the supportive environments they have inhabited. Certainly, as has been shown from the employing and training stakeholders' observations, and from previous research, the women upon entering the offshore setting have exhibited high levels of agency, self-belief and critical consciousness of their equality with males (Adams, 2014). The other side to the gender equality equation has been the scant evidence of the women having felt disrespected by male superiors and crewmates.

Whether the women's personal strengths, as consolidated by the experience and achievements gained in the offshore work might support their empowerment in other work and social settings is an area of discussion largely pursued in the following chapter, Part (B) of the findings and discussion. Suffice it to say at this point that the Timorese women's sense of dignity and empowerment growth has benefited from the social capital of the industry and local entity protocols and codes of conduct around gender equality, gender discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplaces (and the adherence of male crewmembers to these with overwhelmingly positive attitudes) as well as that which has been manifest in the decision-making and actions of actors whereby equal opportunities have been opened for them to realise their potential to varying degrees and in various ways.

Further, the reach of this social capital has extended to the involvement of a strata of other actors (such as trainers, the offshore supervisors and OIMs) within the organisational networks who have appreciated the abilities and potential of Timorese females and who have invested time and personal commitment into fostering the women's workplace empowerment well-being – such as in their enhanced knowledge, self-efficacy, self-confidence and competence, and their sense of autonomy, meaning, impact and relatedness (through, for example offshore on-the-job mentoring and coaching activities and onshore support and pastoral care inputs). The findings will now be explored in order to elicit understanding of the

depth and breadth of the social capital manifest in these actors' attitudes and actions at the individual level and in organisational boundary-spanning ways.

6.6 Tiers of social capital manifest in employing and offshore personnel

Movers and shakers moving women to offshore jobs

It is not inconceivable that, given: i) the physical isolation of the Timor Sea operations and hence their invisibility to the oversight of the outside O&G world with its gender diversity agenda; ii) the absence of any gender component in local content planning and reporting, and; iii) a hypothetical (but not unrealistic) mindset amongst local and facility actors that males are better suited to the offshore workplace, there could have been a complete *non*-representation of Timorese females on any of the offshore facilities. It has become evident from the findings that behind the phenomenon of Timorese women entering offshore employment and receiving related WSD it has been the 'push' of a handful of 'movers and shakers' – that is, the motivations, agency and actions of some key individuals (both foreign and local, female and male) that has driven the gendered outcome, which can be seen from the following collection of narrative contributions:

> *"We turn waitresses into offshore workers"* (Interview: SH1, 2016).
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> *"One of our pet project is you see someone who has the potential, you treat it as your priority to allow this potential to blossom … The ones that came from waitress [to offshore administration and bridge control jobs] they might have reached the highest level they will ever get … but some others will engage in more learning and when I feel they are ready I will put them forward for the higher job… I think the client got a bit surprised by how fast we were sending out the female"* (Interview: KI1, 2013, Masters fieldwork).
>
> *"It take a long time for them [the foreign stakeholders] to take a decision [about hiring women for offshore roles]. And this role as a bridge controller was a kind of test – a very easy role, maybe to see whether the Timorese woman can work in that sort of environment. Because they created that role to tick the boxes for the government. But they could hire men - and we propose the women"* (Interview: SH2, 2016).

"For me personally Jean is one of the most invested of labour hire company people that I've ever met – he really wants to do the right thing by his employees. He really wants what's best for them. I think that's why he liked me because we had the same thinking – you know: 'Let's get them, train them and put them in real jobs!'" (Interview: SH9, 2016).

"The best duty of care we could have done, for me who runs the thing, is to interview these males and females - Jean, Caltech HR Manager and me – over two to three days. So I'm happy if there is one who is borderline and I can see its someone we can work with, we can give them these opportunities" (Interview: SH9, 2016).

"[The Bayu-Undan field manager] was paramount in getting women on board – if he had said he didn't want women on the facility no-one would question that" (Personal communication: SH1, October, 2016).

"A lot of people can talk about it, think about it [within the owner/operator company regarding investing in building Timorese capacity], but no-one actually does it – I'm the one who's doing it! When I'm offshore 50% of my daily work is about Timorese. When I'm onshore it's probably about 80% - I'm always working at angles, setting up interviews, communicating with CAJV or Jean about things" (Interview: SH11, 2016).

"The OIM really fought for her [the female Kitan camp boss] to be given the role" (Interview: SH17, 2016).

Once the women have entered the offshore O&G opportunity structures, their social capital has extended to contingents of other actors, within the organisational tiers and across the organisational interfaces of the employing stakeholder networks, who have supported the initiatives and aligned with the motivations of these movers and shakers and/or provided formal and informal support to many of the women's realising potential progress. These actors include local content coordinators, human resources and contracts personnel involved (on one-on-one

and collective levels) in the structuring and management of the women's work performance and WSD as well as workplace supervisors, superiors and trainers who have provided mentoring, on-the-job coaching and monitoring of their progress. These inputs have thus supported the development of their human capital caches of knowledge, skills and competences, through providing challenges to their self-efficacy and feedback on their achievements, and through fostering enhancements to psychological components of their empowerment such as their sense of autonomy, meaning and impact in the workplace and their self-confidence and self-esteem. The nature of these inputs and viewpoints on the outcomes will now be discussed.

Bolstering women's self-confidence and self-efficacy

Chapter Two explained the importance of women who live in a society where female potential is undervalued having self-efficacy – that is, having the belief that they have the ability to surmount the challenges required to achieve their goals and to master skills. For women, such as in this case study, this self-belief has been instrumental in their being able to pursue aspirations of becoming self-confident, skilled, competent and valued employees. The next chapter goes into some depth in exploring the complexion of the Timorese women respondents' self-efficaciousness (often courageous, based on their intrinsic motivation to learn but tempered by their fear of making a mistake) as it has supported their efforts to acquire the skills and competences (including for many 21st century skills) [55] required in their offshore roles and consequent boosts to their sense of empowerment. An important companion to this self-efficacy has been explained as reinforcement by external sources, that which might be deemed the social capital of authentic efficacy information coming from significant/expert others about the women's ability to master a skill and the provision by employers of positive (at the appropriate level)

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[55] The OECD uses definitions of skills and competencies as: a skill being the ability to perform tasks and solve problems, and; a competence being not limited to cognitive elements, encompassing functional aspects (involving technical or practical IT skills) as well as the ability to draw on and mobilise psychosocial resources (such as organisational skills, interpersonal attributes and attitudes) and ethical values in a given context. 21st century skills and competencies are commonly related to knowledge management, including 'processes related to information selection, acquisition, integration, analysis and sharing in socially networked environments' (Ananiadou & Claro, 2009, p. 5).

learning opportunities that allow for self-efficaciousness to manifest into competency achievements.

For many of the women it was onshore stakeholder personnel who initially provided, through verbal persuasion, encouragement to believe they had the ability to perform offshore roles, as these comments reflect:

> *"With the women I'm probably like a father figure so if I say: 'You should probably apply for this [offshore] job, I think you have what it takes', they do. A lot has to do with the growth we have given them as women. They have started with the low job and never thought they would end up on the rig"* (Adams, 2014, p. 117).

> *"I say to her when she got the Heli-admin job and was scared she would make a mistake: 'You have to go because this is a good opportunity. I'm the one recommend you, you the good one, that's why they choose you'. She is shy, but the supervisor wanted her"* (Interview: FR3, 2016).

One of the women with an aspiration to embark on a blue-collar trade who failed her first VOC was encouraged by her employers (based on their understanding of her aptitude to eventually succeed in reaching the required standard) to persist with her training, telling her:

> *"Keep your spirit up and you know we will support you all the way" (Interview: SH2, 2016).*

Several long-term female offshore hospitality crewmembers on Kitan and/or Bayu-Undan facilities applied for the facility jobs at the instigation of two male senior ESS/Compass Group and ConocoPhillips personnel, who had identified their abilities when they were working onshore as waitresses at Dili Beach Hotel. However, as has been mentioned, those with local knowledge of Timorese capacity have had to at times be persuasive to have female Timorese potential appreciated by foreign actors. In one instance, the confidence held by Caltech management in the abilities of a non-tertiary educated woman to take on a more responsible, higher skilled role than bridge controller (that she had been performing for several years) was not shared by foreign contractor personnel. The authenticity of Caltech's

efficacy beliefs about her potential was, so to speak, not appreciated until she was given the opportunity to prove herself. The result, as this local content actor described, was thus: *"I was told she wasn't confident enough to do the job when she did the HSE training. Now she's through the roof!"* (Interview: SH6, 2016). (Since 2016, this woman has embarked on industry-supported training at a management/supervisor level that involves her attending courses in Perth in her at-home time).

It is perhaps in the face of having to pass the T-BOSIET (in particular the escape from the underwater helicopter crash simulation and from the smoke-filled space) that most of the women were in need of the verbal persuasion of others in order to feel confident and able to take on the challenge. In response to most Timorese' lack of experience of being in water the offshore recruits who were channeled through Caltech were prepped via a mock-up underwater plunge-pool that their managing director had had set up in the company's construction yard, receiving reassuring encouragement to become acclimated to this setting. Non-Timorese trainers at the certification venues were also reported as being very supportive, and additionally CAJV staff often accompanied the candidates (at the instigation of senior personnel who identified the fear barriers they needed to surmount) as is mentioned here:

> *"They have to have the T-BOSIET to go offshore and so we spent a lot of time with them. We flew them to Darwin so they would actually have people with them to mentor them – our logistics staff stayed with them for the whole day and talked them through it and try to overcome that fear they had of water. It's quite daunting. At first they show everybody what happens, they actually have to be put in a chair and turned upside down [a mock helicopter cockpit that enters the pool at speed]. Their affinity with water is not as good as Australian and New Zealand - we all get taught how to swim (Interview: SH7, 2016).*

The accuracy with which those closest to the Timorese women identified their potential and capability to succeed might also be said to have encouraged them to be perseverant in surmounting offshore learning/adapting challenges – that is to exercise their resilience, an attribute which has been explained in Chapter Two as an integral psychological capital component of self-efficacious behaviour.

In entering training and employment settings where the women could observe the expertise of others, they also sourced efficacy information vicariously – that is, in the seeing that it is humanly (and womanly) possible to master new and challenging situations or workplace tasks. One woman reported that role modeling provided by Australian and British experts in the offshore workplace had taught her about the need to apply consistent focus (as a companion to self-efficacy) in the completion of tasks or solving of problems – something in her onshore government internship she had had little opportunity to witness. This response from one of the Caltech employers illustrates how Ramform Sovereign women's thinking processes have been galvanised into greater cognitive alertness: *"Their brains are on fire. Just by looking at the expert, she doesn't want to miss any data – this is impressive. I am pleased with the outcome"* (Interview: SH2, 2016). For many of the respondents, seeing other women performing jobs that they had never seen females occupy altered their mental models of stereotypes of feminine abilities and inspired them to extend their aspirational horizons – to want to be like these women they admired, such as this Ramform Sovereign woman who was able to watch female seismic navigators (Brazilian and Scottish) at work:

> *"I find it amazing because they can go outside with the small boats to check when they have some problem with the cable or the streamer – on the rubber dinghy. The navigators are very strong girls. It is dangerous, not easy"* (Interview: FR21, 2016).

In another example, the presence of a female rigger and female supervisor of a blaster painter crew on Bayu-Undan provided role modeling for a group of the first Timorese women on Bayu-Undan facility, inspiring two to adopt new aspirations to enter nontraditional blue-collar trades, and several to start using the offshore gym facilities in order to become physically strong like these women (Adams, 2014). A female admin-worker enthusiastically shared her impression of one of these foreign women thus:

> *"I think she is strong and very, very organised. Like she can handle many people, like 10-20 men. They respect her"* (Interview: FR4, 2016).

Another woman who had roomed with two female engineers (a New Zealander and Indian woman) on Kitan facility was inspired to comment on her impression of

seeing women engineers in the offshore workplace thus: *"They can do it!"* (Interview: FR2, 2016).

Additionally, as time has gone by, the investments in promoting and supporting Timorese women to be successes in higher skill-level roles and those normally filled by males have created compatriot female role models for others. These comments illustrate the new phenomenon of the personification of non-normative Timorese female role models:

> *"The female unit manager [camp boss] – she <u>runs</u> the facility, she is very strong"* (Interview: SH15, 2016). (This woman has been engaged in self-supported business management studies in her free time – which involves her attending an exam in Indonesia every eight weeks).

> *"She has been the stand-out – I think it's an attitude thing with her. It's really refreshing and impressive. She's a real up-and-go-getter … when you are out there in the middle of the ocean you just need people to roll up their sleeves and give it a go. We are planning to train her in the same qualification as the expat HSE officers"* (Interview: SH10, 2016).

> *"A ConocoPhillips guy who goes round and checks all the helicopter equipment globally met our Timorese radio-ops woman and he said she was the only female he has ever met globally [in that role] and he was impressed by that"* (Interview: SH9, 2016).

> *"The girls who have just gone to the Philippines – they are just like unbelievable! One turned out to be the best welder out of the nine [of which the others were men] … The women in ASV – they have got rapid development potential … The women are skyrocketing – the men just flat-line at the top"* (Interview: SH11, 2016).

By all accounts, the women's achievement progress has been accompanied by confidence-building encouragement and positive feedback from workplace seniors, as these examples from all three facilities show:

"The others around me love to explain to me, they really help me. Teach me how to learn from my mistakes. They say all the time: 'You are a very good person, quick to learn'. It gives you the confidence to try" (Interview: FR8, 2016).

"The first time I went to the vessel I didn't think I can do it or not. Sometimes I feel not confident but I learn from the others, my supervisor, and then I try to understand and then I can believe in myself – I can do it!" (Interview: FR21, 2016).

"During the first six months there was a good mentor for me … Safety is a complicated environment, you have to deal with people, you have to be strict with procedures – if you say things in an impolite way, they will not accept. In Seafox company we have a meeting to learn how to deal with people's anger – how to stay calm and solve the problem correctly, be professional" (Interview: FR28, 2016).

The enhancements to the women's self-efficacy (as the reinforcement of their self-belief and the translation of aptitude into new competences) has been the experience of those who have been provided with structured WSD investments (as advanced skills training and on-the-job coaching) alongside increments of greater levels of responsibility in order for them to fulfill higher-skilled roles. For example, in 2015 when the Kitan camp boss was promoted from her kitchen hand/steward role into this new role (one which involves a considerable level of responsibility and autonomy[56]), ESS/Compass Group provided her with two trainings in financial management along with on-the-job coaching for two weeks and two-monthly follow-ups by a visiting supervisor. Her employers also supported her studies in Level Cert III in hospitality, kitchen operation and salad making which she attained in early 2017. In another example, a woman was provided with the opportunity to

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[56] The camp boss (or unit manager) on an offshore facility is responsible for all catering and accommodation services. The role is regarded as a crucial position within any offshore community with the primary responsibility for 'the efficient running of the kitchen, ensuring safety, work schedules, and maintaining food stocks. The most important part of a camp boss' duties, is conducting hygiene audits and understanding storage methodologies' (Rigzone, 2018, p. 1).

experience the perspective of another crewmember with which she was to develop an important working relationship:

> *"The HSE supervisors teach me in a very good way – they teach me many things, especially you know in the last swing my supervisor say to me: 'I wanna bring you to the crane to have a chat with the crane operator – so you know how to fill out the LSR (Lifting Safety Register) for the crane lifting operation'. He bring me up to the crane ... I am very happy, I never go there before, it is very high but that's good – I love it and learn about the balance of the lifting, checking the slings. Not all the cranes are the same"* (Interview: FR10, 2016).

It appears that once performing in her offshore role her supervisors gained traction on the self-efficacy of this woman to her 'realising potential' advantage:

> *"Every swing she's doing new things to do with industrial safety which lends itself more to exploring her potential, what her areas of interest are – we are trying to keep up with her thirst for knowledge and pace of learning"* (Interview: SH8, 2016).

Alongside the fostering of the women's self-efficacy, has been that of their sense of impact and autonomy in their work.

Inculcating the women's sense of impact and autonomy in the offshore workplace

Chapter Two introduced theory that argues that when one's sense of impact (of feeling one's work makes a difference to organisational outcomes) and autonomy (of feeling that one has control over the initiation and carrying out of work tasks) is heightened in the workplace there are accompanying gains in empowerment. The sense of having an impact on operational outcomes is not one that springs to mind for some of the offshore Timorese women working in entry-level positions. However, the Bayu-Undan field manager indicated that he took time to inculcate a sense of having an impact amongst hospitality crew by verbalising his appreciation of the standard of meals and service for which they were responsible. For the bridge controllers, it was impressed upon them in training and worksite meetings that their controlling of flow between platforms within PoB limits is potentially impactful for safety during an emergency, as this respondent implied:

> *"The bridge control position was quite critical to do with the safety codes of ConocoPhillips – it was a pretty important position ... They can control, they*

can effectively stop work, they can stop people going onto the facility – no matter who it is." (Interview: SH7, 2016).

Due to the pressing deadlines, the absence of superfluity of job roles and tasks and the tightly integrated and inter-related processes and systems (particularly around safety for which everyone has responsibility) the clear and obvious (and inculcated) consequences of any crewmember failing to adequately perform a duty engendered amongst the women the belief that each crewmember's role (even those at entry-level) is critical to, that is impactful upon, operations. Training the Timorese women to see themselves as an important cog in the human machinery of offshore processes was more explicit in some roles, as the following comments from onshore personnel who have visited Bayu-Undan facility in order to facilitate women's progress indicate:

> *"I try to get them to think outside the box – to see the bigger picture, how important document trails and storage are to the overall operation and safety"* (Interview: SH14, 2016).

> *"The women impress by their willingness to just roll up their sleeves and give it a go. Once they become experts in their field we like to cross-train them and give them the bigger picture"* (Interview: SH10, 2016).

Providing the women with safety training (ranging from basic first aid and hazard identification/awareness to advanced firefighting and coxswain for fast boat rescue) has inculcated them with a sense of the potential impact of their new skills in the offshore setting. For those women who talked of now having the skills that might potentially save a crewmember's life or protect their children at home from harm, there was a heightened sense of meaning around health and safety not just in their offshore but also in their at-home lives. When told of the enthusiasm and precision with which two hospitality crewmembers, in interviews, had demonstrated their new CPR skills, a local stakeholder respondent remarked: *"They might save my life some day. This is to me what it is about, you see the impact" (Interview: SH1, 2016).* Seafox management has had high expectations that its *Frontier* crew would develop high-level functional responses to safety issues:

"They don't just do a T-BOSIET course and 'bang' they're ready to go. Everyone has to do more - they actually know how to fight fires. The woman who is muster coordinator looks after 100 people and accounts for them as she directs them to the lifeboats. The radio ops woman is the first one to communicate a response if the fire sensors are active or if the helicopter crashes. These women have integral roles in safety, in running the place" (Interview: SH9, 2016).

Encouraging the sense of safety autonomy is an element of the safety training – that is, the degree to which employees feel accountable for site safety, for each other, and actively contribute to safety reporting and discussions. The previous research concluded that having safety autonomy was a positive psychological aspect of the Bayu-Undan women's workplace empowerment (Adams, 2014). A contractor stakeholder explained how this had been instilled, cognitively and psychologically, into the sense of responsibility of the bridge controllers:

"There's an aspect of autonomous decision-making in that [bridge control] role. That's one of the things we spent a little bit of time with them. It doesn't matter who it is – if I came along and the facility was full you have the right, as Conoco does, to say for safety reasons: 'you cannot go over until somebody comes off'. I think they found that a bit hard because of that hierarchy of power and the fear of losing their job. We actually had to spend a lot of time with them and say: 'No, you are doing what you have been asked and this person is supporting you and he should absolutely understand'" (Interview: SH7, 2016).

Having the power to interrupt work was also an autonomy-enhancing aspect within the job realm of HSE trainees: *"We've tried to empower them to have a sense of authority to stop the job or intervene"* (Interview: SH8, 2016). Autonomy was also vested in roles where there has been an element of power in ensuring work schedules proceed smoothly (such as via the Permit-to-Work system):

"The coordinator, he rely on me to do this job – to check the permits are still valid, haven't expired before a job is done. Or make sure there is another permit ready before the other one expire" (Interview: FR2, 2016).

Coaching personnel have alternately referred to their encouraging the women to have a sense of autonomy as training them to use their initiative and assume responsibility for their task areas, as these reports illustrate:

> *"I went offshore during the AIM programme to do the coaching because they weren't keeping up with things they needed to be doing. Document control is very detailed-oriented and they needed to be keeping on top of things, to learn to prioritise because of time pressures. Now I'm quite happy to let them do what they need to do and if there's an issue to come back to me"* (Interview: SH14, 2016).

> *"When I was first out there [on Bayu-Undan] there weren't too many Timorese women – but now we try to put as much responsibility on them out there as we can, within the limits of the role"* (Interview: SH10, 2016).

For some women, being given greater responsibility in onshore industry jobs, subsequent to their having become familiarised with offshore systems, has been seen to find fertile initiative-encouraging ground, such as two CAJV women in administrative roles who: *"have showed a lot of confidence and initiative in the weekly Skype meetings [with head office]"* (interview: SH13, 2016).

On the one hand, due to the pressures of time and work schedules around offshore operations, assuming responsibility for several of the higher-skilled women meant to an extent being thrust into their roles and expected to 'swim'. For this woman, her trepidation on being left alone early on in her new offshore role was mediated by a crewmember thus:

> *"I want to expand my knowledge about this radio thing. When I start, I'm so scared I don't know how to talk to the pilot. My coach offshore for the first few days [an Australian male crane operator who had experience in Heli- Admin] says: 'That's your job, I will be behind you'"* (Interview: FR29, 2016).

The HSE trainee, who was recommended for the position by Caltech and initially considered too shy for the job by owner/operator personnel, had to do a presentation to 60 men just three days after assuming the role. She commented that her supervisor was very helpful in guiding her on the topic and checking her power point:

> *"He said: 'That's good, you can present it'. I say to my Superintendent I am nervous about my English – it is my second language. He say: 'No, it's OK, you have to try, you never know if you're scared'. The first time even I am nervous, but everything go well"* (Interview: FR10, 2016).

The field manager also took a close interest in this woman's first safety presentation:

> *"As HSE you have to be able to stand in front of people and do a presentation. She would not back down from standing in front of 30-plus men and having her morning safety meeting … when she did her first one it was really, really good. She did a superb job. I was there to support her"* (Interview: SH11, 2016).

On the other hand, the narratives show that in the structuring of their WSD the women entering more responsible roles were set up for success, as the following explanations indicate:

> *"We put her through her GMDSS (Global Distress Maritime Radio Operator course) which is quite intensive. I've done it myself and I know how tricky it can be and Caltech wanted to put her through the course in Tasmania at the Maritime College, which is a world-renowned facility. But I said: 'I really don't think it's a good idea to send her there – it's Australian, quite demanding, in English and for everyone else it's their first language. She could easily fall behind'. We look at those sorts of things, factor them into where we're going to train them – we want them to feel confident about learning things they can actually execute in their role, not to feel it's over their head. In the end we put her through the course in the Philippines where a lot of people would have English as the second language"* (Interview: SH10, 2016).

> *"We are trying to advance them in the fastest but structured way via the HSE competency log books – my job is to make their Cert IV learning specific to the facility and to set realistic, individualised targets"* (Interview: SH8, 2016).

> *"The training [for assistant to coxswain in Fast Rescue Boat] it is very valuable for me. Actually, they give us plenty of training – at least we have experience and knowledge. By the training it gives a little bit confidence"* (Interview: FR28, 2016).

Consolidating the women's self-esteem and self-confidence
Self-esteem (alternately self-worth or self-pride) has been highlighted in Chapter Two as a critical long-term stabilising ingredient of empowerment. The findings suggest that, for all of the Timorese women who have worked on the offshore facilities, the attitudes, behaviours and inputs of others in the settings have contributed to the consolidation of their self-esteem. Even for the Kitan woman whose WSD for her entry to a middle-high skill job was considered to have been haphazardly structured and monitored, her narrative points to her being able to access the social capital of instructive workplace crewmembers to her self-esteem advantage:

> *"They love to explain to me … the confidence is coming when you get the knowledge, by learning, by doing. They really appreciate me and it gives you more pride in yourself"* (Interview: FR8, 2016).

