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**In Women's Words: A New History of Violence
and Everyday Life during the Indonesian
Occupation of East Timor
(1975 – 1999)**

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Doctor of Philosophy
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School of Historical and Philosophical Studies
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Abstract

In this thesis, I examine women's experiences, memories, and perceptions of life during the Indonesian invasion and occupation of East Timor (1975–99). I draw primarily upon my own oral history interviews with East Timorese women, as well as published collections of East Timorese women's personal narratives and life histories, to examine how women experienced the initial violence of the Indonesian invasion, the period of conflict, and then survived, through practices that expressed both negotiated accommodation and resistance, the subsequent omnipresence within their lives of the occupying regime. I argue that exploring how women remember, narrate, and conceptualise the occupation reveals the ways in which violence became deeply interwoven into the social and cultural 'everyday' of life in occupied East Timor.

In addition to these oral histories, I utilise a diverse range of written sources, including personal and public archival material from online repositories, Australia, Timor-Leste, Canada, and the United Kingdom; as well as newspapers, bulletins, periodicals, Indonesian government and military documents, in order to develop a deeper understanding of the infrastructure and culture of the Indonesian military occupation. Drawing upon broader scholarship on gender, occupation, violence, everyday life, and oral history, I argue that by examining women's narratives we gain new insights into violence and everyday life under military occupation. This thesis takes as its point of departure an observation made by the anthropologists Veena Das and Arthur Kleinman, that 'in the midst of the worst horrors, people continue to live, to survive and to cope', and it is this point of intersection between violence and the ordinary, this space in which individual experience and collective identities persist, that this thesis will interrogate.¹ Through this approach, I seek to write a new history of the Indonesian occupation of East Timor, placing women's voices and experiences at the centre of historical analysis.

¹ Veena Das and Arthur Kleinman, "Introduction," in *Remaking a World: Violence, Social Suffering, and Recovery*, ed. Veena Das, Arthur Kleinman, Margaret M. Lock, Mamphela Ramphele, and Pamela Reynolds (Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 2001), 1.

Declaration

I declare that:

- the thesis comprises only my original work towards the degree of Doctor of Philosophy except where indicated in the Preface;
- due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used; and
- the thesis is fewer than 100,000 words in length, exclusive of tables, maps, bibliographies, and appendices.

Name: Hannah Loney

Signature: 

Date: 3 November 2016

Preface

Published works by the author that have been incorporated into the thesis include:

- Loney, Hannah. "Speaking Out for Justice: Bella Galhos and the International Campaign for the Independence of East Timor." In *The Transnational Activist*, edited by Sean Scalmer and Stefan Berger. Palgrave-Macmillan (forthcoming).
- Loney, Hannah. "The Emergence of an East Timorese Women's Movement." In "Timor-Leste: 1975 – 40 Years On," *Timor-Leste: The Local, The Regional, and the Global: Proceedings from the Timor-Leste Studies Association 2015 Conference*, edited by Sarah Smith, Antero Benedito da Silva, Nuno Canas Mendes, Alarico da Costa Ximenes, Clinton Fernandes, and Michael Leach, 20–4. Hawthorn: Swinburne University Press, 2016.
- Loney, Hannah. "'The Target of a Double Exploitation': Feminism and Nationalism in Portuguese Timor, 1974–75." *Intersections: Gender and Sexuality in Asia and the Pacific* 37 (2015), <http://intersections.anu.edu.au/issue37/loney.html>.
- Loney, Hannah. "'And I Started to Understand': Moments of Illumination within Women's Oral Narratives from Indonesian-Occupied East Timor." *The Oral Australia Journal* 36 (2014): 61–71.
- Loney, Hannah. "'This is Me': Exploring Narrative and Trauma within Women's Memories of the Indonesian Occupation of Timor-Leste (1975-1999)." *Oral History Forum d'Histoire Orale* 34 Special Issue: Human Rights and Oral History: Stories of Survival, Healing, Redemption, and Accountability (2014).
- Loney, Hannah. "Negotiating a Corporeal History: Women's Embodied Memories of the Indonesian Occupation." In *Understanding Timor-Leste 2013: Conference Proceedings from the Timor-Leste Studies Association Conference*, edited by Hannah Loney, Nuno Canas Mendes, Antero B. da Silva, Alarico da Costa Ximenes, and Clinton Fernandes, 222–27. Hawthorn: Swinburne University Press, 2014.

Additional published works by the author relevant to the thesis but not forming part of it include:

- Loney, Hannah. "Women and Resistance in East Timor: A Case Study on Fighting Women." In *Communicating New Research on Timor-Leste: Conference Proceedings from the Timor-Leste Studies Association Conference*, edited by Michael Leach, Nuno Canas Mendes, Antero B. da Silva, Bob Boughton, and Alarico da Costa Ximenes, 265–69. Hawthorn: Swinburne University Press, 2012.

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Glossary and Abbreviations

ABRI	Republic of Indonesia Armed Forces – <i>Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia</i>
APODETI	Timorese Popular Democratic Association – <i>Associação Popular Democrática Timorense</i>
ASDT	Association of Timorese Social Democrats – <i>Associação Social Democrática Timorense</i>
ASSEPOL	Association of Ex-Political Prisoners – <i>Associação dos Ex-Prisioneiros Políticos</i>
<i>Babinsa</i>	Non-Commissioned Village Guidance Officer
BAKIN	State Intelligence Agency – <i>Badan Intelijen Negara</i>
<i>Bapak</i>	Indonesian word for ‘father’; used in Indonesia as a term of respectful address to an older person; used by East Timorese to refer generally to Indonesian military personnel during the occupation
<i>Bases de apoio</i>	Resistance bases
<i>Buibere</i>	Female version of <i>Maubere</i> , the common people
<i>Bupati</i>	Indonesian district officer / Governor
CAVR	Commission for Reception, Truth, and Reconciliation, East Timor – <i>Comissão de Acolhimento, Verdade e Reconciliação de Timor Leste</i>
CNRM	National Council of the Maubere Resistance – <i>Conselho Nacional da Resistência Maubere</i>
CNRT	National Council of Timorese Resistance – <i>Conselho Nacional de Resistência Timorense</i> (1998–2001)
<i>Comissário política</i>	Political commissar
CRRN	National Council of Maubere Resistance – <i>Conselho Nacional da Resistência Maubere</i> (1988–98)
<i>Dharma Pertiwi</i>	Duty to the Homeland
<i>Dharma Wanita</i>	Dutiful Women
DPRD	Regional People’s Representative Assembly – <i>Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah</i>
DRET	Democratic Republic of East Timor – <i>República Democrática de Timor-Leste</i>
<i>Dwi fungsi</i>	Dual function – the military and socio-political function of ABRI
<i>Estafetas</i>	Messengers
FALINTIL	Armed Forces for the National Liberation of East Timor – <i>Forças Armadas de Libertação Nacional de Timor-Leste</i>
FOKUPERS	East Timorese Women’s Communication Forum – <i>Forum Komunikasi Untuk Perempuan Loro’Sae</i>
FRETILIN	Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor – <i>Frente Revolucionária do Timor-Leste Independente</i>
<i>Funu</i>	Struggle / war
<i>Garis merah</i>	Red line / to be blacklisted
<i>Generação Foun</i>	New / younger generation of East Timorese
<i>Gerwani</i>	Indonesian Women’s Movement – <i>Gerakan Wanita Indonesia</i>
GPK	Security Disturbance Movement – <i>Gerakan Pengacau Keamanan</i>
<i>Hansip</i>	Civilian defence auxiliaries / guards – <i>Pertahanan Sipil</i>
IMPETTU	East Timor Students’ Association – <i>Ikatan Mahasiswa dan Pelajar Timor Timur</i>

<i>Juventude</i>	Youth
KODAM	Regional Military Command – <i>Komando Daerah Militer</i>
KODIM	District Military Command – <i>Komando Distrik Militer</i>
KORAMIL	Sub-District Military Command – <i>Komando Rayon Militer</i>
KOREM	Sub-Regional Military Command – <i>Komando Resort Militer</i>
KOTA	Association of Timorese Heroes – <i>Klibur Oan Timor Asuwain</i>
KOWANI	Indonesian Women’s Congress – <i>Kongres Wanita Indonesia</i>
<i>Liurai</i>	Traditional East Timorese ruler
LSM	Self-Reliant Social Institutions – <i>Lembaga Swadaya Masyarakat</i>
<i>Lulik</i>	Objects held sacred by East Timorese
<i>Maubere</i>	The ‘common people’ of Timor-Leste
<i>Mestiça</i>	Person of mixed ethnicity / descent
<i>Nome de Guerra</i>	War / code name
OJECTIL	East Timor Catholic Youth Organisation – <i>Organização de Juventude Catolica de Timor-Leste</i>
OJETIL	Organisation for Youth and Students of Timor-Leste – <i>Organização de Jovens e Estudantes de Timor Leste</i>
OMT	Women’s Organisation of Timor-Leste – <i>Organização da Mulher Timorese</i>
OPJT	Popular Organisation of East Timorese Youth – <i>Organização da Popular da Juventude Timorese</i>
OPJLATIL	Popular Organisation of Timorese Youth Lorikeet Warriors – <i>Organização Popular Juventude Lorico Ass’wain Timor Leste</i>
OPMT	Popular Organisation of East Timorese Women – <i>Organização Popular da Mulher Timorese</i>
OPSUS	Special Operations Command – <i>Operasi Khusus</i>
<i>Pancasila</i>	The official founding philosophy of the Indonesian state
PKI	Indonesian Communist Party – <i>Partai Komunis Indonesia</i>
PKK	Family Welfare Movement – <i>Pembinaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga</i>
PSTT	Provincial Government of East Timor – <i>Pemerintah Sementara Timor Timur</i>
RDTL	Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste – <i>República Democrática de Timor Leste</i>
Rede Feto	Women’s Network of East Timor
RENETIL	National Resistance of East Timorese Students – <i>Resistência Nacional dos Estudantes de Timor Leste</i>
SD	Primary School – <i>Sekolah Dasar</i>
SMA	Senior High School – <i>Sekolah Menengah Atas</i>
SMP	Junior High School – <i>Sekolah Menengah Pertama</i>
<i>Surat jalan</i>	Travel permit / letter
TBO	Operational Auxiliaries – <i>Tenaga Bantuan Operas</i>
TNI	Indonesian National Armed Forces – <i>Tentara Nasional Indonesia</i>
UDT	Timorese Democratic Union – <i>União Democrática Timorese</i>
UNETIM	National Union of Timorese Students – <i>União Nacional de Estudantes de Timor</i>
<i>Zonas libertados</i>	Liberated Zones

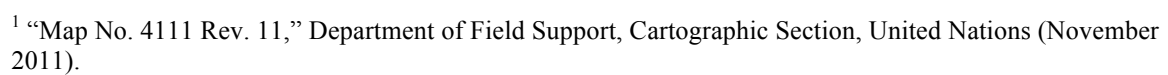
A Note on Sources and Referencing

The primary research method used within this thesis is oral history interviews, which I conducted with fifty-four East Timorese women. The interviews were conducted in one of three languages: English, Tetun (Timor-Leste's *lingua franca*), or Indonesian. Two East Timorese research assistants interpreted and then translated the written material: Elsa 'Uka' Joaquina Araujo Pinto and Bernadete 'Dete' Rafu Fatima Luan. I transcribed all English language interviews myself, and Carmeneza Moniz Noronha Soares transcribed the Tetun and Indonesian language interviews. Abbreviated references are included for these interviews in the footnotes, and full details (including information regarding translating and interpreting) are noted in the Bibliography. While most interview participants consented to their full names being used in the project, some asked to remain anonymous or to be referred to using a pseudonym (such as Mana Maria or their code name from the resistance).¹ Brief biographical data for each interview participant is provided in the Appendix.

I also drew upon published collections of East Timorese women's oral narratives and life histories; collections of published primary sources; unpublished primary sources; memoirs and autobiographies; documents and reports; newspapers, bulletins, and periodicals; and primary sources from a range of personal and public archives. In the footnotes, I provide full reference details for the primary source, as well as shortened versions for the archival collection. Full reference details for these collections are provided in the Bibliography. Footnotes recommence at the beginning of each chapter for readability, while page numbers continue from the previous section.

¹ 'Mana' is a Tetun word of respect meaning 'older sister'.

Image: Map of Timor-Leste.¹



Introduction

Maria do Céu Lopes da Silva was eighteen years old when Indonesian forces invaded her home of East Timor on 7 December 1975.⁴ In a small fishing village on Ataúro Island, located approximately twenty-five kilometres north of the capital, Dili, Céu and her family were protected from the initial brutality of the invasion. Yet she still remembers seeing the Indonesian warships approaching the foreshore and hearing the ‘tuk tuk tuk vooom’ of the planes flying overhead. Céu’s brother, a former member of the Portuguese army, was in Dili at the time of the invasion but escaped to the mountains in the interior, along with large numbers of the East Timorese civilian population. For some time afterwards, the family didn’t know if he was dead or alive. ‘So every time we heard the bombing,’ Céu recalled during an interview I conducted with her in Dili in July 2013, ‘my mother started wailing – “ohhh, your brother is going to die!”’. Céu first heard about the violence of the invasion through fishermen, as well as people who travelled across to Ataúro on boats from Dili. Two of Céu’s family members, who came over from the mainland in search of food, spoke of corpses that had been ‘swollen under the sun, and then the dogs would come and eat them’. They explained that the Indonesian military had separated the men from the women, and then shot the men in front of the women: ‘For no reason, it didn’t matter, they didn’t care’, Céu told me.⁵ The vast scale of violence and disregard for the lives of East Timorese people displayed by the Indonesian forces during the invasion of Dili foreshadowed the terror, brutality, and oppression that went on to mark the subsequent twenty-four-year military occupation of the territory.

For an East Timorese woman, Céu’s life and experiences were rather unique: she was born in 1957 to a man of mixed African, Portuguese, and French descent – a political deportee from Príncipe-São Tomé, a small Portuguese colony off the west coast of Africa. Her mother was the daughter of a village chief (*chefe de suco*) from Ermera, a mountainous region located in the central-west of East Timor. Céu remembered a happy and carefree childhood on Ataúro Island: ‘It was a very small community, where everybody knows each other [sic], where we rely on each other for everything ... It was very isolated.’ She remembered ‘a life of tranquillity, of peace, on the beach all the time with the fishermen,

⁴ The official name of the territory today is the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste (*República Democrática de Timor-Leste* – RDTL). In this thesis, I use ‘Portuguese Timor’ when referring to the Portuguese colonial period; ‘East Timor’ when referring to the period of Indonesian occupation (1975–99); and ‘Timor-Leste’ when referring to the period from 1999 to the present.

⁵ Maria do Céu Lopes da Silva Federer, interview with the author, Dili, July 20, 2013.

playing on the coral, fishing, eating the best seafood in the world for nothing, practically!’.⁶ Céu was one of a very small number of East Timorese girls to receive an education while East Timor was still under Portuguese colonial rule, first at a convent boarding school in Ermera that was run by Dominican nuns, followed by high school in Dili. She returned to Ataúro in July 1975, and remained there for the next two years as a result of the conflict that engulfed the territory. It wasn’t until 1977 that Céu travelled across the Wetar Strait to Dili. There, she found a completely different society to that which she had left behind: ‘the impact was so strong’, she explained. She saw ‘military, military, military – trucks and guns’. Dili was ‘a city totally dominated by military men and military warfare’.⁷ Céu remembered meeting acquaintances on the street and enquiring as to the whereabouts of her friends and colleagues. Some, she was told, maybe went to Australia. Others were in the mountains, or maybe they were dead. Many of the people that she used to know, the houses that she used to visit, were gone. ‘So suddenly’, she explained, ‘our entire life had changed completely, you know? 180 degrees. You had to start a new language, a new culture, a brutal culture; a brutal society’. After a bitter and protracted struggle with local fighters, the Indonesian military slowly extended its control over the territory and into the lives of all East Timorese people, and for Céu, ‘those beautiful memories of that wonderful childhood and the youth, and suddenly were shattered [sic] with the crying and the wailing and the tears and the suffering [that] started to come into the family and every Timorese household’.⁸

Within our oral history interview, Céu described a peaceful childhood in the sleepy and rather neglected colonial outpost of Portuguese Timor. She contrasted this idyllic image with an act of unprecedented and incomprehensible violence, committed by a ruthless modern military machine. This destruction of innocence by a strange, fundamentally alien force, is positioned as the original event in the ensuing narrative of personal and collective suffering. In narrating her life in such a manner, Céu powerfully and evocatively entwined her life story with that of a nation, brutally invaded and violently occupied by a foreign military force. Her narrative parallels with many East Timorese women’s experiences and memories of the Indonesian occupation. While in some ways speaking to the dominant historical narratives of heroism and sacrifice in the name of national liberation, they also offer a different picture of life under Indonesian rule, one based upon the experiences, practices, and institutions of the everyday. This thesis explores the ways in which East

⁶ Maria do Céu Lopes da Silva, in ABC Late Night Live, “Timor-Leste: Maria do Ceu Lopes da Silva,” presented by Philip Adams, December 18, 2007.

⁷ Maria do Céu Lopes da Silva Federer, interview with the author, Dili, July 20, 2013.

⁸ Maria do Céu Lopes da Silva, in ABC Late Night Live.

Timorese women's narratives of the Indonesian occupation present a more complex and nuanced articulation of how the violence of the Indonesian military occupation was experienced, accommodated, negotiated, and resisted.

Aims of the Thesis

In this thesis, I examine women's experiences, memories, and perceptions of life during the Indonesian invasion and occupation of East Timor (1975–99). I draw primarily upon my own oral history interviews with East Timorese women, as well as other published collections of women's personal narratives and life histories, to explore how women experienced the initial violence of the Indonesian invasion, the period of conflict, and then survived, through practices that expressed both negotiated accommodation and resistance, the subsequent omnipresence within their lives of the occupying regime. I argue that exploring how women remember, narrate, and conceptualise the occupation reveals the ways in which violence became deeply interwoven into the social and cultural 'everyday' of life in occupied East Timor. As such, I seek to write a new history of the Indonesian occupation of East Timor, by placing women's narratives and experiences at the centre of historical analysis. Drawing upon broader scholarship on women, occupation, violence, everyday life, and oral history, I suggest that East Timorese women's personal narratives not only illuminate the experiences of ordinary people living under the exceptional circumstances of military occupation, but also point to the capacity of individuals to survive, to endure, and to resist, despite the most difficult of circumstances. As such, the thesis takes as its point of departure an observation made by anthropologists Veena Das and Arthur Kleinman, that 'in the midst of the worst horrors, people continue to live, to survive and to cope', and it is this point of intersection between violence and the ordinary, and how it shapes individual experience and collective identity, that this thesis will interrogate.⁹

This thesis is driven by several broad research questions: how did women experience the Indonesian invasion and occupation of East Timor? How do they remember and make sense of this period? How and in what ways do their experiences, memories, and perceptions of life differ from dominant narratives? What are the particular narrative structures that women use to remember, to think about, and to understand this period of Timor-Leste's past?

⁹ Veena Das and Arthur Kleinman, "Introduction," in *Remaking a World: Violence, Social Suffering, and Recovery*, ed. Veena Das, Arthur Kleinman, Margaret M. Lock, Mamphela Ramphele, and Pamela Reynolds (Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 2001), 1.

How did women survive the violence and suffering that was prevalent throughout the Indonesian occupation? What is the relationship between memory, violence, identity, and everyday life within their narratives? And finally, moving away from the specific case of Timor-Leste, what insights can East Timorese women's experiences provide for thinking about gendered experiences of conflict and military occupations more broadly?

In this Introduction, I provide the historiographical, conceptual, methodological, and structural framework for the thesis. Above, I outlined the main aims of the thesis, and the broad research questions that drive it. In the next section, I review the literature on women and the Indonesian invasion and occupation of East Timor. I categorise this literature in terms of dominant modes of representing the period, attentiveness to women's experiences and daily life under occupation, and how the field has developed in accordance with broader shifts in Timor-Leste's history. From this review, I outline the conceptual framework that the thesis will adopt by introducing my focus on women, occupation, violence, and everyday life. In addition, I highlight oral history as the main practice and method of historical inquiry used within the thesis. Finally, I provide an overview of the content of the thesis, briefly detailing the core arguments of each chapter, and suggest how these arguments combine to produce a new history of violence and everyday life during the Indonesian occupation of East Timor.

The Indonesian Invasion and Occupation of East Timor

In the above account, Céu depicts the Indonesian invasion as an event that constituted a violent rupture within the lives of East Timorese people: families were displaced, homes were destroyed, and a new regime of everyday life was initiated. The terror and brutality that underpinned the subsequent occupation were symptomatic of the violent birth of Suharto's New Order (1966–98) in Indonesia; for the most part, this was a militarised, authoritarian regime that sought legitimacy through claims of maintaining stability, and promoting prosperity and progress.¹⁰ When Indonesia invaded the former Portuguese colony of East

¹⁰ Until recently, the mass violence perpetrated against the Indonesian Left in the mid-1960s, which saw the rise of the New Order regime, had received rather little sustained scholarly attention. Some prominent exceptions include Robert Cribb, ed., *The Indonesian Killings of 1965–1966: Studies from Java and Bali* (Clayton: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1990); and Douglas Kammen and Katharine McGregor, eds., *The Contours of Mass Violence in Indonesia, 1965–68* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2012). A detailed study on gendered forms of violence perpetrated during the killings is provided in Annie Pohlman, *Women, Sexual Violence and the Indonesian Killings of 1965–66* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015). In 2016 a two-day event took place in Jakarta, 'Dissecting the 1965 Tragedy', which marked the first time that Indonesia has held an open discussion on the violence. For an overview of the event, see Katharine McGregor and Jemma Purdey,

Timor in December 1975, without the formal declaration of war,¹¹ a bloody and protracted campaign ensued. In the face of fierce and unexpected local resistance it took several years, an increase in US-supplied aircraft, and the loss of hundreds of thousands of lives before the Indonesian National Armed Forces (*Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia* – ABRI) gained control over the territory of East Timor.¹² On 26 March 1979 the Indonesian government declared East Timor ‘pacified’, and established the militarised state structure that would administer the territory as *Timor Timur*, the purported twenty-seventh province of the Republic of Indonesia, until 1999.

The state rhetoric of ‘development’ and ‘modernisation’ was deployed by the New Order regime in East Timor using extreme methods of rule. The East Timorese people, however, remained largely unconvinced by the regime’s invocations of long-standing ties of national brotherhood as justification for the annexation of the territory.¹³ The Indonesian occupation was a time of great suffering for many East Timorese people. Violence was deployed from the initial invasion and remained a constant feature of daily life throughout the period.¹⁴ It is estimated that up to 200,000 East Timorese people, or almost a third of the population, died across the course of the twenty-four-year occupation.¹⁵ Under the structures and institutions of the occupying regime, the routines and assumptions of everyday life in the territory were disrupted as part of the integrationist aims of the New Order state. Despite the relentlessness of the Indonesian military machine, East Timorese society demonstrated a remarkable capacity to resist occupation and control. In fact, the Indonesian occupation proved critical to the development of a unique East Timorese national identity that was forged through collective suffering and a unifying resistance narrative. A combination of guerrilla warfare, clandestine resistance, and international activism and diplomacy,

“Indonesia Takes a Small but Critical Step Toward Reconciliation,” *Indonesia at Melbourne*, April 26, 2016, <http://indonesiatmelbourne.unimelb.edu.au/indonesia-takes-a-small-but-critical-step-toward-reconciliation/>.

¹¹ Commission for Reception, Truth, and Reconciliation in Timor-Leste (CAVR), *Chega! The Final Report of the Timor-Leste Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation, Vol. 1* (Jakarta: KPG in cooperation with STP-CAVR, 2013), 206.

¹² The Indonesian military – which included the army, navy, air force, and police – was referred to as ABRI for the duration of the New Order regime. In 1998, the name was changed to the Indonesian National Armed Forces (*Tentara Nasional Indonesia* – TNI), to reflect the separation of the police from the military.

¹³ See, for example, “Statement Made by President Suharto in Response to the Address Presented by the Delegation of the Provisional Government of East Timor,” June 7, 1976, in *East Timor and the International Community: Basic Documents*, ed. Heike Krieger (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 47–9.

¹⁴ For an account of human rights violations committed in the context of political conflict from 1974–99, see CAVR Report.

¹⁵ Estimates of the conflict-related death toll range from 40,000 to more than 200,000. Estimates based on official Portuguese, Indonesian, and Catholic Church data – and provided in the CAVR Report – suggest an overall magnitude of approximately 200,000 deaths. CAVR Report, 491.

culminated in 1999 when, following a United Nations (UN)-sponsored Popular Consultation, the Indonesian government relinquished control and a UN transitional government administered the territory until full independence was achieved (or restored) in 2002.

Literature on Women and the Indonesian Occupation of East Timor

There is a well-established, but modest, secondary literature on the Indonesian invasion and occupation of East Timor. The subject of much of this scholarship correlates with and, indeed, emerges out of broader historical processes and political developments within the territory and internationally, including: decolonisation and the emergence of a nationalist movement; liberal human rights narratives; the heroic resistance struggle; East Timor as, in the words of José Ramos-Horta, ‘a mere footnote’ to the history of the Cold War;¹⁶ and post-conflict reconstruction, nation- and state-building beyond independence. These are the dominant paradigms through which women’s experiences of the occupation have thus far been represented or sidelined, and I outline each of these below.

Before 1999, most non-Indonesian scholars wrote about East Timor in an attempt to challenge Indonesia’s annexation of the territory, and to highlight East Timor’s resistance of the occupation. Many of these scholars came from an activist background, and wrote about East Timor as a form of advocacy. This scholarship focused primarily on human rights violations, or the East Timorese resistance movement. Due to the educational and activist aims of such scholarship, the socio-cultural dimensions of the Indonesian occupation and experiences of daily life under military rule were not central concerns. Within this literature, women were predominantly represented as either victims of mass human rights violations or as subordinate heroes of the revolutionary struggle and, for the most part, this polarisation continues into the post-independence period. Recognising a gap in this literature, several scholars of East Timor, such as Lia Kent and Sara Niner, have recently called for more inclusion of women’s voices and experiences and for studies of the everyday lives of East Timorese people during the occupation.¹⁷ This thesis seeks to respond to these calls.

A small number of predominantly Australian commentators who visited the territory to observe the decolonisation process in 1974–75, such as Jill Jolliffe, Helen Hill, James

¹⁶ José Ramos-Horta, “Nobel Lecture,” December 10, 1996, *The Official Website of the Nobel Prize*, http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1996/ramos-horta-lecture.html.

¹⁷ Lia Kent, “After the Truth Commission: Gender and Citizenship in Timor-Leste,” *Human Rights Review* 17, no. 1, Special Issue: Engendering Transitional Justice: Silence, Absence and Repair (March 2016): 51–70; and Sara Niner, *Xanana: Leader of the Struggle for Independent East Timor* (North Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2009).

Dunn and Roger East, wrote short, yet important accounts of East Timor's history in light of recent political developments.¹⁸ The first major historical study of East Timor in English was written by Jill Jolliffe, *East Timor: Nationalism and Colonialism*, and published in 1978.¹⁹ Other important early studies include Carmel Budiardjo and Liem Soei Liong's *The War against East Timor*, James Dunn's *Timor: A People Betrayed*, John G. Taylor's *Indonesia's Forgotten War: The Hidden History of East Timor*, and Helen Hill's influential study of the nationalist party, the Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor (*Frente Revolucionária de Timor-Leste Independente* – FRETILIN).²⁰ Although women were not central to Hill's account, her work stands out among this early literature as more attentive to women's experiences and organising. In particular, Hill describes the emergence and aims of the women's arm of FRETILIN, the Popular Organisation of East Timorese Women (*Organização Popular de Mulher Timor* – OPMT). For the most part, however, the experiences of East Timorese women were treated within this early literature as a side issue to the wider nationalist movement and the unfolding story of Indonesian oppression.

Scholars revisiting this critical period of 1974–75 have considered women's involvement in political processes, but this has not been a central concern of their analyses. In his 2012 PhD thesis, the East Timorese scholar Antero da Silva considers the period of decolonisation through the lens of FRETILIN's popular education programme. His chapter on OPMT and women's emancipation, which draws primarily on testimony provided by twelve OPMT members, provides a valuable insight into the involvement of women in the early nationalist movement.²¹ In his detailed account of decolonisation in East Timor, David Hicks explores the role of language in shaping events that transpired in the territory, and challenges the idea that nationalism was widespread in Portuguese Timor prior to the Indonesian invasion. He argues that despite the establishment of OPMT, 'it was men who determined party policies and ensured they were implemented, and, as it happened, the most

¹⁸ Jill Jolliffe, *Report from East Timor* (Canberra: ANU Student's Association, 1975); Helen Hill, *The Timor Story* (Melbourne: Timor Information Services, 1975); Roger East, *Independence or Death!: East Timor's Border War: Eye-Witness Reports* (Sydney: Campaign for Independent East Timor, 1975); and Australian Council for Overseas Aid (ACFOA) Timor Task Force, *Report on Visit to East Timor for ACFOA Timor Task Force* (Canberra: Australian Council for Overseas Aid, 1975).

¹⁹ Jill Jolliffe, *East Timor: Nationalism and Colonialism* (St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1978).

²⁰ Carmel Budiardjo and Liem Soei Liong, *The War Against East Timor* (London: Zed Books, 1984); James Dunn, *Timor: A People Betrayed* (Milton: Jacaranda Press, 1983); John G. Taylor, *Indonesia's Forgotten War: The Hidden History of East Timor* (London: Zed Books, 1991); Helen Hill, "Fretilin: The Origins, Ideologies, and Strategies of a Nationalist Movement in East Timor" (M.A., Monash University, 1978); later published as Helen Hill, *Stirrings Of Nationalism in East Timor: Fretilin 1974–1978: The Origins, Ideologies and Strategies of a Nationalist Movement* (Sydney: Otford Press, 2002).

²¹ Antero B. da Silva, "FRETILIN Popular Education 1973–1978 and its Relevance to Timor-Leste Today" (Ph.D., University of New England, 2012).

conspicuous contribution *Fretilin* women played in East Timor's history was that of political martyrs to the cause'.²² Although only a small number of women held central positions in political organisations at this time, I suggest that East Timorese women *were* active participants within the dissemination of nationalist ideology and contributed to the development of political consciousness during the period of decolonisation and, in particular, life in the mountains following the Indonesian invasion. I explore these ideas in Chapter Two.²³

Limited access for foreign observers and a dearth of material coming out of East Timor throughout the 1980s restricted the capacity for scholars to gather data and write about experiences of life under Indonesian rule. The 'opening up' of East Timor in 1989 enabled increasing access to, and mobility within and from, the territory. Subsequently, international human rights and aid organisations, such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, carefully documented human rights abuses that were perpetrated by the Indonesian military against East Timorese civilians.²⁴ Making a case for the oppression and violence suffered by the East Timorese people remained one of the dominant modes of representing and narrating the occupation subsequently. Gender-specific violations were not central to these accounts until the mid-1990s, coinciding with an emerging international movement on women's human rights in the period following the UN Decade for Women (1976–85).²⁵ In particular, a 1997 report by Miranda Sissons from Yale University carefully documents the violations of East Timorese women's reproductive and sexual rights through the implementation of the

²² David Hicks, *Rhetoric and the Decolonization and Recolonization of East Timor* (Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2014), 24.

²³ See also Hannah Loney, "'The Target of a Double Exploitation': Feminism and Nationalism in Portuguese Timor, 1974–75," *Intersections: Gender and Sexuality in Asia and the Pacific* 37 (2015), <http://intersections.anu.edu.au/issue37/loney.html>.

²⁴ See, for example, Amnesty International, *East Timor: Violations of Human Rights: Extrajudicial Executions, 'Disappearances', Torture and Political Imprisonment*, ASA 21/16/85 (London: Amnesty International Publications, 1985); Amnesty International, *Power and Impunity: Human Rights Under the New Order* (New York: Amnesty International USA, 1994); Human Rights Watch/Asia, *The Limits of Openness* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1994); East Timor International Support Centre, *Human Rights Violations in East Timor* (Nightcliff: East Timor International Support Centre, 1997); East Timor Human Rights Centre, *The Right to be Heard: Documenting Human Rights Violations for Justice* (Melbourne: East Timor Human Rights Centre, 1999); and Maria Brett and Simon Andrewartha, *Escalating Violations in East Timor: Is a Peaceful Solution Possible?: Annual Report of Human Rights Violations in East Timor* (Fitzroy: East Timor Human Rights Centre, 1999).

²⁵ The first sustained study on violence against East Timorese women did not appear until 1995, twenty years after the Indonesian invasion. See Amnesty International, *Women in Indonesia and East Timor: Standing against Repression*, ASA 21/51/1995 (London: Amnesty International, 1995). See also Torben Retbøll, "The Women of East Timor," in *East Timor: Nationbuilding in the 21st Century*, ed. G. Jonsson (Stockholm: Center for Pacific Asia Studies, Stockholm University, 2003), 11–31; and Kiyoko Furusawa and Jean Inglis, "Violence Against Women in East Timor Under the Indonesian Occupation," in *Common Grounds: Violence Against Women in War and Armed Conflict Situations*, ed. Indai Lourdes Sajor (Quezon City: Asian Center for Women's Human Rights, 1998), 293–300.

Indonesian national Family Planning Programme (*Program Keluarga Berencana – KB Programme*), which I discuss in Chapter Four.²⁶ The Indonesian academic and activist, George Aditjondro, authored and presented to the UN a number of reports about violence by the state against East Timorese women.²⁷ As David Webster observes, the language of peace, diplomacy, non-violence, and human rights became central to the rhetoric and strategies of the East Timorese resistance around the same time that this human rights discourse was used by international scholars and observers writing about the territory.²⁸ Using a human rights framework to represent experiences of the Indonesian occupation served an important political purpose by drawing attention to the violence, and in shaping the agenda of institutional mechanisms for transitional justice post-independence. There is a tendency for this human rights literature to focus on gross human rights violations, and for less attention to be paid to ‘low-level’ forms of violence, such as surveillance and intimidation.²⁹ In Chapter Three, I discuss direct acts of violence, in addition to systems of regulation, surveillance, and social control which, I suggest, cultivated a broader climate of fear and mistrust within the territory.

Alongside this human rights approach, many scholars have focused on East Timor’s resistance to Indonesian rule, positioning it within a broader nationalist narrative of a 500-year *funu* (struggle or war) against consecutive foreign rulers.³⁰ The experiences and personal stories of East Timorese men and their contributions to the resistance have received considerable attention in scholarly literature, personal memoirs, and autobiographies, including that of the imprisoned resistance leader, Xanana Gusmão; Catholic Church leader, Bishop Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo; FRETILIN’s Foreign Minister and Permanent

²⁶ Miranda E. Sissons, *From One Day to Another: Violations of Women’s Reproductive and Sexual Rights in East Timor* (Melbourne: East Timor Human Rights Centre, 1997).

²⁷ See George Junus Aditjondro, *Violence by the State against Women in East Timor: A Report to the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, Including Its Causes and Consequences* (Fitzroy: East Timor Human Rights Centre, 1997); see also George Junus Aditjondro, “The Silent Suffering of Our Timorese Sisters,” in *Free East Timor: Australia’s Culpability in East Timor’s Genocide*, ed. Jim Aubrey (Milsons Point: Random House Australia, 1998), 243–65.

²⁸ David Webster, “Languages of Human Rights in Timor-Leste,” *Asia Pacific Perspectives* (August 2013): 5–21.

²⁹ See also Catherine Smith, “A Stranger in One’s Own Home: Surveillance, Space, Place, and Emotion during the GAM Conflict in Aceh,” *Indonesia* 100 (October 2015): 53–76; and Fiona C. Ross, *Bearing Witness: Women and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa* (London: Pluto Press, 2003).

³⁰ See Geoffrey Gunn, *Timor Loro Sae: 500 Years* (Macau: Livros do Oriente, 1999); Geoffrey Gunn, “The 500-Year Timorese Funu,” *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 32, no. 1 & 2 (2000): 5–10; and Geoffrey Gunn, “The Five-Hundred Year Timorese Funu,” in *Bitter Flowers, Sweet Flowers: East Timor, Indonesia and the World Community*, ed. Richard Tanter, Mark Selden, and Stephen R. Shalom (Sydney: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001), 3–14.

Representative to the UN, José Ramos-Horta; and the clandestine leader, Constâncio Pinto.³¹ Matthew Abud's twelve-part oral history radio documentary series, *Tuba Rai Metin* (Stand Your Ground), was produced in the wake of independence with the aim of documenting different experiences of resistance, and to recount these stories to a broad audience.³² This material highlights the endurance of the East Timorese resistance and the longevity of a unique East Timorese conception of national political community. In Chapter Five, I suggest that this narrative of *funu* is still important in shaping East Timorese women's memories of the occupation, although it needs to be considered alongside more 'everyday' forms of resistance.³³ After independence, this seductive narrative of heroism and sacrifice was used by the East Timorese political elite to cultivate and disseminate a sense of national identity, unity, and pride.³⁴ Public forms of remembering and commemorating the struggle similarly tend to focus almost exclusively on key male leaders and veterans of the armed struggle.³⁵ This resistance literature and corresponding sites of popular memory and commemoration constitute valuable resources for tracing the development of a unique sense of East Timorese national identity. Yet there remain, as Michael Leach argues, a number of 'fault lines' within these East Timorese national resistance narratives that have been key sources of conflict since independence.³⁶ A lack of recognition of the roles that East Timorese women played in the struggle for independence is one example.

³¹ Xanana Gusmão, *To Resist is to Win!: The Autobiography of Xanana Gusmão with Selected Letters & Speeches*, ed. Sara Niner, trans. Jose Luis Perestrelo Botelho, Ana Noronha and Palmira Pines (Richmond: Aurora Books with David Lovell Publishing, 2000); Xanana Gusmão, *Timor Lives!: Speeches of Freedom and Independence* (Alexandria: Longueville Media, 2005); Arnold S. Kohen, *From the Place of the Dead: The Epic Struggles of Bishop Belo of East Timor* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999); José Ramos-Horta, *Funu: The Unfinished Saga of East Timor* (Trenton: Red Sea Press, 1987); and Constâncio Pinto and Matthew Jardine, *East Timor's Unfinished Struggle: Inside the East Timorese Resistance* (Toronto: Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Data, 1997). See also Donaciano Gomes, "The East Timor Intifada: Testimony of a Student Activist," in *East Timor at the Crossroads: The Forging of a Nation*, ed. G. Carter Bentley and P. Carey (London: Cassell, 1995), 106–8; and Naldo Rei, *Resistance: A Childhood Fighting for East Timor* (St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 2007).

³² Matt Abud, "Stand Your Ground," *Inside Indonesia* 74 (2003), <http://www.insideindonesia.org/stand-your-ground>.

³³ See, for example, James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak. Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).

³⁴ See, for example, Gusmão, *Timor Lives!*.

³⁵ Memories of the independence struggle also occupy a prominent place in Timor-Leste's cultural heritage. Examples include the large statue of the famous resistance leader, Nicolau Lobato, near the airport in Dili; the 'heroes' monument to FALINTIL resistance fighters in Metinaro; and the Archive and Museum of the East Timorese Resistance (*Arquivo & Museu da Resistência Timorense* – AMRT) in Dili. For a more detailed discussion, see Michael Leach, "Remembering War and Occupation in Post-Independence Timor-Leste," in *Heritage and Memory of War: Responses from Small Islands*, ed. Gilly Carr and Keir Reeves (New York: Routledge, 2015), 292–310; and Michael Leach, "Difficult Memories: The Independence Struggle as Cultural Heritage in East Timor," in *Places of Pain and Shame: Dealing with 'Difficult Heritage'*, ed. William Logan and Keir Reeves (Milton Park: Routledge, 2009), 144–61.

³⁶ See Michael Leach, *Nation-Building and National Identity in Timor-Leste* (Routledge, forthcoming).

Indeed, several scholars have highlighted the absence of women within heroic narratives of the East Timorese resistance post-independence. As George Aditjondro observes, there is a tendency when women are included in accounts of the Indonesian occupation to focus primarily on their experiences as victims, an approach which effectively obscures their contributions to the struggle for independence. Aditjondro suggests that this tendency is the result, in part, of ‘the systematic repression’ of the first East Timorese women’s organisation, OPMT. The death of the founder of OPMT, Rosa ‘Muki’ Bonaparte Soares, on the wharf in Dili on the days following the invasion meant that the main spokespersons of the resistance subsequently were male.³⁷ This sidelining of women’s experiences is observed by other scholars such as Emma Franks, who argues that the role of East Timorese women was ‘obscured both by the Indonesian occupation and, paradoxically, also by the nationalist movement’.³⁸ In the post-independence era, several scholars have sought to counter this neglect by recording women’s participation in the independence struggle. Yet for many observers, such as Sara Niner, this task remains incomplete and ‘the crucial role of women in the resistance has never been fully acknowledged’.³⁹ I also suggest that the common portrayal of the East Timorese resistance as having been fought on three ‘fronts’ – the armed front in the mountains, the clandestine front in the towns and villages of East Timor and Indonesia, and the diplomatic front in the international arena – is also unable to capture many women’s motivations and specific contributions to the struggle.⁴⁰ In Chapter Five, I trace a different trajectory of women’s involvement in the struggle by outlining the development of a culture of resistance and identifying several themes that characterise the nature of women’s participation.

Irena Cristalis and Catherine Scott’s 2005 popular history, *Independent Women: The Story of Women’s Activism in East Timor*, was an important breakthrough in telling the story of women’s activism in East Timor from occupation to independence.⁴¹ The authors draw upon several oral history interviews with prominent East Timorese women, although they do not engage extensively with oral history theory, which is a key approach adopted within this thesis. Another important contribution was made by several East Timorese women activists,

³⁷ George Aditjondro, “Women as Victims versus Women as Fighters: Redressing the Asymmetrical Focus of the East Timorese Activists Discourse” (paper presented at “East Timorese Women and International Law” conference, Lisboa, Portugal, January 20–24, 1999).

³⁸ Emma Franks, “Women and Resistance in East Timor: The Centre, as They Say, Knows Itself by the Margins,” *Women’s Studies International Forum* 19, no. 1–2 (1996): 163.

³⁹ Niner, *Xanana*, 43.

⁴⁰ See CAVR Report, 419.

⁴¹ Irena Cristalis and Catherine Scott, *Independent Women: The Story of Women’s Activism in East Timor* (London: Catholic Institute for International Relations, 2005).

Maria Domingas Fernandes Alves, Laura Soares Abrantes, and Filomena Reis, within a short booklet, *Written with Blood*, which was published by the Office for the Promotion of Equality in Timor-Leste in 2001.⁴² The booklet traces East Timor's history from the Portuguese colonial period, Indonesian invasion and occupation, and through to independence by focusing on women's activism. Other scholars have sought to illuminate women's contributions to the resistance struggle by focusing on the experiences of individual women, such as Sara Niner's biographical account of Rosa de Camâra or 'Bi Soi', one of the few East Timorese women to serve as a combatant in the armed front of the resistance.⁴³ Recent research conducted by the East Timorese Secretariat for the Commission for Research and Development of the History of the Timorese Women's Struggle (*Secretariado da Comissão de Pesquisa e Elaboração da História da Luta da Mulher Timor*) was a major step forward in recording the role of East Timorese women in the resistance, moving away from portraying women primarily as victims, and exploring the diversity of their contributions to the struggle.⁴⁴ The coordinator of the project, Nuno Rodrigues Tchailoro, explained that the project sought to counter the male-dominated resistance history, and to capture the contributions of ordinary women to the struggle.⁴⁵ Extending and broadening this narrative of resistance to include women's contributions, Teresa Cunha proposes a reimagining of East Timorese national identity based on the shared memory of one particular woman, 'Bi-Murak', as a means of uncovering the 'feminine face and strength of the nation of Timor-Leste'.⁴⁶ These works reposition women's experiences away from a discourse of victimhood, to one that promotes recognition and acknowledgement of their contributions to the struggle for national liberation.

Some scholars argue for a more 'feminised' version of the resistance narrative by focusing on women's participation in nonviolent forms of resistance and their supportive

⁴² Maria Domingas Fernandes Alves, Laura Soares Abrantes, and Filomena B. Reis, *Hakerek ho Ran (Written with Blood)* (Dili: Office for the Promotion of Equality, Prime Minister's Office, Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, 2001). See also Milena Pires and Catherine Scott, "East Timorese Women: The Feminine Face of Resistance," in *East Timor: Occupation and Resistance*, ed. Torben Retbøll (Copenhagen: IWGIA, 1998), 141–52; and Ines Almeida, "The Role of Women in the Struggle," in *It's Time to Lead the Way: Timorese People Speak About Exile, Resistance and Identity: Writings from a Conference on East Timor and Its People*, ed. East Timor Relief Association (Collingwood: ETRA, 1996), 100–5.

⁴³ Sara Niner, "Bisoi— A Veteran of Timor-Leste's Independence Movement," in *Women in Southeast Asian Nationalist Movements*, ed. Sue Blackburn and Helen Ting (Singapore: NUS Press, 2013), 226–49.

⁴⁴ The associated publication, *Buibere Hamrik, Tuba Rai Metin ba Ukun Rasik An*, is not yet available in English, and to my understanding has not received a significant print run as yet. Thus, I was unable to consult the findings of the project, beyond conversations with the coordinator of the project.

⁴⁵ Nuno Rodriguez Tchailoro, personal communication with the author, Dili, July 25, 2013; and May 17, 2012. See also Kent, "After the Truth Commission," 66–7.

⁴⁶ Teresa Cunha, "Beyond the Timorese Nationalist Orthodoxy: The 'Herstory' of Bi-Murak," in *Women and the Politics of Gender in Post-Conflict Timor-Leste*, ed. Sara Niner (Florence: Taylor and Francis, 2016), 62.

roles in the struggle. Emma Franks and Christine Mason, for example, focus on women's 'alternative strategies' and practices of 'nonviolent resistance'.⁴⁷ Both use personal testimony to an extent, with Franks deploying a narrative approach that is supported by women's testimony, and Mason drawing on the life histories of forty-three East Timorese women. Both scholars highlight the way in which rape became 'formalised into the occupation strategy as a specific tool used by the Indonesian state to attack women, to weaken and destroy a whole community'.⁴⁸ I find Mason's observation that in East Timor, 'the home front *was* the battlefield', a useful reconceptualisation of the typical dichotomy used to understand the geography of conflict and its gendered implications.⁴⁹ In highlighting women's involvement in non-violent forms of resistance, Franks and Mason move away from focusing on the armed struggle to consider, for example, daily resistance strategies and 'principled non-violence derived from a Catholic ethos'.⁵⁰ This approach is extended by Jacqueline Siapno, who examines the 'complex and often contradictory configurations of female agency' within the context of independence movements in Aceh and East Timor which, she argues, can be better understood outside membership in national collectives and militarised defiance.⁵¹ Siapno furthers this analysis in her book, *Gender, Islam, Nationalism and the State in Aceh: The Paradox of Power, Co-optation and Resistance*. Although the book focuses on Aceh, many of her observations about how female agency is constituted offer useful parallels with the East Timorese context.⁵² These approaches are useful in broadening the parameters of women's resistance and agency during times of conflict is understood.

Rather than focusing solely on the internal East Timorese resistance, other scholars – usually from a political science perspective – have situated the conflict in East Timor within an international framework, either by exploring the internationalisation of East Timor's independence struggle, or by considering the conflict within the context of Cold War political narratives and diplomatic relations. Clinton Fernandes' multidimensional analysis of the global 'continuum of resistance' to the Indonesian occupation is particularly detailed, most

⁴⁷ Franks, "Women and Resistance in East Timor," 155–68; and Christine Mason, "Women, Violence and Nonviolent Resistance in East Timor," *Journal of Peace Resistance* 42, no. 6 (2005): 737–49.

⁴⁸ Franks, "Women and Resistance," 160.

⁴⁹ Mason, "Women and Nonviolence in East Timor," 739.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 745.

⁵¹ Jacqueline Siapno, "Gender, Nationalism, and the Ambiguity of Female Agency in Aceh, Indonesia, and East Timor," in *Frontline Feminisms: Women, War, and Resistance*, ed. Marguerite R. Waller and Jennifer Rycenga (New York and London, Garland Publishing: 2000), 275.

⁵² Jacqueline Aquino Siapno, *Gender, Islam, Nationalism and the State in Aceh: The Paradox of Power, Co-optation and Resistance* (Florence: Taylor and Francis, 2013).

notably in its attention to the ‘little known decade’ of the 1980s.⁵³ Similarly, one of the more nuanced accounts of the East Timorese independence struggle is a comparison with Eritrea by Awet Tewelde Weldemichael in which, similar to Fernandes, the role of international diplomacy is highlighted.⁵⁴ Other scholars have looked at violence and resistance in the context of the Catholic Church which, as the only independent institution to remain within the territory throughout the occupation, became a critical source of support and solidarity for East Timorese people.⁵⁵ Other scholars have focused on Western complicity in the invasion and occupation;⁵⁶ the 1999 referendum, international intervention, and UN transitional period;⁵⁷ or adopted a broader approach to Timor-Leste by considering it within the context of international foreign relations.⁵⁸

Post-independence, the contested oil resources of the Timor Sea have also generated increasing scholarly attention.⁵⁹ That women did not hold formal positions within the diplomatic front of the East Timorese resistance explains, in part, their general exclusion from some of these ‘international’ narratives within the context of occupation and resistance. Yet the experiences of prominent East Timorese activist women in the diaspora, such as Bella Galhos, Emilia Pires and Ines Almeida, show us that women were still involved in promoting East Timor’s independence in international forums, although this was more often in forums that were dedicated specifically to a wider readings of women’s issues, such as the UN World

⁵³ Clinton Fernandes, *The Independence of East Timor: Multi-Dimensional Perspectives: Occupation, Resistance, and International Political Activism* (Portland: Sussex Academic Press, 2011).

⁵⁴ Awet Tewelde Weldemichael, *Third World Colonialism and Strategies of Liberation: Eritrea and East Timor Compared* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

⁵⁵ Robert Archer, “The Catholic Church in East Timor,” in *East Timor at the Crossroads: The Forging of a Nation*, ed. G. Carter Bentley and Peter Carey (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1995), 120–33; Patrick A. Smythe, *The Heaviest Blow: The Catholic Church and the East Timor Issue* (Münster: Lit, 2004); and Joel Hodge, *Resisting Violence and Victimisation: Christian Faith and Solidarity in East Timor* (Abingdon: Taylor and Francis, 2016).

⁵⁶ Mark Aarons and Robert Domm, *East Timor: A Western Made Tragedy* (Sydney: New Left Book, 1992); Wendy Way, Damien Browne, and Vivianne Johnson, eds., *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation of Portuguese Timor* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 2000); Tanter, Selden, and Shalom, eds., *Bitter Flowers, Sweet Flowers*; John Birmingham, *Appeasing Jakarta: Australia’s Complicity in the East Timor Tragedy* (Melbourne: Schwartz Publishing, 2001); James Cotton, *East Timor, Australia, and the Regional Order: Intervention and its Aftermath in Southeast Asia* (London and New York: Routledge Curzon, 2004); Joseph Nevins, *A Not-So-Distant Horror: Mass Violence in East Timor* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005); and Geoffrey Robinson, *“If You Leave Us Here, We Will Die”: How Genocide was Stopped in East Timor* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

⁵⁷ Ian Martin, *Self-Determination in East Timor: The United Nations, the Ballot, and International Intervention* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2001); John Martinkus, *A Dirty Little War: An Eyewitness Account of East Timor’s Descent into Hell, 1997-2000* (Milsons Point: Random House Australia, 2001); and David Savage, *Dancing with the Devil: A Personal Account of Policing the East Timor Vote for Independence* (Clayton: Monash Asia Institute, 2002).

⁵⁸ Nicholas Tarling, *Britain and Portuguese Timor 1941–1976* (Clayton: Monash University Press, 2013); and David Webster, *Fire and the Full Moon: Canada and Indonesia in a Decolonizing World* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2009).

⁵⁹ Paul Cleary, *Shakedown: Australia’s Grab for Timor’s Oil* (Crow’s Nest: Allen and Unwin, 2007).

Conferences on Women.⁶⁰ Although it is beyond the scope of this thesis to explore such international activism in depth, it is important to note the masculinist tendencies of international narratives of the Indonesian occupation.

Since 2002 there has been a proliferation of literature on Timor-Leste, concerned primarily with state- and nation-building after two consecutive colonial eras.⁶¹ Within this field, many scholars have sought to place gender issues at the forefront of their analysis.⁶² The establishment of the Timor-Leste Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation (*Comissão de Acolhimento, Verdade e Reconciliação* – CAVR) in 2001 provided one of the first opportunities for many East Timorese to speak publicly about their experiences of violence and oppression. The final report, *Chega!* (No More! Stop! Enough!), was released in 2005.⁶³ In accordance with UN Resolution 2001/10, the CAVR integrated a gender-sensitive approach into its work, and this resulted in an impressive account of women's experiences of the conflict.⁶⁴ In addition to extensive written and oral testimony, the CAVR also drew upon materials and submissions from civil society and human rights activists that had been involved in the international solidarity movement. The Report is useful in its thoroughness and depth, highlighting the way in which the conflict 'reached every village of Timor-Leste

⁶⁰ In a forthcoming book chapter, I discuss the transnational feminist activism of Bella Galhos. See Hannah Loney, "Speaking Out for Justice: Bella Galhos and the International Campaign for the Independence of East Timor," in *The Transnational Activist*, ed. Sean Scalmer and Stefan Berger (Palgrave-Macmillan, forthcoming).

⁶¹ James J. Fox and Dionisio Babo Soares, *Out of the Ashes: Destruction and Reconstruction of East Timor* (Adelaide: Crawford House, 2000); Gabriel Jonsson, ed., *East Timor: Nationbuilding in the 21st Century* (Stockholm: Center for Pacific Asia Studies, Stockholm University, 2003); Damien Kingsbury and Michael Leach, eds., *East Timor: Beyond Independence* (Melbourne: Monash University Press, 2007); Andrew McWilliam and Elizabeth G. Traube, eds., *Land and Life in Timor-Leste: Ethnographic Essays* (Acton: ANU E-Press, 2011); Damien Kingsbury, "Challenges of Constructing Postcolonial Unity: Timor-Leste as a Case Study," *Asian Politics and Policy* 4, no. 1 (2012): 15–32; Michael Leach and Damien Kingsbury, eds., *The Politics of Timor-Leste: Democratic Consolidation After Intervention* (Ithaca: Cornell University, Southeast Asia Program Publications, 2013); and Sue Ingram, Lia Kent, and Andrew McWilliam, eds., *A New Era?: Timor-Leste After the UN* (Acton: ANU Press, 2015).

⁶² Asian Development Bank and UNIFEM, *Gender and Nation Building in Timor-Leste: Country Gender Assessment* (Manila: Asian Development Bank, November 2005); Damien Grenfell and Anna Trembath, *Mapping The Pursuit of Gender Equality, Non-Government and International Agency Activity in Timor-Leste*, 4th ed., with The Office For The Promotion Of Equality (Dili: Office for the Promotion of Equality and Irish Aid, Prime Minister's Office, 2008); Anna Trembath, Damian Grenfell, and Carmenesa Noronha, with partners Alola Foundation, JSMP, FKSH and GFFTL, *The Impacts of Gender Programming in Timor-Leste*, Irish Aid and Trocaire, 2011; Damian Grenfell and Anna Trembath, eds., *Challenges and Possibilities: International Organizations and Women in Timor-Leste*, 2nd ed. (Melbourne: Globalism Institute, RMIT University, 2008); and Sofi Ospina, *Participation of Women in Politics and Decision Making in Timor-Leste: A Recent History*, Report for the United Nations Development Fund for Women (Dili: UNIFEM, 2006).

