Timor-Leste Population
and Housing Census 2015

Analytical Report
on Marriage

Volume 7

Timor-Leste Population and Housing Census 2015

Thematic Report Volume 7

Analytical Report on
Marital Status

Foreword

The 2015 Timor-Leste Population and Housing Census with the theme **"Census from people to people: Be part of it"** was conducted in July 2015 on a *de facto* basis by the General Directorate of Statistics, Minister of Finance. The 2015 Census is the third after those conducted in 2004 and 2010 (post independent Timor-Leste) and fifth after the 1980 and 1990 Censuses, both taken in Indonesian times. This Census was undertaken within the provision of the Statistics Decree Law No. 17/2003 and the 2015 Population and Housing Census Government Resolution no. 11/2014 of 9 April 2014.

The main objective of the 2015 Census was to collect, analyze and effectively disseminate demographic and socio-economic information required for policy and programme formulation, decision making in planning and administrative processes, and research. The Census preliminary results were published in Volume 1 on 21 October 2015 and were launched by His Excellency the Prime Minister of RDTL Dr. Rui Maria de Araújo. The 2015 Census priority tables were published in three volumes: 2, 3 and 4, and launched by the Vice Minister of Finance Eng. Helder Lopes on 17 November 2016. The 'Sensus fo Fila fali' (returning back the results of the Census) was launched by His Excellency Minister of State Dr. Deonisio Babo Soares on behalf of the Prime Minister of RDTL on 2 March 2017. After that an ambitious "Sensus Fo Fila Fali" project was undertaken by the General Directorate of Statistics, Ministry of Finance that culminated in a Census report for each of the 442 sucos in the country.

This fourth phase comprises drafting of analytical reports covering Census thematic topics including fertility, marriage, mortality, migration, population projections, education, labour force, housing, agriculture, gender, youth and an atlas. The preparation of these reports was a collaborative effort between the Government of Timor-Leste, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). Drafting of the thematic reports involved local and international experts. The reports were authored under the supervision and guidance of the Census Technical Specialist from UNFPA. The authors were recruited on a competitive basis, ensuring that they had adequate knowledge of the topics they were to analyse.

All staff at the General Directorate of Statistics, Ministry of Finance and especially the Director General and the Director of System and Reports and his team are commended for their commitment and tireless efforts to successfully undertake all phases of the Census including the thematic analysis exercise.

The Government of Timor-Leste wishes to extend its sincere gratitude to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) for providing technical, financial and administrative support throughout the Census process, and in particular acknowledges the contribution of the authors of each thematic report.

Last but not least, all Timorese people deserve special praise for their patience and willingness to provide the requisite information which forms the basis of these reports and hence benchmark information for development. We in the Ministry of Finance and Government as a whole hope that the data contained in these thematic reports will be fully utilized in the national development planning process by all stakeholders for the welfare of the Timorese people.

Sara Lobo Brites
Vice - Minister and Acting Minister of Finance

Executive Summary

<u>Marital status</u>

The singulate mean age at marriage increased from 25.8 years to 26.7 years between the 2010 and 2015 Censuses. The values were lower for females (25 years) than males (28.4 years) in the 2015 Census, but the male-female gap decreased from 4.2 years to 3.4 years between the 2004 and 2015 Censuses, demonstrating reducing gender disparities. The gap for females relative to males closed slightly in both rural and urban areas, with more progress in gap closure in urban than in rural areas. The youngest mean marriage ages were in Viqueque and the oldest were in Dili for both males and females in the 2010 and 2015 Censuses. In the 2015 Census, the largest gap in the mean age at marriage for males and females was in Oecusse (4.2 years) and the smallest gap was in Liquica (3.0 years). There is a clear north-south divide in the country. The mean marriage ages were higher in the north and lower in the south. Manatuto is the exception, with Laclo constituting the only Administrative Post on the north coast having a very low mean marriage age (excluding western Oecusse, where two out of three Administrative Posts had a very low mean marriage age). In general, Administrative Posts along the southern coast were in the lowest, or second lowest mean marriage age bands. It is notable that on the southern coast the mean marriage age data was higher in the Administrative Posts where major towns are located, (except in Viqueque), because urban mean marriage ages were higher than those in rural areas.

As for the 2010 Census, the most common marital status for more than half of the population aged 15 years and over in the 2015 Census was 'married' (NSD and UNFPA, 2012). However, the percentage married declined between the 2010 and 2015 Censuses (from 56.3 per cent to 54.6) and consequently, there was an increase in the percentage of never married people, (from 36.9 per cent to 39). There was a decrease in widowhood (from 6 per cent to 4.6), but rates of divorce and separation were still very low in the 2015 Census. Males were more likely to never have married (42.9 per cent) than females (35.1 per cent), and females were more likely to be married, living together, widowed, divorced or separated compared to males. The changes in marital status between the 2010 and 2015 Censuses were more evident for women than for men, such that the male-female divergences in the proportions in each marital status category narrowed. Similarly, greater change in rural areas meant that rural marital status patterns were more like urban patterns than in 2010. Although low percentages were recorded as living together with a partner in the 2015 Census (1.2 per cent), this status was slightly more common in urban areas (2.1 per cent). The age structure of marital status changed because people were marrying later. Also, people were remaining married for longer because of increasing life expectancy, reducing widowhood (particularly for women). There is still significant disparity in marital status circumstances between the Municipalities and Administrative Posts.

Between the 2010 and 2015 Censuses, the percentage of adolescents (aged 15–19 years) already married decreased by 1.4 percentage points from 7.6 per cent to 6.2 per cent. In 2015, married adolescent women were generally concentrated in the older teen ages (74 per cent of married women were aged 18 or 19 years, and 26 per cent were aged less than 18 years). Adolescents living in in rural areas were more likely to be married (7.7 per cent as compared to 3.4 per cent of urban adolescent women), with the highest percentages in Oecusse (10.8 per cent of adolescent women were married) and lowest in Dili (3.8 per cent). Geographically, the distribution is similar though less clear-cut than the distribution for adolescent childbearing, but the general pattern is that high percentages of adolescent marriage were found in of Administrative Posts that are less-well connected, or further away from Municipality capitals.

The percentage of all households that were single-parent households declined by 1.3 per cent to 3.7 per cent between the 2010 and 2015 Censuses. Across the inter-censal period, the tendency was towards concentration

of the age of household heads into the 45 to 54 years age bracket, but there were also slight increases among young and elderly household heads. In the 2015 Census, the vast majority of single-parent households were female-headed (seven-in-ten), an increase from six out of ten in the 2010 Census. Eight-in-ten single-parent households were in rural areas and eight-in-ten household heads were widows in the 2015 Census. High percentages of single-parent household heads were separated (8.6 per cent), with the implication that migration of spouses is a factor in single-parent household formation. Geographically, higher percentages of single-parent households were clustered in Covalima, Ermera and Ainaro and higher percentages of female-headed single-parent households were located in mountainous Administrative Posts that are not served by road and isolated from Municipality capitals in the remote extreme west of Covalima, Ermera and Oecusse and in isolated pockets such as Turiscai in Manufahi and Lacluta in Viqueque.

Although widowhood declined more for women than men between the 2010 and 2015 Censuses, in 2015, women aged 15 and above were still three times more likely to be widowed than men. Lautem, Bobonaro and Viqueque had the highest percentage of widows among women aged 15 years and above. For women aged 60 years and above, Lautem also had the highest proportion, with four-in-ten women classed as widows. The lowest percentage was in Dili in 2015.

Marital status and background characteristics

In the 2015 Census, literate people married later (26.6 years, as opposed to 25.2 years for non-literates) and the gap in mean age at marriage between non-literates and literates in marital age increased from 1.2 years to 1.4 years between the 2010 and 2015 Censuses. The marriage age gap between male and female literates reduced by 0.5 years between 2010 and 2015 as compared to only 0.4 years for non-literates. Also, more educated people (especially females) married later in the 2015 Census (the gap was 4.7 years between females educated to primary level and those educated to university level). As for literacy, the male-female marital age gap reduced more for well-educated than for poorly educated people between the 2010 and 2015 Censuses. Persons occupying lower quality housing had a lower mean age at marriage than persons occupying higher quality housing in the 2010 and 2015 Censuses for both males and females (in the 2015 Census, the gap between lowest and highest quality housing was 3.4 years for females, an increase from 2.9 years in the 2010 Census). In the highest quality of housing, the male-female gap in mean age at marriage narrowed (by 0.9 years) whereas in the lowest quality of housing the gap did not change between the two censuses. The mean age at marriage was lower in agricultural households (26.2 years) than in non-agricultural households (26.8 years) in 2015.

Between the 2010 and 2015 Censuses, women who were never married had increasing propensity to be literate (an increase of 0.5 per cent) and more educated, compared to married women or widows (where the percentages of women who were literate declined by 2 per cent and 0.3 per cent respectively). This is linked to the trend between 2010 and 2015 for increasing percentages of never married women to be economically inactive (an increase of 13.7 percentage points), which means that in 2015 as compared to 2010, more of these women were remaining in full time education for longer, delaying their marriage. In 2015, never married women and women living with a partner were more commonly found in higher quality housing, which is linked to their higher presence in urban areas. Between the 2010 and 2015 Censuses, married women were increasingly engaged in waged employment (an increase of 8.4 percentage points). In the 2015 Census, widowed women were more common in the labour force (8.7 per cent) than in the inactive sector (5.3 per cent), because of their need to support themselves financially through work. In both censuses, widows more commonly resided in lower quality housing further emphasizing their vulnerable status.

Between the 2010 and 2015 Censuses, the background characteristics of married adolescent women improved marginally, but they were still a vulnerable population group. In the 2015 Census, married

adolescent women had greater propensity to be non-literate (13.8 per cent of all non-literate adolescent women were married, compared with 5 per cent of literate adolescent women). Married women constituted one-in-four of all adolescent women in the labour force – consequently, these women were not in education. Married adolescent women were more prevalent in agricultural households and especially those that sell their produce. They were more prevalent in poorer quality of household circumstances, which includes lower access to improved sanitation and safe water supplies (married women constitute only 2.1 per cent of adolescent women in the highest quality, as opposed to 11.3 per cent in the lowest quality of housing). In the 2015 Census, women living with partners exhibited different characteristics to married adolescent women, being more inclined to be literate, urban dwellers. Women living with partners were more inclined to be classified as unemployed than other economic activity classifications and will likely be subject to other forms of vulnerability related to unstable urban lifestyles that were not measured by the 2015 Census.

In the 2015 Census, six-in-ten single-parents were non-literate and they were generally less-well educated, which renders these householders and their families more vulnerable. As single-parents need to support their families, over eight-in-ten were classed as employed, but also defined themselves as heading agricultural households, producing mainly for home consumption. Single-parent households, and particularly female-headed single-parent households must be among the most vulnerable households in Timor-Leste, as they are predominately headed by middle-aged women, lack literacy and secondary level education, live in poor quality housing (generally lacking access to electricity, clean drinking water and adequate sanitation) and support family members through subsistence agriculture. These households are most common in more remote Administrative Posts of Timor-Leste.

Recommendations

Preventing early marriage (and cohabitation) is the critical first step in delaying childbearing, reducing fertility overall and protecting adolescent women from harmful practices. Between the 2010 and 2015 Censuses, significant progress was made in reducing adolescent marriage rates, and the mean age at marriage increased, whilst male-female and urban and rural gaps reduced. The government should aim to capitalize on the trajectory of these improvements through interventions that will sustain or even increase the pace of these changes.

The data shows that childbearing was, not surprisingly, higher among married adolescent women, and as only 11.4 per cent of married adolescent women were still in education in the 2015 Census, interventions should aim to encourage females to remain in education longer as a mechanism for preventing marriage and subsequent childbearing during adolescence. A critical step is to change behavior by sharing information regarding the risks of early marriage and the benefits for young women and their families of remaining in education to fully reach their potential. Secondly, the Government must continue to foster enabling environments so that all adolescent women are able to remain in the education system for longer.

Geographical data provides part of the picture, but it does not explain which women within Administrative Posts are the most appropriate recipients of interventions. The evidence generated in this report demonstrates that early marriage was more common among women with less-developed circumstances at the individual, household and broader contextual levels. Therefore, information campaigns and services should, in particular, be channeled towards communities and families that exhibit these characteristics in order to prevent early marriage and childbearing and reducing completed family size.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) framework offers a mechanism within which to implement, monitor and evaluate these interventions. To prevent early marriage, the Government should focus on:

- SDG 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls)
  - Target 5.3: By 2030, eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation
    - Indicator 5.3.1: Proportion of women aged 20–24 years who were married or in a union by age 15 and before age 18.

In 2015, around 7,500 households in Timor-Leste were single-parent households, and women headed more than seven out of ten of these households. Single-parent households and especially those headed by women (and in particular those headed by widows) must be among the most vulnerable households in Timor-Leste. The situation of household members (and especially children) in these households should be a matter of concern for the Government and the development community. It is recommended that specific social protection and livelihood interventions be implemented for these families. Targeting of these interventions should be based on the information in this report.

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[1] Excel versions of these tables are available in the '2015 Marital Status Report Tables Annex' which can be accessed at: http://www.statistics.gov.tl/category/publications/census-publications/

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In July 2015, the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste conducted its third Population and Housing Census after independence in 2002. The previous two censuses were carried out in 2004 and 2010, respectively. Like the two previous censuses, the 2015 Census was conducted by the General Directorate of Statistics (Direcção Geral de Estatística, GDE) of the Ministry of Finance. This thematic report will focus on nuptiality, one of the major proximate determinants of fertility, namely.

Fertility is affected by proximate determinants and in a less direct way by more remote determinants. The main proximate determinants are nuptiality (or marriage patterns - whether people marry or form couples and whether they do so at an early age or later in life), breastfeeding practices, the incidence of abortion, and contraceptive prevalence. Longer breastfeeding is associated with longer spacing between births and thereby with lower fertility. Nowadays the prevalence of contraceptive methods is one of the main mechanisms by which couples control their fertility, with the intent of spacing births or (more often) limiting the total number of children. The 2015 Census does not collect data on breastfeeding practices or prevalence of contraceptive methods, but does collect data on nuptiality, which is henceforth the focus of this thematic report.

The analysis covers marital status, age at first marriage and characteristics of adolescent women, widows and single-parent households. The measure used for the age at first marriage is **the Singulate Mean Age at Marriage** (SMAM). The SMAM is the mean age at first marriage among those who ever marry (United Nations, 1983). It was computed from the proportions of those who were never married in each five-year age group between 15 and 54 years for males, females and both sexes.

In Chapter 2, patterns and differentials of marital status are analysed, with a particular focus on the marital status and background characteristics of women including adolescents, widows and single-parents. In Chapter 3, patterns and differentials of age at first marriage are analysed. Chapter 4 presents conclusions and recommendations.

Chapter 2: Patterns and differentials of marital status

The analysis of marital status was carried out by examining patterns and differentials of marital status by sex, age, place of residence, Municipality, Administrative Post and other selected background characteristics. Marital status is classified as: never married; married; living together; widowed; divorced; and separated. The results of the 2015 Census demonstrate that the majority (54.6 per cent) of the population aged 15 years and above were married and just over one per cent were living together with a partner, 39 per cent had never married, 4.6 per cent were widowed, and less than one per cent were divorced or separated (Figure 1). Males were more likely to never have married than females; and females were more likely to be married, living together, widowed, divorced, or separated compared to males.

Compared to the 2010 Census, there was a decrease in widowhood (from 6 per cent to 4.6 per cent), with a decrease from 9 per cent to 6.8 per cent for women, presumably due to increased male life expectancy. The never married population increased from 36.9 per cent to 39 per cent, with an increase from 31.8 per cent to 35.1 per cent of women recorded as never married. The corresponding proportion of males recorded as never married also increased, but by only 0.9 per cent. The proportion married dropped from 56.3 per cent in 2010 to 54.6 per cent in the 2015 Census, with proportions of women married declining by 2.2 per cent and proportions of men married declining by 1.2 per cent between the 2010 and 2015 Censuses.

Figure 1: Population aged 15 years and above by marital status and sex, Timor-Leste, 2015 Census
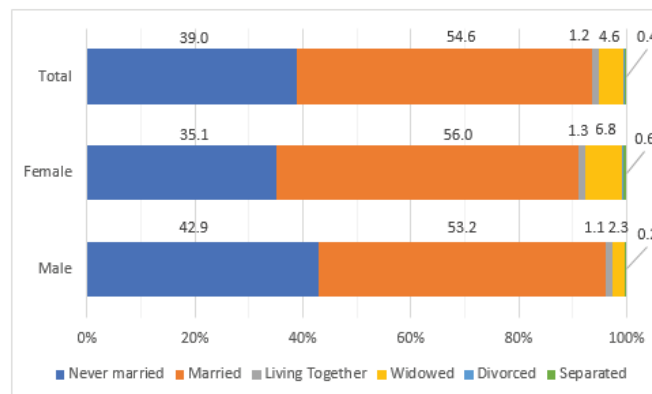
Marital status varies by age - as expected, the percentage of never married people decreased sharply between ages 15 and 39 and the percentage of widowed persons increased gradually with age (Figure 2). The percentage of all persons married increased to a peak at age 45–49 and then declined as marital partners die. Percentages living together were small, but slightly more prevalent for ages less than 34 years.

Figure 2: Population aged 15 years and above by marital status and age, Timor-Leste, 2015 Census
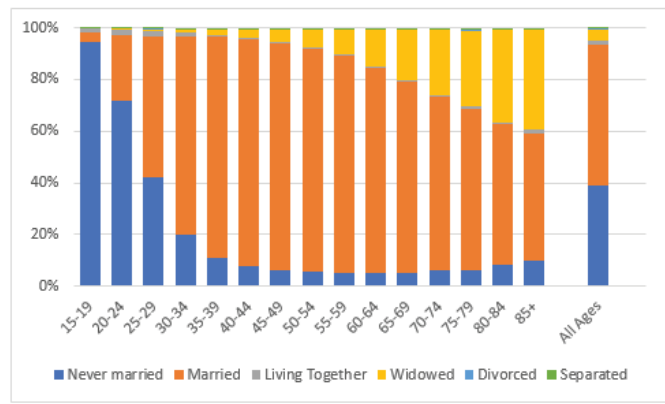
The age pattern of marital status differed between males (Figure 3) and females (Figure 4) aged 15 years and above. The percentage never married decreased faster as age increases for females than males (because women married at younger ages – 7.8 per cent of women aged 15–19 years were married or living together with a partner as opposed to 2.7 per cent of men of the same age). The percentage widowed increased more markedly for females than males because women live longer than men and were more likely to experience widowhood. The peak age group for the married category was at ages 45–54 years for males whereas for females the peak was at 40–44 years. The never married proportion above age 34 was only 7 per cent for males and females respectively.