For those women in lower-skilled roles, the findings point to the deliberate efforts of senior personnel to ensure that their abilities and efforts have been valued by the male crewmembers. The field manager of Bayu-Undan talked of his daily rounds on the facility including providing positive feedback to hospitality staff. An offshore installation manager (OIM) on Kitan was reported as being on the alert for any derisive comments from crew about meals and ensuring these were quashed before the hospitality staff could become aware of them. These observations reveal how stakeholder personnel themselves have observed the women's growth in self-esteem and self-worth:

> *"Her role is to land helicopters. She directs the crew, directs the fire crew – that's gotta be good for your self-esteem"* (Interview: SH9, 2016).

> *"The doc-control girls are learning to be assertive, not to get pushed around and just do what they are told when it might not be what you think is right"* (Interview: SH14, 2016).

> *"The women I've had conversation with have just exuded confidence! And they are not afraid to ask for assistance"* (Interview: SH3, 2016).

"The catering ladies will stand their ground" (Interview: SH11, 2016).

Thus, it has been evidenced that all of these empowerment gains of the women (reflected in cognitive and psychological dimensions) have been both fostered (to varying positive degrees) and noticed across the span of the employing/training stakeholder networks. There have been other achievements and strengths, fostered and noticed also, that have contributed to the women's caches of human capital and enhanced their capabilities sets, such as resilience and relatedness, and the acquisition of 21st century 'soft skills' such as those relating to communication, interpersonal relations, leadership, time management and team work.

Offshore systems and lifestyle inculcate empowering elements of relatedness and resilience

Chapter Two has discussed elements of psychological capital (PSYCAP), such as resilience and perseverance and the universal empowerment need of 'relatedness' (of being affiliated in secure, stable and caring social groups), which are important for maintaining positive (empowering) attitudes towards one's work. Stakeholder respondents place a high premium on the value of these attributes that are developed through the team-based organisational structure of offshore workplaces, the protocols which require crewmembers look out for each other's safety and the FIFO lifestyle (of being able to perform tasks and communicate effectively 12 hours a day and co-habit for 28 days in a harsh, pressured, isolated worksite), as these remarks show:

> *"The human capital gained from having worked on an offshore rig is of great value. It's resilience – the ability to be away from home for that length of time, particularly for the women. It's stamina, better nutrition and the other thing they do get is the understanding of having to work within rules" (*Interview: SH15, 2016).

> *"A big gain from offshore is teamwork – this is huge offshore, more so than any other place in the hospitality business"* (Interview: SH15, 2016).

> *"The offshore culture is one of togetherness, of closeness, because we are the most remote platform – cyclones can hit us, indigenous fishing boats, refugee*

boats. We have to deal with this ourselves. For many it is their second home" (Interview: SH11, 2016).

"People are less tolerant of poor behaviour in the offshore than at home because of the closeness of living together and because they know what each other are missing – the sacrifices of not being there for the kids, birthdays, weddings, funerals etcetera" (Interview: SH17, 2016).

The women's sense of relatedness is further coloured by the multicultural social scaffolding of the offshore domains in which they have been immersed, which has required that they develop what Ananiadou and Claro (2009) have described as the 21st century competency of being able to interact and communicate effectively in heterogeneous groups (both face-to-face and in socially-networked situations within the offshore setting and to onshore personnel where the job role requires it). This exposure has been reported as igniting intercultural competence as well as reflective understandings of the work ethic required of workers in high tech, pressured industry environments. The following comments confirm the value of this work environment provided by the O&G industry:

"I have met the people of different culture and have the confidence to mix with the different people" (Interview: FR 9, 2016).

"Offshore is always good because the Australian and UK people they always focus on their work and when they finish, they just turn around for more work. If we work onshore [for the government] it's we always look at each other, just talk with each other and not enjoy our work. Also, here in Dili the technology is very, very low" (Interview: FR19, 2016).

The stakeholder respondents' narratives universally point to a shared understanding that, as one senior contractor asserted: *"The skills that you learn offshore, the experience means a lot"* (Interview: SH9, 2016). This understanding was echoed by one of the labour hire employers:

"Anyone who has worked in the offshore is a big plus. In terms of offshore it's the HSE culture, the ability to work in English, working with a lot of expatriates

with different accents, hygiene. Working offshore gives you a label … We hire an attitude – those that work offshore, it doesn't matter what job, the fact is they got to the airport, they flew away from their families for 28 days, they are willing to sacrifice to earn a good standard of living for their family" (Interview: SH1, 2016).

Perhaps those with the most insight into the value of Timorese females being able to take advantage of the offshore experience are stakeholder actors who have lived alongside the women in their own society – actors who with foresight gleaned out of local knowledge have persuaded women, such as these four, to put themselves forward for positions or promotion:

"Maun Jean gave me opportunity, he said: 'Stop from Venture, you need to go for your experience'. I am very happy because they [Venture Hotel and Caltech management] support everything" (Interview: FR25, 2016).

"I don't want the Heli-admin job – I just want to stay and look after my baby. I come to Mana Sheilla to tell her because she is my boss and she say: 'Look it's good for you, this position is higher than the doc-control. You need to think to your future'". (Interview: SH5, 2016).

"That one, she is a single mother – she's smart but she is shy and doesn't know. With the offshore experience I see the difference because she used to work for Venture – she and the wait staff – I work hard to get them to Bayu-Undan. They don't have the background like the university but they are acting more intelligently – they speak more from experience than theory. Like another one told me: 'I work hard to get here, I used to be banana seller, selling vegetables in the market. And I work my way up here – sitting with all of the engineers in one room'" (Interview: SH2, 2016).

The extent to which this implicit sense of social responsibility (towards contributing to the advancement of Timorese women's strategic interests, not just in the fulfillment of their learning potential, but also in their enhanced social and economic

status) has authority throughout the wider stakeholder networks of offshore operations will now be explored.

6.7 The social responsibility for Timorese women's empowerment

The depth of understanding of the importance of the globalised private sector being able to contribute to host-country females meeting their strategic empowerment needs and interests (in particular of learning and earning) and of enduring empowerment well-being is a key theme in this inquiry (as expanded upon in Chapter Two). This theme occupied a corner of dialogue in the interviews with stakeholder respondents. Not surprisingly, those respondents with the most understanding of women's strategic needs (males and females) were either Timorese, were locally based, had spent much time acculturating to Timor-Leste society or had taken the time to gather knowledge from those living locally:

> *"At the interface between the world of ConocoPhillips and Timor-Leste the women are treated as equals – yet we know the society these women are coming from [is not the same]"* (Interview: SH12, 2016).

> *"It's like '50s Australia here. The girls are raised to do all the jobs at home. The men are very important – they are revered a lot more. I hear this, especially out in the districts. But the understanding of how important it is for Timorese society to have competent women is not much in the minds of the stakeholders at all. We now have so few women left out there [on the facility] which is a shame – and even one who has been there the longest I was expecting her to be a feminist but she said: 'I am woman, I want to settle down and work in an office. Once I start having babies I don't want to work anymore'"* (Interview: SH6, 2016).

> *"I certainly do think it's really important for these women to break those stereotypical conservative things that are holding women back generally"* (Interview: SH3, 2016).

"I think our understanding of the culture here – where we have little girls cooking and cleaning from a very young age and boys don't start helping 'til they are 18. My dislike of the male privilege in many ways led to our promotion of female ... But I think empowerment was as important for the male as for the female" (Interview: SH1, 2016).

Those stakeholders who thought, consciously, beyond the gender-neutral contracts parameters also saw the importance of the offshore women being role models in their communities - for girls and women wanting to follow in their footsteps:

"She [the woman training in blasting/painting] just have the high school education. I tell her if she just standing and walking tall a lot of women will start to follow her" (Interview: SH2, 2016).

"Putting women offshore is a no-brainer. It's better for everybody in the extended family. The kids who see Mum, or Aunty or sister out there – it changes their view. The girls doing the non-traditional jobs are great role-models" (Interview: SH3, 2016).

It became very clear during the fieldwork that within the global corporations there is a clear demarcation between corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities in Timor-Leste (such as sponsoring the annual marathon or a hydroponic farm) and local content. It was acknowledged that even though there might be some bleed of corporate citizenship sentiment into local content approaches[57], CSR tends to be in a *"separate basket to contracts"* (Interview: SH12, 2016). Further, it was apparent that the foreign contractors saw CSR largely as the responsibility of the owner/operator companies. What the narratives conclusively did reveal, however, was an organisational boundary-spanning consciousness of key individuals (amongst the contractor companies and support and services sector of Bayu-Undan and Kitan operations with respect to investments into Timorese human capital development) that has been motivated by a sense of personal social responsibility to make a tangible positive difference, as these viewpoints illustrate:

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[57] One of the senior ConocoPhillips respondents (who had been involved with Bayu-Undan since production began) confided in me during a 'corridor chat' after his interview that it was doing good by the Timorese that kept him going.

"What I'm doing within Caltech has a 'feel good' part for me. I feel like I'm doing something worthwhile for the Timorese" (Interview: SH3, 2016).

"The ultimate satisfaction for me is what I can do for the Timorese. That I can give them employment opportunities, development opportunities" (Interview: SH11, 2016).

"The only way you can sleep at nights is by working harder to support the Timorese people" (Interview: SH17, 2016).

It was apparent from the findings that out of all the foreign contractors, ESS/Compass Group and CAJV have taken a longer-term corporate citizenship approach regarding their development footprint – evidenced in the former beginning to canvas the idea of outsourcing some of their (non-Timor Sea) globally-related administration work to Dili and the latter continuing to structure WSD investments for their female employees in onshore roles following their redundancies from the facilities or following short-term work offshore. Additionally, in what might be deemed a blend of local content and corporate citizenship commitments, ESS/Compass Group has established a strong collaborative relationship with East Timor Development Agency (ETDA) (a Timorese vocational training organisation that is partnered with the government) with the aim of bringing the hospitality training programmes in its 2012-established Tourism and Hospitality Centre up to international standards of accreditation[58].

One key local actor was forthright in his viewpoint about what a company acting as a development agent should be doing:

"To me the CSR we have here is not towards women, it's towards our Timorese employees … we are doing what the government should be doing. We could do it financially better, but we would carry less people. We make the decision ourselves with no involvement from the owner/operator to transfer the laid off

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[58] As part of this collaboration, an ESS-provided tutor travels to Dili regularly to deliver skills training for ETDA students (many of whom are orphans) and the company has partnered with registered Australian training provider, William Angliss Institute, who visit Dili three to four times annually to formally sign off the Timorese students' VOCs, several of whom have become offshore crewmembers (Interview SH15, 2016).

*workers to roles with Caltech onshore, to relocate, reassign all of our employees – so far it's been very successful. And also, CSR is to commit to giving employees an annual CPI increase regardless of oil prices" (*Personal communication: SH1, 2016).

It came as no surprise that amongst those most consciously committed/driven individuals to making a positive difference in Timorese women's lives were female actors (both local and foreign) and these most often coming from a perspective of having experienced or witnessed, to various degrees, the barriers women can face in their empowerment journeys. This young Australian woman, who had spent very little time in Timor-Leste, was able to infuse her offshore coaching work with an intuitive empathy in supporting the Timorese women's empowerment needs:

"For me it's a personal thing – not just ticking the boxes … I watched my Mum be controlled psychologically and financially by my father. For me personally I want to encourage women to get better jobs, to be independent, to have outcomes where you can make your own choices" (Interview: SH14, 2016).

Nonetheless it might be suggested that the pride some of the foreign male stakeholder personnel expressed (as retrospective reflection in the interview setting) in the Timorese women's growth in the empowerment dimensions canvassed in this study represents a retroactive gendered sense of social responsibility. As one individual in a position of decision-making power over the structuring of some of the Bayu-Undan women's WSD volunteered to me in a corridor chat after our interview - the research had made him think (having never previously considered it) that consciously factoring in women's empowerment outcomes is potentially a good idea in the company's work in a developing country like Timor-Leste.

One of the most compelling notes I made to myself in my fieldwork diary, however, alluded to the fact that at the end of the Timor-Sea hydrocarbon fields' life cycles, the people left staring down the barrel of the ongoing and dire development needs (general and gendered) of the country would be those still resident in the country – working for the long haul at the developmental coalface:

'At the end of the day those in Dili will be left living amongst the long-term outcomes of O&G and Timorese women. The others can move on to different jobs, retirement, different projects, and the Timorese women will become a memory. They don't have to continue to live every day amidst underdevelopment and all that it means, and be aware of the significance of this gender outcome in a 'lived' way' (Fieldwork diary entry: April 2016).

The following poem, created out of the narrative of one of the research's gatekeepers who has been in Timor-Leste for the 'long haul', goes some way to encapsulating the potency of a local private sector entity's development footprint upon which the globalised oil and gas industry was able to gain traction in enhancing its social license to operate:

Local knowledge lifts local talent

I think the one thing the Timorese lack
is pride in who they are
and in confidence
the mothers sit in a circle
talking about their kids
trying to outbid each other
on how stupid, how naughty
their kids are

it's like a cultural thing
to denigrate their own kids
that creates a young adult
with zero confidence
who needs to be told
what to do
that they can do it
I have to put a rocket under their skates

I've had quite promising guys resigning

when I've promoted them

"I want you to do this job"

and they never return to work

that would mean a 30% raise

but more responsibility

and they just disappear

over the years we've learned to manage this better

this is what really trigger my interest

in employing females

I realised that the women

they also lack confidence, but

they are quicker

to get on the wagon

when you showing an interest in them

the desire to up-skill them

still today if you went in to the office

and offer the more responsible position

they will say

"Oh maybe I should stay assistant"

but we've created a culture

now it's self-propelling

I don't need to tell a person

she is capable

because everywhere they look around

they see Timorese male or female

doing very important jobs

for the business

"OMG we can actually do these things

other than working in the restaurant"

I've got nothing against restaurant work

but there's a lot of Timorese talent being wasted

(Interview: SH1, 2016)

6.8 Concluding Remarks

This chapter has explored decision-making and business practices within the Timor-Leste sector of the offshore oil and gas (O&G) industry, as these relate to the training and employment of Timorese women. It has focused the research's gender lens onto the nature of the intent behind and ensuing actions arising from these decisions and the impact chains with respect to empowerment outcomes for the women. It has revealed that as structures of opportunities, the stakeholder companies (local and foreign, and to varying but all positive degrees) have represented conduits and learning/working spaces through which the women's exercise of agency and self-efficacy towards the realisation of their potential has been fruitful. On an economic empowerment level, they secured high salaries (relative to the Timor-Leste labour market) as well as, for many, meaningful corporate investments into their work skills development (WSD), thus enhancing their knowledge and competency levels. Ultimately, they have had their self-esteem consolidated (fundamental to sustainable empowerment levels) due to their training and competency achievements, growing confidence and the universal respect they have received for their capacity to perform to standard in their offshore roles.

Notwithstanding this laudable outcome, the chapter has shed light on the tensions inherent in the thesis title: *In what ways and to what extent is the global oil and gas industry able to deliver enduring empowerment outcomes for women in Asia-Pacific?* It has also drawn out expert opinion (male and female, Timorese and Australian, from a range of industry perspectives encompassing senior local labour hire company personnel, and personnel within the foreign owner/operator and contractor companies in positions relating to training and workplace supervising, contracts, recruitment, human resources and local content) around the *whys* and *hows* of areas where, notwithstanding these tensions, improvements might have been made in advancing the strategic learning interests of the women.

The findings have brought to light the tensions reflected in the thesis title to have the following elements:

- the reality (outlined in previous chapters) that, for women living in a poor and patriarchal country such as Timor-Leste with agency and learning/earning aspirations, having the opportunity to experience the benefits of decent work and WSD is a gender and development, women's strategic empowerment interest

- as part of their social license to operate enshrined within the Timor-Leste local content regulatory framework, the contractual obligation for owner/operator companies of the Timor Sea offshore ventures to commit to the training and employment of Timorese nationals

- the absence in these contracts of mandates for numbers of Timorese trained and employed, and in particular, the absence of any mention of gender or the empowerment interests of Timorese women vis-à-vis their training and working in this non-traditional job field

- demand-side factors such as the requirement of offshore operations for specialised skillsets and compliance trainings to international standards and limitations around person-on-board crew numbers, and supply-side factors (especially initially at the onset of operations) of the low capacity of the Timor-Leste labour market to deliver Timorese workers with the requisite skills and experience

- the residence, at individual actor, intra- and inter-organisational levels, of corporate citizenship sentiments that identify the need to support local women's empowerment growth and to open opportunities for them to advance the normative cognitive and job-role frontiers for girls and women in their society

- the reality that the raisin d'etre for the global businesses in this study is the pursuit of efficiency and profitability

- the equal opportunities protocols of the industry stakeholders that manifest in business-as-usual recruitment regimes in which women must compete on merit with men for training and job openings.

The evidence points to some considerable reconciliation of these tensions due to the enabling decision-making and efforts of key industry players in decision-making positions, whereby decisions around female recruitment and WSD have been based upon a growing recognition of Timorese women's potential to be effective offshore crewmembers. This has resulted in the near-40 women achieving positions on the facilities undergoing compliance trainings (such as the T-BOSIET) and certification to international industry standards, and over half being engaged in significant upskilling programmes – either through workplace-based supervision, in training courses within and outside of Timor-Leste or on the rig-ready course at Site Skills, Philippines. There have been variances in the levels of investments made into the women's WSD (dependent more often than not upon the skill level required for an offshore position, such as level Cert-II in hospitality, Radio Telephone competency, Confined Spaces Entry, the Able Seaman ticket or Heli-Admin certification, but also upon the length of employment on a facility). However, there appear to have been no barriers put in the way of women applying for offshore roles or training opportunities nor negative mindsets within training and work spaces that demean their abilities to achieve and practice competencies (be it in controlling passage along a platform bridge, serving salads in the mess, ordering and managing supplies, passing the T-BOSIET training, learning to weld or becoming a radio operator).

For Bayu-Undan facility, in particular, the 'spend' on the women's training and employment has been increasingly based upon a commitment to structuring and

delivering WSD outcomes that have more longevity and potential-realisation than entry-level positions. There has, however, been no evidence within the stakeholder networks of an overt adherence to principles of gender equity in order to redress the gendered deficits Timorese women in general face in their society, nor of any overt gender diversity drives within the Timor-Leste O&G industry sector. Nonetheless, there is evidence of an organisational boundary-spanning understanding amongst key actors (male and female, local and foreign) that recruiting, training and paying Timorese women well in this non-traditional job field is a good thing for re-shaping the possibilities for Timorese femininities and breaking down normative stereotypes of females - as inferior to males and powerless to pursue their own life path.

It would appear that the industry expectation that the women must compete on merit with men for job and WSD opportunities has been unproblematic for the women and to the contrary has enhanced their sense of self-worth and self-confidence and their dignity. Additionally, the women have benefited from the social capital of tangible encouragement by bosses and supervisors and role-modelling of workplace industry experts to enhance their self-efficaciousness (as confidence in their abilities and enthusiasm for learning more skills) – to have a heightened understanding of their potential and what trajectories they could aspire to and pursue if possible, for its further realisation.

This social capital has extended to palpable and sustained appreciation from others (male and female, co-workers/trainees and superiors) of the women's resilience and reliability, accomplished and positive adaptation to working long hours and swings in the isolated and masculinised industry environments and practice of competence in their roles. This appreciation and the lived experience of camaraderie that characterises the offshore environments have led the women to experience an enhanced sense of relatedness and impact (as the affiliation in secure, stable and caring social groups and the sense that their work makes a difference to overall organisational outcomes). These two attributes have been identified in Chapter Two as important psychosocial components of empowerment in the workplace, along with the sense of autonomy accorded the women (to varying

degrees) in their offshore roles. Moreover, their value has been materially recognised in the significant financial investments by their employers into their WSD and in their high (relative to other Timorese workers) salaries – factors that are deemed to engender a further empowerment strand of trust, that others have their best interests at heart. The findings have highlighted that the engendering of trust in the women has been no more evident than within Caltech, the main labour hire entity for all three offshore operations in the study.

Caltech, as a locally-owned business with nearly 20 years' experience of operating in Timor-Leste, through turbulent times and in a seriously struggling Least Developed Country economy, has clearly shown itself to be a private sector player with a strong development ethos and long history of operating along gender-equal principles (it's owner is a Timorese woman) (Adams, 2014). This chapter has revealed Caltech's success as a development agent for women's empowerment to be reflected in: its local knowledge of and ability to attract Timorese female talent and potential, and; its enlightened and invested understanding of the need for Timorese women's strategic empowerment interests to be fostered beyond basic equal rights and economic thresholds. Senior personnel (male and female) have exhibited a strong commitment towards the development of new female identities that are breaking negative feminine stereotypes in their society. They have foreseen the need for such identities exemplifying competent, confident leaders capable of ensuring the ongoing well-being of themselves and their families, and adding to the ripple of Timorese women who, in their expectation that they will be treated as equals with males in their society, can influence change.

It was Caltech who initiated the channeling of Timorese women into non-traditional and predominantly non-hospitality work trainings and offshore positions (in which many proved themselves capable of up-skilling to perform highly responsible, middle-high-skilled industry roles). Caltech also initially touted the proposal for the intensive, Philippines-based, rig-ready training programme for Timorese with the potential to eventually advance to more senior facility positions. Further, the unequivocal commitment to those on its payroll has seen the company ensure that no woman made redundant from the offshore facilities was left without the security

of well-paid onshore employment. The evidence strongly suggests that without Caltech, as a savvy, pivotal player within the Timor-Leste local content stakeholder network, the strategic interests of a small but significant population of Timorese women with the potential to enter and succeed in the offshore O&G industry (in other than service roles) would not have been fulfilled.

Regarding how far the O&G industry had been *able* to advance the women's successes the chapter brought to light some in-hindsight frustrations and admittances amongst some industry actors that upskilling efforts had either not been expeditious enough nor able to fulfil the women's aspirations. For some women the management and structuring of their WSD had been somewhat ad hoc and for others (in particular in the hospitality roles) they had stagnated at level Cert II. Whilst there were compelling factors underlying this shortcoming, such as women being unavailable for training due to needing to return to rural villages in their at-home time or the high pressured offshore environment leaving little space for senior/mentoring personnel to devote time to the women's learning interests, the evidence shows that there has been an increasing commitment (particularly amongst Bayu-Undan personnel) to the realisation of Timorese crewmembers' potential and to building longevity into crew training efforts and investments.

Regarding addressing the all-important question in the thesis aim of whether the women's empowerment growth, as influenced by their offshore experience, might prove to be *enduring,* the narratives of the stakeholder organisation personnel and key informants have been laced with pessimism. These viewpoints are presented and discussed towards the end of the next chapter following the findings, arising largely from the women's own narratives, relating to the thesis' second research objective.

Chapter Seven: The enduring strength of Timorese offshore women workers' empowerment.

7.1 Introduction

The previous chapter has presented and discussed descriptions and viewpoints from a range of actors with respect to the role played by the Timor-Leste offshore oil and gas industry in fostering empowerment outcomes for female Timorese employees. This next chapter addresses the second of the Research Objectives:

- **To evaluate the ways in which the experience of working in the offshore oil and gas setting has contributed to enduring empowerment gains for women in a Least Developed Country.**

It draws largely upon the descriptions and viewpoints of the Timorese women respondents themselves as it explores their empowerment pathways – that is, as non-normative female identities traversing the starkly contrasting developing and developed world contexts of Timor-Leste society and the Western O&G industry offshore workplace.

It begins by outlining the educational and oil and gas industry achievements of the women. It then moves to providing an overview of the women's background growing up in a poor, post-conflict and patriarchally-characterised society and of their early critical consciousness around gender equality. The shared constellation of empowerment strengths with which the women entered the world of the oil and gas industry is unpacked - such as their non-traditional aspirations to become skilled, economically independent working women, their agency and the social support they received for pursuing their strategic life choices. The chapter then presents an in-depth analysis of the women's offshore employment-enhanced human capital portfolios and related expansion of their capabilities sets – in psychological, cognitive, practical and material dimensions. Discussion follows around how several of the women have rationalised their choices with respect to their offshore jobs and how empowerment gains in social, economic and material dimensions have had a mediating effect upon any un-realisation of learning aspirations and potential. The chapter concludes with revelations of the women's hopes and fears for their futures, as well as those of stakeholder respondents, and

an evaluation of the capacity of the women's offshore-enhanced empowerment status to endure in the face of uncertain futures.