⁶³ Commission for Reception, Truth, and Reconciliation in Timor-Leste (CAVR), *Chega! The Report of the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation in Timor-Leste* (Dili: CAVR, 2005). A revised and updated version of the report was published in 2013. See CAVR, *Chega!* (2013). In this thesis, the 2013 report has been used and is referenced in the footnotes as 'CAVR Report'.

⁶⁴ See CAVR, *Timor-Leste: Women and the Conflict / National Public Hearing, 28–29 April 2003* (Dili: CAVR, 2005).

and profoundly influenced the lives of all East Timorese people',⁶⁵ as well as outlining some of the ways in which the shape and form of the occupation changed across the period. However, as Lia Kent points out, the human rights framework that governed the mandate of the CAVR meant that in relation to women's experiences, there was a focus upon sexual violence.⁶⁶ This focus, which is replicated within broader literature on transitional justice, 'has the potential to divert attention away from other forms of violence that women may experience'.⁶⁷ Similar observations are made by Leigh-Ashley Lipscomb who, furthermore, suggests that the CAVR produced a 'national women's story' that 'reinscribed the history of women who were victimised by rape, sexual slavery and a myriad of other abuses'. As such, women's experiences were primarily situated within an overarching narrative of violence and abuse.⁶⁸ Despite these limitations, the CAVR Report remains the most complete historical account of the period to date, and that which is most attentive to the dynamics of daily life under occupation and to the various dimensions of violence experienced by women throughout the period.

The literature on transitional justice in Timor-Leste – much of which analyses the CAVR process – is particularly gender-sensitive, and often considers the impact of violence upon women. Scholars such as Susan Harris Rimmer highlight the gendered nature of violence during the Indonesian occupation and its ramifications post-independence,⁶⁹ drawing specific attention to survivors of sexual violence and the ongoing stigma and hardship that many of these women and their children face.⁷⁰ The Indonesian scholar and activist, Galuh

⁶⁵ CAVR Report, 11.

⁶⁶ Lia Kent, "Narratives of Suffering and Endurance: Coercive Sexual Relationships, Truth Commissions and Possibilities for Gender Justice in Timor-Leste," *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 8, no. 2 (2014): 289–313.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 290. See also Susanne Buckley-Zistel and Magdalena Zolkos, "Introduction: Gender and Transitional Justice," in *Gender in Transitional Justice*, ed. Susanne Buckley-Zistel and Magdalena Zolkos (Aldershot: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 1–33.

⁶⁸ Leigh-Ashley Lipscomb, "Housing the Truth: The Archived Legacy of Transitional Justice in Timor-Leste" (Ph.D., University of California, 2011), 95.

⁶⁹ Susan Harris Rimmer, *Gender and Transitional Justice: The Women of East Timor* (London; New York: Routledge, 2010). See also Susan Harris Rimmer, "Untold Numbers: East Timorese Women and Transitional Justice," in *Global Issues, Women and Justice*, ed. Sharon Pickering and Caroline Lambert (Sydney: Federation Press, 2004), 335–66; Susan Harris Rimmer, "The Roman Catholic Church and the Rights of East Timorese Women," in *Mixed Blessings: Laws, Religions and Women's Rights in the Asia-Pacific Region*, ed. Carolyn Evans and Amanda Whiting (The Hague: Brill, 2006), 654–701; Susan Harris Rimmer, "Beloved Madam: Gender Issues at the Indonesian ad hoc Human Rights Court," in *Timor-Leste: Challenges for Justice and Human Rights in the Shadow of the Past*, ed. William Binchy (Dublin: Clarus Press, 2009), 427–74; and Susan Harris Rimmer, "Timor-Leste: International Intervention, Gender and the Dangers of Negative Peace," in *Diminishing Conflicts in Asia and the Pacific: Why Some Subside and Others Don't*, ed. Edward Aspinall, Robin Jeffrey, and Anthony J. Regan (New York: Routledge, 2012), 19–36.

⁷⁰ Susan Harris Rimmer, "Orphans or Veterans? Justice for Children Born of War in East Timor," in *Born of War: Protecting Children Born to Sexual Violence; Survivors in Conflict Zones*, ed. R. Charli Carpenter

Wandita, similarly reflects upon women's experiences of transitional justice in the form of criminal justice, truth commission processes,⁷¹ and reparations for female victims in post-conflict Timor-Leste.⁷² These commentators generally observe that women in Timor-Leste did not receive tangible and satisfactory results from transitional justice processes. In a related field, attempts to record women's contributions to the resistance and their experiences of violence throughout the occupation are often accompanied by claims for recognition and compensation. Lia Kent and Naomi Kinsella, for example, discuss the marginalisation of East Timorese women within the Veterans' Valorisation Scheme.⁷³ Kent's most recent work expands the lens of transitional justice to consider some of the 'everyday' ways in which East Timorese people are seeking to rebuild their lives after years of conflict.⁷⁴ Her approach parallels somewhat with the anthropological work of Judith Bovensiepen on post-conflict recovery in its attention to the realm of everyday life.⁷⁵ Both Kent and Bovensiepen focus on strategies and practices of social repair; I suggest that a similar framework can be used to read women's oral narratives of life during the period of conflict, and to explore the everyday strategies for survival and resilience deployed by East Timorese people throughout the occupation.

Thus, it is evident that there has been relatively little attention paid to daily experiences of life under Indonesian rule, and to the ways in which the occupation was negotiated by the East Timorese population.⁷⁶ Within internationally-focused accounts of the occupation, women are largely sidelined, and their experiences and activism are not fully recognised. There are some attempts to position women within a nationalist narrative of heroism and sacrifice, although these operate within a predominantly masculine frame, and

(Bloomfield: Kumarian Press, 2007), 53–75; and Susan Harris Rimmer, "'Orphans' or Veterans?: Justice for Children Born of War in East Timor," *Texas International Law Journal* 42, no. 2 (2007): 323–44.

⁷¹ Galuh Wandita, "Whose Justice Is It Anyway? Gendered Lessons in Transitional Justice in Timor-Leste," in *The Future of Asian Feminisms: Confronting Fundamentalisms, Conflicts and Neo-Liberalism*, ed. Nursyahbani Katjasungkana and Saskia E. Wieringa (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012), 214–46.

⁷² Galuh Wandita, Karen Campbell-Nelson, and Manuela Pereira, "Learning to Engender Reparations in Timor-Leste, Reaching Out to Female Victims," in *What Happened to the Women?: Gender and Reparations for Human Rights Violations*, ed. Ruth Rubio-Marín (New York: ICTJ and Social Science Research Council, 2006), 284–335.

⁷³ Lia Kent and Naomi Kinsella, "A Luta Continua (The Struggle Continues)," *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 17, no. 3 (2015): 473–94. This article was later published as "The Veterans' Valorisation Scheme: Marginalising Women's Contributions to the Resistance," in *A New Era*, ed. Ingram, Kent, and McWilliam, 213–23. See also Sara Niner, "Bi Soi," 242–43.

⁷⁴ Lia Kent, "Sounds of Silence: Everyday Strategies of Social Repair in Timor-Leste," *Australian Feminist Law Journal* 42, no. 1 (2016): 31–50.

⁷⁵ Judith Bovensiepen, *The Land of Gold: Post-Conflict Recovery and Cultural Revival in Independent Timor-Leste* (Ithaca: Cornell University, Southeast Asia Program, 2015).

⁷⁶ Helene van Klinken's history of child transfers to Indonesia explores one of the social impacts of the occupation. The focus of the work, however, is children rather than women. See Helene van Klinken, *Making Them Indonesians: Child Transfers Out of East Timor* (Clayton: Monash University Publishing, 2012).

women's contributions are not valued as highly as those of male resistance fighters. Women are predominantly represented as victims of mass human rights violations whose very suffering, paradoxically, strips them of political agency. In a recent article, Lia Kent calls for more analyses of how ordinary women navigated, survived, and resisted the occupation. She writes:

While important stories of women's agency as political actors and of their experiences as victims of the conflict are beginning to emerge, missing are the "everyday" and locally grounded stories of how ordinary women (and men) navigated and survived the conflict, how they endured long term, structurally embedded injustices in the form of forced resettlement, famine, deprivation, disease and the deaths of children, and how family, community and socio-cultural life were quietly eroded through fear, distrust and suspicion.⁷⁷

Considering the relative stability of Timor-Leste today, the accessibility of the country for researchers, and the fact that the occupation remains in living memory for many East Timorese people, the recording of women's everyday experiences of the Indonesian occupation is an important endeavour. I suggest that in order to construct more diverse and nuanced narratives of the Indonesian occupation, there exists 'a sense of urgency' to recover and record multiple women's voices and experiences that have thus far been significantly under-represented in accounts of the Indonesian occupation.⁷⁸ Through these narratives, I seek to offer a people's history of the occupation, told through the personal narratives of East Timorese women. This is important not just for understanding Timor-Leste's past, but also other cases of military occupation and how people negotiate these experiences within their daily lives. I suggest that the Indonesian occupation of East Timor offers rich material for comparative insights in the broader studies of women and military occupations.

Conceptual Framework and Methods

This thesis adds to existing studies of the Indonesian invasion and occupation of East Timor by focusing on the experiences, memories, and perceptions of life of everyday East Timorese women. It charts a history of how women struggled and survived the occupation, and how they remember and narrate this period subsequently. I place women's voices and experiences at the centre of historical analysis, explore everyday life under military occupation, and use

⁷⁷ Kent, "After the Truth Commission," 67.

⁷⁸ Sherna Berger Gluck and Daphne Patai, "Introduction," in *Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History*, ed. Sherna Berger Gluck and Daphne Patai (New York and London: Routledge, 1991), 1.

oral history as both the subject and the means of studying this past. In doing so, I look beyond the existing literature to consider studies of women and military occupations more broadly, including studies of violence, everyday life, and gendered experiences of military occupations. In the below section, I outline how literature on women and military occupations, as well as oral history, was used in the development of a unique framework and approach for this thesis.

Women and Military Occupations

The December 1975 Indonesian invasion of East Timor set the stage for a long and bloody occupation that came to an end only after a UN-sponsored Popular Consultation precipitated the arrival of an international peacekeeping force in 1999. Despite the Government of Indonesia declaring its annexation of the territory in July 1976, territorial control of East Timor was represented by non-Indonesian scholars and observers as a ‘military occupation’ – that is, according to the military occupation specialist David M. Edelstein, ‘the temporary control over a territory by another state that claims no right to permanent sovereignty over that territory’.⁷⁹ In this formulation, occupation is seen as distinct from other forms of territorial control in that there is some understanding that ‘the occupying power’s intention must not be to stay indefinitely’.⁸⁰ For the Indonesian government, however, there was no sense that territorial control of East Timor was temporary. As Mohamad Junaid reminds us, occupations rarely name themselves as such. Instead, we can identify them by general features or practices, such as the reorganisation of physical space, the use of violence, security procedures, emergency laws and ordinances, tactical decisions, psychological operations, and propaganda. Although Junaid is referring specifically to Indian-occupied Kashmir, these features resonate with other places that have experienced occupation, including Indonesian-occupied East Timor.⁸¹ Other scholars, such as Christine de Matos and Rowena Ward, also use ‘military occupation’ as a broader framework for analysis, which includes ‘intervention, peacekeeping, annexation, the long-term establishment of military

⁷⁹ David M. Edelstein, “Occupation Hazards: Why Military Occupations Succeed or Fail,” *International Security* 29, no. 1 (2004): 52.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Mohamad Junaid, “Death and Life Under Occupation: Space, Violence, and Memory in Kashmir,” in *Everyday Occupations: Experiencing Militarism in South Asia and the Middle East*, ed. Kamala Visweswaran (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 161–2.

bases'.⁸² This understanding precipitates a shift away from occupation semantics and legalities and opens up scope to consider the 'human and cultural' elements of territorial control.⁸³ Studying the politico-military elements of occupation events is essential, but this expanded scope suggests that the dynamics of everyday life, locally-grounded strategies for negotiating and resisting occupying power, and personal narratives and experiences, are also important considerations.

Occupation studies as a distinct field of scholarship largely emerged in the wake of the Allied occupations of Germany and Japan at the end of the Second World War,⁸⁴ when new international laws to regulate and administer occupations were established.⁸⁵ The increasing relevance of the concept of military occupation, as well as the changing shape and form of occupations, has led to a growth in the number of studies that explore the phenomenon.⁸⁶ There has been a growing emphasis on gender and occupation, and the impact of occupations on women, from about the mid-1990s. Much of this scholarship looks at women in the occupied Palestinian territories and Israel, such as the work of Tamar Mayer, Simona Sharoni, and Fatma Kassem.⁸⁷ The ongoing military occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan and their impact on women have been the subject of increasing research, such as the work of Laura Sjoberg, Nadjé Al-Ali and Nicola Pratt, Cynthia Enloe, and Elaheh Rostami-Povey.⁸⁸ As Simona Sharoni observes, there is still a tendency within scholarship on

⁸² Christine de Matos and Rowena Ward, "Analyzing Gendered Occupation Power," in *Gender, Power, and Military Occupations: Asia Pacific and the Middle East since 1945*, ed. Christine de Matos and Rowena Ward (New York: Routledge, 2012), 3.

⁸³ Robin Gerster and Christine de Matos, "Introduction," in *Occupying the 'Other': Australia and Military Occupations from Japan to Iraq*, ed. Christine de Matos and Robin Gerster (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), 8.

⁸⁴ Sexual violence committed by the Red Army as it entered Berlin at the end of Second World War, for example, has generated much scholarly attention. See Atina Grossman, "A Question of Silence: The Rape of German Women by Occupation Soldiers," *October* 72 (October 1995): 43–63; Antony Beevor, *Berlin: The Downfall, 1945* (London: Viking, 2002); James W. Messer, "The Forgotten Victims of World War II: Masculinities and Rape in Berlin, 1945," *Violence Against Women* 12, no. 7 (July 2006): 702–12; and Filip Slavski, *The Soviet Occupation of Germany: Hunger, Mass Violence, and the Struggle for Peace, 1945–1947* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

⁸⁵ International law on occupation was codified at The Hague Peace Conventions of 1899 and 1907, and then reformulated at the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. See Eyal Benvenisti, *The International Law of Occupation*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012). For an overview of the development of the field, see Peter M. R. Stirk, *The Politics of Military Occupation* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009).

⁸⁶ For example, 10,000 UN troops have been stationed in Haiti since 2004 as part of a 'Stabilisation Mission'. See Justin Podur, *Haiti's New Dictatorship: The Coup, the Earthquake and the UN Occupation* (London: Pluto Press, 2012).

⁸⁷ Tamar Mayer, ed., *Women and the Israeli Occupation: The Politics of Change* (London: Routledge 1994); Simona Sharoni, *Gender and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: The Politics of Women's Resistance* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1995); and Fatma Kassem, *Palestinian Women: Narrative Histories and Gendered Memory* (London: Zed Books, 2011).

⁸⁸ Laura Sjoberg, *Gender, Justice, and the Wars in Iraq: A Feminist Reformulation of Just War Theory* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2006); Nadjé Al-Ali and Nicola Pratt, *What Kind of Liberation? Women and the Occupation of Iraq* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010); Cynthia Enloe, *Nimo's War, Emma's War: Making*

women and the violence imposed by occupation to represent women as either victims or heroes, which reflects much of the scholarship on East Timorese women. Sharoni seeks to move away from these dominant representations, and to focus instead on ‘the range of women’s daily experiences of violence and the diverse strategies which women have employed in resisting violence’.⁸⁹ In line with Sharoni’s approach, there has been an increasing shift away from exploring occupations within the context of discourses of global geopolitics and international relations to look at ‘the other side of occupation’,⁹⁰ to explore occupation from what Sharee Makdisi calls the ‘inside out’.⁹¹ This approach is less concerned with the macro-dimensions of occupations, and instead focuses on the everyday lives of the people concerned. This focus on people, the ways in which they respond to occupation and its effects upon their lives, constitutes the broader conceptual framework in which this thesis is situated.

Theories and sociologies of the ‘everyday’, such as Henri Lefebvre’s *Critique of Everyday Life*, Raoul Vaneigem’s *Revolution of Everyday Life*, and Michel de Certeau’s *Practice of Everyday Life*, highlight the importance of technologies and discourses that frame and shape people’s lives.⁹² The term ‘everyday life’ was originally conceptualised by Lefebvre to describe the mundane routine, habitualness, and the ordinary or the taken-for-granted.⁹³ For the literary theorist Rita Felski, ‘everyday life’ can be seen as ‘synonymous with the habitual, the ordinary, the mundane, yet it is also strangely elusive, that which resists our understanding and escapes our grasp’.⁹⁴ The implication of such elusiveness, for scholars, is described by Liesl Olson as ‘the insistent paradox of everyday life’ – that is, ‘to say *this is ordinary* is to give significance to what is insignificant’. She asks: ‘How do we discuss the ordinary when by its very nature it should remain overlooked?’⁹⁵ There is now a well-

Feminist Sense of the Iraq War (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010); and Elaheh Rostami-Povey, *Afghan Women: Identity and Invasion* (London; New York: Zed Books, 2007).

⁸⁹ Simona Sharoni, “Homefront as Battlefield: Gender, Military Occupation and Violence against Women,” in *Women and the Israeli Occupation: The Politics of Change*, ed. Tamar Mayer (London: Routledge, 1994), 122.

⁹⁰ Kamala Visweswaran, “Introduction: Geographies of Everyday Occupation,” in *Everyday Occupations: Experiencing Militarism in South Asia and the Middle East*, ed. Kamala Visweswaran (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 16.

⁹¹ Sharee Makdisi, *Palestine Inside Out: An Everyday Occupation* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2008).

⁹² Henri Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life* (London: Verso, 2002); Raoul Vaneigem, *The Revolution of Everyday Life* (Welcombe: Rebel Press, 2001); and Michele de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

⁹³ See Henri Lefebvre, *Everyday Life in the Modern World*, trans. Sacha Rabinovitch (New York: Harber and Low, 1971); and Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life*.

⁹⁴ Rita Felski, “The Invention of Everyday Life,” *New Formations* 39 (1999/2000): 15.

⁹⁵ Liesl Olson, “Everyday Life Studies: A Review,” *Modernism/Modernity* 18, no. 1 (January 2011): 175–6.

established scholarship on everyday life.⁹⁶ There is also a long scholarly association between everyday life and women's experiences. For Lefebvre, for example, 'Everyday life weighs heaviest on women [...] they are the subject of everyday life and its victims'.⁹⁷ Part of the broader move to write women's histories from the 1960s and 1970s, which I discuss in Chapter One, was a focus on everyday life. Indeed, the feminist scholar Teresa de Lauretis has gone so far as to define feminism as 'not merely a sexual politics but a politics of experience of everyday life'.⁹⁸ A number of prominent feminist scholars, such as Agnes Heller and Dorothy Smith, have produced histories of everyday life that explicitly draw upon a feminist framework of analysis.⁹⁹

Although this framework has not yet been applied to the Indonesian occupation of East Timor, several scholars have explored other occupations through the lens 'everyday life'. The essays in Kamala Visweswaran's edited collection on *Everyday Occupations: Experiencing Militarism in South Asia and the Middle East*, for example, seek to analyse 'the everydayness, and unfortunate ordinariness of occupation'.¹⁰⁰ In this context, occupation is understood not only in terms of control over territory, but also as a process that 'seeks to violently remake the culture of a subjugated people by changing its internal fabric or patterning'.¹⁰¹ Scholars of occupation who use this framework are interested in how everyday life is negotiated within the broader conditions of exceptionality and violence, as well as people's capacity to 'get by' under these circumstances.¹⁰² In her analysis of the second Palestinian intifada against Israeli occupation, Lori Allen argues that the kind of agency

⁹⁶ See, for example, Michael Gardiner, *Critiques of Everyday Life* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000); Ben Highmore, *Everyday Life and Cultural Theory* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002); Ben Highmore, ed., *The Everyday Life Reader* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002); Michael Sheringham, *Everyday Life: Theories and Practices from Surrealism to the Present* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); John Roberts, *Philosophizing the Everyday* (London and New York: Pluto Press, 2006); Bryony Randall, *Modernism, Daily Time, and Everyday Life* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007); and Siobhan Phillips, *The Poetics of the Everyday: Creative Repetition in Modern American Verse* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010).

⁹⁷ Lefebvre, *Everyday Life*, 73.

⁹⁸ Teresa de Lauretis, *Feminist Studies / Critical Studies* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 10.

⁹⁹ See Agnes Heller, *Everyday Life*, trans. G. L. Campbell (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984); and Dorothy Smith, *The Everyday World as Problematic: A Feminist Sociology* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1987). See also Bryony Randall, *Modernism, Daily Time and Everyday Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Liesl Olson, *Modernism and the Ordinary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); and Bryony Randall, "'Telling the Day' in Beatrice Potter Webb and Dorothy Richardson: The Temporality of the Working Woman," *Modernist Cultures* 5, no. 2 (2010): 243–66.

¹⁰⁰ Visweswaran, "Introduction," 17.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹⁰² Carol J. Greenhouse, Elizabeth Mertz, and Kay B. Warren, eds., *Ethnography in Unstable Places: Everyday Lives in Contexts of Dramatic Political Change* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002); Sandya Hewamanne, "Duty Bound? Militarization, Romances and New Spaces of Violence Among Sri Lanka's Free Trade Zone Garment Factory Workers," *Cultural Dynamics* 21, no. 2 (2009): 153–84; Pradeep Jeganathan, "Checkpoint: Anthropology, Identity and the State," in *Anthropology in the Margins of the State*, ed. Veena Das and Deborah Poole (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 2004), 67–80.

expressed by most Palestinians was not in the form of military or organised resistance but, in fact, was ‘entailed in practices whereby people manage, get by, and adapt’.¹⁰³ Similarly, Nina Gren, in her study of people in Dheisheh refugee camp in the West Bank, explores the way in which people responded to the Israeli occupation and its effects on everyday life. ‘Despite emergencies and interruptions, life in Dheisheh went on during military occupation and uprising’, Gren writes. ‘There were dishes to be washed, food to be cooked, television news to be followed. People had school and jobs to attend and weddings to celebrate even though such daily routines and festivals were often interrupted or disturbed by violent events’.¹⁰⁴ In her study of women’s experiences in the West Bank, Caitlin Ryan also explores ‘how Palestinians experience “normal” everyday life under occupation’. She argues that through ‘narratives of women’s daily experiences’, we gain ‘a different understanding of the nature of occupation and resistance’.¹⁰⁵ I suggest that this observation is similarly applicable to histories of the Indonesian occupation of East Timor.

In this thesis, I draw also upon anthropological scholarship, such as the work of Veena Das, who explores the way in which violence may become deeply interwoven with the fabric of the everyday.¹⁰⁶ She draws attention to the complex and, most importantly, to the necessarily *continuing* negotiation of crises precipitated through violent events in the everyday lives of victims. I suggest that focusing on everyday life enables us to better understand the deeper effects of violence on social and cultural life, as well as the various shapes that attempts to maintain forms of order and normality take in a society in which everyday life is characterised by violence and uncertainty. As Ivana Maček writes in her book, *Sarajevo Under Siege: Anthropology in Wartime*, we must remember that the concept of ‘normality’ is not necessarily understood in the same way during violent conflict and massive political violence as during peace time.¹⁰⁷ One of the key questions motivating this thesis is how people managed to endure, to negotiate, and to survive violent ruptures and structures in their daily lives; and in what ways their ability to simply ‘get by’ can be seen as a form of resistance. In order to capture these everyday experiences, I conducted oral history

¹⁰³ Lori Allen, “Getting by the Occupation: How Violence Became Normal During the Second Palestinian Intifada,” *Cultural Anthropology* 23, no. 3 (2008): 457.

¹⁰⁴ Nina Gren, *Occupied Lives: Maintaining Integrity in a Palestinian Refugee Camp in the West Bank* (Cairo: New York: The American University in Cairo Press, 2015), 11.

¹⁰⁵ Caitlin Ryan, *Bodies, Power and Resistance in the Middle East: Experiences of Subjectification in the Occupied Palestinian Territories* (Florence: Taylor and Francis, 2015), 12, 11.

¹⁰⁶ Veena Das, *Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

¹⁰⁷ Ivana Maček, *Sarajevo under Siege: Anthropology in Wartime* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009).

interview with women in East Timor about their lives under Indonesian rule, and I provide an overview of this process below.

Oral History as Method and Methodology

The primary research method used within this thesis is oral history interviews with East Timorese women, most which I conducted on a number of trips to Timor-Leste across the course of my PhD. In the interviews, I sought an in-depth account of personal experiences and reflections on the impact of the Indonesian occupation upon the women's lives. These interviews were supplemented by a small number of published collections of East Timorese women's personal narratives and life histories collated by other researchers and activists, including Laura Abrantes and Beba Sequeira,¹⁰⁸ Jude Conway,¹⁰⁹ Rebecca Winters (a.k.a. Sally-Ann Watson),¹¹⁰ the Asia Justice and Rights (AJAR) organisation,¹¹¹ the Association *Chega* for Us (*Asosiasaun Chega Ba Ita* – ACBIT),¹¹² and Rede Feto,¹¹³ in addition to other collections of oral testimony from East Timor during the Indonesian occupation.¹¹⁴ A diverse range of written sources supplemented this material, including personal and public archival material from online repositories, Australia, Timor-Leste, Canada, and the United Kingdom; in addition to a range of newspapers, bulletins, and periodicals – especially solidarity, human rights, and advocacy bulletins – government reports and other official documents.¹¹⁵ I also

¹⁰⁸ Laura Soares Abrantes and Beba Sequeira, eds., *Secrecy: The Key to Independence: It's Better to Have No Title Than to Have No Nation* (Dili: Blue Mountains East Timor Sisters, 2010).

¹⁰⁹ Jude Conway, ed., *Step by Step: Women of East Timor, Stories of Resistance and Survival* (Darwin: Charles Darwin University Press, 2010).

¹¹⁰ Rebecca Winters, rec. and comp., "East Timor Interviews Recorded November 1998," trans. IdaRua, Tiles and Lola in East Timor; and Flavia Pires, Bi-Hali, Luisa Ferreira, Maria Bernadino, and Maria do Céu Lopes da Silva in Australia; Rebecca Winters, comp., *Buibere: Voices of East Timorese Women, Volume 1* (Darwin: East Timorese Support Centre, 1999); and Sally-Anne Watson, comp., *Buibere: Lian Feto Timór Lorosa'e Nian, Volume 2* (Darwin: East Timor Support Centre, 1999).

¹¹¹ Galuh Wanita, Agustina Amtaran, Ah Hkam, Angela, Angela Martin, Ani Sipa, Baihajar Tualeka, Celestina de Almeida, Christina Sumarmiyati, Hkang Seng Pan, Indah Radja, Karen Campbell-Nelson, Mai Ja, Manuela Pereira, Matheos Viktor Messakh, Mohammad Noor Romadlon, Myint Daw Thuzar Tin, Natalia de Jesus, Naw Cynthia Win, Naw Hpaw Shee Wah, Naw Khin Pyu Myint, Naw Noe Lah, Nuela Labranche, Nurjamaliah, Paoina Ngefak Bara Pa, Pipit Ambarmirah, Radhiah, Samsidar, Sorang Saragih, Sudarsini, Tati Krisnawaty, Tegan Molony, and Zandra Mambrasar, *Enduring Impunity: Women Surviving Atrocities in the Absence of Justice*, ed. Dodi Yuniar and Matt Easton (Jakarta: Asia Justice and Rights (AJAR), 2015).

¹¹² Asosiasaun Chega Ba Ita, *Hanaruk Luta [Prolonged Struggle]: Voices of Women Survivors of Violence* (Dili: CAVR, 2014).

¹¹³ Rede Feto Timor-Leste, *Hau Fo Midar, Hau Simu Moruk [I Give Sweetness, I Receive Bitterness]* (Dili: Rede Feto, 2007).

¹¹⁴ Michele Turner, ed., *Telling: East Timor, Personal Testimonies 1942–1992* (Sydney: New South Wales University Press, 1992); and Jill Jolliffe and the Association of Prisoners of East Timor (*Associação dos ex-Prisioneiros Políticos do Timor-Leste* – AESPPOL), "The Living Memory Project," *Southeast Asia Digital Library*, accessed September 20, 2016, <http://sea.lib.niu.edu/easttimorprojects>.

¹¹⁵ See the Bibliography for a list of archival collections used in this thesis.

drew upon rarely-cited Indonesian government and military documents to outline the intentions and justifications of the occupation, as well as the specific programmes that targeted women both physically and mentally. In all, I conducted fifty-four oral history interviews with East Timorese women. These interviews are listed individually in the Bibliography, and brief biographical data for each interview participant is provided in the Appendix.

My reasons for using oral history as the practice and method of my research are twofold. First, there is a paucity of written source material from the Indonesian occupation that is attentive to the everyday experiences of East Timorese women. I therefore use women's oral narratives and life histories in order to position women's voices and experiences, as Joan Sangster writes, 'at the centre of history'.¹¹⁶ As I explain in more detail in Chapter One, I felt that East Timorese women's memories could provide, as Ann Stoler and Karen Strassler suggest, a 'repository of alternative histories and subaltern truths' to dominant narratives of the Indonesian occupation.¹¹⁷ I argue that the Indonesian invasion and occupation effected men and women differently and, drawing upon the work of memory scholars such as Elizabeth Jelin and Selma Leydesdorff, that they remember and narrate their experiences in gender-specific ways.¹¹⁸ I explore the notion of gendered memory, especially in the context of war and violence, in more detail below.

Second, drawing upon critiques made by Indigenous scholars such as Linda Tuhiwai Smith regarding the colonising role of Western concepts of research and traditions of knowledge,¹¹⁹ I chose this approach because Timor-Leste is a society with rich oral traditions, and story-telling plays a central role in passing on knowledge about the past. As the East Timorese political scientist, Dionísio da Costa Babo Soares, has written, the term *ai-knanoik* is used in Tetun – East Timor's *lingua franca* – to refer to folk stories and narratives about the past. In Timor-Leste 'the past is understood', Babo Soares writes, 'through the power of words'.¹²⁰ Similar to Robina Thomas' explanation for using storytelling as a

¹¹⁶ Joan Sangster, "Telling Our Stories: Feminist Debates and the Use of Oral History," in *The Oral History Reader*, ed. Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 87.

¹¹⁷ Ann Laura Stoler and Karen Strassler, "Castings for the Colonial: Memory Work in "New Order" Java," *Society for Comparative Study of Society and History* 42, no. 1 (January 2000): 7.

¹¹⁸ See, for example, Elizabeth Jelin, *State Repression and the Labors of Memory*, trans. Judy Rein and Marcial Godoy-Anativia (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003); and Selma Leydesdorff, "Introduction to the Transaction Edition. Gender and Memory Ten Years On," in *Gender and Memory*, ed. Selma Leydesdorff, Luisa Passerini, and Paul Thompson (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 2009), 1–16.

¹¹⁹ Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (London: Zed Books, 2012).

¹²⁰ Dionísio da Costa Babo Soares, "Branching from the Trunk: East Timorese Perceptions of Nationalism in Transition" (Ph.D., Australian National University, 2003), 89.

research method to honour her Indigenous heritage,¹²¹ I felt that asking women to narrate their life histories orally was a research method that was attentive and responsive to East Timorese culture and knowledge traditions.

Similarly, this thesis uses oral history as a feminist research methodology to analyse and interpret East Timorese women's memories of the Indonesian occupation. Although the practice and the theory – or, as the oral historian Lynn Abrams writes, the 'doing and interpreting' – of oral history are inextricably intertwined, this methodological approach involves considering 'not just *what* is said, but also *how* it is said, *why* it is said and *what* it means'. Similar to Abrams, I approach the oral history interview 'as a means of accessing not just information but also signification, interpretation and meaning' within the narratives.¹²² By researching women's lives, listening to women's voices, and analysing their experiences, I also adopt a feminist approach to this material.¹²³ I discuss some of the ways in which feminist scholars have engaged with oral history, both practically and theoretically, as well as some of the issues and complications involved in a project to 'recover' women's voices, in Chapter One.

Although there were, of course, differences among the women interviewed for this research project and their individual memories, I suggest that there are gender-specific ways in which women remember the Indonesian occupation. There is an emerging body of feminist scholarship on gender and memory, some of which focuses specifically on war and political violence. Key texts, including Selma Leydesdorff's analysis of gender and memory in the context of the war in the former Yugoslavia,¹²⁴ Veena Das' theorising of gendered memories of the partition in South Asia,¹²⁵ and Nadjé Al-Ali's research on memories of war and state violence in the Middle East,¹²⁶ have pioneered a critical framework for thinking about the complex relationship between women, war, and memory. In particular, this scholarship raises the importance of silences in the histories and memories of wars, as well as the way in which memories are often deeply gendered and political. I discuss the notion of 'silence' and memories of gendered forms of violence in Chapter Three. Of course, as Ayşe Gül Altınay

¹²¹ Qwul'sih'yah'maht / Robina Anne Thomas, "Honouring the Oral Traditions of My Ancestors Through Storytelling," in *Research as Resistance. Critical, Indigenous, and Anti-Oppressive Approaches*, ed. Leslie Brown and Susan Strega (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 2005), 237–54.

¹²² Lynn Abrams, *Oral History Theory*, 2nd ed. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), 12.

¹²³ Personal Narratives Group, "Origins," in *Interpreting Women's Lives: Feminist Theory and Personal Narratives*, ed. Personal Narratives Group (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1989), 4.

¹²⁴ Selma Leydesdorff, *Surviving the Bosnian Genocide: The Women of Srebrenica Speak* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011).

¹²⁵ Veena Das, *Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

¹²⁶ Nadjé Sadig Al-Ali, *Iraqi Women: Untold Stories from 1948 to the Present* (London: Zed Books, 2007).

and Andrea Pető remind us, we cannot assume that women's experiences and memories are undifferentiated from each other, and that they are categorically different from men's.¹²⁷ I suggest, however, that women's oral history narratives tell a different story of the Indonesian occupation, in which familial relationships, the intimate sphere, everyday life, and experiences of caring for others in the context of ongoing violence and oppression, are common themes. Women's memories, their modes of narration, the role of silence, and the different stories, produce a perspective that is distinct from dominant or hegemonic narratives of the occupation.

In writing a history of the Indonesian occupation of East Timor, therefore, I suggest that oral history provides a means of incorporating women's voices and experiences into scholarship from which they have previously been excluded, stereotyped, or under-represented. As discussed in the above literature review, within previous studies of the Indonesian occupation of East Timor, women have predominantly been represented as either victims of mass human rights violations or as subordinate heroes of the revolutionary struggle. There is a growing body of scholarship that explores women's experiences of broader historical events and political processes, although this field is still in its infancy. The aforementioned edited collections of oral histories have drawn attention to some predominantly high-profile women's experiences of life under Indonesian rule. However, there is yet to emerge a sustained, theoretically-engaged discussion of the implications and the uses of women's valuable oral narratives within a history of the occupation more broadly, and to consider the way in which literature on oral history and personal narratives shape and inform such an analysis. As such, my thesis uses these valuable collections, in addition to my own extensive oral history interviews, to write a history of the Indonesian occupation through the lens of women's memories, personal narratives, and experiences.

Overview of the Thesis

At the centre of this research project are East Timorese women's personal narratives and life histories and, as such, in Chapter One I discuss the historiographical literature that informs my theoretical approach to researching women's lives. Drawing upon an established body of feminist scholarship, I outline my decision to place women's voices and experiences at the

¹²⁷ Ayşe Gül Altınay and Andrea Pető, "Introduction. Uncomfortable Connections: Gender, Memory, War," in *Gendered Wars, Gendered Memories. Feminist Conversations on War, Genocide and Political Violence*, ed. Ayşe Gül Altınay and Andrea Pető (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), 27.

centre of my analysis, and discuss some of the issues and complications associated with utilising the concept of ‘experience’ within historical analysis. I explain my use of oral history as both a research practice and theoretical framework, and provide an extensive discussion of my interviews with East Timorese women, drawing upon broader literature on oral history, trauma and memory, narrative, and identity. In keeping with the tenor of this literature, I have considered not merely the content, but also the presentation (both structure and form) of the personal narratives presented in my interviews. As such, I have attempted to somewhat translate these frameworks to structure this (textual) thesis. Key themes arising from these interviews – violence, everyday life, and resistance – provide the thematic structure for the remainder of the thesis. In addition, perceptible and distinct shifts in the broad affective structures of the women’s narratives have informed the distinction I have made between the periods of ‘conflict’ (in Chapter Two) from 1975–79; and ‘occupation’ (in Chapters Three, Four, and Five) from 1979–99.

At the start of this Introduction, I noted Céu’s description of the Indonesian invasion of East Timor as an event that constituted a violent rupture within the lives of East Timorese people. While the main focus of Chapter Two is the period of conventional war and life in the mountains (1975–79), I first take a step back to explore the development of political consciousness and nationalist thinking in Portuguese Timor prior to the Indonesian invasion. I focus, in particular, on the way in which women’s emancipation was seen as part of the broader struggle for national liberation. I suggest that in the liberated zones (*zonas libertadas*) during the period of conventional war, the lives and experiences of East Timorese women, when not under constant attack by the Indonesian forces, were extensively shaped by FRETILIN’s ideology and politics. Here, I draw upon FRETILIN’s early revolutionary rhetoric and, in particular, its ideas about revolutionary femininity. Subsequently, I describe what happened to women and their families when the Indonesian military invaded on 7 December 1975. After the invasion, FRETILIN managed to hold the Indonesian military to a stalemate until the end of 1976, and to organise functioning societies in the mountains. As the Indonesian military gained more strength and supplies, conditions in the mountains became increasingly difficult. By the end of 1978, most of the civilian population had surrendered and on 26 March 1979, the Indonesian military concluded its conventional operations and declared that East Timor had been ‘pacified’.

The remaining three chapters explore the period of occupation (from 1979–99), and are structured in accordance with three broad themes: violence, everyday life, and resistance. Although these are separated into distinct chapters there are, of course, strong parallels and

points of intersection between each. Chapter Three explores the violence of the Indonesian occupation which, I argue, resulted in part from the heavily militarised state structure that Indonesia imposed on East Timor. I also suggest that the territory can be seen as a special and extreme case within the context of the New Order regime, in that the direct application and the threat of violence were routinely used as administrative tools by the occupying state. Women were targeted for specific acts of violence because of their alleged involvement in the independence movement, they were related to fighters in the mountains, or some had no clear connection to the resistance and suffered in the military occupation as women. In addition to analysing direct acts of violence, I explore the way in which the occupying regime constructed and maintained systems of regulation, surveillance, and social control, which cultivated a broader climate of fear and mistrust within the territory. For East Timorese women, these structures of violence often involved a gender-specific dimension: the threat of rape, sexual slavery, sexual torture, and harassment. Although there were shifts in the form and extent of military violence across the course of the occupation, I argue that the military used widespread terror, violence, and surveillance fairly consistently throughout the period.

In Chapter Four, I argue that the infrastructure of the Indonesian military occupation and its impact on East Timorese women needs to be understood within the context of the gender ideology of Suharto's New Order regime. In doing so, this chapter situates analyses of women's experiences in Indonesian-occupied East Timor within an entirely new framework. I suggest that the particular social constructions of gender, notions of women's roles in society, and their relationship to the state, were central components of how the regime's governance shaped women's experiences of everyday life. Initially drawing upon Indonesian government documents, I examine a number of national programmes and state-sanctioned organisations that were introduced to East Timor in a purported attempt to 'develop' and 'modernise' the territory. In part, these initiatives brought about new spaces for social organisation, opportunities for education and employment, and new forms of social and geographical mobility, for East Timorese women. Yet the highly militarised and repressive context of East Timor meant that many people were hesitant to perceive them as genuine and well-intended; rather, my interview participants remembered these initiatives largely as attempts to restrict, control, and indoctrinate the population in accordance with the integrationist aims and centralising ideology of the New Order state.

In the face of the violence and brutality demonstrated by the military regime, and despite attempts by the state to modernise and develop East Timor, many East Timorese remained committed to the idea of national independence. The development of a widespread

culture of resistance is the focus of Chapter Five. My interview participants framed their decision to participate in resistance activities not merely in terms of a political commitment to East Timor's right to self-determination, but also as a response to intense personal loss and suffering and the violent realities of daily life under Indonesian rule. For many women, participating in the resistance was a natural decision – they explained that it was part of growing up in Indonesian-occupied East Timor. In this chapter, rather than characterising the East Timorese resistance into three 'fronts', I highlight several themes that encapsulate the nature of women's involvement: networks of resistance and the importance of secrecy; the Catholic Church as an institution of survival, hope, and endurance; subtle acts that undermined Indonesian authority and hegemony; and the increasingly public nature of resistance from the 1990s. While acknowledging that violence was a constant feature of daily life under Indonesian rule, this chapter explores the ways in which women survived, negotiated, and coped with such violence within their daily lives – and even transformed these experiences of suffering into sources for unity, resistance, and activism.

In the Conclusion, I reflect upon the aims and findings of the thesis, and outline the key arguments that were made within each of the chapters. In particular, I suggest how both the structure and approach of this thesis reveals some of the complexity of women's experiences of military occupation, which has thus far been missing from scholarship on the Indonesian invasion and occupation of East Timor. I also situate my reflections within the context of broader literature on women and military occupations, specifically through an emphasis upon local strategies for survival and resistance.

Chapter One: Researching Women's Lives

At its core, this thesis is an exploration of East Timorese women's experiences, memories, and perceptions of life during the Indonesian occupation. In researching women's lives and placing women's voices and experiences at the centre of historical analysis, I am drawing upon the insights from an established body of scholarship on women's history, feminist theory, and discussions of the complicated position of historical 'experience' within such analyses. In order to highlight the everyday experiences of ordinary East Timorese women during the occupation, I draw upon feminist interpretations of oral history as both a research practice and theoretical framework for analysis. I suggest that this approach can lead to new understandings of the Indonesian occupation of East Timor.

In this chapter, I first outline the historiographical context that foregrounds my focus on researching women's lives. I then discuss the use of personal narratives within my thesis, by providing an extensive discussion of my interviews with East Timorese women in the context of literature on oral history, trauma and memory, narrative and identity. The structure and form of the personal narratives presented in these interviews is important, because I used this framework to structure the remainder of the thesis. By drawing upon the structure of the women's narratives, both in terms of chronological shifts and key themes, I sought to write a new, women centred history of the occupation. As such, key themes arising from these narratives – violence, everyday life, and resistance – provide the thematic structure and points of focus for the remainder of the thesis. In addition, the broad temporal shifts outlined within the women's narratives have informed the distinction I have made between 'war' (in Chapter Two) and 'occupation' (in Chapters Three, Four, and Five) as constitutive of a distinct shift in the way that women experienced everyday life.

Writing Women's History: The Concept of 'Experience'

The conceptual framework for this thesis arises from the observation that literature on the Indonesian occupation of East Timor has neglected, under-represented, or granted only peripheral attention to the complex experiences of East Timorese women. This observation regarding representations of women within historical records accords with long-standing feminist observations about the past. In this section, I provide an overview of the

development of women's history as a specific field of academic inquiry, and the way in which the notion of historical 'experience' has featured within such discussions.¹

Promoted by the rise of women's liberation movements in the 1960s and 1970s was a growing awareness that the discipline of history had traditionally been written from a masculine perspective, and that women's experiences had been largely excluded from the historical record.² As an increasing number of women began to enter the historical profession during this time (especially in England and North America, but also in Continental Europe and India), they began to challenge the traditional subjects, issues, and methods of historical inquiry. They sought to bring to the fore previously untold stories of women's lives in the past, and to explore the reasons for their exclusion or omission from the historical record. This approach is outlined in the introduction to the 1977 edited collection, *Becoming Visible: Women in European History*, in which Renate Bridenthal and Claudia Koonz explain that they sought to 'both to restore women to history and to explore the meaning of women's historical experience'.³ Although not necessarily self-identified feminist historians, many scholars of women's history were informed by the ideas and theories of feminism that aimed broadly to combat women's oppression, in all its various forms.⁴ Feminist historians sought to 'reclaim' the lives of women that had been, in Sheila Rowbotham's apt phrase, 'hidden from history'.⁵ For women to gain historical subjectivity, both as agents and writers of history, feminist historians proposed new ways of understanding the past, and embraced new methodologies and theoretical positions. Much of this early scholarship on women's history was centred in the United States and Britain, although there have since been significant

¹ For an excellent and extremely detailed overview of developments in the field of gender history, see Kathleen Canning, "Chapter 1. Gender History. Meanings, Methods and Metanarratives," in *Gender History in Practice: Historical Perspectives on Bodies, Class and Citizenship* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2006), 3–62.

² See, for example, Martha Vicinus, ed., *Suffer and Be Still: Women in the Victorian Age* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972); Mary S. Hartman and Lois Banner, eds., *Clio's Consciousness Raised: New Perspectives on the History of Women* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974); Berenice A. Carroll, ed., *Liberating Women's History: Theoretical and Critical Essays* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1976); Juliet Mitchell and Ann Oakley, eds., *The Rights and Wrongs of Women* (Harmondsworth; New York: Penguin, 1976); and Martha Vicinus, ed., *A Widening Sphere: Changing Roles of Victorian Women* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977).

³ Renate Bridenthal and Claudia Koonz, "Introduction," in *Becoming Visible: Women in European History*, ed. Renate Bridenthal and Claudia Koonz (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977), 1.

⁴ For an overview of the historical relationship between feminism and women's history, see Judith M. Bennett, *History Matters: Patriarchy and the Challenge of Feminism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006).

⁵ Sheila Rowbotham, *Hidden from History: Rediscovering Women in History from the 17th Century to the Present* (New York: Vintage Books, 1973).

efforts to expand this geographic focus to different local, national and transnational contexts and, indeed, to critique its inherent presuppositions.⁶

The field of women's history was also influenced by developments in historical studies and broader academic trends, such as 'new social history' or 'history from below', as a foundation for uncovering women's experiences and to provide a framework for listening to women's voices.⁷ Much of this work initially focused on the 'private sphere' of the household, family, sexuality, and reproduction.⁸ The reworking of Marxist analysis also provided a crucial analytical framework for thinking about the relationship between women, class, and work.⁹ For women's history and feminist theory, the notion of 'experience' was particularly important as a category which mediated between the realities of sex-based oppression and the development of a shared consciousness. Dorothy Smith, for example, examines the experiences of women and seeks to build an analysis of everyday life from the standpoint of women.¹⁰ For Smith, 'experience' can be seen as the foundation of a feminist sociology, as 'the ground of a new knowledge, a new culture' that is located in 'one's bodily and material existence'.¹¹ Patricia Hill Collins develops a similar approach, focusing on the 'concrete experience' of African-American women to construct her analysis.¹² For advocates of what became known as feminist standpoint theory, such as Smith and Hill Collins, in

⁶ For an overview of the development of women's history from a variety of international perspectives, see Karen Offen, Ruth Roach Pierson, and Jane Rendal, eds., *Writing Women's History: International Perspectives* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan, 1991).

⁷ See, for example, Sally Alexander, "Women's Work in Nineteenth-Century London: A Study of the Years 1820-50," in *The Rights and Wrongs of Women*, ed. Juliet Mitchell and Ann Oakley (Harmondsworth; New York: Penguin, 1976), 59-111; Anna Davin, "Feminism and Labour History," in *People's History and Socialist Theory*, ed. R. Samuel (London; Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), 176-81; and Barbara Taylor, "'The Men Are as Bad as their Masters...': Socialism, Feminism and Sexual Antagonism in the London Tailoring Trade in the Early 1830s," *Feminist Studies* 5, no. 1, Women and Power: Dimensions of Women's Historical Experience (Spring 1979): 7-4.

⁸ See, for example, Juliet Mitchell, *Women's Estate* (New York: Random House, 1972); Linda Gordon, *Women's Body, Women's Right, A Social History of Birth Control in America* (New York: Grossman/Viking, 1976); Louise A. Tilly and Joan W. Scott, *Women, Work and Family* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1978); Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: Norton, 1983); and Christine Delphy, *Close to Home: A Materialist Analysis of Women's Oppression* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts, 1984).

⁹ See Mary O'Brien, *The Politics of Reproduction* (London: Routledge, 1981); Nancy Harstock, *Money, Sex and Power* (New York: Longman, 1983); and Donna Haraway, "A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology and Socialist-Feminism in the 1980s," *Socialist Review* 15, no. 2 (March/April 1985): 65-107.

¹⁰ See Dorothy Smith, *The Everyday World as Problematic: A Feminist Sociology* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987); Dorothy Smith, *The Conceptual Practises of Power: A Feminist Sociology of Knowledge* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1990); Dorothy Smith, *Texts, Facts and Femininity: Exploring the Relations of Ruling* (London: Routledge, 1990); and Dorothy Smith, *Writing the Social: Critique, Theory and Investigations* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998).

¹¹ Smith, *The Everyday World as Problematic*, 107.

¹² Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1990), 209.

making women's concrete life experiences the primary source of analysis, historical knowledge could be constructed that accurately reflects and represents women's lives.

This approach was not unchallenged, however, and from the 1980s post-structural and post-modern feminists raised concerns about the notion of a single 'women's experience'. Denise Riley, for example, argues against the use of 'women' itself as an essential category. Riley instead advocates for inquiry into the ways in which female subjectivity is produced, agency is made possible, race and sexuality intersect with gender, and in which politics organise and interpret experience.¹³ Joan Scott similarly problematises the use of experience as a means through which historical knowledge can be produced. She argues that using experience as evidence over-generalises group histories and produces a tendency to naturalise discursively-produced identities: '[such analyses] take as self-evident the identities of those whose experience is being documented and thus naturalize their difference', she writes.¹⁴ These criticisms precipitated extensive theoretical and conceptual discussions on the notion of 'experience' within feminist and historical scholarship.

Accordingly, feminist historians began to move beyond 'women's history' to consider the concept of 'gender' as a broader, more compelling approach to analysing the past.¹⁵ In her oft-cited article, 'Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis', Scott argues that inserting women's perspectives and experiences into history was not enough, and that 'gender' – a cultural construct that is used to create and enforce power relations – provides a much more useful concept for analysing the past.¹⁶ As Bonnie Smith suggests in her reflection upon the passage from women's history to gender history, the meaning of the term 'gender' was increasingly widened from a signifier of the social or cultural relation between the sexes, to include the symbolic system or signifier of relations of power, in which men and women are positioned differently.¹⁷ The impact of Scott's work upon the practice of feminist and women's history was considerable, as feminist scholars began to use the concept of 'gender' to analyse the past. Leonora Davidoff and Catherine Hall's 1987 influential study on men and women of the English middle class, for example, places the construction of gender

¹³ Denise Riley, *'Am I That Name?': Feminism and the Category of 'Women' in History* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan Press, 1988).

¹⁴ Joan W. Scott, "The Evidence of Experience," *Critical Inquiry* 17, no. 4 (1991): 777.

¹⁵ See Judith L. Newton, Mary P. Ryan, and Judith R. Walkowitz, eds., *Sex and Class in Women's History* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983).

¹⁶ Joan W. Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *The American Historical Review* 91, no. 5 (December 1986): 1053-75. This article was reprinted in *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 28-50.

¹⁷ Bonnie G. Smith, *The Gender of History: Men, Women, and Historical Practice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998).

identities at the centre of analysis. They also consider the social construction of gendered identities, stating in the Prologue: ‘The principal argument [of the collection] rests on the assumption that gender and class always operate together, that consciousness of class always takes a gendered form’.¹⁸ Since the rise of ‘gender’ as a critical category for analysis, feminist historians have suggested a redefinition of other categories, chronologies, and narratives of historical transformation, which constituted central frames of historical analysis.

Calls for an integrated, ‘intersectional’ analysis that drew upon considerations of gender, class, and race as equal and interdependent variables rose significantly from the 1980s, spearheaded by academic and activist women of colour. In 1989, Kimberlé Crenshaw famously coined the term ‘intersectionality’ to describe the multiple ways in which oppression is experienced. The term went on to occupy a central place within women’s and gender history.¹⁹ Challenging perceptions that previous scholarship in women’s studies had ignored the specificity of race and class differences, scholars pointed to the concentration on white, middle-class women in historical analysis. Important studies by Claire Midgley, Vron Ware, Antoinette Burton, and Catherine Hall drew attention to the complex relationship between ‘first wave’ feminists and empire.²⁰ Other feminist scholars, such as Anne McClintock, Ann Laura Stoler, and Angela Woollacott, applied these tools of analysis to ‘new imperial history’, exploring the role of gender, race, and agency in the colonial context.²¹ Similarly, the work of so-called ‘Third World’ and postcolonial feminists, such as Audre Lorde, Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Ann Russo, Lourdes Torres, and M. Jacqui Alexander, criticised Western feminism for its ‘Eurocentricism’ and failure to acknowledge

¹⁸ Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes* (London: Hutchinson, 1987), 13. See also Anna Clark, *The Struggle for the Breeches: Gender and the Making of the British Working Class* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

¹⁹ For example, special issues of three journals – *European Journal of Women’s Studies* 13, no. 3 (2006); *Signs* 38, no. 4, Intersectionality: Theorizing Power, Empowering Theory (2013); and *Du Bois Review* 10, no. 2, Intersectionality: Mapping the Movements of a Theory (Fall 2013) – and a number of edited volumes were devoted to the field of intersectional studies. See Esther Ngan-Ling Chow, Marcia Texler Segal, Lin Tan, eds., *Analyzing Gender, Intersectionality, and Multiple Inequalities: Global, Transnational and Local Contexts* (Bingley: Emerald, 2011); Helma Lutz, Maria Teresa Herrera Vivar, and Linda Supik, eds., *Framing Intersectionality: Debates on a Multi-Faceted Concept in Gender Studies* (Farnham; Burlington: Ashgate, 2011).

²⁰ Clare Midgley, *Women Against Slavery: The British Campaigns, 1780–1870* (New York: Routledge, 1992); Vron Ware, *Beyond the Pale: White Women, Racism and History* (London: Verso, 1992); Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Antoinette Burton, *Burdens of History: British Feminism, Indian Women and Imperial Culture, 1865–1915* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994); and Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination, 1830–1867* (Oxford: Polity, 2002).

²¹ Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Context* (New York: Routledge, 1995); and Angela Woollacott, *Gender and Empire* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006). See also Julia Clancy-Smith and Frances Gouda, eds., *Domesticating the Empire: Race, Gender, and Family Life in French and Dutch Colonialism* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1998).

the role of power and oppression in relations between white (European and North American) women and non-white women. Instead, they argue for more attention to issues of race, sexual preference, class, and age within analyses of women's oppression.²² Mohanty suggests that it is still valuable to narrate the experiences and histories of struggle of 'Third World' women, as long as these experiences are situated within the context of broader historical events and processes.²³ Her emphasis upon the need for 'situated' studies informs this thesis.

In framing this research project and considering the various critiques of 'women's history', it is important to note that it is East Timorese women's experiences in the *plural* that are the subject of historical inquiry. Obviously, we cannot reduce all East Timorese women to one group with a uniform experience of the Indonesian occupation. In the discussion of my oral history interviews below, I outline the ways in which I sought to include a cross-section of women within my study. Although I refer to 'East Timorese women' throughout this thesis, by no means am I asserting that 'women' are a monolithic group, and that all women experience and respond to conflict and occupation in the same ways. In arguing for a feminist research methodology engaged in researching daily lived experiences, political scientist Christine Sylvester maintains that experience 'is no longer seen as a compass pointing toward any true meaning of events or feelings and more of a methodology that enables research to focus on ordinary people and ways that international relations affects them as is affected by their actions'.²⁴ Similar to Caitlin Ryan's study on Palestinian women in the West Bank, my use of 'East Timorese women' also does not imply that I frame their subject status of 'women' as inherent, but rather, as 'a complex array of relationships and interactions that brings the category into being'.²⁵ While women's narratives and experiences included in this thesis pertain primarily to those interviewed, I suggest that they can be instructive about the experiences of other women living under similar conditions. This method does not result in claims about the universality of women's experience; instead, the diverse stories told are

²² Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses," in *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*, ed. Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Ann Russo, and Lourdes Torres (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 51–80; Audre Lorde, "An Open Letter to Mary Daly," in *This Bridge Called My Back: Writing By Radical Women of Colour*, ed. Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa (New York: Kitchen Table Press, 1983), 94–7; Kumari Jayawardena, *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World* (London: Zed Press, 1986); Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Ann Russo, and Lourdes Torres, eds., *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991); and M. Jacqui Alexander and Chandra Talpade Mohanty, eds., *Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures* (New York: Routledge, 1997).