Figure 3: Male population aged 15 years and above by marital status and age, Timor-Leste, 2015 Census
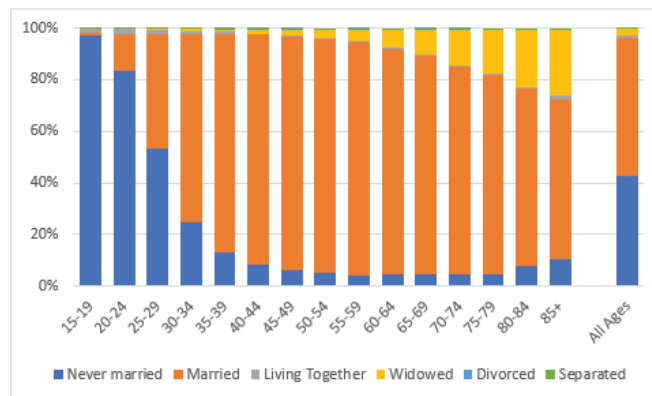
Figure 4: Female population aged 15 years and above by marital status and age, Timor-Leste, 2015 Census
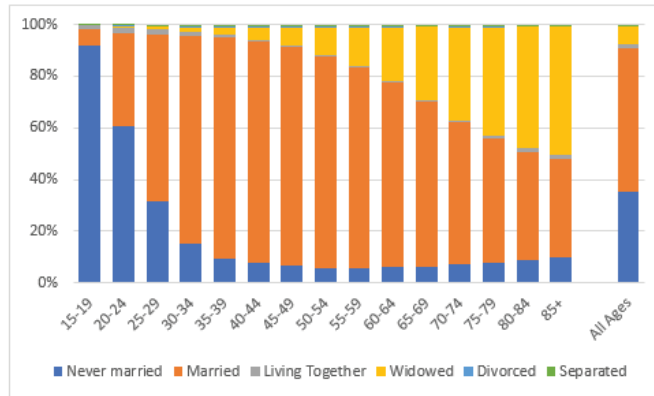
Urban dwellers were more likely to never have married than rural dwellers (48.6 per cent as compared to 34.6 per cent) (Figure 5). The percentage of the urban population that had never married was also 48.6 per cent in the 2010 Census (Table 1), whereas the rural proportion never married increased from 31.2 per cent in the 2010 Census to 34.6 in the 2015 Census. The percentage married was higher in rural areas (58.3 per cent) than in urban areas (46.6 per cent) in the 2015 Census. The corresponding values for the 2010 Census were slightly higher in rural areas (60.6 per cent) and urban areas (47.9 per cent). Rural dwellers, especially women, were more likely to be widowed than urban dwellers, however there were slight declines in widowhood status since the 2010 Census, due to improved life expectancy for men.

Figure 5: Population aged 15 years and above by marital status and sex, urban and rural location, 2015 Census
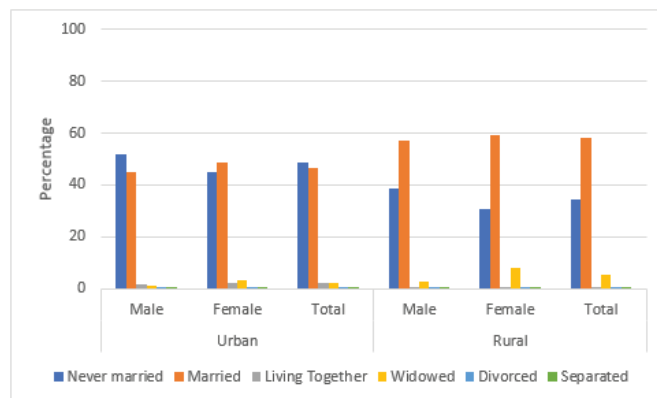
Table 1: Marital status, aged 15 years and above by place of residence, 2010 and 2015 Censuses

Background Characteristic	Marital status										
	Never married		Married		Living together	Widowed		Divorced		Separated	
	2010	2015	2010	2015	2015	2010	2015	2010	2015	2010	2015
					Place of Residence						
Urban	48.6	48.6	47.9	46.6	2.1	3.1	2.2	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.3
Rural	31.2	34.6	60.6	58.3	0.9	7.5	5.6	0.4	0.2	0.3	0.4
Timor-Leste	36.9	39.0	56.3	54.6	1.2	6.0	4.6	0.4	0.2	0.3	0.4

Figure 6 presents data on marital status by Municipality. Dili had the highest proportion of never married persons, with almost 50 per cent of people aged over 15 years reported in the 2015 Census as being never married. Aileu was the only other Municipality where more than four in ten people aged over 15 were reported as never married (42.1 per cent), and only Dili, Aileu and Ermera had higher proportions reported as never married than the national population. The corresponding values from the 2010 Census were similar although slightly lower (Dili: 49.3 per cent; Aileu: 38.7 per cent; Ermera: 36.7 per cent). The municipality with the lowest percentage never married in the 2015 Census was Oecusse (29.6 per cent), followed by Viqueque (31.4 per cent) and Bobonaro (32.7 per cent). Again, these Municipalities had amongst the lowest proportions of never married men and women in the 2010 Census. Consequently, in the 2015 Census, Oecusse had the highest percentage married (63.9 per cent), and Dili had the lowest percentage married (45.5 per cent), as was also the case in the 2010 Census. In Oecusse, Viqueque and Bobonaro, more than 60 per cent of persons aged over 15 were married in the 2015 Census. Only Dili and Ermera had lower percentages of the population aged over 15 years married than the national average of 54.6 per cent. Percentages of persons living together with a partner were generally low, at 1.2 per cent for Timor-Leste, but were highest in Dili (2.5 per cent) and Manatuto (2.2 per cent). Percentages of persons divorced or separated remained at similar low levels in 2010 and in 2015.

Widowhood varied from a low of 2 per cent in Dili to a high of 6.5 per cent in Viqueque. Widowhood had declined from 6.0 per cent in the 2010 Census to 4.6 percent in the 2015 Census, due to increased life expectancy (especially for males). The largest decline was in Aileu (by 2.4 percentage points from 6.8 per cent to 4.4 per cent). Oecusse did not experience any decline (widowhood remained at 5.3 per cent in 2015).

Figure 6: Population aged 15 years and above by marital status, Municipalities, 2015 Census
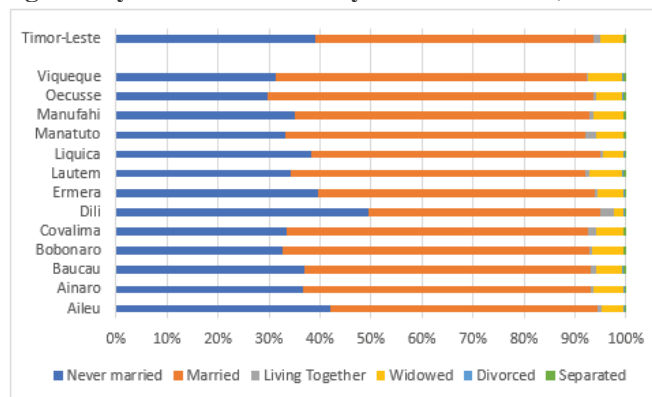
Marital status data from the 2015 Census are presented in Figures 7 and 8 for males and females respectively. The main points to be observed are that higher proportions of males than females were never married in all Municipalities, and higher proportions of females were married, or widowed than their male counterparts across the country.

Figure 7: Male population aged 15 years and above by marital status, Municipalities, 2015 Census
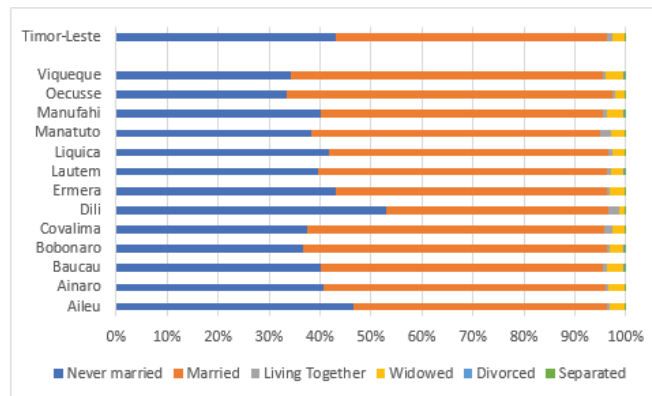
Figure 8: Female population aged 15 years and above by marital status, Municipalities, 2015 Census
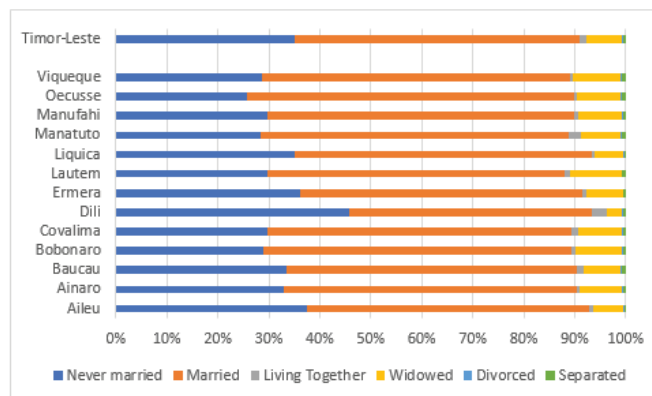
Figure 9 presents data from the 2015 Census on marital status by Administrative Post for both sexes. In Figure 9, the Administrative Posts of Cristo Rei, Dom Aleixo, Nain Feto and Vera Cruz in Dili stand out most as being different from others around the country, in that the percentages never married were generally high, the percentages living together were relatively higher and widowhood was lower. The lowest percentages of never married persons aged over 15 years were found in Fatumean, Covalima (21.3 per cent), and the highest in Vera Cruz, Dili (51.3 per cent). For married persons, the highest percentages were in Passabe, Oecusse (69.8 per cent) and the lowest percentage was in Vera Cruz, Dili (41.9 per cent), a smaller range than for never married persons. Living together is generally uncommon, indeed in 39 out of 65 Municiplities, less than one per cent of persons were reported to be living together with a partner, and the highest proportion was 5.4 per cent in Nain Feto, followed by 3.9 per cent in Vera Cruz, both in Dili. Widowhood ranged between only 1.5 per cent in Dom Aleixo (and less than 2.5 per cent in Cristo Rei, Nain Feto and Vera Cruz) up to 10.8 per cent in Fatumean and 11.9 per cent in Fatulilic, both in Covalima. Divorce and separation were generally very low, never reaching more than 1.3 per cent in any Administrative Post.

Data from the 2015 Census for males (Figure 10), and females (Figure 11) at the level of the Administrative Post are presented to further illustrate the variations in marital status between the sexes exemplified in Figures 7 and 8 for males and females at the level of the Municipality. The main points to be observed are the higher proportions of males than females who were never married in every single Administrative Post, reaching as high as 15.3 percentage points difference in Barique in Manatuto, and over 10 per cent higher in Liquidoe (Aileu), Lautem and Lospalos (Lautem), Laclo and Soibada (Manatuto), all Administrative Posts in Manufahi, and Lacluta in Viqueque. Higher percentages of females aged 15 years and over were recorded as married in 53 out of 65 Administrative Posts. Without exception, in every Administrative Post higher percentages of females than males aged 15 years and over were reported as widowed in the 2015 Census. More attention will be given to widowhood later in this chapter.

In summary, as for the 2010 Census, the most common status for more than half of the population aged 15 years and over in the 2015 Census was to be married. The percentage married had declined and consequently, there was an increase in the percentage of never married people, and a decrease in widowhood. Rates of divorce and separation were still very low. Males were more likely to never have married than females, and females were more likely to be married, living together, widowed, divorced or separated compared to males. The changes in marital status between the 2010 and 2015 Censuses were more evident for women than for men, such that the gaps narrowed between the sexes. Similarly, greater change in rural areas meant that the gaps narrowed with urban areas. Although low percentages were recorded as living together with a partner in the 2015 Census, this status was slightly more common in urban areas. There was still significant disparity in marital status circumstances between the Municipalities and Administrative Posts in the 2015 Census. The age structure of marital status had changed leading to the conclusion that people were marrying later and remaining married for longer because of increasing life expectancy reducing widowhood (particularly for women).

Figure 9: Population aged 15 years and above by marital status, Administrative Posts, 2015 Census

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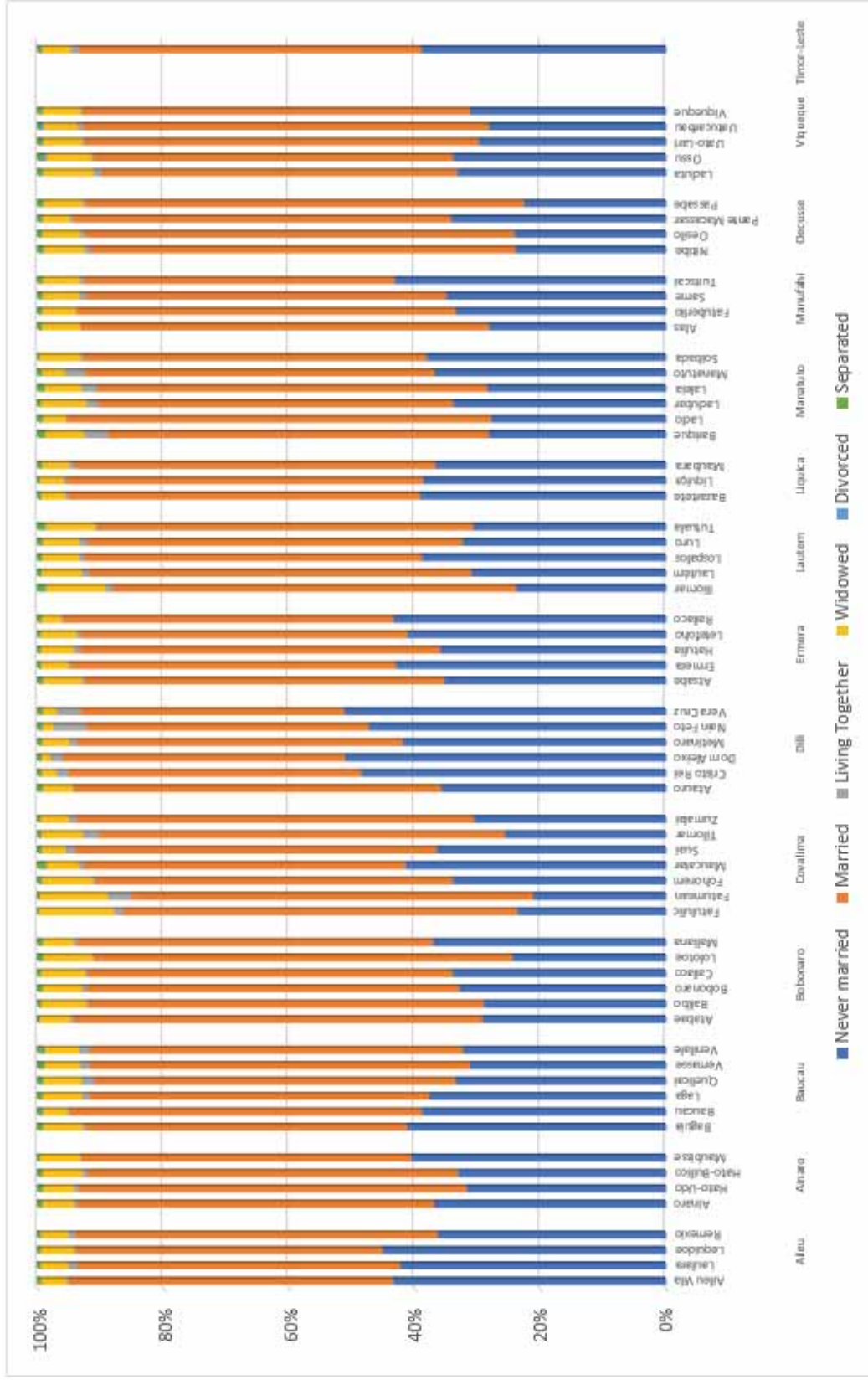
Figure 10: Male population aged 15 years and above by marital status, Administrative Posts, 2015 Census
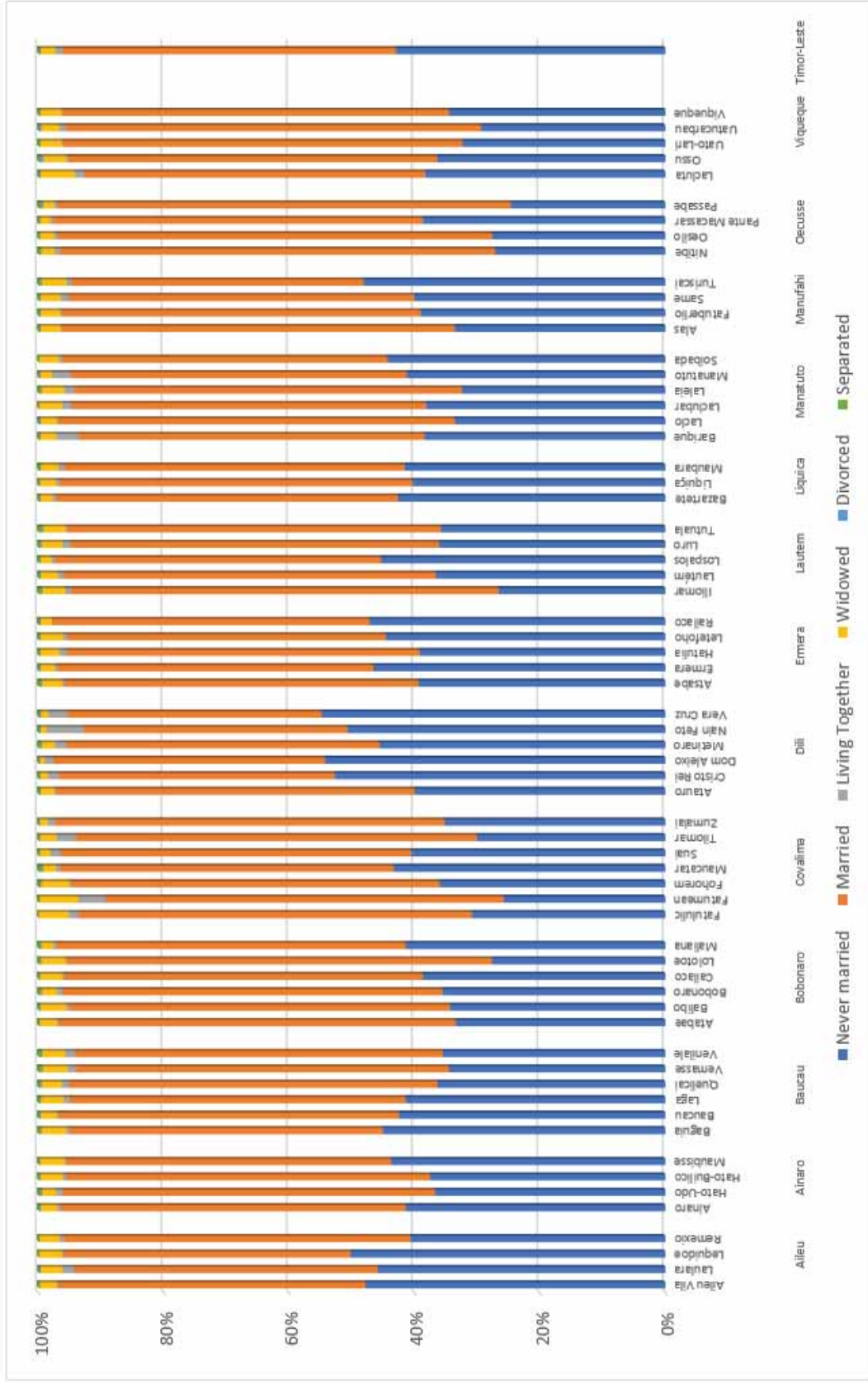
Figure 11: Female population aged 15 years and above by marital status, Administrative Posts, 2015 Census