7.2 Overview of the educational and industry work/training histories of the Timorese women respondents

In order to bring to the fore a sketch of the educational, skills and oil and gas industry experience the Timorese women brought with them to the research, some details are now provided. Of the 37 Timorese female offshore worker respondents 21 had spent three years or longer working offshore, four had spent over one year and the remaining 12 less than one year. The skillsets required for their various roles spanned low- to middle/medium- to high-level skill categories[59]. As has been previously mentioned, all offshore crewmembers share a baseline of industry knowledge and skills resulting from offshore compliance trainings such as the T-BOSIET and HSE inductions (for Caltech this being ISAT and for ConocoPhillips WAVES) and in their being able to demonstrate the required level of English fluency (such as via the Marlins test scoring undertaken by Caltech). Detailed job descriptions including the requisite skills/competencies and certifications for the positions the women have filled (and of additional trainings some women have received beyond those required for their position) can be found in Appendix 2.

Of the 25 women who had experienced longer than a year on a facility, less than 40% had a tertiary qualification. Two of these women attained a middle-high-skill position of considerable responsibility and five held middle-skilled, semi-responsible roles – all involving significant investments into their industry-specific WSD and on-the-job learning. Of the women in low-skilled jobs, five were in hospitality roles and the remaining five were in bridge control roles. One of the long-term bridge control women had received blasting/painting training not long before data collection but had not subsequently been recruited into crew positions in this

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[59] The OECD defines middle-skilled jobs as those that require significant training but do not involve much critical thinking once the skill is learned (such as machine operators and office clerks) and high-skilled jobs as those that involve complex cognitive tasks that are not frequently repeated. A low-skilled job requires less training and typically involves basic manual or cognitive tasks that can be quickly taught (such as food preparation and cleaning) (Sutherland & Cooper, 1996).

job area [60]. For another, whilst having a degree in mining engineering from Indonesia, her skillset was not enhanced beyond the basic bridge control training. Of the eight remaining long-term offshore women who had tertiary-level qualifications all had attained highly responsible, middle- to high-skilled positions, which had again entailed significant, structured WSD and on-the-job learning.

All but three of the 12 women with less than a year's offshore employment experience at the time of data collection had tertiary degrees in extractive industries-related areas. Three of them were beginning middle-level skilled jobs on Bayu-Undan platform as trades trainees (following their graduation from the six months Site Skills Training course in the Philippines – with Level Cert. II in electrotechnology or mechanical engineering), two were in Junior HSE Officer trainee roles and the remainder had filled low-skilled jobs in bridge control and/or kitchen/housekeeping areas or marine mammal observer (MMO)/internship roles on the seismic vessel. One of the other three with no tertiary qualification was completing her architecture degree part-time at the University of Timor-Leste (UNTL) and the remaining two (of secondary level education) were long-term Venture Hotel staff[61]. At the time these 12 women were recruited to the offshore facilities, most of them were either working in onshore jobs associated with the Timor Sea stakeholder organisations, undergoing offshore-related training or fulfilling internships with the ANPM.

7.3 Overview of the women's growing up years

All of the Timorese women respondents have experienced Timor-Leste's coming of age into independence, some as children but most as adolescents. With the exception of one woman (who spent much of her growing up years in Indonesia and pre-offshore working life outside of Timor-Leste) this points to the women's shared experience of the realities of the violence and destruction wrought by the occupying

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[60] This woman was unable to fulfill an aspiration to become a scaffolder on the facility due to her fear of heights – in particular above the ocean. Caltech, aware that if she was working surrounded by scaffolding rather than erecting it she might feel safer, subsequently put her through training as a blaster/painter, for which, at the time of data collection, she had not yet passed her VOC.
[61] Venture Hotel is owned by the female Timorese owner of Caltech and has a café and restaurant attached from which several offshore women were sourced.

Indonesian army and local allied militia before and at the time of Indonesia's withdrawal of troops in 1999 [62]. It also points to those women who were not attending university outside of the country during the 2006-8 civil upheavals having relived the experience of conflict during that time. Further, several women had their post-secondary studies interrupted in 2006 when they had to flee from Dili to the Districts. These imprinted realities have honed psychological strengths, such as courage, resilience and perseverance, and influenced the motivations, aspirations and choices of the women. The following description is insightful in this respect (of a respondent who, as a high school student during the 2006-8 upheavals, had had to leave her uncle's home when he became unemployed and unable to support her and move in with a friend's parents, trying to pay her way by selling ices in the street in the afternoons):

> *"I never stop selling when trouble happen. I just went where there was no trouble – sometimes the refugee camp"* (Interview: FR34, 2016).

Growing up amongst poverty has also coloured the choices and activities of the women. The findings have revealed that 80% of the women have come from families with more than four children and that 13 of these reported experiencing being very poor as children. Of these 13 women (all of whom managed to acquire post-secondary technical and vocational education and training (TVET) or a university education) six worked when they finished high school to pay for courses themselves, two were supported by their parents, one had the cost of extended English learning paid for by a New Zealand policewoman posted to Dili and four were supported in hospitality training by Dili Beach Hotel, their employer. Of the remainder of women, most of who grew up in poverty but with their schooling and nourishment needs satisfactorily met, 13 received scholarships to study at universities outside of Timor-Leste and one to attend the Dili Institute of Technology, five supported themselves through university (four with as yet uncompleted degrees) and three entered hospitality work at Venture Hotel.

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[62] Two examples of this experience are of one woman who, as an adolescent bereaved of her father, witnessed her mother's livestock and garden being destroyed and girls in her village being sexually violated (Kopf, 2017) and another who fled as a girl with her 10 siblings in her father's vehicle to a refugee camp a terrifying five hours' drive away in West Timor (Interview: FI 23, 2016).

Less than a third of the women's mothers worked in formal (teaching or government) jobs and indications pointed to the other women's mothers (who mostly lived outside of Dili) having had very little education (indeed some were reported by their daughters to be illiterate). Many of the women's testimonies revealed that, regardless of the level of their mothers' education, they supported their daughters' learning and earning endeavours (morally and in some cases materially) as routes out of restrictive, traditional feminine roles confined to the domestic space. This support (as social capital), that of significant other actors in the women's growing up lives (including males) and that of gender equal training/WSD and/or employment opportunities with NGOs and private sector entities, is highlighted later in the chapter. Next, the chapter provides illumination of the nature of the women's antecedent agency that has been a critical element of their pre-oil and gas industry capability sets.

Young women with agency

Knowledge arising from the previous research into this topic has painted a picture of 16 of the Timorese offshore women workers (of whom 15 are respondents of this study) being imbued as young women with a drive, self-belief and critical consciousness that had propelled them to advance normative aspirational and behavioural frontiers for females in their country (Adams, 2014). Sharing the strategic life goal of acquiring work skills and achieving economic self-reliance, their post-secondary school life trajectories had eventuated in all of them securing learning and earning opportunities in the non-traditional job field of offshore oil and gas. The wider group of women in this case study share with these 16 women a similar constellation of antecedent attributes (innate and acquired), attitudes and aspirations that had contributed to their high levels of agency in taking purposive action towards their strategic goals.

Indeed, for all the Timor Sea offshore women workers, significant empowerment thresholds had been crossed when they entered the decent work world of offshore oil and gas and experienced WSD to varying degrees. Thus, as the Prologue to the thesis has indicated, the study is indeed about women in a patriarchally-defined society experiencing capabilities gains that have built upon an *existing* ballast of empowerment strengths. This constellation of existing strengths, manifest in

cognitive and psychological dimensions (broadly conceptualised in Chapter Two as having the freedom and the capacity to make and pursue strategic life goals) has been unpacked into three critical areas of agency: a critical consciousness; a self-determination based both on intrinsic motivation to learn and extrinsic motivation to improve their lives, and; self-belief and self-efficacy.

Sharing an early critical consciousness

The early post-secondary school critical consciousness the women shared has been manifested in: a) the rejection (through reflective, cognitive consideration) of taken-for-granted patriarchal socio-cultural scripts of femininities and masculinities, along with the perception that there were alternative ways of doing and being to the pervasive norms of female roles and behaviours, and; b) their belief in their right and potential to make their own strategic life choices and to shape their lives in the ways they choose.

The following viewpoints illustrate the gendered realities in their society the women have reflected upon, beginning with some opinion on the positions of privilege and power they have witnessed males enjoy:

> *"You know, sometimes in my neighbourhood, like the Timorese people, the man thinking he is big, like boss! The boss in the home and he do nothing – just sitting, watching, drinking the beer. Not very good"* (Interview: FR 16, 2017).

> *"Maybe the husband can have another wife because he has money. He will do whatever he wants. The women can't talk because they just sit and keep quiet, just take care of the kids"* (Interview FR: 4, 2016).

> *"Some women when they get married their husbands say they can't work"* (Interview: FR11, 2016).

And some evidence of their rejection of this privilege and power:

> *"Maybe the woman at home gets stressed because she's the one holding the baby and the husband come home and say you have to make this, do that. She should just say: 'Make it yourself!'" (much laughter)* Interview: FR12, 2016).

"Women in Timor is like under the man – you cannot say things against the men. But I will just say so if I'm not happy with something they do" (Interview: FR29, 2016).

"I have to be independent. Otherwise in Timor-Leste – I don't know you believe or not, the woman still dependent on the man. Some men that work – all the management will come from the man. So, women will only take money for feeding the children and then education. The men are like power over the financial – it happens here mana! In my mind it's not right – you have to support each other" (Interview: FR28, 2016).

The pressure upon young women to begin childbearing at an early age was raised as an issue of concern:

"Sometimes they start a family because the husband very dominating. Women just stay at home, it is like 14 or 15. Sometimes their parents push them to have a family, to get married" (Interview: FR19, 2016).

The lack of support from the fathers of children was another point of contention, with one woman talking about girls in her village becoming pregnant and having to live with their parents: "*because the boyfriend doesn't care about them*" (Interview: FR24, 2016), and three others who were solo mothers unsupported by the fathers sharing the view of this respondent: *"I think you know about the Timorese boy attitude - of not caring about their children"* (Interview: FR33, 2017). Additionally, several women expressed concern for the epidemic levels of gender-based violence against women and girls (VAWG), as these comments reflect:

"The Timorese men have anger – their tone is so high. I see in some neighbourhood the men start swearing, the women start swearing as well. The husband start beating the wife – everything start from there" (Interview: FR11, 2016).

"Some of the men think they have the power, the right to hit women. A socialised thing. Men always thinking that it's the woman's fault. They always want to blame the woman. They thinking the women are rubbish, they never thinking the woman is smart. I really don't like it when the man come in and say: 'Ah I'm

married to you, give you cow or give you money. I pay for you, I can punch you, hurt you, I don't care'. That's happening all around me. I say: 'When you punch her it's bloody shit'. They say: 'Oh they are like animals'. I say: 'You don't punch your animals'" (Interview: FR26, 2016).

This 'reflective consideration' of what the women view as a societal malaise of male power and privilege also extends to its correlate - the constraining norms for girls' and women's roles that confine them to the home, rendering them either dependent upon males or waiting for a husband, having limited aspirational horizons:

"When ladies not have a job very difficult for us because must stay at home, look after kids, then wash, cook – every day do the same. No money to buy something what they need. Just poor in the home, miserable. Sometimes the husband have no money to give" (Interview: FR33, 2017).

"In my neighbourhood [in Dili] the women just stay at home, minimum education... they don't have the motivation to change their life" (Interview: FR9, 2016).

"A Timorese woman can do whatever we want. A woman just sitting at home waiting to get married and do nothing - just cooking and cleaning and waiting for husband, husband going to treat us like he is the boss. Not good to be dependent on husband. I have my own job. I'm not going to be treated like that" (Interview: FR4, 2016).

"In my district we have a lot of girls still single, they graduate from uni and go back to the district again [to their parents]. That's why I say: 'Why you back in district? We have no job in district. You need to go back to Dili looking for job related to your degree'. They never try!" (Interview: FR10, 2016).

"Many girls in Baucau when they finish school they just help their mother to cook for their family" (Interview: FR25, 2016).

Another woman from Baucau township thought about half of the women were unable to go to work because of their domestic duties whilst for the other half:

> *"They have the power to be free, to say: 'I want to work. I cannot stay at home the whole time. I also want the money. If you [the husband] have money, I want to have too'* (Interview: FR8, 2016).

Whether this estimate is accurate or not, the comment points to a corner of the female Timorese population (in which the respondents belong) where there is a shared viewpoint on the importance of equal opportunities and gender equality in their society:

> *"Women don't have to just be a Mum and wife. They can have their own business to develop the skills and knowledge to ... about the empowerment, feel proud of themselves, support their family financially and educationally as well"* (Interview: FR6, 2016).

> *"From previously, have a little bit changing. Before the men first, they always say that everything must be decide by the men and the men have the high power. But now we need to balance the women and the men in the equal gender"* (Interview: FR15, 2016).

> *"I live in a separate home from my parents and so we talk about the gender equality, the equal opportunities to women"* (Interview: FR18, 2016).

This last woman told of how she and her friends, wonder: *"how come domestic violence and rape still happen?"* but also mentioned being encouraged by the proactive stance taken towards cases of VAWG by her female cousin who is in the police force in Baucau. Another woman, reflecting on inroads being made into male power and privilege asserted:

> *"Before we had the gender equality we have violence, men always use their power. So now when they use their power, we can tell the police. And also, since we have the gender now like the women, we can have the high-level education, we can be like the Prime Minister. Because we can control the world"* (much laughter) (Interview: FR22, 2016).

However, for one non-tertiary educated woman the low representation of females at high levels in government was an issue: *"I feel better to work in NGO because man or woman the same. Sometime the woman very high level. In the government most of the managers are men. Makes me angry"* (Interview: FR7, 2016).

For many of the women, their gender equality conscientisation has been enhanced by their diaspora experience at universities outside of Timor-Leste:

> *"I think personally gender equality is getting better to the past. Especially today more women are actually getting their education overseas. When they come back they actually try to talk more about the gender equality – how we need to get the same opportunities as men. I think it is good for the women to explore their self – how to be involved in the environment with the many men"* (Interview: FR6, 2018).

Additionally, this woman, tertiary-educated in Perth, commented that she was aware of males who had been educated outside of Timor-Leste increasingly having: *"the knowledge about gender equality and they actually support women more choosing to study and work".* She qualified this, however, with the rejoinder that some tertiary-educated males still carry on the traditional way of thinking: *"They say even after getting married you should stop work and stay at home and be a wife, cooking and doing the household chores"* (Interview: FR6, 2016). Another woman (also tertiary-educated in the diaspora) had this to say about the progressiveness of Timorese males around gender equality:

> *"The equality between male and female, for what I see in Timor-Leste its only 20% accepted. If we talk to Timorese men, they will say: 'Yes, I respect women, they should have the same opportunities with us'. But they won't go and get the food if everybody wants to eat. They will say to me: 'Go get the drinks and food', and when I say: 'No, I am also busy with work' they just say: 'You are only woman here'. And they will expect I will do the dishes"* (Interview: FR36, 2017).

Chapter Three noted that one of the reasons a young Timorese woman might choose not to take up vocational training is her belief that if she is too successful in her education or employment it will be hard to find a husband. One woman believed that 50% of males would not now feel threatened by their wife working in a high-status

job like hers in the offshore. But for another, also in a highly responsible, skilled job offshore, her lived experience of relationships with Timorese men who needed to feel superior to her had made her skeptical of the extent of positive change:

> *"It's very difficult here in Dili because we end up with a guy, he has to be ahead of me. For me if I don't know something, I like to be able to ask him and he can explain it to me – just that [as an equal]"* (Interview: FR29, 2016).

Another (tertiary-educated and holding a position of responsibility) had experienced a relationship break-up because her boyfriend was opposed to her working offshore:

> *"Because he want his girl to stay at home and just take an easy job"* (Interview: FR28, 2017).

Whilst there was a general optimism amongst the women that gender equality was progressing in their country, with more young women making and pursuing strategic goals of learning and earning, the above (and following) comments give some indication of the continued prevalence of traditional patriarchal pressures and negative gendered stereotypes that they themselves have managed to navigate or circumvent, as these examples show:

> *"My mother say: 'Why do you have to work? Why don't you just stay at home to take care of your kids? You have five kids'. My Mum is very old"* (Interview: FR17, 2016).

> *"Before the equal opportunities the woman's parents say: "You just stay at home, you don't have to work". But I say: I will do what I want to do. I have to work!"* (Interview: FR12, 2016).

The women's *power within* of an avowed awareness of their right to make strategic life goals of learning and earning has been accompanied by an internal locus of control (LOC) (which encompasses both the *power over* normative controls and the *power to* take purposive action). This is the next area of antecedent agency the findings will illuminate.

Sharing an inner sense of autonomy
An internal LOC (or sense of autonomy) derives from the women's belief that they, rather than external forces, determine what happens to them - that they are the authors of their own destiny (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Chapter Two, citing Sprietzer

(1995), has explained that this attribute, along with self-esteem (which will be explored later in relation to the women's offshore-related empowerment gains) is one that lends stability to empowerment. It is a psychosocial need of humans that if satisfied has enduring properties towards the achievement of self-endorsed goals.

It might be deemed a given that women navigating their chosen (non-normative) life path in a patriarchally-defined society, taking purposive action along the way, will have been guided by an internal LOC (fortified by perseverance and resilience - innate or acquired) as this woman's testimony suggests:

> *"I had a dream as a girl to have my own house which is very strange for Timorese females. I am hardworking, flexible, ready to do anything I can to achieve my dreams"* (Interview: FR32, 2017).

The findings, supplemented by those of the previous research, clearly portray a group of women who have independently identified or sought out avenues through which to attain skills or jobs they have desired or deemed useful in the pursuit of their goals - for many in an ad hoc way as fortuitous opportunities have become visible *'that might lead to any job',* such as a World Vision IT course in a nearby town or a mining engineering scholarship (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Having a sense of autonomy over their life was equated with being able to make a decision by several respondents, as this woman articulated:

> *"I think it is important for a woman to stand on her own. We can make a decision, given the chance"* (Interview: FR23, 2016).

Having the agency to choose their own pathway was especially recognised as a strength for the solo mothers in this study (of which there are four) – as females who have defied the customary norm for women in their position to live with their parents and not hold down a job:

> *"I feel strong because I am the one make a decision. Because when I'm pregnant I'm alone and I feel strong"* (Interview: FR9, 2016)[63].

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[63] This woman, on becoming pregnant with her second child, left her husband because he did not shield her from pressures from his family and had not been able to financially contribute to their life together.

> *"I support the women whose husbands leave them and people gossip about them. I say that for them: 'This is my life, this is my choice'"* (Interview: FR26, 2016).

One of the solo mothers rated her power to get what she wanted in life as 9/10 now compared with 5/10 when she was pregnant (and ostracised by local workplaces until she entered the Venture Hotel opportunity structure).

Two women pointed out that being single (with no children) gave them greater control over their lives:

> *"Being single it is easier for you to make a decision because just you. I want this experience, I want this skill or knowledge, I just go get it"* (Interview: FR6, 2016).

> *"I'm still single, I'm lucky, I have time, I can go to Bali for a holiday. Maybe when get married can't go on holiday anymore"* (Interview: FR24, 2016).

Some women have attributed their success in being recruited to offshore work to non- self-directed influences, such as their being lucky or supported by God. Others (such as those who had been Dili Beach Hotel waitresses or Venture Hotel and Caltech onshore employees) have alluded to the push from their employers or key actors in the oil and gas stakeholder networks that initiated their taking the step of applying for an offshore job. However, the empirics show all of the women, these included, to have had the self-drive to get themselves into a status of employability for offshore positions (such as learning computer skills or English, financially supporting their own learning endeavours, having a university or TVET qualification and/or experience, having a job history, preparing a curriculum vitae, applying for a passport, and 'selling' their abilities and suitability in interviews for positions). This self-drive can be no better depicted than in the story of one of the hospitality women's early post-high school activities:

> *"From 21-23 years I sell my vegetables in the morning in Baucau and go to [English] courses in the afternoon"* (Interview: FR14, 2016).

For the initial group of offshore women, those without a university qualification, or those with tertiary degrees unrelated to the petroleum industry, their internal drive

was not accompanied by clear cognised aspirations to enter the job field of the O&G industry. Rather, they were driven by the intrinsic motivation to learn and to be economically self-reliant and the extrinsic motivations to escape the spectre of poverty (for themselves and their families) as well as the constraints of normative roles and behaviours for females. As one woman who had been an offshore bridge controller said: *"My parents were farmers – poor. I don't want their life. For me I want to change my life"* (Interview: FR5, 2016). Needless to say, these motivations have also influenced the life paths of the women who have studied in petroleum-related areas.

Chapter Two has made the link between humans having autonomous drive and their proclivity, at their best, to be 'agentic and inspired, striving to learn … extend themselves [and] master new skills' (Adams, 2014, p. 90). Having an intrinsic motivation to learn has been something that, as the first part of this chapter highlighted, was identified in the female Timorese candidates by employers/recruiters looking for potential offshore recruits. The women themselves have also identified this as a strength, as the following contributions portray:

> *"If I see something good to learn I think why not? It's just part of life"* (Interview: FR26, 2016).
>
> *"My ability is I am thirsty to learn"* (Interview: FR2, 2016).
>
> *"When I was a junior, I really love English. So every day I write 10 words and I learn"* (Interview: FR8, 2016).

The woman who said simply, of her learning endeavours that: *"I want to improve myself"* (Interview: FR34, 2016) was representative of a shared ambition of the women of improving their minds (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 68) and also indicative of their self-belief that they had the ability and potential to achieve this outcome, that is of their self-efficacy.

Self-efficacy as a component of antecedent agency

An important companion to the women's capacity to envision, pursue and achieve learning challenges and earning goals has been their belief in their abilities and potential - explained in Chapter Two as a motivational self-belief or self-efficacy.

Having significant levels of self-efficacy has been an antecedent empowerment strength that enabled the women to gain pre-offshore skills and knowledge (through the acquisition of vocational education and training and/or work experience) and to have the confidence in their abilities to be a success as offshore crewmembers. As a woman who was encouraged by Caltech to apply for an offshore hospitality role offered: *"I don't know what job in offshore is but I say: "OK, we can try it""* (Interview: FR25, 2016). And one of the women with a tertiary degree who talked of her self-efficacy thus: *"I always felt clever. I always wanted to know everything"* (Interview: FR23, 2016). The assumption with which this study was approached – of the women's shared significant levels of self-efficacy, was based on clear evidence of this from the previous research (Adams, 2014). As one of the women of that original group, who performed the bridge control role offshore, asserted: *"I really believe in myself that I can do it"* (Interview: FR1, 2016).

A key line of inquiry of this study has been around the reinforcement and growth of the women's self-efficacy through achievements relating to their successful navigation of the offshore workplace and their related trainings/learnings – such as in passing the knowledge and skills field-entry requirements, becoming familiarised with the FIFO system, undergoing job-related training and WSD and acquiring the competencies necessary to perform their jobs to industry standard. Perhaps the clearest, and earliest, indication of the women's self-efficaciousness (bolstered by courage, as a component of their agency) was evidenced in their approach to undergoing the offshore-required certification (of which, as the previous chapter explained, the Helicopter Underwater Escape Training (HUET) and escape from a smoke-filled building are components). Bearing in mind that most of the women could not swim, the following range of their own comments on their attitudes towards the training shows the strength of their pre-offshore self-efficacy:

> *"I don't know how to swim but I just try. You never know if you do not try"* (Interview: FR10, 2016).

> *"The HUET – very scared, but just confidence myself to do that"* (Interview: FR27, 2016).

"I was excited to do the HUET, but scared because I cannot swim. I can handle it. When we do, I think it as not so difficult as I thought" (Interview: FR19, 2016).