²³ Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "Introduction. Cartographies of Struggle: Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism," in *Third World Women*, ed. Mohanty, Russo, and Torres, 34–9.

²⁴ Christine Sylvester, *War as Experience: Contributions from International Relations and Feminist Analyses* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 48.

²⁵ Caitlin Ryan, *Bodies, Power and Resistance in the Middle East: Experiences of Subjectification in the Occupied Palestinian Territories* (Florence: Taylor and Francis, 2015), 8.

clearly rooted in life experiences and, therefore, produce knowledge that is specific to an historical moment and cultural context. However, the approach adopted and the way in which oral history can provide new understandings of life under occupation is useful in understanding experiences of women living under similar circumstances.

In developing a new framework for examining life during the Indonesian occupation, focusing on women's experiences is one way to bring to the fore the diverse range of activities that women engage in as part of their everyday lives. I suggest that this approach reveals how occupations are 'lived', offering unique perspectives and insights into the nature of rule. Women's experiences can, as Abigail Brooks writes, provide 'a lens through which to examine society as a whole'.²⁶ It is thus necessary to consider the broader historical processes, political structures, and ideological systems in which women's experiences are located. I attend to this concern throughout my thesis, but particularly in Chapter Two, in which I discuss the revolutionary politics of the East Timorese independence movement and how this shaped women's experiences of conflict and life in the mountains. Similarly, in Chapter Four, I suggest that the infrastructure of the Indonesian occupation and its impact upon East Timorese women must be understood within the context of the gender ideology of the New Order regime. I argue that East Timorese experiences of conflict and occupation are, in addition to other intersecting axes of difference, determined by their gender. As it is the masculine experience which has thus far occupied a central place within interpretations and representations of the past, this thesis makes a case for placing women's voices and experiences at the centre of analysis while also, and necessarily, considering the broader ideological processes that constitute and structure those experiences.

Feminist Approaches to Oral History

Within this research project, I adopt a feminist approach to the practice and interpretation of oral history. This approach was central not only to the way in which I conducted the interviews, but also informed my analysis of the material. In this section, I outline the development of oral history as an academic discipline and make a case for oral history as a distinctively feminist methodology, before outlining my interview process and how I incorporated this framework into both my research practice and analysis.

²⁶ Abigail Brooks, "Feminist Standpoint Epistemology: Building Knowledge and Empowerment through Women's Lived Experience," in *The Feminist Standpoint Theory Reader: Intellectual and Political Controversies*, ed. Sandra Harding (New York: Routledge, 2004), 59.

Oral history is a research practice and theory that originated with the radical and democratic attempt to reclaim the history of ordinary people. It is particularly important, according to the oral historian Alessandro Portelli, because it can give us information about groups of people that either have no written records themselves, or appear in written records produced by others in ways that distort or misrepresent their real experiences.²⁷ Oral historians originally sought to record ‘history from below’ by including the voices of the non-elite and the disempowered within narratives of the past. This objective involved an attempt to democratise and transform the field of history, as the oral historian Paul Thompson writes, ‘by introducing new evidence from the underside, by shifting the focus and opening new areas of inquiry, by challenging some of the assumptions and accepted judgements of historians, [and] by bringing recognition to substantial groups of people who had been ignored’.²⁸ Such accounts were seen to allow for a fuller and more democratic understanding of the past to emerge. These aims have resonated with the endeavours of feminist historians and attempts to include women’s lives in broader narratives of the past.

While there has been a long relationship between women’s history and oral history, a distinct literature on oral history as a feminist methodology arose from the late 1970s as part of broader movements for women’s liberation, and the development of a new field of social history. For feminist scholars, oral history was particularly important in drawing attention to women’s lives, so many had been overlooked within traditional historical sources and official histories.²⁹ As Sherna Berger Gluck outlines, the methodology was originally used to celebrate the unearthing of women’s voices and experiences as means of challenging the traditional historical narratives, affirming that women’s everyday lives *are* history.³⁰ From the mid-1980s, however, the field began to shift towards deeper considerations of individual narration, subjectivity, and the interviewer-narrator relationship.³¹ These complexities were explored, for example, in Gluck and Daphne Patai’s 1991 collection of essays, *Women’s Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History*.³² The field has since progressed to consider

²⁷ Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli, and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 50.

²⁸ Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 7–8.

²⁹ See *Frontiers: A Journal of Women’s Studies* 2, no. 2 Special Issue on Women’s Oral History (Summer 1977); and *Oral History: The Journal of the Oral History Society* 5, no. 2 Women’s History Issue (1977).

³⁰ Sherna Gluck, “What’s So Special About Women? Women’s Oral History,” *Frontiers: A Journal of Women’s Studies* 2, no. 2 (1977): 3–17.

³¹ Susan H. Armitage, “The Next Step,” *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 7, no. 1 Special Issue on Women’s Oral History (1983): 3–8. See also Personal Narratives Group, eds., *Interpreting Women’s Lives: Feminist Theory and Personal Narratives* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1989), 12.

³² Sherna Berger Gluck and Daphne Patai, eds., *Women’s Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1991).

more closely, as Joan Sangster writes, the ethical issues and different theoretical approaches associated with oral history practice,³³ and I discuss these considerations in more detail below. Today, oral history remains an important tool for uncovering women's experiences, and for analysing the meaning of the past in the present. Feminist practitioners of oral history have, in turn, opened up new ways of exploring methodological complexities associated with the practice and process of oral history.³⁴ The research method adopted within this thesis draws upon the intersections and interrelations between these two fields of inquiry.

My Interviews with East Timorese Women

From May 2012 to September 2013, I conducted fifty-four oral history interviews with East Timorese women *in situ*.³⁵ My research focused on three East Timorese towns and their surrounding areas: Dili, the capital; Liquica, in the west; and Baucau, the former Portuguese administrative centre in the east. While not aiming to be representative, I chose a multi-site approach for similar reasons to Victoria Sanford in her study of massacres during *La Violencia* in Guatemala: I felt that it allowed for an analysis of experience that was specific to the context of local communities, while at the same time, offering opportunities to make 'generalised conclusions about the similarities, contradictions, and complexities' of East Timorese women's experiences during the Indonesian occupation.³⁶ Most women were aged between forty and sixty at the time of the interview. The recruitment processes used was a snowball technique although some women were personally invited to participate, drawing upon my personal connections and relationships formed within the country. The interviews occurred on one or two occasions and lasted between one-and-a-half to six hours each. They were held at a time and place of the participant's choosing, which was usually in their homes or place of work.

The interviews were conducted in English, Tetun, or Indonesian – at times, in a combination of these languages – with the assistance of an interpreter where necessary. I used two local interpreters across the course of my research, and they both also assisted with

³³ Joan Sangster, "Politics and Praxis in Canadian Working-Class Oral History," in *The Oral History Reader*, 3rd ed., ed. Robert Perks and Alistair Thompson (Milton Park: Routledge, 2016), 59–60.

³⁴ For an overview of the historical relationship between women's history and oral history, see Joana Bornat and Hanna Diamond, "Women's History and Oral History: Developments and Debates," *Women's History Review* 16, no. 1 (2007): 19–39.

³⁵ Ethics clearance was obtained for this project through the University of Melbourne Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC 1136578).

³⁶ Victoria Stanford, *Buried Secrets: Truth and Human Rights in Guatemala* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 17.

written translation work where required. My local interpreters were invaluable research partners and local guides, assisting my navigation of various linguistic and cultural barriers. They also provided me with a link to the local community, helped me to source potential interview participants and sites, and assisted me in identifying a cross-section of women in accordance with local standards. Within the East Timorese context, this meant considering socio-economic status, family background (*liurai* – traditional ruler or chief), education, geography, and age.³⁷ Working with women was critical for my research project, considering the cultural context and gender-sensitive nature of the discussion. I found that both my interpreters' youth, personality, and professionalism was invaluable in making my interview participants feel comfortable, at ease, and also calmed if they became upset when sharing their story.

I drew upon the experiences and observations of other women who had conducted oral history fieldwork for inspiration and guidance during this process. In the context of her work with Iraqi diaspora women in North America, for example, Nadia Jones-Gailani reflects upon the presence of an interpreter within 'the interview space', and how it 'informs the construction of participant narratives as well as the process of remembering and retelling past traumas and life histories'. Although initially hesitant about her ability to 'control' the interview and being forced to 'share authority' with her interpreter, Jones-Gailani soon saw her interpreter's presence as aiding her interview participants to 'overcome their insecurities and hesitancy to divulge difficult pasts'.³⁸ I similarly felt that the presence of my interpreters made my participants feel more comfortable in what may have been initially perceived to be an unfamiliar context. Their presence was also one of my own ethical safeguards, both to assist and guide my responses to difficult memories expressed during the interviews, but also as someone with whom I could discuss the story and its meaning afterwards. Although I developed an intermediate level of Tetun (and, subsequently, Indonesian) and could generally follow the conversation, I was still somewhat reliant upon my interpreter and generally had less control over the direction of the conversations than would have been the case had I conducted the interviews alone. Similar to Nicola North's experiences using an interpreter in

³⁷ Although this thesis focuses primarily upon those women who remained inside the territory during the Indonesian occupation, it is important to note the ongoing tensions between diaspora and local experiences. For a discussion of this issue, see Andre Borgerhoff, *Competitive Nation-Building in East Timor: With Particular Reference to the Discourse on the Postcolony's 'Language Tetralemma' During the Years 2002–07* (Berlin: Regiospectra, May 2012); and Angie Bexley, "The Geracao Foun, Talitakum and Indonesia: Media and Memory Politics in Timor-Leste," *Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs* 41, no. 1 (2007): 71–90.

³⁸ Nadia Jones-Gailani, "Third Parties in 'Third Spaces': Reflecting on the Role of the Translator in Oral History Interviews with Iraqi Diaspora Women," in *Oral History Off the Record: Toward an Ethnography of Practice*, ed. Anna Sheftel and Stacey Zembrzycki (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 170–2.

her interviews with Cambodian refugees, this meant that there were times when the conversation took unexpected turns that sometimes appeared to me to be ‘off the topic’.³⁹ However, such divergences were ultimately advantageous in building rapport and helping my participants feel more comfortable. I also learnt that this divergent and fluid conversational style was a central component to local speaking patterns and this, perhaps, was an observation that I would not have made had I conducted the interviews alone and insisted on a clearer focus and direction.

Most interviews were recorded on a digital voice recorder (with permission) and were transcribed by an experienced East Timorese transcriber and myself; brief field notes and reflections were also written during and after the interviews. The interviews were transcribed verbatim with minimal editing, in an attempt to retain the narrator’s unique way of speaking and to preserve the texture and cadences of their speech.⁴⁰ In accordance with the oral historians Hugo Slim and Paul Thompson’s assertion, I sought for the transcriptions ‘to render the original speech into written text as accurately as possible by including hesitation, repetition, exclamation, emphasis and dialect’.⁴¹ If the interview was conducted in English and the participant asked me to do so, I made minor corrections to their grammar and syntax. These transcripts were then printed and provided to the participants, who were given the opportunity to edit or remove anything that had been recorded. I then read through the Tetun transcripts and identified specific passages to be accurately translated by one of my interpreters. Most participants received a written summary of the research findings when I returned to Timor-Leste towards the end of my project to share my findings.⁴²

The interviews were of a free-ranging and conversational style, in which I asked my participants to engage in an ‘open conversation’ about their life. I felt that this approach relaxed my participants, some of whom were hesitant to meet if they thought that I might ask ‘difficult questions’ that they might not be able to answer. I used the narrative structure initially outlined by the participants themselves as a framework for the conversation and tried to think about the shape and form of these narratives when structuring my overall thesis, which I discuss in more detail below. This method of interviewing was intended to convey to

³⁹ Nicola North, “Narratives of Cambodian Refugees: Issues in the Collection of Refugee Stories,” *Oral History* 23, no. 2, Working with Memories (Autumn 1995): 32–9.

⁴⁰ See Raphael Samuel, “Perils of the Transcript,” *The Oral History Reader*, 1st ed., ed. Robert Perks and Alistair Thompson (London: Routledge, 1998), 389–92.

⁴¹ Hugo Slim and Paul Thompson, *Listening for a Change: Oral Testimony and Development* (London: Panos Publications, 1993), 87.

⁴² The data is currently kept in locked facilities at the author’s university. In accordance with the Ethics stipulations for this research project, the research data will be maintained for as long as it is of continuing value to the researcher.

my participants that this project saw them not merely as objects of research, but rather invited them to participate as ‘narrators of their own experiences’: to speak as they chose and to control the telling of their own stories.⁴³ I used some probing questions if necessary to elicit further information, such as: ‘Can you tell me the story of what happened then?’, ‘What happened next?’, or ‘How did you feel about that?’.⁴⁴ In line with Michael Frisch’s observation, I viewed the interview process as a platform for individuals to discover, explore, and evaluate how to ‘make sense of their past’, how to connect their own experiences to the broader social context, and how to ‘interpret their lives and the world around them’.⁴⁵ In this regard, the narrative structure was important to the individual women’s development and portrayal of their identity within the interview context. My approach resonated with that of Nicola King, who writes that narrative construction is a continual process of ‘putting together moment by moment, of provisional and partial reconstruction’ so as to construct a sense of self, an individual identity.⁴⁶ In their work on memory and narrative, Nathalie Nguyen and Catherine Kohler Riessman also observe that the ways in which people dynamically reshape and reframe their memories through narrative enable them not only to make sense of their own lives, but also of their past.⁴⁷ My participants used language and narrative to articulate what happened in their past, to give structure and meaning to their memories, and to communicate them to me, as the listener and observer.

It was important for me to approach the interviews with limited presuppositions about the experiences of the participants and, as suggested above, to maintain flexibility with regard to the direction of the conversation. Although the essential purpose of the interview was to construct and communicate a narrative, I hoped that the interviews might give my participants a sense of empowerment by providing a space for their experiences, many of which had been neglected and silenced within popular histories of the occupation, to be heard.⁴⁸ I also hoped that in listening and bearing witness to their stories, many of which contained memories of violent events and experiences, I tentatively could, as Judith Herman

⁴³ Susan E. Chase and Colleen S. Bell, “Interpreting the Complexity of Women’s Subjectivity,” in *Interactive Oral History Interviewing*, ed. Eva M. McMahan and Kim Lacy Rogers (Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1994), 79.

⁴⁴ See Slim and Thompson, *Listening for a Change*, 77.

⁴⁵ Michael Frisch, *A Shared Authority: Essays on the Craft and Meaning of Oral and Public History* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), 188.

⁴⁶ Nicola A. King, *Memory, Narrative, Identity: Remembering the Self* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), 175.

⁴⁷ Nathalie Huynh Chau Nguyen, *Memory is Another Country: Women of the Vietnamese Diaspora* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2009), 7; Catherine Kohler Riessman, *Narrative Methods for the Human Sciences* (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2008), 8.

⁴⁸ Sherna Berger Gluck, “Advocacy Oral History: Palestinian Women in Resistance,” in *Women’s Words*, ed. Gluck and Patai, 205–19.

has written, ‘share the burden of pain’.⁴⁹ I make no claims about the possibility for redemption within the oral history interview, but find Sean Fields’ proposal that the oral historian can perhaps be seen as a competent and sensitive ‘facilitator’ quite instructive.⁵⁰ In this regard the expression of empathy, which Fields describes as ‘a visual simulation in the interviewer’s mind of the interviewee’s subjective constructions of their memories of experience’, was an essential part of the interview process.⁵¹ Particularly outside Timor-Leste, I felt that I could, perhaps, be a ‘medium of communication’, as Sherna Berger Gluck writes, between East Timorese women and the international community, by sharing the experiences of women who were, for twenty-four years, outside international consciousness.⁵² One of my interview participants, Filomena ‘Mena’ Barros dos Reis, suggested that East Timorese women’s experiences could be used ‘to inspire’ women ‘in other parts of the world’ who are still suffering, suggesting that the acts of telling, listening and recording can be political and valuable for women.⁵³ I found these words comforting, and (in part) reconciled my unease about recording people’s personal, intimate narratives and experiences, and using them for academic research and analysis.

Research fatigue was a problem that I also encountered while conducting research in Timor-Leste. The nation’s small size, close proximity to Australia and subsequent influx of Australian researchers, density of non-government organisations, complex relationship with foreigners, and high levels of ‘collective anxiety’ after experiencing decades of violence, sometimes made research difficult.⁵⁴ When I explained my research project to people in Timor-Leste, I would often be referred to talk to women who had ‘lots of experiences’. This usually meant that they had played an active role in the resistance, or that their family had suffered heavily at the hands of the Indonesian military. Some of these women had told their story before, to the Timor-Leste Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation (*Comissão de Acolhimento, Verdade e Reconciliação* – CAVR) or to other researchers and, as such, were rehearsed story-tellers and had a prepared narrative of resistance and suffering that they thought I wanted to hear. It was at times difficult to move beyond these presumptions, but the life revealed in the stories told by these women offered a different

⁴⁹ Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery* (New York: Basic Books, 1992), 7.

⁵⁰ Sean Field, “Beyond Healing: Trauma, Oral History and Regeneration,” *Oral History* (Spring 2006): 40.

⁵¹ Field, “Beyond Healing,” 37.

⁵² Gluck, “Advocacy Oral History,” 208.

⁵³ Filomena ‘Mena’ Barros dos Reis, interview with the author, Dili, June 20, 2012.

⁵⁴ Some of these difficulties are discussed with specific reference to Timor-Leste by Elizabeth Stanley, “Interviewing Victims of State Violence,” in *The Sage Handbook of Criminology Research Methods*, ed. David Gadd, Susanne Karstedt, and Steven F. Messner (London: Sage Publishing Ltd., 2012), 231–43.

account of the Indonesian occupation. It was these stories of day-to-day survival, rooted in the quotidian and the intimate, that I found most interesting.

For some highly educated, politically active women, my identity as an Australian – considering Australia's ambivalence towards Indonesia's invasion and occupation, but subsequent role in Timor-Leste's transition to independence – created a sense of urgency for them to carefully explain what had happened, and to highlight stories and experiences that they felt had been neglected. That I was a woman, who was interested in their stories, often bridged many perceived differences between my interview participants and myself. At times, being an outsider also created openness for dialogue within a somewhat polarised, post-conflict society which may not have been achieved by an 'insider'. Alison Baker discusses some of the advantages that she experienced being an outsider, a foreigner, in her interviews with women in Morocco because she felt that she 'stood outside of the Moroccan social hierarchy and political landscape'.⁵⁵ Similarly in Timor-Leste, free of preconceptions about my political affiliations or contribution to the struggle, some women took it upon themselves to contrast life during the occupation with the post-independence period, thus presenting comments and observations that have been missing from other critiques. Many women were very proud of their role within the independence struggle, although they were concerned that their contributions had not been fully recognised in the post-conflict society and that they were still suffering in many ways.

Conducting this research as a white, Australian woman, however, inevitably still raised issues of subject position and difference: these are dilemmas that Diana Wolf has discusses in detail in her explanation of contemporary feminist concerns regarding fieldwork.⁵⁶ The interactions raised broader issues of representation and positionality within feminist research methodology, which Linda Alcoff discusses in her aptly titled article, 'The Problem of Speaking for Others'.⁵⁷ It was important to recognise the power relations that existed between my interview participants and myself, and to be continually self-critical, sensitive, and reflective throughout the process. To this end, I adapted strategies from the work of other feminist researchers, such as Debra Blake, an American woman who collected oral histories of working-class, Mexican-origin women.⁵⁸ How my interviews were framed was important in countering some of these issues. I would sometimes hold preliminary

⁵⁵ Alison Baker, *Voices of Resistance: Oral Histories of Moroccan Women* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1998), 284.

⁵⁶ Diane L. Wolf, ed., *Feminist Dilemmas in Fieldwork* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996).

⁵⁷ Linda Alcoff, "The Problem of Speaking for Others," *Cultural Critique* 20 (Winter 1991–92): 5–32.

⁵⁸ Debora J. Blake, "Reading Dynamics of Power through Mexican-Origin Women's Oral Histories," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women's Studies* 19, no. 3, Problems and Perplexities in Women's Oral History (1998): 24–41.

conversations with my interview participants, in which I would introduce my project and myself. I would share details of my experiences living in Timor-Leste and my interest in East Timorese history, in an attempt to establish a sense of intimacy and familiarity. I tried to keep the tone of the interaction both informal and comfortable.

Of course, it was important for me to obtain informed consent and to explain the research process to my interview participants clearly. Before I began any interview, I explained the purpose and potential uses of my research, and ensured that my interview participants were clear on their rights as a ‘human subject’: their right to withdraw from the project, to request further information, to not answer any questions that they did not wish to, to terminate the interview, and to stop the recorder at any time. I gave my participants the option to use a pseudonym or to keep their identity anonymous; perhaps indicative of many women’s desire to have their lives and experiences recorded, only a very small number actually chose this option.

At the time of the interviews, I felt that my interview participants were ready and willing to tell me their stories and what they had experienced during the occupation. Having conducted interviews in Timor-Leste in 2006, Teresa Cunha told me that she already observed this sense of ‘preparedness’ by East Timorese women to talk about this past.⁵⁹ Recent oral history scholarship, such as the work of Stephen Sloan and Mark Cave, explores the possibility of doing oral history research in times of crisis or immediately after.⁶⁰ However, had I attempted this task during or immediately after the Indonesian occupation, problems that Sherna Berger Gluck struck in her interviews with Palestinian women who were still resisting Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, such as ‘the daily reality of occupation and the immediacy of the political struggle’, may have restricted the narrative flow and the women’s willingness to participate in the research project.⁶¹ Michele Turner conducted interviews with East Timorese people while the territory was still under Indonesian occupation, and I have incorporated some of these testimonies within this thesis.⁶² In a 1998 interview with Wendy Lowenstein, Turner recalled the great responsibility that she assumed in her project: ‘I couldn’t be naïve,’ she explained, ‘I had to protect, protect, protect. [I] Still wake up at night – what if someone’s being tortured to death in East Timor because

⁵⁹ Teresa Cunha, Skype conversation with the author, February 12, 2014.

⁶⁰ Mark Cave and Stephen M. Sloan, eds., *Listening on the Edge: Oral History in the Aftermath of Crisis* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

⁶¹ Gluck, “Advocacy Oral History,” 208.

⁶² Michele Turner, ed., *Telling: East Timor, Personal Testimonies 1942–1992* (Sydney: New South Wales University Press, 1992).

of me?’.⁶³ For my interview participants, war and occupation were still in living memory, although I felt that there was enough temporal distance from that difficult past to allow them to speak without fear of retribution. In the below section, I outline my use of theoretical scholarship on memory, narrative, and identity, and suggest how this literature offers new approaches to understanding the experiences of East Timorese women during the Indonesian occupation.

Memory, Narrative, and Identity

The moment of the telling was, of course, significant to the structure and content of the narratives presented in my oral history interviews. The memory scholar, David Gross, reminds us that in ‘most acts of remembering, there is as much material from the present that is projected backward as there is material that comes authentically and indisputably from the past itself’.⁶⁴ Interviewing some women who supported integration would have added another layer of depth to the analysis. Yet this proved to be an extremely difficult task. None of my interview participants expressed this sentiment within the context of the interview. They demonstrated various practices of negotiated accommodation, resilience, and different mechanisms for coping with the violence of the occupation, which can perhaps be seen as complicity. On one occasion, my interpreter introduced me to a woman whose husband was known to have been a member of the East Timorese pro-integration militia in Liquica in 1999. During the interview, however, this was not raised by my interview participant at all.⁶⁵ The ultimate success of Timor-Leste’s independence struggle was, therefore, extremely significant in framing the women’s individual narratives, and situating them within a broader and encompassing narrative of conflict, suffering, and resistance. As such, the women actively positioned their personal lives within a collective framework and, as I suggested above with regard to Céu’s story, interwove their personal stories with those of the nation.⁶⁶ The prominent collective memory scholar, Maurice Halbwachs, has written about the way in which individuals all have distinctive memories, but that these memories are located in specific group contexts that are used by those individuals to remember the past. He writes: ‘While the collective memory endures and draws strength from its base in a coherent body of

⁶³ Wendy Lowenstein, “Don’t Cry Michele!,” *Oral History Association of Australia Journal* 20 (1998): 42.

⁶⁴ David Gross, *Lost Time: On Remembering and Forgetting in Late Modern Culture* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts, 2000), 3.

⁶⁵ Anonymous, interview with the author, Liquica, June 3, 2012.

⁶⁶ Nathalie Nguyen comments on this strategy in her study of women of the Vietnamese diaspora. See Nguyen, *Memory is Another Country*, 8.

people, it is individuals as group members who remember'.⁶⁷ One of the defining frameworks for individual women's memories was the narrative of *funu*, a Tetun word for war that also became a metaphor for Timor-Leste's nationalist struggle against consecutive foreign occupiers.⁶⁸ As I argued in the Introduction, this is a particularly masculine narrative in which women are largely absent, because it places emphasis primarily upon the role of the guerrilla fighters and high-profile male leaders in the struggle.

In my oral history interviews, I felt that the women used their memories and experiences to assert a space for themselves within this national narrative. As Marita Eastmond has shown, the past is always 'remembered and interpreted in the light of the present as well as by the way that the future is imagined'.⁶⁹ In Chapter Five, I suggest some of the ways in which the eventual success of Timor-Leste's liberation struggle framed the way in which my interview participants remembered and represented their past. I observed, particularly among those who grew up under Indonesian rule, a tendency to identify moments of illumination and nascent political consciousness, and to construct narratives around these moments as earlier signs of this path of resistance in their life. In doing so, they proscribed a sense of inevitability to Timor-Leste's independence. These illumination narratives were, perhaps, a way for my interview participants to remember, in a way both meaningful and explanatory, their experiences of past violence. The anthropologist Liisa Malkki writes about the way in which historical narratives told by Hutu refugees in Tanzania represent 'not only a description of the past, but a subversive recasting and reinterpretation of it in fundamentally moral terms'. Similar to biblical stories, she explains, the narratives 'comprised a set of moral and cosmological ordering stories', which 'implied the creation of the collective past in distinction to other pasts, thereby *heroizing* the past of the Hutu as "a people" categorically distinct from others'.⁷⁰ I suggest that a similar concern with ordering past events in a fundamental, cosmological sense, and the representation of historical events, processes, and relationships within such a morally-charged scheme, is similarly present within East Timorese narratives of the past.

⁶⁷ Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, trans. Francis J. Ditter, Jr. and Vida Yazdi Ditter (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1980 (orig., 1950)), 48.

⁶⁸ See Geoffrey C. Gunn, "The Five-Hundred-Year Timorese *Funu*," in *Bitter Flowers, Sweet Flowers*, ed. Richard Tanter, Mark Selden, and Stephen R. Shalom (Sydney: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001), 3–14.

⁶⁹ Marita Eastmond, "Stories as Lived Experience: Narratives in Forced Migration Research," *Journal of Refugee Studies* 20, no. 2 (2007): 249.

⁷⁰ Liisa H. Malkki, *Purity and Exile: Violence, Memory, and National Cosmology Among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1995), 54–6.

Several of my interview participants emphasised the uniqueness of East Timorese culture. It was often represented as categorically distinct from Indonesian culture, for which Javanese culture was seen to be most representative. This difference was communicated, for example, through the use of formal terms to refer to members of the Indonesian military. My interview participants mainly used either *Bapak* (the Indonesian term of respect meaning ‘father’ or ‘mister’, which is often used when addressing senior males), or *Javanese* – not *Indonesian*. I discuss these ideas of cultural difference with reference to transmigration in Chapter Four, and to the development of political consciousness in Chapter Five. Collectively, however, I suggest that the women’s narratives included in this thesis portray an inherent, moral, and shared sense of opposition to the Indonesian occupation; a commitment to a unique East Timorese identity; and a belief in the inevitability of Timor-Leste’s independence.

Despite the temporal distance from the Indonesian occupation, my interview participants’ memories were imbued with a deep sense of personal and collective suffering. Many of the women had been either directly effected by a traumatic event, were witnesses to one or more, were bereaved by the loss of others, or had heard about traumatic events that took place in the past and involved members of their family or community. All of the women interviewed for this thesis experienced the Indonesian occupation as a traumatic *process*. I use the term ‘trauma’ in the sense that the literary scholar Cathy Caruth describes in her classic formulation, as a dramatic shock or rupture, ‘an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events’.⁷¹ Traumatic episodes, Judith Herman suggests, ‘overwhelm the ordinary systems of care that give people a sense of control, connection, and meaning’. She writes:

Traumatic events are extraordinary, not because they occur rarely, but rather because they overwhelm the ordinary human adaptations to life. Unlike commonplace misfortunes, traumatic events generally involve threats to life or bodily integrity, or a close personal encounter with violence and death. They confront human beings with the extremities of helplessness and terror, and evoke the responses of catastrophe.⁷²

I was interested, therefore, in the different effects that experiences and stories of the Indonesian occupation had upon my participants’ sense of identity and their memories, the way in which they narrated the twenty-four-year occupation through the lens of personal

⁷¹ Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 11.

⁷² Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 33.

experience, and simultaneously situated the occupation within the context of their life narratives. In addition to considering the shape and form of these narratives, and the way in which they were told orally – through traits such as repetition, silence, and shifts in tone – I observed my participants’ body language and posture. I was conscious of the complicated ‘relational dynamics’ of interviews where trauma is present, and the work of Robert Reynolds was instructive in reminding me to constantly reflect upon how trauma ‘complicates’ oral history interviews. It ‘confronts our best intentions’ and may ‘repeat and attach itself to new objects and experiences, not least the deeply relational (and partly unconscious) space of the oral history interview’, Reynolds writes.⁷³ Despite the difficult nature of the memories, I felt that my interview participants narrated the past from a strong subject position, in which they always used first person pronouns, presenting themselves as authors of their own narratives and, indeed, as subjects of those narratives. ‘This is me’, one of my interview participants, Maria de Fatima Kalsona, told me: ‘I swear ... I tell it clearly’.⁷⁴ Most of my interview participants had very clear memories about what happened during their lives in terms of events, feelings, and emotions. They were less definite about dates and chronology. One woman I interviewed, for example, remembered being told by her parents that she was born when they harvested their paddy, so she simply guessed the corresponding year.⁷⁵ Similarly, when I asked Mana Marta how old she was when her father passed away, she said that she didn’t know, but remembered that she ‘had two teeth on the top and two on the bottom – four teeth’.⁷⁶

There is a significant body of literature which explores the impact of trauma on memory, which has been useful in thinking through and analysing my oral history interviews. In an edited collection on trauma and life stories, Selma Leydesdorff, Graham Dawson, Natasha Burchardt, and T.G. Ashplant observe that the ‘impact of trauma makes the process of remembering and forgetting more complex than in other situations’.⁷⁷ In the East Timorese context, many women experienced ongoing trauma as a result of sexual violence in particular, and often found talking about these violations extremely difficult. In Chapter Four, I discuss some of the narrative strategies used by my interview participants to describe

⁷³ Robert Reynolds, “Trauma and The Relational Dynamics of Life-History Interviewing,” *Australian Historical Studies* 43, no. 1 (2012): 88.

⁷⁴ Maria de Fatima Kalsona, interview with the author, Dili, May 23, 2012.

⁷⁵ Luisinha Freitas Mok, interview with the author, Baucau, August 4, 2013.

⁷⁶ Mana Marta, interview with the author, Dili, November 28, 2012.

⁷⁷ Selma Leydesdorff, Graham Dawson, Natasha Burchardt, and T.G. Ashplant, “Introduction: Trauma and Life Stories,” in *Trauma: Life Stories of Survivors*, ed. Kim Lacy Rogers and Selma Leydesdorff, with Graham Dawson (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2004), 1.

experiences of violence, including the role of silence and absence, and the deployment of discontinuity, allusion, and deflection. Some of my interview participants no doubt presented ‘sanitised’ versions of their stories and experiences, or may have simply forgotten. As the oral historian Luisa Passerini writes, ‘There is no “work of memory” without a corresponding “work of forgetting”’.⁷⁸ Many of my participants used the term ‘trauma’ to describe the impact of the violence of the Indonesian occupation upon their lives and the lives of those around them. In my interview with Maria ‘Bebe’ Nelson Pinto, for example, she described people having ‘very serious trauma’ after a massacre in the Liquica Church in 1999, which I discuss in Chapter Three. Following the massacre, she remembered, ‘our lives were full of trauma’.⁷⁹ Maria do Céu Lopes da Silva explained to me that only when she facilitated a trauma recovery programme in independent Timor-Leste, did she began to understand why women who had ‘gone through hell’ went into such detail about their suffering, and how their trauma was something that was constantly being relived in the present. She explained:

I could understand why those women went into every little detail, to explain how they were tortured and how they were abused, I could understand only very later, that you have to take it out. You have to throw it out, or else it is inside and eating you up [...] you don’t put it [trauma] in the past, it’s there every day. I didn’t go through it most of the time, but I saw the people who went through a lot and I still see them, and you just live with it. You just live with it. You don’t put them in the past, you don’t say ok, this is what happened, I want to forget it. You can’t forget. It’s central to your being. But as long as you live with it, you survive ... you take that along, because it’s part of your life. People who were violated, they must have nightmares. How do you forget it? This is ... it’s hard to explain. It’s animal behaviour. And, how do you... people just go on.⁸⁰

I was interested in people’s capacity to ‘just go on’, as Céu explained, considering the structures that facilitated the violence often continued to be a part of people’s lives long after the event.

This notion of ‘going on’ is a central part of theoretical understandings of trauma. Literary critic Kathryn Robson has written that trauma ‘cannot simply be consigned to the past: it is endlessly relived in the present’, and that this element of trauma has enduring effects upon the survivor’s identity. She writes: ‘it is only when the seemingly unspeakable traumatic experience can be transformed into a narrative that the traumatic event can be put in the past’, and the survivor can begin to reconstruct their identity by incorporating the

⁷⁸ Luisa Passerini, “Memory,” *History Workshop Journal* 15 (1983): 196.

⁷⁹ Maria ‘Bebe’ Nelson Pinto, interview with the author, Liquica, June 3, 2012.

⁸⁰ Maria do Céu Lopes da Silva, interview with the author, Dili, July 20, 2013.

traumatic event within the frame of their life story.⁸¹ Speaking to an Australian activist, Rebecca Winters, in Dili in November 1998, a young East Timorese woman, Maria, expressed the significance of speaking about trauma in the context of women's experiences of the Indonesian occupation. She spoke of the way in which East Timorese women 'live amongst violence'. Therefore, Maria said, 'it is difficult to get out of the trauma enough to talk about what has happened to them, their feelings, what they went through'.⁸² Although this observation is situated in the temporal context of the occupation, it reveals the somewhat inescapable and often incommunicable nature of traumatic experience.⁸³ Maria stressed talking together and sharing experiences as a means of moving forward: 'to talk is good for the spirit', she suggested.⁸⁴ In Chapter Five, I discuss some of the public platforms that appeared in the late 1990s to enable East Timorese women to share their experiences of trauma and suffering, and to provide support and comfort to one another in the face of ongoing violence. While it would be too presumptuous to suggest that my research could act in some senses as a kind of substitute for more locally-grounded practices,⁸⁵ some women did say that they hadn't told anyone some of the things that they were telling me. Perhaps no one had asked, or perhaps, as I suggested above, there was something in the presence of an 'outsider' that made them feel as though they could tell me things about their past that they couldn't or wouldn't necessarily say to someone who was on the 'inside'.

In addition to the traumatic context in which their memories were situated, the personal narratives of my interview participants were also shaped by other axes of identity; not only gender, but also intersecting factors such as class, geography, political affiliations, and age. Although I conducted fieldwork only in three separate sites, there had been, across the course of the occupation, significant movement and dislocation of the population: I explore the effects of this in more detail in Chapter Two and Chapter Four. Most people moved around many times, and thus their life histories are based in multiple geographic sites. For Angie Bexley and Nuno Rodrigues Tchailoro, generation was a critical factor that

⁸¹ Kathryn Robson, *Writing Wounds: The Inscription of Trauma in Post-1968 French Women's Life-Writing* (Amsterdam; New York: Rodopi, 2004), 11.

⁸² Rebecca Winters, rec. and comp., "East Timor Interviews Recorded November 1998," trans. IdaRua, Tiles and Lola in East Timor; and Flavia Pires, Bi-Hali, Luisa Ferreira, Maria Bernadino, and Maria do Céu Lopes da Silva in Australia; Rebecca Winters, comp., *Buibere: Voices of East Timorese Women, Volume 1* (Darwin: East Timorese Support Centre, 1999), 14–15.

⁸³ Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 1.

⁸⁴ Winters, comp., "East Timor Interviews," 14–15.

⁸⁵ For an overview of local practices of memorialisation and commemoration, and the activities of victims' groups in contemporary Timor-Leste, see Lia Kent, "Local Memory Practices in East Timor: Disrupting Transitional Justice Narratives," *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 5, no. 3 (2011): 434–55.

defined an individual's experience of the occupation and memory of it subsequently.⁸⁶ Within studies of the Indonesian occupation, we hear many stories and can observe many public forms of commemoration for the '75 generation, those who grew up under Portuguese rule and experienced the Indonesian invasion first-hand. We hear much less about the younger generation, the *juventude* (youth), who grew up under Indonesian rule and were educated in the Indonesian education system.⁸⁷ Some notable exceptions include the resistance fighter Naldo Rei's memoir; and the recently erected monument in Dili for the victims of the 12 November Santa Cruz massacre – the second of which demonstrates one of the ways in which the youth are slowly being incorporated within public sites dedicated to the memory and commemoration of the struggle.⁸⁸ What is distinct about this younger generation is that their construction of illumination narratives, and the transformation of these narratives into a revolutionary politics, reflects their generational situation of being born into an occupation already going on. I discuss the significance of the ways in which generation shaped both experiences of the occupation, and practices of remembering the period, in more detail in Chapter Five.

Several broad themes arose out of my oral history interviews, and I use these themes to structure the remainder of the thesis. Generally, and dependent upon the woman's age, there were a number of shifts within the oral narratives presented. These shifts weren't necessarily identified by temporal markers, such as a specific date or even year, but were particular forms of periodisation that generally implied a significant restructuring of society and of the contours of human experience. The first shift described was from Portuguese colonialism to decolonisation. If the women had been born during the Portuguese colonial period (before 1974) they commenced their narrative at this time, and reflected upon political developments that took place during the 1974–75 period of decolonisation and political change. The second shift occurred after the Indonesian invasion in December 1975: my interview participants described where they and their families were at this time, and what

⁸⁶ Angie Bexley and Nuno Rodrigues Tchailoro, "Consuming Youth: Timorese in the Resistance Against Indonesian Occupation," *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology* 14, no. 5 (2013): 405–22. See also Angie Bexley, "Seeing, Hearing and Belonging: The Case of East Timorese Youth," *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology* 8, no. 4 (2007): 287–95; and Bexley, "'The Geracao Foun,'" 71–90.

⁸⁷ Clinton Fernandes observes that the *juventude* (youth) played 'a vital yet often unacknowledged role in their country's independence struggle'. Clinton Fernandes, *The Independence of East Timor: Multi-Dimensional Perspectives: Occupation, Resistance, and International Political Activism* (Portland: Sussex Academic Press, 2011), 125.

⁸⁸ Naldo Rei, *Resistance: A Childhood Fighting for East Timor* (St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 2007). See also Dan Nicholson, "The Lorikeet Warriors: East Timorese New Generation Nationalist Resistance, 1989–99" (Hons., University of Melbourne, 2001). See also Michael Leach, "Difficult Memories: The Independence Struggle as Cultural Heritage in East Timor," in *Places of Pain and Shame: Dealing with 'Difficult Heritage'*, ed. William Logan and Keir Reeves (Milton Park: Routledge, 2009), 158.

happened to them subsequently. In most cases (although not representative of all East Timorese women), my interview participants fled to the mountains and spent up to three years living in areas under the control of the nationalist party, the Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor (*Frente Revolucionária de Timor-Leste Independente* – FRETILIN). These societies functioned in accordance with FRETILIN's political ideas for the transformation of East Timorese society. Thus, while Chapter Two is concerned primarily with the period of conventional war and life in the mountains (1975–79), I also provide a brief background of the evolution of political consciousness and nationalist thinking in Portuguese Timor prior to the Indonesian invasion and, in particular, the way in which women's emancipation was seen as part of the broader struggle for national liberation.

If they had not already been captured, the majority of the civilian population had come down from the mountains and surrendered to the Indonesian military by late 1978 or early 1979, and the final three chapters of the thesis explore this period of life under occupation (until 1999). These chapters are structured in accordance with three broad themes contained within the women's narratives: violence, everyday life, and resistance. I felt that these themes corresponded broadly with the dominant representational modes deployed by the women. There is much overlap between them, of course, and I have noted these parallels where applicable. However, in writing a thesis about women's experiences, I wanted to present the material in a way that was representative of and responsive to the narrative structures and shifts outlined by my interview participants.

Strong traditions of story-telling, as I discussed in the Introduction, were evident within the shape and form of the women's narratives. Jude Conway, an Australian activist who compiled a collection of thirteen East Timorese women's life stories,⁸⁹ has reflected that the women she interviewed were 'such vivid and practiced storytellers' that they 'could move you with their stories'.⁹⁰ Many of the narratives presented within my oral history interviews were similarly compelling examples of story-telling. Suffused with a strong sense of spirituality, in the form of both traditional spirits (*lulik*) and imagery drawn from the Catholic tradition, the stories frequently bound individual experiences to a providentially-inflected broader narrative of the political destiny of Timor-Leste.⁹¹ East Timorese scholars, such as Dionísio da Costa Babo Soares and Josh Trindade, have noted the same use of dual or binary

⁸⁹ See Jude Conway, ed., *Step by Step: Women of East Timor, Stories of Resistance and Survival* (Darwin: Charles Darwin University Press, 2010).

⁹⁰ Jude Conway, email communication with the author, July 2, 2012.

⁹¹ In my conversation with Teresa Cunha, who collected seven East Timorese women's life histories in 2007, she similarly observed the strong sense of spirituality within her interview participants' narratives. Teresa Cunha, Skype communication with the author, February 12, 2014.

categories, both temporal and political-cultural, in framings of the past in Timor-Leste.⁹² As Babo Soares explains, the peaceful and calm past, referring to both the time of the ancestors prior to European arrival and the Portuguese colonial period, is often distinguished in this manner from the time of struggle, when traditional social and political structures were disrupted by outsiders, understood as fundamentally and categorically different to the local culture.⁹³ Remembering the heroism and suffering of the past, and imagining a future when Timor-Leste's sovereignty would be restored, was a central governing framework in which the oral history narratives included within this thesis were enclosed.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have outlined the reasons and historiographical context for my focus on East Timorese women's experiences, memories, and perceptions of life during the Indonesian occupation. I suggested that this approach can provide new understandings of violence and everyday life under Indonesian rule for several reasons. I have argued that women's experiences of conflict and military occupation, as well as their memories of this period, are deeply gendered and political. Oral narratives are a central part of East Timorese social and cultural life, and constitute a means for women to express experiences and to negotiate memories of difficult pasts. Placed within the wider socio-political and cultural context, these memories reveal some of the ways in which individuals seek to make sense of displacement, violence, and conflict; to bear witness to violence and repression; and to re-establish their lives within the context of an ongoing military occupation.

Drawing upon an extensive literature on oral history, trauma, and identity, I outlined my role in witnessing these narratives, and how I view memory texts as representations of experience and of the various dimensions of social and cultural life. Critically, I suggest that we need to consider the complex relationship between, as Edward Bruner writes, 'life as lived', the flow of events that touch on a person's life; 'life as experienced', how the person perceives and ascribes meaning to these events; and 'life as told', how experience is framed

⁹² See Dionísio da Costa Babo Soares, "Branching from the Trunk: East Timorese Perceptions of Nationalism in Transition" (Ph.D., Australian National University, 2003); and Josh Trindade, "Matak-Malirin, Tempu Rai-Diak and Halarik: Expressions of What Timorese Longed for in Life," in *Understanding Timor-Leste 2013, Vol. 1*, ed. Hannah Loney, Antero B. da Silva, Nuno Canas Mendes, Alarico da Costa Ximenes, and Clinton Fernandes (Hawthorn: Swinburne Press, 2014), 55–9.

⁹³ Babo Soares, "Branching from the Trunk," 83–95.

and expressed within a particular social and cultural context, and to a particular audience.⁹⁴ Past experience is always remembered and interpreted in light of the present and, as such, the circumstances of Timor-Leste's eventual independence inevitably shaped the structure and form of the narratives presented. Marita Eastmond proposes a fourth dimension to Bruner's analysis, 'life as text', the researcher's interpretation and representation of the story.⁹⁵ In this sense, the personal experience and cultural assumptions of the researcher are central to reading, selecting, and representing data obtained from the oral history interview. I deploy these strategies and techniques throughout the remaining chapters of the thesis.

⁹⁴ Edward M. Bruner, "The Opening Up of Anthropology," in *Text, Play and Story: The Construction and Reconstruction of Self and Society*, ed. Edward M. Bruner (Washington: The American Ethnological Society, 1984), 7.

⁹⁵ Eastmond, "Stories as Lived Experience," 249.

Chapter Two: Women's Experiences of Invasion and Conflict

When the Indonesian military launched a full-scale land, sea, and air invasion of East Timor on 7 December 1975, large numbers of the East Timorese civilian population and the leadership of the nationalist front, the Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor (*Frente Revolucionária de Timor-Leste Independente* – FRETILIN), fled the towns and villages on the northern coast into the mountainous areas of the interior. The armed wing of FRETILIN, the Armed Forces for the National Liberation of East Timor (*Forças Armadas de Libertação Nacional de Timor-Leste* – FALINTIL), resisted the Indonesian military's advances and managed to maintain control over substantial territory until 1978, the population of which may have been as many as 300,000 people.¹ Life for civilians in these areas was difficult, but in general, they were temporarily safe from the conflict. After a meeting in Soibada in May–June 1976, the FRETILIN Central Committee adopted a strategy of protracted people's war, in which civilians in the liberated zones (*zonas libertadas*), outside Indonesian military control, provided logistical support for the fighters in a number of resistance bases (*bases de apoio*) across the territory.² FRETILIN also sought to strengthen the will of the people through education and mobilisation programmes, and women from the Popular Organisation of East Timorese Women (*Organização Popular de Mulher Timor* – OPMT) took on much responsibility for organising and carrying out these programmes. The Indonesian military's 'encirclement and annihilation' campaigns from 1977–79 significantly reshaped the trajectory of the conflict. These campaigns resulted in a high civilian death toll, the destruction of food supplies, and the almost total destruction of the resistance. By the end of 1978 most of the civilian population, faced with increasingly difficult conditions, had surrendered and, on 26 March 1979, the Indonesian military concluded its conventional operations and declared East Timor 'pacified'.

In this chapter, I explore how women experienced the initial violence of the Indonesian invasion, the period of conventional war, and life in the mountains (1975–79). I commence the chapter with a brief discussion of feminist scholarship on women and war. This literature informs my focus on women's everyday experiences of war and on gendered

¹ Indonesian Red Cross, "List of People Returned in Whole of East Timor – Per Last December 1978," in Part 6. Portuguese Timor – Visits of Australians to Portuguese Timor, A1838, 3038/10/11/2, NAA. See also Commission for Reception, Truth, and Reconciliation in Timor-Leste (CAVR), *Chega! The Final Report of the Timor-Leste Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation, Vol. 1* (Jakarta: KPG in cooperation with STP-CAVR, 2013), 215.

² Xanana Gusmão, *To Resist is to Win!: The Autobiography of Xanana Gusmão with Selected Letters and Speeches*, ed. Sara Niner (Richmond: Aurora Books with David Lovell Publishing, 2000), 42.

experiences of the shifting geographies of conflict which, I argue, can produce new understandings of the women's experiences of this period in East Timorese history. I suggest that the structuring of society and the daily lives of East Timorese women in the mountains were shaped by FRETILIN's gender ideology and, in particular, the nationalist movement's ideas about women's roles in the revolutionary struggle. As such, after introducing my approach to women and war, I take a step back to trace the development of political consciousness and nationalist thinking in Portuguese Timor prior to the Indonesian invasion, highlighting in particular the emergence of an East Timorese women's movement, and its vision for the transformation of East Timorese society and politics. Subsequently, I outline what happened to women and their families when the Indonesian military invaded in December 1975, women's experiences in the FRETILIN-controlled liberated zones, and the increasingly difficult conditions of life on the move before eventual capture or surrender by the end of 1978. In exploring women's experiences of invasion and war, this chapter sets the context for the remainder of the thesis, which focuses on life under military occupation.

Feminist Scholarship on Women and War

In this chapter, I draw upon insights of feminist thinkers on gendered experiences of war, many of which challenge the limited or partial representation of women in traditional historical accounts of conflict. From the late 1980s, scholars such as Jean Bethke Elshtain and Cynthia Enloe were influential in early feminist theorising on gender and war.³ In her seminal work, *Women and War*, Elshtain observes that war histories are often told in terms of men as 'just warriors' who have the duty to protect, while women are seen as 'beautiful souls' who are in need of saving.⁴ Enloe also explores the effects of war and militarisation on women's lives, criticising the way in which 'womenandchildren' are often collapsed into a common category of vulnerable, gendered subjects.⁵ She suggests that it is productive to ask, 'Where are the women?' in times of conflict, as a means of revealing some of the complexities and

³ Classic texts by these scholars include Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Women and War* (Brighton: Harvester, 1987); Cynthia H. Enloe, *Does Khaki Become You?: The Militarisation of Women's Lives* (London: Pluto, 1983), *The Morning After: Sexual Politics at the End of the Cold War* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014); and Ann J. Tickner, *Gender in International Relations: Feminist Perspectives on Achieving Global Security* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992).

⁴ Elshtain, *Women and War*, 4. See also Miriam Cooke and Angela Woollacott, eds., *Gendering War Talk* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

⁵ Cynthia Enloe, "Women and Children: Making Feminist Sense of the Persian Gulf War," *The Village Voice* (September 1990): 25.

variety of women's roles and experiences.⁶ Subsequent interdisciplinary collections on women and war have explored the multiple roles and experiences of women in wartime – as victims, opponents, fighters, and perpetrators – and have also encouraged a new focus on ordinary women and their everyday experiences of conflict.⁷ Since the 1990s, postmodern feminists theorising about war have warned against conflating the term 'gender' with 'women' and have instead turned towards revealing, as Simona Sharoni and Julia Welland indicate, '*when and how* gender impacts the politics and practices of war'.⁸ As such, feminist approaches to women and war not only aim to understand the distinct impact that war has on women and the various ways in which women respond, but are also able to provide a more nuanced understanding of the dynamics of particular conflicts as gendered experiences.

The multiplicity of women's experiences of and relations to war can be understood, in part, by both the diversity among women and among wars. 'Women', of course, is not a monolithic category, and I raised some of the ways in which East Timorese women's experiences are shaped by other axes of identity in Chapter One. Similarly, 'war' is also not a uniform phenomenon, nor is it a uniformly gendered experience. It is, however, useful to think about the relationship between war histories and gender histories, in order to identify the intersections and to consider the implications of these two categories for each other. As Cynthia Enloe proposes: 'Any war takes place at a particular moment in the history of gender – that is, in the history of women's organizing, in the history of women's relationship to the state, in the history of contested masculinities, in the history of patriarchy's rationalization and reach'.⁹ Feminist insights into the multiplicity and complexity of women's experiences of and in relation to conflict, as well as the shifting geographies and temporalities of war, shape and inform the analysis contained within this chapter. Carol Cohn suggests that in order to better understand these interactions, 'we need to start by understanding the contexts within which that experience is embedded, the series of interlocking systems, relationships, and

⁶ Enloe, *The Morning After*, 20.

⁷ See, for example: Ruth Jacobson, Susie Jacobs, and Jen Marchbank, eds., *States of Conflict: Gender, Violence and Resistance* (New York: Zed Books, 2000); Caroline O.N. Moser and Fiona Clark, eds., *Victims, Perpetrators or Actors?: Gender, Armed Conflict, and Political Violence* (New York: Zed Books, 2001); Carol Cohn, ed., *Women and Wars: Contested Histories, Uncertain Futures* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013); and Simona Sharoni, Julia Welland, Linda Steiner, and Jennifer Pedersen, eds., *Handbook on Gender and War* (Cheltenham and Northampton: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited, 2016).

⁸ Simona Sharoni and Julia Welland, "Introduction: Revisiting the Relationship Between Gender and War: Reflections on Theory, Research, Activism and Policy," in *Handbook on Gender and War*, ed. Sharoni, Welland, and Pedersen, 2.

⁹ Cynthia Enloe, *Nimo's War, Emma's War: Making Feminist Sense of the Iraq War* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 4.

processes which constitute the conditions under which women act'.¹⁰ The following section traces women's experiences of decolonisation and political change in Portuguese Timor, and outlines the way in which the gender ideology espoused by the nationalist movement proposed radical changes to the role of women within East Timorese social and political life.

Decolonisation and Political Change

Portuguese Timor remained a rather neglected imperial outpost for much of the colonial period.¹¹ In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the colonial government began to solidify and extend its rule over the territory through a number of developments, including the introduction of a head tax and attempts to partially transform the subsistence economy. These developments, and the associated intensification of colonial rule, stimulated rebellions by different groups within the territory, which became important to the development of an East Timorese political consciousness and sense of collective national identity.¹² Of all the European powers, Benedict Anderson writes that the Portuguese colonial empire was the one that 'lasted the longest, collapsed the fastest, and left the most bloodshed and ruin behind it'.¹³ Nowhere is this statement truer than in the small colony of Portuguese Timor. The Carnation Revolution in Portugal on 25 April 1974, which overthrew the authoritarian Salazar regime, brought about significant changes to the social and political landscape of Portuguese Timor. Political associations were legalised for the first time, in preparation for a Popular Assembly to be elected in October 1976, to make a decision on the future political and administrative status of the territory in 1978.¹⁴

Political associations developed quickly, and were distinguished primarily by different visions for the future of the territory. The Timorese Democratic Union (*União Democrática Timorense* – UDT), the first party formed, favoured a continued association with Portugal. The Social Democratic Association of Timor (*Associação Social Democrática*

¹⁰ Cohn, "Women and Wars," 2.

¹¹ For an overview of the Portuguese colonial empire in the region, see Charles R. Boxer, *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire: 1415–1825* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973).

¹² See the work of Geoffrey Gunn for a discussion on the longevity of rebellion in East Timor. Geoffrey Gunn, *Timor Loro'Sae: 500 Years* (Macau: Livros do Oriente, 1999). Ernest Chamberlain has also written on early accounts of resistance against the Portuguese in *The Struggle in Iliomar: Resistance in Rural East Timor* (Point Lonsdale: Ernest Chamberlain, 2003); *Rebellion, Defeat and Exile: The 1959 Uprising in East Timor* (Point Lonsdale: Ernest Chamberlain, 2005); and *Faltering Steps: Independence Movements in East Timor – 1940s to the Early 1970s* (Point Lonsdale: Ernest Chamberlain, 2010).

¹³ Benedict Anderson, "Gravel in Jakarta's Shoes," *London Review of Books* 17, no. 2 (November 1995): 3.