Legend: Never married | Married | Living Together | Widowed | Divorced | Separated
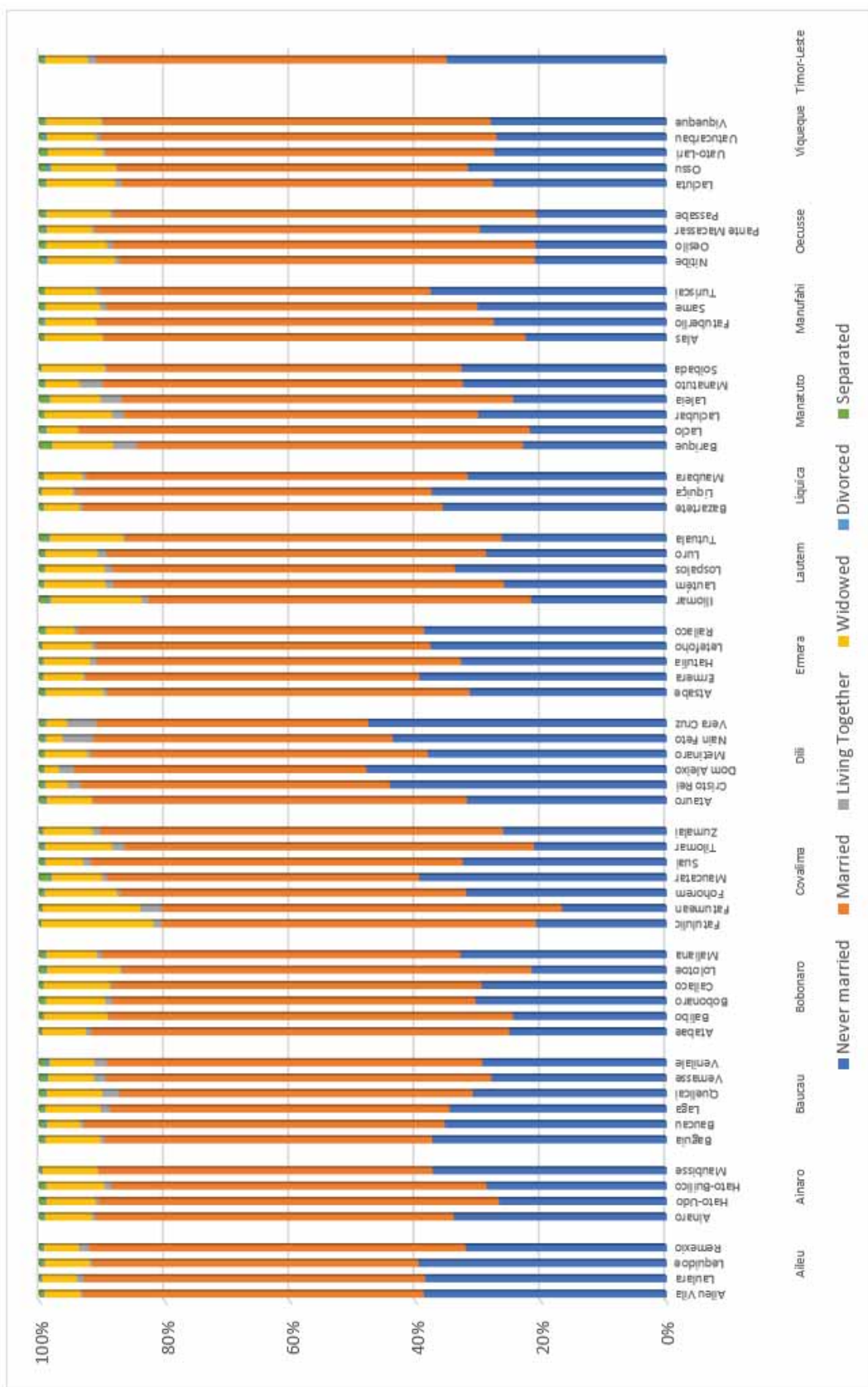
Marital status of women by background characteristics

This section examines marital status by background characteristics for women aged 15 years and over from the 2010 and 2015 Censuses. For purposes of comparison, the data presented in this sub-section are also available for the total population aged 15 years and over in the statistical annex (Table A.6) which is available on the General Directorate of Statistics website at: http://www.statistics.gov.tl/category/publications/census-publications/

Table 2 presents data on marital status of women from the 2010 and 2015 Censuses. The status of never married increased from 31.8 per cent to 35.1 per cent between the 2010 and 2015 Censuses, with a slightly larger increase in rural areas of 3.9 percentage points in rural areas compared with 1.6 percentage points in urban areas (albeit from a lower base of 26.7 per cent in rural areas in 2010 as compared to 43.4 per cent in urban areas). There was a decline in women married, from 58.2 per cent to 56 per cent between the two censuses, with a fairly similar magnitude in both rural and urban contexts (albeit from a lower base in urban contexts). Living together with a partner was reported for 2.3 per cent of urban women, but only 0.9 per cent of rural women in the 2015 Census. Widowhood decreased from 9 per cent of women aged over 15 years in the 2010 Census to 6.8 per cent of women aged over 15 years in the 2010 Census. Widowhood was more than twice as commonplace in rural areas than in urban areas in both censuses. The percentage of women divorced, though already very low in the 2010 Census had actually decreased further by the 2015 Census, whereas percentages separated saw a modest increase from very low levels in the 2010 Census.

Table 2: Marital status for women aged 15 years and above by place of residence, 2010 and 2015 Censuses

Background Characteristic	Marital status										
	Never married		Married		Living together	Widowed		Divorced		Separated	
	2010	2015	2010	2015	2015	2010	2015	2010	2015	2010	2015
Place of Residence											
Urban	43.4	45.0	50.9	48.4	2.3	5.0	3.5	0.5	0.3	0.3	0.5
Rural	26.7	30.6	61.5	59.4	0.9	10.7	8.3	0.6	0.2	0.4	0.6
Timor-Leste	31.8	35.1	58.2	56.0	1.3	9.0	6.8	0.6	0.2	0.4	0.6

Table 3 presents data on marital status by literacy and educational attainment. Higher proportions of never married women were literate in the 2010 and 2015 Censuses, with a small increase in the percentage of non-literate women who were never married in 2015 (17.1 per cent) compared to the 2010 Census (15.9 per cent). Modest decreases in the status 'married' were evident for literate women (a 2 percentage point decrease from 50.7 per cent in the 2010 Census), and for non-literate women, the percentage married rose by half of one percentage point to 67 per cent in the 2015 Census. Although the percentages were very low, a higher percentage of literate women were reported as living together with a partner (1.7 per cent) in the 2015 Census as compared to non-literate women (0.7 per cent). Widowhood was consistently higher for non-literate women in the 2010 Census (16.4 per cent) and the 2015 Censuses (14.2 per cent), which could be explained by the fact that widowhood is more prevalent among older women, who are also less inclined to be literate. The decrease in widowhood was greater among non-literate women (2.2 percentage points) than literate women (0.3 percentage points).

As level of education increases, the percentage of women reported as never having been married had a general tendency to increase. For example, in 2010, 30.3 per cent of women with only pre-primary education were reported as never having married (38.5 per cent in the 2015 Census), whereas 53.2 per cent of women with university education were reported as never having married (54.9 per cent in the 2015 Census). Conversely, the percentage of women reported as married generally decreased as education levels increase. In the 2015 Census, living together was generally more common for more educated women (for example, 2.6 per cent of women with university level education were reported as living together compared with only one per cent of women who had only attained primary level education. Widowhood can be observed to have declined as the level of education increases, which is consistent with the lower levels of widowhood for literate women than non-literate women.

Table 3: Marital status for women aged 15 years and above by literacy status and educational attainment, 2010 and 2015 Censuses

Background Characteristic	Marital status										
	Never married		Married		Living together	Widowed		Divorced		Separated	
	2010	2015	2010	2015	2015	2010	2015	2010	2015	2010	2015
Literacy											
Literate	46.4	46.9	50.7	48.7	1.7	2.2	1.9	0.5	0.2	0.3	0.5
Not Literate	15.9	17.1	66.5	67.0	0.7	16.4	14.2	0.7	0.3	0.5	0.7
Educational Attainment											
Pre-primary	30.3	38.5	62.3	55.7	1.3	6.5	3.7	0.8	0.2	0.2	0.7
Primary	32.8	30.7	62.5	63.8	1.0	3.7	3.5	0.6	0.3	0.4	0.6
Pre-Secondary	53.4	63.8	44.5	33.2	1.5	1.4	1.0	0.4	0.1	0.3	0.4
Secondary	52.2	39.4	45.9	56.3	2.1	1.1	1.4	0.4	0.2	0.3	0.6
Polytechnic / Diploma	39.2	29.5	58.4	64.7	1.8	2.1	2.8	0.2	0.7	0.1	0.6
University	53.2	54.9	45.4	41.3	2.6	0.9	0.7	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.3
Non formal	27.5	17.4	64.7	66.6	1.0	6.6	14.1	0.6	0.3	0.5	0.6

For Catholic women (Table 4), the percentage who were reported as never married increased by 3.2 percentage points between the 2010 and 2015 Censuses to 35.2 per cent of women aged 15 years and over. Meanwhile, the percentage of Catholic women who were reported as married decreased by 2.2 percentage points to 55.9 per cent in 2015. Only 1.3 per cent of Catholic women were reported as living with a partner in the 2015 Census. Widowhood among Catholic women decreased from 8.9 per cent in the 2010 Census to 6.8 per cent in the 2015 Census. Percentages of Catholic women divorced or separated were identical to those at national level, as would be expected since Catholicism was reported as the faith of 97.5 per cent of the female population in the 2015 Census.

The numbers of cases in other religious groups were small, and therefore their analysis should be treated with some caution. Noting this, we can still make the observation that lower percentages of women of faiths other than Catholicism were reported as being never married in the 2010 and 2015 Censuses, and consequently, higher percentages of women of faiths other than Catholicism were reported as married in both censuses. For other marital status categories (living together, widowed, divorced and separated) small numbers of women of faiths other than Catholicism negate any meaningful analysis.

Table 4: Marital status for women aged 15 years and above by religious affiliation, 2010 and 2015 Censuses

| Background Characteristic | Marital status | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Never married | | Married | | Living together | Widowed | | Divorced | | Separated | |
	2010	2015	2010	2015	2015	2010	2015	2010	2015	2010	2015
Religion											
Christian (Catholic)	32.0	35.2	58.1	55.9	1.3	8.9	6.8	0.6	0.2	0.4	0.6
Christian (Protestant/Evangelical)	28.2	30.8	60.5	59.4	0.8	10.5	8.0	0.6	0.2	0.5	0.8
Islam	22.1	28.7	70.9	65.4	0.6	5.4	3.9	1.2	0.7	0.5	0.7
Buddhist	21.3	29.6	73.0	58.7	6.1	2.8	5.1	1.1	-	1.7	0.5
Hindu	30.8	22.7	65.4	70.9	-	1.9	5.5	1.9	0.9	-	-
Traditional	5.2	13.1	59.5	57.5	4.2	34.6	23.6	0.3	-	0.4	1.6
Other	28.7	25.6	58.4	60.8	2.3	11.3	9.3	0.3	2.0	1.4	-

Table 5 examines the 2010 and 2015 Censuses marital status data for women aged 15 years and above by economic characteristics. The most common economic activity category for never married women was 'unemployed' in both the 2010 and 2015 Censuses, with employed as the least common category. The inactive category (which includes full time students and household work) was listed for 35.3 per cent of women in the 2010 Census and 49 per cent of women in the 2015 Census. In contrast to the employed and unemployed categories, this was the only category that increased between the two censuses. For employed women, the status 'married' increased from 63.3 per cent to 71.7 per cent and for unemployed women the status of married increased from 33.3 per cent to 40.1 per cent, whereas for women classed as inactive, the status of married decreased from 57.2 to 43.7 percent. This demonstrates that married women were increasingly absorbed into the labour force between the 2010 and 2015 Censuses, and most likely, unmarried women increasingly absorbed into remaining in full time education for longer. Widowed women were more common in the labour force (employed and unemployed) than in the inactive sector in both censuses. In the 2015 Census, women who were living together with a partner were more prevalent in the unemployed category (2.3 per cent) than the inactive (1.6 per cent) or the employed (1 per cent) categories. Divorced women were more inclined to be employed or unemployed than inactive in the 2010 Census, and separated women were more inclined to be employed or unemployed than inactive in the 2015 Census.

Turning to examine agricultural activity and marital status, in the 2015 Census, women in agricultural households were much more inclined to be married (57 per cent) than never married (33.9 per cent) compared

to non-agricultural household women (married: 49 per cent; never married 43 per cent). Whereas, women in non-agricultural households were more commonly living with a partner (2.6 per cent) than women in agricultural households (1.2 per cent). Women in agricultural households had higher prevalence of widowhood (7.2 per cent) compared to non-agricultural household women (4.6 per cent) in the 2015 Census. Since most agricultural households are rural households, there were similar patterns to the variations between rural and urban women's marital status (Table 2). Within agricultural households, there is practically no difference in marital status for female household members between those households mainly producing food for home consumption and those households mainly producing for sale.

Finally, turning to the quality of the housing within which women reside, there was a clear association between household quality and marital status. Larger percentages of never married women resided in higher quality housing than lower quality housing, and the converse is true of married women, with larger percentages of married women residing in lower quality housing than higher quality housing. An explanation for this could be that never married women were more likely than married women to live in urban settings, where housing quality is generally higher. Similarly, a higher percentage of women living together with a partner was found in higher than lower quality housing. In contrast, widows, who were more common in rural Timor-Leste had a tendency to live in lower quality housing than in higher quality housing.

Table 5: Marital status for women aged 15 years and above by economic characteristics, 2010 and 2015 Censuses

| Background Characteristic | Marital status | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Never married | | Married | | Living together | Widowed | | Divorced | | Separated | |
	2010	2015	2010	2015	2015	2010	2015	2010	2015	2010	2015
Economic Activity											
Employed	22.0	17.4	63.3	71.7	1.0	13.1	8.7	1.0	0.3	0.6	0.8
Unemployed	55.8	50.3	33.3	40.1	2.3	9.6	6.2	0.9	0.2	0.4	0.8
Inactive	35.3	49.0	57.2	43.7	1.6	6.9	5.3	0.3	0.1	0.3	0.4
Housing Quality											
Highest quality	47.5	46.8	48.5	47.3	2.4	3.5	2.8	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4
Second highest quality	43.7	40.7	50.7	51.9	1.8	5.0	4.8	0.4	0.2	0.3	0.6
Medium quality	34.6	32.1	56.4	58.4	1.0	8.0	7.6	0.6	0.2	0.4	0.6
Second lowest quality	25.3	28.0	62.2	60.6	0.8	11.4	9.7	0.7	0.3	0.5	0.7
Lowest quality	21.0	25.1	66.1	61.1	0.7	11.8	12.0	0.6	0.4	0.5	0.7
Agricultural Activity											
Agricultural household	-	33.9	-	57.0	1.2	-	7.2	-	0.2	-	0.6
Non-Agricultural household	-	43.0	-	49.0	2.6	-	4.6	-	0.3	-	0.6
Mainly/completely home consumption	-	33.6	-	57.2	1.3	-	7.1	-	0.2	-	0.6
Producing mainly for sale	-	33.3	-	57.7	1.2	-	6.8	-	0.4	-	0.6

To summarise, between the 2010 and 2015 Censuses, women who were never married had increasing propensity to be literate and more educated, compared to married women or widows. This was linked to increasing percentages of never married women reported to be economically inactive, which means more of these women were remaining in full time education for longer, delaying their marriage. Also, never married women and women living with a partner were more commonly found in higher quality housing, which was linked to their higher presence in urban areas. Between the 2010 and 2015 Censuses, married women had been increasingly absorbed into the labour force and widows were also more common in the labour force than in the inactive sector, because they need to support themselves financially through work. Married women and widows were found to more frequently inhabit agricultural households and to reside in lower quality housing, further emphasizing their vulnerable status compared to never married women.