"I felt brave doing the T_BOSIET. I pass first time" (Interview: FR4, 2016).

"Escape from the smoke-filled room – the biggest experience! I never thought I would and then I did it. It's very hard" (Interview: FR21. 2016).

As the previous chapter has explained, in the passing of the T-BOSIET training by all of the women (for most on their first attempt) they had been encouraged through authentic efficacy information about their abilities given by their trainers and employers (that is, outside belief from experts that they could do it) – an important element of social capital to give them the extra confidence to try. Sources of social capital such as this and that from other rig-ready training settings have been important components of the women's pre-offshore employment capabilities sets. Social capital has also come in the form of support from families of their aspirations of and efforts to attain strategic learning and earning goals.

Social capital assisting life goals

The findings reveal that most of the women were at least morally, and for some materially, encouraged by their parents or members of their extended families (such as uncles or brothers with whom they lived during high school or tertiary years or in a few cases their grandparents) to further their education (such as through English or TVET courses or university studies) in order to get a formal job. The important gendered motivation behind this social capital – such as the aspirations others held for the women to break with traditional roles, can reasonably be surmised from the following testimonies:

> *"My Mum didn't go to school. Just stay at home to do full time housework. She decide that since she didn't go to school, she want all her kids to study – especially overseas"* (Interview: FR15, 2016).

> *"I remember my Mum told me that she doesn't want her daughters to get married at young age, considering her own experience. Her thinking was*

different from parents in the village who thought women are born to stay at home and do the chores. She say: 'I give you freedom, so make use of it''' (Interview: FR35, 2017).

This social capital extended (for the large majority of the women with children) to parents and extended family members supporting them by providing childcare services when they have been studying or working. All of the mothers living with the fathers of their children reported that their husbands wholly supported their choice to seek work in the offshore setting – with several adding that this has taken the form of their assuming some (albeit in many cases not significant) level of childcare and cooking duties.

A further important aspect of the women's social capital (or *power with* as a component of their capabilities sets*)* was their pre-offshore experiences of studying, training or working within equal opportunities/gender equal spaces, such as NGO-run courses, universities, NGO and private sector workplaces (in particular Caltech, Venture Hotel and Dili Beach Hotel). In being treated with dignity and as equals with males it might be expected that the women entered the offshore workplace already fortified with important levels of self-esteem. With a key interest of this study being the women's ongoing empowerment well-being in the face of uncertain futures, understandings of the meanings around how their self-esteem (alternately called self-worth or self-pride) as well as their internal LOC (as fundamental attributes that lend stability to empowerment over time) might support this are important to the analysis. Attention will be focused on this question later in the chapter. The findings will now be explored for the range of important offshore WSD- and employment-related enhancements to the women's human capital portfolios and capabilities sets (in cognitive and psychological dimensions) that have contributed to their enhanced empowerment status.

7.4 Introducing the women's human capital portfolios as caches of cognitive and psychological strengths

The construct of a human capital portfolio (portrayed metaphorically as a briefcase in the interviews) has previously been explained as representing the women's

'owned' cache of personal strengths and achievements (as they have been enhanced by their offshore experience but not in the sense of their being human resources awaiting uplifting/utilising by employers). The contents of the briefcase were divided into four sections under the headings (as KSAOs): knowledge (and experience as knowledge), skills (which includes competences), abilities, and other attributes. In the interviews these sections were collaboratively filled up, drawing on their descriptions and viewpoints and my understandings as researcher. Discussion concerning skills tended to encompass competences due to the women's preference for using the term 'skills' to embrace the two. Attributes highlighted have included those of determination, perseverance, adaptability, resilience, self-belief, self-confidence and courage. As well as exploring the value of the women's human capital portfolios, additional detail arising from their narratives has been teased out in order to evaluate the extent to which new self-esteem levels might have been reached and further cognitive and psychosocial empowerment needs fulfilled in the workplace (of autonomy, self-efficacy, impact, meaning and relatedness).

To facilitate the subsequent analysis, the data was roughly divided into two groupings of narratives – those women in offshore positions of greater responsibility who have had considerable structured on-the-job learning and/or work skills development and those who have had the significantly less required for occupying lower-skilled or internship-type positions. The former group includes the women who have occupied the following roles: camp boss, laboratory technician, materials coordinator, fabric maintenance assistant, junior HSE officer, Heli-admin, radio operations, document controller and trainee mechanical and electrical technician. The woman bridge controller who subsequently trained as a blaster/painter is also included in this group. The latter group includes hospitality roles, bridge controllers, time sheet coordinators, and the women in MMO and internship roles on the seismic vessel.

Knowledge acquisition
Having *knowledge* of the offshore setting and systems appears to equate to an enduring empowerment gain - based as it has been upon the women's knowing and experiencing of the tasks, responsibilities, offshore systems and processes the

offshore roles have required and successfully navigating of the facility workplace. One woman articulated this simply as:

> *"If I lost my job, I would still feel clever because I know about the jobs I have done in the offshore"* (Interview: FR3, 2016).

All of the women have shared a baseline of knowledge and experience arising from preparing to enter, live and work in the offshore facility setting [64]. For the women who achieved middle- or middle-high-level positions and/or had been engaged in significant levels of associated WSD and on-the-job learning, both generic and industry-specific knowledge was secured. Those in trainee HSE officer positions acquired over time (mostly through on-the-job learning) significant knowledge of health and safety issues (atypical for most Timorese) - such as the importance of hygiene and hydration for crewmembers, the safe use of equipment, the correct PPE for different tasks and safe levels of noise and gas toxicity. As one woman excitedly explained:

> *"I learn many new things that I never learn before – like crane safety and how to fill the LSR [lifting safety register]. I never know this. I never know this!"* (Interview: 10, 2016).

The trainees who completed the Site Skills Training gained a wide-ranging knowledge inclusive of offshore processes, the function, safe use and maintenance of tools and equipment and the Permit-to-Work system. Those performing document control roles had clear understandings around the importance of record management and document-control trails as well as attention to detail and timeliness:

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[64] This baseline encompasses the following: what is entailed for responses to emergencies (such as those presented in the T-BOSIET); of HSE protocols, equipment, and emergency drill systems; of helicopter logistics and transportation associated with the FIFO system; of the chain of command; of communicating in English; of navigating cultural differences amongst crew members; of living amongst a predominance of males; of enduring and observing weather and ocean patterns as they impact on the offshore processes; of living the FIFO lifestyle, and; for the Kitan and Bayu-Undan women of the physical structures designed around oil and gas extraction and production/processing/piping and of systems around product off-takes to vessels as well as supply vessel activities (such as the functioning of cranes), and the associated range of different crewmember roles, activities associated with these roles and flow of facility work and timetabling, whilst; for the Ramform Sovereign crewmembers of the physical arrangements on a vessel designed for seismic data acquisition and processing, the structure and roles of the crew, the flow of activities and purpose. And importantly, for all, they have acquired experience as knowledge in how, on a daily basis, their particular role fits in to the bigger picture of facility processes and systems.

> *"I am just familiar with the document – like the work pack that they send to me on what needs to be fixed– the materials, the tools, PPE they need for the job. I have to check if it is the correct one, double check, because just the little problem can go big"* (Interview: FR9, 2016).

The women more conversant with the Permit-to-Work system and transportation logistics also appreciated the importance of preparedness, timeliness, alertness and attention to detail due to the consequences of delays or complications if all the boxes have not been ticked, as this respondent explained:

> *"My main job is to check the permits – write the permits. Because in offshore the Permit-to-Work is only for seven days. If the job is not done in seven days you have to replace the permit because it has expired. I have to make sure the coordinator approve the permit and then I take to the operator to check. Make sure there is another permit ready two days before the other expires. Every day I have to check because if we miss we have a problem! Because we lost time and I have to rewrite the permit and get checked again"* (Interview: FR2, 2016).

The Heli-admin and radio operations women were also required to be fully conversant with helicopter and helideck protocols, meteorological requirements for helicopter operations, freight and dangerous goods handling requirements and PoB constraints/flow on the different installations and vessels. The women with responsibilities around the ordering and distributing of consumables had comprehensive knowledge of inventory and vessel unloading systems. Of these women, the camp boss was required additionally to understand how to manage food shelf life and the materials coordinator dangerous goods and the rules to do with transporting them. The Kitan female laboratory technician had comprehensive knowledge of the chromatography process related to oil and water separation and testing, from her practice as well as from her online studies. An appreciation of knowing about the wider processes of offshore operations through observation and experience rather than through theory was expressed by some of the women:

> *"I am so happy I gain all this knowledge. Even you can Google it, but it's better you are there directly"* (Interview: FR8, 2016).

> *"Once you know the whole complexity you are little bit wise. I think if I can learn even the small thing then I will start to understand the whole thing"* (Interview: FR28, 2016).

Some of the women in low-skilled jobs on Kitan and Bayu-Undan were able to glean some more detailed understanding of how the oil and gas is extracted and processed through enquiring of other crewmembers. For the two non-hospitality women on the seismic vessel the knowledge they gained from observation and asking questions of experts had high value:

> *"I feel so lucky I can learn new things, more than I learnt in the university. This give me a shot. I have to learn more and more this knowledge"* (Interview: FR22, 2016).

However, for most of these women in lower-status roles the more concrete or precise knowledge they acquired has been of the nature of the teamwork, of the equipment and materials employed in their jobs and of the responses to hazards and emergencies potentially required in their sphere of work activity. For them, as for all of the other women, a high premium was placed on knowledge gained of generic and industry-specific hazards and risks and of how to keep oneself and others safe, as the following comment shows:

> *"The first aid knowledge is important for us because in Timor-Leste it's lack of rules about how to help people in an emergency. Someone get hurt we can help. As women we are always around the kitchen, getting burnt. Sometimes I think the firefighting is really important"* (Interview: FR19, 2016).

The women talked of how they now noticed unsafe practices in their onshore world such as insufficient numbers of life rafts on a ferry, the absence of life jackets on a boat, the rarity of the use of earmuffs, safety glasses or gas masks by workers performing dangerous tasks or of the near invisibility of scaffolding for work carried out at heights:

> *"I never see the scaffolding in Dili. We have seen the crane at the port – not good safety"* (Interview: FR7, 2016).

I was privileged to be given, during interviews with the two Ramform Sovereign kitchen/housekeeping women precise enactments (accompanied by enthusiastic

explanation) of their knowledge of Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and of how to escape from a smoke-filled room. For these women (of high school-level education) their obvious thirst for knowledge (and especially knowledge highly relevant to their home lives) had been amply rewarded. However, for some of the hospitality women, in only attaining Level Cert II in hotel operations whilst aspiring to gain level Cert III, their desire to gain more knowledge might be said to have remained somewhat unfulfilled.

Perhaps the most universally acknowledged result of the women's growth in knowledge has been the corresponding growth in confidence, as these contributions reveal:

> *"The confidence is coming by learning and doing – when you got the knowledge"* (Interview: FR8, 2016).

> *"Knowledge is confidence"* (Interview: FR1, 2016).

> *"Knowledge about safety gives me confidence"* (Interview: FR7, 2016).

> *"I have the confidence because I know what I am doing"* (Interview: FR3, 2016).

Having self-confidence (as manifest in having a 'go to' attitude in approaching tasks and goals) has been identified by the respondents as being an important element of their success as a woman. This element was introduced specifically into the interviews and will be explored next.

Raising self-confidence levels

Several of the women in face-to-face interviews were asked to rank their confidence levels on a scale of 1-10 at the beginning of their time offshore and at the time of data collection (with 10 representing the highest feeling of confidence). All of those asked reported that their confidence levels were at least at 5 before they entered the workplace and at least 8 once they were familiarised with the facility and their job description. The following contributions illustrate some of the outcomes:

"Maun Jean said just be confident, even though scared of the helicopter and noise and being far away and in the middle of the ocean and what if something happen?" (Interview: FR4, 2016). (This woman rated her offshore confidence at 10).

"I learnt to be calm, even when afraid – just confidence myself" (Interview: FR32, 2018).

"I think it is very terrible for me because I went there in the wet season – I'm afraid about the weather and the height, but I was excited too. By the third time it was comfortable for me" (Interview: FR19, 2016).

Two women were not alone in alluding to the confidence coming as they became more acculturated to the offshore environment:

"Once we get used to the environment and the people make us feel comfortable so we feel confident" (Interview: FR12, 2016).

"I feel reliable and confident. You feel the confidence because it feel like home" (Interview: FR2, 2016).

Several women with tertiary degrees stated that they began their offshore experience with already high levels of confidence - two suggesting that a workplace culture (such as is in the offshore workplace) that encourages crewmembers to ask for information or clarification if they are unsure about some aspect of their job engenders a status of confidence. Two others experienced significant boosts to their confidence on being promoted to a more responsible position, as this woman reported:

"They push me to do radio ops alone with no one to guide me so that I learn – which is good because at the end I feel more confident" (Interview: FR29, 2016).

Two women alluded to the confidence gained in overcoming fears of communicating with superiors (acculturated in Timor-Leste society where one is expected to be polite and deferential to one's boss):

"At the start we didn't know everything but when you talk to the supervisor or OIM [offshore installation manager] you need the confidence because the

> *bridge controller control the PoB [person-on-board numbers on each platform]"* (Interview: FR1, 2016).
>
> *"In bridge control you need a strong, confident voice [on the radio]. You need the confidence to tell people they have to wait to cross the bridge. Even they say they have to go through you have to say no"* (Interview: FR2, 2016).
>
> *"I don't know - other people say they are scared of the OIM but for me it's my job and I need to face him"* (Interview: FR9, 2016).

One woman attributed her high confidence in mixing with different levels of seniority in the workplace to her Australian diaspora experience:

> *"In Timor-Leste when someone in high position you have to be really polite – not friendly. But I adapt very quickly to the way they talk in offshore"* (Interview: FR6, 2016).

Several of the women who have occupied onshore roles (relating to the facilities' operations) following their time offshore have commented that knowledge of the offshore systems and workplace has enhanced their confidence in performing these onshore roles - such as in the area of crew logistics and data entry. For two women, the degree to which they had realised their learning potential was related to their capacity to advance their confidence levels. One had an area of learning she felt she still needed to be able to perform her document control job fully confidently. The other, having been a bridge controller for over two years, felt that as her role was low-skilled her confidence level was not as high as she wanted it to be because there was: *"Not enough thinking for me"* (Interview: FR5, 2016). This latter viewpoint suggests that, in the absence of WSD challenges in the workplace, the self-efficaciousness of the women occupying the low-skilled job areas long term had plateaued, whilst for others who experienced on-going structured WSD and positions of growing responsibility this had expanded.

Self-efficacy as 'feeling clever'

It has been shown in the previous chapter that in entering the offshore setting and related training settings the women have had a range of opportunities to test and challenge their self-efficacy. In order to best translate, in interview dialogue, the women's meanings around their self-efficacy the synonym of *"feeling clever"* was

introduced as a more accessible concept. In most face-to-face interviews a rudimentary cleverness scale of 1-10 (with 10 representing the highest feeling of cleverness) was employed as a methodological tool in order to gain some idea of changes in the women's self-efficacy - from before their entry offshore experience or offshore-related WSD to the time of data collection.

Several non-hospitality women (of both tertiary- and secondary- school attainment and in different skill-level positions) rated their pre-offshore cleverness at lower than 5 due to their lack of understanding of their role, which only became clear once they were in the offshore workplace settings and integrated into the systems and had received on-the-job coaching. They reported their self-efficacy to subsequently rise to the 7s and 8s in a short space of time. One HSE woman, on her first swing in the position (who had three days in which to learn to do safety checks, register them and present the results to the 6.30am pre-start meeting attended by around 60 men) commented on her confidence in her abilities thus: *"Even nervous I try to do – everything go well"* (Interview: FR28, 2016).

In fact about one third of the non-hospitality women entered the setting comfortable with their abilities, whilst the three Site Skills women began their offshore apprenticeships with a high level of feeling clever due to their training accomplishments (which as at the time of data collection not been meaningfully tested through the practice of their trades on the facility). It appears that the women in hospitality roles (who had nearly all previously worked in this job field onshore) shared a significant sense of cleverness in their roles both before and after they had entered the offshore setting. As one woman asserted: *"Even though my job just hospitality I feel clever"* (Interview: FR33, 2016). With the 'women realising potential' outcomes being a key empowerment theme of this study, the link between this and the women's *expanding* self-efficacy through having ongoing opportunities (or not) to face and surmount ongoing learning challenges within the offshore training and employment settings is of particular interest.

The previous chapter has explained how there is little room for superfluity around the skillset demand of the offshore operations (where there is scant potential for the

creation of positions over and above the size and role mix of crews required to carry out functions effectively, efficiently and safely) and how investments into WSD are constrained by factors such as skillset ceilings on some roles, limits to the time more experienced crew can devote to learners, problematic issues around the making of Filipino crew redundant in order to replace them with up-skilled Timorese, and cost-benefit considerations. This had had some influence upon the lengths of offshore time some of the women were able to secure. However, the self-efficacy of the women who have spent less than a year in low-skilled positions (their tenure associated with short-term demand for able Timorese to fill the positions) had nonetheless been enhanced purely by their undergoing the rig-ready certifications, learning to navigate the offshore structures (physical and organisational), successfully performing their roles and of being able to observe experts at work.

For those women in low-skilled bridge control and kitchen hand/housekeeping roles for longer periods any significant advancing of self-efficacy frontiers has been constrained by the skillset ceilings in their job description. Several of the female bridge controllers, whilst valuing the experience of working in the offshore setting for reasons such as the status of having a job, having a high income, having a sense of relatedness, safety awareness, and confidence, felt they had not been sufficiently cognitively challenged. This deficit was in fact remedied in their subsequent on-shore positions and trainings (such as in blaster/painting and warehousing training for a Caltech and a Venture Hotel employee, in leadership and planning for some CAJV staff and for several in working in new logistics or administration roles with Caltech).

One area where there has been ongoing stimulation for the long-term offshore women to experience an increasing sense of cleverness has been through their practice of communicating in English – a skill upon which they have universally placed high employment/career value. For example, in the bridge control role several women were able to capitalise on the English-speaking aspect of the job and make progress in their fluency. One, however, did not feel she was able to rate her RT adeptness higher than a seven score because: *"My English is not very good"* (Interview: FR1, 2016). Several of the women in administration roles felt their

struggles with English fluency to be a 'cleverness' deficit (such as the document controllers and timesheet coordinators). This they ascribed to their offshore isolation in Timorese-populated office spaces where they largely conversed in their native *Tetun*, thus experiencing less exposure to English speakers than they would have liked. One of these women, who had much confidence in her work performance, when asked why her self-rated 'cleverness' was not at score 10 replied:

> *"The English is hard. My objective, how to explain what I feeling when speak with the other people – I cannot find the right word, it take a long time to reply. Sometime they get impatient – I make a mistake, like sometime the words in the email we have never seen before"* (Interview: FR9, 2016).

In fact, for three women their reluctance to apply for or accept a higher offshore position was due to their not feeling their English was good enough (despite being reassured and encouraged to do so by Caltech management personnel). For one woman with a degree in mining engineering, her lack of confidence in her English abilities was a reason for her not proactively promoting herself for training in pipe weld inspection – an enduring aspiration she had developed due to her witnessing of experts in this role in the offshore setting (and a skill which she would have had to acquire in the diaspora). It would appear that the low self-efficacy around English fluency of this woman and two others who had aspirations to enter O&G industry jobs with higher levels of skill had limited their choice-making behaviour.

Overall, however, the authenticity of efficacy information the women have embraced along their 'feeling clever' journeys (through their own achievements, verbal persuasion from others and observations of what is possible) might be deemed to have engendered, collectively, positive changes at both cognitive and psychological levels, and for many has enhanced their capacity to envision new (knowledge/skills/competence) 'realising potential' futures and their motivation for new learning goals. Moreover, as Chapter Two has explained, an important empowering correlate to enhanced self-efficacy (based upon the achievement of goals, skills mastery and the practice of competence) is a strengthened self-esteem. Most of the women developed mastery in their offshore roles (with the exception of

the two non-hospitality women interns on Ramform Sovereign who subsequently, however, in their onshore roles with CAJV were appraised as performing well). For those women who had the most self-efficacy challenges and subsequent skills competency achievements (reflected in their attaining more advanced VOCs and ongoing positive appraisals of their development by supervisors and in their assuming positions of high-level skills and responsibility) one might consider that their self-esteem would be the highest amongst the group. However, both narrative data and researcher observations of the women who had been in low-skilled roles in which there had been limited self-efficacy challenges point to no discernable difference between their portrayals of self-esteem and those of the higher skilled women.

Being skilled and competent, as a result of ability, self-belief and tenacious effort, (which Bandura (2001) has combined as 'resilient self-efficacy and deemed an important component of psychological capital), regardless of the level of skills required in a job, are important pillars of women's empowerment, contributing in ways that are both intrinsic (as self-pride, self-confidence and job satisfaction) and extrinsic (in capabilities, such as practical application and subsequent results and symbolically as certifications which confer status and represent opportunity).

Women developing skills and competence

For all of the women, the types and levels of offshore-related knowledge and skillsets they have acquired are objectively manifest in the range of inductions, training achievements, VOCs and job descriptions outlined in detail in Appendix (2). The women performing HSE roles for CAJV also had logbooks (to which this research was not privy) via which their on-the-job learning was structured and signed off when completed. The following contributions from the women's narratives bring to life some of the assessments around skills and competencies:

> *"My performance appraisal said: "she learns fast, easy to talk – communicate well with the rest". My technical skills and radio skills were 2 and ability to plan my work, 1" [where a scoring of 1 indicates having achieved competency]* (Interview: FR12, 2016).

> *"I feel competent - I'm doing all the chromatography lab analysis job"* (Interview: FR8, 2016).

One woman, in describing the competence required in her job, alluded to the tensions she had to manage at the critical point of facility crew change:

> *"Sometimes we have stressful because we have too many things to do all at the same time. Like when for the movement we have to prepare the T-Card for the people, the arrivals, then we have to have to check in for the people departing. Then we have to make the PoB, print out the manifest for the pilot. Then prepare for the accommodation of the arrivals – that the beds are available. It happen all at the same time!"* (Interview: FR3, 2016).

An HSE trainee commented of the Fast Rescue Craft skills her colleague had (of at least three years' more offshore experience than her), that: *"She is very, very well trained"* (Interview: FR28, 2016).

Given the paucity of jobs in Timor-Leste and absence of an industrial sector, the offshore experience has provided a rare opportunity for the women to gain both generic and O&G industry-specific skillsets and practice competencies in a high-tech work environment (such as in the learned responses to emergencies and competent use of emergency equipment, Skype conferencing and in being integrated into the permit-to-work systems).

The achievement of competency (as consolidated self-efficacy and confidence in and effective application of performance abilities) has been explained in Chapter Two as a cognitive facet of psychosocial empowerment that supports an individual having a proactive stance towards her/his work along with four other facets. To reiterate, these facets are:

- *self-determination* (or the feeling of autonomy or control over the initiation and carrying out of work tasks);
- *meaning* (as the congruence between the purpose and requirements of one's work role and values);
- *relatedness* (the positive effect of being part of a secure, stable, nurturing social group such as the offshore crew), and;

- *impact* (as the degree to which one feels one's work makes a difference to organisational outcomes).

These psychosocial aspects will now be explored.

Further psychosocial and cognitive dimensions of workplace empowerment

Chapter Two raised the question of the degree to which crewmembers integrated into the immutable and compelling offshore chain of command (particularly at the lower-skill levels) would experience a sense of *autonomy* (or self-determination) in the workplace. The findings reveal that even in the entry-level jobs where crewmembers' levels of responsibility are the most superseded by superiors' veto around decisions, work schedules and activities, there is a shared sense of autonomy. This has been based upon the expectation that they are still all independently responsible for being HSE-aware and keeping an eye out for and reporting risk or hazards (to themselves, to others and to the operation). Due to their only just having been recruited to the offshore installation, it was hard to define whether any greater autonomy, over and above this, would be experienced by the women in apprenticeship roles. However, for the bridge controllers the authority given to them to make the decisions on whether individuals can cross the bridge or not has indeed inculcated an additional sense of autonomy beyond the safety aspect of their job. The coaching inputs that have been aimed at increasing the document controllers' sense of initiative and problem-solving skills suggest that there is an important degree of autonomy in these roles – as too for the woman working in fabric maintenance.