¹⁴ "Portuguese Council of the Revolution Constitutional Law 7-75," July 17, 1975, in *East Timor and the International Community: Basic Documents*, ed. Heike Krieger (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 34–5.

Timor – ASDT), which changed its name to FRETILIN in September 1974, was a nationalist party which favoured immediate independence. The Timorese Popular Democratic Association (*Associação Popular Democrática Timorense* – APODETI) was a smaller party which advocated integration with Indonesia. There were several other smaller parties formed at the time – the Sons of the Mountain Warriors or Association of Timorese Heroes (*Klibur Oan Timor Asuwain* – KOTA) and the Timor Labour Party (*Partido Trabalhista Timorense* – PTT) – but they did not garner much popular support.¹⁵ The first East Timorese women’s organisation, OPMT, was founded alongside FRETILIN to facilitate women’s participation in political developments.¹⁶ After a brief union between FRETILIN and the UDT based on a common platform of independence,¹⁷ the UDT launched an armed insurrection in August 1975 and a civil conflict ensued. The Portuguese colonial administration withdrew to Ataúro Island and then went on to Portugal. It is estimated that between 1,500 and 3,000 lives were lost during the brief civil conflict, which left lasting fractures within the East Timorese political community.¹⁸ After just a few weeks, FRETILIN emerged victorious and began to implement its plans for the transformation and development of East Timorese society.¹⁹ The defeated parties came together to form the Anti-Communist Movement of August 11 (*Movimento Anti-Comunista de Onze de Agosto* – MAC),²⁰ and fled across the border into West Timor in search of protection from Indonesia.

The Emergence of an East Timorese Women’s Movement

Unlike the other political parties, FRETILIN had a developed social and economic programme and sought to internationalise its activities, which included identifying with

¹⁵ The political programmes for each of the main parties are available as “Appendix A” in Jill Jolliffe, *East Timor: Nationalism and Colonialism* (St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1978), 325–43. For a discussion of the critical period of 1974–75, see David Hicks, *Rhetoric and the Decolonization and Recolonization of East Timor* (Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2014).

¹⁶ I discuss the emergence of OPMT in more detail in Hannah Loney, “‘The Target of a Double Exploitation’: Feminism and Nationalism in Portuguese Timor, 1974–75,” *Intersections: Gender and Sexuality in Asia and the Pacific* 37 (2015), <http://intersections.anu.edu.au/issue37/loney.html>.

¹⁷ “Joint Communiqué, Issued by the Coalition Revolutionary Front of Independent East Timor and Timorese Democratic Union,” March 18, 1975, in *East Timor and the International Community*, ed. Krieger, 37.

¹⁸ CAVR Report, 186.

¹⁹ See Helen Hill, *Stirrings of Nationalism in East Timor: Fretilin 1974–1978: The Origins, Ideologies and Strategies of a Nationalist Movement* (Sydney: Otford Press, 2002).

²⁰ There has been much discussion of the extent to which FRETILIN was communist in 1974–75. The CAVR Report concludes that while some members were communist, ‘it would be incorrect to conclude on that basis that the party itself was communist’. Rather, the report maintains, ‘the mainstream of the Fretilin leadership was centre-left, although the party contained a spectrum of opinion that ranged from far-left to more conservative elements’. CAVR Report, 169.

national liberation movements in Portuguese Africa and with other liberation movements worldwide.²¹ According to a statement issued by the party in 1974, FRETILIN ‘unites all the nationalist and anti-colonialist forces in a common cause – authentic liberation of the people of East Timor from the colonial yolk [sic]’.²² FRETILIN espoused an explicitly anti-colonial form of nationalism, and advocated both social democracy and unity in the pursuit of independence. It also sought to eliminate discriminatory traditional and colonial practices, such as polygamy, and advocated for equal wages, widespread education, and sexual equality.²³ Despite the fact that there were only three women included in the fifty-member original Central Committee,²⁴ a women’s organisation was established, according to the party’s political programme, ‘so that every person will actively contribute to the political life of the country’.²⁵ No other political party set up a women’s arm at this time. The women’s organisation, OPMT, can thus be seen as emblematic of an emerging East Timorese women’s movement. It is important to note, however, that the organisation was framed quite explicitly within the context of the nationalist movement’s commitment to a broader vision of the democratisation and modernisation of East Timorese society.

A rare statement issued on 18 September 1975 by Rosa ‘Muki’ Bonaparte Soares, the founding secretary of OPMT, outlined the purpose of the organisation in the context of FRETILIN’s broader political struggle:

The Popular Organisation of Timorese Women is a mass organisation of the Revolutionary Front of an Independent East Timor – Fretilin – which enables Timorese women to participate in the revolution. The principal objective of women participating in the revolution is not, strictly speaking, the emancipation of women as women, but the triumph of the revolution, and consequently, the liberation of women as a social being who is the target of a double exploitation: that under the traditional conceptions and that under the colonialist conceptions [sic].²⁶

²¹ For a comparison of FRETILIN with other national liberation movements, in particular, those waged in Africa against Portuguese colonial rule, see Estêvão Cabral, “FRETILIN and the Struggle for Independence in East Timor 1974–2002: An Examination of the Constraints and Opportunities for a Non-State Nationalist Movement in the Late Twentieth Century” (Ph.D., Lancaster University, 2002).

²² “What is FRETILIN? (A Popular Explanatory Statement),” in Grant Evans, *Eastern (Portuguese) Timor: Independence or Oppression? Special Report and Photos* (An AUS Booklet, 1975).

²³ Rosa ‘Muki’ Bonaparte, “Timorese Women Are Fighting on All Fronts,” *East Timor News* 14, August 25, 1977, 1.

²⁴ Helen Hill, informal conversation with the author, Melbourne, January 25, 2014.

²⁵ Frente Revolucionária do Timor Leste Independente [Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor], “Program of the Revolutionary Front of Independent East Timor (Fretilin),” in *What is Fretilin? The Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor (Fretilin) Explains its Aims in a Question and Answer Format* (Sydney: Campaign for Independent East Timor, 1974), 4.

²⁶ Rosa ‘Muki’ Bonaparte, “Women in East Timor: Statement by Popular Organisation of Timorese Women,” September 18, 1975, *Direct Action*, March 4, 1976, 7.

In this statement, Muki articulated the inseparable relationship between women's emancipation and the nationalist movement. Her priorities for the women's movement were: first, 'to participate directly in the struggle against colonialism'; and second, 'to fight in every way the violent discrimination that Timorese women have suffered in colonial society'. East Timorese women, she wrote, were fighting 'a double exploitation': against traditionalist, patriarchal social structures, and against Portuguese colonialism.²⁷ Originally intended as 'a mass organisation' that would enable East Timorese women 'to participate in the revolution', the immediate role of OPMT was to attend to the children and families who were abandoned and homeless as a result of the civil conflict.²⁸ Muki also envisaged women's roles to include educating the youth to 'continue the revolution', as well as organising 'the more active and conscious women' and to 'awaken those who are passive and submissive'.²⁹ The roles and responsibilities of women according to the nationalist movement during this critical period would become important in the structuring of everyday life in the mountains in the years following the Indonesian invasion.

Several of my interview participants were involved in the early activities of OPMT and in the humanitarian work undertaken by the organisation in response to the civil conflict. Ilda Maria da Conceição, the daughter of a traditional chief or ruler (*liurai*) from Uato Carbau, recalled OPMT's early role as a vehicle for organising women, encouraging their participation in meetings, facilitating their role in public and community decision-making processes, and teaching women 'how to participate in politics'.³⁰ Along with the FRETILIN youth organisation, the Popular Organisation of Timorese Youth (*Organizacao Popular da Juventude Timor* – OPJT), OPMT established crèches and childcare centres in Dili, and then in Mau-Koli and Sere-Leki, in order to care for orphans following the civil conflict.³¹ Although she was only fourteen years old at the time, Maria de Fatima Kalsona worked at the crèche in Mau-Koli. She remembered establishing a rotating roster of responsibilities for running the crèche, which included sewing, taking care of the children, teaching, and cooking.³² Another of my interview participants, Zulmira 'Sirana' da Cruz Sarmiento, also worked at the centre, along with Maria 'Soi Mali' José Boavida, who went on to become the

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Bonaparte, "Women in East Timor," 7.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ilda Maria da Conceição, interview with the author, Dili, July 5, 2012.

³¹ Antero B. da Silva, "FRETILIN Popular Education 1973–1978 and its Relevance to Timor-Leste Today" (Ph.D., University of New England, 2012), 150.

³² Maria de Fatima Kalsona, interview with the author, Dili, May 23, 2012.

Secretary of OPMT after Muki's death in December 1975.³³ Sirana explained that in addition to taking care of the children, they also provided moral and logistical support for women who had lost their husbands during the civil conflict.³⁴ Writing from Mau-Koli in September 1975, Muki explained that at the crèches, children who were orphans or whose parents were actively involved in the struggle were being looked after. The children were also provided with a revolutionary education, she reported, which was aimed at developing future revolutionary cadres to continue the revolution until a more just society, free from all forms of oppression, was realised.³⁵ In November 1975, the Dili-based FRETILIN newspaper, *Timor Leste: Jornal do Povo Mau Bere*, reported that an estimated 100 children were looked after at the crèche in Mau-Koli.³⁶ On her visit to the territory in later 1975, Jill Jolliffe from the Australian Associated Press visited the crèche in Mau-Koli and observed that OPMT women were taking care of just fewer than 100 children, but that this was a significantly decreased figure from previous months.³⁷ Although only operational for several months, this model for crèches, in which children were taken care of and also provided with a political education, was continued in the resistance bases after the invasion.

OPMT women were also active in FRETILIN's literacy campaigns, which were a key strategy for the dissemination of political ideas and objectives to the population in the rural areas. Adult literacy volunteers (*brigadistas*) used a literacy handbook, *Rai Timor, Rai Ita Niang* (Timor is Our Country), which had been designed and printed by revolutionary East Timorese students who were studying in Portugal, to teach reading and writing to the people.³⁸ They told traditional East Timorese stories and sang songs, such as *Foho Ramelau* (Mount Ramelau), to encourage nationalist sentiment and to generate discussions about East Timorese culture and identity. The literacy campaign was initially tested at two pilot centres in Namuleco and Baucau, and after six months there were reportedly 200 literacy centres operating across the territory.³⁹ According to Estêvão Cabral, a young nationalist who was

³³ Maria Domingas Fernandes Alves, Laura Soares Abrantes, and Filoma B. Reis, *Hakerek ho Ran [Written with Blood]* (Dili: Office for the Promotion of Equality, Prime Minister's Office, Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, 2001), 16.

³⁴ Zulmira 'Sirana' da Cruz Sarmiento, interview with the author, Dili, December 5, 2012.

³⁵ Pela Comissão Directiva; Muki, Creche Mau-Koli, Maubisse, Setembro 18, 1975, "Organização Popular da Mulher Timor: Texto de Análise da Situação da Mulher Timor," *Timor Leste: Jornal do Povo Mau Bere* 1, Setembro 27, 1975, 8.

³⁶ "Noticiário," *Timor Leste: Jornal do Povo Mau Bere* 9, Novembro 22, 1975, 2.

³⁷ "Australian Associated Press Reports from East Timor," September 15–December 10, 1975, Rick Collins and Jill Jolliffe, Press AustNews Sydney, Ex Jolliffe\Maubisse Relief One (November 22), 2, in ET Z627, ANU Archives.

³⁸ *Rai Timor, Rai Ita Niang* [Timor is Our Country] (Lisbon: Casa Dos Timore, 1974), in Box 4969: Jill Jolliffe's Papers, NAA.

³⁹ "Political Developments," *Timor Information Services* 1, November 11, 1975, 2.

involved in the campaigns, female literacy volunteers in fact outnumbered men in late 1974 and in early 1975.⁴⁰ Maria Maia dos Reis, the daughter of a *liurai* from Baucau, was involved in the literacy campaigns in Aileu. She remembered seeing ‘how people lived their life’ in the rural areas and teaching them about FRETILIN’s philosophy that ‘everyone must have an equal life’.⁴¹ Zulmira ‘Sirana’ da Cruz Sarmento also worked at the centre in Aileu, which provided basic literacy training to the people. She remembered learning from the people about traditional medicine, as well as traditional dances and culture.⁴² Drawing on their knowledge and experience obtained during the 1974–75 period, women who organised these programmes often went on to hold prominent positions in the FRETILIN-controlled societies in the mountains after the invasion.

The changes that took place within Portuguese Timor in 1974–75 had broad ramifications for East Timorese women. Nationalist elite imagined the dismantling of colonial and traditional social structures, and a new society that was free from oppression. FRETILIN’s nationalist, revolutionary ideology and its vision for a rapid transformation of East Timorese society created and, indeed, necessitated women’s participation. The window of opportunity created for East Timorese women by the Carnation Revolution in Portugal and the subsequent initiation of decolonisation processes in its overseas territories was, however, short-lived. The Indonesian invasion radically changed the nature and aims of the nationalist movement, and concerns for gender equality were progressively sidelined in the pursuit of independence. In the next section, I outline the political events that precipitated the invasion, as well as what happened to women and their families when Indonesia invaded in December 1975.

The Indonesian Invasion

Indonesia made clear its designs for Portuguese Timor once Portugal had signalled its intention to leave. The official position, as outlined by Indonesia’s Foreign Minister, Adam Malik, was that the Government of Indonesia had no intention to expand its territory and that

⁴⁰ Estêvão Cabral and Marilyn Martin-Jones, “Discourses About Adult Literacy and About Liberation Interwoven: Recollections of the Adult Literacy Campaign Initiated in 1974/5,” in *Proceedings of the Understanding Timor-Leste Conference*, ed. Michael Leach, Nuno Canas Mendes, Antero B. da Silva, Alarico da Costa Ximenes, and Bob Boughton (Hawthorn: Swinburne Press, 2010), 344.

⁴¹ Maria Maia dos Reis, interview with the author, Dili, July 17, 2012.

⁴² Zulmira ‘Sirana’ da Cruz Sarmento, interview with the author, Dili, December 5, 2012.

it respected Portuguese Timor's right to self-determination.⁴³ But at the same time, military heads such as General Ali Murtopo, the head of the Indonesian intelligence, held talks in Lisbon in which he advocated for Portuguese Timor to 'integrate' into Indonesia.⁴⁴ Indonesian authorities portrayed the left-leaning FRETILIN as a threat to Indonesian security and stability, and used this image to generate widespread fear and to mobilise popular support for intervention, both domestically and internationally, in the broader context of the Cold War.⁴⁵ With a full-scale invasion looking increasingly imminent, FRETILIN became desperate to find a way to engage the international community and so, on 28 November 1975, the party unilaterally declared the independence of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste (*República Democrática de Timor-Leste* – RDTL).⁴⁶ Notably, the first constitution of the RDTL guaranteed equal rights for both sexes, as well as stipulating the duty and right of each citizen – regardless of sex – to participate in the revolution, and to defend national sovereignty and territorial integrity.⁴⁷ Indonesia's response was to facilitate the signing of the Balibo Declaration, which announced East Timor's integration with Indonesia, by representatives from other East Timorese political parties on the following day in Kupang (Indonesia).⁴⁸ Portugal recognised neither declaration. Meanwhile, Indonesian intelligence services intensified destabilisation operations against East Timor, as well as covert military operations, with the ultimate goal of annexation.⁴⁹

⁴³ Adam Malik, "Minteri Luar Negeri, Republik Indonesia, Letter to Mr. Jose Manuel Ramos-Horta, Dili, Portuguese Timor, Jakarta," June 17, 1974, in AMRT.

⁴⁴ J.A. Ford, "Timor: Indonesia's Reluctant Takeover," British Embassy in Jakarta, Confidential Despatch printed by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office for General (but confidential) Distribution, Diplomatic Report No. 182/76," March 15, 1976, in The National Security Archive, The George Washington University.

⁴⁵ For a discussion of decolonisation of East Timor in the context of the Cold War, see Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of our Times* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 247; and Malcom H. Murfett, *Cold War: Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Marshall Cavendish Editions, 2012), 313–17.

⁴⁶ Democratic Republic of East Timor (RDTL), "Texto da Declaração Unilateral da Independência de Timor-Leste, Proclamada pela FRETILIN em 28 de Novembro de 1975," [Text of the Unilateral Declaration of Timor-Leste's Independence, Proclaimed by FRETILIN on 28 November 1975], in AMRT.

⁴⁷ See Art. 21 and Art. 26 in "Constituição da República Democrática de Timor Leste," [Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste], in RDTL, *Timor-Leste, Uma Luta Heróica; Documentos da Fretilin e do Governo da República Democrática de Timor-Leste* (Lisboa: Silvas, 1976), 36. I am grateful to Michael Leach for providing a translation of relevant sections of this document from the original Portuguese into English.

⁴⁸ "Joint Declaration by APODETI, UDT, KOTA and the Partido Trabalhista, Issued at Batugade, 30 November 1975," in *East Timor and the International Community*, ed. Krieger, 40.

⁴⁹ For an overview of Indonesia's campaign of destabilisation (Operation Komodo), see "Chapter Two: Destabilization and War," in Clinton Fernandes, *The Independence of East Timor: Multi-Dimensional Perspectives – Occupation, Resistance, and International Political Activism* (Portland: Sussex Academic Press, 2011), 29–46.

On 7 December 1975, the Indonesian military launched a full-scale land, sea, and air invasion of Dili under the pretext that it was ‘maintaining order’.⁵⁰ The invading forces included some MAC members, and the Indonesian government attempted to foster the idea that the East Timorese forces were assisted only by a small number of Indonesian ‘volunteers’.⁵¹ The attack was made without a formal declaration of war.⁵² For East Timorese women, such as Domingas ‘Micato’ Fernandes Alves, the invasion was a day they would ‘never forget’. ‘We could see planes dropping bombs, burning everything. I had a lot of conflicting emotions ... I felt isolated and lost all hope’, Micato remembered.⁵³ Group executions by Indonesian troops of FRETILIN leaders and their families took place on the wharf in Dili on 7 and 8 December, and more civilians were killed as Indonesian troops made their way towards FALINTIL headquarters.⁵⁴ Women who were suspected of links with FRETILIN were singled out for particularly harsh treatment by the Indonesian military.⁵⁵ George Aditjondro suggests that Indonesian troops perhaps drew parallels between politically active East Timorese women and the highly demonised Indonesian Women’s Movement (*Gerakan Wanita Indonesia – Gerwani*), the progressive women’s organisation that was closely aligned with the Indonesian Communist Party (*Partai Komunis Indonesia – PKI*),⁵⁶ and I explore this idea in more detail in Chapter Three. In my interview with Zulmira ‘Sirana’ da Cruz Sarmiento, she suggested that East Timorese spies provided the Indonesian troops with the names of FRETILIN members and, as such, they knew who to target.⁵⁷ Loudres

⁵⁰ According to H.E. Mr. Ali Alatas, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, Indonesia’s involvement was an attempt ‘to respond, as restrainedly as possible, to the chaotic and tragic circumstances which unfortunately accompanied the decolonization process’ in the territory. In “East Timor: De-Bunking the Myths Around a Process of Decolonization: Remarks by H.E. Mr. Ali Alatas, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, before Members of the National Press Club, Washington, D.C.,” February 20, 1992, in *East Timor and the International Community*, ed. Krieger, 277.

⁵¹ 217 Cablegram to Canberra, Jakarta, September 6, 1975, OJA1677 Top Secret AUSTEO Priority, “Portuguese Timor,” for the Secretary from Woolcott, in *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation of Portuguese Timor, 1974–1976*, ed. Wendy Way (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 2000), 391–93.

⁵² CAVR Report, 206.

⁵³ Domingas ‘Micato’ Fernandes Alves, in *Step by Step: Women of East Timor, Stories of Resistance and Survival*, ed. Jude Conway (Darwin: Charles Darwin University Press, 2010), 82.

⁵⁴ The massacres that took place on these first couple of days are detailed well by James Dunn and John Taylor. See James Dunn, *Timor: A People Betrayed* (Milton: Jacaranda, 1983); and John G. Taylor, *East Timor: The Price of Freedom* (London: Pluto, 1999).

⁵⁵ This report was part of the information prepared by ETRA to be used by the ‘Timor Woman’ team, who participated in the NGO forum that ran parallel to the UN World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. Information was gathered from sources such as Amnesty International reports, the London-based human rights organisation TAPOL, and personal accounts. ETRA, “East Timor Resistance: 20 Years On. Timor Woman: The Painful Road to Freedom,” Report on the Situation of Women in East Timor under Indonesian Occupation, World Conference on Women, UN, Beijing, 1995, 2, in AMRT.

⁵⁶ George Aditjondro, “Women as Victims versus Women as Fighters: Redressing the Asymmetrical Focus of the East Timorese Activists Discourse” (paper presented at “East Timorese Women and International Law” conference, Lisboa, Portugal, January 20–24, 1999).

⁵⁷ Zulmira ‘Sirana’ da Cruz Sarmiento, interview with the author, Dili, December 5, 2012.

Maria Assunção Alves Araújo similarly claimed that the Indonesian military possessed a 'black list', which included so-called 'radical' women from OPMT.⁵⁸ One such example is a brief document that was prepared by Indonesian military authorities in August 1975 and handed to Australian diplomat, Alan Taylor, by Indonesian intelligence operative, Harry Tjan. Entitled 'Steps to Prevent Communist Agitators to Escape', the document contained a list of nineteen 'suspected communist agitators', including Rosa 'Muki' Bonaparte Soares, and urged measures to be undertaken 'to avoid the escape of communist guilt leaders [sic]'.⁵⁹ Subsequently, two high profile East Timorese women were executed in the days following the invasion: Muki and Isabel Lobato, the wife of the prominent FRETILIN member, Nicolau dos Reis Lobato.⁶⁰ Their deaths demonstrate the way in which both politically active women and the wives of high profile male leaders were targeted by the invading forces: a trend that would continue throughout the occupation. The brutality of the invasion is crucial in understanding the dynamics of military violence and terror that became a constant feature of the subsequent military occupation of the territory.

While Indonesia had secured the complicity of Western governments for what was expected to be a quick take-over, military operations were poorly planned and executed, on-the-ground intelligence was extremely minimal, and a bloody and protracted campaign ensued.⁶¹ FALINTIL fought back, perhaps drawing upon the training and combat experience obtained by professional East Timorese soldiers in the Portuguese colonial army who had joined the organisation, as well as rifles and ammunition that had been passed on from Portuguese stocks.⁶² Using US-supplied military equipment, Indonesian forces quickly gained control over the main towns of Dili and Baucau and attempted to formalise the annexation.⁶³ On 17 December 1975, the Indonesian government established the Provincial

⁵⁸ Loudres Maria Assunção Araújo, interview in "The Living Memory Project."

⁵⁹ For a discussion of the document and an image of the list, see Peter Job, "Blind Eyes: Indonesia's Fretilin Hit-List and Australia's Quiet Support for It," *New Matilda*, December 14, 2014, <https://newmatilda.com/2015/12/14/blind-eyes-indonesias-fretilin-hit-list-and-australias-quiet-support-for-it/>.

⁶⁰ CAVR Report, 817.

⁶¹ For an overview of problems likely to confront the Indonesians military by invading of East Timor, see Telegram 3399 from U.S. Consulate Surabaya to U.S. Embassy Jakarta, "Estimate of Indonesian Military Capabilities," March 3, 1975, in The National Security Archive, The George Washington University.

⁶² The majority of East Timorese soldiers who had served in the Portuguese colonial army gave their support to FRETILIN when the Portuguese withdrew from the territory during the internal conflict in August 1975. Rogerio Lobato, Minister for National Defence in the government of the Democratic Republic of East Timor and commander of FALINTIL, in "Rogerio Lobato: How East Timor Fights On," interview made in Europe in January 1977, republished in *Australian Left Review* 57 (March 1977): 9.

⁶³ For a weapon-by-weapon description of the US arms used by invading Indonesian troops, see Memo from Clinton Granger to Brent Scowcroft, "Indonesian Use of MAP Equipment in East Timor," December 12, 1975, in The National Security Archive, The George Washington University.

Government of East Timor (*Pemerintah Sementara Timor Timur* – PSTT),⁶⁴ which comprised key supporters of integration. Subsequently, a People's Assembly was established to endorse a petition to Indonesian President Suharto asking for the integration of the territory into Indonesia,⁶⁵ which Suharto accepted on 7 June 1976.⁶⁶ This process formed the basis upon which Indonesia and its supporters advanced the idea that a valid act of self-determination took place within the territory.

Conflict, Violence, and Displacement

One of the most far-reaching ways in which the Indonesian invasion disrupted the everyday lives of East Timorese people was the widespread displacement of the majority of the civilian population before, during, and after the occupation. According to the findings of the Timor-Leste Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation (*Comissão de Acolhimento, Verdade e Reconciliação* – CAVR), almost every East Timorese person who lived through these years (1974–99) suffered some form of displacement, and many were displaced on more than occasion.⁶⁷ Displacement usually resulted in deprivation in the form of hunger, disease, and the loss of adequate shelter. Geoffrey Robinson breaks down the displacement that accompanied Indonesia's invasion of the territory into three phases: the first, when approximately 10,000 people fled across the border to West Timor following the outbreak of the civil war in August 1975; the second, when some tens of thousands of civilians fled towns and coastal areas into the interior following the Indonesian invasion in December 1975; and the third, which involved the flight, surrender, and forcible relocation into 'resettlement areas' of some 300,000 people, and the deaths of approximately 100,000 people, from late 1977 until late 1979.⁶⁸ These three periods are useful for thinking about the dynamics of conflict, violence, and displacement in East Timor. In this section, I focus on the displacement from 1975–79, and the experiences of the population both in the mountains and

⁶⁴ "Declaration on the Establishment of a Provincial Government of the Territory of East Timor, Dili," December 17, 1975, in *East Timor and the International Community*, ed. Krieger, 44.

⁶⁵ "Statement Made by Mr. Arnaldo dos Reis Araujo, Chief Executive of the Provincial Government of East Timor on the Occasion of Presenting to President Suharto the Petition of the People of East Timor Addressed to the Government and People of East Timor Addressed to the Government and People of the Republic of Indonesia," June 7, 1976, in *Ibid.*, 46.

⁶⁶ "Statement Made by H.E. President Suharto in Response to the Address Presented by the Delegation of the Provisional Government of East Timor," June 7, 1976, in *Ibid.*, 47–9.

⁶⁷ CAVR Report, 1173.

⁶⁸ Geoffrey Robinson, "People Power: A Comparative History of Forced Displacement in East Timor," in *Conflict, Violence, and Displacement in Indonesia*, ed. Eva-Lotta E. Hedman (Ithaca: Southeast Asia Program Publications, Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 2008), 88–9.

on the move, as they attempted to escape the continuing conflict between the Indonesian forces and the East Timorese resistance.

The increasing tensions and violent consequences of conflict between FRETILIN and the UDT in August 1975 precipitated the displacement of thousands of East Timorese people, most for short periods of time, both within the territory and across the border to Indonesian West Timor. According to estimates by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) East Timor Relief Operation from September 1975, as much as fifty percent of the population may have been displaced as a result of the internal conflict.⁶⁹ Aside from those who went across to West Timor for military training and to join forces with the Indonesian military, many people crossing the border at this time were civilians who were fleeing the territory out of fear for their safety – some of these people were then subject to covert recruitment strategies by the Indonesian military for training and subsequent deployment alongside Indonesian forces.⁷⁰ Others remained there until they determined that it was safe to return home. For example, Filomena ‘Mena’ Barros dos Reis travelled with her family and many others across the border to Atambua, Indonesia, in an attempt to escape what she described as the ‘chaotic situation’ within the territory. She was nine years old at the time, and remembered her confusion at being told by her parents that they were ‘at war’ and had to flee their home: ‘I overheard my parents whispering that we had to pack our clothes and make preparations to go away. I thought we were going on holidays’, she remembered. When Mena and her family arrived in Atambua, the Indonesian military recorded their details. The family was then placed in a school building, along with many other families, and labelled ‘refugees’.⁷¹ The exact numbers of those who crossed the border has been heavily disputed. Indonesian officials at the time reported 40,000 to 50,000 people; whereas East Timorese estimates are much lower, at between 10,000 and 30,000 people.⁷² Most people were able to return to their homes by mid-September, when hostiles largely subsided.

The December 1975 Indonesian invasion triggered the evacuation of up to 300,000 East Timorese civilians,⁷³ including the FRETILIN leadership, from the towns and villages

⁶⁹ “Memorandum by A. Pasquier to the ICRC Geneva titled International Committee of the Red Cross, East Timor Relief Operation, Concerning: Situation in Timor, Report of the Activities of the Delegation from 1 to 15 September,” Darwin, September 16, 1975, cited in the CAVR Report, 1182.

⁷⁰ See Robinson, “People Power,” 87–118.

⁷¹ Filomena Reis, in *Step by Step*, ed. Conway, 208–11. See also Filomena ‘Mena’ Barros dos Reis, interview with the author, Dili, June 3, 2012.

⁷² CAVR Report, 1185–86.

⁷³ Indonesian Red Cross, “List of People Returned in Whole of East Timor – Per Last December 1978,” in Part 6. Portuguese Timor – Visits of Australians to Portuguese Timor, A1838, 3038/10/11/2, NAA. See also CAVR Report, 215.

on the northern coast of the territory into the mountainous areas of the interior. Some evacuations were spontaneous, in response to widespread perceptions that an Indonesian invasion was increasingly imminent. In the main towns of Dili and Baucau, many people fled within a few days of the 7 December invasion in response to intensive Indonesian aerial and naval bombardments, as well as to the arrival of Indonesian ground troops and the violence that ensued. Teresinha 'Jina' de Jesus Oliveira, for example, attempted to flee Dili where she was attending school at the time of the civil conflict in August. Jina remembered that she initially took refuge with the Canossian Sisters, before staying with the Portuguese Bishop, Dom José Joaquim Ribeiro, in Lecidere. Eventually, one of the Fathers from Liquica found her and escorted her back to Liquica to be with her family. Jina remembered: 'I went there with only a blanket and the clothes that I was wearing at the time'. After one week, she ran away to the mountains to try and find a place to hide because of the impending Indonesian invasion.⁷⁴ For Jina, the period from the civil conflict to the Indonesian invasion was one of constant movement and dislocation, and her experience is indicative of the multiple phases of displacement experienced by East Timorese people during the occupation.

Other people were organised by FRETILIN to evacuate towns and villages at the time of the invasion, an action that was framed as an attempt to support and protect them. In Queliquai, for example, Bilela remembered FALINTIL members coming and telling everyone to evacuate because 'Indonesia is here and we have to escape, otherwise we will die'.⁷⁵ Those who had been active in political organisations and activities, such as Maria de Fatima Kalsona who was working at the crèche in Mau-Koli, fled to her home town of Same after Indonesian troops entered Dili. 'When they [the enemy] came', she explained, 'we worked with the community, taking them and evacuating them to Tutuala', in the east of the territory.⁷⁶ Initially, people often spent several months moving around in an attempt to find a safe place to stay. After she fled into the mountains above Dili following the Indonesian invasion, for example, Loudres 'Merita' Alves Araujo remembered spending several months moving around, before she met up with FRETILIN leaders who invited her to become a part of the organisation and to help mobilise the people.⁷⁷ I return to this theme of constant movement later in the chapter.

FALINTIL troops put up substantial resistance to the Indonesian military and, for several years, retained control over large amounts of territory. A Catholic Church report from

⁷⁴ Teresinha 'Jina' de Jesus Oliveira, interview with the author, Liquica, June 3, 2012.

⁷⁵ Bilela, interview with the author, Baucau, August 3, 2013.

⁷⁶ Maria de Fatima Kalsona, interview with the author, Dili, May 23, 2012.

⁷⁷ Loudres 'Merita' Alves Araujo, interview with the author, Dili, July 6, 2012.

2 November 1976 claimed that at the time, eighty-five percent of the territory and 500,000 East Timorese people out of a total population of 650,000 remained outside direct control of the Indonesian military.⁷⁸ Although the precise figures are difficult to ascertain, Indonesian relief workers reported, around the same time, that Indonesian forces had great difficulty in extending their control beyond the main towns and villages, claiming that only 150,000 people were living in areas under Indonesian control.⁷⁹ In the areas outside of Indonesian control, FRETILIN was initially able to provide sufficient food supplies, shelter, and basic health care to the population. Drawing upon their plans for the social and political transformation of the territory developed during the critical period of 1974–75, as outlined in the above section, FRETILIN also implemented mass literacy and political mobilisation programmes. Despite the massive displacement generated by decolonisation and the Indonesian invasion, FRETILIN was able to establish functioning societies in the mountains, relatively outside the reach of the Indonesian military and the conflict, until at least the end of 1976. In the section below, I describe life in these areas outside of Indonesian control, known as liberated zones, and highlight how FRETILIN's vision for the development and transformation of East Timorese society shaped perceptions of women's roles in the struggle and their experiences of everyday life during the period of conventional war and life in the mountains (1975–79).

Life in the Mountains

Although Indonesian forces enjoyed overwhelming military superiority and quickly gained control over the main towns such as Dili and Baucau, the East Timorese resistance managed to maintain control over a large amount of territory which contained a majority of the civilian population for some time. There, FRETILIN organised functioning societies and provided the civilians with sufficient food and basic health care. From 20 May–2 June 1976, the FRETILIN Central Committee held an historic meeting in Soibada, at which its strategy for mobilising a national resistance was established. The party realised that it would be unable to gain victory over the Indonesian forces through purely military means, and so a strategy of protracted people's war was developed. The liberated zones were subsequently divided into six sectors, which defined both military zones under military command and political administrative units under FRETILIN administration: *Ponta Leste* (Eastern End); *Centro*

⁷⁸ "News of East Timor," *Timor Information Service*, November 2, 1976, 1.

⁷⁹ "Indonesian Relief Workers in Timor," *Tribune*, December 1, 1976.

Leste (Central East); *Centro Norte* (Central North); *Central Sul* (Central South); *Fronteira Norte* (North Frontier); and *Fronteira Sul* (South Frontier).⁸⁰ Within each sector, political commissars (*comissário política*) administered political and military activities, as well as coordinated food production, housing, education, and health care.

The functioning of FRETILIN-controlled societies varied across the territory and in accordance with different conditions, but OPMT women often took the lead in providing logistical support for the fighters on the front line, as well as managing programmes and distributing tasks to the civilian population. This period of life in the mountains is significant in understandings of women's contributions in the struggle for national liberation, and in providing tangible instances of the gender emancipation which had been advanced within early FRETILIN nationalist rhetoric. In the small publication, *Written with Blood*, written by Maria Domingas Fernandes Alves, Laura Soares Abrantes, and Filomena B. Reis and published by the Timor-Leste Office for the Promotion of Equality in 2001, women in the resistance bases are described as playing critical roles. 'During this early and crucial period of resistance', the booklet explains, 'East Timorese women showed high self-esteem and a remarkable capacity to face problems optimistically'.⁸¹ In the resistance bases, OPMT was responsible for developing and administering a range of programmes, including: the preparation and distribution of food, medicine, and clothes to the fighters; the provision of general health education, the preparation of medicines, and attending to the ill; launching the literacy campaign; and the establishment of crèches to care for orphans. In doing so, the publication explains, 'East Timorese women, under the umbrella of OPMT, put the values of women's emancipation into practice in the service of the people in the struggle for liberation'.⁸² The roles of women in the resistance bases were thus evocative of the revolutionary platform developed by FRETILIN and OPMT during the period of 1974–75.

Many of my interview participants remembered their involvement in FRETILIN programmes that sought to promote education, mobilisation, and logistical support for the population living in the mountains. In my interview with Loudres 'Merita' Alves Araujo, who was based in the Central North sector, she explained that OPMT continued to promote its earlier objectives of educating women 'so that they could participate in the political

⁸⁰ FRETILIN was not unanimous in this decision. For a discussion of the politics and factions that converged around the 1976 meeting in Soibada, see Gusmão, *To Resist is to Win!*, 42–3. See also Sara Niner, "A Long Journey of Resistance: The Origins and Struggle of CNRT," in *Bitter Flowers, Sweet Flowers: East Timor, Indonesia, and the World Community*, ed. Richard Tanter, Mark Selden, and Stephen R. Shalom (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers; Sydney: Pluto Press, 2001), 15–30.

⁸¹ Alves et. al., *Hakerek ho Ran*, 16.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 19.

process [sic]'. In order to 'free our country', she explained, 'everyone should know about politics and women also have to know and understand politics'. Accordingly, it was important for women to learn to read and write, and to be responsible for certain tasks. Women were encouraged to speak out in weekly meetings, to 'criticise other people but only in a constructive way', Merita explained.⁸³ Domingas 'Micato' Fernandes Alves, who was also based in the Central North sector, described using objects and images from daily life to teach reading and writing; for example, by drawing an image of a tree in the ground and then writing the word 'tree' next to it.⁸⁴ Through OPMT, women were encouraged to speak in public, to make decisions within the community, and to participate in politics. According to Ilda Maria da Conceição, who was based in the East Central and then the Eastern End sector, meetings were held to outline how women 'could participate in the war'.⁸⁵ In addition to logistical support, women were encouraged to promote East Timorese cultural traditions and to assist in building a widespread political commitment to national liberation among the population. In my interview with Maria de Fatima Kalsona, who was based in the East Central sector, she remembered participating in cultural activities, alphabetisation campaigns, traditional dancing, singing, and historical education.⁸⁶ Maria Maia dos Reis, who was also in the East Central sector, recalled how enjoyable she found these cultural activities, particularly the parties and dances: 'although we were in a difficult situation,' she explained, 'when it came to the parties it was so fun. But it was also fun when we had important days, theatre performances, *tebe-tebe* [traditional East Timorese dance] to raise the flag'.⁸⁷ Similarly, Micato reflected fondly upon her time in the mountains: 'It's ironic but I miss those days', she recalled.⁸⁸ Although the war effort was of central importance, several of my interview participants expressed fond memories of life in the resistance bases immediately following the Indonesian invasion. These sites, in part, presented an opportunity for the nationalist movement to implement its plans for the development of a new and more equitable society, and to enact plans for women's emancipation.

In addition to providing for the material conditions of life, political education, and the maintenance of cultural traditions and practices, many women reflected upon this period as one in which they were provided with a new level of responsibility in accordance with FRETILIN's ideological position on gender equality. There was a sense that gender-based

⁸³ Merita de Jesus Marques, interview with the author, Dili, December 3, 2012.

⁸⁴ Domingas 'Micato' Fernandes Alves, interview with the author, Dili, July 25, 2013.

⁸⁵ Ilda Maria da Conceição, interview with the author, Dili, July 5, 2012.

⁸⁶ Maria de Fatima Kalsona, interview with the author, Dili, May 23, 2012.

⁸⁷ Maria Maia dos Reis, interview with the author, Dili, July 17, 2012.

⁸⁸ Domingas 'Micato' Fernandes Alves, in *Step by Step*, ed. Conway, 82.

roles and responsibilities were reformulated in the context of war, as the Indonesian military penetrated deeper into the territory and began to threaten the sustainability of the mountain-based societies. Ilda Maria da Conceição explained that because many of the men were on the front line holding guns, women often took on security responsibilities in the resistance bases: ‘they were also strong’, she remembered. Ilda explained that women often worked as security guards during the day, and in the evenings cooked for their husbands and looked after their children.⁸⁹ There were reports of women being provided with military training as preparation for an Indonesian attack; for example, Domingas ‘Micato’ Fernandes Alves remembered that she was given a pistol by a FALINTIL commander in Remexio because she often travelled alone on horseback. Not many women had guns, Micato explained, but because she had a prominent position in OPMT and travelled around a lot she was provided with a weapon for protection.⁹⁰ In Laura Soares Abrantes and Beba Sequeira’s collection of oral testimony, several women reported being trained in how to assemble and reassemble weapons, although they generally did not engage in battle. Ana Rosa Tilman, for example, remembered being told by FALINTIL commanders that she ‘should know how to disassemble and reassemble weapons’, so that she could join the armed front if needed.⁹¹ Madelana Bi Dau Soares similarly recalled being told that it was important for women to have basic training in weaponry, because ‘if all the men die, women will have to carry weapons to continue the war until we get independence’.⁹² Despite receiving basic training, there is little evidence to suggest that women formed a substantial portion of the armed resistance. Prior to the full-scale Indonesian invasion, there were several reports of a brigade of 100 women fighters under a woman commander near the border.⁹³ During the conflict, there were also isolated reports of women fighting: for example, in a 1978 interview Rogério Lobato, the FRETILIN Minister for Defence, told a correspondent from the Sydney-based *East Timor News Agency* that there were ‘thousands of women in the armed struggle’,⁹⁴ although this figure is likely to

⁸⁹ Ilda Maria da Conceição, interview with the author, Dili, July 5, 2012.

⁹⁰ Domingas ‘Micato’ Fernandes Alves, interview with the author, Dili, July 25, 2013.

⁹¹ Ana Rosa Tilman, “We May All Die, But if There is One Child Still Alive, This War Will be Our Victory,” in *Secrecy: The Key to Independence: It’s Better to Have No Title Than to Have No Nation*, ed. Laura Soares Abrantes and Beba Sequeira (Dili: Blue Mountains East Timor Sisters, 2010), 23.

⁹² Madelana Bi Dau Soares, “The Liberty of the Maubere People and the Struggle for Independence”, in *Ibid.*, 39.

⁹³ “ACFOA Report on Visit to ET,” Canberra, October 10, 1975, in CAA 81/137 Box 4, East Timor, University of Melbourne Archives; and Jolliffe, *East Timor*, 201.

⁹⁴ Interview with Rogério Lobato, “The Final Say Will be Fretilin,” Member of the Fretilin CC and Commander-General of Falintil, made in Europe earlier this year by a special correspondent of ETNA, *East Timor News* 27–28, March 9, 1978, 5.

be significantly exaggerated. A 1983 FRETILIN publication contained an iconic image of a line of East Timorese women holding guns, as depicted below:



Image: Female guerrilla fighters, 1983.⁹⁵

The photo was used to portray the image of women actively contributing to the armed resistance and was circulated widely, although its provenance is uncertain.⁹⁶ Although there are several well-known women who did become members of FALINTIL, such as Rosa ‘Bisoï’ de Camâra,⁹⁷ engaging in the armed struggle was not the experience of most East Timorese women and none of my interview participants reported that they had been members of FALINTIL’s rank-and-file.

The ideological position of OPMT, as outlined by Rosa ‘Muki’ Bonaparte Soares in 1975, envisaged that women would contribute to the conflict in broader ways than bearing arms. Proposing a broad vision of the dynamics of armed conflict, yet also simultaneously reasserting a gendered hierarchy of struggle, Muki wrote: ‘The participation of Timorese women in the fighting takes various forms: gather information about enemy movements, their fighting potential, and so on [...] To participate in combat does not just mean to take up arms, though this is superior [sic].’⁹⁸ Although many women actively participated in and administered programmes that structured everyday life in the resistance bases, they generally did not take up arms nor engage in combat. As such, there was a slight discrepancy between FRETILIN’s vision for gender equality and what occurred in practice. This discrepancy can

⁹⁵ In AMRT.

⁹⁶ Sara Niner, personal communication with the author, May 29, 2013.

⁹⁷ See Sara Niner, ‘Bisoï – A Veteran of Timor-Leste’s Independence Movement,’ in *Women in Southeast Asian Nationalist Movements*, ed. Sue Blackburn and Helen Ting (Singapore: NUS Press, 2013), 226–49.

⁹⁸ Bonaparte, ‘Women in East Timor,’ 7.

be explained, in part, by the increasingly difficult conditions of conflict and the extremely brief period available to enact such changes. I discuss these difficult conditions in the following section. In the resistance bases, the roles and responsibilities of East Timorese women were generally concerned with fulfilling the material needs of the mountain-based societies, and became increasingly structured around surviving the wartime conditions and evading attack. The nature of their contributions to the resistance struggle during the latter stages of the occupation built upon these initial ideas and roles, and the subsequent difficulties encountered by these ideas.

Living on the Move

A series of Indonesian military campaigns that took place from 1977–79, known as the ‘encirclement and annihilation’ campaigns,⁹⁹ entailed the intensification of aerial bombardments of the FRETILIN resistance bases and food sources by Indonesian forces, with the aim of separating the civilian population from the armed resistance.¹⁰⁰ The campaigns led to a high civilian death toll, from both direct attacks and from the starvation and sickness that resulted from the destruction of food sources. The CAVR found that the number of direct killings during the period from 1975–80 was the highest of the entire conflict, in addition to estimates of up to 100,000 deaths due to hunger and illness around this period.¹⁰¹ In the face of sustained attacks by the Indonesian military, the East Timorese population gradually abandoned the resistance bases and moved progressively eastward into smaller and less productive areas. This experience of life lived constantly on the move featured prominently in East Timorese women’s oral narratives of the period.

In recalling the military campaigns during this period, East Timorese women’s oral narratives moved quickly over time and space, as they described attempts to escape the Indonesian forces and to find food and shelter for themselves and their families. Emilita Mendes, for example, remembered a very difficult childhood in the mountains. ‘It was really difficult to find food, there was no time for me to play, no time to study, it wasn’t like a normal life like it is now [...] It was really, really difficult’, she remembered. She had strong memories of moving around constantly, ‘running from place to place’, and seeing lots of

⁹⁹ For a discussion of these campaigns, see John G. Taylor, “‘Encirclement and Annihilation’: The Indonesian Occupation of East Timor,” in *The Spectre of Genocide: Mass Murder in Historical Perspective*, ed. Robert Gellately and Ben Kiernan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 163–85.

¹⁰⁰ CAVR Report, 219–20.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 488.

people become ill and pass away.¹⁰² In a 1984 interview with Michele Turner, an East Timorese woman in exile, 'Edhina', remembered her experience of life in the mountains as one in which she was constantly on the move in an attempt to escape the Indonesian forces:

The Javanese kept attacking and dropping bombs and we were like animals running from one place to the other carrying our children going this way and that. We slept anywhere, in the rain, in the mud, even near the dead animals. The bombs would come and we would stand up and run again. On the way we ate anything growing, anything we could find. In the daytime we went into caves or under rocks to hide. We could come out at night to sleep in the open air and cook, make a hole and light a little fire without smoke, only coals.¹⁰³

The constant threat of capture and of death at the hands of the Indonesian military meant that daily life for women such as 'Edhina' lacked grounding in a physical place; she was constantly running and sleeping in different places, had to eat what was available to her, and to live almost in secret so as to avoid attracting attention. In my interview with Luisa Gonzaga, she remembered frequent attacks near the FRETILIN stronghold of Mount Matebian in 1978. She described the seemingly constant flow of bullets during an attack and the widespread fear that these attacks generated: 'the bullets were just like the leaves, you couldn't even look above', she remembered. 'You just stayed like this [*mimics sitting still*] and peed in your pants, and also just defecated in there. You couldn't do anything at all'. Luisa attributes her survival of the attacks to God and to the souls of her ancestors.

[W]e were lucky [that] God helped us. That's why I am still here today, and also [because of] the souls of my grandfathers' souls were helping us. I was helped by the souls of the elders to be alive, otherwise my parents would have to look for me in the beach side or somewhere else I don't know, if I sit alone and think of this, it always makes me almost cry.¹⁰⁴

Luisa's spirituality was important in helping her in times of suffering, demonstrating the way in which faith – both in the form of the Catholic Church and the traditional spiritual cosmos (*lulik*) – became such important sources of survival and hope for East Timorese people throughout the subsequent occupation, which I explore in more detail in Chapter Five. In my interview with Josefa Álvares Pereira Soares, she remembered that she initially ran to Soibada with her family when the Indonesian military invaded, 'but the war got longer and longer', so they ran to Fatuberlihu, where she obtained a prominent position with OPMT. As

¹⁰² Emilita Mendes, interview with the author, Liquica, July 12, 2012.

¹⁰³ 'Edhina', 'People and Animals Ran,' in *Telling: East Timor, Personal Testimonies 1942–1992*, ed. Michele Turner (Kensington: NSW University Press, 1992), 110.

¹⁰⁴ Luisa Gonzaga, interview with the author, Dili, June 24, 2012.

food became scarce and disease commonplace they ran to Natarbora, where mosquitos were prevalent and many people contracted malaria. In Natarbora, Josefa was able to plant a garden to grow food, but the Indonesian military attacked and they had to run away and leave it.¹⁰⁵

As food crops were destroyed and people were no longer able to live in settled areas where they could plant crops, they were forced to keep on the move for both safety and survival. Maria de Fatima Kalsona explained how they would have to leave their farms, food stocks, and the corn that they had just harvested, when the Indonesian military began to attack: ‘we had to leave it all so we could run away. If we did not leave these things the enemy would capture us and we would die’.¹⁰⁶ Teresinha ‘Jina’ de Jesus Oliveira similarly remembered that once the attacks started in her area, they had to run and leave all their food behind:

We moved to another place, a safe place, but it was not safe for a long time, sometimes we were there for one month and sometimes it was less than a month, depending on the situation, depending on the military. They were looking for us always and we always had to run to find another place ... we ran day and night.¹⁰⁷

Once they heard ‘the sound of guns’ they had to run, to leave immediately and move on to another place where they would stay ‘for a week, or two weeks’, if the situation remained calm. But ‘if you heard the sound of the guns again ... you had to run again’, Jina remembered.¹⁰⁸ Ana Maria de Jesus dos Santos similarly remembered that from 1978 the situation in the mountains was much more disrupted, there was no time to work as usual because you had to keep moving: ‘you didn’t care when it was night time [or] day time, you just had to keep running’.¹⁰⁹ Domingas dos Santos remembered her constant fear of the approaching military and the need to remain so quiet. ‘At night time’, she explained, ‘all of us would stay quiet’. She remembered: ‘We made sure that the smoke of the fire would not be visible to the Indonesians, if the Indonesian army saw the smoke, they would come straight away, a helicopter will come to find us’.¹¹⁰ The destruction of food sources meant that people were constantly on the move in an attempt to both find food, and to escape attack.

Images of dead and injured bodies featured in many of my interview participants’ memories of this period. Due to the necessity for constant movement to escape attack, there

¹⁰⁵ Josefa Álvares Pereira Soares, interview with the author, Dili, July 4, 2012.

¹⁰⁶ Maria de Fatima Kalsona, interview with the author, Dili, May 23, 2012.

¹⁰⁷ Teresinha ‘Jina’ de Jesus Oliveira, interview with the author, Liquica, June 3, 2012.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ana Maria de Jesus dos Santos, interview with the author, Liquica, July 14, 2012.

¹¹⁰ Domingas dos Santos, interview with the author, Liquica, June 10, 2012.

was often not enough time to bury the corpses. In my interview with Luisa Gonzaga, for example, she remembered walking from Tutuala to Mount Matebian. On the way, people just collapsed and died as they were walking. The others had to step on their corpses, she remembered, even if it was your mother or father, your husband or your children – it didn't matter, you just had to keep going because 'the enemy was coming'.¹¹¹ When someone died, they would 'just put [the corpse] inside a hole ... just left it and then kept moving', Luisa explained. She was deeply troubled by the fact that they were unable to bury the bodies, it disrupted her sense of dignity owed to the dead, but she explained: 'What could you do, [we] just left it to rot. You had no time to do it in the traditional way, you couldn't talk or have wine together because the time didn't permit it'.¹¹² Similarly, Mana Eu remembered that her father passed away when they were in the mountains. Although she was only a small child at the time, she remembered that they were unable to bury him properly – they just had to throw the body away, she explained.¹¹³ Domingas dos Santos told me that her mother had become sick when they were in the mountains, not because of a lack of food, but because so many of her children had died during the war:

She passed away in 1979. She had been sick when we were in the mountains. She was sick because most of her children had passed away in the mountains, only two of us were still alive. She was always thinking about them, so she got sick and passed away. Because in 1979 we were in the mountains, we had nothing, we did not have a coffin for her, we just covered her dead body with a *hadak* [platform made from bamboo] and then we buried her [...] I was the one who stayed by her side until her last breath.¹¹⁴

At the time, Domingas explained, she did not really understand what had happened because she was only a small child: she hadn't yet started school. However, she remembered that her mother 'cried before she left me forever, maybe she was sad because she had many children but only two of us [were] left'.¹¹⁵ In his discussion of modern and traditional customs in Timor-Leste, Damien Grenfell observes that 'remembering the dead is central to the order of the living' and is fundamental to maintaining a 'balance between the living and spirit worlds'.¹¹⁶ Although burying practices vary across the territory, a death is typically followed by a process of mourning, burial, and a combination of customary (*adat*) and Catholic belief

¹¹¹ Luisa Gonzaga, interview with the author, Dili, June 24, 2012.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Mana Eu, interview with the author, Dili, November 28, 2012.

¹¹⁴ Domingas dos Santos, interview with the author, Liquica, June 10, 2012.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Damian Grenfell, "Remembering the Dead from the Customary to the Modern in Timor-Leste," *Local-Global* 11 (2012): 86–7.

practices to remember the dead. The large number of deaths and the separation of families that resulted from the period of conventional war had an enduring effect upon East Timorese social and cultural life.

Alongside the death of family members, the bodily experience of pregnancy and birthing practices were also reconfigured within the extreme conditions of dislocation and life on the move. In my interview with Luisa Gonzaga, she explained that due to the constant movement it was sometimes difficult not only to find water to drink, but also to use during the birthing process. She recalled a time when her sister-in-law became pregnant in the mountains and had to give birth under a coconut tree in Lore, but they didn't have any soap or boiling water, which was needed to wash the baby and the mother. Instead, they had to use sea water.¹¹⁷ For Josefa Álvares Pereira Soares, the situation in the mountains presented difficulties in terms of the health of mothers and babies. She gave birth to twin girls, but they both passed away – one at six months, and the other at seven months. Josefa explained their deaths in terms of the fact that she, as a mother, was 'not able to protect them' by providing sufficient medicine after they contracted malaria. Afterwards, Josefa explained, she just had to 'keep going', again stressing the necessity for constant movement, no matter what happened, in order to evade attack.¹¹⁸ In a 1989 interview with Michele Turner, Fatima Gusmao explained that her periods were irregular in the mountains 'because of all the disruption' and so, for a while, she didn't realise that she was pregnant. Her aunt delivered the baby, but the labour was long and they did not have any medicine to ease the pain. Eventually the baby was born, but immediately 'he went pale and dark, pale and dark. We try [sic] to massage, rub his heart, but he was too long without oxygen I think [...] He died after two hours'. Fatima became pregnant again and gave birth to her second baby in 1978. She was able to produce milk and, because some other women were not, she ended up feeding four babies to try and keep them alive.¹¹⁹ Later, Fatima's baby contracted diarrhoea and became ill: 'We had not eaten for many days', she explained. She remembered that it took her a long time to understand that her baby was dying: 'We sit for a long time and slowly I understand he is dead', she recalled. 'His arms are locked tight around my neck. It was hard to separate us'.¹²⁰ Another of my interview participants, Bilela, remembered when her baby was one month old and she was hiding in a hole during an Indonesian attack. She knew that there would be snakes in the hole and she could smell them when she entered, but she still hid

¹¹⁷ Luisa Gonzaga, interview with the author, Dili, June 24, 2012.

¹¹⁸ Josefa Álvares Pereira Soares, interview with the author, Dili, July 4, 2012.

¹¹⁹ Fatima Gusmao, "That Body on the Water Spring," in *Telling*, ed. Turner, 132–3.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 136.

there. She believed that the snake must have understood that it was a war situation and wouldn't bite them. Despite the fact that she was able to produce milk, the baby wouldn't drink and, as a result, the baby died.¹²¹ For women, the experience of life constantly on the move presented difficulties in terms of their capacity to birth, feed, and look after their children.