Early marriage and co-habitation of adolescent women

This sub-section examines the background characteristics and geographical distribution of women aged 15 to 19 who were either married, or living with a partner in the 2015 Census. Table 6 presents the data by age, place of residence and Municipality. Across Timor-Leste, 6.2 per cent of 15 to 19 year old women were recorded as being married in the 2015 Census and 1.6 per cent were recorded as living with a partner. Combined, 7.8 percent of all women aged between 15 and 19 years were recorded as being married or living with a partner in the 2015 Census. Compared with the 2010 Census, the percentage of women in this age group who were married decreased by 1.4 percentage points from 7.6 per cent to 6.2 per cent. The percentage of women aged 15 to 19 years who were reported as married in the 2015 Census varied quite markedly between urban and rural places of residence, with 3.4 per cent of urban women reported as married as compared with 7.7 per cent of rural women. The status of living with a partner applied to 2.0 per cent of urban women in the 2015 Census as compared with 1.3 per cent of rural women.

In the 2015 Census, there were 193 15 year old girls recorded as living with a partner, 1.3 per cent of all 15 year old girls. For 16 year olds, 2.8 per cent of all women aged 16 years were reported as married and 1.3 per cent as living with a partner. From ages 16 to 19, the percentage of women reported in the 2015 Census as being married increased markedly, from 2.8 per cent at age 16 years to 15.5 per cent at age 19 years. The percentage of those living with a partner rose from 1.3 per cent at age 15 years to 1.9 per cent at age 19 years. The percentage of those either married or living with a partner also increased markedly from 1.3 per cent for age 15 years to 17.4 per cent for age 19 years.

Table 6: Marriage and cohabitation of women aged 15 to 19 by age, place of residence and Municipality, 2015 Census

Background Characteristic	Number of women married	Number of women living with a partner	Number of women married or living with a partner	% of women married	% of women living with a partner	% of women married or living with a partner	Number of women
Age							
15	-	193	193	-	1.3	1.3	14,976
16	381	179	560	2.8	1.3	4.1	13,686
17	686	192	878	5.2	1.4	6.6	13,305
18	1,269	249	1,518	9.9	1.9	11.8	12,832
19	1,795	223	2,018	15.5	1.9	17.4	11,577
Place of Residence							
Timor-Leste	4,131	1,036	5,167	6.2	1.6	7.8	66,376
Urban	784	455	1,239	3.4	2.0	5.4	22,898
Rural	3,347	581	3,928	7.7	1.3	9.0	43,478
Municipality							
Aileu	165	15	180	5.5	0.5	6.0	2,983
Ainaro	252	26	278	7.1	0.7	7.8	3,548
Baucau	364	108	472	5.3	1.6	6.9	6,861
Bobonaro	311	44	355	6.8	1.0	7.7	4,586
Covalima	276	102	378	7.5	2.8	10.3	3,666
Dili	628	365	993	3.8	2.2	6.0	16,541
Ermera	529	88	617	6.8	1.1	8.0	7,758
Lautem	189	69	258	5.1	1.9	7.0	3,682
Liquica	304	38	342	7.6	1.0	8.6	3,988
Manatuto	187	54	241	8.1	2.4	10.5	2,296
Manufahi	238	49	287	7.8	1.6	9.4	3,060
Oecusse	361	51	412	10.8	1.5	12.3	3,339
Viqueque	327	27	354	8.0	0.7	8.7	4,068

Figure 12 displays data on the percentage of women aged 15 to 19 years who were either married, or living with a partner by Municipality in the 2015 Census. The lowest percentage was in Dili (6.0 per cent) and the highest percentage was in Oecusse (12.3 per cent). Seven Municipalities were above the national average of 7.8 per cent.

Figure 12: Percentage of women aged 15 to 19 married, or living with a partner, Municipalities, 2015 Census
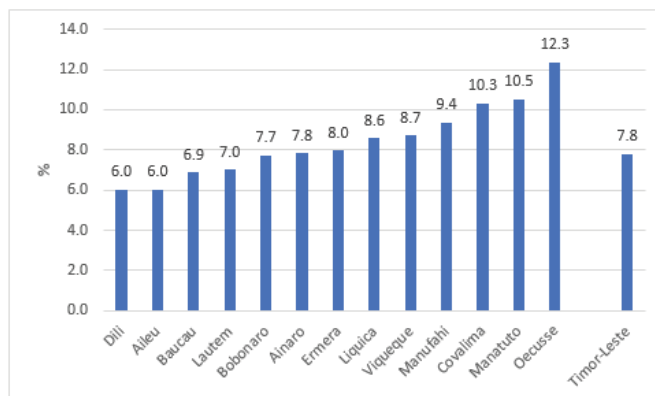
These data are mapped in Figure 13. The data are presented in equal interval categories, which means that the size of the bands are of equal width, and consequently there are differing frequencies of Municipalities in each of the bands. Higher percentages are demarked with darker shading. Oecusse has the darkest shade, having the highest percentage. Across the rest of the country, higher percentages of marriage in adolescence can be observed in Covalima and Manatuto. Percentages of adolescent women married in the 2015 Census were generally higher in the western Municipalities (except Aileu and Dili) and were lower in the east.

Figure 14 displays data on the percentage of women aged 15 to 19 who were either married, or living with a partner by Administrative Post from the 2015 Census. The lowest percentages were in Tatuala, Lautem (0.7 per cent), followed by Maukatar in Covalima (3.6 per cent) and the highest percentages were in Fatumean, also in Covalima (22.3 per cent) followed by Passabe in Oecusse (22.1 per cent). Forty Administrative Posts (62 per cent) had a higher percentage than the national average (7.8 per cent) and in 22 Administrative Posts, more than one in ten women aged 15 to 19 were either married, or living with a partner.

These data are mapped in Figure 15. The data are presented in equal interval categories, which means that the size of the bands are of equal width, and consequently there are differing frequencies of Administrative Posts in each of the bands. Higher percentages are demarked with darker shading. The pattern for adolescent marriage is similar, though less clear-cut, to the pattern for childbearing in adolescence, as displayed in Figure 22 of the thematic report on fertility (GDS, 2018). The distribution forms somewhat of a patchwork, but the general impression is that Administrative Posts with higher and highest percentages of adolescent marriage or cohabitation were those less-well connected, or further away from the Municipality capitals.

Figure 13: Percentage of women aged 15 to 19 married, or living with a partner, Municipalities, 2015 Census

Equal Interval
Categories

6.0 - 7.3
7.4 - 8.5
8.6 - 9.8
9.9 - 11.0
11.1 - 12.3

Lautém

Baucau

Viqueque

Manatuto

Manufahi

Aileu

Dili

Ermera

Ainaro

Liquiçá

Bobonaro

Covalima

Oecusse

17

Figure 14: Percentage of women aged 15 to 19 married, or living with a partner, Administrative Posts, 2015 Census

18

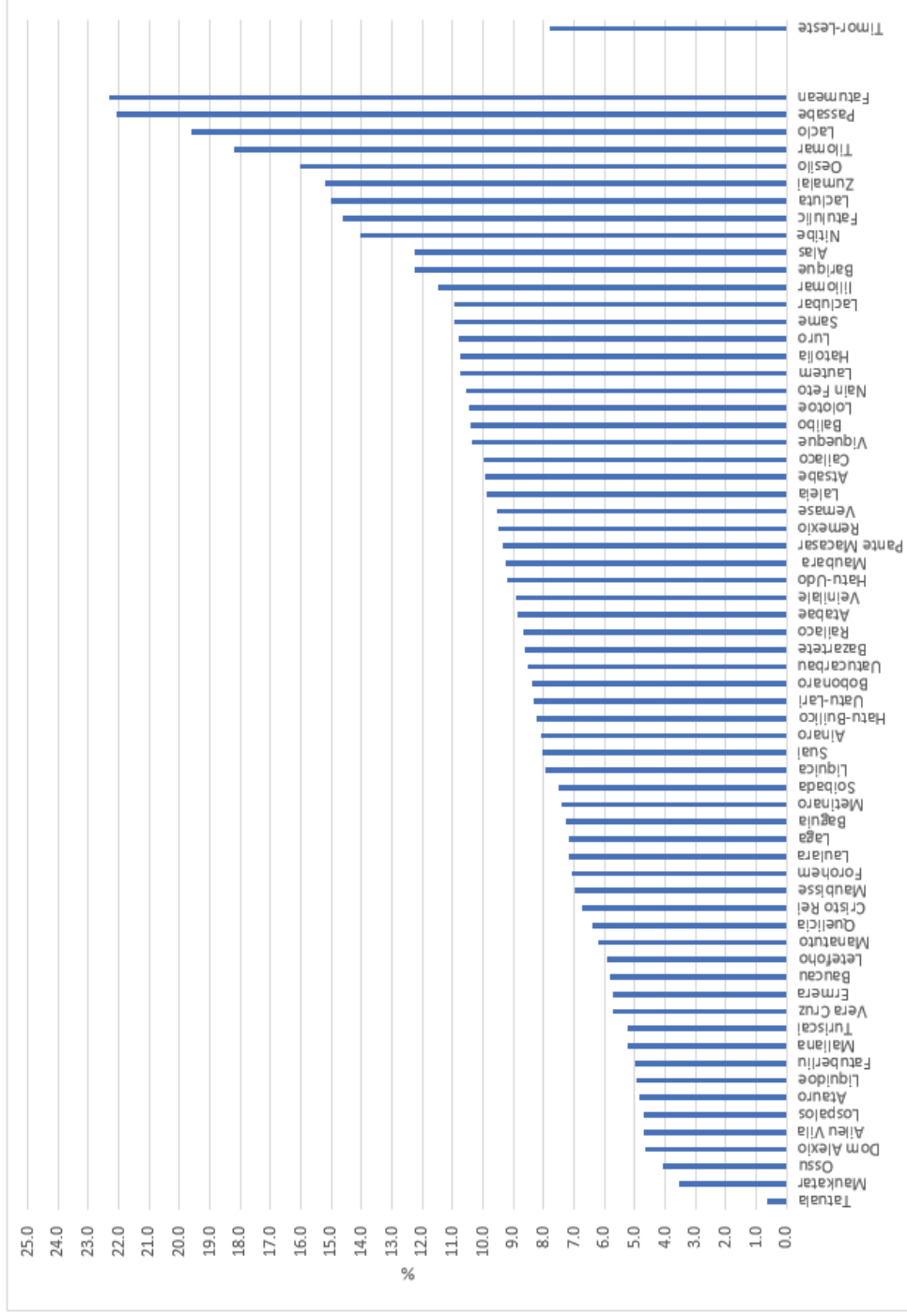**Figure 15: Percentage of women aged 15 to 19 married, or living with a partner, Administrative Posts, 2015 Census**

Equal Interval Categories

- 0.7 - 5.0
- 5.1 - 9.3
- 9.4 - 13.6
- 13.7 - 18.0
- 18.1 - 22.3

Boundaries
- Major Town
- Capital
- Road
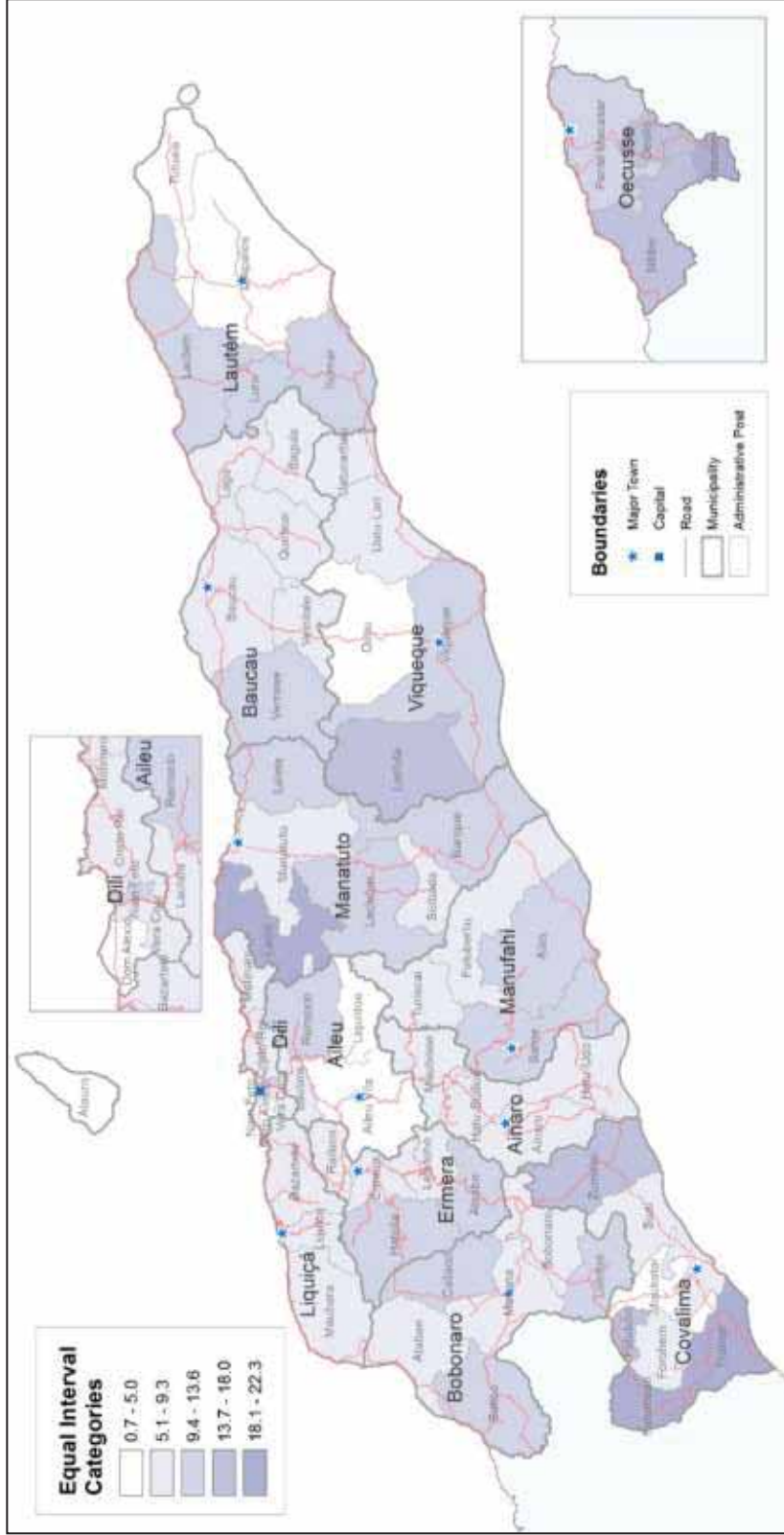- Municipality
- Administrative Post

Table 7 examines data on marriage and cohabitation of women aged 15 to 19 by literacy status and educational attainment from the 2015 Census. Married women were reported as constituting 13.8 per cent of all non-literate 15 to 19 year old women, whereas married adolescent women constituted only 5 per cent of all literate adolescent women. However, literate women were slightly more likely to be living with a partner (1.6 per cent) than non-literate women (1.4 per cent). Combined, 15.2 per cent of non-literate women were married or living with a partner as compared with only 6.6 per cent of literate women aged 15 to 19 years in the 2015 Census.

There was no clear pattern by level of educational attainment for the status 'married', however, more educated women had a higher propensity to be living with a partner, which is consistent with higher percentages of literate women living with a partner.

Table 7: Marriage and cohabitation of women aged 15 to 19 by literacy status and educational attainment, 2015 Census

Background Characteristic	Number of women married	Number of women living with a partner	Number of women married or living with a partner	% of women married	% of women living with a partner	% of women married or living with a partner	Number of women
Literacy							
Literate	2,842	904	3,746	5.0	1.6	6.6	57,017
Not-literate	1,289	132	1,421	13.8	1.4	15.2	9,359
Education attainment							
Pre-primary	72	17	89	5.2	1.2	6.4	1,381
Primary	1,007	146	1,153	9.2	1.3	10.5	10,944
Pre-Secondary	1,522	645	2,167	3.8	1.6	5.4	40,029
Secondary	520	139	659	7.8	2.1	9.9	6,648
Polytechnic / Diploma	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
University	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Non formal	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 8 presents data from the 2015 Census on marriage and cohabitation of women aged 15 to 19 years by economic characteristics. The proportion of employed women aged 15 to 19 years who were reported as married was 25.4 per cent, compared with 8.8 per cent for unemployed women and only 3.8 per cent for women reported as inactive (not in the labour force). Women living with a partner constituted 1.6 per cent of employed women, 2.1 per cent of unemployed women and 1.5 per cent of inactive women aged 15 to 19 years. Therefore, women aged 15 to 19 who were either married or living with a partner constituted 26.9 per cent of all employed women, 10.9 per cent of all unemployed women and 5.3 percent of women classed as inactive (not in the labour force) within this age group in the 2015 Census.

Women aged 15 to 19 who were reported as married in the 2015 Census constituted a larger percentage of women from agricultural households (6.4 per cent) as compared with non-agricultural households (4.4 per cent), whereas the opposite is the case for the percentage of women living with a partner, which was higher for the non-agricultural households (2.6 per cent) than the agricultural households (1.4 per cent). This is consistent with the urban-rural gap between the percentages of women aged 15 to 19 being married as compared with those living with a partner as displayed in Table 6. Married status was more prevalent (8.6 per cent) among women from agricultural households that were engaged in production mainly for sale than

households producing for home consumption (6.4 per cent). The number of women living with a partner in a household producing for home consumption was very low, and therefore, no meaningful assessment can be made.

In terms of the quality of the housing that women aged 15 to 19 occupied, a very clear pattern is apparent for married women, whereby these women constituted an increasingly larger percentage of all women for this age group as the quality of the housing they occupied deteriorated. Thus, married women made up 2.1 per cent of all women aged 15 to 19 in the highest quality of housing, and made up 11.3 per cent in the lowest quality of housing. The pattern for women living with a partner is the reverse, although the percentage difference was less marked – this was also consistent with larger percentages of married 15 to 19 year old women occupying urban households.