The women who have had the most significant levels of autonomous activity in the performance of their jobs have been those in HSE, lab technician, Heli-admin, radio operations, camp boss and materials coordinator jobs, as evidenced in the following narrative contributions:

> *"All the items [consumables for jobs] that come on board or are for shipment – they need to come to me. I am in charge of when the crane can operate"* (Interview: FR26, 2016).

> *"I'm in CUQ but I have to control ASV and FSO [accommodation needs] as well. We have to plan six weeks before – we have the supply boat delivery every two weeks and we don't want to miss out anything"* (Interview: FR34, 2016).
>
> *"Her [HSE] job as muster coordinator, she looks after 100 people and accounts for them all, directs them to lifeboats and she's gotta be in charge of those 100 people. The radio ops woman is the communicator, for helicopter crashes or if there is a fire somewhere or the sensors are active – she's the first to communicate a response ... these people have all got integral roles in safety and running the place"* (Interview: SH9, 2016).

Regarding the psychosocial empowerment need of *impact*, the empirics indicate that all of the women share, at the least, the 'impact enhancing' correlate of having clear cognitive appreciation of the consequences to operations if they *fail* to carry out their duties to required standards. As one woman spoke of her kitchen job:

> *"I think my job is important because without food the contractor on offshore can't be doing their job"* (Interview: FR31, 2017).

The HSE women demonstrated a high awareness of the importance of their role in ensuring work is carried out safely and that crewmembers followed rules around their health and hygiene. The experience of being integrated into the Permit-to-Work system has allowed them, and others, to see the downstream consequences of their part to play in the organisational machinery. The bridge controllers were aware that if they allow PoB limits to be exceeded on platforms there are potentially serious consequences around inadequate lifeboat capacity should there be an emergency. The decision-making roles of the women associated with helicopter operations with regard to, for example, PoB capacity (of facility structures and helicopters), weather conditions, weight restrictions, helideck safety and whether travelling crew are appropriately certificated and permitted can be clearly appreciated as being impactful upon crew safety and upon the smooth running of transportation logistics and crew changes.

With respect to the women's offshore experience being one reflective of *meaning* for the women (which Chapter Two conceptualised as a 'congruence between the purpose and requirements of their work role and ... values, that [has inspired their]

approach to work' (p. 34)) their narratives universally point to this having transpired. At an important baseline level, they have all experienced meaning in the satisfaction of their generalised desire to learn and practice new skills. This woman performing a hospitality role put it simply, thus:

> *"I get all the positive from my job – learning from the malae respect for time and each other, HSE awareness and first aid"* (Interview: FR33, 2016).

For those who have degrees in engineering and/or extractive industry-related areas the findings point to this congruence being additionally deepened as can be seen from the following comment:

> *"Offshore always enjoy our work – sometimes I'm asking the operator how the gas goes through the flaring and sometimes how the injection, the air pump works. I think with my background in geology, it is good opportunity"* (Interview: FR19, 2016).

It is also clear that meaning has been manifest in the meeting of their need (with respect to an alignment with their critical consciousness around gender equality) to experience dignity and decent work in technical and vocational education and training (TVET) spaces where there are equal opportunities and an absence of gender discrimination. The meeting of this workplace psychological empowerment need in the offshore setting has been reinforced by the strong sense of camaraderie[65] (or *family* as several women called this) and teamwork experienced and valued by the women (which has also met the empowerment need of relatedness.

Having a sense of relatedness has been alternately defined as *trust* by Dercon and Singh (2011) in international development discourse, which along with self-pride and self-efficacy is a key indicator of empowerment, as outlined above. Trust is the knowing that others have one's best interests at heart (Dercon & Singh, 2011). The findings leave no doubt that the decisions, behaviours and actions of the actors

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[65] One woman reported a deficit in her sense of camaraderie with crewmembers (male and female). This woman's experience has been relegated to 'outlier' status in the analysis (as untypical when compared with the adaptive behaviour of other female Timorese respondents) as her narrative points to her proclivity to self-isolate whilst on the facility due perhaps to her overtly avowed religious moral attitude (not emphasised in the other women's narratives) that had lent her an aversion to joining in lighthearted banter during downtime (particularly with her male compatriots) and to a mistrust that if she got too close to the Timorese and Filipino men she would not be able exert authority in her position.

involved with the women's well-being in their offshore workspaces, and those involved with structuring and managing their WSD, have engendered a collective sense of trust. However, for some of the ESS/Compass Group employees, there has been an accompanying sense of being let down regarding their desire to up-skill to Level Cert. II. It might be suggested that, contrary to the experience of working women in other parts of Asia who are paid under or at the minimum wage level, for these offshore women being paid relatively high salaries (in Timor-Leste terms) there might be a heightened trust that their employers have an interest in their being able to significantly, materially better their lives and those of their families. The opening by the offshore industry stakeholders of opportunities, or the resumption of positions, in ongoing onshore employment for all of the non-hospitality women except those engaged in tertiary studies, (and for the two Venture Hotel waitresses on Ramform Sovereign and those ESS/Compass Group women who have been able to work in shipyards or with the company elsewhere) must be seen to reinforce the sense of trust and hence enhanced empowerment. This sense of trust can be aligned with the meeting, for the women, of the psychosocial empowerment need of relatedness.

It might be expected that for the women who spent only short spells in the offshore workplace the benefits of meeting the empowerment needs of enhanced self-efficacy, the practice of competency, autonomy, the senses of meaning, impact and relatedness might be fleeting – that the consolidation of empowerment gains through these cognitive/psychological needs being met would require ongoing similar employment experience in which this can continue to develop. For those who have returned to onshore positions with contractors to Bayu-Undan operation and for those continuing their work with Venture Hotel this has undoubtedly been the case[66]. For those whose learning trajectories were to leave employment and pursue full-time tertiary education (such as the two Fulbright scholars and the woman studying English at UNTL) it is not to be expected that these empowerment

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[66] My continued contact with most of the women via Facebook has enabled me to keep up with the ongoing WSD journeys of many of the women which have satisfied their intrinsic need for learning and also to be aware that even for the women who experienced a fleeting sense of offshore relatedness, their continued integration into the related onshore communities has furthered the satisfaction of this psychological empowerment need in employment.

gains would diminish. Moreover, the important personal strength of *self-esteem* (and its companions self-worth and self-pride) is one which once acquired is believed (as Chapter Two discusses) not to have a proclivity to diminish (unless perhaps in the face of prolonged physical/emotional abuse which is not an avenue of inquiry in this research) but rather to lend stability to empowerment (Spreitzer, 1995). The final chapter of the thesis draws some conclusions around the relationship between the women's offshore-enhanced self-esteem levels and prospects for their enduring empowerment.

The previous section of this chapter has painted the picture of the Timor Sea "structures of opportunity" as gender equal spaces in which the women's self-esteem has been nurtured and their nascent critical consciousness around gender equality fortified through their experiences of dignity and decent work. The Timorese female identities that have traversed these spaces, and taken advantage of the opportunities to develop their human capital portfolios, represent an important enclave of successful, empowered women within a society that has serious gender equality deficits – as a group of females for whom the aggregation of their individual achievements and subversive performances of gender will serve to counterbalance (albeit in a small way) these women's empowerment negatives.

It can be seen from the exploration of the findings so far that the portraits of these new feminine identities resonate with many of the elements voiced by a group of women in the previous research. As was indicated in Chapter Two, this (collective) conceptualisation of empowerment (alternately articulated as 'Success as a Woman' and reiterated below) has been integrated into the research as having important 'situated' meaning to the women, living as they do in an LDC:

- Improving your mind
- Working in a safe environment
- Having English fluency
- Having self-belief
- Having self-confidence
- Having respect from others (in the workplace), and:
- Having responsibility in your work

- Feeling strong inside yourself (which might equate with agency but also with self-esteem)

Three remaining empowerment elements (in social and economic dimensions) articulated by the women go some way towards completing the picture, holistically, of the multi-faceted, multi-dimensional empowerment arrival place the women had reached at the time of this study, these being:

- Having respect from others outside the workplace (as a self-esteem enhancing source of social status)
- Having a good salary (representing economic independence and material well-being for themselves and family)
- Having savings as more opportunities for your children (as the ability to plan for the future and as a buffer against economic shock).

The high ranking in importance of the dimension of material gains and economic self-reliance achieved by the women must be given due weight as a cornerstone of their offshore-enhanced empowerment status, capabilities sets and feminine identities. Moreover, as well as the offsetting effects of boosts to the women's economic empowerment and material well-being, there needs to be consideration of the ways in which they have experienced empowerment in the social dimension.

7.5 Empowerment in social, economic and material dimensions

As has been mentioned the offshore salaries the women have received have been at least 10 times the monthly minimum wage of USD115 (for the women in job-share positions half of this due to their working every second shift). For those women who have returned to onshore positions, their incomes, whilst less than this, have still been in the region of five times the minimum wage (apart from a few whose salaries are higher). The material benefits the higher incomes have been able to bring for the women and their families represent startling departures from the avenues of poverty the majority of Timorese females have been trapped in. The holistic view needs to include the importance to many of the women of being able to meet (through this income) practical needs such as adequately sized, watertight houses with good sanitation, secure access to clean water, mosquito nets and access to

health services cannot be overstated[67]. However, it is the empowerment meaning of economic self-reliance, of having the *power to* in deciding how the income is spent or saved, that the gender lens of this inquiry has particularly focused.

The following breadth of comments provides some illustration around this issue. For a solo mother, having the salary was about being free from male power over financial resources, as she explained thus:

> *"What we call, we believe we have the confidence to have the power to get what we want. I have my own job. I'm not going to be treated like my husband is the boss. Not going to depend on him"* (Interview: FR4, 2016).

A woman who worked in hospitality roles was proud to be financially independent and to have saved half of her offshore salary, saying:

> *"This is my life! I never ask my brother, my father for money. Yes, I am independent for myself – the job is the big difference!"* (Interview: FR25, 2016).

For another woman, married (with a child and a husband who also earns an income that is spent on their household necessities), when asked if she makes her own decisions about how her salary is spent her reply was:

> *"Of course! Because my money. As long as I want things for myself, I can buy"* (Interview: FR10, 2016).

Being able to make her own financial decisions around improving her family's well-being was important to another woman:

> *"For me, I want to improve everything in my life. You can do it by yourself"* (Interview: FR5, 2016).

This woman had seen the need to accumulate non-cash assets as a buffer against the leakage of her income into the extended family, such as the buying of a buffalo (later finding out it was pregnant which meant two buffalo as she gleefully reported in the interview) as a type of untouchable savings. She was also among at least 50% of the female respondents who had built, were in the middle of building or were saving to build homes for themselves and their families – a significant empowerment well-

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[67] Although, at least three of the single female respondents reported or were seen (during a fieldwork visit) to still live in rudimentary rental accommodation (along with other family members) next to festering, polluted streams that became more polluted on occasions when deliveries of clean water for washing and flushing were interrupted, sometimes for days on end.

being outcome for women in Timor-Leste. As one woman who had been a waitress before working offshore said:

> *"Everyone saying: 'Oh she a success. She's working offshore. She build her own house'. Normally it's a man who does this!"* (Interview: FR13, 2016).

Another, a solo mother, was happy to have the security of owning her home, saying:

> *"I have to buy the land and build the house for my children. The first time I only buy 4x6 metre and then I buy the next bit and now I have big house!"* (Interview: FR9, 2016).

This woman, and at least six others, had purchased non-family land on which to build their homes. One woman commented on the need for women to have their names on land documents rather than male family members, for them to have control over their assets. Another single woman expressed the same sentiment thus:

> *"I want to buy land for myself because if we stay on our husband's family land the women lose power"* (Interview: FR26, 2016).

Investing in land and houses, and for at least three women who had established small business supplementary to their full-time jobs (one woman had bought her husband a truck for his self-employment), was seen as an important buffer against the potential economic shock of becoming unemployed. Timorese female management personnel were heartened by hearing of these material gains, as can be seen in the following comments:

> *"I know in CAJV a few of them have bought houses or land. Very good because they used to be, for example, one of the staff in the office was working for Venture Hotel and now she has a house. It's very good looking at these changes in the last four years"* (Interview: SH5, 2016).

> *"This is excellent that they are buying houses and having savings – such good news for me and Jean! I have just come back into the business after having our child and I am really surprised actually. I thought the money was probably going to all the family and they don't have the time to save for themselves"* (Interview: SH2, 2016).

This latter woman had been quite concerned about financial 'bleed' of the women's offshore incomes into the extended families: *"Because when the women start to work*

offshore the family come and hit them hard. They need to put a roof on it, put a solid purpose on it – not like for petrol and cigarettes. The funerals take a lot of money when someone in the family have a higher income" (Interview: SH2, 2016). This issue (cutting across their empowerment gains) had assumed untenable proportions for many of the women in the previous research (Adams, 2014). The findings of this study, however, revealed that this appears to have become less problematic. All of the women who mentioned spending money on extended family (such as building a house for a parent or accommodating siblings or cousins in their homes and/or paying for their education) appeared to have done so willingly as part of a cultural reciprocal obligation system. At the same time, they had evolved strategies (such as not disclosing their incomes fully, not divulging the existence of savings accounts or investing in a buffalo) to ensure they could accumulate savings for their needs and their children's futures. One woman commented that her in-laws could not take her money whilst she was away offshore. For all but one of the single women (who had not managed to save any of her offshore income over four years due to cultural demands from extended family – at the cost of her career advancement), they had the protection of their parents who decided how much or little they should share and shielded them from unacceptable demands.

Additionally, many of the women had been able to enhance their mobility through the purchase of motorbikes or cars and it appeared that all at least had mobile phones, and some, laptops or I-pads. Most of the single women had been able to afford holidays outside of Timor-Leste and for one married woman, the valued well-being outcome of being able to take her family to picnics at the beach was a result of her income and increased mobility.

An important consequence of the women's economic self-reliance and material gains are the changes in the social dimension of their empowerment – as respect from others for them as females with power over their lives and the capacity to elevate the well-being of their families (immediate and extended). It is clear from this and the previous research that Timorese women having a formal job (and income) brings with it a certain social status (Adams, 2014), as this woman explained:

> *"In here everything depend on the money, everything stem from your work. If you are working in a good position they will respect you very much"* (Interview: FR16, 2016).

Another woman talked about the different status held by women within the Caltech entity with different levels of responsibility – ranking a bridge controller at 7/10, the Heli-Admin woman at 9, and the female bosses at 10. However, in many of the interviews there was a prevailing modesty around talking about their social status – a behaviour that senior Timorese Caltech women suggested was a socio/culturally-derived female reticence to set themselves above others. Further, several narratives revealed some contradiction around how the Timorese women perceive their working in the non-traditional job field of the offshore O&G industry might be viewed by others in their community and by their families. In canvassing these issues with the women, the notion of them as role models for young girls and women rather than as having social status proved a fruitful avenue for dialogue.

Where the women's success had been received positively in their families and neighbourhoods they could clearly see themselves as good role models as these contributions illustrate:

> *"In my suburb most of the women stay at home – some of my neighbours, especially the little girls – when they are at high school their Mums say: "You know you should study hard so you can be like her". Not just my neighbours but my cousins as well. That motivates them to focus on school and their education to be like me"* (Interview: FR6, 2016).

> *"I think I am maybe example because in my house sometimes my Mum talking to my little sister: "You must learn from her because she is the one example – how she did it, how she got it""* (Interview: FR15, 2016).

> *"My sister-in-law encourage the daughter: "You see your Aunt have a job, she have money, she can buy whatever she want … one day you can have a job like her". They say this to the children when we sit together"* (Interview: FR7, 2016).

Those women who talked openly in their communities about where they worked told of how they were admired, such as this woman who had been a teacher in Baucau:

> *"My ex-students [in junior high school] – they always say how proud they are of me. They ask how the work in offshore look like so I just explain to them about the condition of the boat and some already start the study for the petroleum engineer. Maybe four or five of them"* (Interview: FR8, 2016).

And another university graduate:

> *"The people think when you go offshore: "Oh she going offshore – she is brave, confident." It's good. They don't really think about what kind of job you are doing"* (Interview: FR6, 2016).

One woman commented that people thought she was amazing to work offshore saying: *"You are like a man!"* (Interview: FR26, 2016). Whilst for these women, talking with others in their neighbourhood about their work offshore was unproblematic, for others, their preference was not to divulge the nature of their job and workplace due to a perceived risk of stirring up jealousies or condemnation. The following remarks provide some insight into the complexities around the phenomenon of the dissident, non-traditional female identities these women exemplify in their society:

> *"All of my neighbours they don't know where I'm working. My sister and brother they just tell them that I'm going to the district. I tell them to say that because I don't want some … their disapproval because it is not a normal thing for a woman to do"* (Interview: FR18, 2016).

> *"I think that other Timorese would laugh that I'm a blaster/painter. That's why I don't tell, no one knows. They would just think about the dust. They don't want to know good things about that job. My kids just tell them I work in an office – for them it is big shame to say their Mum is a blaster/painter"* (Interview: FR17, 2016).

Two women in hospitality roles also told of how they never talk about their offshore work with small-town neighbours.

Notwithstanding the low community profile some of the women have assumed with respect to their place/type of employment, as a group they contribute to the post-independence aggregation of Timorese women advancing cognitive/skills, decent work and occupation/career frontiers for females in Timor-Leste (such as in STEM and blue-collar areas). It is not within the scope of this study to evaluate the extent to which the 'ripple' represented in their collective status as empowered working women has transformed discriminatory gendered societal structures. However, the women's shared sense of self-pride, arising from their awareness that their entry to the offshore world represents the advancement of these important normative frontiers for women in their country (accompanied for many by family/spouse pride in their achievements) whilst not necessarily shouted to the world by them, indeed represents an enclave of new mindsets around gender roles. The following narrative threads amply illustrate the palpable nature of this self-pride (evident for women across the board of low- and middle-high- skilled offshore jobs):

> *"I'm pride for myself because I can do the job even it's hard for me and even it's good for me in the future"* (Interview: FR3, 2016).
> *"I feel happy – even I'm woman I can work offshore"* (Interview: FR31, 2017).

> *"I'm proud I am first woman in Timor-Leste to do mechanical fitter"* (Interview: FR15, 2016).

> *"Proud to be only female camp boss [in South East Asia]* (Interview: FR34, 2017).

> *"Only female blaster/painter in Timor-Leste – only me! Even I have no education in engineering, for the basic skills I think I have now"* (Interview: FR17, 2016)[68].

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[68] As a dance teacher of many years habituated to interpreting human physical expression I was privileged to read the pride in the body language of this last woman when she gave a powerful (ambidextrous) enactment in the interview, accompanied by detailed description, of how to hold the blaster/painter hose, the strength required to adapt to the different pressures and the attention to detail needed to ensure the steel surfaces are prepared adequately in readiness for painting.

Chapter Two discussed the importance of girls and women from countries where women's usual status is as passive, inferior citizens being exposed to 'new role models of women, for example, as extolled, confident leaders, as tertiary educated, or as being competent and comfortable in non-traditional job fields' (Harper et al., 2015; Mosedale, 2005; van der Gaag, 2011). From a gender and development perspective it might be hoped that other Timorese girls and women would be encouraged to follow in the footsteps of the women in this study. It might also be hoped, looking at the outcome through a wider angle of the gender lens, that their experience be a catalyst for opening up of equal opportunities for Timorese females in other nontraditional job fields.

The findings around the women's achievements of 'success as a woman' have provided strong evidence of universally positive outcomes. These appear to have materialised irrespectively of whether or not their job role has met up with aspirations or involved significant reward in the realisation their potential. As Chapter Two has explained, it is important to understand women's concepts of their empowerment as being context-dependent - such as being influenced by the need to escape poverty and constraining cultural norms, the desire to have a decent job and independent income and not necessarily predicated upon being able to find the ideal job in which their potential and aspirations are 100% realised and fulfilled. With this view in mind, the next section explores the Timorese women's capacity to rationalise their decisions and the situations they have found themselves in (such as experiencing job dissatisfaction or frustrated aspirations) to their empowerment advantage.

7.6 Rationalising unfulfilled aspirations and under-realised potential

In the previous research and Chapter Two of this study allusion has been made to potentially disempowering effects from the experience of job dissatisfaction (in particular as the un-realisation of potential). Two sources of job dissatisfaction were discussed as having relevance to the Timorese female offshore workers, these being: a skills/qualification-occupation mismatch (where an employee is over-skilled or qualified for a job role leading to the depreciation of their knowledge and skills and

feeling of their abilities being undervalued), and; 'rust out' (where there is little variety and stimulation in the job leading to the worker's boredom and feeling of being under-utilised).

The relevance of the experience of job dissatisfaction applies more particularly to the women who have been engaged for longer than a year in entry-level offshore jobs. Several of the longer-term bridge controllers acknowledged that the work could be at times boring (such as when there was little PoB movement between platforms), as one woman who had been promoted out of the role commented: *"As bridge controller we do nothing but just make sure how many people work on the platform, check the PPE. Never get to walk around the platform"* (Interview: FR10, 2016). As has been mentioned, one of these women felt the lack of cognitive challenge in the job had undermined her self-confidence a little. Another, whilst enjoying the offshore position, preferred her onshore logistics job because: *"now you can do everything, more of the thinking"* (Interview: FR1, 2016). However, it appears that an apparent qualification/occupation mismatch was problematic for only one woman (with a mining engineering degree occupying the role for over three years). This, however, materialised more as a sense frustration that her thirst for learning was unquenched rather than in any correlation with lowered self-esteem. For her, and for all of the other long-term bridge controllers their subsequent, more challenging onshore jobs (created for them by Caltech) had gone some way to remedying the sense of the un-realisation of potential and job dissatisfaction experienced in their offshore work, such as for this woman:

> *"My new job in Caltech Construction is good one. I never did the timesheet, invoicing the employer, hireage of the equipment. For me it is good. I'm the one who learn everything. I feel valued"* (Interview: FR18, 2016).

To the contrary, for a woman who spent a short, stimulating time offshore whilst fulfilling an internship with the ANPM, a sense of being under-utilised in her onshore role was a source of frustration. Another woman who had held a highly responsible and high-skilled job offshore, and subsequently took up a lesser position onshore due to pregnancy felt positive that her knowledge and skills gained offshore would not depreciate, as she remarked: *"The knowledge will stay in your brain"* (Interview:

FR8, 2016). As none of the hospitality females interviewed expressed any levels of job dissatisfaction in their offshore roles, it must be assumed that their sense of empowerment in the workplace had not been sabotaged by the sense of unrealised potential.

Rather than delve too deeply into potential negative impacts of job dissatisfaction on the women's well-being, it is perhaps more apposite to factor in to the empowerment equilibrium equation the ways in which they have rationalised their choices and employment situations in order to maintain their sense of optimism and overall life-satisfaction. The story of one of the hospitality women (with three children and an absent father) who had aspirations of becoming a technician (through completing an electronics degree abandoned in 2001 due to poverty) amply depicts the rationalising of her choice to remain long-term in offshore employment in a kitchen hand/steward role and of her making the best of her opportunity:

> "You being here mana – you will know Timor not have lots of jobs. I feel happy with my work now because we have better salary offshore than onshore. I like my job because I learn something good – respect for time, honesty, respect each other, HSE, first aid. Yeah, that's what I learn from the malae … Timor ladies when not have a job, so difficult for the life – really difficult" (Interview: FR33, 2017).

For a woman chosen to move from a middle-level skill offshore position to one of high skill and responsibility (both of which bore no relation to her tertiary qualification) having the opportunity as a woman to earn a high salary was paramount:

> "Only from this job I can help my family and my kids and save for the future. If I lose my job I can't find another where we get good money like this" (Interview: FR3, 2016).