The intensification of Indonesian military attacks highlighted internal divisions within the FRETILIN leadership about what to do with the large number of civilians living in the interior. The majority of the party maintained that the civilians should not be separated from the resistance, but the 'encirclement and annihilation' campaigns presented new challenges for sustaining the mountain-based societies. The FRETILIN leader, Francisco Xavier do Amaral, advocated the surrender of civilians to the Indonesian military, especially children and the elderly, for their safety and to ease the burden placed on the fighters in the mountains. These conflicts were never resolved within the resistance itself, despite the deposition of Amaral in September 1977,¹²² and instead ended when the intensification of Indonesian military offensives led to the destruction of the resistance bases and the death, capture, or surrender of the civilian population by the end of 1978. In the below section, I outline what happened when the population in the mountains surrendered to the Indonesian forces, and suggest some of the ways in which the violence and displacement of invasion and conflict led to a restructuring of everyday East Timorese social and familial life.

Surrender and Resettlement

The Indonesian military offensives of 1977–79 took their toll upon the civilian population and the East Timorese resistance. After the fall of the FRETILIN stronghold of Mount Matebian in November 1978, an estimated 300,000 civilians and resistance fighters came down from the mountain and surrendered to Indonesian authorities.¹²³ In the early stages of surrender, there was no infrastructure in place to receive the surrendering populations and people were temporarily placed in schools, shops, military barracks, or were held out in the open. By 1978, dozens of transit camps had been established across the territory,¹²⁴ with the

¹²¹ Bilela, interview with the author, Baucau, August 3, 2013.

¹²² Extracts from a speech by Nicolau Lobato dos Reis over *Radio Maubere*, September 14, 1977, in "Permanent Committee of FRETILIN CC Statement," *East Timor News* 16, September 22, 1977, 2.

¹²³ Indonesian Red Cross, "List of People Returned in Whole of East Timor – Per Last December 1978," in Part 6. Portuguese Timor – Visits of Australians to Portuguese Timor, A1838, 3038/10/11/2, NAA.

¹²⁴ Although the CAVR was unable to compile a complete list, it found that there were dozens of these camps in the territory from 1977–79. CAVR Report, 1229.

purported objective of processing those who had surrendered before they were resettled in Indonesian-controlled areas. In the transit camps, people were registered and interrogated, remaining in the camps for anywhere between several weeks to several years. By the early 1980s, most people were allowed to return to their home villages or to resettlement areas under Indonesian control. In some cases, resettlement areas were located in the same site where transit procedures had been carried out. Throughout this period, the Indonesian military continued to use displacement as a strategy to control the population and to separate the civilian population from the remaining resistance fighters in the mountains. In this section, I discuss the experiences of East Timorese women after they surrendered to the Indonesian military, life in the transit camps and, eventually, their return to towns and villages under Indonesian control.

After many months of life constantly on the move to evade attack, most people were in a very vulnerable condition when they surrendered. Their suffering was exacerbated by the Indonesian military's ban on international agencies entering the territory, in force until 1979.¹²⁵ Once they were permitted access, international organisations such as the Australian Council for Overseas Aid heavily condemned the desperate situation inside the camps, where they observed that the population was not receiving adequate food or health services, and were subject to constant surveillance.¹²⁶ Maria Teresa Santos, who escaped the territory in 1986 to Australia, later wrote about her experiences in the transit camps and the difficulties that she encountered:

At the concentration camp life was difficult, we suffered from starvation, disease and malnutrition. Our movements were strictly controlled. We weren't free, we were living in constant fear. And those who left the camp in search for food were killed. No one was allowed to leave the camp. We spent at least six months in the concentration camp.¹²⁷

These observations resonated with experiences described by my interview participants. Maria de Fatima Kalsona, for example, told me that she was shot during her capture on 14 January 1978. She explained: 'I still remember the date until now. I still remember when the bullet hit me, I cannot forget this'.¹²⁸ After being captured, Maria was taken by the Indonesian military

¹²⁵ CAVR Report, 233.

¹²⁶ Australian Council for Overseas Aid, *Aid and East Timor* (ACFOA: Canberra, 1979), 1–2.

¹²⁷ Maria Teresa Santos, "Personal Experiences, Thoughts and Views about East Timor," in *It's Time to Lead the Way: Timorese People Speak about Exile, Resistance and Identity*, ed. East Timor Relief Association (Collingwood: East Timor Relief Association, 1996), 24.

¹²⁸ Maria de Fatima Kalsona, interview with the author, Dili, May 23, 2012.

to a transit camp in Poelet, where she remained for one week, before being taken to Alas.¹²⁹ During that time, she did not receive any treatment for her injury and it became infected. Maria felt that she was being deprived of medicine by Indonesian forces as punishment.¹³⁰ Another of my interview participants, Teresa ‘Alita’ Verdial de Araujo, remembered spending time in a transit camp as a small child. When Indonesia invaded, Alita and her family had fled across the border to West Timor. They stayed there for several years before returning to their hometown of Maliana. When I asked Alita about growing up in Maliana, one of her most vivid memories was of staying in a ‘big camp’ when they returned to the territory, with lots of other families, for about three years. Of life in the camp as a small child, Alita told me: ‘So, one [thing] I still remember is every night, people [were] crying because someone died. That’s every day. When we played ahh around, we always saw the ... dead bodies [...] almost every hour, if not children, adults ... because of many diseases at that time, many people died’.¹³¹ In addition to these deaths, there were many reports of sexual violence. For example, a number of radio messages that were transmitted by FRETILIN from inside the territory reported brutal rapes being perpetrated by Indonesian forces. A woman from Suai told a FRETILIN member in February 1977, for example, that her daughter had died ‘because she had been brutally raped by an Indonesian official’.¹³² A subsequent collection of FRETILIN messages reported that people still remaining in the camps were being ‘raped with impunity’, and that these kinds of attacks were ‘known to the whole population of the camp’.¹³³ These reports demonstrate some of the ways in which women’s bodies were targets for military violence.

Individuals who were suspected by the military of holding a prominent position in the mountains, to have links to the resistance movement, or to have relatives who were still fighting in the mountains, were often imprisoned and interrogated for extended periods of time. I explore these experiences in more detail in Chapter Three. Some people – mainly men – were co-opted to participate in campaigns that aimed at rounding up the remaining resistance fighters in the mountains, such the June 1981 Fence of Legs (*Operasi Kikis* or *Pagar Betis*) campaign.¹³⁴ Josefa Álvares Pereira Soares told me that her husband had been

¹²⁹ According to the CAVR Report, there was a transit camp in Fatubessi (Hatolia, Ermera) and two in Alas (Manufahi), Uma Metan (Manufahi), and Lebos (Bobonoro). CAVR Report, 1235.

¹³⁰ Maria de Fatima Kalsona, interview with the author, Dili, May 23, 2012.

¹³¹ Interview with Teresa ‘Alita’ Verdial de Araujo, interview with the author, Dili, June 21, 2012.

¹³² “Summary of Radio Messages from East Timor: February–June 1977,” *Timor Information Service* 20/21, October 1977, 11.

¹³³ “Information No. 3, October 1985,” in Box 25: 138 Fretilin Reports, East Timor Collection, ACFOA Human Rights Office, CHART.

¹³⁴ CAVR Report, 960.

forcibly recruited as an Operation Assistant (*Tenaga Bantuan Operasi* – TBO) in 1979, until he managed to escape to the mountains in 1983.¹³⁵ By 1982–83, however, most people were allowed to leave the transit camps and to return to their original villages, new villages, or resettlement areas under Indonesian control. Indonesian military documents captured by FRETILIN from 1982 and published in international solidarity newsletters outlined the objective of cutting off ties between the guerrillas in the mountains and the civilian population, by placing people in these so-called secure locations.¹³⁶ People were transferred to various locations in an attempt to break up resistance support networks, including Ataúro Island, and I discuss transfer to and imprisonment on Ataúro in Chapter Three. In official Indonesian government documents, however, such as the 1984 publication, *East Timor After Integration*, population resettlement was framed in terms of the increasing capacity of the state to attend to the welfare of its citizens. Previous patterns of settlement within the territory, the publication explained, had resulted in ‘isolated mountainous areas in total neglect’. New resettlement areas were established ‘in fertile agricultural areas’ and contained housing complexes, schools, village meeting halls with a television, and fresh drinking water. These developments, it was further explained, were intended ‘to bring about a gradual change in their ways of life’, as well as to increase food production and distribution, and to reunite families.¹³⁷ In addition to resettlement, another demographic programme implemented in East Timor under the aegis of wider Indonesian national development was the transmigration (*transmigrasi*) programme, or the transfer of people from overpopulated to allegedly underpopulated islands in Indonesia. I discuss these developments further in Chapter Four.

Family and Everyday Life

The militarised conflict and violence that came about as a result of the Indonesian invasion of East Timor led to widespread displacement of the East Timorese population, a large number of deaths, the separation of families, and the forced restructuring of East Timorese society. Almost all my interview participants lost family members across the course of the conflict, many during the period of conventional war. As a result of these deaths, extended family members took on responsibility for looking after children, such as Domingas dos Santos’

¹³⁵ Josefa Álvares Pereira Soares, interview with the author, Dili, July 4, 2012.

¹³⁶ Military Resort Command (Korem) 164, Wira Dharma, Intelligence Section, “Instruction Manual: The Way for Babinsa or Team Pembina Desa to Expose/Break Up GPK Support Networks,” August 30, 1982, trans. reproduced in *TAPOL Bulletin* 58 (July 1983), 3.

¹³⁷ Department of Information, Republic of Indonesia, *East Timor After Integration* (Jakarta: Department of Information, 1984), 138–41.

aunts who looked after her following the death of her mother in the mountains, which I described earlier in the chapter.¹³⁸ Similarly, Mana Eu explained that both her parents had passed away in the mountains after the Indonesian invasion. ‘By the time we got back [from the mountains], everything had changed and we started to have a different life’, she explained. Afterwards, Mana Eu and her siblings had to live with relatives.¹³⁹ Many women’s responsibilities within the family also increased, as they needed to undertake both household and agricultural labour, as well as act as breadwinners for their families after their husbands passed away or were imprisoned. Many women described extended family networks as sources of courage, adaptability, and resilience during these extremely difficult times.

The period of conventional war and life in the mountains saw death, displacement, and separation effect many East Timorese families. Indonesian military campaigns resulted in a steady surrender of people from the mountains, although this did not always mean that families remained together. In my interview with Yolanda Maria Conceição Chelvés, she explained that she had surrendered to the Indonesian military and had started attending school by 1978, but that her mother had still not surrendered and remained in the mountains. It was one of the consequences of the war, Yolanda explained, that families became separated like this. Although she was looked after by her father and grandparents, Yolanda still missed her mother: ‘I really needed my mum’s care, love from my mum, but in fact I couldn’t [get it]. I only got it from my father and my grandparents’, she told me.¹⁴⁰ Other women, whose husbands were still fighting in the mountains or later escaped back to the mountains after surrendering, were required to support their families alone. After her husband escaped back to the mountains in 1983, for example, Josefa Álvares Pereira Soares looked after her two children alone: ‘they were still very young’, she remembered, ‘I was alone to take care of the kids’.¹⁴¹

After surrendering, those who were suspected of having links with the resistance were often imprisoned and interrogated for extended periods of time. As a result, the wives of men who were in prison would often be required to support the family. Loudres ‘Merita’ Alves Araujo met her husband at Sang Tai Hoo prison in Dili after they had both come down from the mountains and surrendered to the Indonesian forces. Merita and her husband were both eventually released, but then subsequently reimprisoned and interrogated again in 1980 after an attack in Dili by the resistance. Although Merita was released soon after, her husband was

¹³⁸ Domingas dos Santos, interview with the author, Liquica, June 10, 2012.

¹³⁹ Mana Eu, interview with the author, Dili, November 28, 2012.

¹⁴⁰ Yolanda Maria Conceição Chelvés, interview with the author, Liquica, July 15, 2012.

¹⁴¹ Josefa Álvares Pereira Soares, interview with the author, Dili, July 4, 2012.

taken to an unknown location. ‘I was really desperate because economically I had no way to support myself’, Merita explained, ‘I was really depressed and felt under pressure because I had no idea where my husband was’. He was eventually brought back to a prison in Dili, covered in bruises, and remained there for five years while Merita was forced to continue to work to provide for her family.¹⁴² Elisa da Silva dos Santos explained that it was ‘all the women and children who were the ones who suffered the most’ during the conflict. Even after she and her husband surrendered to the Indonesian military, her husband would often go out and ‘do political work’ and the military would come by her house to ask where he was. ‘As a woman, I really felt that I had to overcome this situation’, she explained, ‘That [situation] was really difficult for me’.¹⁴³ The years of conflict, violence, and dislocation severely disrupted East Timorese social life and familial relations. The dispersal of families and the large number of deaths during this period meant that women often took on extended roles within social and cultural life, and wider networks became increasingly important as sources for support and survival.

Conclusion

One of the immediate and widespread effects of the Indonesian military invasion of East Timor was the large-scale displacement that occurred as the military attempted to gain control over the territory and its people. After a sustained period of life in the mountains, the resistance lost ground to more aggressive Indonesian military offensives, which rendered it impossible for the hundreds of thousands of civilians to continue living in areas under FRETILIN control. This intensification of Indonesian military campaigns from 1977 resulted in a high civilian death toll, the loss of food supplies, and the almost total destruction of the resistance. People were constantly on the move in an attempt to find food and to escape attack. By late 1978, the majority of the civilian population in the mountains had either been captured or had surrendered. They were then placed in transit camps to be processed and interrogated, before ultimately being transferred to Indonesian-controlled towns and villages.

In my interview with Loudres ‘Merita’ Alves Araujo, a prominent member of OPMT, she identified this time in the mountains in the years following the invasion as the defining feature of women’s experiences of the Indonesian occupation. From this experience, Merita explained, women had gained ideas about how and why to fight for independence; they

¹⁴² Loudres ‘Merita’ Alves Araujo, interview with the author, Dili, July 6, 2012.

¹⁴³ Elisa da Silva dos Santos, interview with the author, Dili, June 27, 2012.

developed ‘a different perspective’ from those who had not undergone this experience.¹⁴⁴ In addition to losing multiple family members in the mountains, women such as Merita also had to subsequently endure the extreme difficulties of being associated with the Security Disturbance Movement (*Gerakan Pengacau Keamanan – GPK*), the name generally used by the Indonesian military to refer to the resistance or those suspected of having links to the resistance. The critical experience of life in the mountains provided many women, those who had been participants as well as many in the wider community, with a reservoir of political and cultural sentiment that could be drawn upon both to sustain and make meaningful their resistance to the violence and everyday depredations of the subsequent period.

The conflict that ensued when the Indonesian military invaded East Timor in December 1975 uprooted and recast the lives of hundreds of thousands of East Timorese men, women, and children. As I argued in the Introduction, this event constituted a violent rupture within the daily lives of East Timorese people. In this chapter, I have suggested that the period of conventional war and life in the mountains (1975–79) was formative in shaping East Timorese women’s subsequent experiences of the occupation, by firmly establishing their political commitment to a nationalist liberation. In addition, the period also saw the normalisation of a high level of violence and terror as defining characteristics of Indonesian military rule. In the next chapter, I explore East Timorese women’s experiences of violence after the period of conventional war and life in the mountains had ended, when the majority of the civilian population had either surrendered or been captured, and placed under the control of the Indonesian military.

¹⁴⁴ Loudres ‘Merita’ Alves Araujo, interview with the author, Dili, July 6, 2012.

Chapter Three: Women and the Violence of Military Occupation

Following the December 1975 invasion of East Timor, the Indonesian National Armed Forces (*Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia* – ABRI) used violent methods to achieve the political objectives of pacification and integration. Once the military had established control over the people and territory of East Timor, the Indonesian government set up a Sub-Regional Military Command (*Komando Resort Militer* – Korem) 164 / *Wira Dharma*, as well as installing non-commissioned village guidance officers (*babinsa*) to administer the territory. By these actions, the Government of Indonesia incorporated East Timor within the territorial command structure already in place throughout the Republic. Through this attempt by the state to both control the territory and manage the population, therefore, the governing structures and administrative processes common to the New Order regime would infiltrate the daily lives and homes of East Timorese people. Although there would be a number of shifts in the policies governing the Indonesian military administration of East Timor, throughout the occupation, violence would remain a constant feature of daily life. This violence resulted, in part, from the heavily militarised nature of the state structure imposed upon East Timor by Indonesia. Yet in East Timor, in an attempt to limit sustained expressions of opposition and dissent, and in the face of a surprisingly persistent level of widespread resistance, the Indonesian military additionally used the direct application and the threat of violence as administrative tools.¹ In doing so, the systems of regulation, surveillance, and social control, constructed and maintained by the Indonesian state, here precipitated widespread fear, resentment, and mistrust on the part of the population of occupied East Timor.

This chapter explores East Timorese women's experiences of violence during the Indonesian military occupation after the conclusion of the conventional war in 1979, when the majority of the civilian population had retreated from the mountains and were resettled in areas under Indonesian control. It builds upon the analysis of Chapter Two, both chronologically and thematically, in which I described the Indonesian invasion as an event that constituted a violent rupture in the daily lives of East Timorese people. As the Indonesian military consolidated and extended its rule over the territory, the nature and form of violence changed. My intention in this chapter is not primarily to catalogue these violations as such. This is, of course, an important endeavour, and one which the final report of the Commission

¹ Shubh Mathur, "This Garden Uprooted. Gendered Violence, Suffering and Resistance in Indian-Administered Kashmir," in *Gender, Power, and Military Occupations: Asia Pacific and the Middle East since 1945*, ed. Christine de Matos and Rowena Ward (New York: Routledge, 2012), 217.

for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation (*Comissão de Acolhimento, Verdade e Reconciliação de Timor Leste* – CAVR) has made significant headway. I draw upon the Commission's findings, however, to develop and contextualise the material raised by my interview participants.² I explore the various modalities of violence that impacted upon people's lives and the overall dynamics of the occupation, as well as the particular narrative strategies used by my interview participants to tell their stories. As such, I initially examine direct acts of violence that effected women, in the form of interrogation, detention, torture and ill-treatment, and the particular strategies that East Timorese women use when recalling these experiences. I then consider more subtle forms of violence, such as the implementation of systems of surveillance and social control, which included compulsory self-reporting (*wajib lapor*) and the control of physical movement, as well as the perception of continually being watched, described by my interview participants as 'to have an eye put on them' (*haree tuir-tuir* or *tau matan*). I explore how the Indonesian military used both the direct application and the threat of violence, particularly sexual violence, in an attempt to assert control and to enforce the politics of the New Order in East Timor.

Direct Violence

From the initial days of the Indonesian invasion, reports emerged from inside the territory of the specific targeting of East Timorese women by the Indonesian military for direct killings and acts of sexual violence. In Chapter Two, I discussed some of the tactics deployed by Indonesian troops as they began incursions into the territory, including the brutal treatment of women on the initial days of the invasion. I suggested that some of this violence was specifically aimed at FRETILIN members and their families, as part of a policy of targeted terror against the resistance. For example, the targeting of Rosa 'Muki' Bonaparte, the Secretary of OPMT, and Isabel Barreto, the wife of prominent FRETILIN leader, Nicolau Lobato, demonstrated the treatment of politically active women by the Indonesian military.³ The harsh treatment meted out to political figures and their families can also be seen as an attempt by the Indonesian military to terrify the broader population into submission, by demonstrating that resistance to Indonesian rule would bring about great suffering to

² Commission for Reception, Truth, and Reconciliation in Timor-Leste (CAVR), *Chega! The Final Report of the Timor-Leste Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation, Vol. 1* (Jakarta: KPG in cooperation with STP-CAVR, 2013).

³ "Statement by Jose Ramos-Horta, Member of the Central Committee of Fretilin, and Minister for External Relations and Information of the Government of Democratic Republic of East Timor," April 2, 1976, in AMRT.

individuals and their families. Civilians were often subject to detention or torture upon their surrender or capture in the mountains, but many also subsequently experienced ongoing interrogations or close monitoring due to their alleged affiliation with the resistance.

This section explores the experiences of these women, initially by looking at memories of arrest, interrogation, and imprisonment. I outline which women, why, where, and how they were targeted, as well as their treatment during periods of incarceration. I then focus on what was, in this context, a gender-specific violation – sexual violence – and discuss some of the narrative strategies used by my interview participants and other women when describing these experiences. In doing so, I provide a detailed picture of the form, nature, and prevalence of sexual violence perpetrated by Indonesian forces upon East Timorese women. This section, therefore, makes a case for the violent nature of the Indonesian military and the gendered forms of terror and violence practiced by the occupying regime.

Interrogation and Imprisonment

By 1978, a large portion of the civilian population had retreated from the mountains. As I discussed in Chapter Two, upon surrender, people were held in transit camps where they often had inadequate access to food and medical supplies, and experienced constant surveillance at the hands of the Indonesian military. As a result of these conditions, large numbers of the population perished. Some people were then released from the camps to live in towns and villages under Indonesian control, while others experienced ongoing imprisonment and interrogation, often in inadequate conditions and without trial. These individuals were often targeted because of their alleged affiliation with the Security Disturbance Movement (*Gerakan Pengacau Keamanan* – GPK), the generic name used by the Indonesian state to refer to uncooperative groups throughout the archipelago.⁴ Women were targeted for interrogation and imprisonment because of two reasons: they had, or were suspected of having, a position of responsibility in the mountains; or they were the relative, usually the mother or wife, of someone who held a position of authority within the political structure of FRETILIN. For example, Genoveva da Costa Martins believes that her imprisonment after being captured in Ermera in October 1979 was primarily because she was

⁴ See Geoffrey Robinson's discussion of army operational plans and training manuals for East Timor. In Geoffrey Robinson, *"If You Leave Us Here, We Will Die": How Genocide Was Stopped in East Timor* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2009), 51. The term GPK was also used to describe West Papua's Free Papua Movement (*Organisasi Papua Merdeka* – OMM). See Matt Davies, *Indonesia's War Over Aceh: Last Stand on Mecca's Porch* (Oxon: Routledge, 2006), 26.

the widow of the revolutionary poet, Francisco Borja da Costa. In her interview for the Living Memory Project, Genoveva remembered: ‘I was very persecuted, principally because I was Borja’s wife and when I was captured ... I was immediately singled out, grabbed and put in prison for eight months. And, evidently, being the wife of a leader I was maltreated from the start’.⁵ Some women appear to have been targeted more arbitrarily, such as Loudres ‘Merita’ Alves Araujo, who suggested that she was singled out for imprisonment upon coming down from the mountains in July 1978 simply because she looked physically healthy and well-fed, and therefore the military suspected that she must be the wife of a commander or someone of similar importance. Merita was subsequently interrogated in Ilimano, before being taken to Dili and imprisoned at the Sang Tai Hoo interrogation centre until December, when she was moved to the Farol prison.⁶ Not all of my interview participants said that they were treated poorly upon surrender: Teresinha ‘Jina’ de Jesus Oliveira explained that after she was captured the military treated her ‘well’, despite the fact that she was interrogated for one month about her experiences in the mountains, her knowledge of FRETILIN, and the structure of the resistance.⁷ As Indonesian control was consolidated from the early 1980s, suspicion of active participation in the resistance movement, or the indirect implication of individuals via presumed personal connections, would become the primary reasons for the targeting of women for interrogation and detention by the Indonesian military.

A set of military manuals issued to Indonesian troops serving in East Timor outlined the processes for interrogation and imprisonment. The documents were captured by the resistance on 30 December 1982 and passed on to international solidarity and human rights organisations, such as the United Kingdom-based human rights organisation, TAPOL, and Amnesty International. The documents were then translated and reproduced by these organisations, and disseminated internationally.⁸ Although Indonesian officials repeatedly cast doubt upon the authenticity of the documents, Amnesty International claimed that experts on Indonesia had examined the documents and found them to be genuine and authentic.⁹ The manuals covered a range of strategic problems, including how to break up resistance support networks, systems of security in resettlement towns and villages, and interrogation procedures. One of the manuals, ‘On Torture, and How to Keep It Secret’,

⁵ Genoveva da Costa Martins, interview in “The Living Memory Project.”

⁶ Loudres ‘Merita’ Alves Araujo, interview with the author, Dili, July 6, 2012.

⁷ Teresinha ‘Jina’ de Jesus Oliveira, interview with the author, Liquica, June 3, 2012.

⁸ See, for example, *TAPOL Bulletin* 58 Special Supplement (July 1983); and Amnesty International, *East Timor: Violations of Human Rights: Extrajudicial Executions, “Disappearances,” Torture, and Political Imprisonment, 1975–1984*, ASA 21/16/85 (London: Amnesty International Publications, 1985), 11–13.

⁹ Amnesty International, *East Timor*, 12.

explicitly laid out the reason for the interrogation of prisoners: primarily, in order to obtain information about the whereabouts and methods of operation of those fighting in the mountains. The manual explained that while force, violence, and drawing ‘hasty conclusions’ must be avoided, violence was permitted ‘in certain circumstances when the person being interrogated is having difficulty telling the truth (gives evasive replies)’. ‘If it proves necessary to use violence,’ the manual instructed, ‘make sure that there are no people around ... to see what is happening, so as not to arouse people’s antipathy’.¹⁰ These documents provide a rare insight into official Indonesian military processes and instructions in East Timor. In general, these instructions accorded with the experiences of prisoners who were captured, interrogated, and imprisoned, in the early years of the occupation.

These processes would often commence with individuals being brought to an initial place of interrogation. After the Indonesian parliament passed legislation that attempted to integrate East Timor into the Republic of Indonesia on 17 July 1976,¹¹ military commands and police stations were established across the territory. Prisoners would often be held initially at the Sub-District Military Command (*Komando Rayon Militer* –KORAMIL) or District Military Command (*Komando Distrik Militer* – KODIM) station,¹² after which time they might be released or transferred to permanent places of detention. Prisoners were often moved around between detention centres many times in an attempt to isolate them from their family and friends, and people were often interrogated and imprisoned multiple times throughout the course of the occupation. For example, Luisa Gonzaga explained that when she was arrested in Mount Matebian in 1978 she was initially taken back to her hometown of Tutuala, and then transferred to Los Palos, before being taken by boat to Dili, where she was moved between three separate holding places.¹³ The main permanent holding centres for my interview participants were the Comarca Prison in Dili, Becora Prison in Dili, Sang Tai Hoo (an old Chinese shop) in Dili, Hotel Flamboyan in Baucau (now known as the Pousada Hotel), or on Ataúro Island, which was a holding centre for an estimated 4,000 to 6,000 people, mainly women and children, from 1980 until late 1984.¹⁴ Ataúro Island was a unique

¹⁰ Military Region Command XVI Udayana Military Resort Command (Korem) 164 Wira Dharma, “On Torture, and How to Keep It Secret,” July 1982, trans. and reproduced in *TAPOL Bulletin* 58 (July 1983), 7.

¹¹ “Article 1, Law 7/1976, the Legislation of the Integration of East Timor into the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia and the Proclamation of the Province of East Timor,” July 17, 1976, in *East Timor Law Journal*, http://www.eastimorlawjournal.org/Indonesian_Laws_regarding_East_Timor/indolaw7of76integratingtimor.html.

¹² For an analysis of the role of the Indonesian army in that country’s politics, see Harold Crouch, *The Army and Politics in Indonesia*, rev. ed. (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1978).

¹³ Luisa Gonzaga, interview with the author, Dili, June 24, 2012.

¹⁴ CAVR Report, 1274.

site for long-term internment and collective punishment due to its isolation from the mainland, and I discuss experiences of life on this prison island in more detail shortly.

Interrogation processes varied across the territory and period, but usually included multiple questioning sessions, as well as various forms of intimidation and insults. Prisoners were often asked questions about the politics of FRETILIN, the leadership structure of the resistance, the location of resistance fighters, and the weapon count of the fighters. These lines of questioning reveal particular concerns of the Indonesian military with regard to FRETILIN's activities and ideology. For example, Loudres 'Merita' Alves Araujo, who was imprisoned in Sang Tai Hoo prison in Dili from July 1978 to February 1979, remembered being asked questions related to the politics of FRETILIN, such as: 'What did you do in the jungle? Is FRETILIN communist?'. Other questions referred more specifically to alleged deviant communist practices, such as, 'Is it true that in FRETILIN, one man can have two or three wives at the same time? Can a man freely have sex with another man's wife?'.¹⁵ In her Living Memory Project interview, Madalena Soares similarly recalled being told that 'the men fighting in the forest were our lovers'.¹⁶ In a similar incident, Luciana da Costa, remembered being told by the military to, 'Go naked, do a striptease dance and practice communist actions', in a clear reference to perceptions of the immorality and sexual deviance of FRETILIN women.¹⁷ These practices are suggestive of the Indonesian mythologising of what they saw as FRETILIN's atheist outlook and immoral practices, which were perceived as an intolerable affront to New Order gender norms and notions of respectability.

These kinds of concerns on the part of the Indonesian military also perhaps evoke the New Order regime's more general depiction of communist women as a threat to morality, which emerged in response to perceived actions of the Indonesian Women's Movement (*Gerakan Wanita Indonesia* – Gerwani) in 1965.¹⁸ As such, these instances of interrogation can be seen as situated within a continuum of the policing of women's bodies across the archipelago under the New Order regime. Saskia Wieringa, for example, has described the way in which a 'campaign of sexual slander' was perpetrated by the military in Indonesia, involving claims that Gerwani women had killed and castrated seven generals at Lubang Buaya following the coup attempt in 1965, as well as engaged in sexualised practices around

¹⁵ Loudres 'Merita' Alves Araujo, interview with the author, Dili, July 6, 2012.

¹⁶ Madalena Soares, interview in "The Living Memory Project."

¹⁷ Luciana da Costa, "Planning to Control Timor-Leste for 24 Years," in *Secrecy: The Key to Independence: It's Better to Have No Title Than to Have No Nation*, ed. Laura Soares Abrantes and Beba Sequeira (Dili: Blue Mountains East Timor Sisters, 2010), 80–1.

¹⁸ See Saskia Wieringa, "The Politicisation of Gender Relations in Indonesia: The Indonesian Women's Movement and Gerwani until the New Order State" (Ph.D., University of Amsterdam, 1995).

their dead bodies.¹⁹ For Steven Drakeley, the Lubang Buaya myth was ‘a black propaganda campaign which luridly and highly effectively detailed alleged crimes [...] against the Indonesian nation and state, against God, and against the normative Indonesian cosmic and social order’.²⁰ I further explore New Order ideas about femininity and sexuality, and the way in which this ideology shaped the infrastructure of military occupation in East Timor, in Chapter Four.

For many of my interview participants, these questions were received with a combination of confusion and insult. Loudres ‘Merita’ Alves Araujo, for example, explained that she did not know how to answer many of the questions that were posed to her, and that her understanding of FRETILIN’s politics was very different to the assumptions proposed by her interrogators. She explained:

What I know is that FRETILIN is a movement that worked for the liberation of people from the colonial system and from the Indonesian occupation so that people can have a good life, a new life, and also ensure that people make decisions through a democratic process – that’s the idea of FRETILIN. So the aim is to teach the people to get national liberation so that Timor can be free from Portuguese colonialism and Indonesian occupation, and enable Timor to be a free country [sic].²¹

Merita’s emphasis upon the ‘democratic process’ advocated by FRETILIN evokes Clinton Fernandes’ argument that the Indonesian military was threatened by idea of political activity at the village level, as they did not want to see this tendency replicated in the rest of the archipelago.²² Developed by General Ali Murtopo, deputy head of the State Intelligence Coordinating Body (*Badan Kordinasi Inteligen* – BAKIN) and head of the Special Operations Command (*Operasi Khusus* – OPSUS), which set up the operation to invade East Timor in 1975, the policy of a ‘floating mass’ or ‘people who are not permanently tied to membership of any political party’ had been promoted and maintained throughout the New Order period. Aimed at ‘freeing the people from political manipulation’ and from ‘political party allegiances’, the people were not to ‘spend their valuable time and energy in the political struggles of parties and groups’ but instead, were to ‘be occupied wholly with

¹⁹ Saskia Eleonora Wieringa, “Sexual Slander and the 1965/66 Mass Killings in Indonesia: Political and Methodological Considerations,” *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 41, no. 4 (2011): 551.

²⁰ Steven Drakeley, “Lubang Buaya: Myth, Misogyny and Massacre,” *Nebula* 4, no. 4 (2007): 12.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Fernandes, *The Independence of East Timor*, 25.

development efforts'.²³ The emphasis upon uncovering and destroying any expression of political consciousness, including notions of sexual freedom, appears to have been a central part of the military's early interrogation practices in East Timor.

Prisoners were often interrogated for extended periods, when they would be asked the same questions time and time again.²⁴ Many were unable to speak the Indonesian language and required the assistance of an interpreter. Sometimes, East Timorese civilian auxiliaries (*hansip*) conducted the interrogation sessions, and these individuals were often the most feared interrogators. Indeed, through the mechanism of civil-military cooperation, officially justified by the military doctrine known as 'People's total defence and security system', but which Geoffrey Robinson describes as 'a euphemism for the policy of compelling civilians to participate in intelligence and security operations against real or alleged government opponents', the New Order regime produced deep mistrust and animosity within East Timorese society.²⁵ In Baucau, for example, several of my interview participants spoke of Juliaõ Saka, whom Carlota Borromeia de Correia told me was 'known for being very cruel'. She recalled being told by others that, 'If you are going to be investigated by him, be ready for death'.²⁶ An East Timorese man from Baguia, Juliaõ Saka, also known as Juliaõ Fraga, commanded a highly trained paramilitary unit formed in about 1980, *Tim Saka* (*Satuan Khusus Pusaka* – Heirloom Special Unit), which operated in the Baucau area.²⁷ In 1995, Saka was appointed Sub-District Military commander in Baguia, before being assassinated in 1995 by Indonesian forces as a result of suspicions that he had betrayed his superiors.²⁸ For Carlota, Saka's involvement in the interrogation process proved to her that, 'your enemy is not only the Indonesian army, but also your friend'.²⁹ Another of my interview participants, Luisinha Freitas Mok, recalled that *Tim Saka* 'worked for the Indonesians and [they] were really trusted by the Indonesian military to control other Timorese'.³⁰ In addition to using East Timorese collaborators to conduct interrogation sessions, other strategies were utilised to

²³ Ali Murtopo, "The Acceleration and Modernization of 25 Years' Development," (first published 1972), in *Indonesian Politics and Society*, ed. David Bourchier and Vedi Hadiz (Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2014), 45–8.

²⁴ Maria Domingas 'Micato' Fernandes Alves, interview with the author, Dili, July 25, 2013; and Ilda Maria da Conceição, interview with the author, Dili, July 5, 2012.

²⁵ Geoffrey Robinson, "Rawan is as Rawan Does: The Origins of Disorder in New Order Aceh," *Indonesia* 66 (1998): 143.

²⁶ Carlota Borromeia de Correia, interview with the author, Baucau, August 4, 2013.

²⁷ CAVR Report, 369.

²⁸ Douglas Kammen, "The Trouble with Normal: The Indonesian Military, Paramilitaries, and the Final Solution in East Timor," in *Violence and the State in Suharto's Indonesia*, ed. Benedict R.O'G Anderson (Ithaca: Southeast Asia Program Publications, Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 2001), 169.

²⁹ Carlota Borromeia de Correia, interview with the author, Baucau, August 4, 2013.

³⁰ Luisinha Freitas Mok, interview with the author, Baucau, August 4, 2013.

disorient and confuse prisoners. Interrogation sessions could occur at any time of the day and night; as Lourdes ‘Merita’ Alves Araujo explained, ‘it just depended on when they wanted to do it’.³¹ For example, Ilda Maria da Conceição recalled being woken up in the middle of the night in Hotel Flamboyant in Baucau when she was still groggy, and being interrogated in an attempt to get her to reveal information because of her vulnerable state.³² These strategies were used to mentally and physically distort the detainee’s perceptions of reality and to coerce them into revealing information about the resistance.

When individuals did not comply, interrogators would sometimes use highly specific threats to obtain information and to coerce an individual into ceasing their political activities. Lourdes ‘Merita’ Alves Araujo, for example, recalled being told, ‘If you guys still want to continue to be involved in political work we will kill you, even until your seventh generation!’.³³ The particular nature of this threat indicates that the military sought to inculcate a deep and permanent fear by threatening not only the individual lives of detainees, but also by warning of dire and enduring consequences that the individuals’ political choices and actions would have for their families and descendants. The intimidatory nature of the interrogation session was also exacerbated through the use of euphemistic, yet commonly-understood, threats of execution and torture. Ilda Maria da Conceição, for example, remembered being warned by the interpreter during an interrogation session, ‘Mana be careful, if they say you are going to visit Australia, that means you will get the electric shock’.³⁴ In his analysis of Indonesian state terror in East Timor, George Aditjondro identifies a number of such expressions. These include *mandi laut* (taking a bath in the sea) in Dili, which referred to the practice of weighing bodies with rocks and dumping them from a helicopter into the sea; *(jalan-jalan) ke Jakarta Baru* (taking a trip to New Jakarta), *jalan-jalan ke Lissabon* (taking a trip to Lisbon), or *berangkat studi lanjut ke Jawa* (going for further study in Java), which all meant that the person was going to be executed; *piknik ke Builico* (going for a picnic to Builico) in Ainaro, which referred to dumping the bodies in the river near Buicoli, a notorious execution place; and *menginap di Hotel Flamboyant* (spending the night at the Hotel Flamboyant in Baucau), which meant that the person was going to be interrogated at the Hotel Flamboyant.³⁵ The CAVR, similarly, found a ‘repeated and

³¹ Lourdes ‘Merita’ Alves Araujo, interview with the author, Dili, July 6, 2012.

³² Ilda Maria da Conceição, interview with the author, Dili, July 5, 2012.

³³ Lourdes ‘Merita’ Alves Araujo, interview with the author, Dili, July 6, 2012.

³⁴ Ilda Maria da Conceição, interview with the author, Dili, July 5, 2012.

³⁵ George J. Aditjondro, “Ninjas, Nanggalas, Monuments, and Mossad Manuals: An Anthropology of Indonesian State Terror in East Timor,” in *Death Squad: The Anthropology of State Terror*, ed. Jeffrey A. Sluka (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 178–9.

widespread' use of euphemisms in interrogatory practices.³⁶ These threats were sometimes used to severely disorient detainees through the exploitation of the inherent double-meaning of such euphemisms. Luisa Gonzaga, for example, remembered being told during an interrogation session in Dili that she would be taken to bathe, *lori ba haris*, which she explained actually meant that she would be taken to be killed somewhere.³⁷ That Luisa was in fact then taken to 'wash', and not actually killed, is one such example of the strategic manipulation of these expressions. Threats of an explicitly sexual nature were also used against women, which I discuss later in this chapter.

In addition to the psychological pressure of an interrogation session, prisoners were often subjected to various forms of physical violence, ill-treatment, and deprivation while incarcerated. In an interview for the Living Memory Project, Rosa Pereira do Rêgo recalled being captured and interrogated, on three separate occasions, at three separate military command posts in Dili: Colohun, Mandarin, and Sang Tai Hoo. During this time, she was given electric shocks to her legs, was lashed with a whip 'from the head downwards', and had her feet stamped on.³⁸ Other methods of torture included being burnt with cigarette butts, which was experienced by Dulce Vitor at the KODIM in Baucau. She suggested that such strategies were used 'to force us to say what they wanted'.³⁹ General beatings also occurred: Maria da Silva Benfica, for example, remembered that during her incarceration in the Comarca Prison in Dili, 'They beat me and punched me in the right eye until it was all black and bruised, and they punched me in the stomach, and poured water over me'.⁴⁰ Such practices typify the violent methods used against prisoners during incarceration, in an attempt to get them to reveal information about the resistance.

Forced witnessing of violence committed by the military against other prisoners, including direct killings, was also used as a fear tactic and method of soliciting complicity and cooperation. This strategy of torture was used particularly against women. One of my interview participants, Bilela, was imprisoned in the Hotel Flamboyant in Baucau. She remembered standing on an enclosed balcony of the prison and hearing her husband being beaten nearby, as she listened to him screaming from early morning until 11.00am. She also remembered 'very well' another incident in the prison when two men were brought by Indonesian forces to stand in front of a group of women. The men had their hands tied and

³⁶ CAVR Report, 846.

³⁷ Luisa Gonzaga, interview with the author, Dili, June 24, 2012.

³⁸ Rosa Pereira do Rêgo, interview in "The Living Memory Project."

³⁹ Dulce Victor, in *Step by Step: Women of East Timor, Stories of Resistance and Survival*, ed. Jude Conway (Darwin: Charles Darwin University Press, 2010), 30.

⁴⁰ Maria da Silva Benfica, interview in "The Living Memory Project."

their faces covered, and one was hit on the head with a piece of wood and died immediately.⁴¹ In her Living Memory Project interview, Maria Da Silva Benfica recalled an incident in the Comarca Prison in Dili, in which a male prisoner, who was recently brought down from the mountains, was beaten to death in his cell. Afterwards, Maria was put in the cell with him ‘for many hours’, before the body was taken away.⁴² This element of violence as spectacle was also described in a joint interview that I conducted with two sisters, Juana Gonçalves Amonia Dias Soares and Maria de Fatima Ximenes Dias. Even though they were only very young at the time, Juana and Maria both recalled their whole family being taken to the KORAMIL in Dili along with their father, a former member of the Portuguese army, when he was to be interrogated by the Indonesian military. Despite the family’s presence during the sessions, physical violence soon became a part of the process. Each time, their father would need to be hospitalised because of the beatings. Juana recalled that sometimes he was put in jail, but did not receive any medical treatment. After one particular beating, he could eat only rice powder for a year because he had been beaten so badly. He eventually passed away in 1984 due to his untreated wounds. In witnessing this ongoing torture, Maria observed that her father had ‘big principles’; he encouraged them not to be afraid but to be hopeful.⁴³ These accounts reveal some of the methods used by Indonesian forces to instil fear in detainees and their families, as well as demonstrate the place of physical violence in daily life under Indonesian rule. In a notable instance of the gendered nature of this violence, women were often forced to witness acts of violence that were perpetrated against close male relatives.

Despite the difficult conditions of incarceration and the military’s use of various methods of coercion, some women recalled with pride that they did not reveal any information about the structure and strategy of the resistance. Ilda Maria da Conceição, for example, explained that in response to interrogation questions, she would always reply that she ‘had no idea’ and that her husband was the one with all the information, so they should ask him. She said that it was ‘better to die than to mention the names of the people in the mountains’.⁴⁴ Emphasis upon individual resilience and courage in the face of interrogation and torture were important features within the women’s narratives. When faced with extreme physical and psychological violence, some individuals were adamant that they had refused to

⁴¹ Bilela, interview with the author, Baucau, August 3, 2013.

⁴² Maria Da Silva Benfica, interview in “The Living Memory Project.”

⁴³ Maria de Fatima Ximenes Dias and Juana Gonçalves Amonia Dias Soares, interview with the author, Dili, July 27, 2013.

⁴⁴ Ilda Maria da Conceição, interview with the author, Dili, July 5, 2012.

comply with their interrogators. Genoveva da Costa Martins, for example, explained in her Living Memory Project interview that she had ‘a strong outlook’ and, as such, she ‘wasn’t going to reveal our country’s strategic plans to the enemy’.⁴⁵ The danger of beginning to reveal any information, Armandina Gusmão explained, was that, ‘if you began to open your mouth and give something away, it was like a piece of crochet, in which if one thread is pulled the whole thing unravels’.⁴⁶ Complicating such unambiguous narratives of resilience and heroism in her extensive work on the theory of pain, however, Elaine Scarry has suggested that the ‘confession’ obtained under torture or interrogation should be seen not merely or simply as a ‘betrayal’. Although East Timorese women’s narratives often insist upon their heroic resilience in the face of torture and interrogation, Scarry’s work offers a more complex theorisation of the effects of overwhelming pain upon the person and the necessary accommodations entailed thereby. By fruitfully elucidating how such pain, in its effect of making ‘neutral and invisible’ broader political questions of allegiance, as well as its inevitable ‘distortion of the significance of the world to which the [interrogators’] question refers’, Scarry provides a more empathetic understanding of betrayal and its meanings.⁴⁷ This more nuanced way of thinking about the capacity and, indeed, the meaningfulness of individuals’ endurance of immense pain, is useful in moving beyond a rigid binary that sees only complicity and heroic resistance and helping us to consider, instead, concepts wide enough to allow for a continuum of accommodation.

Alongside the use of detention and interrogation to extract information from detainees about the resistance, the Indonesian military employed a deliberate strategy of separating the resistance in the mountains from their families and support networks. One of the key sites for this form of strategic detention was Ataúro Island, located approximately twenty-five kilometres off the coast north of Dili. Indonesian military documents from 1982 contained instructions for the transfer of prisoners from the mainland to Ataúro in order to ‘cut the ties between the support networks in the settlements and the Nurep [resistance nuclei]’.⁴⁸ These transfers had been occurring since approximately 1980, and testimony from individuals who were imprisoned on the island confirmed the disruptive effects of the strategy. For example, a collection of material gathered in March 1982 by the Amsterdam-based Movement for

⁴⁵ Genoveva da Costa Martins, interview in “The Living Memory Project.”

⁴⁶ Armandina Gusmão, interview in “The Living Memory Project.”

⁴⁷ Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain. The Making and Unmaking of the World* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 29–30.

⁴⁸ Military Resort Command (Korem) 164, Wira Dharma, Intelligence Section, “Instruction Manual: The Way for Babinsa or Team Pembina Desa to Expose/Break Up GPK Support Networks,” August 30, 1982, trans. and reproduced in *TAPOL Bulletin* 58 (July 1983), 3.

Democracy and Human Rights included a document that described the situation on Ataúro based on evidence provided by people in exile in Portugal. According to the document, one woman had been taken to the island, along with her five children, because she had ‘a brother-in-law who belongs to the anti-Indonesian resistance’.⁴⁹ In its April/March 1981 issue, the Lisbon-based *Timor Newsletter* reported that a source in Dili had claimed that the island was crowded with ‘thousands of deportees, including many women and children, who have been imprisoned and sent there for purely political reasons, because they opposed the means used by the Indonesian authorities to impose the integration of Timor’.⁵⁰ In official Indonesian government documents, however, these measures to relocate approximately 4,000 people to Ataúro in 1980 were described as ‘temporary measures which the Government deemed necessary to protect them from eventual harassment by the EDR (Elements of Dissident Remnants) some of whom were still hiding in the mountainous areas’. On the island, the government claimed, the people ‘lived normally and most probably for some of them had a better life’ and public services were ‘adequately supplied’.⁵¹

Claims of adequate living conditions are in vehement opposition to conclusions drawn by human rights organisations and the first-hand testimonies of individuals, including several of my interview participants. Eye-witness accounts collated by international human rights organisations, such as Amnesty International,⁵² as well as aid organisations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), a delegation of which was permitted access to the territory by Indonesian authorities on a programme of prison visits and food relief in February 1982, provide detailed accounts of life on the island.⁵³ As a result of recommendations made by the delegates, an emergency food and medical assistance programme was set up in conjunction with the Indonesian Red Cross. Conditions did improve to some extent,⁵⁴ although most accounts highlighted difficult living conditions, isolation, and deprivation. Amnesty International, for example, described conditions facing people on the

⁴⁹ Document 8: Situation of Those Exiled on the Island of Atauro, in “Dossier on East Timor March 1982,” Movement for Democracy and Human Rights, Amsterdam, distributed by ACFOA Canberra, in Box 009: East Timor Documents, in TAPOL Archival Collection.

⁵⁰ “Ataúro Transformed to a Prison Isle,” *Timor Newsletter* 1, no. 4–5 (March/April 1981), 6.

⁵¹ Department of Information, Republic of Indonesia, *East Timor Today* (Jakarta: Department of Information, 1984), 34.

⁵² Amnesty International, *East Timor: Violations of Human Rights: Extrajudicial Executions, “Disappearances,” Torture, and Political Imprisonment, 1975–1984*, ASA 21/16/85 (London: Amnesty International Publications, 1985).

⁵³ International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), *Annual Report 1982* (Geneva: International Committee of the Red Cross, 1983), 45–7.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 46.

island as ‘deplorable’.⁵⁵ A letter from an anonymous author in East Timor, dated November 1981 and published in the Melbourne-based *Timor Information Service*, described the majority of the women on the island as ‘invalids; they are widows and were exiled because their sons maintain the armed resistance against the presence of Indonesia [...] These women live alone, sitting in a corner of the tents, keeping company with others in the same condition. They starve, having been abandoned by all’.⁵⁶ An open letter sent by Maria Silva, an East Timorese woman who was exiled in 1985 to Australia, to the Prime Minister of Norway, Mrs Gro Harlem Brundtland, on the eve of her state visit to Indonesia, described similarly deplorable conditions:

Nursing mothers lost their breast milk, which dries up suddenly as a result of shock and traumas. Their babies were screaming of hunger! Inevitably, diseases such as diarrhoea and dysentery broke out and the babies die like flies. I helped to bury the innocent babies who passes away ahead of time. At the peak of the crisis, we had buried 5 babies in one week [sic]! At the time I almost lost faith in humanity.⁵⁷

While conditions were extremely difficult on the island they were, however, sometimes seen as less restrictive than in other parts of the territory, in particular in Dili, where there was a constant military presence. The experience of living and working on the island was raised by a number of my interview participants, who provided accounts of life from several different perspectives.

Zelia Fernandes, who was born in Watulari in 1977, prefaced our interview by explaining that it was ‘very hard’ for her talk about her childhood.⁵⁸ She spent several years on Ataúro with her father, who had been sent to the island because of his involvement in the resistance. Zelia spent the early years of her life in the mountains and, after surrendering due to a severe lack of food, her father was taken away by Indonesian forces. For several years, the family did not see or hear from him: ‘We did not know if we would ever see him again. My mother somehow learnt to survive and to feed us. We never knew what would happen the next day, month and year’, Zelia explained. Eventually, Zelia’s mother received a letter from her father who, like many, had been imprisoned on Ataúro without his family being informed of his whereabouts. ‘We were all very happy to learn that he had survived’, Zelia

⁵⁵ Amnesty International, *East Timor*, 66.

⁵⁶ “A Letter from East Timor,” November 1982, in *Timor Information Service* 35, March/April 1982, 2.

⁵⁷ “Open Letter Sent by an East Timorese Woman Exiled in Australia to the Prime Minister of Norway, Mrs Gro Harlem Brundtland, on the Eve of her State Visit to Indonesia, from Maria Silva, Australia,” in Catherine Scott’s Personal Archival Collection.

⁵⁸ Zelia Fernandes, interview with the author, Dili, June 6 and 7, 2012.

remembered.⁵⁹ When Zelia was about eight years old, her father decided that she should come to live on Ataúro with him and his new wife. She described how different the conditions on the island were compared to her hometown of Watulari, in terms of the fertility of soil and weather, and she remembered that many people suffered from hunger and malnutrition.⁶⁰ Over time, however, and when Zelia went to live on the island, assistance from the ICRC from February 1982 had greatly improved living conditions, including through the provision of medicine and food.

For another of my interview participants, Durvalina Belo Magno, who was born in Ainaro in 1965, living on Ataúro was one of the key events within her life story. Like Zelia, she described very difficult conditions on the island, and she became upset when talking about this subject. Unlike Zelia, Durvalina was an adult when she went to live on the island and was imprisoned because her husband, a former Portuguese soldier, was connected to the fighters in the mountains. Durvalina was part of the first group of people to be taken to the island in 1980, and she had remained there for four years. She thought that it would be like Dili, but found that it was ‘completely different’. She described feeling scared of the local people living on the island – feelings that she thought were reciprocated, as each wondered who the other people were. For Durvalina, one of the most difficult things about living on the island was a lack of food. The only food provided by the military was rotten corn but, because they had no other option, the people ate it. Eventually, the local people showed them how to eat marungi leaves with maize. Yet many people, especially in the early days, became sick and vomited. They suffered a lot, she explained.⁶¹

Another of my interview participants, Maria do Céu Lopes da Silva Federer, worked as an interpreter on Ataúro for a Swiss doctor from the ICRC. From the perspective of an Ataúro local, as well as an employee of an international humanitarian organisation, Céu observed differences between life on the island and in Dili, as well as the changes that were brought about as a result of the island being used as for detention:

In Atauro there were no atrocities, there was no prison, the Indonesians did not act in a brutal manner and, err, you know, try to intimidate the population. The fact that they had guns all the time was enough, but what happened here is, is, you can't compare. So I didn't see dead bodies, I didn't see people, you know, being tortured and the scars. Only in 1980 when the prisoners came did I see the scars. So, then I

⁵⁹ Zelia Fernandes, “Born Hard, Born to Struggle for Freedom” (paper presented at the Country Women of Australia’s Country of Study School on the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, the University of New England, Australia, February 2012).

⁶⁰ Zelia Fernandes, interview with the author, Dili, June 6, 2012.

⁶¹ Durvalina Belo Magno, interview with the author, Dili, June 29, 2012.

could understand what I heard when I came here ... err, for me, it was kind of a surreal story.⁶²

When prisoners were brought to the island from 1980, Céu noticed the way in which the conflict had been carved onto the bodies of the people:

I could see the cigarette burns, I could see the slashes, I could see the scars from electric shocks, and yeah, people would explain in detail, ahh. What amazed me is that people went into very little detail about how they were tied up and cables were connected to their bodies, to their breasts, to their private parts. And I went like this: are these people real? How could anyone have the capacity to remember, and go through every detail?⁶³

Ataúro was a unique place of detention, however, in that regular interrogation was not a general feature of internment. Despite this lack of interrogation, the dislocation, deprivation, and isolation on the island brought about immense suffering for many people, especially women and children, who constituted the majority of detainees.

For those that remained on the mainland and had connections to the resistance, however, interrogation and detention reminded constant features of life under Indonesian rule. This section has outlined some of the ways in which detainees were subject to a variety of psychological and physical pressures during incarceration. The Indonesian military used various methods to extract information about resistance activities that they believed were being conducted either by the women themselves, or their friends and families. Once suspected of having links with the resistance, women would often be re-captured and interrogated on multiple occasions across the course of the occupation period. Many women recalled with courage and pride their refusal to comply with their interrogators, despite the physical, psychological, and sexual pressures under which they were placed. Inconsistencies in processes, the use of East Timorese collaborators, and the persistent threat of physical and sexual violence were strategies used by the Indonesian military to create a general sense of unpredictability and uncertainty within East Timorese society.

Women and Sexual Violence

The CAVR Report reveals that across the course of the Indonesian occupation, human rights violations were perpetrated by the Indonesian military and their auxiliaries in the form of

⁶² Maria do Céu Lopes da Silva Federer, interview with the author, Dili, July 20, 2013.

⁶³ Ibid.

civilian killings and disappearances, forced displacement and famine, detention, torture and ill-treatment, and sexual violence.⁶⁴ As I demonstrated in the above section, individuals and families were often targeted because of their relationship to the resistance, but I suggested that the regime also implemented structural forms of violence, constructing and maintaining informal systems of surveillance and social control that implicated the entire population. For East Timorese women, these structures of violence often involved a gender-specific dimension: the threat of rape, sexual slavery, sexual torture, and harassment. Although women were victims of the same range of human rights violations as men, almost all cases of sexual violence were committed against women. This section explores East Timorese women's experiences and memories of sexual violence and sexual torture.