Table 8: Marriage and cohabitation of women aged 15 to 19 by economic characteristics, 2015 Census

Background Characteristic	Number of women married	Number of women living with a partner	Number of women married or living with a partner	% of women married	% of women living with a partner	% of women married or living with a partner	Number of women
Economic activity							
Employed	1,833	113	1,946	25.4	1.6	26.9	7,225
Unemployed	75	18	93	8.8	2.1	10.9	851
Inactive	2,141	870	3,011	3.8	1.5	5.3	57,042
Housing quality							
Highest quality	100	102	202	2.1	2.1	4.2	4,760
Second highest quality	901	386	1,287	4.0	1.7	5.7	22,466
Medium quality	2,110	390	2,500	7.5	1.4	8.9	28,182
Second lowest quality	982	141	1,123	9.3	1.3	10.6	10,598
Lowest quality	37	2	39	11.3	0.6	11.9	328
Agricultural activity							
Agricultural household	3,837	861	4,698	6.4	1.4	7.9	59,628
Non-Agricultural household	294	175	469	4.4	2.6	7.0	6,748
Mainly/completely home consumption	3,689	844	4,533	6.4	1.5	7.8	57,904
Producing mainly for sale	148	17	165	8.6	1.0	9.6	1,724

In summary, in the 2015 Census, married adolescent women were generally concentrated in the older teen ages and were more prevalent in rural areas, with the highest percentages in Oecusse and lowest in Dili. The percentages of the age group married had declined, and background characteristics improved marginally, but they were still a vulnerable population group. Married adolescent women had greater propensity to be non-literate and were much more likely to be in the labour force group (and therefore not in education) than other women of the same age. Married adolescent women were more prevalent in agricultural households and a higher percentage of women from agricultural households that mainly sell produce were married compared to women from agricultural households producing mainly for home consumption. These women were more prevalent in poorer quality of household circumstances, which includes lower access to improved sanitation and safe water supplies. Women living with partners exhibited different characteristics to married adolescent women, being more inclined to be literate urban dwellers. Unemployed women were more likely to be living with a partner than the other marital states when compared to employed or inactive women.

In the 2015 Census, widowhood was higher among women aged 15 years or above (6.8 per cent) than men aged 15 years or above (2.3 per cent). Figure 16 shows that the highest percentage of widowed women aged 15 years and above was in Lautem (10.2 per cent), followed by Viqueque (9.3 per cent) and Bobonaro (9.2 per cent), and the lowest percentage were recorded in Dili (3.0 per cent). Between the 2010 and 2015 Censuses, widowhood among women declined in all Municipalities except Oecusse, where there was no change (8.6 per cent). The largest percentage point decline was in Alieu (by 3.4 per cent from 9.3 per cent in 2010) and the smallest decrease was in Manatuto (0.9 per cent).

Figure 16: Percentage of women aged 15 years and above widowed, Municipalities, 2015 Census
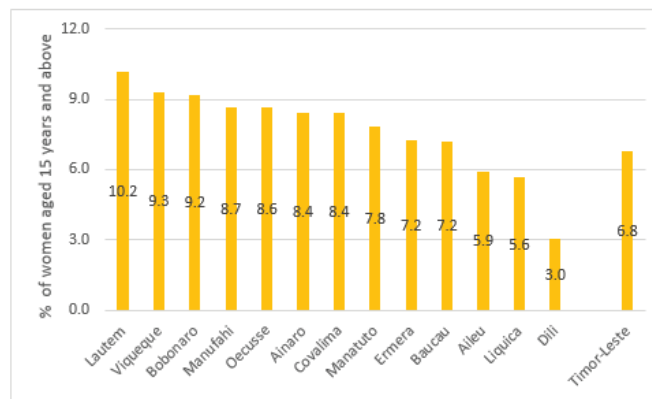
Figure 17 shows that the highest percentage of widowed women aged 60 years and above was also in Lautem, where almost four in ten women were classified as widowed in the 2015 Census (39.5 per cent), followed by Ermera (35.8 per cent), and the lowest percentage was recorded in Liquica (25.1 per cent) with Dili at second lowest (27 per cent). In seven Municipalities, more than 3 in ten women aged 60 years or more were recorded as widows in the 2015 Census. Women in remote, rural Municipalities may be particularly susceptible to insecure livelihoods if they are widowed, and this is particularly the case for older women.

Figure 17: Percentage of women aged 60 years and above widowed, Municipalities, 2015 Census

22
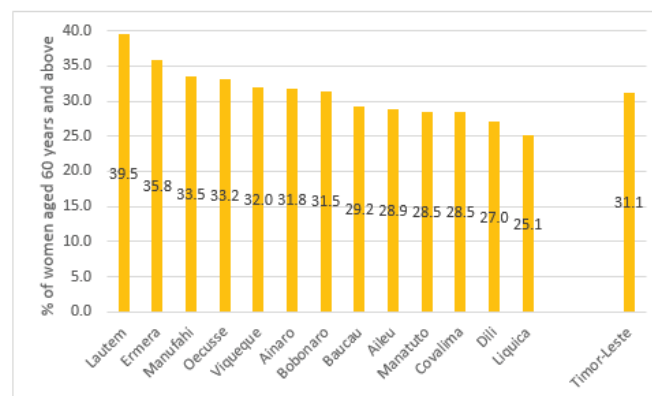
Single-parent households

In this analysis, single-parent households are defined as households with children aged less than 18 years, headed by a parent whose marital status was never married, widowed, divorced or separated. In the 2015 Census, there were approximately 205 thousand private households, and only 7.5 thousand of these were single-parent households. This means that 3.7 per cent of all households were single-parent households, a decline of 1.3 percentage points from 5 per cent of all households in the 2010 Census (Table 9). In the 2015 Census, the largest percentage of single-parent household heads were aged between 45 and 54 years (30.5 per cent), which was also the most common age group in the 2010 Census, when 27.5 per cent of household heads were in this age bracket. A tendency towards concentration of single-parent households into this age group is notable, but slight increases for the 15–24 and 65+ age groups can also be seen in comparison of the 2010 and 2015 Census data. Females headed more than seven out of ten single-parent households in the 2015 Census, an increase of almost an additional one in ten single-parent households compared to the 2010 Census. By place of residence, almost eight out of ten single-parent households were in rural areas in both the 2010 and 2015 Censuses. The distribution of single-parent households was skewed more towards rural areas (78.2 per cent) than the distribution of private households overall (73.4 per cent of private households were classed as rural in the 2015 Census). This is because widowhood is more commonplace in rural Timor-Leste, but may also be due to migration of fathers to urban areas for work.

Table 9: Percentage distribution of single-parent households by age, sex and place of residence, 2010 and 2015 Censuses

Background characteristics	Percentage	
	2010	2015
Age group of head of household		
15-24	2.0	2.9
25-34	12.8	10.6
35-44	26.9	23.6
45-54	27.5	30.5
55-64	21.3	18.7
65+	9.4	13.7
Sex of head of household		
Male	37.0	27.8
Female	63.0	72.2
Place of residence		
Urban	20.5	21.8
Rural	79.5	78.2
Timor-Leste	5.0	3.7

Figure 18 displays the age structure distribution of single-parent household heads from the 2015 Census. The male-female gap is clearly apparent at all ages and particularly so in the more common age groups for single-parent household heads. The number of female-headed single-parent households peaked at almost nine hundred in age group 50 to 54 years, whereas the peak for males was just over 300 in age group 45 to 49 years.

Figure 18: Age structure of single-parent household heads by sex, 2015 Census
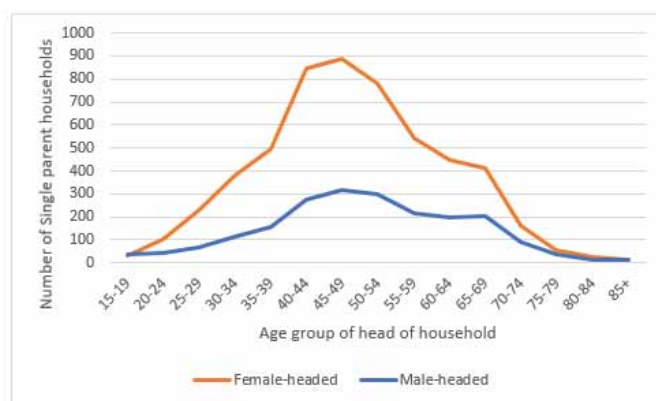
Table 10: Percentage distribution of single-parent households by number of children and marital status of the household head, 2010 and 2015 Censuses

Background characteristics	Percentage	
	2010	2015
Number of children		
1	39.3	40.3
2	25.5	26.1
3	16.8	16.5
4	9.6	10.0
5+	8.8	7.2
Marital status		
Never married	16.3	8.0
Living together	-	-
Widowed	72.7	80.4
Divorced	6.5	3.0
Separated	4.6	8.6

The distribution of single-parent households by the number of children under 18 years of age living within these households is presented in Table 10. About four-in-ten households had one resident child in the 2010 and 2015 Censuses, and approximately one quarter of households had two resident children. Households with three resident children constituted 17 per cent in both censuses, and one-in-ten households had four resident children. In the 2015 Census, 7 per cent of households had five or more resident children, a decline from 9 per cent in the 2010 Census.

The vast majority of household heads were widowed (eight-in-ten in the 2015 Census, and 73 per cent in the 2010 Census). There was a decline in the percentage of household heads reported as divorced (from 6.5 per cent in the 2010 Census to 3 per cent in the 2015 Census), whilst the percentage reported to be separated

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almost doubled (from 4.6 per cent in the 2010 Census to 8.6 per cent in the 2015 Census). The national average percentage for separation in the 2015 Census was 0.3 percent, therefore, a percentage of 8.6 per cent of separated households heads is consistent with the possibility that spouses (predominately fathers) have migrated to Dili seeking work. The percentage of women heading single-parent households who reported as never being married halved between the 2010 Census (16.3 per cent) and the 2015 Census (8 per cent).

Table 11: Percentage distribution of single-parent households by religion, 2010 and 2015 Censuses

Background characteristics	Percentage	
	2010	2015
Religion of head of household		
Catholic	95.4	97.4
Protestant / Evangelical	3.6	2.1
Islam	0.3	0.2
Buddhism	0.1	0.0
Hindu	-	0.1
Traditional	0.5	0.1
Other	0.1	0.1

Table 11 displays data on single-parent householders by religion. Almost all (97.4 per cent) single-parents were Catholics in the 2015 Census, a slight increase on the 2010 Census (95.4 per cent), and 2.1 per cent of householders were Protestant, a slight decline from 3.6 per cent in the 2010 Census. For all other faiths, the percentages were negligible.

Table 12 displays data on single-parent householders by literacy status and educational attainment. In the 2015 Census, over six-in-ten household heads were non-literate, a slight decline from over two-thirds in the 2010 Census. The decline is likely to be attributable to less-literate older single-parents dying off and increasing levels of literacy in Timor-Leste more generally.

Table 12: Percentage distribution of single-parent households by literacy and educational attainment of the head of household, 2010 and 2015 Censuses

Background characteristics	Percentage	
	2010	2015
Literacy status of head of household		
Literate	32.5	37.7
Not-literate	67.5	62.3
Educational attainment of head of household		
Pre-primary	66.1	3.5
Primary	21.4	38.2
Pre-Secondary	8.4	18.2
Secondary	2.6	25.2
Polytechnic / Diploma / University	1.6	10.3
Non formal	1.6	4.7

There was also a clear association between lower levels of educational attainment for single-parents, such that in the 2010 Census, 66.1 per cent of single-parents had no education or were educated to pre-primary level, compared with 1.6 per cent of single-parents educated to polytechnic, diploma, or university level. The pattern persists in the 2015 Census, where 38.2 per cent of household heads were educated to primary level, whereas 10.3 per cent were educated to polytechnic, diploma, or university level. In the 2015 Census as compared to the 2010 Census, the main difference to note is that higher percentages of single-parents had higher levels of education. The reason for this shift is that the population of Timor-Leste became more educated. Never-the-less, in 2015 it was still notable that single-parents were generally less-well educated and more prone to have poor levels of literacy, which renders these householders and their families more vulnerable.

Table 13 displays data on single-parent households by economic characteristics. In the 2015 Census, 81.9 per cent of single-parent householders were employed, and 16.5 per cent were classified as inactive. Of those classed as inactive, 73.5 per cent were household workers, and 91 per cent of these household workers were women. Since the 2010 Census, those employed declined (by 12.4 per cent), whilst the inactive group increased by 12 per cent because a higher percentage were classifying as household workers.

In the 2015 Census, almost eight out of ten single-parent households were agricultural households, and 97.5 per cent of these households were engaged in food production chiefly for home consumption.

In terms of the quality of housing occupied by single-parent households, there was a tendency for occupancy of lower quality housing in the 2010 Census. This tendency had reduced by the 2015 Census. However, only very small percentages of single-parent households occupied the highest quality of housing in either the 2010 or the 2015 Censuses.

Table 13: Percentage distribution of single-parent households by economic characteristics, 2010 and 2015 Censuses

Background characteristics	Percentage	
	2010	2015
Economic activity		
Employed	94.3	81.9
Unemployed	1.2	1.6
Inactive	4.5	16.5
Housing quality		
Highest quality	0.5	3.9
Second highest quality	13.6	23.7
Medium quality	27.1	46.7
Second lowest quality	48.5	24.7
Lowest quality	10.4	1.0
Agricultural Activity		
Agricultural Household	-	79.0
Non-Agricultural Household	-	21.0
Mainly/completely home consumption	-	97.5
Producing mainly for sale	-	2.5

Figure 19 displays data from the 2015 Census on the percentage of all private households that were single-parent households by Municipality. The highest percentage was in Covalima (5.1 per cent) followed by Ermera (4.9 per cent) and the lowest percentage was in Dili (2.8 per cent) followed by Manatuto (2.9 per cent). Six Municipalities (Covalima, Ermera, Ainaro, Lautem, Oecusse and Bobonaro) had a higher percentage of single-parent households than the national average of 3.7 per cent.

Figure 19: The percentage of households that were single-parent households, Municipalities, 2015 Census

Figure 20 maps the distribution of private households that were single-parent households by Municipality. The data are presented in equal interval categories, which means that the size of the bands are of equal width, and consequently there are differing frequencies of Municipalities in each of the bands. Higher percentages are demarked with darker shading. Percentages of households that were headed by single-parents were highest in Lautem and Oecusse. It is also notable from Figure 20 that excluding Dili and Liquica, the percentages were higher in the west (and especially in Covalima, Ermera and Ainaro).

Figure 20: The percentage of households that were single-parent households, Municipalities, 2015 Census

Figure 21 displays data from the 2015 Census on the percentage of female-headed private households that were single-parent households by Municipality. It is notable that compared with the proportion of all households that were single-parent households (3.7 per cent), the percentage of female-headed households that were single-parent households were very much higher (16.8 per cent).

The highest percentage of female-headed households that were single-parent households were in Covalima (28.8 per cent), followed by Oecusse (22.2 per cent). Covalima therefore had 6.6 per cent more female-headed households that were single-parent households than the next highest Municipality. The lowest percentage was in Baucau (11.5 per cent) followed by Viqueque. Covalima, Oecusse, Manufahi, Ermera, Ainaro, Bobonaro and Aileu all had a higher percentage of female-headed households that were single-parent households than the national average of 16.8 per cent.

Figure 21: The percentage of female-headed households that were single-parent households, Municipalities, 2015 Census
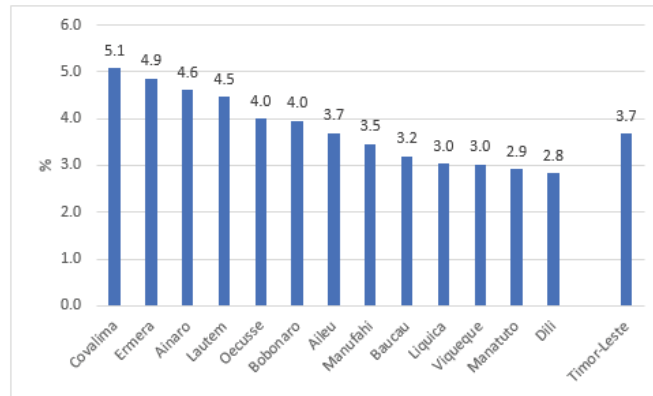

Figure 22 maps the distribution of female-headed households that were single-parent households by Municipality. The data are presented in equal interval categories, which means that the size of the bands are of equal width, and consequently there are differing frequencies of Municipalities in each of the bands. Higher percentages are demarked with darker shading. There is a very clear pattern in the map. There were higher percentages of female-headed households that were single-parent households in the west and in particular the south-west of Timor-Leste, and in Oecusse.