Two female Timorese management personnel were aware of some of their female employees' choice-making rationales, as these comments reveal:

> "The ones who have a qualification-occupation mismatch like their oil and gas job but would rather have the opportunity to work in the area that is related

to their education – it's just that the opportunity is not there so they would rather work than just stay at home doing nothing" (Interview: SH5, 2016).

"About the bridge control job – I ask is it the money or the job? They say: "Yes, it is the money, but also that I can get away from the extended family for a month. Have a break from all the activities". For some they would probably default to staying at home if no offshore job because of pressure from the family who think she needs to take more domestic responsibility. The women offshore can just say: "No I can't come home"" (Interview: SH4, 2016).

One woman, in being offered that chance to continue in another offshore position at the completion of the AIM programme on Bayu-Undan, turned the opportunity down, preferring to take an onshore position (at half the salary) in order to be more available to support her children's education (such as in transporting them to school and helping with homework). This woman (due to her long-term, high offshore salary) had been able to invest in important well-being areas such as setting up a small sideline business, building a house and buying a car.

Ultimately it might be said that in the capacity to rationalise their choices, the women's internal locus of control has remained robust. Equally robust, for most, has been their optimism, as an important companion to their capacity to rationalise their choices and situations and continue to feel a sense of empowerment. Time will tell whether the shared optimism for their well-being futures, based upon their offshore-enhanced human capital portfolios representing tangible caches of employability potential, is well placed. The next section discusses viewpoints, across the full range of Timorese female and industry stakeholder respondents, on how well placed this optimism might be.

7.7 Hopes and fears for the women's empowerment futures

The findings point to the majority of the female Timorese respondents feeling optimistic about their futures. This might reasonably be attributed to all but one hospitality worker (who had been on Maternity Leave when Kitan closed) feeling secure in their occupations at the time of data collection - most in non-temporary

jobs either in offshore or onshore O&G industry-related fields or with Caltech and Venture Hotel and three being engaged in or about to embark upon tertiary studies. Whilst continuing to be employed, their offshore-acquired knowledge, experience, skills and competences might optimistically be deemed to represent their enhanced employability. However, given the very high unemployment level in Timor-Leste, its fledgling private sector combined with a lack of industry and manufacturing sectors, the uncertainties around mining projects getting off the ground and the limited potential for further hydrocarbon fields to be developed any time in the near future, an important line of inquiry has been exploring how their hopes for the future align with the potential availability of opportunity.

Eight women saw their employment futures being associated with the extractive industries, with three of these already in positions on Bayu-Undan that would take them to the end of its field life. Three others aspired to work in the mining sector, but with little hope that opportunities would open up in the near future (one of these had a secondary aspiration of setting up her own engineering business). The two women who had been in MMO/intern positions on Ramform Sovereign had dreams to work in the field of seismic exploration, but saw the need to acquire additional qualifications (such as in geophysics) as a pre-requisite. Of 12 women wishing to forward non-O&G industry careers in areas related to their knowledge and skills gained, or efficacy information provided in the offshore setting, seven had aspirations to become skilled in blue-collar areas and one in HSE. For some of these women, barriers in their confidence were holding them back from pursuing training in order to achieve their goals while for others, goals of setting up their own businesses were based on confidence that their knowledge and skills would be in demand in their communities. All of these women were aware of the low demand in the formal labour force in the areas of their skills preference. Of the remaining women, (all with tertiary degrees in O&G industry-related areas) they had high confidence that their aspirations to gain higher-skill jobs aligned with their offshore roles would prosper.

Two women saw their post-offshore working lives in fields related to their (non-extractive industry-related) tertiary studies – one as an English teacher and the

other in finance. Of interest, were the six women who did not see their future in government jobs because of a perception of cronyism whereby family members of senior government officials received preference in employment and/or of the favouring of Timorese with degrees from Australia or with a Masters-level qualification. At least ten respondents had ambitions to go overseas – four to continue their tertiary studies and another to obtain work in extractive industry-related fields, one long-term hospitality worker to find a job in a restaurant and three to find employment in unrelated areas such as a retirement home or chicken factory. One single woman who held a position of high responsibility offshore felt that Timor-Leste represented a dead end for her as a woman seeking further work skills development:

> *"I don't want to be stuck in here – this is it? For me even if I have to start from zero overseas, do a shit job, as long as it is not in here. I know how to control my money so no big deal"* (Interview: FR19, 2016).

The Timor-Leste-based aspirations of the women working offshore in hospitality roles ranged from three wanting to attain level Cert. III in kitchen operations, two to open their own café/restaurant/kiosk and another to continue to work for Venture Hotel. Another was interested to branch out into the IT field.

With respect to having some pessimism about their futures, only two women (both tertiary-educated and having held long-term high-skilled offshore positions) expressed deeply held fears that they might become unemployed, reflected in the following comment:

> *"What am I worried about? We don't know what is in the future – if a woman has a husband he can look after her but what if he lost his job or die? It is something we worry about. We have to work 8am til 5pm, we have little time with the kids but if I stop this job, I don't know what the future will be"* (Interview: FR2, 2016).

Counter-intuitively, for Timorese women in the study who might in the future lose their employment and revert to a domestic role, it may be that the traditional value given to women's rightful place being in the home could serve to offset any loss in their social status due to no longer having a job or income. However, it may also be

that the unproblematic assuming of domestic roles reported by many of the offshore women workers when on their at-home swings becomes problematic if this was expected of them and accompanied by denigrating pressures from family members. For the women who reported finding housework boring this could be doubly problematic. The attitudes and behaviour of male partners in the potential scenario of the women being cast adrift from the formal workforce could be expected to influence their self-respect and sense of self-worth.

The nature of the women's relationships with partners and husbands (such as their attitudes to gender equality and the equal sharing of domestic responsibilities) was not an area of inquiry that the gender lens had a specific focus upon[69]. Nonetheless, in many of the interviews women shared information on the status of equality in their relationships. The social capital (or *power with*) from spouses/partners was reflected in respect and support for their life choices and working life, which for some extended to men cooking meals, looking after children and for one to defending, in the face of demands from her mother-in-law to perform domestic duties, her right to rest on the weekend. A worthwhile area for future follow-up research (in the potential eventuality that the women become unemployed) would be to explore the constancy of this social capital. This could include research into the constancy of the self-worth of the single women (as manifest in their risk-averseness to engaging in partnerships with dominating, disrespectful males who expect them to assume the domestic responsibilities) should they lose the empowerment pillar and social status of having a full-time formal job.

In contrast to the women's views, there was a strong vein of pessimism about future opportunities for the women, and the risks associated with their relegation to full-time household roles, reflected in the viewpoints of several of the offshore employer stakeholders. This is evident in the following range of comments:

> "*I hope that by having the jobs offshore the women can have the skills to look for work with companies outside of Timor because they gain the skills offshore.*

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[69] This call was made on reflection that in order to do justice to the complex area of intimate partner relationships as these impact upon women's empowerment a more targeted conceptual framework would be required and separate interviews focusing on this topic would be necessary for rich narrative data to be gathered.

Many have engineering degrees but it's hard to find a job here related to their degrees. The worst-case scenario is they will stay at home just looking after the kids" (Interview: SH5, 2016).

"You are seeing the success stories. When I look at our database, I see over 2,000 good people not being employed. We have four or five geologists in the office. Will they work as geologists? Yes – if we can find them an internship. If you are a mechanical engineer in a developed nation you will be working on a plant and all sorts of new machinery, but if you are here you work for Caltech on Caltech trucks. All of my mechanics are engineers. There is no industry of any kind" (Interview: SH1, 2016).

"What industries in Timor-Leste would replicate the blaster/painter process of offshore? On the facility it is blast-clean-spray-check, make sure it's operating in pristine condition. Maybe Caltech? Maybe the new power station? You've gotta say a regular maintenance schedule means it has to be fit for purpose but here in Timor-Leste if their personal asset like a taxi gets dinged up what could they do? There's gotta be government infrastructure – if the government got a wharf or warehouse facilities, they've got buildings to maintain then the skills these people have learnt offshore can be applied to infrastructure" (Interview: SH7, 2016).

"The sad thing for me is we have had some trainees that are degree-qualified but there is no good position for them when they come back – they are being sent overseas on some scholarship scheme, come back and now they're basically doing an apprenticeship. I suppose one of the concerns we have is we are up-skilling you know but let's say in 10 years' time when the field is finished, you're gonna have all these people back on the beach with no work. The ability to use these skills is limited – if you are a bridge controller or blaster/painter there is no call for these positions. There is no fabrication in Timor-Leste – they haven't got the workshop, the overhead cranes. They can't get stuff into the country. You need quality management systems that are quite sophisticated. We've got people doing warehousing but these highly trained women all of a sudden go

back to Timor when the project finishes and can't find anything like these positions and can't provide for their families" (Interview: SH7, 2016).

"We want to build longevity into capacity-building but there are doubts to how much opportunity will be available long-term in Timor-Leste" (Interview: SH12, 2016).

"These women speak Portuguese, English, Indonesian. With the offshore experience they are really quite employable beyond just locally where the opportunities are limited. What is the government's long-term plan? They will have these people with the skillsets but if they don't have the jobs for them to step into ..." (Interview: SH10, 2016).

"I think we are a few years away from when we'll see true opportunities in Timor-Leste that give longevity to people. We'll still have work for them while we have Bayu-Undan and shipyard work and we are looking at outsourcing our data entry permanently out of the Dili [ESS/Compass Group] office. I think my biggest concern would be if the women would be absorbed back into the family structure and not work. It's all very well to talk about a possible bauxite mine and factory but the reality is the running of them would require less people" (Interview: SH15, 2016).

Whilst ESS/Compass Group appears to have been successful in re-assigning many of its employees with offshore experience to other workplaces, the prospects for offshore-trained Timorese looking to find employment opportunities outside of Timor-Leste (relative to their skills/competency/experience levels) are limited, as these comments reveal:

"Even the HSE personnel are at risk. We would have limited opportunity to take anyone off the JPDA to anywhere else. There's potential for the HSE women to come and work in Australia but they've gotta get a 457 permanent residence which is quite difficult" (Interview: SH7, 2016).

"The biggest worry would be that nobody would know that these people – a ready-trained English-speaking cadre of workers, are here in Timor-Leste.

Should the resources be made available for local labour-hire contractors to develop a global reach so they can be picked up for competitive wages?" (Interview: KI1, 2016).

Some interview dialogue canvassed the issue of offshore workers who leave the country representing a brain drain (and importantly a female brain drain) for Timor-Leste, with a general consensus that there is not the opportunity for many to stay and contribute meaningfully to their country's development, as these remarks indicate:

"There's no incentive for tertiary-educated graduates to bring their training back to Timor-Leste. They just jump from scholarship to scholarship – there's nothing that compels them to stay" (Interview: SH18, 2016).

"It's not much different to the brain drain effect if trained people lose what they've learnt because there's nothing for them to do when they return" (Interview: SH7, 2016).

"A brain drain is only that if they go when Timor-Leste has the occupation-skills/qualification matches. If the most intelligent people cannot find a job then you have a problem. When you have engineers applying for the blaster/painter job, then going to the UK to pluck chickens, that is a brain drain. The future of the Timor's brightest minds is not here in Timor – they will never get the same challenge, the same money as with global oil and gas. But the problem is overseas employers are not looking for Timorese engineers, but more as fruit pickers" (Interview: SH1, 2016).

Similarly, the risk that skills/competencies learnt and practiced in the O&G industry field might depreciate in the absence of opportunities to continue applying them was expressed as a concern:

"If you get skillsets you have to use them or lose them. There will be a percentage who will be able to use those transferable skills but there will be a large proportion who will struggle – for example, the hand skills, they come back to you but they take time. It's a re-investment to bring them back up the

curve. Once you leave our strict regime of skills refreshers to keep them at the required level and you don't use that skill, you might get a skills-job mismatch and it can be quite depressing if you know your skill is eroding and you know you would have to go and re-learn that skill. Even if another oil and gas facility started up after ConocoPhillips, probably all of their tickets would have expired" (Interview: SH7, 2016).

"For a woman with an environmental engineering qualification – after five years of not using your qualification you are less employable than a new graduate" (Interview: SH1, 2016).

The implication behind these comments is that the longevity of the gendered development footprint of the oil and gas industry in Timor-Leste is integrally linked to the strategic economic development plans of its government as their successful implementation results in the creation of jobs aligned with the skillsets acquired and honed in the industry. The envisioning, by employing stakeholders, of future scenarios for the women should this fail to eventuate, has included the undoing of the good investments into their knowledge growth, skills acquisition and of their efforts in developing competences as well as the empowerment-undermining prospect of their being absorbed back into domestic roles. The women's envisioning of well-being futures rests, optimistically, upon their being able to continue to pursue learning and/or earning pathways based upon the fruits of these investments and efforts as consolidated capabilities sets.

These consolidated capabilities sets are summarised in the following chapter along with conjecture and conclusions on their durability and the enduring status (or not) of the women's new empowered identities.

7.8 Concluding remarks

To sum up the findings around the status of the women's empowerment as influenced by their experience of off-shore employment and related WSD, the evidence strongly points to an augmenting of their existing core of personal power

and capabilities sets (encompassing personal, social and material resources). This has resulted in the following outcomes:

I.   To the *power within* - of their early self-belief in their right and capacity to pursue life and career goals that went against the tide of normative societal expectations and roles for females, has been added their experiencing of self-worth, self-pride and self-confidence in the workplace. These empowerment gains have arisen out of congruence between their goals and values and their experiences in the O&G industry – values of gender equality and goals of learning and earning and the experience of dignity as offshore crewmembers and an enhanced self-efficacy and feelings of competence. Importantly, an awareness of new potentials has been generated (which for most has been accompanied by a widening of aspirational horizons).

II.   To their *power over* - of having been able to circumvent socio-cultural pressures to conform to the normative feminine role of being confined to the domestic space, has been added their collective making of inroads into the gendered orthodoxies of: a) the Timor-Leste labour market through their advancing of occupational frontiers for women, and; b) the offshore worksite through the sheer numbers of their recruitment as host-country women crewmembers and their demonstration that they have the capacity to adapt to the isolated, male environment and perform effectively in a range of roles.

III.   To their *power to* - as being able to take purposive, unfettered action towards strategic goals, has been added strengthened self-confidence and confirmation of their ability to be effective members of an industry workforce (manifest in their human capital portfolios of KSAOs and reflective of training and on-the-job learning achievements, perseverant self-efficacious effort and heightened resilience).

To the *power to* must be added their economic capacity to materially advance their and their families' lives and save for their and their children's futures. Further, there is *power to* in the situated importance of their enhanced safety and first aid awareness and skills, which has given them new confidence for responding to hazards and emergencies in their at-home settings.

IV.   To the *power with* - where all of the women have had some degree of social support (from husbands/partners, family members, peers, teachers and employers) for their pursuit of non-normative learning and earning pathways, has been added the critical social capital of significant others within the organisational tiers of O&G industry employing/training stakeholder networks. These individuals, in valuing the abilities and potentials of the women, have facilitated the opening of offshore opportunities and/or been involved with the structuring and managing of their associated WSD (whilst in offshore roles and/or prior/subsequent to their offshore employment).

Further, the women, in their enhanced sense of relatedness and trust in the offshore workplaces have enjoyed the *power with* of being accepted as equals within teamwork systems and of a supportive intercultural camaraderie wrought of living for extended periods in close quarters with compatriots and crews of mostly males of different nationalities. The companion to this relatedness has been their sense of trust that significant others in their training/employment settings have had their interests at heart. Further, they have experienced the *power with* as a close-knit group of women, living in a patriarchal society and sharing the essentially subversive performance of gender exemplified in their new Timorese female identities as offshore O&G industry workers.

Additionally, respondents have suggested that, implicitly, in this enclave of new Timorese female identities, there has been the power of example – that is, of their being role models for girls and other women in their families and communities to follow. They are unique female identities in their society - as women who have travelled to work by helicopter, occupied responsible offshore positions, been incorporated in a lived way, with dignity, into historically masculinised, high tech worksites far away from family and friends, and received high incomes (relative to most Timorese). As such, they have the potential (in the aggregation of their individual achievements) to make inroads into pervasive and persistent negative

mental models of femininity in their society that have rendered females' abilities undervalued and their activity space constrained.

Critically, the research, taking a retrospective and forward-looking approach, has revealed that the new female identities collectively share three fundamental personal strengths understood to stabilise empowerment across time, as: a high level of self-esteem; being in the driver's seat of their lives (motivated by an internal locus of control), and; a critical consciousness around gender equality consolidated through their experience of gender-equal, women-friendly training and employment settings.

The final chapter presents conjecture and conclusions as to the extent to which the Timorese women's consolidated capabilities sets might contribute to *enduring* empowerment outcomes, as they face uncertain employment futures. The chapter also raises limitations of the research and discusses its wider importance to gender and development discourse.

Chapter Eight: Thesis Conclusion

The aim of this thesis has been to explore the question of the extent to which a corner of the global oil and gas (O&G) industry in the Asia-Pacific region has been able to deliver enduring empowerment outcomes for women. The women in question are Timorese nationals, the industry contexts are three offshore ventures in the Timor Sea. The underlying empowerment rubric guiding the research is that of agency, potential and structures of opportunity. Building on previous research into the topic, the study has been approached in a positive tone. This reflects a presumption at the outset that amongst the subject group of women there would be shared high levels of agency with which they had embarked upon learning and earning journeys. Notwithstanding the uncertain futures they face, the thesis concludes on an optimistic note, conceiving some significant sustainability in the empowerment progress that has been consolidated for the women, as their lives have traversed the training and employment spaces associated with offshore oil and gas.

The prologue to this thesis opened a window onto the non-normative pathways of women, living in patriarchally-characterised societies who have breached bastions of masculinity in non-traditional job fields and consolidated core empowerment attributes of self-determination, self-efficacy and self-esteem. This consolidation has been founded upon the acquisition of industry competences and knowledge, the workspace experience of being respected as equals with males, as well as the achievement of ongoing economic self-reliance. The role of other actors (female and male) within the women's training and employment settings represent important social capital supporting their empowerment progress – in identifying their abilities and potential, opening opportunities for well-paid, responsible positions and investing in their work skills development (WSD). The prologue also introduced the notion that the individualised, unorganised but purposive (and essentially pioneering) actions of young women swimming against the tide of limiting gendered norms (such as this study's subject group) represent important strands in the expansion of the strategic empowerment interests of females in their society. As

such the women's stories are worthy of attention, and represent an important addition to the *her*story of Timor-Leste.

To expand, the stories of the Timorese women offshore workers in the case study signify the collective advancing of normative social and cognitive frontiers for girls and women in their society. Wigglesworth (2012), in writing about the progress towards democracy and equality in Timor-Leste, alluded to the post-independence phenomenon of young women who, with their initiative, would find 'pathways towards a different life from their mothers and grandmothers' (Wigglesworth, 2012, p. 49). The expanding of the realms of what is possible for women in their society, is, as Mosedale (2005) has argued, a straightforward indicator of empowerment. Their stories also signal the likelihood and potential that within Timor-Leste there will be other young women who have been/will be able to tread a similar empowerment pathway, given empowering opportunities. However, the empowerment meanings this thesis explores are about more than the straightforward. Empowerment has been conceptualised as a process, complex, multidimensional, situational and relational. The Timorese women's progress towards their 'success as a woman' [70] has been approached holistically, incorporating the complexion of the decision-making processes and actions of others (within the O&G industry settings they have navigated) that have impacted upon this progress. The thesis thus helps to construct a more textured narrative about how gender and development might be framed.

This concluding chapter begins by briefly explaining the aim and objectives and research design of the case study and alluding to the previous knowledge upon which it builds. It then outlines the contributions to the gender and development/women's empowerment knowledge this thesis brings. These contributions fall under three broad headings:

- Situating the thesis within gender and development and women's empowerment discourse

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[70] This phrase has been drawn from the empowerment narratives of a group of Timorese women offshore workers interviewed for my Masters research and is expanded as to its meaning in Chapter Two (P.72).

- Unpacking the qualities and elements of multidimensional empowerment growth, based around the concept of a human capital portfolio, for a group of women living in a patriarchal society entering a masculinised workplace
- Demonstrating that corporate business-as-usual practices, threaded with seams of informal social responsibility packaged as social capital, can align with the empowerment interests of host country women.

The main limitation of the research is explained. The chapter then discusses the shape of the gendered development footprint of global oil and gas in Timor-Leste, the pivotal role played by local labour hire entity, Caltech, and lessons that might be learned around integrating host-country women's empowerment into the local content framework of extractive industry operations.

Connecting Timorese women's agency, potential and international oil and gas structures of opportunity

With respect to context, the study has focused upon two social/organisational theatres that the lived experiences of the women have straddled. The first is Timor-Leste society, in which: a) pervasive socio/cultural norms have relegated the majority of women to reproductive, household roles with limited aspirational horizons and rendered them subservient to males (Asia Foundation, 2016; Corcoran-Nantes, 2011; Cunha. 2017), and; b) the formal labour force and market are characterised by high levels of unemployment, a tiny private sector and a lack of industry and science and technology jobs (ILO, 2019; Mitchell, 2019). The second theatre is a corner of the historically male-populated global O&G industry operating in Timor-Leste (Kitan oil and Bayu-Undan gas offshore facilities and Ramform Sovereign seismic operation), through which the Timorese women have experienced employment and WSD.

In addressing the aim of this research endeavour as encapsulated in the thesis title: *In what ways and to what extent is the global oil and gas industry able to deliver enduring empowerment outcomes for women in Asia-Pacific?* the research strategy has been shaped around a case study design incorporating these three structures of opportunity. This has allowed for what Yin (2009) has explained to be the illumination (through a gendered lens) of the 'whole' picture of the interconnected phenomena as represented in the research objectives:

- **To explore (within the stakeholder networks of Timor Sea oil and gas projects) the ways in which organisational agendas and decision-making processes, as well as the attitudes, agency and actions of industry and associated actors, have influenced the empowerment journeys of Timorese women through their offshore employment experience and related work skills development.**

- **To evaluate the ways in which the experience of working in the offshore oil and gas setting has contributed to enduring empowerment gains for women in a Least Developed Country.**

The scope of these objectives has allowed for a detailed study of the relationship between industry decision-making, inputs/influences and the results of the women's own decision-making, efforts, actions and achievements. In exploring the intentional terrain behind, and action/impact chains ensuing from, these sets of decisions, whilst at the same time factoring in the interpenetrating nature of contextual influences and realities, an in-depth revealing of the *why* and *how* of the development outcome of empowered Timorese women offshore workers has been possible (Brinkman & Kvale, 2005; Flyvbjerg, 2011; Denscombe, 2010). In particular, it has been possible because of what Flyvbjerg (2001) deems the competence of knowers, engaged in the dialogic of semi-structured, narrative interviews (as the qualitative research method employed in the research). The knowers in this study are purposive sample groups involving 39 Timorese women offshore workers as well as 20 local and foreign industry personnel associated with their work/training spaces.

The research builds on previous knowledge arising from my Masters research which provided evidence allowing for a foundational assumption to be made - that the central actors (the women offshore workers), from finishing secondary school, were young females in the driver's seat of their lives, with self-belief and determination to achieve their learning and earning aspirations (Adams, 2014). As such they had already pressed a vein of dissident feminine identities through the mesh of patriarchal mores in their society. Further previous knowledge allowed the study to

be premised upon the understanding that, within the O&G industry contexts in which the women have worked and trained, they have enjoyed decent work, including well-established practices and protocols based on gender equality (Adams, 2014). A further, critical, prior knowledge has been that O&G ventures such as those in the Timor Sea have a finite life cycle after which, in the absence of further field development, the global players move on, taking their structures of opportunity with them. It is largely because of this platform of existing knowledge that a customised multidisciplinary empowerment and human capital framework has been the conceptual guide for this research.