While there are no substantive statistics on sexual violence during this period, there is a wealth of anecdotal evidence that attests to its widespread nature. The most wide-ranging investigation and comprehensive documentation of sexual violence was conducted by the CAVR. The final report of the Commission contends that sexual violations were committed in a 'widespread and systematic' manner, and that they were primarily perpetrated by members of the Indonesian armed forces and their auxiliaries.⁶⁵ Although the Report documented only 853 instances of sexual violence across the course of the occupation,⁶⁶ it concluded that the women who came forward represented only a portion of the total number of victims, and suspected that 'the total number of sexual violations is likely to be several times higher [...] in the thousands, rather than hundreds'.⁶⁷ Of the reported instances of sexual violence, rape was the most common, at 46.1 percent of all sexual violations, followed by sexual harassment and other acts of sexual violence at 27.1 percent, and sexual slavery at 26.8 percent. Out of the total sexual violations documented, 93.3 percent were attributed to Indonesian security forces and their auxiliaries.⁶⁸ The Report found that violations against East Timorese women had been committed with impunity, and that these violations were used as tools of terror and degradation by the Indonesian armed forces and their auxiliaries.⁶⁹

⁶⁴ CAVR Report, 479–593.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 1915.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 548. Through the Commission's statement-taking process 59,972 non-fatal violations were reported, out of a total of 85,000 violations. See *Ibid.*, 2317.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 2040.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 548–9.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 1914.

Information from inside the territory supports the contention that there were relatively high levels of sexual violence perpetrated across the course of the occupation.⁷⁰ During the early years of the occupation, radio transmissions that were transcribed and published in the *Timor Information Service* newsletter, for example, attested to the brutality and frequency of sexual violence: ‘women and little girls’ being forced ‘to dance completely naked and violated’,⁷¹ married women being ‘brutally abused’ and young females ‘raped no matter where’,⁷² individual women being ‘barbarously violated’,⁷³ ‘brutally violated’,⁷⁴ women being ‘continually raped’,⁷⁵ and ‘sexually tortured’.⁷⁶ Other sources, such as statements and documents produced by international human rights organisations, similarly reported multiple rapes and other forms of sexual violence.⁷⁷ Sexual torture was deployed during interrogation sessions, as described in survivor testimony recorded in Darwin: cigarettes were butted out by Indonesian soldiers on the bodies of women, including their breasts and vaginas, and women were sexually abused with bottles and other objects.⁷⁸ One woman from Kamanasa, Domingas Maria Moniz, reported that she was raped ‘so many times I cannot remember’ by many different soldiers.⁷⁹ These reports suggest that sexual violence was prevalent during the occupation.

Reports also often expressed a widespread awareness that sexual violence was taking place, as well as the impunity with which these offences were conducted by the perpetrators. For example, an October 1985 FRETILIN report about the gang rape of a woman from the

⁷⁰ See Dara Kay Cohen, “Researching Wartime Sexual Violence: Methods, Challenges and Ethical Concerns” (paper presented at the “Governance, Development and Political Violence Summer Training Workshop,” University of California, San Diego, 2011), 4–5.

⁷¹ “Radio Messages from East Timor,” from Nicolau Lobato, message 42, received 9.15am CST, February 17, 1976, in *Timor Information Service* 8, March 1, 1976, 2.

⁷² “Radio Messages from East Timor,” from Alarico Fernandes, Minister for Internal Administration and National Security in East Timor, May 17, 1976, in *Timor Information Service* 11/12, June 26, 1976, 7.

⁷³ “Oct/Nov in East Timor – Fretilin Account,” November 10, 1976, in *Timor Information Service* 16/17, December 1976, 6.

⁷⁴ “Summary of Radio Messages from East Timor: February–June 1977,” in *Timor Information Service* 20/21, October 1977, 11.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁷⁶ “Dili Government Complains,” Based on a Report by the Indonesian-Appointed Regional People’s Representative Assembly of East Timor,” in *Timor Information Service* 32, Sept/Oct 1981, 6.

⁷⁷ Document 26: Interview with C 6/3/82 (East Timorese), 26, in “Dossier on East Timor March 1982,” Movement for Democracy and Human Rights, Amsterdam, distributed by ACFOA Canberra, in Box 009: East Timor Documents, in TAPOL Archival Collection.

⁷⁸ Bi-Hali, “Appendix – Testimony Recorded in Darwin, Australia, February 1999,” in “East Timor Interviews Recorded November 1998,” rec. and comp. Rebecca Winters, East Timor International Support Centre, 1999, 27.

⁷⁹ “Witness Statement,” by Domingas Maria Moniz (loose), in Box 65-66: 1998 Inside Timor Reports, East Timor Collection, ACFOA Human Rights Office, Melbourne, CHART Office.

Lu'ua camp in Viqueque, stated that the 'entire population is well aware of the incident'.⁸⁰ Information smuggled out of the territory in the same year reported that rape was deemed 'normal practice' for Indonesian soldiers, and was being committed with 'impunity'.⁸¹ A report by the Indonesian-appointed Regional People's Representative Assembly of East Timor, and published in *Timor Information Services* in September/October 1981, attested to sexual violations being committed in a situation where there are 'no legal restraints and no discipline'.⁸² In personal testimony collected by the activist and researcher Rebecca Winters in 1998, one woman, 'Tiles', told her:

There are a lot of women who have been in this situation so frequently that the abuse is almost normal. When a woman has been raped many, many times and is living in a situation where she is still being raped, she will sometimes not even feel that she is being abused anymore. Because rape every day has become normal.⁸³

Similarly, in my oral history interviews, women spoke about rape as extremely common during the occupation. In my interview with Isabel 'Bella' Antonia da Costa Galhos, for example, she explained that during the occupation there was 'a lot of rape': during the conflict, and throughout the invasion and occupation period, women were raped 'systematically'.⁸⁴ This range of documentation suggests that a widespread and systematic campaign of rape was committed by the Indonesian military against East Timorese women.

These reports are useful, on the one hand, in documenting the widespread, brutal, and systematic nature of sexual violence. Oral history interviews, on the other, can reveal some of the particular strategies used by women to narrate these experiences and cultural context in which they were situated. Only a small number of my interview participants spoke openly about sexual violence. As Armandina Gusmão explained in her Living Memory Project interview, 'There are things that happen to a woman, many things, things happen to women here that... how can I say it? It's preferable not to... people prefer not to give details, understand?'.⁸⁵ Similar to Annie Pohlman's reflections upon talking to women and girls about sexualised forms of violence perpetrated against them during the Indonesian massacres

⁸⁰ "Information No. 3," October 1985, 3, in Box 25: 138 Fretilin Reports, East Timor Collection, ACFOA Human Rights Office, Melbourne, CHART Office.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² "Dili Government Complains," Based on a Report by the Indonesian-Appointed Regional People's Representative Assembly of East Timor, *Timor Information Service* 32, Sept/Oct 1981, 6.

⁸³ "Tiles," in *Buibere*, comp. Winters, 96.

⁸⁴ Isabel 'Bela' Antonia da Costa Galhos, interview with the author, Dili, July 3, 2012.

⁸⁵ Armandina Gusmão, interview in "The Living Memory Project."

of 1965–66,⁸⁶ most of the women whom I interviewed alluded to incidents of sexual violence only in abstract terms, using various linguistic and pragmatic strategies to negotiate speaking about the topic. It is important to note, too, that silence on these issues does not necessarily foreclose the possibility for interpretation. As Lia Kent suggests, ‘silence can reveal a great deal about the continuities of violence and suffering into the present and the cultural and social contexts in which women need to live their lives’.⁸⁷ An awareness of the role of silence and absence within women’s narratives, as well as noting the deployment of discontinuity, allusion, and deflection to talk about difficult memories, can increase our understanding of the lived experiences of a militarised and violent regime for women.

One of my interview participants, however, was uniquely direct in her recounting of sexual violence. Towards the end of a three-and-a-half-hour interview, Maria de Fatima Kalsona told me about her rape on the outskirts of Dili in 1980. Maria had been taken from her home in Lahane in Dili, to be interrogated at the Intelligence Task Force (*Satuan Tugas Intelijen* – SGI) office in Colmera. Maria described and showed me how, after the interrogation session, she was tied up by her arms and legs in the back of a jeep and driven out to Tasi Tolu, on the outskirts of Dili. On the way there, the military commander violated her. Maria was unusually direct in her telling of the event, which suggested perhaps that she had told it before, yet she still expressed difficulties in narrating this experience:

This is the worst thing that has happened to me. I will never forget this even when I have passed away. I hate this... I really, really hate this... Although I have had children I still kept my revenge and hate inside my heart. This is the worst thing for me, at the time I did not care about death at all, whatever was going to happen with me could just happen... I also told my husband: if you want me, ok... if you don’t want me, it’s ok... This is me.⁸⁸

In this account, Maria used the Portuguese-derived words, *viola* (violate) and *estraga* (destroy) to refer to the rape, which seemed to be the most common words used by East Timorese women in referring to this act. Maria’s recollection reveals not only the unforgettable nature of the violation that was perpetrated against her, but also sheds light upon the shaming that she expected to receive. She was defiant in the face of potential humiliation and determined that this experience was part of her past. Maria explained the

⁸⁶ Annie Pohlman, *Women, Sexual Violence and the Indonesian Killings of 1965–66* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015), 79.

⁸⁷ Lia Kent, “Narratives of Suffering and Endurance: Coercive Sexual Relationships, Truth Commissions and Possibilities for Gender Justice in Timor-Leste,” *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 8, no. 2 (2014): 308.

⁸⁸ Maria de Fatima Kalsona, interview with the author, Dili, May 23, 2012.

devastation that she experienced subsequently, saying: ‘This is the worst thing that has happened to me’, she said. ‘I will never forget this even when I have passed away’.⁸⁹ For Maria, the recounting of her experience was not present within the flow of her life story. Instead, it was not until we had been discussing Timor-Leste’s independence and the interview was coming to a close that she dipped back into the past and described her more intimate and brutal encounters with the Indonesian military.

In other interviews, women employed euphemistic language, physical gestures, or deflection, to describe assaults. At times, it seemed that there was no need to state the action explicitly. Instead, the meaning would be implied, for example, by describing a situation where it was common for women to experience sexual violence, such as during interrogation or in prison, and using hints to indicate what transpired. For example, one of my interview participants was interrogated in 1980 in Baucau, during which time she was taken to a room and had all her clothes taken from her. She was asked if she would like to stay there to sleep, ‘*hakarak toba?*’, to which she responded no. Afterwards, she explained that she gathered her clothes and left the place immediately.⁹⁰ Despite not explicitly saying what happened to her, that she was allowed to leave quite freely seems unlikely. Although I didn’t ask for any further details, it is probable that she experienced some form of physical sexual violence, along with this sexual humiliation. In these narratives, hints such as being left alone in a room, having one’s daughter taken away, or escaping at the last moment, can perhaps be seen as strategies to defer explicitly stating what happened. After the aforementioned interview my interpreter, Uka, pointed out that perhaps for some women these experiences are ‘a secret’; that they wanted to forget what happened, or, perhaps, ‘instead of sharing their story ... it would be easier to share another person’s story’.⁹¹

The use of deflection to avoid describing assaults as personal experiences was present within my oral history interviews, and has also been observed by other researchers. Maria Bernadino, a translator for Rebecca Winter’s 1999 compilation, *Buibere: Voice of East Timorese Women*, for example, notes a tendency for some women to speak about another woman’s experience in great detail, but to insist that they themselves were not the subject of the story. Bernadino notes that some women would state that ‘a friend of mine was raped’, or ‘I was in a group and saw one of the women raped’, rather than directly saying, ‘I was

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Anonymous, interview with the author, Baucau, August 3, 2013.

⁹¹ Elsa ‘Uka’ Joaquina Araujo Pinto, personal conversation with the author, Dili, August 4, 2013.

raped'.⁹² The story of a young woman, Maria Gorete Joaquim, who was captured, tortured, imprisoned, and then executed, was often used within women's testimony as demonstrative of broader oppression: speaking about another, well-known example, can perhaps be seen as an easier way of speaking about the prevalence of sexual violence, one free of the personal implications of recounting one's own experiences. One of my interview participants, Loudres 'Merita' Alves Araujo, went to school with Maria before the invasion and told me about Maria as a young girl of sixteen or seventeen, who had 'a strong spirit for fighting'. Maria contributed to the resistance, but was eventually captured and imprisoned in Sang Tai Hoo in Dili, where Merita explained that she experienced 'a very difficult situation', but was 'really brave'.⁹³ In her collection of testimony from East Timor, Michele Turner explained that while Maria's fate was similar to that of many East Timorese people, she became such an important symbol because of her open defiance: 'So potent a symbol has she become that the women I tried to interview who were too frightened or still too traumatized to articulate their own experience invariably retold second-hand versions of her story'.⁹⁴ Indeed, Maria's story was raised by several of my interview participants as demonstrative of the particular treatment of women by the occupying regime, but also of the resilience and courage of East Timorese women. Zulmira 'Sirana' da Cruz Sarmento, for example, another school friend of Maria's, told me that although Maria experienced 'so much violence [...], she never lost her spirit'.⁹⁵

Sexual violence was a form of violence that specifically, but not entirely, effected women. According to the CAVR Report, women experienced the overwhelming majority of sexually-based violations, with 90.1 percent of recorded sexually-based violations involving female victims.⁹⁶ The notion of sexual violence as specific to women's experiences of the occupation was described in my interviews, as well. For one of my interview participants, Luisa Gonzaga, 'men used guns to fight with against guns [sic], against knives and other things. Then we, women, we only have our body to fight against all of these things ... we as women, we really, really suffered'.⁹⁷ Several of my interview participants described women being continually harassed by the Indonesian military because their husbands were in the mountains. Yolanda Maria Conceição Chalhés, for example, told me that she 'still remembered' when her uncle went to the mountains and her aunt was left alone. Every day,

⁹² Maria Bernadino, "Translator's Notes," in *Buibere*, comp. Winters, 36.

⁹³ Loudres 'Merita' Alves Araujo, interview with the author, Dili, July 6, 2012.

⁹⁴ Maria Gorete Joaquim, "I Do Not Belong to Myself Any More," in *Telling: East Timor, Personal Testimonies 1942-1992*, ed. Michele Turner (Sydney: New South Wales University Press, 1992), 168.

⁹⁵ Zulmira 'Sirana' da Cruz Sarmento, interview with the author, Dili, December 5, 2012.

⁹⁶ CAVR Report, 526.

⁹⁷ Luisa Gonzaga, interview with the author, Dili, June 24, 2012.

the military would come with guns and interrogate her. Yolanda remembered that her aunt became very depressed and would sometimes just sit in a room alone and talk to herself. Eventually, Yolanda explained, she ‘lost her mind’.⁹⁸ Luisinha Freitas Mok described the violent treatment of women by the Indonesian military in Baucau, and emphasised that ‘everyone knew about it’.⁹⁹ She mentioned several examples, including two women whose husbands were known to be in the mountains. During this time, the women were visited and interrogated by the Indonesian military every day in an attempt to obtain information about the whereabouts of their husbands, and to ensure that they were not maintaining contact with them. Luisinha said that despite the development and education provided by the Indonesians during the occupation, which I discuss in Chapter Four, she ‘really hated them’ because of the sexual violations that they committed and the fact that they ‘really didn’t respect a woman’s body’.¹⁰⁰ Luisinha’s story demonstrates the way in which women were often targeted for sexual violence when their husbands were not available for interrogation, suggesting that rape had a function beyond that of the sexual gratification of the perpetrators. Although recent work by Maria Eriksson Baaz and Maria Stern seeks to deconstruct the ‘rape as a weapon of war’ discourse,¹⁰¹ the prevalence of sexualised forms of violence against East Timorese women, combined with a broader culture of impunity for perpetrators, strongly suggests that there were strategic and tactical aims to these practices within the East Timorese occupation context. I explore some of the ways in which we can further understand the violence in the following section.

Understanding the Violence

As discussed above, women were usually targeted for acts of sexual violence because they were perceived by the Indonesian forces to have a connection to the resistance movement, and thus were often the victims of proxy violence. In this sense, rape and sexual violence can be seen as a strategy to humiliate and demoralise women, but the violence can also be seen as an attempt to attack men as perceived ‘protectors’ of women. This connection has been highlighted by several scholars of East Timor. Drawing upon the work of Franz Fanon, George Aditjondro suggests that the sexual harassment by the Indonesian military of East

⁹⁸ Yolanda Maria Conceição Chalhés, interview with the author, Liquica, July 15, 2012.

⁹⁹ Luisinha Freitas Mok, interview with the author, Baucau, August 4, 2013.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Maria Eriksson Baaz and Maria Stern, *Sexual Violence as a Weapon of War? Perceptions, Prescriptions, Problems in the Congo and Beyond* (London: Zed Books, 2013).

Timorese women can be explained, in part, by the perceived need ‘to reinforce their self-confidence in the face of widespread local resistance’.¹⁰² The CAVR Report extends this argument to propose that the purpose and aim of such violence ‘was not limited to the personal gratification of perpetrators or the direct impact on individual victims’.¹⁰³ Sexual violence had a pedagogical function, the Report suggests, it was intended ‘to humiliate and dehumanise the East Timorese people’ in order to achieve the much broader political goal of integration with Indonesia. According to the Report, it was ‘an attempt to destroy their will to resist, to reinforce the reality that they were utterly powerless and subject to the cruel and inhuman whims of those who controlled the situation with guns’.¹⁰⁴ This perspective is supported by a 1995 report prepared for the United Nations (UN) World Conference on Women in Beijing by the East Timor Relief Association, which stated that sexual violence was ‘used by the military as a form of institutionalised terror with the aim of subduing real or perceived threats of resistance in the community at large’.¹⁰⁵ The widespread and systematic nature of the sexual violence perpetrated by the Indonesian military against East Timorese women, therefore, suggests a more cohesive strategy and intent that extended beyond individuals to the broader controlling mechanisms of the Indonesian occupying regime.

The threat of sexual violence was sometimes used by the Indonesian military to extract a confession or to obtain information about the resistance movement, as a form of proxy violence to convey a message to the resistance, and as a method of instilling fear. For example, Luciana da Costa, who was imprisoned in Quelicai, was told by a civilian auxiliary (*hansip*), ‘My child, you have to give your body to the military in order to survive. If you don’t give your body, you will have to buy [pay with] your life’.¹⁰⁶ Although there was a coherent strategic aim, there were also opportunistic features to the violence. At times, sexual violations were perpetrated at places where victims were most vulnerable and the military possessed absolute control, for example, in military installations during interrogation or detention sessions, in military or police custody, or during medical treatment sessions in hospitals.¹⁰⁷ In other cases, sexual violations were perpetrated in people’s homes, in cars, and

¹⁰² George Aditjondro, *In the Shadow of Mount Ramelau: The Impact of the Occupation of East Timor* (Leiden: Indonesian Documentation and Information Centre, 1994), 87–8.

¹⁰³ CAVR Report, 2040.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ “Report on the Resistance Twenty Years On,” East Timor Relief Association for Beijing UN/NGO’s World Women’s Forum (1995), in AMRT.

¹⁰⁶ Luciana da Costa, “Planning to Control Timor-Leste for 24 Years,” in *Secrecy*, ed. Abrantes and Sequeira, 80–1.

¹⁰⁷ See “Torture and Ill-Treatment,” Case Study: “Isabel,” 9, in Amnesty International, “East Timor: Who is to Blame?,” Statement before the UN Special Committee on Decolonisation, July 13, 1994, ASA 21/31/94.

during military operations. A statement made by two women, Maria Sarmiento and Odilia Victor, at the Australian Embassy in Jakarta in 1996 explained: ‘Many East Timorese women are raped in their homes, on the street, in prisons, in the villages and in the bush’.¹⁰⁸ Patterns in sexual violence also corresponded with levels of violence throughout the territory. As the CAVR Report notes, periods that witnessed a high volume of sexual violations included the invasion and initial years of the occupation, and around the time of the Popular Consultation in 1999.¹⁰⁹ Instances of sexual violence often were not isolated, with some women describing ongoing sexual harassment throughout the occupation.

In addition to sexual violence, therefore, sexual harassment was also an element of the broader climate of fear and intimidation under the occupying regime. For example, one of my interview participants, Emilita Mendes, remembered being brought to Maubara by the local East Timorese militia in 1999. There, she and several other women were forced to dance: ‘I still remember there were around nine of us and they forced us to dance in Maubara ... I was thinking that if it was a party we could dance, a wedding or something, but nothing was happening’, she told me. She remembered feeling very afraid because she had heard about young women being raped: ‘I was absolutely terrified, really, really scared’, she recalled. Emilita felt that she had ‘no choice’ but to oblige the militia or her family would be killed. She remembered that the militia were holding guns, pistols, and knives: ‘we saw them and became really scared’.¹¹⁰ Some women were also forced into long-term and coercive sexual arrangements with Indonesian military personnel or others in power, a common feature of sexual violence against women in conflict areas or territories under military occupation.¹¹¹ These women were known as a ‘military wives’, ‘local wives’ (*feto nona*) or ‘TNI wives’ (*istri TNI*), even though there was often no formal marriage or consent freely given by the women concerned.¹¹² Lia Kent provides a detailed account of a number of these ‘coercive sexual relations’, drawing upon interviews with nineteen East Timorese women. In these interviews, Kent explains, the women spoke of ‘both the sexual and the physical abuse they experienced, as well as psychological and “everyday” forms of violence’, such as the need to

¹⁰⁸ “12 January 1996 Statement by East Timorese Jakarta Australian Embassy Women Asylum Seekers, Maria T. Sarmiento and Odilia Victor,” (abridged and edited translation of original), in Catherine Scott’s Personal Archival Collection.

¹⁰⁹ CAVR Report, 1922.

¹¹⁰ Emilita Mendes, interview with the author, Liquica, July 15, 2012.

¹¹¹ See Kiyoki Furusawa and Jean Inglis, “Violence against Women in East Timor under Indonesian Occupation,” in *Common Grounds: Violence against Women in War and Armed Conflict Situation*, ed. Indai Lourdes Sajor (Philippines: Asian Centre for Women’s Human Rights, 1998), 293–300.

¹¹² CAVR Report, 1968–9.

provide sex ‘on demand’, beatings, and feelings of loneliness and social isolation.¹¹³ One of my interview participants from Pantemakassar, Merita de Jesus Marques, described the increasing frequency of these arrangements as the occupation was consolidated and ‘the Indonesian military started to enter the community level’. She spoke of the military trying to find young ladies with whom ‘to spend time’, and stressed that the woman often had no choice in the matter.¹¹⁴ Some of my interview participants remembered being pressured to become a *nona* and the lengths that they went to in order to avoid this. After being released from prison in Dili in 1980, for example, Zulmira ‘Sirana’ da Cruz Sarmiento hoped to remain in her hometown of Aileu, until she discovered that one of the military commanders wanted to make her his *nona*. In order to avoid such a fate, Sirana lied to him and said that she was very sick, and needed to go back to Dili. Despite the fact that she felt too young, Sirana then decided to get married to someone else, so as to limit the possibility of sexual harassment from the Indonesian military. Sirana’s aunt also lived with an Indonesian military commander, and Sirana benefited from this situation in that he wrote a letter to help her gain employment at the education department in Dili.¹¹⁵

This decision to marry, sometimes to a member of the Indonesian military, an East Timorese who held a position within the government, or a member of one’s extended family, was one of the ways through which women could avoid ongoing and persistent sexual attention and harassment. This was often the case when their husbands had been missing in the mountains for several years and were presumed dead, as the marriage afforded some protection to the women. One of my interview participants, Mana Marta, recalled that after her father passed away, her mother married an East Timorese who was a member of the Indonesian military. After he was killed in combat, she married another East Timorese member of the Indonesian military, hoping that it would provide her and her daughters with some form of protection.¹¹⁶ Lia Kent has observed that for some women, these relationships provided ‘a limited form of protection’, and there was thus ‘a limited space for some women to negotiate and maneuver’, conclusions which broadly correspond with my own findings.¹¹⁷ For example, when the husband of one of my interview participants, Bilela, had disappeared and was presumed dead in 1979, Bilela was regularly interrogated by the Indonesian military until 1984. She found these conditions extremely difficult in terms of her ability to provide

¹¹³ Kent, “Narratives of Suffering and Endurance,” 301.

¹¹⁴ Merita de Jesus Marques, interview with the author, Dili, December 3, 2012.

¹¹⁵ Zulmira ‘Sirana’ da Cruz Sarmiento, interview with the author, Dili, December 5, 2012.

¹¹⁶ Mana Marta, interview with the author, Dili, November 28, 2012.

¹¹⁷ Kent, “Narratives of Suffering and Endurance,” 301.

for herself and her young son. Eventually, her husband's brother came to stay with her and the two decided to get married.¹¹⁸ For Bilela, this decision was made in order to prevent advances from Indonesian military officers, and in the hope of bringing about a sense of security for herself and her young son. Similarly, Ilda Maria da Conceição explained that because her husband had disappeared, she married her husband's cousin because she had been alone with her children, and she did it 'to protect them'.¹¹⁹ Carolina do Rosário's decision to marry was similarly brought about by her need for protection, as she explained: 'My first husband ran to the mountains after the invasion and I was harassed many times by the military so, for protection, in 1982 I decided to marry a Timorese from Maliana who was in the Indonesian army'.¹²⁰ The below image depicts Carolina and her husband in 1982:



Image: Carolina with her fiancé, José Mau, 1982.¹²¹

These practices of negotiated accommodation are also discussed in an interview conducted by Peter Carey and Steve Cox in Lisbon in 1999 with Bernadina 'Dina' Alves, a

¹¹⁸ Bilela, interview with the author, Baucau, August 3, 2013.

¹¹⁹ Ilda Maria da Conceição, interview with the author, Dili, July 5, 2012.

¹²⁰ Carolina do Rosário, in *Step by Step*, ed. Conway, 112.

¹²¹ In *Step by Step*, ed. Conway, 118.

woman from Dili.¹²² Dina spoke about a woman called Antoinetta, a Portuguese person of mixed ethnicity (*mestiça*) who had been the wife of a top FRETILIN commander. Antoinetta was captured and felt pressured to sleep with Indonesian soldiers, and so eventually decided to marry an Indonesian Marine Corps (*Korps Komando Operasi* – KKO) officer. When asked what she thought about this woman's decision, Dina replied:

I saw that it was not only Antoinetta but also some amongst my own family who married Indonesians. I saw this with the eyes of humanity and compassion. I knew that I could handle suffering and oppression, but why should I expect other people to choose my path? Maybe Antoinetta couldn't stand the situation and chose to marry an Indonesian. Maybe it was because her father was from a rather privileged social status. After all he was a DPR (*Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat* or DPR, local parliament) member. Maybe she just wanted to improve her situation slightly. Who am I to blame her? I have to admit the path I chose was pretty arduous – I mean if the Indonesians knew you were even so slightly against them they could make your life very difficult indeed.¹²³

Dina's response demonstrates her understanding of the pressure that Antoinetta was facing, and her empathy with Antoinetta's predicament. One of my interview participants, Luisinha Freitas Mok, responded similarly when she described the experiences of two women in Baucau whose husbands were in the mountains. The military 'always came and accused and interrogated them because they were worried that the women still kept contact with their husbands'. The women were sexually violated and sent to Atauro Island for one year. Eventually, Luisinha explained, one of the women 'couldn't stand the treatment' and so she married her first cousin. Luisinha explained that traditionally, East Timorese people could not marry their first cousin, but the woman just 'couldn't stand it anymore'.¹²⁴ These examples suggest that strategic marriage acted as a coping mechanism for some women to avoid constant interrogation, suspicion, and even sexual violence.

Incidents of sexual violence and ongoing sexual relationships sometimes resulted in children, which presented another layer of complexity for the women concerned. In Laura Soares Abrantes and Beba Sequeira's collection of oral testimony, several women described giving birth to children as a result of sexual violations. Maria do Carmo de F. Sarmiento, for example, was a prominent member of OPMT and was imprisoned for an extended period of time in Ainaro. During her incarceration, Maria was violated by a member of the Indonesian

¹²² Peter Carey, "Dimensions of Domination: Institutionalised Violence against Women During the Indonesian Occupation of East Timor (1975–99)," in *Violence in Indonesia*, ed. Ingrid Wessel and Georgia Wimhofer (Hamburg: Abera Verlag Markus Voss, 2001), 199.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Luisinha Freitas Mok, interview with the author, Baucau, August 4, 2013.

military and subsequently gave birth to a daughter.¹²⁵ Margarida Gonçalves was also violated by a member of the Indonesian military and, as a result, also gave birth to a daughter. Afterwards, Margarida was excluded from her family: ‘My relatives did not recognise me and my child, because they did not want the military to make them suffer as well’, she explained.¹²⁶ Susan Harris Rimmer provides an extensive discussion of this phenomenon, with a specific focus upon the lead-up to the August 1999 Popular Consultation. In the absence of data on children born of rape, Harris Rimmer suggests that ‘anecdotal evidence points to perhaps hundreds or even thousands of children born of war’. Despite stigmatisation of these women and their children by their families and communities, she suggests that many of the children were kept and raised by their mothers.¹²⁷

This section has discussed sexual violence within the context of the Indonesian occupation. This was a form of violence, I have suggested, that specifically targeted East Timorese women. I have outlined the nature and form of such violations, and have also considered the forms of representation and narrative strategies deployed by women in speaking about this form of violence. Although beyond the scope of this thesis, it is important to acknowledge the ways in which such violence is not simply confined to the past; as Lia Kent suggests, forms of violence such as these remain embedded in women’s ‘everyday interactions with family and community members’.¹²⁸ Considering the ways in which sexual violence has been incorporated into women’s personal narratives provides us with a deeper understanding of women’s diverse experiences and roles during the occupation. Above, I have outlined the strategies of this violence, and have suggested that women were often targeted for acts of sexual violence as a form of interrogation, or as an act of proxy retribution against husbands or family members who were believed to be involved in the resistance. In considering these strategic elements, sexual violence cannot be entirely explained in terms of individual sexual gratification. Instead, it can be seen as occupying or fulfilling a specifically political function: to reinforce the perception and to enforce the reality of Indonesian sovereignty over the physical territory, lives, and bodies of East Timorese people.

¹²⁵ Maria do Carmo de F. Sarmiento, “I am Ready to Say the Truth,” in *Secrecy: The Key to Independence: It’s Better to Have No Title Than to Have No Nation*, ed. Laura Soares Abrantes and Beba Sequeira (Dili: Blue Mountains East Timor Sisters, 2010), 87.

¹²⁶ Margarida Gonçalves – Leno Timor, “Learn Guerrilla Strategies in Order to Defeat the Enemy’s Weapons,” in *Ibid.*, 22.

¹²⁷ Susan Harris Rimmer, “Orphans or Veterans? Justice for Children Born of War in East Timor,” in *Born of War: Protecting Children Born to Sexual Violence; Survivors in Conflict Zones*, ed. R. Charli Carpenter (Bloomfield: Kumarian Press, 2007), 55.

¹²⁸ Kent, “Narratives of Suffering and Endurance,” 307.

Systems of Surveillance and Social Control

To the UN General Assembly in August 1998, a representative from the Indonesian Human Rights Campaign described the structure of the Indonesian military administration in the territory as ‘specially designed to keep the daily life of every Timorese in the iron grip of military intelligence’.¹²⁹ Many women described experiences of insidious forms of surveillance and social control throughout the occupation period. This section identifies and explains several strategies used by the Indonesian military to monitor the movement of the population and, in particular, ex-prisoners and suspect individuals. These methods included practices of necessary self-reporting, restrictions on movement, population control, and the cultivation of an informal system of surveillance that permeated women’s daily lives. As such, I suggest that the Indonesian military co-opted East Timorese women into a web of regulatory power, which resulted in a climate of fear, uncertainty, and suspicion, and that there were gender-specific forms of terror that were used to control women’s lives and bodies.

In Chapter Two, I described the way in which large numbers of East Timorese individuals, families, and communities were displaced as a result of the Indonesian invasion. While increasingly difficult conditions forced most of the civilian population to come down from the mountains by the late 1970s, the ability to move freely within the territory was limited to varying degrees throughout the occupation period. The movement of individuals was closely monitored by the Indonesian military, using a combination of structural and tactical methods. As such, surveillance was not only a technique used by the Indonesian military to gather information about the resistance, but was also used, as Catherine Smith describes with reference to the conflict in Aceh, as ‘a mode of terror to militarize social spaces and shape the affective climate of everyday life’.¹³⁰ I draw here upon a rich body of anthropological scholarship on surveillance and terror, which observes the destructive effects of violent conflict on everyday life, as it breaks down everyday modes of understanding the

¹²⁹ Extracts from the Debate of the UN General Assembly, Special Committee on the Situation with Regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and People, 1340th Meeting, August 12, 1988. In *East Timor and the International Community: Basic Documents*, ed. Heike Krieger (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 173.

¹³⁰ Catherine Smith, “A Stranger in One’s Own Home: Surveillance, Space, Place, and Emotion during the GAM Conflict in Aceh,” *Indonesia* 100 (October 2015): 55.

world.¹³¹ Linda Green, for example, describes that for survivors of protracted violence, fear can become ‘a way of life’. She writes:

Fear destabilizes social relations by driving a wedge of distrust within families, between neighbors, among friends ... The spectacle of torture and death, and of massacres and disappearances in the recent past have become more deeply inscribed in individual bodies and the collective imagination through a constant sense of threat.¹³²

Here, Green comments on what she calls ‘the invisible violence of fear and intimidation’ in Guatemala. She explains that fear became ‘the metanarrative’ of her research; it was ‘the reality in which people live, the hidden state of (individual and social) emergency’.¹³³ These observations resonate with the narratives of East Timorese women. Through the identification of a number of formal and informal systems of surveillance and social control deployed by the Indonesian military in East Timor, I suggest similarly that these strategies inculcated ongoing fear within everyday life.

One of the strategies used to monitor the movement of the population was to release detainees from formal detention centres into ‘outside detention’ or ‘house arrest’ (*tahanan luar*). Under such conditions, detainees were allowed to live at home or with family members, but were still closely monitored by the military. One of my interview participants, Zulmira ‘Sirana’ da Cruz Sarmiento, described being captured in September 1978 and being taken to Aileu. Upon release, she lived with her female cousin in ‘outside detention’ until 1980.¹³⁴ Similarly, after being captured in January 1979, Maria de Fatima Kalsona was taken to several places of imprisonment before being moved to Dili, where some of her family members were staying after they had been released from prison. Maria was to live with her family but was still required report to the military, particularly when an incident occurred between the Indonesian military and the resistance fighters.¹³⁵ Both Sirana and Maria described the limitations that this form of punishment imposed upon their lives.

A system of compulsory self-reporting (*wajib lapor*) was also used by the Indonesian military to monitor the movement of those suspected of engaging in resistance activities, or

¹³¹ See, for example, Allen Feldman, *Formations of Violence: The Narrative of the Body and Political Terror in Northern Ireland* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1991); Monique Skidmore, *Karaoke Fascism: Burma and the Politics of Fear* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); and Antonius C.G.M. Robben, *Political Violence and Trauma in Argentina* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005).

¹³² Linda Green, “Fear as a Way of Life,” *Cultural Anthropology* 9, no. 2 (1994): 227.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Zulmira ‘Sirana’ da Cruz Sarmiento, interview with the author, Dili, December 5, 2012.

¹³⁵ Maria de Fatima Kalsona, interview with the author, Dili, May 23, 2012.

considered to have the potential to do so. Even some individuals who were not living under ‘outside detention’ were still required to report to the local military or police station on a regular basis. Some of my interview participants explained that it was always on a Monday,¹³⁶ others daily,¹³⁷ others simply when they were called upon to do so.¹³⁸ The CAVR Report similarly ‘found no consistency or clear pattern in how this system was applied’ across the territory.¹³⁹ In Baucau, several of my interview participants had been required to follow this procedure, and they recalled initially having to report at a specific location.¹⁴⁰ They might then have been required to stand in a line and salute the Indonesian flag, which may have been followed by a speech given by a commander about why they should not be involved in ‘politics’.¹⁴¹ Sometimes, this presentation would be accompanied by an interrogation session, in which they would be questioned about leaders from the mountains and whether they had maintained contact with them.¹⁴² ‘It was very important to present yourself’, one woman, Labo, told me: ‘You had to make sure that you didn’t forget to do this’.¹⁴³ In one interview, I was told that those who did not report on a particular day in Baucau were all killed, although this seems to be an isolated incident.¹⁴⁴ The reporting was intended, rather, to instil a sense of fear in the population through the construction of regulated yet informal systems of surveillance. Another of my interview participants, Maria de Fatima Kalsona, was required to report from her time of capture in 1979 until 1982 when her older brother, who had been living in the mountains, was also eventually captured. She reflected that it was not until this time that she ‘felt that [she] was really free’.¹⁴⁵ The practice appears to have been aimed at controlling and closely monitoring the movements of those who were suspected of engaging in resistance activities; as Josefa Álvares Pereira Soares explained, the strategy was ‘used by the enemy when they suspected anyone of being involved in clandestine’ activities.¹⁴⁶

These processes of regular reporting and ‘outside detention’ posed significant structural difficulties for many women in term of their capacity to sustain a regular life. Luisa Gonzaga, for example, remembered difficulties in physically moving about the territory, and

¹³⁶ Labo, interview with the author, Baucau, August 6, 2013.

¹³⁷ Josefa Álvares Pereira Soares, interview with the author, Dili, July 4, 2012.

¹³⁸ Maria de Fatima Kalsona, interview with the author, Dili, May 23, 2012.

¹³⁹ CAVR Report, 1504.

¹⁴⁰ Labo, interview with the author, Baucau, August 6, 2013.

¹⁴¹ Loudres ‘Merita’ Alves Araujo, interview with the author, Dili, July 6, 2012.

¹⁴² Bilela, interview with the author, Baucau, August 3, 2013.

¹⁴³ Labo, interview with the author, Baucau, August 6, 2013.

¹⁴⁴ Loudres ‘Merita’ Alves Araujo, interview with the author, Dili, July 6, 2012.

¹⁴⁵ Maria de Fatima Kalsona, interview with the author, Dili, May 23, 2012.

¹⁴⁶ Josefa Álvares Pereira Soares, interview with the author, Dili, July 4, 2012.

in her ability to access education and to gain employment. After being captured in the mountains, Luisa was detained in multiple locations that ranged from her home town in Los Palos to Dili because of her husband's position as a high level FALINTIL commander. After being released in 1982, Luisa explained, she had to report regularly:

Everyday I had to self-report at KORAMIL. There were people trying to help me to get a job, but I couldn't; they didn't accept me because my husband had run away to the forest so we were red marked (*garis merah*). They said they wouldn't allow me to get a job still and still, even to go to school I couldn't, to go work I couldn't.¹⁴⁷

Despite the fact that she was not being detained in one particular place, Luisa still recalled feeling the presence of the military watching her every move. She said that she was made to feel like 'a piece of smelly meat, people when they looked at me, they would cover their mouth'.¹⁴⁸

Other more formal restrictions and systems of surveillance were used by the occupying regime. Similar to other territories in Indonesia, all East Timorese over the age of seventeen were required to have a Resident Identity Card (*Kartu Tanda Penduduk* – KTP). Anyone not in possession of a card warranted immediate suspicion. This practice is reminiscent of restrictions placed upon Ex-Political Prisoners (*Eks Tahanan Politik* – ET) in Indonesia in the aftermath of the 30 September Movement. ETs had to carry an identity card at all times, which bore the special mark 'ET', and had to report periodically to the local police and military apparatus. Ariel Heryanto, in his study on *State Terrorism and Political Identity in Indonesia*, writes that even after being released from prison ETs were 'continually subject to further cycles of interrogation, abuse, and humiliation', including restrictions on freedom of movement, freedom of association, freedom of expression, and access to employment.¹⁴⁹ Similarly in Aceh after the introduction of martial law in the 1990s, when new identity cards were issued and everyone was obligated to carry these cards at all times, those not in possession of a card were immediately considered to have an association with the independence movement.¹⁵⁰ According to a representative from the Indonesian Human Rights Campaign, possession of a KTP – issued by village heads with the approval of more senior officials – was necessary for an individual in East Timor to participate in daily social life. To the UN General Assembly in August 1998, he explained: 'Anyone not possessing a

¹⁴⁷ Luisa Gonzaga, interview with the author, Dili, June 24, 2012.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ For a discussion of the impact of the mass killings upon public life in Indonesia, see Ariel Heryanto, *State Terrorism and Political Identity in Indonesia: Fatally Belonging* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 17.

¹⁵⁰ See Human Rights Watch, "Aceh Under Martial Law: Inside the Secret War," December 17, 2003, 12, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2003/12/17/aceh-under-martial-law-inside-secret-war>.

KTP is not able to get a job, to open a shop, to have a driving licence, to go to school. It must be carried at all times and must frequently be produced'.¹⁵¹ One of my interview participants from Baucau, Bilela, stressed this importance of carrying the card with you at all times. If you didn't have it, she explained, the military would think that you were from the mountains.¹⁵² Thus, the KTP was used as a system of classifying the broader Indonesian population, yet within East Timor, it was used further as a strategy to identify those who had not submitted to Indonesian authority and might therefore be excluded from the state.

Along with the KTP, people's movements were controlled by the Indonesian military through the use of a travel permission letter or permit (*surat ijin perjalanan – surat jalan*), which was required for any form of travel within the territory. This requirement came out of East Timor's designated status as a Military Operation Area (*Daerah Operasi Militer – DOM*).¹⁵³ The letter might be obtained by submitting an application to the village head, which would then need to be endorsed by the sub-district and the district military command. An individual's KTP and *surat jalan* were checked frequently along any journey within the territory. In explaining her journey from Pantemakassar to Dili in 1987, for example, Merita de Jesus Marques remembered check points along the way in Batugade, Maliana, Liquica, and Tibar, where she had been required to present both documents. This, she suspected, was simply another method of easily identifying those who might be members of FALINTIL.¹⁵⁴ Similar to comments made by Bilela in relation to the KTP, Merita understood that not having a *surat jalan* would clearly identify those who were excluded from the state. With these requirements, the Indonesian military was able to administratively monitor the lives, bodies, and movements of East Timorese people.

These methods of surveillance resonate strongly with strategies that were used by the Indonesian military in other parts of the archipelago throughout the New Order period. For example, Catherine Smith has described a surveillance strategy known as 'sweeping', which was used by the Indonesian security forces during the conflict in Aceh (1976–2005). The term 'sweeping' was used to refer to two modes of surveillance: 'roadblocks, which acted as military checkpoints while also restricting people's daily mobility and isolating particular towns; and door-to-door checks, in which soldiers entered people's homes, searched for

¹⁵¹ Extracts from the Debate of the UN General Assembly, Special Committee on the Situation with Regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and People, 1340th Meeting, August 12, 1988. In *East Timor and the International Community*, ed. Krieger, 173.

¹⁵² Bilela, interview with the author, Baucau, August 3, 2013.

¹⁵³ "Glossary," in *Violence and the State in Suharto's Indonesia*, ed. Anderson, 243.

¹⁵⁴ Merita de Jesus Marques, interview with the author, Dili, December 3, 2012.

rebels, and questioned ordinary Acehnese about their knowledge of rebel activity'.¹⁵⁵ The military's justification for these strategies was to gather information on the rebels, yet they also had a wide range of effects upon the everyday lives of Acehnese people. This practice of 'sweeping' was often accompanied by other forms of intimidation and interrogation, in a manner similar to the ways in which mechanisms of social control were deployed in occupied East Timor. These mechanisms contributed to a general atmosphere of fear and suspicion within Aceh, which parallels that in occupied East Timor. Indeed, Geoffrey Robinson argues that terror strategies used by the Indonesian security forces in Aceh had first been 'tried and proven' in East Timor.¹⁵⁶ The strategy of 'sweeping' appears to be a more refined version of the various methods of controlling movement and surveillance that were common practices of the military in East Timor. For Jacqueline Siapno, too, parallels in the patterns of state violence in Aceh and East Timor demonstrate that 'these are not the isolated acts of undisciplined soldiers, but a centralized, institutionalized system of terror and surveillance'.¹⁵⁷ In the below section, I explore more fully the implications of these particular modes of violence.

A Climate of Fear and Intimidation

The Indonesian military carefully cultivated a climate of fear and intimidation in the territory, which was aimed at securing the compliance and cooperation of East Timorese people. Some of the mechanisms used by the state were aimed at severely punishing those who were suspected of engaging in resistance activities; others were intended to create a climate in which the entire population understood that they were being closely watched, so as to prevent their participation in actions that might seek to undermine the occupying regime. As well as the structural mechanisms discussed above, which were used to control and monitor the daily activities of the population, the Indonesian military also made public the violent punishment of individuals who participated in resistance activities.

Several of my interview participants described witnessing acts of violence that were perpetrated by the Indonesian military. These memories were prominent within their

¹⁵⁵ Smith, "A Stranger in One's Own Home," 53.

¹⁵⁶ Robinson, "Rawan is as Rawan Does," 146.

¹⁵⁷ Cited in Jacqueline Siapno, "Gender, Nationalism, and the Ambiguity of Female Agency in Aceh, Indonesia, and East Timor," in *Frontline Feminisms: Women, War, and Resistance*, ed. Marguerite R. Waller and Jennifer Rycenga (New York and London, Garland Publishing: 2000), 281. An extended analysis of these parallels is provided in Jacqueline Siapno, "The Politics of Gender, Islam and Nation-State in Aceh, Indonesia: A Historical Analysis of Power, Co-optation and Resistance" (Ph.D., University of California, Berkeley, 1997).

narratives, emotional to recall, and had had severe implications for their perceptions of their safety and security under the regime of occupation. Rosa Xavier, for example, remembered the Indonesian military publicly displaying the dead bodies of FALINTIL soldiers in Laga when she was about seven years old. She remembered: ‘they killed FALINTIL people and cut their head and hung it around in town [sic] and said that if you are against the Indonesian military your life will be also like this’. She suspected that this was a method of intimidating people, of making them afraid.¹⁵⁸ This public display of bodily fragments by the Indonesian military suggests that there was still a perceived need to punish and to deter those who did not conform to Indonesian rule. In the case of West Papua, the Indonesian scholar Yohanes Budi Hernawan has written that torture was ‘deployed strategically by the Indonesian state ... as a mode of governance’,¹⁵⁹ and this summation also applies to East Timor under Indonesian rule.

Despite having been released from incarceration, several of my interview participants explained that they still felt ‘an eye being kept’ on them, or that they were being continually watched (*haree tuir-tuir* or *tau matan*). For example, despite being released from prison and living in Wailili around 1986, Josefa Álvares Pereira Soares recalled still feeling that the military was watching her.¹⁶⁰ This sentiment was also described by other women who had a connection to the resistance or were suspected by the military, due to either their personal or family background. Luisinha Freitas Mok, who also lived in Wailili, described the way in which she and her family had been required to be careful in their ‘actions in daily life’, to ensure that the Indonesian military ‘didn’t put their eye’ on them. Because Luisinha and her husband had been blacklisted or ‘red lined’ (*garis merah*) for their clandestine activities, she recalled that their movements at the time had been extremely controlled.¹⁶¹ Similarly, Durvalina Belo Magno remembered the inability of her family to ‘live peacefully’ in Liquica because she felt that they were ‘continually being watched’ by the military. She said that because of this, ‘we really didn’t feel that we were free, it was like we were still in jail’.¹⁶² These women described a constant sense of being watched, which had a severe impact upon their daily lives. It meant that they were always careful in what they did, who they spoke to, and ensured that they never felt at peace within their daily lives.

¹⁵⁸ Rosa Xavier, interview with the author, Dili, July 13, 2012.

¹⁵⁹ Yohanes Budi Hernawan, “From the Theatre of Torture to the Theatre of Peace: The Politics of Torture and Re-Imagining Peacebuilding in Papua, Indonesia” (Ph.D., Australian National University, 2013), 6.

¹⁶⁰ Josefa Álvares Pereira Soares, interview with the author, Dili, July 4, 2012.

¹⁶¹ Luisinha Freitas Mok, interview with the author, Baucau, August 4, 2013.

¹⁶² Durvalina Belo Magno, interview with the author, Dili, June 29, 2012.

This broader sense of fear was also described by other women when they were going about their daily lives – both in their homes, usually at night, and when walking in the streets, even if they themselves had not been active in resistance activities. Growing up in Dili, Benícia Eriana ‘Bebé’ Xavier dos Reis Magno described the constant presence of the military:

Every night. They came and patrolled the town – I mean, in those days, they came with big trucks, and full of military troops, and sometimes they just watched. In one line, there was maybe twenty or thirty people with complete equipment; like they are ready to go to war. It was ridiculous. But, back in those days, not so many things really made sense. But those people, they were loud. Even when they just walked, they would wear their big boots, and they like marched – it was around ten or eleven, or midnight... the sound was amazing. I mean, I was scared in those days, but when I saw them, I always shook, when I saw them from the window... ohh, my God they’re coming; they’re coming! We were afraid that at any time they could shoot us. But no, they didn’t, they just patrolled.... But it was so... for now, when I recall those days, they were crazy. They were cruel... it was like, physically, psychologically terroris[ing] people.¹⁶³

I asked one of my interview participants, Mana Maria, about the visibility of the military within the territory. She remembered seeing the Indonesian military ‘at every corner, every hill, every mountain’ during her childhood in the 1980s.¹⁶⁴ For Mana Maria, the physical presence of the military on the streets was a constant feature of life under occupation. The high military presence suggests insecurity on the part of the occupying regime about the degree to which they actually exercised a monopoly of force over the territory. Of life in Vermasse, Labo remembered that the military was everywhere, that she met them every day. As a result, she said that she had felt scared to walk alone at night.¹⁶⁵ The below image captures the prevalence of the Indonesian military and the threat of violence within the spaces of everyday life:

¹⁶³ Benícia Eriana ‘Bebé’ Xavier dos Reis Magno, interview with the author, Dili, July 1, 2012.

¹⁶⁴ Mana Maria, interview with the author, Dili, December 3, 2012.

¹⁶⁵ Labo, interview with the author, Baucau, August 6, 2013.



Image: Soldiers in Dili, 13 November 1989.¹⁶⁶

Many women associated this fear with the threat of violence, and particularly sexual violence. In Michele Turner's collection of interviews, 'Isabelle' described her fear in relation to life in Dili: 'It was not safe for young women to go out. If they are clean and well dressed soldiers just take them'.¹⁶⁷ Speaking with Michele Turner in exile, Domingas Maria Moniz recalled that the threat of rape was such that she never felt safe and could 'never sleep soundly'.¹⁶⁸ These descriptions parallel with Maria Root's concept of 'insidious trauma', which was taken up and expanded upon by Laura Brown to denote 'the traumatogenic effects of oppression that are not necessarily overtly violent or threatening to bodily well-being at the given moment but that do violence to the soul and spirit'.¹⁶⁹ In this sense, the frequency of sexual violence in occupied East Timor exposed other women to an 'insidious trauma', such that women who had not been raped themselves sometimes demonstrated similar symptoms of rape trauma. While a sense of being closely watched may have been felt by the population at large, there was a gender-specific fear of sexual violence described by East Timorese women.

Despite leaving the territory in 1983, one of my interview participants, Maria do Céu Lopes da Silva, made several trips back subsequently. She commented upon this sense of fear, which to her appeared pervasive:

¹⁶⁶ "Soldiers in Dili," November 13, 1989, in Box 9, 35: Photographs, Small envelope inside plastic bag labelled "East Timor pics 1989"); addressed to ACFOA Human Rights Office, Fitzroy, from Oliver Duffau (Anon?), in East Timor Collection, ACFOA Human Rights Office, Melbourne, CHART Office.

¹⁶⁷ "Isabella", in *Telling*, ed. Turner, 157.

¹⁶⁸ "Yellow with Frills," in *ibid.*, 158.

¹⁶⁹ Laura Brown, "Not Outside the Range: One Feminist Perspective on Psychic Trauma," in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, ed. Cathy Caruth (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 107. See also Maria Root, "Reconstructing the Impact of Trauma on Personality," in *Personality and Psychopathology: Feminist Reappraisals*, ed. Laura S. Brown and Mary Ballou (New York: Guilford, 1992), 227–65.

[It was] always tense. Always tense, always, ahh... people looked over their shoulders when they walked. I myself had to do it, because I kept meeting one or two faces wherever I went. Tense, err, unhappy, and fear can drive you to exceptional, terrible things. With fear you lie quite a lot, and then it becomes a habit. You have to lie in order to survive first, with Indonesia. You had to lie in order to survive, it was a habit in order to get, err, get away with what you want, what you decided to do.¹⁷⁰

Upon her return to the territory, Maria observed that society had changed profoundly, particularly in the ‘state of nervousness’ that was evident when people walked. She said, ‘you could see the Indonesians all strutting with their muscles and the Timorese were all like this [*mimics being hunched over*] and I could see who, without people showing to me – I could say who was involved, just by looking at them’.¹⁷¹ Maria observed that this constant sense of fear and suspicion seemed almost physically manifest in the bodies of East Timorese people. These comments, made by an insider who was essentially an outsider as well, strongly attest to the broad changes that occurred within the nature of society as a result of the occupying regime.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have explored the violence, most particularly through a gender lens, of the Indonesian military occupation of East Timor. I have suggested that although there were parallels in the strategies and implications of the military violence deployed throughout the New Order state, in East Timor the situation was slightly different. Here, both the direct application and the threat of violence were more readily used, and more readily identified, as tools of an occupying regime. Although there were a number of shifts in the way that the Indonesian military operated in East Timor, violence remained a constant feature of the period. I examined direct acts of violence in the forms of interrogation, detention, torture and ill-treatment, as well as the particular rhetorical strategies that East Timorese women used when recalling these experiences. For East Timorese women, these structures of military violence often involved a gender-specific dimension: the threat of rape, sexual slavery, sexual torture, and harassment. I also highlighted the way in which women were targeted for specific acts of violence either because of their alleged involvement in the independence movement, or because of their relationship to fighters in the mountains. Thus, women could often

¹⁷⁰ Maria do Céu Lopes da Silva, interview with the author, Dili, July 20, 2013.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

become the victims of violence as a proxy, as the Indonesian military's means of targeting both male relatives and the resistance at large.

I also explored the way in which the occupying regime constructed and maintained systems of regulation, surveillance, and social control within the territory. In doing so, I suggested that the direct application and the threat of violence formed part of a larger strategy of control utilised by the Indonesian military regime in East Timor. These structures and processes of violence, I suggested, can be seen as attempts to manage the everyday lives of East Timorese people. I drew upon the findings of the CAVR in classifying and contextualising these practices. I suggested, too, that it is important to consider the communicative, commemorative, and representative modes specific to East Timorese culture. In paying closer attention to such specific social, political, and cultural contexts which shape the possibilities for storytelling, as well as the particular narrative strategies and structures deployed by East Timorese women, we might hope to develop a more nuanced understanding of women's experiences of conflict and military occupation more broadly.

Chapter Four: Living in the Shadow of Violence: Women and Everyday Life under Indonesian Rule

On 26 March 1979 the Indonesian government declared that East Timor had been ‘pacified’, and the military began to consolidate and to ‘normalise’ its control over the territory.¹ By this time, most of the civilian population had retreated from the mountains – either because they had been captured by the Indonesian military or had surrendered – and returned to their original villages, new villages, or resettlement areas under Indonesian control. While the presence of the Indonesian National Armed Forces (*Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia* – ABRI) remained high, state institutions were established and a number of national development policies and programmes were implemented. As the Indonesian government established the architectural and administrative infrastructure of occupation in East Timor, Indonesian state ideology, national language, and culture began to infiltrate the daily lives and homes of East Timorese people through a variety of state-sponsored forms of collective coercion, indoctrination, and social control.² Despite these intrusions, some East Timorese women described feeling comparatively happier during this time. Life regained some degree of normality, and the direct violence of the earlier period of conflict was less prevalent. This chapter explores the spaces, practices, and institutions of everyday life, in order to assess the gendered and gendering effects of occupying power and control in East Timor.