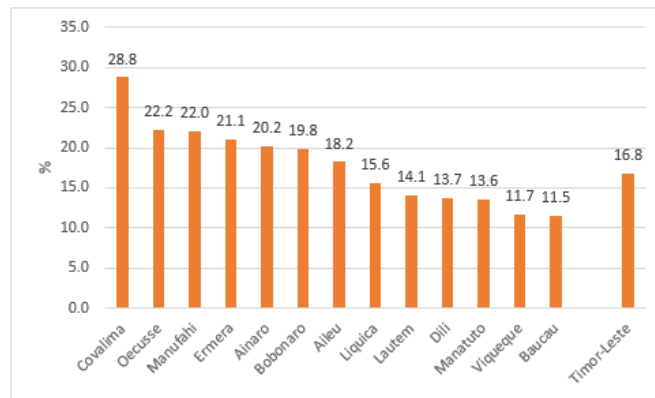**Figure 22: The percentage of female-headed households that were single-parent households, Municipalities, 2015 Census**
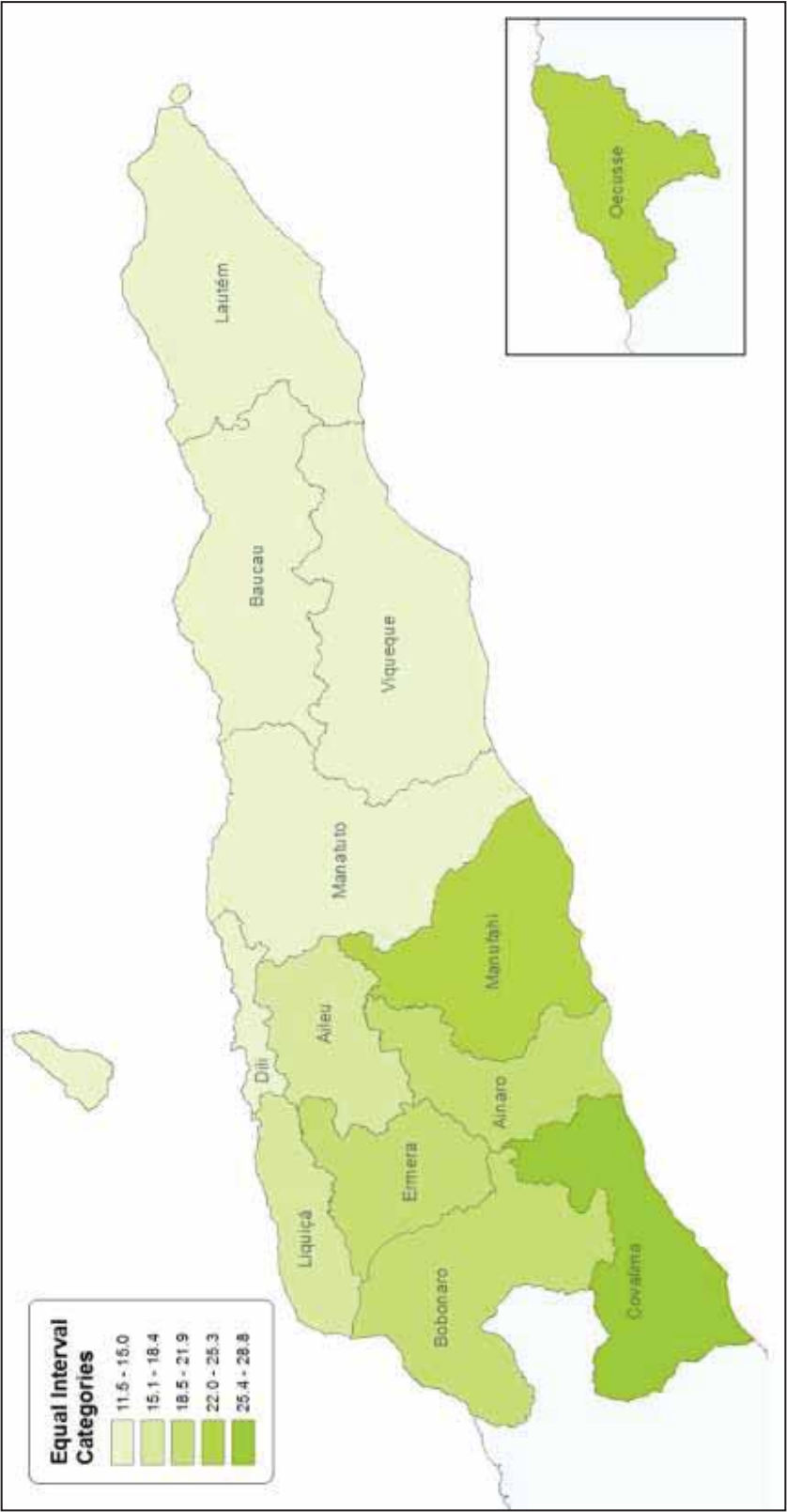
Figure 23 displays data from the 2015 Census on the percentage of all private households that were single-parent households by Administrative Post. The highest percentage was in Fatumean (10 per cent), followed by Fatulilic (8.9 per cent), both in Covalima, and the lowest percentage was in Laclo, Manatuto (1.5 per cent) followed by Alas, Manufahi (1.9 per cent). Thirty-five Administrative Posts (54 per cent) had a higher percentage of single-parent households than the national average of 3.7 per cent and in 11 Administrative Posts, more than 5 per cent of all private households were single-parent households.

Figure 24 displays data from the 2015 Census on the percentage of all female-headed households that were single-parent households by Administrative Post. The highest percentage was in Fatumean (49.1 per cent), followed by Fatulilic (46.7 per cent), both in Covalima. This means that almost half of all female-headed households in these Administrative Posts were single-parent households. Thirty-five Administrative Posts (54 per cent) had a higher percentage of single-parent households than the national average of 16.8 per cent and in eight Administrative Posts, one quarter or more of all female-headed private households were single-parent households. The lowest percentage was in Uatucarbau, Viqueque (5.4 per cent) followed by Laleia, Manatuto (7.1 per cent).

Figure 25 maps the distribution of the percentage of all private households that were single-parent households by Administrative Post. The data are presented in equal interval categories, which means that the size of the bands are of equal width, and consequently there are differing frequencies of Administrative Posts in each of the bands. Higher percentages are demarked with darker shading. The pattern is uniformly high in Oecusse and in Lautem (except for Tutuala in the extreme east of the country, where percentages were higher). Higher percentages in Covalima, Ermera and Ainaro were concentrated in the remoter rural Administrative Posts.

Figures 26 maps the distribution of the percentage of all female-headed households that were single-parent households by Administrative Post. If anything, this map is even more clear-cut than Figure 25. Higher percentages of female-headed single-parent households were located in mountainous Administrative Posts that are not served by road and isolated from Municipality capitals in the remote extreme west of Covalima, Ermera and Oecusse and in isolated pockets such as Turiscai in Manufahi and Lacluta in Viqueque.

Single-parent households, and particularly female-headed single-parent households must be among the most vulnerable households in Timor-Leste, as the census data demonstrates that they were predominately headed by middle-aged women, lack literacy and secondary level education, lived in poor quality housing (generally lacking access to electricity, clean drinking water and adequate sanitation) and supported their family members through subsistence agriculture. These households were most common in more remote Municipalities of Timor-Leste.

Figure 23: The percentage of households that were single-parent households, Administrative Posts, 2015 Census

Figure 24: The percentage of female-headed households that were single-parent households, Administrative Posts, 2015 Census

Figure 25: The percentage of households that were single-parent households, Administrative Post, 2015 Census

Equal Interval
Categories

1.5 - 3.2
3.3 - 4.9
5.0 - 6.6
6.7 - 8.3
8.4 - 10.0

Boundaries

★ Major Town
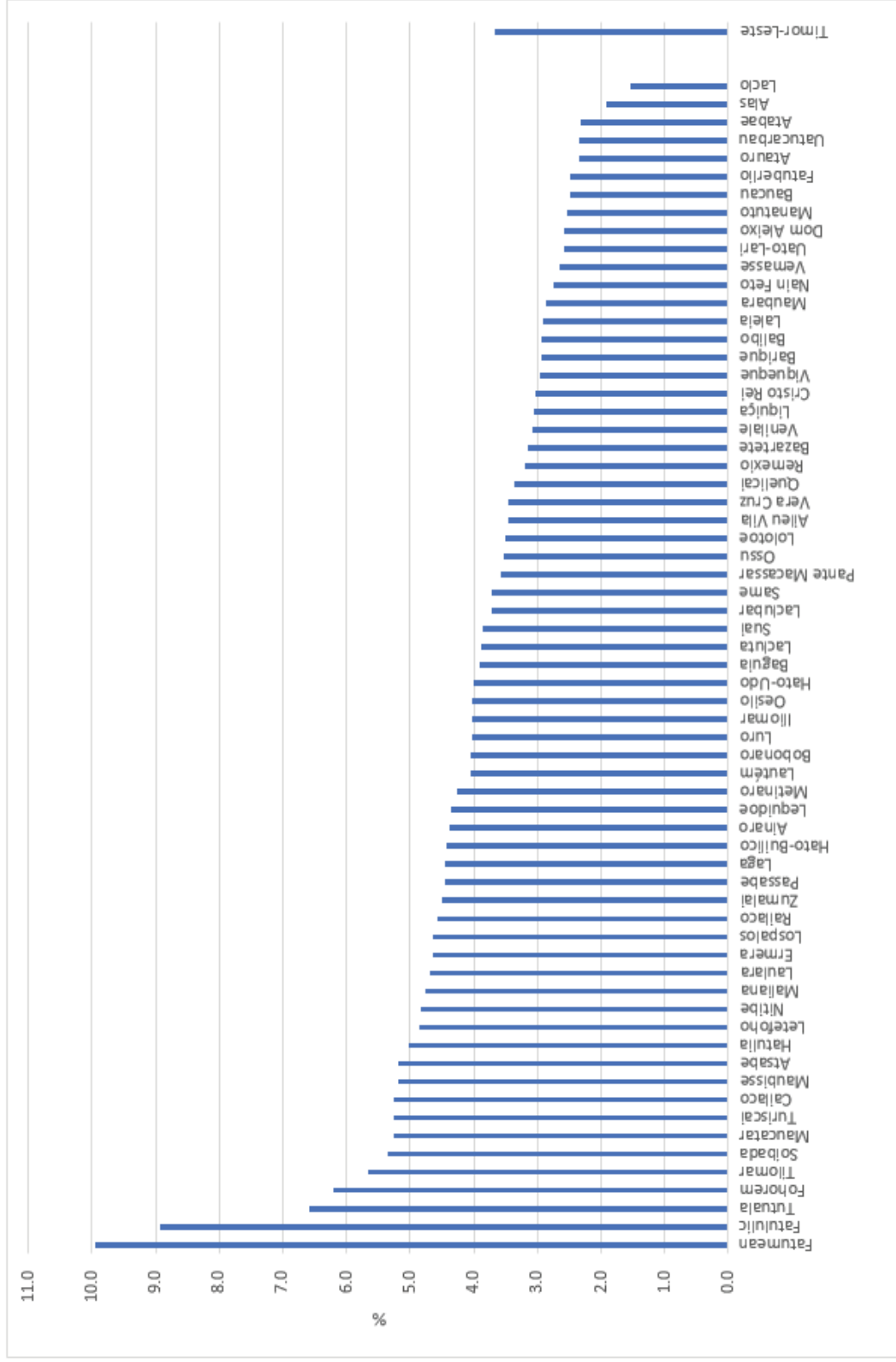■ Capital
Road
Municipality
Administrative Post

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Figure 26: The percentage of female-headed households that were single-parent households, Administrative Post, 2015 Census
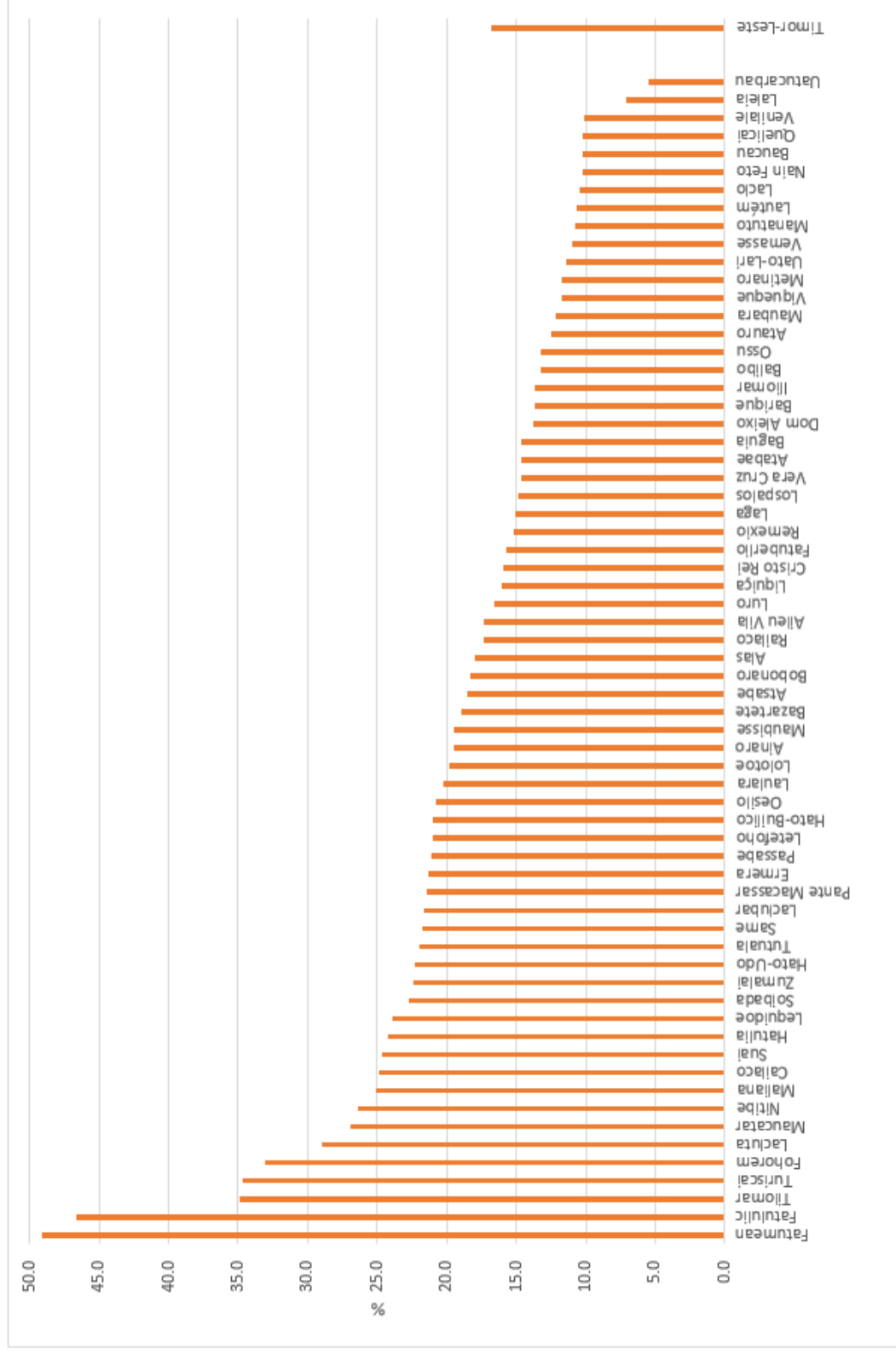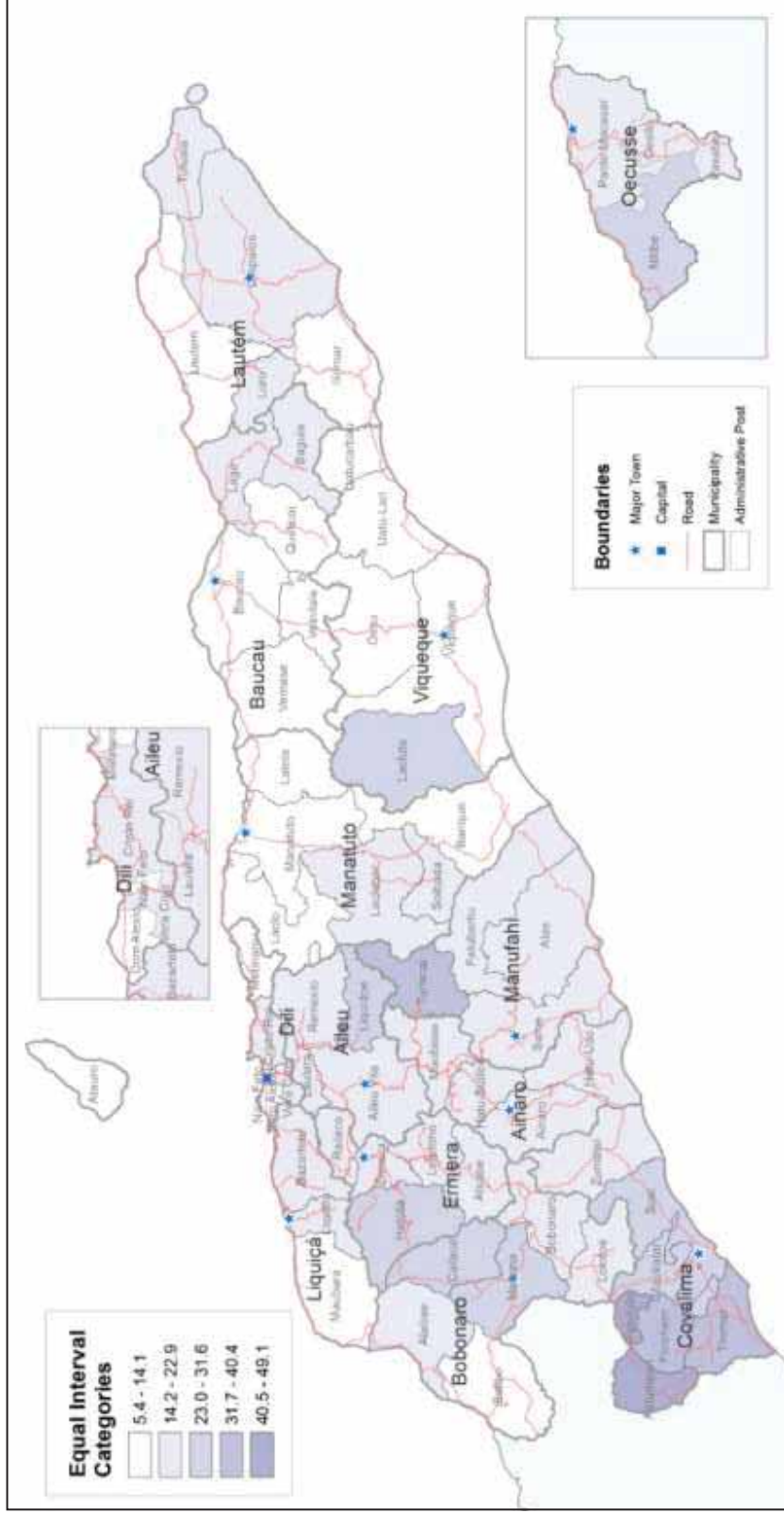

Equal Interval Categories
- 5.4 - 14.1
- 14.2 - 22.9
- 23.0 - 31.6
- 31.7 - 40.4
- 40.5 - 49.1

Boundaries
- ★ Major Town
- ■ Capital
- Road
- Municipality
- Administrative Post

**Chapter 3: Patterns and differentials of age at first marriage**

The singulate mean age at marriage (SMAM) is the average length of single life expressed in years among those who marry before age 55. In the 2015 Census, the SMAM was 26.7 years for both sexes, 28.4 years for males and 25 years for females (Figure 27).

