Environmental Peacebuilding from Below: Customary Approaches in Timor-Leste

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Existing environmental peacebuilding research:

• Focus on cases strongly shaped by external actors
• Lack of knowledge on bottom-up processes
  - Problematic representations
  - Missed take away points for theory
  - Lack of insights for practitioners
Country context:

• Portugese colonialism
• Indonesian occupation 1975-1999
• UN peacebuilding, poverty and communal tensions
• Revival of customary institutions
**Tara bandu** (“hanging prohibitions”):

- Process of negotiation and a ritual ceremony
- Used to manage local environmental issues
- Simultaneously addresses community tensions and violence
Insights:
• *Tara bandu* as successful, endogenous environmental peacebuilding
• Importance of spiritual ecologies
• Benefits of external interventions
• Dangers of external interventions
Thank you for your attention

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