In this chapter, I suggest that the infrastructure of the Indonesian military occupation, and its impact on East Timorese women, needs to be understood within the context of the gender ideology of Suharto’s New Order regime. Initially, I provide an overview of the social constructions of gender ideals, perceptions of women’s roles in society, and their relationship of these to the state under the New Order regime. I then explore the application of these ideas to the East Timorese context, focusing specifically on a number of women’s organisations, as well as programmes for development and modernisation that were implemented within the territory. Although these organisations and programmes were introduced amid high levels of militarisation and, at times, a disregard for the distinctiveness of East Timorese people and cultural traditions, I suggest that they also provided new spaces for social organisation, opportunities for education and employment, and new forms of social mobility for East

¹ Commission for Reception, Truth, and Reconciliation in Timor-Leste (CAVR), *Chega! The Final Report of the Timor-Leste Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation, Vol. 1* (Jakarta: KPG in cooperation with STP-CAVR, 2013), 255.

² See Eeric Carlton, “Introduction: Ideology and Control,” in *Occupation: The Policies and Practices of Military Conquerors*, ed. Eeric Carlton (London: Routledge, 1992), 1–5.

Timorese women. In many ways, this raised standards of living, as well as increasing access to education and the availability of healthcare for many East Timorese women. Among many East Timorese, however, this agenda was interpreted instead as a mechanism for imposing Indonesian identity and for suppressing any expression of cultural or political opposition to the state.

The Infrastructure of Occupation

In this chapter, I use the term ‘infrastructure of occupation’ to refer not only to the physical architecture and administrative apparatus that was used to establish and maintain control in East Timor, but also to the policies, structures, and institutions of the military occupation. These mechanisms can also be seen as components central to the perpetuation of power and militarily enforced uniformity. The effect of this broader analytic frame, I suggest, is that it reveals some of the complexities of the impact of occupation on people; a process in line with the work of Christine de Matos and Rowena Ward, who similarly explore policies, structures, institutions, and daily interactions under occupation.³ In this section, I explore the infrastructure of the Indonesian occupation of East Timor and the changes that were introduced to the territory as Indonesia consolidated and solidified its rule.

After several years of conflict and the displacement of a large portion of the civilian population, the Indonesian military gained control over the majority of territory, and *Timor Timur* (East Timor) purportedly became the twenty-seventh province of Indonesia.⁴ From the mid-1980s, the Indonesian state commenced a process of ‘normalisation and consolidation’.⁵ This process included the introduction of policies, structures, and institutions in line with those throughout the Republic, but with significant differences that arose from the militarised context of the conflict, an intense distrust of the military apparatus of the Indonesian state on the part of the East Timorese people, and the distinctiveness of the East Timorese culture and people from the rest of the archipelago. The final report of the Timor-Leste Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation (*Comissão de Acolhimento, Verdade e Reconciliação – CAVR*) describes this process, from approximately 1985–89, as a distinct phase of large-scale, structural violence in East Timor. In this period, significant political shifts and changes

³ Christine de Matos and Rowena Ward, “Analyzing Gendered Occupation Power,” in *Gender, Power, and Military Occupations: Asia Pacific and the Middle East since 1945*, ed. Christine de Matos and Rowena Ward (New York: Routledge, 2012), 3, 4, 6.

⁴ “Regulation No. 7 1976 on Ratification of East Timor’s Unification into the Republic of Indonesia and the Formation of the Province Regional Level 1, of East Timor (LN No. 35/1976),” cited in CAVR Report, 132.

⁵ CAVR Report, 489.

took place in the nature of occupation power, and there were less human rights violations perpetrated by the Indonesian military upon East Timorese people – or, at least, the dominant nature and form of these violations changed.⁶ In Chapter Three, I outlined the way in which this phase predominantly consisted of targeted detentions and the physical abuse of suspected members of and collaborators with the resistance movement, as opposed to the high levels of physical violations and severe geographic dislocation that characterised the late 1970s. While instances of physical violence were less prevalent, insidious and omnipresent forms of surveillance and social control remained enduring features of everyday life. At this time, the Indonesian state began to lay the infrastructure of occupation by implementing a number of national development programmes, state institutions, an education programme, and transmigration programmes in the territory. As I discuss in this chapter, these developments were informed by the governing structures of the New Order regime and by the development goals, gender ideology, and philosophy of the state.

For most of the Portuguese period, the colonial government had a rather limited impact upon the day-to-day lives of many East Timorese people. As Cecilia Gonçalves explained, Portuguese colonialism was seldom felt at an everyday level, and there were so few Portuguese soldiers in the territory that Portuguese colonial rule had little effect on daily life, especially outside Dili.⁷ It was not until the late nineteenth century that the Portuguese colonial administration intensified and extended its control.⁸ As a result of this limited development, there was little architectural infrastructure or established processes of governance which the Indonesian government could initially use to implement state-driven development and modernisation programmes. Government administration under the New Order regime was highly centralised, and it took several years before the Jakarta-based structure was able to become effectively operational in East Timor.⁹ Even after obtaining control over the physical territory, the military retained ultimate control of the administration in what can be seen as an expansion and intensification of the doctrine of dual function (*dwi-fungsi*), in which ABRI was officially accorded an important social and political role, in addition to its military role.¹⁰ By the early 1980s, the state began to establish institutions in

⁶ CAVR Report, 532.

⁷ Cecilia Gonçalves, interview with the author, Melbourne, July 22, 2010.

⁸ For an overview of developments that took place in the late colonial period, see Frederik Durand, *East Timor [Cartographic Material]: A Country at the Crossroads of Asia and the Pacific: A Geo-Historical Atlas* (Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 2006).

⁹ CAVR Report, 395.

¹⁰ For a discussion of the army as a socio-political force during the New Order, see Harold Crouch, *The Army and Politics in Indonesia*, rev. ed. (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1978), 24–42.

East Timor, such as a provincial government, a regional parliament, and departments of public service; as well as public infrastructure, such as roads, bridges, buildings, hospitals, and schools.¹¹ The introduction of development and modernisation programmes was premised upon the ideological understanding a shared culture across the archipelago which, as John Taylor argues, can be seen as part of a strategy to systematically destroy the social fabric of East Timorese society.¹² In this chapter, I explore the policies, structures, and institutions of the occupying regime, and particularly their impact on East Timorese women's lives.

A series of documents produced by the Indonesian Department of Information throughout the occupation shed light upon the justification and strategies of the state's integrationist approach. The documents outline an attempt to assert a sense of pan-archipelagic identity, and describe the under-development of East Timor as justifying immediate and extensive assistance from the state. These English language documents explained the integration of East Timor into the Republic of Indonesia in historical, cultural, legal, and humanitarian terms. For example, a 1979 document entitled, *To Build a Better Tomorrow in East Timor*, claimed that the East and West Timorese were 'essentially the same people, separated only by the artificial barriers, raised by colonial powers'.¹³ The document explained that the integration of East Timor into Indonesia was in accordance with 'the true wishes of the people of East Timor'.¹⁴ Subsequently, the Indonesian government embarked upon a scheme 'to reconstruct and rebuild' the territory, 'in order to pursue its development and therefore diminishing as far as possible their backward conditions and to achieve an equal standard with the people in other parts of Indonesia'.¹⁵ Similar sentiments were expressed in a 1984 document produced by the appointed Regional Government of East Timor Province, which outlined 'the development activities being undertaken in this region' and 'the results enjoyed by the people of East Timor'.¹⁶ The documents described a number of programmes which were introduced in the fields of governance and security, trade and economics, agriculture, transport, information and communication, public works, education, health, and religion. This rhetoric of development, modernisation, and uniformity was

¹¹ See CAVR Report, 256 and 396.

¹² John G. Taylor, *Indonesia's Forgotten War: The Hidden History of East Timor* (London: Atlantic Highlands, 1991), 198.

¹³ Department of Information, Republic of Indonesia, *To Build a Better Tomorrow in East Timor* (Jakarta: Department of Information, 1979), 1.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 1–2.

¹⁶ The Regional Government of East Timor Province, *East Timor Develops* (Dili: Regional Government of East Timor Province, July 17, 1984).

prominent within official Indoensian state discourse which was, in turn, underpinned by notions of gender and ideas about the role of women within processes of development and modernisation. The following section discusses the gender ideology of the New Order regime, and how this ideology shaped the conceptualisation and implementation of state policies, programmes, and institutions in East Timor.

The Gender Ideology of the New Order Regime

The gender ideology of Suharto's New Order state was promoted in East Timor through the introduction of programmes, organisations, and institutions that aimed to indoctrinate the population, as well as to reinforce and to disseminate particular gender ideals. New Order ideas of gender and notions of femininity were not entirely dissimilar from the sexual and gender politics of Portuguese colonialism and Catholicism, yet the methods of transmission and extent of penetration into the lives and homes of East Timorese women differed markedly from even the latter decades of more intense Portuguese colonial rule.¹⁷ The broader climate of fear in which this gender ideology was introduced, the militarisation of associated programmes and institutions, and the coercive nature with which they were enforced, meant that they were not effective in securing the unity, uniformity, national cohesion, and support that the New Order state required. In fact, I suggest that the political tools of the state were sometimes used simultaneously or even reappropriated as symbols and sites for unity by the resistance. In this section, I outline the gender ideology of the New Order state, and highlight several key organisations that were used to implement state policies and programmes. I then discuss their implementation in East Timor, in what can be seen as processes of state-sponsored socialisation, technologies of indoctrination, and mechanisms of social control. These processes, I suggest, were used to organise and govern the East Timorese population as part of a broader political programme of integration and assimilation.

Scholars who have written about the gender ideology of the New Order in Indonesia, such as Julia Suryakusuma, Saskia Wieringa, Susan Blackburn, and Kathryn Robinson, argue that the state played a central role in the social construction of womanhood, and that it introduced policies and institutions that reinforced this model.¹⁸ In 'officially sanctioned

¹⁷ See Clara Sarmiento, ed., *Women in the Portuguese Colonial Empire: The Theatre of Shadows* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008).

¹⁸ Julia Suryakusuma, "State Ibuism: Appropriating and Distorting Womanhood in New Order Indonesia," in *Sex, Power and Nation: An Anthology of Writings 1979–2003*, ed. Julia Suryakusuma (Jakarta: Metaphor Publishing, 2004), 161–88; Julia Suryakusuma "The State and Sexuality in New Order Indonesia," in

versions of femininity', Kathryn Robinson writes, Indonesian women were symbolised as 'subordinate to men within the family and the state, with their primary civic duties performed in their roles as wives and mothers'. Women's citizenship was seen as a maternal one, reinforcing the idea that the central pillar of the New Order was the family foundation of the state.¹⁹ A series of documents published by Indonesia's Department of Information on *The Women of Indonesia*, for example, outlined the role and responsibility of women to the development of 'strong national unity'.²⁰ This conception of women's roles has been criticised extensively by both Indonesian and international feminist scholars. In her seminal 1988 thesis, for example, Julia Suryakusuma analyses New Order policies on women in the context of the regime's overall ideology, famously coining the term 'state *ibuism*' to describe the way in which the dominant gender ideology defined women as *ibu*, literally 'mother', but also 'wife'.²¹ Suryakusuma influentially argues, first, that the middle-class values contained within this gender ideology and the organisations and programmes that reinforced it 'did not fit with the realities of poor urban and rural women'; and second, that this form of social and political engineering of women was 'part and parcel of efforts by the military bureaucratic New Order state to exercise power and control over the Indonesian people'.²² It is important to note, therefore, that there were significant differences between the gendered ideals of the state and the realities of daily life for many Indonesian women. Critically, however, as Saskia Wieringa discusses, constructions of gender and notions of femininity were central to both the mechanisms and imagery of social control that unpinned the power of the New Order regime.²³

Fantatising the Feminine in Indonesia, ed. Laurie J. Sears (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), 92–119; Saskia Wieringa, "The Birth of the New Order State in Indonesia: Sexual Politics and Nationalism," in *Journal of Women's History* 15, no. 1 (2003): 70–91; Saskia Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia* (Houndmills: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003); Susan Blackburn, *Women and the State in Modern Indonesia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Kathryn Robinson, "Indonesian Women's Rights, International Feminism and Democratic Change," *Communal/Plural* 6, no. 2 (1998): 205–23; Kathryn Robinson, "Women: Difference versus Diversity," in *Indonesia Beyond Suharto: Polity, Economy, Society, Transition*, ed. Donald K. Emmerson (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1999), 237–61; and Kathryn Robinson, *Gender, Islam and Democracy in Indonesia* (Routledge: London and New York, 2009).

¹⁹ Robinson, *Gender, Islam and Democracy in Indonesia*, 68.

²⁰ Department of Information, Republic of Indonesia, *The Women of Indonesia* (Jakarta: Department of Information, Republic of Indonesia, 1985), 8 and 13.

²¹ Julia Suryakusuma, *State Ibuism: The Social Construction of Womanhood in New Order Indonesia* (Depok: Komunitas Bambu, 2011), 1. This text was first written as Julia Suryakusuma, "State Ibuism: The Social Construction of Womanhood in the Indonesian New Order" (M.A., Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, 1988).

²² *Ibid.*, 10.

²³ Saskia Wieringa, "IBU or the Beast: Gender Interests in Two Indonesian Women's Organizations," *Feminist Review* 41 (1992): 98–113.

In accordance with this gender ideology, the Indonesian state introduced policies and exerted control over organisations that restricted women's role in public life and specified their participation in these processes, most concretely within the government's series of Five-Year Development Plans (*Rencana Pembangunan Lima Tahun* – REPELITA) that were in place from 1974–98. The emphasis and framing of the role of Indonesian women in national development and modernisation processes shifted across the course of these plans; REPELITA III (1978–83) was particularly significant as it was the first time that a specific chapter on Health, Social Welfare and the Role of Women was incorporated. In a 1979 speech, the then-Minister of Economics, Finance and Industry, Widjojo Nitisastro, stressed the importance of giving women opportunities to participate in development: 'Women make up the bigger part of the Indonesian population' and, therefore, they 'must also be perceived as important capital for development and we need to push their potential further, so that they can be truly valuable to the development effort'.²⁴ From 1975, women's issues – or 'activities for the enhancement of the role of women' – were segregated into and coordinated by the State Ministry for the Role of Women (*Menteri Peranan Wanita*), which was upgraded to a cabinet position in 1983. Subsequently, the government officially sanctioned the Indonesian Women's Congress (*Kongres Wanita Indonesia* – KOWANI) as the representative of a federation of independent organisations.²⁵ KOWANI advocated the *Panca Dharma Wanita* (Five Responsibilities of Women), which included: first, women as loyal companions of the husband; second, women as procreators for the nation; third, women as educators and guides of children; fourth, women as regulators of the household; and fifth, women as useful members of society.²⁶ Under the umbrella of KOWANI, women's organisations were encouraged to support and assist in the implementation of government policies: wives of civil servants were required to join *Dharma Wanita* (Dutiful Women) and military (army, police and air force) wives were required to join *Dharma Pertiwi* (Duty to the Homeland); at the village level, women were organised into branches of the Family Welfare Movement (*Pembinaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga* – PKK).²⁷ Through these organisations, women were

²⁴ Comments by the Minister of Economics, Finance and Industry and/Chairman of BAPPENAS made at the 1979 KADIN (Chamber of Commerce and Industry) Congress, trans. Harry Bhaskara, "Equitable Distribution Programme (1979), in Widjojo Nitisastro, *The Indonesian Development Experience: A Collection of Writings and Speeches of Widjojo Nitisastro* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies; London: Eurospan, 2011), 268.

²⁵ KOWANI was founded in 1928 as a federation of organisations of education women, but after Suharto's takeover of power, it became an ideological and political tool for the New Order regime.

²⁶ Suryakusuma, *State Ibuism*, 16.

²⁷ Indonesia built a civil service in East Timor that was nearly twice as large in relation to population as the national civil servants. In 1981 there were 780 civil servants; by 1997 there were over 33,602. Kantor Statistik

urged to participate in the national development process, but enjoined never to forget their *kodrat* (true nature) as wives and as mothers.²⁸

Dharma Wanita was established in 1974 as a voluntary organisation but, as Binny Buchori and Ifa Soenarto explain, membership was essentially obligatory for all wives of civil servants.²⁹ The organisation was based on the notion that ‘all civil servants and their wives should share the same ideology’, so as to eliminate conflict that might obstruct the objective of national development.³⁰ The organisation aimed to cultivate a sense of community, belonging, and responsibility, to enhance women’s participation in national development, and to ‘raise consciousness and a sense of responsibility to the state’.³¹ Founded in 1957 and thus predating the New Order regime, the PKK was the prime vehicle through which government programmes were channelled to the grassroots level.³² In March 1981, President Suharto described the PKK as the best way to organise women’s activities to increase their participation in national development.³³ As such, PKK programmes were designed to reinforce state development by building capacity and improving living conditions in the rural areas, including: teaching women the national ideology; mutual self-help (*gotong-royong*); nutrition; clothing; housing and home economics; education and skills; primary health care; promotion of cooperatives; protection and conservation of the environment; and appropriate domestic planning.³⁴ Despite fundamental ideological differences, Saskia Wieringa highlights parallels between the activities of the PKK, which were aimed at ‘the immediate perceived needs of women’, and those of the left-wing Indonesian Women’s Movement (*Gerakan Wanita Indonesia* – Gerwani), which had been banned and many thousands of its members brutally killed in the violence of 1965–66.³⁵ Drawing upon Wieringa’s analysis, a history of women’s organising in Indonesia can be observed which aimed, in part, to address what

Timor Timur [East Timor Statistics Bureau], *Timor Timur Dalam Angka 1983* [East Timor in Figures 1983] (Dili: Kantor Statistik Propinsi Timor Timur, 1983), 32.

²⁸ See Wieringa, “IBU or the Beast.”

²⁹ Binny Buchori and Ifa Soenarto, “Dharma Wanita: An Asset or a Curse?,” in *Indonesian Women: The Journey Continues*, ed. Mayling Oey-Gardiner and Carla Bianpoen (Canberra: Australian National University, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, 2000), 140.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Suryakusuma, *State Ibuism*, 19.

³² Carla Bianpoen, “The Family Welfare Movement: A Blessing or a Curse?,” in *Indonesian Women*, ed. Oey-Gardiner and Bianpoen, 158.

³³ *The Indonesian Times*, March 3, 1981, cited in United States International Development Cooperation Agency for International Development, *Indonesia: Comprehensive Health Improvement Program Project*, Project Paper (Washington D.C., September 1981), 18.

³⁴ Suryakusuma, *State Ibuism*, 36.

³⁵ Wieringa, “IBU or the Beast,” 110.

Maxine Molyneux has called the ‘practical gender interests’ of Indonesian women.³⁶ As discussed in the Introduction, the leftist Popular Organisation for East Timorese Women (*Organização Popular da Mulher Timorense* – OPMT) was similarly repressed and its members targeted by the Indonesian military from the initial days of the invasion. While *Dharma Wanita* and the PKK were supposedly separate organisations under the New Order regime, Julia Suryakusuma suggests that there was significant overlap in membership and, indeed, both were informed by the prescriptions of the gender ideology of the state. The structure of these organisations reflected the Indonesian administration, with organisations at the provincial, district, sub-district, and village levels, and the wives the respective administrative posts heading the relevant branch of the women’s organisation; for example, the wife of the district administrator was the leader of the district branch of *Dharma Wanita*, and the wife of the village head or chief was the leader of the local branch of the PKK.³⁷

It is important to note, as Susan Blackburn reminds us, that despite the gender ideals and their replicating organisations, state gender ideology ‘could not, however, govern the minds of all Indonesian women’.³⁸ The rapid economic growth that took place in Indonesia under Suharto’s regime gave rise to a number of highly-educated women. Especially from the 1980s, some women took a more independent view of their role in society and publicly raised opinions that differed from those sanctioned by the state.³⁹ Yet for the most part, Blackburn writes, Indonesian women’s organisations were neither well-informed about nor even particularly interested in Indonesia’s annexation of East Timor and the violence that followed – most likely due, in part, to the fact that the violence was not reported in the Indonesian media – and they therefore publicly supported the position of the Indonesian state.⁴⁰ At the United Nations (UN) Third World Conference on Women that was held in Nairobi from 15–26 July 1985, for example, representatives from KOWANI stressed that an act of self-determination had taken place in East Timor that conformed to UN resolutions and, subsequently, that the Indonesian government had initiated development efforts ‘aimed at enhancing the welfare of the people and at restoring their dignity, human rights and fundamental freedoms’. Members of KOWANI, ‘driven by a strong sense of responsibility to

³⁶ Maxine Molyneux, “Mobilization Without Emancipation? Women’s Interests, State and Revolution in Nicaragua,” in *New Social Movements and the State in Latin America*, ed. David Slater (Amsterdam: CEDLA, 1985), 240.

³⁷ Suryakusuma, *State Ibuism*, 40–1. This structure was replicated in East Timor See Maria de Fátima, personal communication with the author via Bernadete ‘Dete’ Rafu Fatima Luan, January 27, 2016.

³⁸ Blackburn, *Women and the State*, 27.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 201, 213–14.

help in uplifting the living condition of their sisters in East Timor [sic]', conducted fund-raising activities to address basic needs, education, management and skills training, and arranged study visits for the women of East Timor.⁴¹ The ability of members of KOWANI members to challenge the state on the East Timor issue was limited by the close relationship between the two, and the 'official' Indonesian women's movement and the main women's organisations presented no public opposition to the annexation of East Timor and the violence that accompanied it.

This approach to East Timor by Indonesian women changed slightly towards the end of the Suharto era, when a number of newly-formed Indonesian women's 'cause' groups, known as Self-Reliant Social Institutions (*Lembaga Swadaya Masyarakat* – LSMs), spoke out in condemnation of the violence in East Timor alongside an increasing emphasis upon combatting violence against women in Indonesia more broadly.⁴² The establishment of a National Commission on Violence against Women on 9 October 1998, containing well-known feminist activists and representatives from East Timor, was important in increasing awareness and recognition of military violence against women in East Timor.⁴³ Subsequently, the UN Special Rapporteur for Violence against Women, Radhika Coomaraswamy, visited Indonesia and East Timor from 20 November–4 December 1998, 'to study the issue of violence against women as perpetrated or condoned by the State'. Coomaraswamy reported the use of rape as 'an instrument of torture and intimidation by certain elements of the Indonesian army' in East Timor. She also noted the 'commitment and dedication' of newly-formed women's and human rights groups, in 'their efforts to develop a sensitive human rights culture in Indonesia'.⁴⁴ For the most part, state-sponsored women's organisations were formed to transmit and perpetuate New Order gender ideology, and to facilitate and structure women's participation in the state in accordance with these norms. The permeation of the New Order state into the lives of Indonesian women in an attempt to structure political action

⁴¹ National Council of Women of Indonesia (Kowani), "The National Council of Women of Indonesia (Kowani) on the Right of East Timor People to Self-Determination and on the Real Situation of the Province of East Timor, Indonesia," Nairobi, July 1985, in AMRT.

⁴² Blackburn, *Women and the State*, 27–8.

⁴³ Ibid., 207.

⁴⁴ Radhika Coomaraswamy, *Integration of the Human Rights of Women and the Gender Perspective: Violence against Women*, Report of the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, its Causes and Consequences, Addendum to *Mission to Indonesia and East Timor on the Issue of Violence against Women*, United Nations Economic and Social Council, E/CN.4/1999/68, January 21, 1999. One exception occurred in 1999, when an Indonesian group called the Mothers and Women of Indonesia (*Kaum Ibu dan Seluruh Perempuan Indonesia* – SERUNI) held a demonstration and issued a public statement to General Wiranto, Minister of Defence, expressing their shame, sadness, and concern at the 'continuing bloodshed in East Timor' and demanded an immediate end to the violence. See "Statement of Mothers and Women of Indonesia (Seruni) to General Wiranto, Minister of Defence, Chief of the Indonesian Army," September 8, 1999, in *Action Alerts and Updates*, <http://www.converge.org.nz/pma/etmoth.htm>.

and engagement, and to control the public life of the population, meant that any concern by Indonesian women for women in East Timor was framed in terms of their poverty, backwardness, and under-development – items which required management and attention, but not recognition in any political sense. Indonesian state ideology, as well as its associated women's organisations and programmes, were thus introduced to East Timor as part of the infrastructure of the occupying regime. I discuss these organisations in more detail below.

Women's Organisations in East Timor

Key instruments for the New Order regime's infiltration into the daily lives of its citizens and for carrying out its modernisation and development goals – *Dharma Wanita*, *Dharma Pertiwi* and the PKK – were introduced to East Timor after the annexation of the territory. The structure of these organisations reflected the hierarchical structure of the administrative state, although with more overlap and convergence than in Indonesia. Maria Helena Stoffel Cidrak, the wife of East Timor's Governor, Mario Viegas Carrascalao, was appointed chairwoman of both *Dharma Wanita* and the PKK. East Timorese women were urged to join the organisations 'to help improve the health and welfare of villagers' and the welfare of families.⁴⁵



Image: *Dharma Wanita* meeting in East Timor, n.d.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ "Civil Servants' Wives Urged to Improve Family Life," *UCA News*, September 5, 1990.

⁴⁶ In AMRT.

Programmes focused on rural community development, including health care, nutrition, and education: ‘We visit the villages once a year and donate 1,000,000 rupiah (US\$540) to each village for the construction of health centers, bathing, washing, and toilet facilities, and courses on cooking and planting’, Cidrak explained in a 1990 interview with the *Union of Catholic Asian News*. PKK members also provided guidance and information on ‘how to live a healthy life’ and conducted informal education programmes in the rural areas.⁴⁷ Some Indonesian women were assigned to East Timor to represent the PKK and to implement their programmes. Endira Sulaksono, for example, whose account is included in Malying Oey-Gardiner and Carla Bianpoen’s collection on Indonesian women’s roles in society, was involved in the non-formal education sector of the PKK. Endira explained that she was dedicated to ‘improving the status of women in Indonesia’, and this included her ‘sisters’ in East Timor.⁴⁸

Although several scholars discuss these organisations as part of the New Order regime more broadly and alongside studies of the women’s movement in Indonesia, there is little analysis of their activities in the East Timorese context. In her article on gender issues in East Timor, Helen Hill argued that ‘the close relationship of these organizations to the army meant that few Timorese women were interested in them’, which she claims almost completely eliminated their capacity to address rural women’s practical needs.⁴⁹ In my interviews, however, some women had quite positive memories of participating in activities that were organised by *Dharma Wanita* and the PKK. Growing up in Liquica, for example, Emilita Mendes fondly recalled the sporting activities that were organised by *Dharma Wanita*, such as volleyball and basketball tournaments, as well as singing.⁵⁰ When Emilita was in senior high school, and not yet a member of *Dharma Wanita*, she nonetheless described herself and her friends as ‘supporters’ of the organisation. Members of *Dharma Wanita* asked high school students to participate in competitions with students from other districts, and Emilita explained that she had happily obliged.⁵¹ Maria de Fátima was a member of *Dharma Wanita* in Liquica, and she recalled learning about traditional medicine, gardening, cooking, family hygiene and sanitation, education, and sporting activities. She noted that as opposed to

⁴⁷ “Civil Servants’ Wives Urged to Improve Family Life,” *UCA News*, September 5, 1990.

⁴⁸ Carla Bianpoen, “The Family Welfare Movement,” in *Indonesian Women*, ed. Oey-Gardiner and Bianpoen, 170.

⁴⁹ Helen Hill, “Gender Issues in Timor-Leste and the Pacific Islands: ‘Practical Needs’ and ‘Strategic Interests’ Revisited,” in *Research on Timor-Leste*, ed. Michael Leach, Nuno Canas Mendes, Antero B. da Silva, Bob Boughton, and Alarico da Costa Ximenes (Hawthorn: Swinburne Press, 2012), 218.

⁵⁰ Emilita Mendes, interview with the author, Liquica, July 15, 2012.

⁵¹ Emilita Mendes, email communication with the author via Bernadete Rafu Fatima Luan, January 16, 2016.

Dharma Wanita, for which membership was restricted to wives of civil servants, the PKK was more inclusive, as it was seen to belong to the community.⁵² Josefa Álvares Pereira Soares recalled the activities and training for women on matters of daily life, family, and society that *Dharma Wanita* provided in Baucau, and the effectiveness of such programmes: ‘it worked’, she said, ‘We can’t deny it’.⁵³ In some instances, these organisations fostered a sense of engagement, provided a site for socialisation, and an opportunity to learn new household skills that some women felt benefitted them and their families.

Our understanding of East Timorese women’s opposition to joining these organisations could consider the nature of particular organisations, and the specific sector of society with which they were concerned. In terms of compulsory membership, rather than being seen as refusing to join *Dharma Wanita*, Maria de Fátima described some women as choosing to be ‘passive participants’. ‘They were members but they never took part in any activities and they didn’t get punished for that’, she explained. However, Maria recalled that membership of *Dharma Pertiwi* had been enforced more strictly, and if wives did not join then their husbands’ careers may have suffered for it. She suggested that this requirement could perhaps be attributed to the civil and community nature of *Dharma Wanita* and the PKK, as opposed to *Dharma Pertiwi*’s explicit affiliation with the military.⁵⁴ Maria suggested that perhaps, some East Timorese women’s opposition was not necessarily because they did not support the organisation’s aims and activities, but that they opposed the Javanese nature of associated symbols and practices. These included, for example, encouraging women to wear traditional Javanese clothes, including the *kebaya* (a blouse, usually worn with a *sarong* or skirt) and *sanggul* (a hair piece), for official ceremonies. These forms of dress, Jacqueline Siapno has written, can be seen as a key site for the production of a ‘national Indonesian woman’.⁵⁵ The introduction of official Indonesian women’s organisations was therefore seen by East Timorese women, in part, as an accompaniment to the regime of occupation, but as a much less violent feature than other institutions of social control. They constituted an institution through which some women could socialise, interact, and share knowledge. The compulsory nature of membership was problematic for some women, but the extent to which they involved themselves in the organisations’ activities depended upon the nature of the organisation and the affiliated branch of the Indonesian administration.

⁵² Maria de Fátima, email communication with the author via Bernadete Rafu Fatima Luan, January 27, 2016.

⁵³ Josefa Álvares Pereira Soares, interview with the author, Dili, July 4, 2012, Dili.

⁵⁴ Maria de Fátima, email communication with the author via Bernadete Rafu Fatima Luan, January 27, 2016.

⁵⁵ Jacqueline Siapno, “Gender, Nationalism, and the Ambiguity of Female Agency,” in *Frontline Feminisms: Women, War, and Resistance*, ed. Marguerite R. Waller and Jennifer Rycenga (New York: Garland Pub., 2000), 288.

Although the capacity for women's organisations to develop independently of the state was extremely limited under the New Order regime, a small number of LSM-style organisations emerged from the late 1990s in East Timor. For example, the East Timorese Women's Communication Forum (*Forum Komunikasi Untuk Perempuan Loro Sae* – FOKUPERS) was founded in 1997 to assist political victims and to provide counselling and assistance to women victims of violence, as part of the broader human rights organisation, the Foundation of Law, Human Rights and Justice (*Yayasan Hukum, Hak Asasi dan Keadilan* – Yayasan HAK).⁵⁶ Although there was a small number of clandestine East Timorese women's organisations in existence already,⁵⁷ FOKUPERS emerged as part of the opening-up of Indonesian civil society more broadly and, in particular, at a time when there was increasing organising taking place around new notions and forms of human rights and women's rights.⁵⁸ One of the founding members, Maria Domingas 'Micato' Fernandes Alves, explained that prior to the establishment of FOKUPERS, all activities in support of female victims and which disseminated information about human rights situation had to be conducted clandestinely. FOKUPERS registered as an official organisation, and thus its activities could be conducted legally.⁵⁹ One of the first members and a future director of the organisation, Maria 'Mery' Gorumali Barreto, stressed the importance of having such a forum for women 'to come together to give each other strength and support'.⁶⁰ The founding of FOKUPERS can be situated alongside the emergence of other women's LSMs in late New Order Indonesia, in that it was a grassroots advocacy organisation with a human rights agenda, and I discuss the activities of the organisation in more detail in Chapter Five.

⁵⁶ Maria Domingas 'Micato' Fernandes Alves, interview with the author, Dili, July 25, 2013; and Laura Soares Abrantes, interview with the author, Dili, July 2, 2012. For an overview of the development and role of FOKUPERS, see Janet Hunt, "FOKUPERS – The East Timorese Women's Communication Forum: The Development of Timor's First Women's NGO," in *Women and the Politics of Gender in Post-Conflict Timor-Leste*, ed. Sara Niner (Florence: Taylor and Francis, 2016), 65–82.

⁵⁷ These included the women's arm of FRETILIN, the Popular Organisation of East Timorese Women (*Organização Popular de Mulher Timor* – OMPT) that was formed in 1975; the women's wing of the united resistance front, the National Council of Timorese Resistance (*Conselho Nacional da Resistência Timorense* – CNRT), the Organisation of Timorese Women (*Organização Mulher Timor* – OMT) that was formed in 1998; and the student group that formed to support the independence movement, the East Timor Young Women's Group (*Grupo Feto Foinsa'e Timor Lorosa'e* – GFFTL) that was formed in 1998.

⁵⁸ See Petra Mahy, "Being Kartini: Ceremony and Print Media in the Commemoration of Indonesia's First Feminist," *Intersections: Gender and Sexuality in Asia and the Pacific* 28 (March 2012), <http://intersections.anu.edu.au/issue28/mahy.htm#n48>.

⁵⁹ Maria Domingas 'Micato' Fernandes Alves, interview with the author, Dili, July 25, 2013.

⁶⁰ Maria 'Mery' Gorumali Barreto, interview with the author, Dili, July 3, 2012.

In the 1980s, the Indonesian government introduced a number of programmes to develop and modernise East Timor as its newest province. Women's organisations were used to implement and socialise these programmes. These programmes were shaped by perceptions that East Timor was under-developed and backward, as well as the overarching aims of the centralised structure in creating uniformity within the New Order state. While many of these programmes were targeted at the East Timorese population as a whole, several were targeted specifically at women and families. As such, I suggest that they were informed by New Order constructions of femininity, conceptions of women's roles in both the family and society, and perceptions of their maternal responsibilities to the nation-state. I discuss some of these programmes below.

Family welfare was seen by the New Order regime as one area in which East Timorese women could play 'a significant role' in developing the territory, as an extension of their wifely and motherly duties to the nation.⁶¹ Alongside an increased focus on women in development in REPELITA III (1979–84), a number of programmes were introduced to enhance the role of women in development and to enforce a particular vision of the family, including the Programme for the Improvement of the Role of Women for Healthy and Prosperous Families (*Program Peningkatan Peranan Wanita Keluarga Sehat Sejahtera* – P2W-KSS). According to a 1981 paper produced by the United States International Development Cooperation Agency on health improvement plans in Indonesia, the programme provided extra funds for implementation of activities in every district in Indonesia, including 'baby weighing, supplementary feeding for those underweight, home gardening, basic sanitation, provision of safe water, and other inputs related to family health'.⁶² P2W-KSS was introduced to East Timor in January 1982, 'in an effort to intensify the role of women in nurturing healthy and prosperous families, morally and materially'.⁶³ It included activities 'to increase the knowledge regarding healthy living, nutrition and sanitation, as well as skills to augment extra income of their families [sic]'. The PKK was the central vehicle for mobilising women in this programme at the village level. As part of the programme, a number of Indonesian university students volunteered to work in East Timor 'to assist and lead their Timorese sisters to come up to the level with their sisters from other provinces, both in

⁶¹ Department of Information, Republic of Indonesia, *East Timor Today* (Jakarta: Department of Information, 1984), 89.

⁶² United States International Development Cooperation Agency for International Development, *Indonesia*, 19.

⁶³ Department of Information, *East Timor Today*, 89.

knowledge and skills [sic]'.⁶⁴ P2W-KSS demonstrates one of the ways in which the representation of women as mothers, including perceptions of their responsibilities for the health and wellbeing of families, were central to the development and modernisation efforts of the state.

One of the controversial programmes to be implemented in East Timor was the national Family Planning Programme (*Program Keluarga Berencana* – KB Programme). While the Government of Indonesia maintained a commitment to population control and family planning from the late 1960s, it was not until 1980 that the KB Programme was introduced to East Timor.⁶⁵ The programme was managed centrally by the National Family Planning Coordinating Agency (*Badan Koordinasi Keluarga Berencana Nasional* – BKKBN), which was mandated 'to reduce the national population growth rate by establishing the small family as an acceptable norm, and to improve the health and welfare of mothers and children'.⁶⁶ Indonesia's Department of Information explained that the aim of the programme in East Timor was 'not so much to curtail child births', but to improve 'mother and child health welfare by arranging the intermittence of births'.⁶⁷ The KB Programme was implemented by the BKKBN in conjunction with the Department of Health (*Departmen Kesehatan*) and the military, through an arrangement that was known as ABRI United with Family Planning (*ABRI Manunggal KB*).⁶⁸ As such this programme can be seen a key example of the manner in which *dwi-fungsi* operated in East Timor in both an extended and intensified form. According to the Indonesian National Development Information Office, the programme involved 'a combination of education, improved health care, economic and social incentives, and the voluntary use of contraceptives' in order to meet 'its fundamental goal of reducing its rate of population growth while increasing the health and welfare of its people'.⁶⁹ It was highly target-driven, and specific strategies were set out for achieving acceptor targets.⁷⁰

The KB Programme was delivered through clinics, health centres, and village health posts. Strategies were also set out by the BKKBN to maximise the number of 'contraceptive acceptors', defined as 'the number of women who become (or whose husbands become) users

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Miranda E. Sissons, *From One Day to Another: Violations of Women's Reproductive and Sexual Rights in East Timor* (Melbourne: East Timor Human Rights Centre, 1997), 11–12.

⁶⁶ National Development Information Office, *Family Planning in Indonesia: New Paths for Development* (Jakarta: National Family Planning Coordinating Board (BKKBN), 1989), n.p.

⁶⁷ Department of Information, *East Timor Today*, 73.

⁶⁸ Sissons, *From One Day to Another*, 12–13.

⁶⁹ National Development Information Office, *Family Planning in Indonesia*, n.p.

⁷⁰ World Bank, *Indonesia – Family Planning Perspectives in the 1990s*.

of a contraceptive method they have not used in the months immediately prior, for a given period', which was seen as the leading indicator of success.⁷¹ One strategy that was used to promote the programme was the so-called 'safari', in which delegates visited villages to recruit participants, usually on occasions such as Armed Forces' Day, Mothers' Day, or Indonesian Independence Day.⁷² In provinces where targets were not often met, such as East Timor, there was a much higher tendency for invasive and coercive practices to be used, alongside military involvement. The BKKBN drew upon women's organisations to support family planning promotion, including *Dharma Wanita* and the PKK.⁷³ In 1989, for example, the National Development Information Office reported that more 1.5 million PKK volunteers were seen to 'actively organize and support rural health and social development throughout the country's villages'.⁷⁴ As Katherine Kennedy explains in her study of the programme in West Sumatra, representatives from *Dharma Wanita* and the PKK were often called upon to manage and administer the programmes.⁷⁵ Having fewer children, the Information Office reported, would create 'new opportunities beyond home-making duties' for Indonesian women.⁷⁶ This strategy was replicated in East Timor,⁷⁷ demonstrating one of the ways in which East Timorese women were co-opted into the administrative structures of the occupying regime. There is some evidence to suggest that women who did not participate in the programme would be disadvantaged in terms of their children receiving education scholarships, food rations, and their husband's career.⁷⁸ Thus the programme, while highlighting the importance of health and welfare, can also be seen as a means to 'modernise' the population, by increasing the capacity for women to participate in economic development.

A 1997 study conducted by Miranda Sissons from Yale University provides the most in-depth discussion of the programme in East Timor.⁷⁹ Sissons describes similarities with the broader national KB Programme. She argues, however, that the context of implementation in East Timor differed significantly from that of the rest of Indonesia. She notes particularly the comparatively low levels of education, a corresponding inability for this information to become made meaningful to the bulk of the population, a heightened level of involvement by

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Sissons, *From One Day to Another*, 12.

⁷³ Jeremy Shiffman, "Political Management in the Indonesian Family Planning Program," *International Family Planning Perspectives* 30, no. 1 (March 2004): 27–33.

⁷⁴ National Development Information Office, *Family Planning in Indonesia*, n.p.

⁷⁵ Katherine Kennedy, "Coercion in Family Planning," *Inside Indonesia* (June 1994).

⁷⁶ National Development Information Office, *Family Planning in Indonesia*, n.p.

⁷⁷ Sissons, *From One Day to Another*, 15.

⁷⁸ CAVR Report, 2230–1.

⁷⁹ Sissons, *From One Day to Another*.

the military, and strong community and religious-based resistance. As such, she argues that attempts to implement the programme within East Timorese society, in some cases, contributed to the conditions of intense repression and fear which governed the daily lives of East Timorese women.⁸⁰ Sissons also found evidence of coercion and threats; if women did not cooperate, for example, male family members might be threatened, and heightened levels of tension in East Timor meant that the involvement of the military was necessarily likely to be interpreted as coercive.⁸¹ The CAVR Report draws similar conclusions: while aspects of the KB Programme in East Timor were comparable to the national programme, ‘its coercive dimensions were more than usually pronounced’.⁸² The Commission found no conclusive evidence that there was a forced sterilisation programme, but maintained that ‘a lack of information given to patients in a very paternalistic style of health service delivery’ made ‘informed patient consent impossible and further deepened the prevailing climate of fear’.⁸³ These arguments highlight the pronounced effects of the militarised environment of East Timor in shaping the reception of the mechanisms of the programme.

The approach of the Indonesian government to the KB Programme in East Timor, and its corresponding method of delivery, also differed from that which it employed throughout the remainder of archipelago. In November 1985, for example, the Catholic Church-affiliated Portuguese solidarity organisation, *A Paz É Possível em Timor Leste* (Peace is Possible in East Timor), noted that figures for the use of Depo Provera – a temporary, injectable birth control hormone – were much higher, in East Timor, at 57 percent, as compared to 5 percent of contraceptive users in Indonesia as a whole.⁸⁴ Subsequently, the activist newsletter, the *East Timor News – Monthly Memo*, also highlighted this ‘indiscriminate distribution’ of contraceptive pills or injections, as well as the lack of appropriate information provided or consent either sought or obtained. The *Memo* cited a 1986 report by the Indonesian Planned Parenthood Association, which noted that in East Timor, the Indonesian government was at that time spending proportionately more money on the programme, deployed more staff, yet held less community information sessions.⁸⁵ There is also conflicting information regarding the application and effectiveness of the programme in East Timor. The Australian

⁸⁰ Ibid., 11–13.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² CAVR Report, 2228.

⁸³ Ibid., 2231–3.

⁸⁴ *Em Timor-Leste a Paz é Possível* 10 (Abril–Maio 1985) [Portuguese], English translation and summary in “Birth Control Imposed in East Timor,” *East Timor News – Monthly Memo* 4/88, May 20, 1988, 1, in Casa Comum.

⁸⁵ “Birth Control Imposed in East Timor,” *East Timor News*, 1.

demographer, Terence Hull, argues that claims of forced sterilisation and coercion, which I discuss shortly, are based primarily upon a misinterpretation of official Indonesian figures and are otherwise largely unsubstantiated. He does suggest, however, that claims of coercion are likely to have been more valid in contexts where the military presence was high.⁸⁶ The military nature of the occupation administration in East Timor would seem to suggest, therefore, that the territory would be a site where the KB Programme was seen to be implemented with a high level of coercion.

There was some opposition to the programme in East Timor and by women activists throughout Indonesia regarding its ‘heavy-handed, authoritarian and control-oriented’ nature.⁸⁷ Both of Indonesia’s major Islamic groups, *Nahdlatul Ulama* and *Muhammadiyah*, initially expressed unease with the concept of family planning as a whole,⁸⁸ but the BKKBN was able to overcome this opposition and, eventually, to gain the substantial support of Islamic leaders.⁸⁹ The Indonesian National Development Information Office later attributed this support to the BKKBN’s ‘sensitive approach’ that complied with ‘religious tenets’ by ‘positioning family planning within the context of economic and social development’.⁹⁰ Concerns raised by the Catholic religious order in East Timor were met with much less regard. In early 1987, Haryono Suyono, head of the BKKBN, had told two East Timorese Catholic priests that ‘Church-favoured methods of abstinence should play a role’ in family planning. Yet the East Timor BKKBN office did not substantially adjust nor reframe its strategy for implementing the programme in East Timor. Instead, it raised its targets for the territory,⁹¹ demonstrating the importance accorded to administrative and developmental goals rather than specific religious or cultural concerns.

Subsequently, the Catholic Church went on to become one of the most vehement and vocal opponents of the programme. In an interview with TAPOL, Monsignor Martinho da

⁸⁶ See Terence H. Hull, “The Political Framework for Family Planning in Indonesia: Three Decades of Development,” in *Two is Enough. Family Planning in Indonesia under the New Order, 1968–1998*, ed. Anke Niehof and Firman Lubis (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2003), 57–81; and Terence Hull, *An Investigation of Reports of Coercion in the Indonesian Vasectomy Program*, Appraisals, Evaluation and Sectoral Studies Branch, Development Paper No. 1 (Canberra: Australian International Development Assistance Bureau, August 1991).

⁸⁷ See Betsy Hartmann, *Reproductive Rights and Wrongs: The Global Politics of Population Control and Contraceptive Choice* (New York: Harper and Row, 1987), 83.

⁸⁸ Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI), Departemen Agama and BKKBN, *Results of a National Seminar on Raising the Role of Muslim Leaders in the National Family Planning Movement* (Jakarta: MUI, Departemen Agama and BKKBN, 1990), cited in Jeremy Shiffman, “Political Management in the Indonesian Family Planning Program,” *International Family Planning Perspectives* 30, no. 1 (March 2004), 30.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ National Development Information Office, *Family Planning in Indonesia*, n.p.

⁹¹ “Birth Control in East Timor,” *TAPOL Bulletin* 82, August 1987, 6.

Costa Lopes, the Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Dili until 1983, expressed his strong opposition:

Family planning is against the doctrine of the Catholic Church, so I myself, and the Catholic missionaries have all opposed it. Like other people in the East, the Timorese people very much like to have big families. This is even truer today, now that so many people have been killed since the war started. And besides this, many Timorese are Catholics ... I know of many cases where women have been sterilized without their knowledge and consent. There have been cases where women, under operation for some ailment, had their fallopian tubes closed without their knowledge. This is an act of violence.⁹²

Monsignor Lopes' opposition, although derived initially from the Vatican's long-standing condemnation of 'artificial' forms of contraception,⁹³ also alluded to what he saw as the particular historical, religious, and cultural context of East Timor. He also protested the visible coercion and lack of appropriate requisite information provided by authorities. Unless the programme ceased, Monsignor Lopes claimed, 'the East Timorese people as they were known may no longer exist'.⁹⁴ In 1983, Dom Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo replaced Monsignor Lopes as head of the Church in East Timor, and he similarly spoke out in strong opposition to the programme. Despite claims by the Indonesian state that it had taken into account 'the desire and religious values and beliefs of the population', Bishop Belo asserted in a pastoral letter in March 1985 that he 'regrets, rejects and condemns' the programme, which he saw as fundamentally conflicting with the culture and moral values of the East Timorese people.⁹⁵

Religious beliefs were also cited by East Timorese women in their opposition to the programme. For example, testimony included in Miranda Sissons' report explained: 'We are reluctant to go to clinics and talk about family planning because we are Catholic, because we are frightened we will be punished by God'.⁹⁶ This criticism of the programme extended beyond Church leaders in East Timor to the Catholic Church abroad, and was frequently used by Church agencies as an example of the suffering inflicted upon the East Timorese people by the Indonesian authorities, as well as these authorities' neglect of their specific cultural traditions. For example, the US Catholic Conference of Bishops, held on 31 March 1987,

⁹² "Opposition to Birth Control Programme," Interview with former Bishop of East Timor – Monsignor Martinhu da Costa Lopez, *TAPOL Bulletin* 59, September 1983, 20.

⁹³ Pope Paul VI, "Humanae Vitae," July 25, 1968, in *Libreria Editrice Vaticana*, http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_25071968_humanae-vitae.html.

⁹⁴ Cited in "Nationwide Social Engineering through the Family Planning Programme," in *TAPOL Bulletin* 70, July 1985, 9.

⁹⁵ "The Church and Indonesia's Birth Control Programme," *Timor Link* 3, October 1985, 2.

⁹⁶ Cited in Sissons, *From One Day to Another*, 14.

released a statement that described the birth control measures in East Timor as ‘especially disturbing’ and which called for ‘an immediate end’ to the programme. ‘Given the great loss of life that has already taken place among a largely Catholic people,’ the statement read, ‘this Indonesian policy takes on the character of genocide’.⁹⁷ As I discuss in Chapter Five, the Catholic Church transformed during the Indonesian occupation from an institution that was strongly linked to the perpetuation of Portuguese colonisation to a staunch advocate for the human rights of the East Timorese people.

Concerns about the programme were also raised by international institutions and human rights organisations, in forums that advocated the emerging international language of universal human rights. For example, the ‘forced sterilisation’ of East Timorese women and their ‘forced participation’ in the KB programme was raised in a report prepared by the Australia-based East Timor Relief Association. The report was presented by East Timorese delegates at the UN Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing from 4–15 September 1995.⁹⁸ The report included testimony from an East Timorese refugee, Lidia Mota, who stated that ‘Timorese people regard the birth control campaign as a method of reducing the Timorese to people living in reservations like animals’. In this report, forced sterilisation of East Timorese women was described as ‘an abuse of basic human rights’, with long-term physical and psychological effects.⁹⁹

Only a small number of my interview participants, however, directly raised the KB Programme, perhaps reflecting the highly sensitive nature of the issue within East Timorese society, but also revealing some of the ambiguities that still surround its implementation and reception. Neobere, an East Timorese refugee in Portugal, explained in a 1983 interview with TAPOL that discussing family planning in public was ‘absolutely new for us. People are unwilling to have sex discussed in public and don’t like attending meetings where this is done’.¹⁰⁰ Isabel ‘Bella’ Antonia da Costa Galhos, who lived in exile in Canada from 1994 and was very active in the international sphere of East Timor’s struggle, was one of the most outspoken critics of the programme. In our interview, Bella spoke of several incidents at school in East Timor when a group of soldiers came into the classroom and asked all the

⁹⁷ United States Catholic Conference’s Statement on East Timor in 1987, in *The Church and East Timor: A Collection of Documents by National and International Catholic Church Agencies*, ed. Catholic Commission for Justice, Development and Peace (Melbourne: Catholic Commission for Justice, Development and Peace, 1993), 27.

⁹⁸ East Timor Relief Association, “East Timor Resistance: 20 Years On,” Report Prepared for Beijing’s UN/NGO’s World Women Forum, 1995, 1, in AMRT.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁰⁰ Interview with Neobere, in “The Situation in East Timor Today,” *TAPOL Bulletin* 58, July 1983, 17–20.

Indonesian students and the male students to leave the room, before the female students were injected with an unknown substance. After being tested later in Canada, she discovered it to be Depo Provera. Bella believed that the substance was injected into most women of her generation under the pretence that it was an immunisation: 'It's good for you', she recalled being told. She viewed the programme as 'part of a systematic way to eliminate and control the population from growing [sic]'.¹⁰¹ As part of her international activism, Bella frequently raised this violation of East Timorese women's reproductive and sexual rights.¹⁰² Bella was unusually prepared to talk about the violation of East Timorese women's reproductive rights, and she drew upon the language of human rights as a tool for her activism.

In my interview with Mana Maria, an Indonesian-trained nurse, birth control arose naturally in the course of our conversation about her work. She spoke of the KB programme from a professional perspective, and she appeared hesitant to accuse the Indonesian state directly of systematically and purposefully using birth control as a means of terrorising and controlling the East Timorese population. Mana Maria had attended nursing school in Dili for three years before undertaking a government-sponsored midwifery course in Bali for one year. She subsequently worked in Ainaro, where she observed the use of many different types and methods of birth control. For the most part, she said, 'people came to the hospital and asked ... "I want to take some contraception, please advise me which one is best for me"'. Mana Maria noted that immunisation programmes did take place in schools, but that she couldn't be sure whether birth control injections were routinely administered as part of these programmes. She explained:

What I knew at the time was we had to be vaccinated. To be honest with you, I didn't know what the injection was at the time. For me, until I went to [nursing] school, I never knew exactly how the injection for family planning was different from other types of vaccination. Some people say it was an injection for family planning – contraception. But I never knew, I can't say for other people, because they might have experienced it.¹⁰³

Even with her training in nursing, Mana Maria was unsure as to the exact inoculations that were being widely distributed by the Indonesian administration. She stated that she had 'never questioned' the specific purposes of the injections.¹⁰⁴ Instead, she saw these processes

¹⁰¹ Isabel 'Bela' Antonia da Costa Galhos, interview with the author, Dili, July 3, 2012.

¹⁰² See, for example, Caroline Xia, "East Timorese Woman Speaks Out for Justice," *The ACTivist*, April 1995.

¹⁰³ Mana Maria, interview with the author, Dili, December 3, 2012.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

as part of the largely opaque technologies of health and wellbeing that were being implemented by the state.

The KB Programme was centrally devised and publicly framed as a strategy for increasing development by reducing population growth and, particularly in the province of East Timor, by correspondingly improving the low standards of family health and welfare. Yet East Timor presented a distinct context for implementation due to its historical, cultural, political, and religious uniqueness. The history of conflict, the prevalence of the military in everyday life, concerns about artificial forms of contraception, sensitivities regarding public discussions of sex and sexuality, and the tradition of large families, as well as the lack of appropriate information provided by the Indonesian military state, meant that some East Timorese women were hesitant and fearful to participate in this state-sponsored form of population control. The KB Programme, however, had a significant impact upon the lives of East Timorese women and their families in its attempts to bureaucratise, institutionalise, and militarise women's bodies and their reproductive capacity, and the opposition that this precipitated.

Education, Language, and Cultural Integration

One of the early priorities of the occupying administration in East Timor was the implementation of the Indonesian national education system. In fact, the first Indonesian government department to become operational in East Timor was the Department of Education and Culture in 1979.¹⁰⁵ According to Helene van Klinken, this prioritisation reflected 'not only the New Order's hope to win the East Timorese support for integration [sic], but also its need for educated Indonesian-speaking East Timorese [...] to help its rule in East Timor'.¹⁰⁶ The Indonesian government cited East Timor's extremely low levels of literacy and limited development to rationalise the immediate and widespread implementation of its education system, as well as to justify this process on humanitarian grounds. In 1979, Indonesia's Department of Information described the East Timorese as having been 'left behind' in the field of education during Portuguese colonial times and, as such, it was necessary 'to rehabilitate and to improve the field of education'. The government's education programme for East Timor included restoring facilities and building new infrastructure,

¹⁰⁵ CAVR Report, 397.

¹⁰⁶ Helene van Klinken, *Making Them Indonesians: Child Transfers Out of East Timor* (Melbourne: Monash University Publishing, 2012), 74.

training teachers, upgrading course materials, bringing in qualified teachers from Indonesia, encouraging non-formal education, and providing scholarships for East Timorese students to continue their studies in Indonesia.¹⁰⁷ This prioritisation of education was clearly linked within Indonesian government policy to both national development and security. A 1984 Indonesian Department of Information document claimed that through the ‘equitable distribution of education, every Indonesian citizen [...] has the right to acquire the ability required for development. With that ability, he or she can take part actively in the process of national development’.¹⁰⁸ This emphasis upon a modern conception of equal rights and access to education was particularly significant in providing young East Timorese girls with the opportunity to go to school for the first time. Under the Portuguese colonial administration, only a very small number of girls had had the opportunity to attend school, and usually only those who were members of the elite.¹⁰⁹

The Indonesian education system contained several levels of schooling: Primary School (*Sekolah Dasar* – SD); Junior High School (*Sekolah Menengah Pertama* – SMA); and Senior High School (*Sekolah Menengah Atas* – SMA). In 1986 East Timor’s first university, the University of Timor-Leste (*Universitas Timor Timur* – UNTIM), was established in Dili. Aside from one Portuguese-language school in Dili, Externato de São José or the ‘Portuguese school’,¹¹⁰ the language of instruction was Bahasa Indonesia and the system placed great emphasis upon Indonesian national culture and the state ideology of *Pancasila* (Five Principles).¹¹¹ Schools were established rapidly across East Timor: according to a 1992 Indonesian government document, the number of schools grew from fifty at the end of Portuguese rule, to 673 by the end of 1991. Teachers were recruited from other provinces, and I discuss the reception and ramifications of these practices of transmigration shortly. In order to address the ‘urgent need’ of recruiting qualified teachers, it was deemed necessary to

¹⁰⁷ Department of Information, *To Build a Better Tomorrow*, 9. See also Department of Information, Republic of Indonesia, *East Timor After Integration* (Jakarta: Department of Information, 1984), 132.