Figure 27: Singulate mean age at marriage, by sex, and urban and rural location, 2015 Census
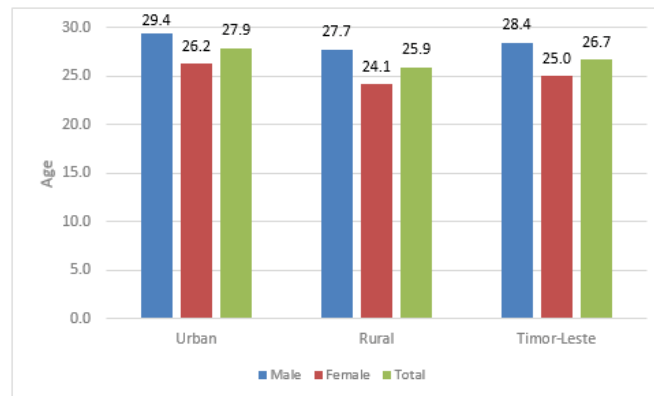
In the 2010 Census, the SMAM was 25.8 years and therefore the SMAM had increased by 0.9 years between the 2010 and 2015 Censuses. The corresponding increase was 0.6 years for males and 1.1 years for females. Casting further backwards, the 2004 Census SMAM was 24.9 years for both sexes, 27 years for males and 22.8 years for females. Figure 28 illustrates that the male-female gap in SMAM reduced from 4.2 years to 3.4 years between the 2004 and 2015 Censuses, indicating that males and females are tending to marry partners closer to their own age than in the past.

Figure 28: Singulate mean age at marriage, by sex, 2004, 2010 and 2015 Censuses
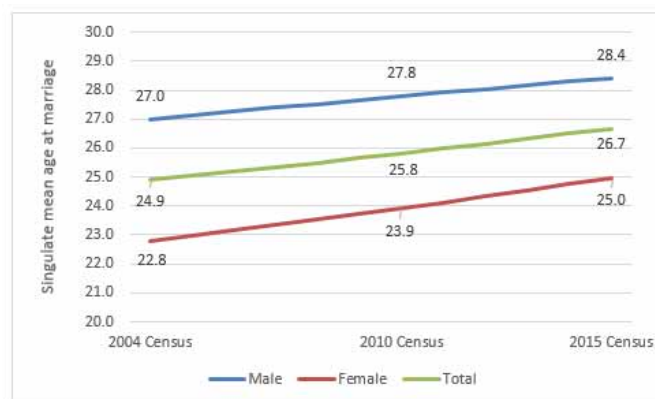
In urban areas in 2015, the SMAM was two years higher (27.9 years) and in rural areas the SMAM was 0.8 years lower (25.9 years) compared to the SMAM for Timor-Leste (Table 14). Between urban and rural areas in 2015, the difference in the SMAM was 1.7 years for males and 2.1 years for females. In the 2010 Census the gap between urban and rural areas was the same for males (1.7 years), but the gap had increased by 0.2 years for females by the 2015 Census. Within urban areas in 2015, the difference in SMAM between males and females was 3.2 years, less than the difference in rural areas (3.6 years). The male-female gap in the 2010

Census was 3.8 years in urban areas and 4.0 years in rural areas. Therefore, the gap in SMAM for females relative to males has closed slightly in both rural and urban areas, with more progress in gap closure in urban than in rural areas.

Table 14: Singulate mean age at marriage, urban and rural locations, 2010 and 2015 Censuses

Background Characteristics	Singulate Mean Age at Marriage					
	Male		Female		Both sexes	
	2010	2015	2010	2015	2010	2015
Place of Residence						
Urban	28.8	29.4	25.0	26.2	27.0	27.9
Rural	27.1	27.7	23.1	24.1	25.0	25.9
Timor-Leste	27.8	28.4	23.9	25.0	25.8	26.7

Figures 29 and 30 present SMAM data for the Municipalities by sex. The rank order of Municipalities is the same for both males (Figure 29), and for females (Figure 30). The youngest SMAM data were in Viqueque (26.1 years for males and 22.8 years for females). In the 2010 Census, Viqueque also had the youngest SMAM data for both males (25.9 years) and females (22.3 years). Thus, the SMAM in Viqueque increased by only 0.2 years for males and 0.5 years for females between the 2010 and 2015 Censuses.

The Municipality with the oldest SMAM in the 2010 Census was Dili, and this was also the case in the 2015 Census. In 2010, the male SMAM was 29 years and the female SMAM was 25.3 years. By the 2015 Census, the male SMAM had increased to 29.7 years and the female SMAM had increased to 26.6 years. Thus, the SMAM in Dili increased by 0.7 years for males and 1.3 years for females between the 2010 and 2015 Censuses.

In the 2015 Census, only Dili, Aileu, Lautem and Ermera had a SMAM for males that was equal to or higher than the national average male SMAM of 28.4 years. For females, only Dili and Aileu had a SMAM that was equal to or higher than the national average female SMAM of 25 years.

In the 2015 Census, the largest gap in the SMAM for males and females was in Oecusse (4.2 years) and the smallest gap was in Liquica (3.0 years). Baucau, Dili, Liquica and Viqueque had a smaller gap in the SMAM for males and females than the national average gap of 3.4 years.

Figure 29: Male singulate mean age at marriage, Municipalities, 2015 Census
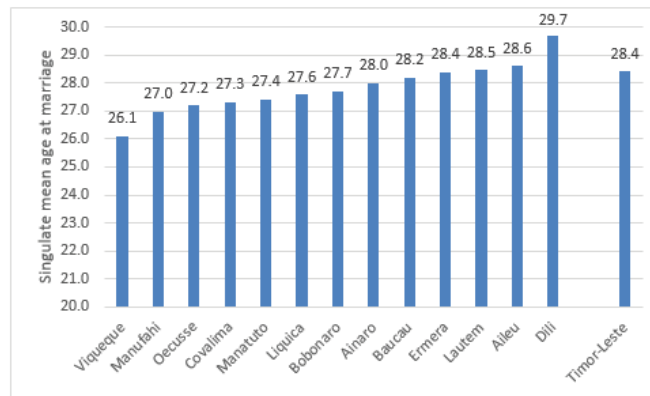

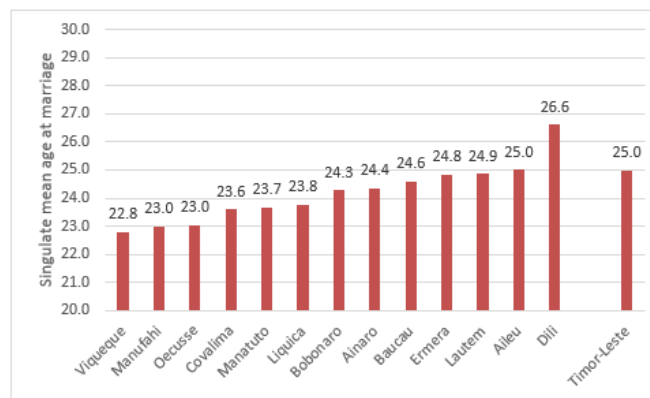**Figure 30: Female singulate mean age at marriage, Municipalities, 2015 Census**

Figure 31 maps the 2015 Census data on SMAM for both sexes by Municipality. The data are presented in equal interval categories, which means that the size of the bands are of equal width, and consequently there are differing frequencies of Municipalities in each of the bands. Higher percentages are demarked with darker shading. There is a clear north-south divide in the country. With the exception of Mantuto, the SMAM was uniformly higher in the north and lower in the south.

Figure 32 displays the SMAM data for males by Administrative Post. The youngest SMAM was in Viqueque Administrative Post (25.3 years), followed by Fatululic, Covalima (25.4 years) and the oldest SMAM was in Vera Cruz (31.2 years) followed by Nain Feto (30.4 years), both of which are in Dili. In 44 Administrative Posts, the SMAM was equal to or lower than the national SMAM for males (28.4 years).

Figure 33 displays the SMAM for females by Administrative Post. The youngest SMAM was in Laclo, Manatuto (21.1 years), followed by Fatululic, Covalima (21.2 years) and Viqueque Administrative Post (21.4 years). The oldest SMAM was in Vera Cruz (28 years) followed by Nain Feto (27 years), both of which are in Dili. In 49 Administrative Posts, the SMAM was equal to or lower than the national SMAM for females (25 years).

The largest gap in the SMAM for males and females was in Laclo, Manatuto (5.0 years) and the smallest gap was in Fohorem, Covalima (1.6 years). Only 23 Administrative Posts (35 per cent of all Administrative Posts) had a smaller gap between the male and female SMAM than the national average gap of 3.4 years.

Figure 34 maps the SMAM for both sexes by Administrative Post. The data are presented in equal interval categories, which means that the size of the bands are of equal width, and consequently there are differing frequencies of Administrative Posts in each of the bands. Higher percentages are demarked with darker shading. The north-south divide observed in Figure 31 is clearly visible. Manatuto is the exception, with Laclo constituting the only Administrative Post on the north coast having a very low SMAM (excluding western Oecusse, where two out of three Administrative Posts were in the lowest band for SMAM). In general, Administrative Posts along the southern coast were in the lowest, or second lowest mean marriage age bands. It is notable that on the southern coast the SMAM data was higher in the Administrative Posts where major towns are located, (except in Viqueque), because urban mean marriage ages are higher than those in rural areas.

Figure 31: Singulate mean age at marriage, Municipalities, 2015 Census

Figure 32: Male singulate mean age at marriage, Administrative Posts, 2015 Census
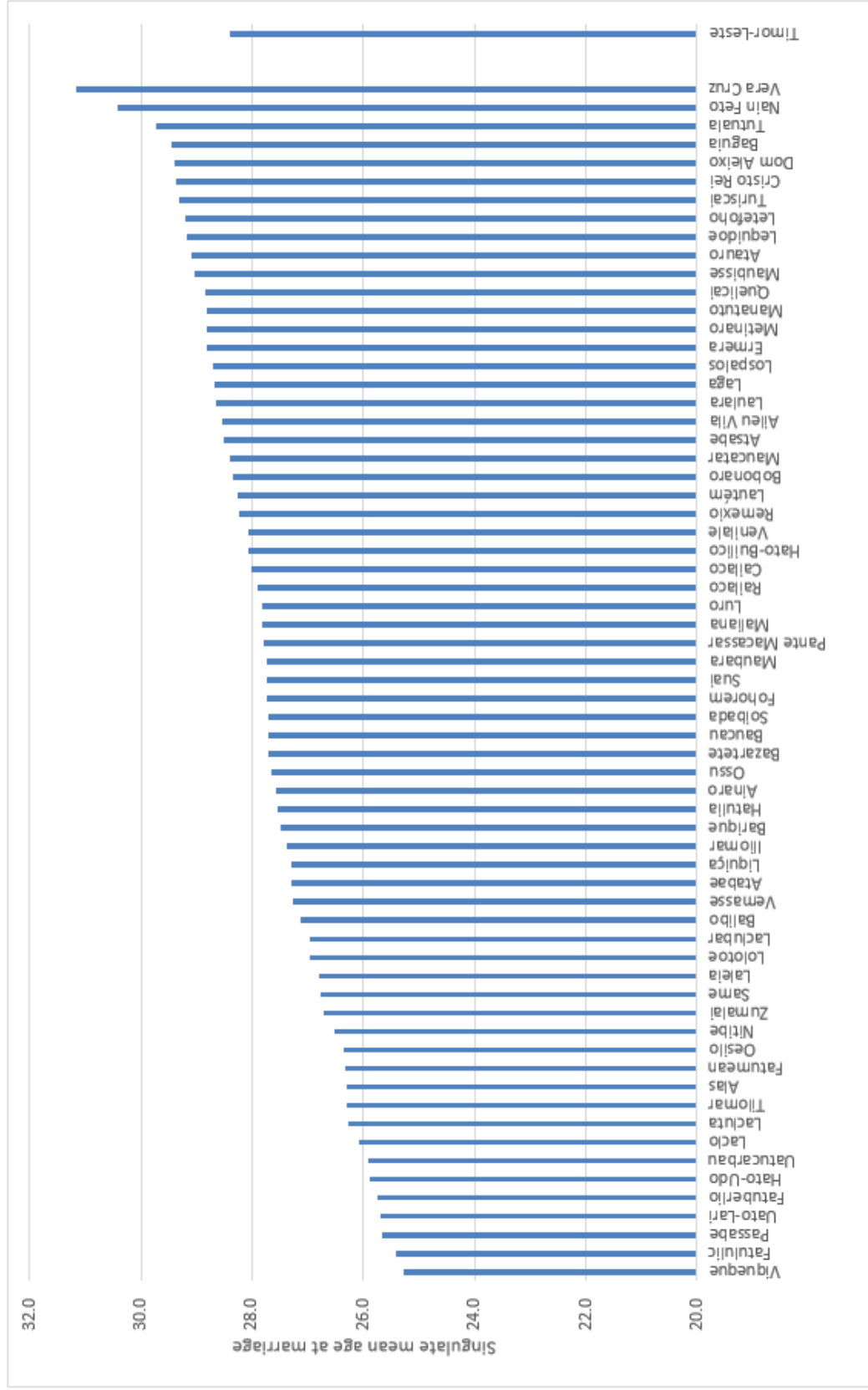
Figure 33: Female singulate mean age at marriage, Administrative Posts, 2015 Census
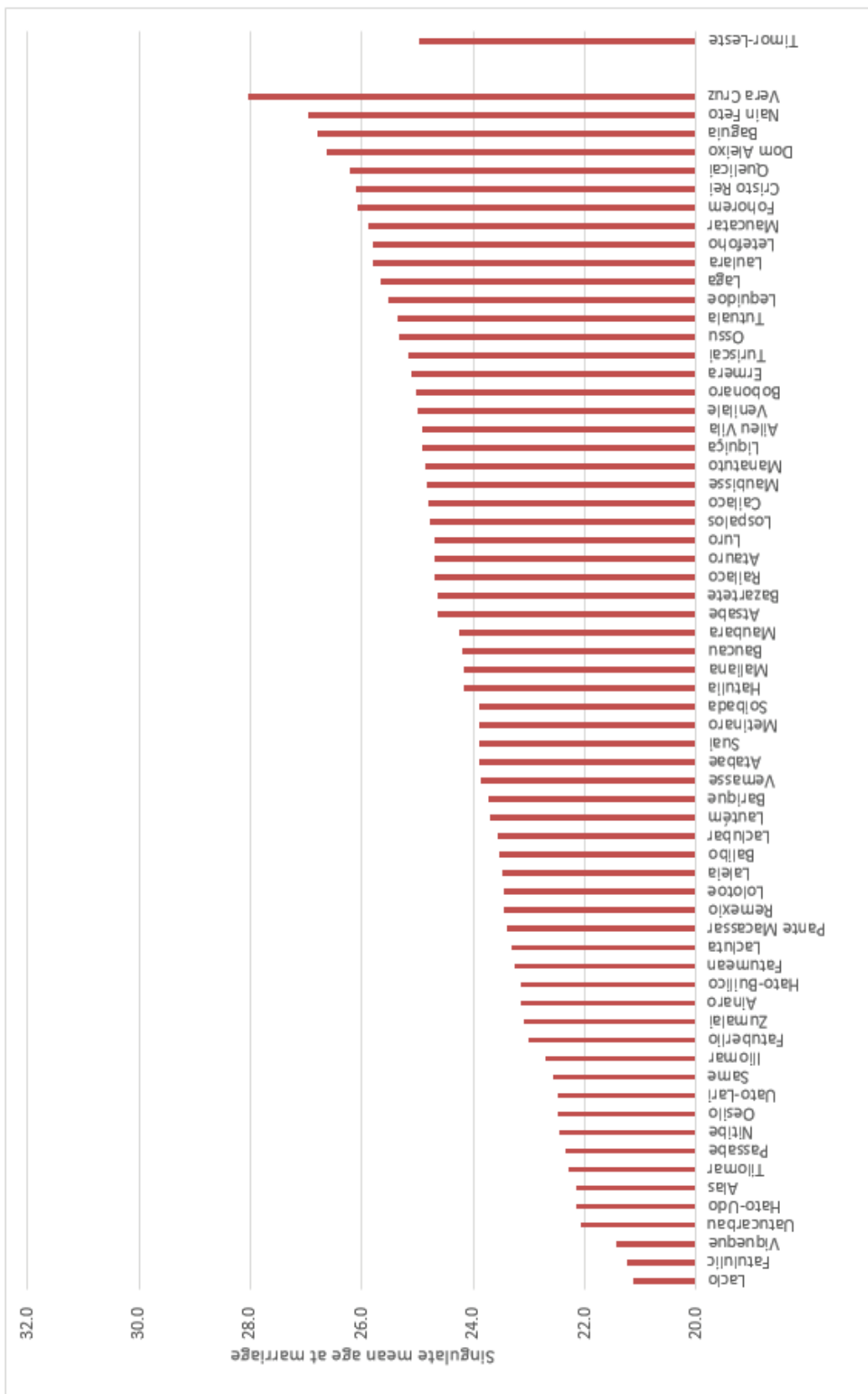
Figure 34: Singulate mean age at marriage, Administrative Posts, 2015 Census
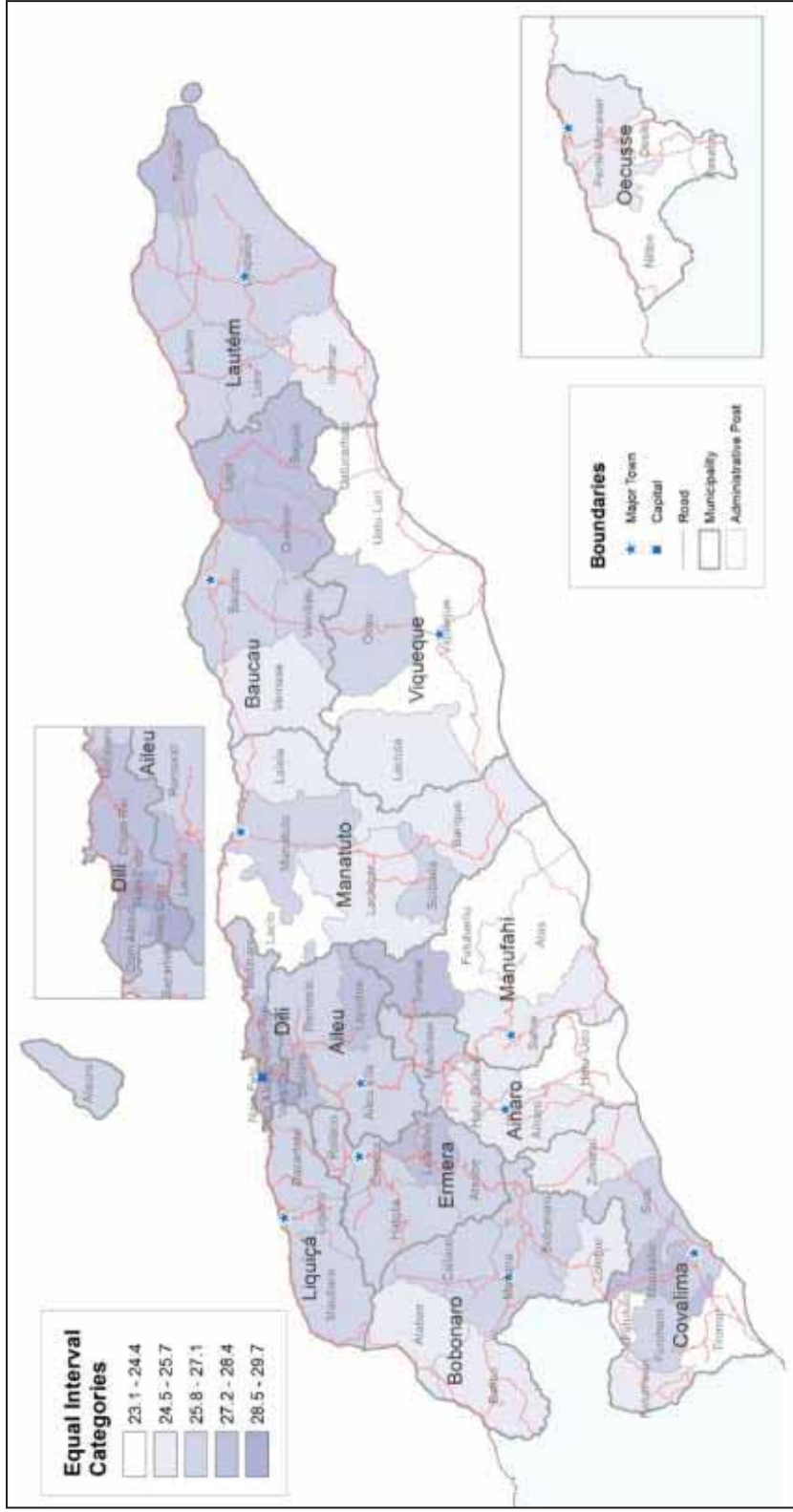