A fresh empowerment brush-stroke to gender and development

As the introduction to this thesis signaled, this study takes a tangent away from much of the gender and development discourse, research and practice - in which the ubiquitous focus is on women who are poor and patriarchally subjugated, needing to lift themselves or be lifted out of states of *dis*-empowerment. The main strategic empowerment interest for this vast population of women has typically been that of attaining the freedom of choice and action to shape their life path (Alkire, 2002; Kabeer, 2000; Sen, 1999a; World Bank, 2012). Considerable attention and authority in the empowerment literature have been given to this goal and its social constructivist corollary of calling for the transformation of socio/cultural norms and the dismantlement of institutional structures that perpetuate women's *dis*-empowerment (Cornwall & Edwards, 2015; Eriksson, 2016; Klugman and Tyson, 2016; Thompson, 2008). Additionally, there has been a typicality of emphases within the gender and development paradigm, on the purely economic entry point as the transformational doorway to women's pathways to empowerment, and on the concomitant operationalising of agency as their enhanced household bargaining power (Buvinic & Furst-Nichols, 2015; World Bank, 2015).

The bleak picture for the majority of working women in globalised value-chains in the developing world, as the first two chapters have described, is that whilst women working for pay might at some level be deemed a game-changer – transformative for their lives, extrinsically through material and social gains and intrinsically through enhanced self-worth (Eyben & Napier-Moore, 2009; Munoz-Boudet et al, 2013; SIDA, 2015), this transformation has had little impact upon the expansion of

awareness of their potential (Kabeer, 2016). Instead, the literature abounds with accounts of their widespread marginalisation into low-skilled feminised job areas experiencing decent work deficits of low pay, minimal or no social protection, gender discrimination and sexual harassment. A critical women's empowerment imperative to remedy this situation, enshrined within the SDGs, has therefore been the establishment of decent work thresholds in the labour markets of developing countries (United Nations, 2017).

Firstly, this study is premised upon the acknowledgement that within patriarchal societies there will be young women endowed with definable and discernable attributes that can impel them towards empowering successes (Burr, 2006). It throws the spotlight onto a group of women who, beginning their adult lives with high levels of agency, as having the *power within, power over* and *power to,* had been able to circumvent the prevailing deficit states of empowerment experienced by millions of women in the developing world (Ibrahim & Alkire, 2007; Mosedale, 2005; Rowlands, 1997). This agency, as a forward-looking indicator of their empowerment trajectories (Dercon & Singh, 2011), is defined as the sense of being the author of one's own destiny (or having an internal locus of control (LOC)) in the absence of fear, control or coercion (Ibrahim & Alkire, 2007; Klugman et al., 2014). It is thus their having the capacity and freedom to envision well-being goals in line with what they value (and not limited by limiting gender role norms) and act purposively upon them (Kabeer, 1999; Sen, 1985b). Equipped with the enabling psychological and cognitive powers of this agency, they had proceeded to manage fortuitous opportunity which saw them, at the onset of the research, to have already crossed significant empowerment thresholds. These thresholds have been manifested in their having a critical consciousness around gender equality, having enjoyed dignity of and in decent work settings and having benefitted, materially and in their enhanced social status, from their economic self-reliance.

A contribution of this thesis to the gender and development knowledge is, therefore, to lend authority to a new women's empowerment strategic interest – that of having the opportunity to pursue (from both extrinsic material/employability and intrinsic personal fulfilment motivations) work skills development (WSD) to international

standards and be meaningfully rewarded for achieving and practicing workplace competences. It is in the evaluation of the *consolidation* of women's capabilities sets (based around this strategic interest) arising from an *existing* springboard of empowerment strength that this study departs from the literature. Furthermore, the thesis advances gender and development discursive frontiers through its evaluation of the *enduring* properties of these consolidated strengths and gains - within the context of a society that has glaring gender inequalities and is fraught with the spectre of poverty and paucity of meaningful job opportunities. These frontiers reach into the predictive realm of envisioning futures, of thereby canvassing the capacity and durability of the sum-of-all-its-parts empowerment status of the women in sustaining their future empowerment well-being.

Secondly, this thesis is sympathetic to, but positioned somewhat apart from, the discursive authority within the international development and feminist paradigms given to the need to address the structures of inequality that Sen (1999a) refers to as perpetuating people's *un*-freedoms - in particular through the *power with* of collective political mobilisation (Cornwall, Gideon & Wilson, 2008; Desai, 2010; Eyben & Napier-Moore, 2009; Mosedale, 2005). There is, without question, the tacit acknowledgement in this study that the female subject group's learning and earning pathways have benefitted from the historical structural advances towards gender equality wrought by their forbears. The subject group have been enjoying empowerment benefits through training and working within gender-equal O&G industry structures of opportunity which, whilst highly masculinised, have been revealed as free from gendered discrimination. Given these positive structural contexts, the thesis offers the argument that within the collectivity of a group of individual women achieving the strategic empowerment interest of achieving and being respected for their workplace skills and competences, therein contains the promise of a wider (structural) effect. This effect arises through the aggregation of their individualised advancing of cognitive, psychological and socio-economic frontiers for women in their society. It is through this effect that inroads are made into pervasive stereotypes of femininity based on female abilities being undervalued and girls' and women's choices being limited. In recognition of the tractability of socio/cultural norms, the thesis therefore foregrounds the legitimacy

of the force of insurgent mental models of femininity, such as represented in the new female Timorese offshore worker identities, as a catalyst for the widening of the cultural field of aspirational horizons for females in their society – in particular, for the opening of opportunities in non-traditional skills/job areas.

Thirdly, this thesis fills a gap in the literature in its acknowledgement that in poor and patriarchal societies there will exist groups of women (such as those in this study) making life-path choices based around eudemonic aspirations for the actualisation of their potential *alongside* the extrinsic instrumental benefits of having their own incomes. These are women with motivations for entering the formal workforce that are grounded in the well-being value of intrinsic rewards arising from learning skills and becoming competent, knowledgeable and valued employees. Whilst the cogency of women's economic empowerment as a gender and development requisite is reflected as a theme in this study, in particular for the sense of independence this has signified for the women around household spending decisions and enhanced capacity to escape poverty and improve their families' material well-being, this theme has not eclipsed others – such as psychosocial and cognitive dimensions of empowerment fostered in training and work spaces.

The approach taken in the thesis, of foregrounding the expansion of women's human capital through the meeting of empowerment needs in the workplace (in psychosocial, cognitive and competency achievement areas) thus introduces a moderating perspective to the seeming predominance of social constructivism in the women's empowerment literature. It poses empowerment as being *more* than growing females' sense of agency (as having the power within, the power to choose and take purposive action towards life goals and power with as collective action in challenging or circumventing socio-cultural constraints). It advances the empowerment frontiers beyond basic thresholds – such as the establishment of enabling contextual conditions in which working females' worth is recognised in the right to equal treatment and opportunity with males and their dignity supported through decent work. The study introduces the novel methodological tool of the women's human capital portfolio. This is deemed their personal asset representing training/workplace-related realising-potential achievements (detailed as

knowledge, skills, abilities and other attributes (KSAOs)). This portfolio is conceived as being a critical component of their capabilities set, containing the promise of further skills-building, promotions and future income-earning opportunities. In the detailing and unpacking of the women's human capital portfolios evaluative space has been opened for a much more comprehensive and tangible tracking of the empowerment progress of working women in a developing country than has been typical in the gender and development literature.

The *more* is raising the argument that as a development agent fostering women's empowerment, the private sector can go further than putting in place these structural thresholds. It can appreciate that humans at their best are agentic and inspired 'to learn… extend themselves [and] master new skills' (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 68). Within the expanded women's empowerment frontiers explored in this study, high value is placed upon the psychosocial attribute of self-efficacy, conceptualised as a powerful empowerment motivator based around an individual's belief that s/he has the capacity (in abilities, cognitions and effort) to achieve skills acquisition and life goals (Bandura, 2001; Bordin et al., 2006). The spotlight has been upon the ways in which global corporations can decisively support women's self-efficaciousness and associated well-being goal of the realisation of potential. In this study, the *more* of this realisation is embodied in the materiality of the Timorese women's (personally owned and enhanced to varying degrees) caches of human capital - for example, a Verification of Competency achievement (to international industry standards) that is a positive, tangible vindication of their self-efficacy, tangible currency for a related job or upskilled position in a job, as well as a human capital adjunct that engenders self-confidence, self-worth and respect from others. The link is made between the Timorese women's lived and positive experience of training and working as equals with males within the offshore O&G industry and enjoying WSD (to varying degrees) and the consolidation of their self-esteem – the powerful psychological quality (along with their internal LOC) which this thesis attests to lending stability to their sense of empowerment (Spreitzer, 1995).

Fourthly, in approaching the Timorese women's empowerment from a holistic perspective, based around their existing high levels of agency and with the

privileging of the workplace expansion of their human capital and enhancements to self-efficacy and self-esteem, this thesis effectively distinguishes itself from the (English language) scholarship on women's empowerment in Timor-Leste. Understandably, dominating this literature has been a focus upon the historic, systemic patriarchal ideology that has produced a widespread plight of female (especially rural) disadvantage and subjugation. For the majority of women the crossing of basic empowerment thresholds (of access to health services, land and financial resources, completion of Senior Highschool, having political voice, freedom from violence) is presented as gender and development imperatives for Timor-Leste, along with the corollary of structural change of institutions and power relations that continue to oppress and discriminate against females (Asia Foundation, 2016; Corcoran-Nantes, 2011; Cummins, 2017; Cunha, 2017; Porter, 2013; Wigglesworth et al., 2015).

The literature has nonetheless been drawn upon in this research in order to understand the gendered realities of Timor-Leste society, historically, socially, culturally, economically and politically as the powerful contextual background to the women's empowerment pathways. Where this study adds to the scholarship is in its focusing on a small but significant group of near-40 Timorese women who have, since leaving high school and in entering the formal labour force, surpassed basic empowerment thresholds of achieving secondary level education, being free to choose their own life path and entering decent work employment settings. It brings to light, missing in the literature, portraits of Timorese women with consolidated empowerment status based upon a multidimensional (personal, social and economic) and human capital approach to their pathways and achievements. It also brings to light the phenomenon, unknown in wider O&G industry circles and yet by all accounts globally unique, of the gender and development outcome of their collective success (as females from an LDC) in entering in such numbers into and achieving dignity in the world of offshore global oil and gas.

Lastly, in putting the spotlight on this phenomenon the thesis contributes new knowledge to the literature around global corporate responsibility and the empowerment of host-country women. It does so in its in-depth exploration, (rare

to find in the CSR scholarship) at individual, intra- and inter-organisational levels, of the integrally connected decision-making, social capital and financial investments arising out of the associated offshore industry training/employing stakeholder network that have supported the women's progress.

The findings arising from the research objectives are now summarised and conclusions drawn with respect to the research aim, with a deliberate reversal of the order in which the research objectives have until this point been addressed. The previous rationale has been to allow the thesis to explore, linearly, the impact chains of inputs/investments arising from decision-making and actions within the organisational structures of opportunity (of the Timor-Leste offshore O&G industry) as they have progressed - that is, as these processes have gained traction upon the women's agency and abilities, resulting in their entry into offshore workplaces and/or related-training, and subsequent gains in their capabilities sets and empowerment. The rationale behind concluding the thesis with a more tangible foregrounding of the women's achievements is that the complexion of the O&G industry's gendered development footprint (that will be left behind in Timor-Leste when the global O&G organisations depart) is now known – as personified in the empowered identities of the women who are essentially at centre stage of this study.

Portraits and enduring potential of Timorese offshore women workers' empowerment

As mentioned previously, this research highlights two positive psychological pillars that lend empowerment stability across time (that is, render it enduring), these being: an internal locus of control (LOC) - which refers to the degree to which people believe that they, rather than external forces, determine what happens in their lives (Spreitzer, 1995), and; self-esteem, as the belief in one's potential, ability and value (Bandura, 2001) - arising in particular in this research from being treated as equals with males and from competency achievements.

Regarding the first: from leaving school, based upon their cognition of their right to choose their own life path, the Timorese women exhibited the *agency freedom* referred to by Bandura (2001) as the exercise of self-influence, through an internal locus of control (LOC), (as *power over*) to circumvent limiting socio-cultural norms

of femininity. With aspirations to improve their mind and have an independent income as working women they had been able to envision and strive towards well-being goals beyond the realms of what are normatively ascribed to females in their society. Notwithstanding the powerful drivers behind these women to escape constraining socio/cultural gender norms and poverty, (for many encouraged by their parents) and because of the assertion by many in the group that the self-belief propelling their journeys came 'from inside themselves', the women's stories have lent power to positive psychology and capabilities theory that humans at their best have an inherent agency to strive for the actualisation of their potential (Ryan & Deci, 2001; Sen, 1999a). This is reflected in actions such as applying for a tertiary scholarship, selling food to pay for vocational courses or achieving interviews for formal jobs and ultimately putting themselves forward as candidates for offshore O&G industry training and facility positions.

This internal LOC or autonomy, as the capacity to be mistress of their actions towards self-endorsed goals, is argued in this thesis to have enduring properties once it has emerged (Chirkov, 2011). For many of the women, it has been augmented by the sense of autonomy accorded and practiced in their position(s) within the offshore O&G framework – that is, as a sense of control over the initiation of job tasks, experienced to different degrees by the women according to their role and length of time in that role.

Two powerful companions to the women's sense of self-determination, strengthened over time, have been: a critical consciousness around gender equality (initially concerning women's right to make their own decisions and latterly, notably, in the women's appreciation of the absence of sexist and disrespectful male attitudes and behaviours within the local labour hire and O&G industry settings), and; a robust self-efficacy, which has supported such endeavours as the accomplishment of workplace tasks to standard, success in trainings in a masculinised industry, the surmounting of risks, danger and isolation associated with offshore employment, and the attainment of the well-being goal of economic self-reliance. These cognitions have not been conferred upon the women by others but rather have evolved through their innate, gritty self-belief that they can choose

and shape their own life path and been reinforced by their achievements. It would not be disingenuous to argue, therefore, that these cognitions are tenacious and indicative of a liberated mindset not at risk of erosion or sabotage.

The second empowering pillar of self-esteem is perhaps more susceptible to ebbs and flows according to the degrees of dignity women are able to experience in different family, socio/cultural, and organisational settings. The women's narratives point to their existing ballast of self-esteem being consolidated within the O&G industry settings and categorically transferring across to other social domains. The factors that have contributed to this outcome have been:

- the absence of gender discrimination, their being treated as equally capable as males and having to compete with them on merit for positions
- the realisation of their self-efficaciousness into workplace competences and having these valued and respected by crewmembers and superiors
- their being chosen as recipients of investments made by employers into their offshore recruitment and associated work skills development (WSD), and
- their being rewarded with substantial (gender equal) salaries.

Their self-esteem has been further consolidated due to their economic power to make household spending decisions around their incomes, their enhanced capacity to financially support kin, the respect they appear to garner from their spouses/partners and family members, and their heightened social status as economically self-reliant working women. For several, this economic power has manifest in their owning property, for some it has meant starting up a secondary small business, for others it has meant being able to go on holiday.

The fact that these women, coming from a society where male superiority and privilege pervades, have carved a significant space of self-esteem for themselves within the historically male-dominated and masculinised social and organisational domain of the offshore O&G industry facility is testament to their robust and perseverant efforts (deemed by Bandura (2001) as *resilient* self-efficacy) and their sense that they are worthy of being respected and valued by men. Moreover, a strong link has been made from the findings between enhancements in the women's self-esteem and the meeting of workplace psychological empowerment needs

through the fostering of cognitions of competence, autonomy and the sense of meaning, relatedness and impact (these latter being in feeling their job and workplace reflect their own values, in their being affiliated in secure, stable and caring social groups and in knowing that their work makes a difference to overall organisational outcomes). Further, the social capital associated with these enhancements represents a considerable bolster to the women's personal well-being and sense of self-worth – social capital that has been apparent within the camaraderie of their female peers, Timorese workmates and offshore crewmembers, the attention given to them by industry coaches/trainers/mentors and the decision-making processes (and agency and appreciation of those making the decisions) associated with their recruitment to trainings and jobs. The women's narratives suggest that they would not expect any diminution of these psychological enhancements into their futures.

In speculating on the women's empowerment trajectories into future scenarios filled with uncertainties around their learning and earning well-being, this thesis has asked the question of whether the union between their agency, potential and the O&G industry structures of opportunity has been sufficiently constructive and forward-reaching in order to help militate against their potential to be undermined.

Potential for empowerment outcomes to be undermined

It is in the area of the women realising potential that the empirics of the research reveal variances amongst them in the extent to which this has been actualised in their offshore roles. For those who had been working for some years in an entry-level role on a facility, this has had implications for their sense of job dissatisfaction and of being under-utilised. For many of the women who experienced this shortcoming it has been remedied in their subsequent onshore roles (under the Bayu-Undan stakeholder network of employers) in which opportunities have continued for their self-efficaciousness to be stimulated by ongoing WSD and career advancement and/or their sense of autonomy, meaning and impact in the workplace being maintained or enhanced in more fulfilling, responsible roles. A handful of the women experienced sharp inclines of realising potential trajectories within the industry training and offshore settings – such as the electrical/mechanical engineering trainees, the helicopter-admin and radio operations women, those

undergoing workplace training in HSE officer and laboratory technician positions, and the camp boss and warehouse controller. For a few, their ongoing learning has taken the path of tertiary studies in areas not closely related to the extractive industries (for one in America and at least four in a part-time capacity in Dili), whilst for most of the women who have worked in offshore hospitality roles, the realisation of their potential has plateaued at a level Cert II qualification and the continued practice of competency in low-skilled roles.

Nonetheless, at the least the sense of achievement and high value of trainings such as the T-BOSIET (which includes escape from an underwater helicopter crash, basic firefighting and first aid skills) and in risk/hazard identification and mitigation, and the resilience built up through month-long swings on steel structures in the middle of the ocean, will not be aspects of personal strength (as attributes in all of the women's human capital portfolios) that will quickly fade. And, for the women whose skills development and/or occupational aspirations have not been fulfilled, this deficit has been mediated by their cognitive, context-related and potentially empowerment-stabilising rationalisation of their situation. They have appreciated that their choices, achievements and material gains have high value in lives confronted daily with the visibility of poverty, widespread joblessness, and of women in their communities living lives of subjugation and constrained choices.

Regardless of the level of alignment of the women's achievements with their realising potential aspirations, the portraits of the female identities in this study nonetheless suggest a significant level of empowerment durability has been achieved. It might optimistically, inductively, be assumed that this durability is such that it can withstand knocks to the women's continued capacity to realise potential through learning and working and/or to remain economically self-reliant.

However, this optimism is tempered by researcher experience of working with unemployed of all ages, male and female, in New Zealand, and supported by the literature, that losing one's job and/or enduring long jobless periods can have debilitating effects on people's psychological well-being, self-esteem and sense of control over their lives (De Witte, Pienaar, & De Cuyper, 2016). The invariable

consequence of this downwards spiral of psychological well-being has been observed as a loss (or self-perceived loss) in social status. In a society such as Timor-Leste, where the default role for women out of the formal workforce is to assume full responsibility for domestic and care work in the household (a role in which many Timorese women have experienced denigration), the risk of the erosion of social status (and of self-pride and self-worth) is compounded. Further, in situations where one is forced to take up any job (especially when beneath one's skill level) as a distress sale, there can also be a subsequent loss of self-pride (Kabeer, 2016). Furthermore, the apparent durability of the women's empowerment might be shaken if they were in the future to enter employment settings in which there is gender-based bullying, misogynistic personnel appraisals of female employees' performance, gender discrimination around promotions and wages, and sexual harassment.

As the temporal parameters of this research have not extended beyond the Timorese women's security in having immediate job futures associated with Timor-Leste oil and gas (or study futures for a few and shipyard work for some of the laid-off hospitality women) there follows discussion of the study's main limitation - regarding the ability to track the durability of the women's empowerment.

Limitation of the study and directions for future research
At the end of the data-gathering all of the women were either still employed or had the realistic expectation that they had jobs open for them in the near future. The absence, therefore, of any stories of women who have become long-term unemployed has meant the envisioning of the capacity for the women's empowerment gains to endure in the face of the shock of losing economic, and potentially associated social, status has been predictive or hypothetical, rather than primary evidence-based. Whilst the conclusions drawn about the stability of the women's empowerment equilibrium at the time of the study are based on a breadth of credible scholarship, data and analysis, neither the literature, nor prior researcher understandings, have canvassed the realities that might be faced for critically-conscious, empowered, industry-skilled and competent women living in an LDC such as Timor-Leste who lose their employment or are driven to enter workplaces which are devoid of gender equality and decent work protocols. More

longitudinally-based research (such as extending beyond the demobilisation of Bayu-Undan) into the empowerment phenomenon revealed in this study could, therefore, be highly fruitful. This would further clarify the thesis conclusions around the longevity residing in the women's industry-enhanced human capital portfolios with respect to how they might bolster enduring empowerment outcomes. These meanings would be of broader, global interest and not simply O&G industry-specific.

Irrespective of the longer-term outcomes regarding their empowerment, the example of these women leads to the not unrealistic assumption that they are representative of similar seams of dissident femininities that will exist in other male-dominated, female-constrained societies in the developing world and who are deserving of the same tenor of learning and earning opportunities through which the Timorese offshore women workers have benefited. This raises the questions of the extent to which global big business should or could act as a development agent for host-country women's empowerment. How these questions have been answered with respect to the findings of this case study is now discussed.

Actual and potential gendered development footprint of Timor-Leste offshore oil and gas

Accompanying international development's drive to establish decent work thresholds for workers in globalised value chains (such as in the clothing and footwear industries in South East Asia) has been an increasing interest in the ways in which the practices of foreign corporations can intersect with the empowerment needs of host-country females – that is, in the notion of big business being consciously engaged as a gender-sensitive development agent (Blowfield, 2012; Grosser, 2011; Herman, Geertz & Alonghi, 2017). This research contributes to the knowledge around the potential for big business to contribute to shaping women's empowerment outcomes in developing countries. It does this through delving deeper into corporate protocols, processes and practices than the broad sweep, tick-box measurement strategies prevalent in global corporate citizenship initiatives, such as in the UN Women and UNGC partnership (Gjolberg, 2009; Kilgour, 2007; Utting, 2008). The thesis dissects the raft of inputs at the individual actor, intra-and inter-organisational levels within the Timor-Leste offshore O&G industry, tracing the links (over time) between the intent-behind and impact-chains of the

stakeholder decision-making regarding the Timorese offshore women's WSD and employment experiences and enhancements to their empowerment status. In doing so, it brings to the gender and development table considerably more textured and meaningful conclusions around the extent to which the global private sector can advance the frontiers of women's strategic empowerment interests in an LDC.

Firstly, it is of note that, as this research progressed, it became apparent that there was no visible architecture of gender and development shaping the stage settings for the Timorese offshore women's empowerment achievements. From a contextual, organisational aspect, it is of broader interest that whilst international oil companies have become very public about wanting gender diversity in the industry (Williams et al., 2014), there is very little mention of gender in local content – the regulatory framework within which the global O&G industry is increasingly expected to support human capital development as part of its social license to operate in host developing countries (Ovadia, 2014). When the gender lens is narrowed to Timor-Leste, of associated contextual note is that, whilst the low labour force participation of women has been recognised as the Achilles Heel for its pro-poor growth (ILO, 2016a) (ILO, 2016a) and the advancement of gender equality remains on its developmental agenda, within the formal arrangements between the offshore owner/operator companies and the Timor-Leste government acknowledgement of these gender and development prerequisites appears to be missing. At no time has there been specified either a recommendation around the promotion of gender diversity within this framework or the locking in of mandates requiring trainings for Timorese women or a female component to offshore Timor Sea facility crews. Moreover, there have been neither any overt gender diversity agendas guiding the in-country goals and practices of the companies involved nor the dissemination of sex-disaggregated recruitment figures in any formal local content reporting settings.