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Table 15 presents data on SMAM by literacy and educational attainment. The SMAM was slightly higher for literate people than non-literate people in both 2010 and 2015 Censuses. For both sexes, the gap increased from 1.2 years on 2010 to 1.4 years in 2015. For males the gap increased by 0.3 years, from 0.7 years to one year, and for females, the gap increased from 0.9 years to 1.3 years. In the 2015 Census, the male female gap in SMAM was 3.9 years for non-literate persons, whereas for literate persons the gap was 3.6 years.

The SMAM generally increased from lower levels of education to higher levels of education in both the 2010 and 2015 Censuses. For example, in 2010 the SMAM for females who attained only primary level education was 4.1 years lower than the SMAM for females who attained university level education, whilst in the 2015 Census the gap was 4.7 years between females educated to primary level and those educated to university level. For males, the gap was of smaller magnitude in the 2010 (3.4 years) and 2015 Censuses (3.8 years). In 2015 the male-female gap for persons educated to primary level was larger (3.7 years) than the male-female gap for persons educated to university level (2.8 years).

Table 15: Singulate mean age at marriage by sex and literacy and educational attainment, 2010 and 2015 Censuses

Background Characteristics	Singulate Mean Age at Marriage					
	Male		Female		Both sexes	
	2010	2015	2010	2015	2010	2015
Literacy						
Literate	28.0	28.3	23.9	24.7	26.0	26.6
Not Literate	27.3	27.3	23.0	23.4	24.8	25.2
Educational Attainment						
Pre-primary	26.8	27.3	22.8	24.1	24.7	25.8
Primary	26.4	26.5	22.2	22.8	24.3	24.7
Pre-Secondary	26.7	26.8	21.7	22.4	24.1	24.5
Secondary	28.4	28.1	24.5	24.3	26.6	26.3
Polytechnic / Diploma	29.0	29.1	26.7	26.1	28.0	27.8
University	29.8	30.3	26.3	27.5	28.6	29.3
Non formal	29.6	29.3	24.1	26.9	25.8	28.0

Table 16 presents data on SMAM by religious affiliation. For Catholics, the SMAM increased from 25.8 years to 26.3 years between the 2010 and 2015 Censuses, an increase of 0.5 years. The SMAM for Catholic males rose by 0.2 years to 28.1 years, whereas the SMAM for Catholic females increased by 0.7 years to 24.6 years. In the 2010 Census, the gap between male and female Catholics was 4 years and in the 2015 Census the gap had declined to 3.5 years.

For Protestants, the SMAM increased from 25.8 years to 26.1 years between the 2010 and 2015 Censuses, an increase of 0.3 years. The SMAM for Protestant males rose by 0.2 years to 27.9 years, which means that the SMAM for Protestant males was 0.2 years lower than the SMAM for Catholic males in both censuses. For Protestant females, the SMAM was 0.1 years higher than for Catholic females in the 2010 Census, but as it increased by only 0.2 years to 24.2 years by 2015, the value was 0.4 years lower than for Catholic females by the 2015 Census. In the 2010 Census, the gap between male and female Protestants was 3.7 years and the size of the gap did not change for the 2015 Census. These findings suggest that there has been more progress in reducing the gender gap in the SMAM for Catholics than Protestants.

For other religions, the small numbers negate meaningful analysis except to note that the female SMAM was always lower than male SMAM in both the 2010 and 2015 Censuses.

Table 16: Singulate mean age at marriage by sex and religion, 2010 and 2015 Censuses

Background Characteristics	Singulate Mean Age at Marriage					
	Male		Female		Both sexes	
	2010	2015	2010	2015	2010	2015
Religion						
Christian (Catholic)	27.9	28.1	23.9	24.6	25.8	26.3
Christian (Protestant/Evangelical)	27.7	27.9	24.0	24.2	25.8	26.1
Islam	27.2	27.5	23.1	23.1	25.7	25.6
Buddhist	26.8	26.8	23.3	22.9	25.0	25.3
Hindu	27.2	30.8	16.9	25.8	24.4	28.5
Traditional	30.7	28.9	24.0	27.3	27.5	27.9
Other	27.2	28.3	22.8	23.6	25.3	26.1

Table 17 displays data on SMAM by economic circumstances and sex for the 2010 and 2015 Censuses. For employed persons, the SMAM from the 2015 Census was 24.3 years for both sexes, 25.8 years for males and 22.4 years for females. The male-female gap for employed persons was therefore 3.4 years. For unemployed persons, the SMAM from the 2015 Census was 5.1 years higher than for employed persons (at 29.4 years for both sexes). The SMAM for unemployed males was 4.2 years higher (30 years) than for employed males, and the SMAM for unemployed females was 5.8 years higher (28.2 years) than for employed females. The male - female gap for unemployed persons was only 1.8 years, much smaller than for employed persons (3.4 years). For the inactive category, which includes full time students, household workers, retired people, disabled people and 'others', the SMAM was 27.3 years for both sexes (32.7 years for males and 25.2 years for females). The value for males was higher than the employed or unemployed categories. This may be because 82 per cent of all 15 to 24 year old males were full time students in the 2015 Census, and perhaps due to a lack of financial security, marriage is delayed for these young men. For females, the inactive category value of 25.2 years was 7.5 years lower than for males, perhaps because household workers were included in this category (and household workers constitute 42 per cent of all married women aged between 15 and 24 years).

Table 17: Singulate mean age at marriage by sex and economic characteristics, 2010 and 2015 Censuses

Background Characteristics	Singulate Mean Age at Marriage					
	Male		Female		Both sexes	
	2010	2015	2010	2015	2010	2015
Economic Activity						
Employed	-	25.8	-	22.4	-	24.3
Unemployed	-	30.0	-	28.2	-	29.4
Inactive	-	32.7	-	25.2	-	27.3
Housing Quality						
Highest quality	29.3	29.4	25.2	26.1	27.4	27.8
Second highest quality	29.1	28.8	25.2	25.4	27.2	27.1
Medium quality	28.1	27.6	24.0	24.0	26.1	25.7
Second lowest quality	26.8	26.8	22.9	23.4	24.7	25.0
Lowest quality	25.7	26.5	22.0	22.8	23.7	24.7
Agricultural Activity						
Agricultural household	-	28.0	-	24.4	-	26.2
Non-Agricultural household	-	28.5	-	25.1	-	26.8
Mainly/completely home consumption	-	28.0	-	24.5	-	26.2
Producing mainly for sale	-	27.9	-	24.2	-	26.1

The SMAM varies significantly by the quality of housing that people occupy such that persons occupying lower quality housing have a lower SMAM than persons occupying higher quality housing. The relationship is consistent between the 2010 and 2015 Censuses for both sexes, males and females. In the 2010 Census, the gap in SMAM between lowest quality housing and highest quality housing was 3.7 years for both sexes, 3.6 years for males and 3.2 years for females. In the 2015 Census, the gap in SMAM between lowest quality housing and highest quality housing was 3.1 years for both sexes, 2.9 years for males and 3.3 years for females. Therefore, the gap in SMAM by housing quality decreased by 0.6 years for both sexes and 0.7 years for males but for females it increased by 0.1 year. In the highest quality of housing the male-female gap in SMAM was 4.1 years in 2010 and 3.3 years in 2015, therefore demonstrating that in the highest quality of housing the gender gap narrowed by 0.8 years between the two censuses. In the lowest housing, the male-female gap in SMAM was 3.7 years in 2010 and in 2015, therefore demonstrating that in the lowest quality of housing the gender gap was smaller in 2010, but did not narrow between the two censuses.

Turning to agricultural activity, in the 2015 Census, the SMAM for persons living in agricultural households was 26.2 years for both sexes, 28 years for males and 24.4 years for females. Thus, the gap between males and females living in agricultural households was 3.6 years.

In non-agricultural households, the SMAM was 26.8 years for both sexes, 28.5 years for males and 25.1 years for females. Thus, the gap between males and females living in non-agricultural households was 3.4 years, which is 0.2 years narrower than the gap in agricultural households. The difference in the SMAM between agricultural and non-agricultural households was 0.6 for both sexes, 0.5 years for males and 0.7 years for females. The larger difference for females by household type and the smaller male-female gap for non-agricultural households suggests that gender equity is slightly higher in non-agricultural households.

In the 2015 Census, the SMAM for persons living in households mainly producing food for sale was slightly lower for both sexes and males (0.1 years), but more so for females (0.3 years) as compared with households mainly producing food for home consumption. The male-female gap in households mainly producing food for sale was 3.7 years, as compared with a gap of 3.5 years for households where food was produced for home consumption. This information suggests that gender equity is slightly better in the agricultural households where food is produced for home consumption than in those where food is produced for sale.

The data on SMAM demonstrate that between the 2010 and 2015 Censuses, age at marriage was generally increasing, with greater increases for females than for males demonstrating that gender disparities were decreasing. The improvement was more evident in urban than in rural areas, such that Dili stood out with the highest mean age at marriage and the greatest decrease in the gap between males and females between the 2010 and 2015 Censuses. Background data illustrates that indicators of development such as literacy, educational attainment, and housing quality were all associated with higher mean ages at marriage, and with a larger reduction in gender disparities in mean age at marriage. Conversely, rural, non-literate, poorly educated people (especially women) from agricultural households had lower ages at marriage and between the censuses, the mean ages increased less and the male-female gap reduced less, thus suggesting that gender disparities were higher and have reduced less than in more developed contexts.

Chapter 4: Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1 Conclusions

<u>Changing marital patterns signal developmental advances</u>

Between the 2010 and 2015 Censuses, the mean age at marriage increased and the male-female gap decreased, demonstrating that gender disparities are reducing, with more progress in urban than in rural areas. There was a clear north-south divide in the country with higher mean ages in the north and lower mean ages in the south (except in Manatuto). On the southern coast, the mean marriage age data was higher in the Administrative Posts where major towns are located, (except in Viqueque), because urban mean ages were higher than rural mean ages.

The percentage of people that were married declined between the 2010 and 2015 Censuses, and consequently, the percentage of never married people increased. Females were more likely to be married, living together, widowed, divorced, or separated compared to males, but the male-female divergences in the proportions in each marital status category narrowed. Similarly, greater change in rural areas has meant that marital status patterns have become more like urban patterns than in 2010. The age structure of marital status shifted because people are marrying later. Also, people remain married for longer because of increasing life expectancy, reducing widowhood (particularly for women). There was still significant disparity in marital status circumstances between the Municipalities and the Administrative Posts.

Consistent with the 2010 Census, in 2015, married adolescent women were concentrated in the older teen ages. Adolescents living in rural areas were more likely to be married and the geographical distribution was similar though less clear-cut than the distribution for adolescent childbearing. The general impression is that Administrative Posts with high adolescent marriage percentages were less-well connected, or further from, Municipality capitals. Between 2010 and 2015, the percentage of adolescents already married decreased.

The percentage of all households that were single-parent households declined between the 2010 and 2015 Censuses and the tendency was towards concentration of household heads into the 45 to 54 year age bracket. Seven-in-ten single-parent households were female-headed, eight-in-ten were rural households and eight-in-ten household heads were widows in 2015. High percentages of household heads were separated from their partners, with the implication that migration of spouses is a factor in single-parent household formation. Geographically, higher percentages were in Covalima, Ermera and Ainaro with female-headed single-parent households concentrated within the remotest, mountainous Administrative Posts, not served by navigable roads and isolated from Municipality capitals and the services they provide.

Although widowhood declined more for women than men between the 2010 and 2015 Censuses, in 2015, women aged 15 and above were still three times more likely to be widowed than men. Lautem, Bobonaro and Viqueque had the highest percentage of widows among women aged 15 years and above. For women aged 60 years and above, Lautem also had the highest percentage, with four-in-ten women classed as widows. The lowest percentage was in Dili.

<u>Marital status and resilience or vulnerability</u>

The data shows the beneficial effects of higher levels of education and literacy on marital formation behavior, such that literate and better-educated people marry later, and the mean marriage age gap between male and female literates reduced by more than three times as much as for non-literates between 2010 and 2015, with a similar trend for education. Between 2010 and 2015, women who were never married had increasing

propensity to be literate and more educated, compared to married women, because increasing percentages of never married women were remaining in full time education for longer, delaying their marriage. Conversely, in 2015, married adolescent women had greater propensity to be non-literate than literate and constituted one-in-four of all adolescent women in the labour force – consequently, these women were not in education.

The census data illustrates that people that marry later had greater prevalence in higher quality housing and greater gender equity (in terms of smaller male-female marriage age gaps). This is connected to the fact that mean age at marriage was higher in urban areas, and that mean age at marriage was higher in non-agricultural households. Conversely, married adolescent women were more prevalent in poorer quality household circumstances (generally lacking access to electricity, clean drinking water and adequate sanitation), and in agricultural households.

In both censuses, single-parent households were predominately living in poor quality housing (generally lacking access to electricity, clean drinking water and adequate sanitation). Most were headed by female widows who generally lacked literacy and secondary level education, and predominately supported family members through subsistence agriculture. Consequently, these households must be among the most vulnerable in Timor-Leste.

4.2 Recommendations

Preventing early marriage (and cohabitation) is the critical first step in delaying childbearing, reducing fertility overall and protecting adolescent women from harmful practices. Between the 2010 and 2015 Censuses, significant progress was made in reducing adolescent marriage rates, and the mean age at marriage increased, whilst male-female and urban and rural gaps reduced. The government should aim to capitalize on the trajectory of these improvements through interventions that will sustain or even increase the pace of these changes.

The data shows that childbearing was, not surprisingly, higher among married adolescent women, and as only 11.4 per cent of married adolescent women were still in education in the 2015 Census, interventions should aim to encourage females to remain in education longer as a mechanism for preventing marriage and subsequent childbearing during adolescence. A critical step is to change behavior by sharing information regarding the risks of early marriage and the benefits for young women and their families of remaining in education to fully reach their potential. Secondly, the Government must continue to foster enabling environments so that all adolescent women are able to remain in the educations system for longer.

Geographical data provides part of the picture, but it does not explain which women within Administrative Posts are the most appropriate recipients of interventions. The evidence generated in this report demonstrates that early marriage was more common among women with less-developed circumstances at the individual, household and broader contextual levels. Therefore, information campaigns and services should, in particular, be channeled towards communities and families that exhibit these characteristics in order to prevent early marriage and childbearing and reducing completed family size.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) framework offers a mechanism within which to implement, monitor and evaluate these interventions. To prevent early marriage, the Government should focus on:

- SDG 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls)
  - Target 5.3: By 2030, eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation
    - Indicator 5.3.1: Proportion of women aged 20–24 years who were married or in a

union by age 15 and before age 18.

In 2015, around 7,500 households in Timor-Leste were single-parent households, and women headed more than seven out of ten of these households. Single-parent households and especially those headed by women (and in particular those headed by widows) must be among the most vulnerable households in Timor-Leste. The situation of household members (and especially children) in these households should be a matter of concern for the Government and the development community. It is recommended that specific social protection and livelihood interventions be implemented for these families. Targeting of these interventions should be based on the information in this report.

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