If it were not for this study bringing to light the gendered outcome of Timorese women offshore workers, the positive example of the Timor-Leste corner of the global O&G industry as it has exemplified a human ecosystem within which the agency, potential and self-efficacy of local females have been recognised, respected,

reinforced and rewarded, might never have been brought to light. In sheer numbers, (with the female offshore contingent of all three operations' preferred local labour hire contractor, Caltech, peaking at 13% of its Timorese crews in 2016) this gendered outcome far exceeds the percentages of local females reported on other offshore operations globally (Oil & Gas UK, 2015; Bailey, 2013). Furthermore, the outcome is based not just around the establishment of, but the exceeding of, key empowerment thresholds through which the women have been able to benefit (that is, beyond those enshrined as Women's Empowerment Principles in the UNGC/UN Women framework relating to inclusion, social protection, non-discrimination, equal opportunities with men in WSD and employment and encouragement to enter non-traditional job fields (UN Women & UN Global Compact, 2010)). The formal work opportunity structures of the organisational business networks associated with the offshore ventures have provided the women with significant material rewards (for many, up to 10 times the Timor-Leste minimum wage), social protection and the 'realising potential' platform of training and work skills development in a non-traditional job field. Moreover, as historically masculinised structures of opportunity yet operating on principles of gender-equality, the offshore facilities have proven to be spaces within which significant psychosocial and cognitive elements of empowerment have been able to be fostered and to flourish for the women.

The qualifier *'able'* in the title of this thesis raises a number of tensions that this thesis has addressed - tensions largely around how far global O&G industry corporations should be expected, and have the potential to act as development agents in fostering the strategic empowerment interests of host-country women. The realities are that the raisin d'etre for the global businesses in this study is the pursuit of operational efficiency and profitability and, to reiterate, their host country has systemic gender inequality challenges, an emergent economy in which there is no industry or manufacturing sector and an uncertain future in the development of its extractives sector.

The evidence points to some considerable reconciliation of these tensions due to the laudable, enabling decision-making and efforts of the industry players based upon

an appreciation of Timorese women's potential to be effective offshore crewmembers. Decision-making around recruitment and subsequent investments in the offshore-related employment and WSD of host-country Timorese females has occurred unproblematically (from a gendered perspective) within the business-as-usual practices and equal opportunities protocols of these companies. There appears to have been no barriers put in the way of Timorese women applying for jobs or training or being given opportunities for upskilling, nor negative mindsets demeaning their abilities to achieve competencies (be it in passing the T-BOSIET training, learning to weld or becoming a radio operator). This social capital of palpable, empowering support has been evident because of a fruitful coalescence of: business-as-usual practices (such as EEO and merit-based protocols around employing and promoting women) of the training/employing stakeholder organisations involved in the three Timor Sea projects, and; the openness of key individual actors (both male and female, foreign and local with decision-making power and/or mentoring/coaching/WSD-structuring roles) within these organisations towards the offshore recruitment and related skills training of host-country females.

Contrary to the value placed upon millions of women working in marginalised and feminised labour markets in the developing world, this social capital has been expressed as appreciation for more than simply female labour. In this sense, it has extended to the lived appreciation (by co-workers/trainees and superiors) for the Timorese females' resilience and reliability, accomplished and positive adaptation to working long hours and swings in the isolated and masculinised industry environments, their potential and enthusiasm for learning and their WSD accomplishments. It has also extended to the tangible encouragement by and role-modeling of industry experts for many of the women to enhance their self-efficaciousness – to have a heightened understanding of their potential and what trajectories they could aspire to and pursue if possible, for its further realisation. When situated within the literature on big business creating shared, gender and development value, this case study can be seen in the light of an example that might, not unreasonably, be generalised to other global corporate-driven settings where there will be similar cadres of business leaders, management/supervisory

personnel and co-workers committed, beyond the prerogatives for women around gender diversity, to fostering the dignity, WSD and job-satisfaction well-being of host-country female employees.

These social capital investments are reflective of a contemporary social responsibility, whereby corporate commitments to creating shared value in host countries have been incorporated (albeit somewhat gender-neutrally) into core business strategies (Blowfield, 2012; Kramer, 2014; Lucci, 2012). This creation of shared value is also manifest in the (non-mandatory) financial investments that have been made into fostering Timorese human capital. For Bayu-Undan facility, in particular, the 'spend' on the women's training and employment (including for those attending the Philippines six-months rig ready training course, with the focus on electrotechnology and mechanical engineering skills) has been significant and increasingly based upon a commitment to structuring and delivering WSD outcomes that have more longevity and potential-realisation than entry-level positions. Additionally, their value has been materially recognised in their reward of high (relative to other Timorese workers) salaries.

There has, however, been no evidence within the stakeholder networks of an overt adherence to principles of gender equity in order to redress the gendered deficits Timorese women in general face in their society. Nonetheless, there is evidence of an organisational boundary-spanning understanding amongst key actors (male and female, local and foreign) that recruiting, training and paying Timorese women well in this non-traditional job field is a good thing for re-shaping the possibilities for Timorese femininities and breaking down normative stereotypes of females - as inferior to males and powerless to pursue their own life path.

Critically, the empirics have highlighted the benefits all three offshore projects have reaped from the development agent potency (as social capital) of locally owned labour-hire entity, Caltech Offshore Services. Based on the findings, the thesis presents Caltech as an exemplar for best practices around gender equality and realising the potential of its local female personnel, and suggests that therein resides a potent gender and development blueprint that could contribute in raising

women's empowerment benchmarks for other global companies creating shared value in host developing countries.

This private sector stakeholder has facilitated the remarkable outcome for Timorese women irrespective of the grand vision of empowerment enshrined within the gender project of the sustainable development agenda. The potency of Caltech was identified in the previous research as arising from its tenacity in growing the company for over a decade 'amidst the uneven, chaotic, fluctuating flow of social change, incoherence of the bureaucratic systems with which the owners have had to engage, and mostly the stagnating pace of economic progress in Dili, into a business model operating to international standards in construction, training, clerical support and safety' (Adams, 2014, p. 117). Whilst having no explicit gender equity agenda, Caltech has a solid record of contributing to gender and development progress in Timor-Leste.

Caltech's success as a development agent for women's empowerment is reflected in its local knowledge of and ability to attract Timorese female talent and potential and its enlightened and invested understanding of the need for Timorese women's strategic empowerment interests to be fostered beyond basic equal rights and economic thresholds. The company has long-established pro-active practices of equal opportunities, and a development ethos based around identifying Timorese talent and opening opportunities for that potential to be actualised beyond entry-level work skills development. Senior personnel (male and female) have exhibited a strong commitment towards the development of new female identities that are breaking negative feminine stereotypes in their society. They have foreseen the need for such identities exemplifying competent, confident leaders capable of ensuring the ongoing well-being of themselves and their families, and adding to the ripple of Timorese women who, in expecting and promoting gender equality in their society, can influence change.

It was Caltech who initiated the channeling of numbers of Timorese women into non-traditional and predominantly non-hospitality work trainings and offshore positions (in which many proved themselves capable of up-skilling to perform

highly responsible, middle-high-skilled industry roles). It was Caltech who also first touted the idea of the rig ready course, the inclusion of Timorese females a given. Further, the unequivocal development ethos of the company has seen it ensure that no woman made redundant from the offshore facilities was left without the security of well-paid onshore employment. The evidence strongly suggests that without Caltech, as a savvy, pivotal player within the Timor-Leste local content stakeholder network, the strategic interests of a small but significant population of Timorese women with the potential to enter and succeed in the offshore O&G industry (in other than hospitality roles) would not have been fulfilled.

Concluding remarks

Bearing in mind such factors as: the close association between the foreign stakeholders and local entities such as Caltech[71] with their proactive approaches around opening opportunities for Timorese women to become skilled and to flourish in employment; the uneven 'realising potential' outcomes across the group of women, and; the qualifier 'able to' in the thesis title, the empowerment outcomes of this research present important evidence of the gendered 'added value' the global O&G industry can contribute to host developing countries. Notwithstanding that this added value has arisen in the absence of any gendered requirements in the foreign stakeholders' social license to operate in Timor-Leste, the study provides compelling reasons for women's empowerment to be a considered factor in local content blueprints, agreements, planning and monitoring/reporting processes. These could include the fast-tracking to core-crew status of those with the potential to flourish (which would enable them to work offshore on facilities elsewhere across the globe that their employer is involved with), the advancing and widening of skillsets and competences to levels that could enable them to set up their own enterprises, or the raising of their certification levels (even exceeding those required in their offshore roles) and hence future employability.

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[71] There have been other entities who have to a lesser degree than Caltech been involved as conduits for Timorese women to achieve offshore positions, these being: ETDA (the East Timor Development Agency) which has partnered with ESS/Compass Group to provide training of the women who have taken up offshore hospitality positions, and; Konnecto, a local Timorese employment agency which has channeled a small number of women into offshore work, latterly employed through Caltech.

Whilst recognising the need for host-country males to also experience enhanced empowerment, this approach could be founded upon an overt boundary-spanning inter-organisational stakeholder understanding around gender equity and the strategic learning and earning empowerment interests of host-country women living in patriarchally-characterised societies. This understanding would lend a sharpness of industry focus on building longevity into investments into female employees' human capital portfolios and a sense of immediacy to the need to gain traction on building WSD trajectories into their workplace experience upon their entry.

The gendered complexion of the development footprint of O&G in Timor-Leste represents a signal to broader gender and development discourse - that a more engaged role can be played by big business (and in particular the broader extractives sector) in fostering host-country women's empowerment than simply giving them jobs (that may or may not constitute decent work). It is a signal for global corporations operating in the developing world to consider incorporating into a corner of their agendas and investments the structuring and management of female employees' WSD to international standards and the creation of workplace processes and environments in which their psychological empowerment needs can be met.

Perhaps the following poem, derived from the narrative of one of the Timorese female respondents of the study, states these sentiments with more authority:

because we are worth it

sometimes they think based on their western environment
they don't really understand the impact
that we as women have with more knowledge and skills
our impact on our society
when others look at us as a role model

so if they have that understanding
they might think to provide more opportunity
more skills and training and knowledge
so when the women go out there in the society
more people are actually inspired

the more they understand about our situation
probably they will invest more on us as well
when they invest more
the impact on society is greater
say promote her from bridge control to radio operator

then when we come back, we can say
I was bridge controller before
now I'm radio operator
so the inspiration we give to others
is very beneficial

I heard a saying
when you teach a man you just teach one person
when you teach a woman you teach more than one person
because they pass it on to the kids
when women feel proud of their skills and knowledge
they can teach their children better
(Interview: FR6, 2016)

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Appendices

Appendix: 1. Diagram of women's empowerment elements and outcomes
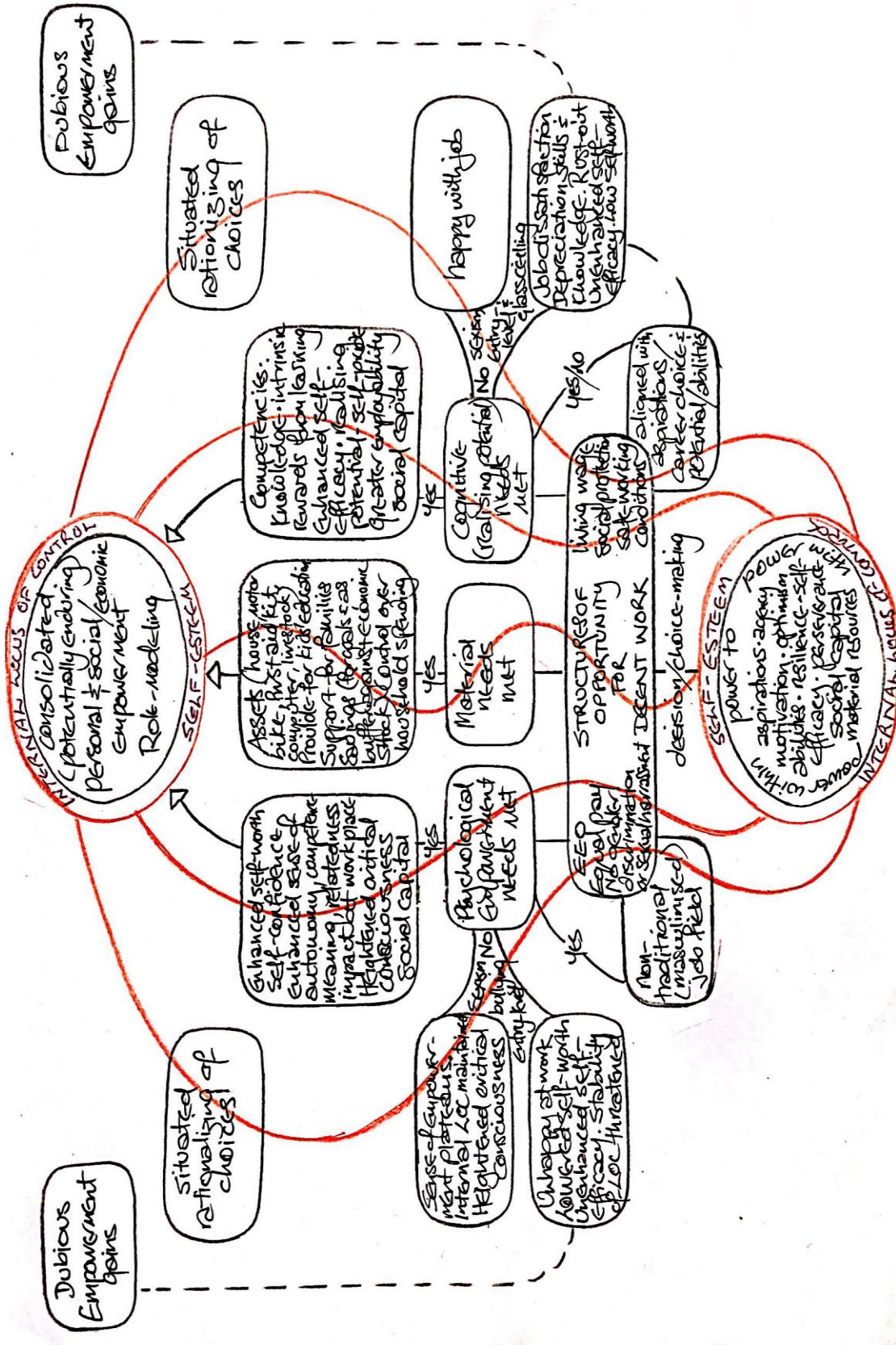
Appendix: 2. Timorese offshore women's job roles and training required

Rig-ready training and certification required of all offshore crew before they were permitted to work on the offshore facilities included: passing an OGUK (Oil and Gas UK) Offshore Medical check (valid for two years) (Offshore Medicals, 2018); undergo the three-day Tropical-basic offshore safety induction and emergency training (T-BOSIET) in emergency response knowledge and skills relevant to travelling to offshore installations by helicopter (valid for four years and including hazard identification and risk reduction, understanding safety regulations and management systems, demonstrating proficiency in coping with helicopter emergencies including underwater escape from a helicopter following ditching, demonstrating sea survival and first aid techniques and effective use of basic fire fighting equipment as well as knowing how to self-rescue in low-visibility situations, including a smoke-filled space); workplace code of conduct familiarisations such as the ConocoPhillips WAVES training concerning behavioural safety (with a focus on taking responsibility for one's own and crewmates' safety) (ConocoPhillips Australia, 2017b) and Caltech's Industry Safety Assessment and Training (ISAT) Induction Course (including PPE, personal hygiene, behavioural safety, manual handling) (Personal Communication: SH1, 2016).

Additionally, Caltech offshore employees must have passed the required english fluency level of the Marlins ESL Assessment and most have undergone at least a 60-hour English course.

Bridge Controller

The bridge control role is specific to Bayu-Undan and involves regulating the personnel traffic flow between the platforms to ensure the Person on Board (PoB) limits of each are not exceeded. Additional to this, the bridge controllers check that crewmembers have the correct Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) for the role they are to perform on the platform to which they are going (such as clear or dark protective glasses and appropriate grade hearing protection). The role-specific training involves learning a PoB monitoring system, understanding Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) requirements for different roles and how to use and communicate via the radiotelephone (RT).

<u>Camp Boss (unit manager)</u>

The Camp Boss is responsible for all accommodation services on the offshore facility and leads the catering crew. S/he oversees safety, work schedules, job roles and work allocation of catering personnel and is responsible for maintaining food stocks (Maersk Drilling, 2018). S/he is required to have an understanding of food hygiene, food rotation and ordering lead-time, to have leadership skills and usually is expected to have had several years' prior experience in hospitality and cooking roles in the offshore environment.

<u>Document Controller</u>

The Document Controller is 'responsible for controlling the numbering, filing, sorting and retrieval of electronically stored or hard copy documentation produced by technical teams, projects or departments in a timely, accurate and efficient manner …[and] … is critical in the support of technical teams, departments and projects in the filing and storing of project related documentation' (such as for the Bayu-Undan AIM programme) (OPITO Skills for Oil and Gas, 2018a, p. 1). Document controllers are required to be proficient in the Permit-to-Work system which is a 'formal recorded process used to control work which is identified as potentially hazardous. It is also a means of communication between site/installation management, plant supervisors and operators and those who carry out the hazardous work' (Health and Safety Executive, 2005, p. 7).

<u>Fabric Maintenance Assistant</u>

The term 'fabric' refers to the structural materials, cladding, insulation and finishes of the offshore installations. This role involves providing technical assistance to the Bayu-Undan AIM fabric maintenance lead supervisor – such as managing records and data, tracking all procurements and hired equipment, developing SAP (systems, applications and products software) notifications and ensuring work orders reflect the work that is required to be carried out, communicating with supervisors about HSE issues relating to jobs, and ensuring efficient procurement of external services. This role requires proficiency in using SAP software and the Permit-to-Work system.

Heli-Admin

This role combines Helicopter Landing Officer and helicopter refuelling responsibilities which include: performing heldeck checks to ensure it and associated equipment is in helicopter-ready condition; communicating with the helicopter pilot (which involves understanding meteorology); being responsible for all those engaged in operations on or near the helicopter landing, loading and unloading operation; assisting with safe transhipment of cargo (which involves understanding regulations around the shipment of dangerous goods by air); understanding procedures for fuelling helicopters and storing fuel (OPITO Skills for Oil and Gas, 2018b).

Junior HSE Officer

This role involves assisting in promulgating and monitoring crew adherence to offshore installation health, safety and environment (HSE) management systems. The role includes identifying hazards and risks that may affect the health of workers; educating personnel around managing workplace risks and encouraging them to participate in health and safety procedures; daily inspection of workplace to check health and safety procedures are followed (such as face fit test for respirator); recording and investigation of incidents and injuries and HSE equipment damage; preparing daily 'tool box meeting' reports on safety performance and delivering fortnightly health and safety talks to crew, and; carrying out inductions for new crewmembers (Personal communication: FR10, September 13, 2018). The Timorese females' training has included operation of emergency response equipment, proficiency in small craft rescue and fast boat rescue and in use of locating devices and pyrotechnics, communication and signalling apparatus and between rescue craft, a helicopter and offshore facility, and applying first aid to survivors.

Kitchen Hand/Steward

This role encompasses entry-level preparation of food (such as for the salad bar), presentation and serving of meals to crewmembers, cleaning of kitchen and equipment, provision of housekeeping services (including laundry) and preparation of rooms for new crew. The work is mainly routine and repetitive and carried out under direct supervision. The ESS/Compass Group employees were required to attain Certification Level II in Kitchen Operations.

Laboratory Technician

The woman performing this role received on-the-job training to be able to safely conduct laboratory analyses, using chromatography equipment, of extractive samples (such as oil, water, gas, glycols and miscellaneous fluids).

Materials Controller (ASV/Frontier)

This woman's role has been to coordinate the ASV accommodation rig's consumables requisitions with responsibilities that include: being in control of the warehouse; keeping an accurate inventory of goods; maintaining adequate levels of stock for continuous installation operations; preparing cargo manifests for all goods/ materials dispatched from the rig either by sea or by air, and coordinating with deck crew around supply vessel arrivals and departures. Her training has included warehousing operation, handling dangerous goods and forklift operation.

Radio Operator

This role involves operating the platform radio equipment in order to communicate with vessels, helicopter pilots, and other installation facilities (such as the FSO) regarding cargo manifests, arrivals and departures, weather. She is required to keep a log of all messages transmitted and received and to monitor air and sea signals in the vicinity unrelated to the facility. Her training involved acquiring certification in the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) which included: demonstrating proficiency in the use of, and an understanding of the regulations concerning, marine radio telephony and digital calling operating procedures, particularly those relating to distress, urgency and safety; maintaining marine radio equipment specified in good working order; demonstrating a basic knowledge of the

Australian marine search and rescue system (Australian Maritime College, 2018). This woman also carried out Heli-admin duties, which required her to have obtained Helicopter Landing Operations and Helicopter Re-fueling training. Additionally, she was trained in Small Craft Rescue.

Timesheet Coordinator

This role required processing and monitoring weekly timesheets of crewmembers involved in the the Bayu-Undan AIM programme to ensure correct entry prior to sign off by CoP authority and transmitting them in correct order to onshore data entry personnel.

Trainee Electrical Engineer

The two women who were about to enter this role on Bayu-Undan at the time of data collection had just completed their Level Certification II in Electrotechnology at the Philippines Site Skills Training course. This was a pre-apprenticeship course which provided a foundation in safety, and basic skills and knowledge for work in any electrotechnology discipline and for solving problems in extra-low voltage single-path and multiple-path DC circuits. It involved learning in the use of equipment and in the dismantling, assembling and fabricating of electrotechnology components (Site Skills Training, 2018b). Their offshore work would initially be as an apprentice to a qualified electrical engineer.

Trainee Mechanical Engineer

The woman who entered this role on Bayu-Undan completed the Site Skills Training in Level Certification II in Engineering (mechanical). This course provided candidates with the base knowledge and skills required to gain an apprenticeship in mechanical engineering and covered soft skills areas of communication, teamwork, problem-solving, initiative, planning and organising, clarifying tasks and required outcomes with appropriate personnel, and practical skills in using dedicated tools, equipment and machines (Site Skills Training, 2018a).

Massey University

Te Kunenga ki Pūrehuroa

Development Studies Programme

Empowerment Outcomes for Timor-Leste Women with Offshore Employment Experience in the Oil and Gas Industry- a case study

Information Sheet

Greetings,

My name is Virginia Adams. I am a New Zealander, and am conducting research for my PhD into the empowerment outcomes of Timorese women with training and offshore employment experience on Bayu-Undan and Kitan offshore gas and oil facilities and Ramform Sovereign seismic vessel.

My 2013/14 Masters study into the lives of 16 Bayu-Undan female employees highlighted the significance of such a number of young women from a newly developing country who have followed the non-normative pathway to employment on Western offshore petroleum operations, achieving positions that have brought them economic empowerment, a sense of dignity and of being valued as crewmembers. Additionally, they represent new female identities in their society – women with differing education backgrounds who have experienced enhanced social and economic status, equipped with new achievements, skills and learning accomplished within a non-traditional, historically male workspace. These confident identities occupy an important space in Timor-Leste society where the life choices for the majority of women and girls are restricted to domestic roles. Gender equality is high on the Timor-Leste development agenda. I feel privileged to have the opportunity to revisit the narratives of these and additional Timorese women who have had offshore experience in the Timor Sea.

My PhD research is primarily concerned with the <u>enduring</u> value, for their futures, of the women's new human capital portfolios of knowledge, work experience, competences, and achievements gained via their offshore employment. Of interest are the aspirations they might now have, their confidence in pursuing these, and whether these can be fulfilled within the context of the opportunities available to them in oil and gas, Timor-Leste urban society or abroad. Of interest also is the extent to which this positive gender outcome has occurred because of, or irrespective of, understandings and agendas around gender and development in Timor-Leste, within the local content, employing, training and workplace stakeholder networks, (both formal and informal, explicit and implicit). Inquiry will seek to illuminate the enabling and constraining factors with respect to the enhancement of the women's capabilities within the offshore oil and gas context.

I invite you to contribute to the research by undertaking an interview with me to offer your thoughts, experience, observations and opinions. Please be assured that everything you say will be confidential and anonymous, and that you may decline to answer any question, may ask me anything about the study, or withdraw at any time prior to the end of data collection.

I will be happy to distribute a summary of my findings to participants in the research. If you have any questions about the research project please feel free to contact my supervisor or me (contact details below).

Thank you very much for participating in and supporting this project.

Contact Details

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Ethics Declaration

"*This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher named above is responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.*

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you wish to raise with someone other than the researcher, please contact Dr Brian Finch, Director (Research Ethics), telephone 06 350 5249, email humanethics@massey.ac.nz .