¹⁰⁸ Department of Information, *East Timor After Integration*, 132.

¹⁰⁹ For example, girls only comprised twenty-five percent of all primary school enrolments in 1973. For a discussion of women’s education in Portuguese Timor, see Helen Hill, *Stirrings of Nationalism in East Timor: Fretilin 1974–1978: The Origins, Ideologies and Strategies of a Nationalist Movement* (Sydney: Otford Press, 2002), 39.

¹¹⁰ Established in 1964 under the auspices of the St Joseph Foundation, the school was closed after Indonesia’s annexation, but was reopened in 1983. See Geoffrey C. Gunn, *New World Hegemony in the Malay World* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2000), 224.

¹¹¹ This ideology was drafted by former President Sukarno in 1945 as the official founding philosophy of the Indonesian state, and was strongly promoted by the New Order regime. See Ken Ward, “Soeharto’s Javanese Pancasila,” in *Soeharto’s New Order and Its Legacy: Essays in Honour of Harold Crouch*, ed. Edward Aspinall and Greg Fealy (Acton: ANU E Press, 2010), 27–37.

recruit from other provinces.¹¹² As a result, almost all teachers beyond primary school were Indonesian. Encouraging skilled migrants can thus be seen as one of the strategies used by the state to facilitate the hegemony of its educational and cultural systems under the guise of provincial development. By 1990, ‘rapid growth’ and development in the field of education was described by the Public Relations Bureau of the Province of East Timor as ‘heartening, and also imperative in the framework of promoting the intellectual life of the populations’.¹¹³

Indonesian government departments also established a number of programmes for young people to travel to Indonesia to study, work, and participate in informal educational, sporting, and cultural activities. These programmes were intended to foster an identification with Indonesia and to inculcate ‘a love for the homeland and its culture’.¹¹⁴ For example, an East Timorese contingent participated in National Sports Week in Jakarta in 1981.¹¹⁵ East Timorese high school graduates were encouraged to pursue higher education in Indonesian cities, and the government established a number of scholarships to support these students.¹¹⁶ This strategy of taking the educated elite out of the territory can be seen as an attempt to accelerate the assimilation of the East Timorese within the Indonesian archipelago. Scholarships were dependent upon holding integrationist views, at least outwardly.¹¹⁷ Isabel ‘Bella’ Antonia da Costa Galhos, for example, was selected in 1994 by the Indonesian government to participate in the Canada World Youth Exchange Programme as a representative of East Timor. This programme was introduced by the state ‘to enhance mutual understanding and friendship among Indonesia’s youth and those of other countries’.¹¹⁸ Bella believes that she was selected out of hundreds of students because she was known for being ‘a good Indonesian’ with ‘a bright future’.¹¹⁹ Yet rather than fulfilling her duties as a compliant, pro-integration youth, upon arriving in Canada Bella defected, and spent the next five years of her life exposing the brutalities of the Suharto regime and advocating for East Timor’s right to national self-determination. Bella’s story is a unique example. However, her experience also sheds light upon the way in which, despite the avowedly integrationist

¹¹² Republic of Indonesia, *East Timor: Building for the Future. Issues and Perspectives* (Jakarta: Department of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia, July 1992), 18–19.

¹¹³ Provincial Government of East Timor, *East Timor Strives for a Better Future* (Dili: Provincial Government of East Timor, 1990), 38.

¹¹⁴ Department of Foreign Affairs and Department of Information, *The Province of East Timor, Development in Progress* (Jakarta: Percetakan Negara, 1980), 23.

¹¹⁵ Department of Information, *East Timor Today*, 88.

¹¹⁶ Republic of Indonesia, *East Timor: Building for the Future*, 18–19.

¹¹⁷ Jacinto dos Santos, “Post-Portuguese Colonial Education: Its Relevance to the East Timorese Resistance Movement,” in *It’s Time to Lead the Way: Timorese People Speak About Exile, Resistance and Identity*, ed. East Timor Relief Association (Collingwood: East Timor Relief Association, 1996), 70.

¹¹⁸ Provincial Government of East Timor, *East Timor Strives for a Better Future*, 40.

¹¹⁹ Isabel ‘Bella’ Antonia da Costa Galhos, interview with the author, Dili, July 3, 2012.

intentions of the Indonesian state in its expansion of schooling in East Timor, these initiatives paradoxically brought together young East Timorese in common spaces and provided them with tools to express their opposition to Indonesian rule. I discuss these ideas further in Chapter Five.

The introduction of the Indonesian education system to East Timor involved the imposition of the Indonesian language, the national *Pancasila* ideology, a respect for Indonesian symbols of patriotism, and the dissemination of a new version of history. This narrative emphasised the rise of nationalism and the anti-colonial struggle in Indonesia, with the aim of homogenising difference and unifying the population under the national motto, *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity).¹²⁰ As Benedict Anderson explains, such ‘urge to oneness’ was central to the idea of nationalism under the New Order.¹²¹ Alberto Arenas argues that these techniques were ‘designed to inculcate in children respect and admiration for Indonesia’s values, beliefs, and practices’ so that they would come to see themselves as Indonesian citizens.¹²² Many East Timorese women who came of age under Indonesian rule recalled the difficulties of learning a new language and their opposition to the state’s attempt to impose Indonesian culture. Filomena Reis, for example, returned to school in 1977 in Dili after the conflict, even though she ‘didn’t want to, but there was no escape. The Indonesians forced all families to send their children to school and to speak *Bahasa*. I hate the language even today’.¹²³ For Maria de Fatima Kalsona, the Indonesian language made her depressed, ‘I did not want to learn [it]’, she said, and so she decided not to go to school at all.¹²⁴ Other women had more light-hearted memories of trying to learn a new language and the difficulties associated with a different phonetic system. Anabela ‘Ana’ Maia Santos, for example, remembered an East Timorese teacher at her primary school in Bobonaro in the early 1980s who accidentally instructed the students to answer ‘Ada, Fa’ when he called attendance, rather than the correct Indonesian phrase, ‘Ada, Pak’ (Here, Sir). When she moved to a new primary school in Maliana, Ana continued to answer ‘Ada Fa’ when her

¹²⁰ For a discussion of Suharto’s New Order and its emphasis upon ‘unity, uniformity and conformity’, see Robert Cribb, “The Historical Roots of Indonesia’s New Order: Beyond the Colonial Comparison,” in *Soeharto’s New Order and Its Legacy*, ed. Aspinall and Fealy, 67–80.

¹²¹ Benedict Anderson, *Language and Power: Exploring Political Cultures in Indonesia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 36–7.

¹²² Alberto Arenas, “Education and Nationalism in East Timor,” *Social Justice* 25, no. 2, Defending Rights & Just Futures in the Real World Order (Summer 1998): 131–48.

¹²³ Filomena Reis, in *Step by Step: Women of East Timor, Stories of Resistance and Survival*, ed. Jude Conway (Darwin: Charles Darwin University Press, 2010), 211.

¹²⁴ Maria de Fatima Kalsona, interview with the author, Dili, May 23, 2012.

name was called during attendance, but the other students laughed at her, asking why she answered in this way.¹²⁵

National days such as 17 August, Indonesian Independence Day, came to be celebrated in East Timor as a means of introducing Indonesian national culture and identity through military-style ceremonies and events. Henri Myrntinen suggests that these practices can be seen as part of a general ‘militarization of society’, which aimed to enable the population to envisage themselves ‘in the service of the Indonesian nation’.¹²⁶ At school in Liquica, for example, Emilita Mendes remembered the huge celebration that was held on 17 August, when students would have a flag-raising ceremony, participate in inter-school sports competitions, and dance.¹²⁷ At school in Dili, Maria de Fatima Ximenes Dias recalled learning about *Pancasila* and the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia (*Undang-Undang Dasar Republik Indonesia* ‘45 – UUD ‘45). She explained that this understanding was central to the ‘mentality’ of being an Indonesian citizen.¹²⁸ For some women, the imposition of Indonesian state ideology was associated with the violence and repression of the military. Maria do Céu Lopes da Silva, for example, who received a government scholarship to study in Jakarta, remembered looking at the *Pancasila* textbook at school and found that she ‘couldn’t open it’ because she felt ‘so traumatised’.¹²⁹

The introduction of Indonesian language, culture, and ideology was framed by East Timorese activists in the diaspora and by the international solidarity movement as ‘the imposition of an Indonesian lifestyle’ upon the East Timorese people, part of the broader integrationist and assimilationist agenda of the Indonesian state. In a 1987 interview with *AMPO Japan-Asia Quarterly Review*, a progressive English-language magazine, the Australia-based East Timorese activist, Mimi Ferreira, argued that this imposition had had a significant and enduring effect upon East Timorese families:

Indonesian culture is being imposed on the people. This is particularly true in schools, where the use of the Indonesian language is strictly compulsory from the very first year of primary school. Indonesian culture is taught in the schools. The teachers are Indonesian all the way through – from primary school to university [...] The children are learning the state ideology, *Pancasila*. Every morning they have the flag-raising ceremony and the singing of the Indonesian national anthem. The educational system now is completely different from what it was up to 1975. So the

¹²⁵ Anabela ‘Ana’ Maia Santos, interview with the author, Dili, May 19, 2012.

¹²⁶ Henri Myrntinen, “Histories of Violence: Occupation, Resistance and Masculinities in Timor-Leste,” in *Gender, Power, and Military Occupations*, ed. de Matos and Ward, 70.

¹²⁷ Emilita Mendes, interview with the author, Liquica, July 15, 2012.

¹²⁸ Maria de Fatima Ximenes Dias, interview with the author, Dili, July 27, 2013, Dili.

¹²⁹ Maria do Céu Lopes da Silva, interview with the author, Dili, July 20, 2013.

parents of most of the children are very unhappy. They don't like the children learning something that is so completely different from their own culture and background.¹³⁰

For Mimi, these impositions were disruptions to the inheritance by the youth of the distinctive culture and heritage of the East Timorese people. She found Indonesian culture distinctly different from that of the East Timorese, and observed that the imposition of Indonesian ideas had inflicted widespread misery upon the population.

For many students, especially those from resistance families, school had been a space where they felt that they were victimised by Indonesian students and teachers, and that they were under constant surveillance. In some cases, students withdrew from school altogether, such as Gosmenia 'Keizar' Savio, who later reflected that she felt extremely disadvantaged at having lost this opportunity.¹³¹ The vast majority of teachers – especially in junior and senior high school – were Indonesian, and many women described difficult relationships between teachers and students. Laurentina 'Mica' Barreto Soares, who attended school in Maliana and in Dili, recalled that Indonesian teachers were often 'very hard' on the East Timorese students. 'If we didn't do our homework', she recalled, 'they punished us hard'. In her later years of schooling, Mica recalled that she actually preferred the Indonesian teachers to the East Timorese, as she claimed that they 'had a more persuasive approach with the students' and that they were more experienced.¹³² Yolanda Maria Conceição Chavés, who attended school in Dili, felt that the teachers from Java were especially 'against' the East Timorese students, while those from places in eastern Indonesia such as Ambon and Flores 'protected' them and told them not to worry, 'This is your land, this is your country. You have to be the ones to lead – not them'.¹³³

For some women, school had been the space where they began to discuss political ideas and to develop a nascent sense of national consciousness. Teresa 'Alita' Verdial de Araujo, for example, described becoming increasingly involved in clandestine activities as she progressed through her schooling.¹³⁴ The Portuguese school in Dili, Externato São José, became an important centre for such clandestine activities. José Manuel da Silva Fernandes explains in the CAVR Report that as a result of these suspected associations, from the late 1980s, the school was 'regularly raided by police and military searching for pro-

¹³⁰ "Where There's Life There's Hope: The Struggle for Survival Continues in East Timor," Interview with Mimi Ferreira, Fretilin Activist in Australia, in *AMPO: Japan-Asia Quarterly Review* 19, no. 1 (1987): 41.

¹³¹ Gosmenia 'Keizar' Savio, interview with the author, Dili, May 15, 2012.

¹³² Laurentina 'Mica' Barreto Soares, interview with the author, Dili, July 12, 2012.

¹³³ Yolanda Maria Conceição Chavés, interview with the author, Liquica, July 15, 2012.

¹³⁴ Teresa 'Alita' Verdial de Araujo, interview with the author, Dili, June 21, 2012.

independence literature or to arrest clandestine members'.¹³⁵ According to the leader of the clandestine movement in Dili, Constâncio Pinto, the Indonesian military saw the school as a politicised institution, and threatened to close it down several times. Such targeting, according to Pinto, in fact 'helped to politicize' the students even further and, as a result, 'many leaders of the underground of the new generation emerged from this school'.¹³⁶ Several of the women whom I interviewed, including Laura Soares Abrantes, attended the school and were active in resistance activities during this time. Laura recalled gaining knowledge about nationalism and patriotism at school, as well as developing insights into the broader political situation in East Timor.¹³⁷ In this sense, the expansion of the education system under the aegis of the New Order regime meant that young people were being brought together in common spaces, in which they frequently discussed new political ideas and concepts.¹³⁸ I discuss these ideas further in Chapter Five.

East Timorese students were also strongly encouraged by the state to participate in non-formal education and extra-curricular activities, which can be seen as part of the New Order strategy to sustain the unity and uniformity of the archipelago. These activities were framed by the state as attempts to 'advance people's knowledge' through youth programmes. According to a 1984 Indonesian Department of Information document, the youth were 'directed to channel their skill and knowledge obtained, to participate in the development of the region'.¹³⁹ Youth activities included sports, art performances, and scouting. From the early years of the occupation, the Indonesian government invested in sporting equipment, facilities, and instruments. The government also introduced the *Gerakan Pramuka* (Scout Movement) to the territory in April 1977.¹⁴⁰ In 1984, it reported that students in East Timor were 'very much interested in out-of-school education' and, at that time, there were 10,341 registered *Pramuka* in East Timor who participated in many national *Pramuka* events.¹⁴¹ In 1992, Mashudi, the chief of the Headquarters of the national *Pramuka* movement, explained that the training East Timorese youth was intended to 'strengthen their understanding' of

¹³⁵ CAVR Report, 1583.

¹³⁶ Constâncio Pinto and Matthew Jardine, *East Timor's Unfinished Struggle: Inside the East Timorese Resistance* (Toronto: Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Data, 1997), 87.

¹³⁷ Laura Soares Abrantes, interview with the author, Dili, July 2, 2012. See also Yolanda Maria Conceição Chavés, interview with the author, Liquica, July 15, 2012.

¹³⁸ This experience and its consequences parallels with that of educated Indonesians under Dutch colonial rule. For an excellent novel that explores this topic, see Pramoedya Ananta Toer, *This Earth of Mankind*, trans. Max Lane (Ringwood: Penguin Victoria, 1982).

¹³⁹ Department of Information, *East Timor Today*.

¹⁴⁰ Republic of Indonesia, *Development of East Timor Province* (Jakarta: Department of Information, 1990), 85.

¹⁴¹ Department of Information, *East Timor Today*, 88; see also Republic of Indonesia, *Development of East Timor Province*, 1.

nationalism.¹⁴² *Pramuka* was a highly disciplined movement and included military-style training, such as marching and drill, assisting the Red Cross, and attendance at official ceremonies.¹⁴³ The organisation was also used as a vehicle through which national values and government programmes, such as family planning, were promoted among the youth. For example, a World Bank report on Indonesian family planning in the 1990s observed that youth were ‘an important target group’ for such programmes.¹⁴⁴ In addition to promoting discipline and loyalty among East Timorese youth, *Pramuka* was used as a mechanism through which New Order programmes and ideas about gender and sexuality were disseminated. Rosa Xavier, for example, was a member of *Pramuka* in Baucau and remembered being taught about environmental preservation, first aid, self-discipline, independence, and moral responsibility. She felt that students who were involved with *Pramuka* sometimes had better relations with those teachers at school who were also members; for example, by addressing them using the more informal term *Kak* (older brother or sister), rather than the polite form of address, *Pak* (Mr or Sir).¹⁴⁵ Youth development programmes, such as the scout movement, were an important part of the New Order regime’s emphasis upon discipline, responsibility, and self-reliance.

In addition to *Pramuka*, there was also a scout movement that was affiliated with the Catholic Church, the *Escuteiros Catholicos* (Catholic Scouts). In my interview with Filomena ‘Mena’ Barros dos Reis, she spoke about the establishment of the scout movement in 1972 by the Catholic Church. After being destroyed during the civil war and invasion, Mena explained that two priests had initiated the re-establishment of the movement in 1977, at the same time that the Indonesian government introduced *Pramuka* to the territory. Due to their different institutional affiliations – *Pramuka* with the Indonesian military and the Catholic Scouts with the Catholic Church – the two movements operated slightly differently.¹⁴⁶ The Catholic Scouts, Mena explained, aimed to teach young people to become future leaders by emphasising principles such as intellectuality, spirituality, and creativity. Laura Soares Abrantes was also a member of the Catholic Scouts from 1977 when she attended Externato

¹⁴² “No Member of Pramuka Was Involved in the Dili Massacre,” *Suara Karya*, January 20, 1992, cited in “Articles on East Timor Massacre from Peacenet and Associated Networks,” *East Timor Documents* 9, January 25–February 7, 1992, 8.

¹⁴³ CAVR Report, 376.

¹⁴⁴ World Bank, *Indonesia – Family Planning Perspectives in the 1990s*, Report No. 7760-IND (January 30, 1990) 61.

¹⁴⁵ Rosa Xavier, interview with the author, Dili, July 13, 2012.

¹⁴⁶ After Timor-Leste’s independence, the two organisations were brought together under the National Union of Scouts of Timor-Leste (*União Nacional dos Escuteiros de Timor-Leste* – NUS-TL). Filomena ‘Mena’ Barros dos Reis, interview with the author, Dili, June 30, 2012.

São José in Dili. She recalled the ‘social actions’ in which members participated every Sunday, such as visits to jails or hospitals.¹⁴⁷



Image: Laura Soares Abrantes taking the Catholic Scout oath at Externato São José, 1977.¹⁴⁸

Similar to the women’s organisations, the scout movements also provided young people with state-sanctioned, public sites for socialisation and support. As the youth became increasingly involved in resistance activities from the late 1980s, the scout movement became one of the networks utilised by independence activists to facilitate the sharing of information, the recruitment of members, and organisation of demonstrations. Despite its affiliation with the military, Mena explained that there had been collaboration between members of *Pramuka* and the Catholic Scouts, as *Pramuka* would receive information from the military and pass it on to the Catholic Scouts, who would pass it on to the guerrilla fighters in the mountains.¹⁴⁹ She also felt that the Catholic Scouts had provided her with an opportunity to meet new friends. They would share stories with one another, creating a sense of solidarity and support: ‘They [the other members] talked about the Indonesian military arresting their parents, killing them, some disappearing. I thought if they can be strong why can’t I?’¹⁵⁰ The Catholic Scouts became increasingly involved in the public demonstrations that took place from the

¹⁴⁷ Laura Soares Abrantes, in *Step by Step*, ed. Conway, 60.

¹⁴⁸ In *Step by Step*, ed. Conway, 73.

¹⁴⁹ Filomena ‘Mena’ Barros dos Reis, interview with the author, Dili, June 30, 2012.

¹⁵⁰ Filomena Reis, in *Step by Step*, ed. Conway, 213.

late 1980s including, in particular, the October 1989 demonstration that was held at Tasi Tolu in Dili, at the time of Pope John Paul II's visit.¹⁵¹ I further discuss the involvement of young people in the resistance more broadly in Chapter Five, yet it is important to note here the transformation of the Indonesian scout movement, a social institution that had been established by the occupying regime to perpetuate its values and inculcate its nationalist principles, into a site for political discussions and collective activism.

For some women, the establishment of a widespread, compulsory education system and the introduction of extra-curricular activities were clear indications that the political situation had become more calm than the initial period of conflict following the invasion. Their living conditions had improved, and some remembered feeling much happier during this time. For Rosa Xavier, for example, her extensive involvement in extra-curricular activities in Dili, such as *Pramuka*, was a way for her to stop thinking about all the other things that had been happening – the killing, torture, and the 'bad situation' – and it was during this period that she was able to concentrate on her education.¹⁵² When I asked Anabela 'Ana' Maia Santos, who attended school in Maliana during the 1980s, whether she enjoyed school, she responded:

We were happy because we got some teachers from Indonesia who taught us and some Indonesian friends as well, we met various friends. Every day we had various activities and every day we went to school. After school we played at home, played with my friends, then we had extra-curricular activities as well to help to do some work in the Church or attended the Catholic sisters' activities, then in the afternoon we went back to the school because we had private lessons in the afternoon [...] And sometimes we went for picnics with the teachers, with friends [...] I was happy because I didn't hear the sounds of guns, the military started to build the nation [and] started to have the law, less people died and less people got sick.¹⁵³

For Ana, this sense of happiness came out of the relative calmness of the situation compared to the previous years of conflict. It is important to note, too, that Ana's family were not actively involved in the resistance. This distinction between political and non-political families was important in shaping young people's experiences and capacity to navigate life under Indonesian rule. Ana also recalled some attempts by the Indonesian military to, as she perceived it, 'make the people happy'. She explained:

[T]hey invited an artist from Indonesia to hold a concert in Maliana ... and then we started to have television every day. As children, we liked to watch the television,

¹⁵¹ See Pinto and Jardine, *East Timor's Unfinished Struggle*, 108–9.

¹⁵² Rosa Xavier, interview with the author, Dili, July 13, 2012.

¹⁵³ Anabela 'Ana' Maia Santos, interview with the author, Dili, May 19, 2012.

new experiences *haiiii* [sic] ... it was really good to see people singing. When the Micky Mouse film was shown, all the children were so happy. At that time there was a film named Scooby Doo. The old people liked to watch the news from Indonesia [and] the young people liked to watch movies, [we were] so happy. Some military started to stay and started to build buildings, to develop [the nation], did the work with Indonesia, working together with the community [sic]. We started to see the products from other countries such as *sardina*, such as bread from Indonesia, good bread, [we] started to see the clothes which were not handmade but Indonesia bought the clothes that could be used in Timor, [we] could use shoes, because before we had no shoes. Yes... [I was] happy.¹⁵⁴

According to a 1984 Indonesian Department of Information document, the introduction of cultural products such as television, radio, exhibitions, film shows, and performances, was intended 'to make the functions and role of information run as smoothly as possible' in light of low levels of understanding of Bahasa Indonesia, the specific geographic conditions and limited communication infrastructure in the territory, as well as the low socio-economic standard of the population. 'All these factors', the document maintained, 'exercised tremendous influence on the motivation of the community, as citizens, to advance their province in the context of national development'.¹⁵⁵ The introduction of these technologies were part of the government's attempts to produce new, modern identities in East Timor. In doing so, however, as Henri Myrntinen writes, they correspondingly 'opened up avenues for East Timorese to access both Indonesian and global popular culture'.¹⁵⁶ For many young people such as Ana, these developments provided new forms of entertainment, and also of engagement.¹⁵⁷ In my interview with Emilita Mendes, who attended school in Liquica and Dili, she similarly recalled a happy childhood due to the variety of activities available to her: 'When I was in primary school, I was really happy', she remembered. 'I really liked that moment because in that time I loved to dance. I was really happy because I could sing and dance. It was really different compared to when I was in the mountains. When I was at school, I felt that I got lots of opportunities to do various activities'.¹⁵⁸ Maria 'Bebe' Nelson Pinto recalled similar memories of her schooling in Liquica, where she enjoyed participating in extra-curricular activities, such as swimming and other sports.¹⁵⁹ Merita de Jesus Marques described the Indonesian government's policy of opening schools even in rural areas, as having been a positive change. She also noted that

¹⁵⁴ Anabela 'Ana' Maia Santos, interview with the author, Dili, May 19, 2012.

¹⁵⁵ Department of Information, *East Timor After Integration*, 98.

¹⁵⁶ Myrntinen, "Histories of Violence," 73.

¹⁵⁷ Anabela 'Ana' Maia Santos, interview with the author, Dili, May 19, 2012.

¹⁵⁸ Emilita Mendes, interview with the author, Liquica, July 15, 2012.

¹⁵⁹ Maria 'Bebe' Nelson Pinto, interview with the author, Liquica, June 3, 2012.

because of the compulsory nature of the Indonesian education system, even if children came from farming or poor families, they could still attend school.¹⁶⁰ The introduction of a widespread education system, the establishment of extra-curricular activities, and the notion that girls should have equal access to education, were central components to the infrastructure of occupation in East Timor.

Underpinned by notions of women as equal and necessary participants in the development process, these changes also opened up new opportunities for many East Timorese women and girls. A report produced in 1990 by the Provincial Government of East Timor explained that programmes ‘for the improvement of women’s roles’ were intended ‘to ameliorate the women’s welfare’ by providing training courses, as well as social and self-employment guidance.¹⁶¹ In our interview, Josefa Álvares Pereira Soares reflected that during the Indonesian occupation, women had had the opportunity to participate in the economy and the military; there were also female teachers, nurses, and administrative workers. These developments provided new career opportunities and forms of mobility that had been extremely rare for women during the Portuguese colonial period.¹⁶² The imposition of the Indonesian language, national culture, and state ideology upon the East Timorese through the expansion of education constituted one of the subtle mechanisms through which the power of the occupying regime was exercised. The gender ideology of the New Order state specified the nature and form of women’s involvement in these processes, but at the same time, the associated programmes and institutions provided some women with a sense of solace and peace within the institutionalisation of new routines and assumptions.

Transmigration and Cultural Assimilation

The structures, organisations, and programmes that were introduced to East Timor as part of the regime of occupation aimed to assimilate and integrate the province into the Republic of Indonesia, and to ensure that the power of the New Order state was widespread, overarching, and impenetrable. In Chapter Two, I discussed the initial stages of the Indonesian invasion and conflict, which involved the large-scale displacement of many East Timorese people. These processes, which led to the forcible restructuring of traditional life, had destructive effects throughout the territory. In addition to forced resettlement, another demographic

¹⁶⁰ Merita de Jesus Marques, interview with the author, Dili, December 3, 2012.

¹⁶¹ Provincial Government of East Timor, *East Timor Strives for a Better Future*, 53.

¹⁶² Josefa Álvares Pereira Soares, interview with the author, Dili, July 4, 2012.

programme implemented under the guise of national development was the transmigration (*transmigrasi*) programme: the transfer of people from ‘overpopulated’ to relatively ‘underpopulated’ islands in Indonesia. As Mariël Otten wrote in a 1986 report for the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, these transfers were perceived by the Indonesian state as necessary because ‘both overpopulation and underpopulation’ were seen as ‘obstacles to development’.¹⁶³ Otten also observed that the programme was clearly linked to notions of national integration and national security.¹⁶⁴ Resettlement had been a component of New Order state planning since REPELITA I (1969–74), yet it began to play a more central role in state planning from 1984. On 24 April of that year, President Suharto announced that the transmigration programme was to play a crucial role in the overall development strategy of Indonesia’s REPELITA IV (1984–89), and that it would have ‘a strong bearing on the progress of development in Indonesia for the future’.¹⁶⁵ One of the target areas for the resettlement of transmigrants was East Timor.¹⁶⁶

International observers and the international solidarity movement were critical of the aims of the transmigration programme and, in particular, the manner in which it was applied in East Timor. Otten’s report pointed out that demographic policies such as local resettlement, transmigration, and birth control were implemented ‘with particular strength and emphasis’ in East Timor, and had ‘catastrophic consequences’ for the East Timorese people. While these policies were framed in terms of ‘development’, Otten suggested that they were actually intended to colonise and control the East Timorese people.¹⁶⁷ This view is supported by international human rights organisations. For example, in a statement made by Liem Soei Liong on behalf of TAPOL at the UN Decolonisation Committee in 1986, he claimed that ‘a drastic transformation’ was taking place in the towns of Dili and Baucau, which were ‘becoming Javanese towns, inhabited primarily by Indonesian military personnel and bureaucrats, together with their families’.¹⁶⁸ Reports in TAPOL’s *Bulletin* asserted that Indonesia’s plans to carry out large-scale transmigration to East Timor constituted an attempt ‘to overwhelm the local population and quell the resistance’,¹⁶⁹ and ‘to swamp the country with outsiders and turn the Timorese into a minority in their own country’.¹⁷⁰ TAPOL drew

¹⁶³ Mariël Otten, *Transmigrasi: Myths and Realities. Indonesian Resettlement Policy, 1965–1985* (Copenhagen: IWGIA, October 1986), 39.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹⁶⁵ Cited in *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 208.

¹⁶⁸ Liem Soei Liong cited in *Ibid.*, 205.

¹⁶⁹ “Increased Transmigration to East Timor,” *TAPOL Bulletin* 66, November 1984, 13.

¹⁷⁰ “Birth Control for All Women of Child-Bearing Age,” *TAPOL Bulletin* 67, January 1985, 3.

links between the Indonesian state pushing birth control in East Timor on the one hand, while on the other, treating the region as ‘under-populated’ and thus encouraging transmigration.

There was some opposition to the transmigration programme and, in particular, its economic and cultural implications. For example, in an interview with *AMPO*, the East Timorese diasporic activist, Mimi Ferreira, expressed concerns with the resettlement programme and associated dislocation of communities, as well as the conflict over land ownership, particularly arable land, that it precipitated:

[T]he people going from Indonesia to live in East Timor are from the populated areas of Java and Bali. People who never had homes, lands, or the opportunity to live properly. These people are given land to farm, homes to live in. The land is land that formerly belonged to the Timorese people, either people who were killed in the war, or people who were shifted into the resettlement centres. Indonesians say that there is vacant land and that it has to be used. And they bring those Indonesians from other places to use that land. They claim that they have to move the Timorese into resettlement centres because their own homes are too far away from the health centres, from educational centres, and they have to put the people in areas to be close to such facilities. The land that becomes vacant they give to the Indonesians. [...] The Indonesian population is increasing considerably. Jobs are given to Indonesian people rather than Timorese.¹⁷¹

Zulmira ‘Sirana’ da Cruz Sarmiento also raised the issue of overpopulation in the course of my interview with her. She claimed that the Indonesian authorities would identify arable land in East Timor and would send Indonesian people to live there, providing them with the opportunity to participate in economic activities, yet also simultaneously blocking the East Timorese from entrepreneurial opportunities.¹⁷² Merita de Jesus Marques remembered many Indonesians, especially Javanese, being sent to Pasabe so that the ‘influence of the Indonesian language would spread quickly’, thus explicitly recalling linguistic integration as an additional motivation for the transmigration programme. She remembered Javanese people being brought over to work in positions that, she thought, the East Timorese could have done themselves.¹⁷³

I was interested in the relationship between Indonesian transmigrants and the East Timorese people, and asked several of my interview participants about this aspect in more detail. Some women described the relations as rather positive, especially if the transmigrants came from the eastern Indonesian islands or from Bali – not from Java. In fact, one of my interview participants suggested that I interview one woman, Mana Erna, without mentioning

¹⁷¹ “‘Where There’s Life There’s Hope,” Interview with Mimi Ferreira, *AMPO*, 41–2.

¹⁷² Zulmira ‘Sirana’ da Cruz Sarmiento, interview with the author, Dili, December 5, 2012.

¹⁷³ Merita de Jesus Marques, interview with the author, Dili, December 3, 2012.

that she was actually from the eastern Indonesian island of Alor, not East Timor. Mana Erna's family had moved to East Timor when she was very young, and she had observed that there were many Indonesians in Timor at that time, 'many from Kupang and Alor, mostly these people had the same colour and hair [as the Timorese]. So I felt like brothers and sisters, there was no discrimination among us'.¹⁷⁴ Similarly, Maria Maia dos Reis recalled that many Indonesians came to live in Tuana Laran in Dili and opened shops there. However, most were Balinese and thus for Maria, 'they were good people' – they were never aggressive, and they never reported other people to the military.¹⁷⁵ When I asked Mana Maria, who had lived in Dili and then Ainaro, about the relationship between East Timorese and Indonesian transmigrants, she responded:

In general, the relationship was fine. The only thing was the army, just the army. Because Timor was considered an occupied territory, and so every time we met the army with the guns in their hands, the uniforms and all that. But the civilians, they were going about their business, we were going about our business, and ... it wasn't an issue ... Yeah but there were only small minor issues, for instance migrants – social disputes or tension. But yeah, it happens everywhere. The only thing was the army.¹⁷⁶

For Mana Maria, Indonesian civilians within the territory were just 'going about their business', similar to the East Timorese, and thus there were generally no problems. It was the constant presence of the military that was the problem.

The potential for positive relations between East Timorese and Indonesian transmigrants also depended upon their location within the territory. Filomena Fuca, who grew up in Oecussi, explained that generally even relations between the Indonesian military and the East Timorese people were positive in that area. Although she noted that there was some violence and intimidation, especially around the time of the Popular Consultation in 1999, she understood the relationship between the East Timorese and Indonesian people to be 'as good as family'; these features can perhaps be attributed primarily to Oecussi's location. Filomena explained that in Oecussi, while some transmigrants came from Sulawesi and Java, most came from areas close to the border, such as Kefa (Indonesia).¹⁷⁷ Zulmira 'Sirana' da Cruz Sarmiento commented that 'some Indonesian people were bad but some were good' and for her, this observation extended to the Indonesian military as well. 'We are all normal

¹⁷⁴ Mana Erna, interview with the author, Dili, June 23, 2012.

¹⁷⁵ Maria Maia dos Reis, interview with the author, Dili, July 17, 2012.

¹⁷⁶ Mana Maria, interview with the author, Dili, December 3, 2012.

¹⁷⁷ Filomena Fuca, interview with the author, Dili, November 30, 2012.

human beings', she explained.¹⁷⁸ East Timor as a target site for transmigration meant that large numbers of people from other Indonesian islands were encouraged to relocate to East Timor, and were provided with employment, land, and other economic benefits to encourage them do so. For many activists, this programme constituted a deliberate attempt by the Indonesian military to dilute the ethnic composition of the East Timorese population. Although several East Timorese women expressed concerns in regard to the opportunities and privileges granted to transmigrants from other parts of Indonesia, for most, there was a sense of going about everyday life despite these perceived inequalities.

Conclusion

As part of the incorporation of East Timor as the purported twenty-seventh province of Indonesia, the state attempted to develop and modernise the territory by introducing a number of programmes. These programmes were often implemented in East Timor in a more rapid and widespread manner than in other Indonesian provinces, due to official perceptions of the backwardness and deprivation of the East Timorese people. The highly militarised and repressive context of East Timor meant that the population were often hesitant to perceive these programmes as genuine and well-intended; rather, they were seen as attempts to restrict, control, and indoctrinate the population, in accordance with the integrationist aims and centralised ideology of the New Order state. These programmes were also often implemented with a disregard for the distinctiveness of the culture and traditions of the East Timorese people and, as such, they sometimes generated hostility and contempt among the local population. Benedict Anderson suggests that the integrationist agenda of the Indonesian state failed primarily because of Indonesia's inability to 'imagine' the East Timorese as Indonesian: 'The [official] language is that of the superior and civilized towards the inferior and barbarous. It is not very far from racism, and reveals a profound incapacity to "incorporate" the East Timorese, an unacknowledged feeling that they are really, basically, foreign'.¹⁷⁹ Building upon arguments made in Chapters Two and Three about the violence and extreme methods of rule used by the Indonesian military in East Timor, in this chapter I have proposed that the development and modernisation programmes implemented by the occupying regime, and the accompanying incomprehension on the part of the Indonesian authorities that the East Timorese people could not but be grateful and welcoming of their

¹⁷⁸ Zulmira 'Sirana' da Cruz Sarmiento, interview with the author, Dili, December 5, 2012.

¹⁷⁹ Benedict Anderson, "Imagining East Timor," *Arena Magazine* 4 (April–May 1993).

assistance, demonstrate the deep lack of mutual understanding and disparate imaginings of national community that characterised this period.

This chapter has argued that the infrastructure of the Indonesian military occupation and its impact upon East Timorese women needs to be understood within the broader context of the gender ideology of Suharto's New Order regime, and its particular ideas about gender, femininity, and sexuality. These social constructions of gender, with their particular notions of women's roles in society and their relationship to the state, were central components in how the regime's governance shaped women's experiences of everyday life in occupied East Timor. These ideas were disseminated through a number of programmes for development and modernisation that were implemented in the territory, as well as being enforced through state-sanctioned organisations and institutions.

As part of these processes of establishing, extending, and maintaining the regime's power in East Timor, such mechanisms and technologies of social control entered what the feminist anthropologist Veena Das has called 'the lexicon of social normality' for East Timorese women; that is, they became part of their everyday social reality.¹⁸⁰ And yet, as Das suggests, it is often in these very sites of everyday life that the capacity for women to live, to survive, and to cope can similarly be located. The focus for women in these situations is on 'making the everyday inhabitable' and this act in itself, I suggest, can become a form of resistance.¹⁸¹ This chapter has rendered visible the complex relationship between occupying power and resistance. While examining the ways in which occupation power was institutionalised by the state and negotiated by East Timorese women on a daily basis has been the focus of this chapter, the way in which these same spaces, practices, and institutions of everyday life in fact became sites for individual and collective processes of politicisation and resistance is the focus of Chapter Five.

¹⁸⁰ As paraphrased by Christine Sylvester, *War as Experience: Contributions from International Relations and Feminist Analysis* (Milton Park: Routledge, 2013), 72.

¹⁸¹ Veena Das, *Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 216.

Chapter Five: Women and the Development of a Culture of Resistance

Amid the violence and brutality demonstrated by the occupying regime, and despite attempts by the Indonesian state to modernise and develop East Timor as its twenty-seventh province, East Timorese society demonstrated a remarkable capacity to resist occupation and control. Under the Indonesian occupation, as the anthropologist Elizabeth Traube suggests, ‘local communities of resistance came to imagine themselves as part of a wider national community, bound together by shared suffering’.¹ This chapter examines the particular ways in which women survived, negotiated, and coped with the violence of daily life under Indonesian rule and, in many cases, transformed these experiences of suffering into sources for unity, resistance, and hope. As such, in this chapter I explore women’s role in the development of a widespread culture of resistance in East Timor, as this emerged out of the violence of the Indonesian occupation. This rhetoric of ‘resistance’ is the dominant mode for representing and remembering the Indonesian occupation. In this chapter, however, I outline a more complex understanding of the ways in which resistance was practiced and experienced, through a consideration of the particular narrative structures and representative modes articulated by East Timorese women in their oral history narratives. In doing so, I offer a more nuanced understanding of the ambiguity and complexity of East Timorese women’s resistance to the Indonesian occupation.

The first part of this chapter examines some of the factors that my interview participants explained had motivated them to participate in the resistance. I suggest that their decisions to participate in these activities were often shaped by experiences of intense personal loss and suffering, and the violent realities of daily life under Indonesian rule. Many women also expressed that this decision both emerged from and shaped their sense of political commitment to East Timor’s right to national self-determination. In the second part of the chapter, I move away from the common conceptualisation of the resistance as having been fought on three ‘fronts’ and, instead, highlight several key themes that, I suggest, are better able to capture the nature of women’s agency: networks of resistance and the importance of secrecy; the Catholic Church as an institution of survival, hope, and endurance; and subtle acts that sought to undermine Indonesian authority and hegemony in the territory. I also consider how women’s agency was effected by the increasingly public nature of

¹ Elizabeth Traube, “Producing the People: Exchange Obligations and Popular Nationalism,” in *Everyday Life in Southeast Asia*, ed. Kathleen M. Adams and Kathleen A. Gillogly (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011), 254.

resistance from the 1990s. Due to the violent realities of daily life under Indonesian rule, and the intense personal loss and suffering that resulted from years of conflict and military occupation, many of my interview participants described experiencing a deep sense of personal trauma. The final section of the chapter explores how these experiences of suffering came to be shared, not only as expressions of collective opposition to the occupying regime, but also as everyday practices through which individuals sought to both make sense of the violence and to reconstruct their lives within an East Timorese nationalist context.

Resistance Narratives

Throughout this thesis, I have argued that one of the central frameworks for representing and remembering the Indonesian occupation of East Timor is the narrative of *funu*, a Tetun word for war that also became a nationalist metaphor for East Timor's independence struggle against consecutive foreign occupiers.² I noted that this is a particularly masculine narrative in which women are largely absent, as it places emphasis primarily upon the role of the guerrilla fighters and high-profile male leaders in the struggle.³ As I indicated in Chapter One, the eventual success of East Timor's liberation struggle inevitably framed the way in which my interview participants thought of their past. As Marita Eastmond reminds us, the moment of the telling inevitably shapes the way in which the past is remembered and represented in the present.⁴ My interview participants used their memories to assert a space for themselves within this metanarrative. In their oral history narratives, many of my interview participants who grew up under Indonesian rule identified moments within their past that they saw as nascent signs of their path to resistance. Many of the women's narratives included in this thesis portrayed a moral and collective opposition to the Indonesian occupation, an opposition founded in a sense of unique and inherent East Timorese identity, and a belief in the inevitability of East Timor's independence.

² See Geoffrey C. Gunn, "The Five-Hundred-Year Timorese *Funu*," in *Bitter Flowers, Sweet Flowers: East Timor, Indonesia and the World Community*, ed. Richard Tanter, Mark Selden, and Stephen R. Shalom (Sydney: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001), 3–14.

³ See also Sara Niner, *Xanana: Leader of the Struggle for Independent East Timor* (North Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2009); Irena Cristalis and Catherine Scott, *Independent Women: The Story of Women's Activism in East Timor* (London: Catholic Institute for International Relations, 2005); and Teresa Cunha, "Beyond the Timorese Nationality Orthodoxy: The 'Herstory' of Bi-Murak," in *Women and the Politics of Gender in Post-Conflict Timor-Leste*, ed. Sara Niner (Florence: Taylor and Francis, 2016), 46–64.

⁴ Marita Eastmond, "Stories as Lived Experience: Narratives in Forced Migration Research," *Journal of Refugee Studies* 20, no. 2 (2007): 249.

In this chapter, I draw upon the concept and theories of ‘everyday resistance’, as developed by James Scott in 1985 with reference to the practices of resistance enacted by peasants in a small village in Malaysia. Scott’s work is concerned with the commonplace, small, and low-profile actions of subordinate classes that characterise their struggles against the state-building initiatives of hegemonic rulers; that is, what he characterises as the ‘ordinary weapons’ of groups, which are used to wage a ‘prosaic but constant struggle’ against such dominant structures and systems of control.⁵ In East Timor, there was a sustained and, in many ways, coordinated resistance movement against Indonesian rule, which extended from the December 1975 invasion through to the Popular Consultation in 1999, although its shape and form changed significantly through this period. This movement drew upon both substantive local support and increasing international solidarity, made headlines, and culminated in political change. However, I suggest that this teleological narrative, despite its popularity and political efficacy as a representative mode, does not fully capture the complexity of many people’s involvement in the struggle. In my interviews with East Timorese women, their narratives were interwoven with prosaic stories of negotiation, struggle, and daily resistance. In an approach similar to that of Anindita Ghosh in her study of women and resistance in South Asia, I argue for a reconceptualisation of East Timorese women’s resistance by focusing on ‘the everyday realm of social relations in which power is constantly and relentlessly negotiated’.⁶ Through listening to East Timorese women’s stories, it can be observed that they engaged in multilayered forms of resistance and resilience within their daily lives. I draw here, too, upon Jacqueline Siapno’s concept of ‘everyday resilience’ as a means of rethinking experiences of violence, terror, and displacement.⁷ In many instances, I suggest, the capacity to live with and through terror can, in and of itself, be seen as a form of resistance.

Despite the control exercised over the lives and bodies of the East Timorese by the occupying regime, many people remained committed to the idea of national self-determination. The widespread climate of fear within the territory, and the severe punishment of those who demonstrated any opposition to the occupying regime, acted to undermine the

⁵ James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak. Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), vx–xvii. See also James C. Scott, “Everyday Forms of Resistance,” in *Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*, ed. Forrest D. Colburn (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1989), 3–33; and James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).

⁶ Anindita Ghosh, “Introduction,” in *Behind the Veil: Resistance, Women and the Everyday in Colonial South Asia*, ed. Anindita Ghosh (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 6.

⁷ Jacqueline Siapno, “Living Through Terror: Everyday Resilience in East Timor and Aceh,” *Social Identities* 15, no. 1 (January 2009): 43–64.

Indonesian government's efforts towards political integration. Indeed, these conditions bred a strong collective opposition to Indonesian rule. In addition, the state-directed attempts to impose Indonesian values and practices upon East Timorese social and cultural life, and the associated methods and institutions established to exercise this state control, both inspired many East Timorese to oppose the regime, and gave them the tools and sites to act upon those desires.

Growing Up under Indonesian Rule

In this section, I discuss the oral history interviews that I conducted with East Timorese women who grew up under Indonesian rule. In these interviews, they articulated the personal processes that led them to becoming aware of and understanding East Timor's history, its status as an occupied territory, and its relationship with Indonesia. This awareness, as it gained coherence, was shaped by a variety of personal, cultural, social, and institutional factors. Several themes were contained within the women's narratives: the visibility of violence within everyday life, intergenerational storytelling, personal experiences of suffering, and the development of a sense of the distinctive nature of East Timorese identity. I suggest that the individual women selected and appropriated memory fragments in order to construct personalised narratives of a politically-charged process of illumination. I use the term illumination quite specifically, in as much as the narrators, in the words of Roxana Waterson, identified 'those critical moments in life when the protagonist tells us (explicitly or implicitly) how he or she first became aware of wider political issues and struggles that may have shaped the course of their life subsequently'.⁸ In addition to identifying such moments of illumination, the women also constructed narratives of realisation around them. Thus, although the women primarily traced the development of their own historical and political consciousness, their narratives, through their imbrication with a wider political narrative of the inevitability of East Timor's independence, also enabled the narrators to remember past experiences of violence in meaningful and explanatory ways.

Many of my interview participants had experienced or witnessed extensive violence and suffering, and these memories featured prominently within their oral history narratives. Yolanda Maria Conceição Chavés, for example, who was born in Maubara in 1971, explained to me that she was still constantly reminded of the violence of the early years of the

⁸ Roxana Waterson, "Introduction: Analysing Personal Narratives," in *Southeast Asian Lives: Personal Narratives and Historical Experience*, ed. Roxana Waterson (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2007), 10.

conflict. The many corpses that she had seen as a child had created fixed images in her mind, that stayed with her into adulthood. She said, ‘I have forgotten most things but I will never forget this’. She remembered:

I was still very small at that time. My dad’s sister, usually, during the afternoon, after the Indonesian military had killed people, went and collected the dead bodies. They wore white clothes, made a cross, and buried the dead bodies. Some people collected the skeletons, others collected dead people’s heads then they buried them. So, [my dad’s sister] was the one who went out to collect those dead bodies. We were still very small, we could not do anything, we just stayed and watched everything that happened. So, when we were still small, we didn’t know much, but we understood already that some people had lost their children, lost their family members and we could feel the pain. At our age at that time, we should have not seen those killings because we would be traumatised. We can forget other things but this one we cannot [sic] because people were killed and died every day in front of us.⁹

That Yolanda referred to forgetting some things, but remembering the horrific images of corpses, illustrates the complex struggles with memory that are often experienced by child survivors of traumatic events. Reflecting upon her interviews with child survivors of the Holocaust, Pauline Rockman observes that the possession of such memories can mean that ‘one is never free of the fear of the dread of those terrible times’.¹⁰ Yolanda was unable to forget the images of corpses and her associated feelings of helplessness. Such difficult memories have stayed with her and she continues to feel ‘traumatised’ by them. The language of trauma has been used quite extensively within the context of East Timor, defining a specific category of victimhood in legal, political, and moral ways.¹¹

Stories of hardship and loss were also passed down through generations, and some women recalled developing an understanding of the broader political situation through stories told to them by their parents. As I noted in the Introduction, East Timor is an oral culture and narrative is one of the central modes for people to explain ideas and share experiences. Rosa Xavier, who was born in Bagia in 1976, for example, remembered her mother telling her about their difficult life on Mount Matebian when Rosa was a baby. Rosa recalled that her mother used to tell stories and sing songs about the invasion and their escape to the

⁹ Yolanda Maria Conceição Chalhés, interview with the author, Liquica, July 15, 2012.

¹⁰ Pauline Rockman, “Issues of Interviewing People with Painful Childhood Memories: Child Survivors of the Holocaust and the Stolen Children,” *Oral History Association of Australia Journal* 24 (2002): 92.

¹¹ For example, the term ‘trauma’ is used extensively within the CAVR Report to describe the experiences of victims, and to make a case for their right to recognition, respect, and support in contemporary Timor-Leste. Commission for Reception, Truth, and Reconciliation in Timor-Leste (CAVR), *Chega! The Final Report of the Timor-Leste Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation, Vol. 1* (Jakarta: KPG in cooperation with STP-CAVR, 2013), 44–5.

mountains: ‘She told me a lot about the situation at that time’, Rosa remembered. This intergenerational transmission of foundational stories of nationalist identity and political struggle were influential in the development of Rosa’s political consciousness – she found her mother’s stories ‘inspirational’, she explained, in forging her own commitment to East Timor’s independence. In addition to the contribution of such intergenerational storytelling and songs, Rosa also described the importance of growing up with a sense that East Timor was different from the rest of Indonesia. She said, ‘Timor-Leste’s status was not the same as others in Indonesia, it was totally different’. What Rosa understood as East Timor’s distinctiveness was connected to what she described as a ‘different story’, East Timor’s Portuguese colonial heritage.¹² For Rosa, therefore, it was a combination of her mother’s stories and a feeling of difference that were significant in her growing understanding of the situation.

Mana Maria, who was born in Aileu in 1965, described a similar sense of a unique East Timorese identity that she recalled feeling ‘instinctively’ as a child, living under Indonesian rule. I asked Mana Maria about her understanding of the situation within the territory when she was a growing up, and her perceptions of the relationship with Indonesia. She responded:

We knew that it was something natural to us, without being told by someone, we knew that there was tension between Indonesia and Timor, we could feel it. We went to school with Indonesian students, talking Indonesian, we made friends with Indonesians. But we knew that there was tension between us. The relationship was flawed. We knew it without it even being said; we could feel it.¹³

Mana Maria explained that she could ‘feel’ the tension between East Timorese and Indonesian people within the territory, ‘without being told’. Mana Maria, who did not actively participate in the resistance, was still able to go about her daily activities despite this tension. She worked alongside Indonesian doctors in her job as a midwife in both Maubisse and Ainaro, and remarked that relations were ‘very good’ between herself and the Indonesian doctors.¹⁴ She remembered, ‘We did things together. We were just working partners’. Despite these positive working relationships, like Rosa, Mana Maria felt that the situation in East Timor was different to the rest of Indonesia, and she did not feel that the territory and its people were treated as an equal part of the Indonesian nation. When I asked her whether she had felt like she was a part of Indonesia, she responded:

¹² Rosa Xavier, interview with the author, Dili, July 13, 2012.

¹³ Mana Maria, interview with the author, Dili, December 3, 2012.

¹⁴ Mana Maria, interview with the author, Dili, December 6, 2012.

Mmm... no. At the time, it was pretty clear that there was segregation. Although we did things like work together, we ate together, we chatted together, but you always felt inside like you would never be a part of them. Back at that time, we knew that we would be separated from Indonesia. Because we didn't have anything much in common. Although we did things together, we worked every day, we chatted, we ate together, just inside you, you felt that something was not right. You felt like, the way they talk to you, the way they do things, they will never consider you. They just wanted to take over the country so that they could access the resources. And sooner or later, they were going to occupy all of this and you would be left out and struggling. That's what I think. Honestly, even when I was young, we always felt it – it was just natural, the way that we were brought up in addition to the situation at that time.¹⁵

Despite them living, eating, and working side-by-side, Mana Maria recalled there being an unspoken, yet pervasive distinction, between East Timorese and Indonesian people. She had felt that this distinction was immutable and, partly in light of this, became increasingly conscious of and invested in her identity as East Timorese.

Other women commented on unusual differences and fragmentations within society and between people that, to a young child, did not seem to make sense. Teresa 'Alita' Verdial de Araujo, who was born in Maliana in 1973, remembered noticing differences in people's work habits and daily activities; she also noticed that the state seemed to closely monitor some people's movements and not others. She identified differences between East Timorese and Indonesian people that, she explained, had solidified her sense of identity as *not* Indonesian: 'we had a totally different language, and we had a different culture and religion', she explained. Alita grew up in a strong Catholic household, but she remembered meeting other children at school who were Muslim (the dominant religion in Indonesia) and wondering, 'why are you so different from us?'. As she moved through school, Alita noticed political divisions between students that sometimes manifested in physical fights. Her parents also sternly warned her not to have a boyfriend from Indonesia. From these events, Alita said, she started to understand that the Indonesian military was 'the enemy' and that the East Timorese people were 'looking for freedom.' She began to situate these particular moments of illumination within a broader narrative of East Timor's struggle for national liberation, 'and I started to understand', she explained. Alita remembered that it was in her final years of school that she became fully aware that 'the East Timorese were fighting for independence'. She felt, therefore, that she had to 'define' herself in support of or opposition to Indonesian

¹⁵ Ibid.

rule.¹⁶ Alita explained her increasing understanding and awareness of East Timor's broader political situation and relationship with Indonesia by identifying particular experiences and reflections within her childhood, and constructing a narrative of realisation around them.

Within our oral history interview, Benícia Eriana 'Bebé' Xavier dos Reis Magno, who was born in Dili in 1981, similarly pieced together various events and articulated a gradual process of realisation. She described discovering only after independence that her parents had been involved in clandestine activities. After this discovery, she was able to reflect upon her childhood and to make sense of strange moments that she specifically recalled:

And we had, like I used to remember, we had several guests, who were not ... back in those days, I didn't suspect that they were, like, connected with the jungle, but then later on, I realised that those people came home with objectives! So it was, I found it interesting to have seen, to have experienced my parents' involvement in those activities. Yeah, it was amazing ... They didn't talk to us – they pretended like nothing happened. I mean, it was amazing. Later on, my mum did... I still have this [*goosebumps*] when I talk about it! And later on when everything [happened], when we had the referendum and got the result, my mum then talked to us. And I came to understand, like those days, those people who visited us on certain days, on particular days, they came and some pretended to be blind, asked us for a cup of water... some came with fruits ... they pretended that [they] were from somewhere else. And then it was like a trading between my parents and them, it was like amazing, I mean, I came to realise that those people were connected to those people in the jungle. But then I only came to know later on, after my mum told everyone about that, about those days.¹⁷

As I discuss later in this chapter, it was common for East Timorese families to provide food, clothing, and medical supplies to the fighters in the mountains, usually through a messenger (*estafeta*). The *estafetas* would communicate the needs of the armed front – such as food, medicine, money, bullets, or information – to civilians in towns and villages under Indonesian control, and would assist in the transfer of such goods and information. As she told this story, Bebé showed me the goosebumps on her skin, as she remembered the risks that her parents had taken to support the resistance. After Bebé's mother had explained to her that these activities had been part of the clandestine movement, she said that she felt, 'Wow! ... it made sense ... everything made sense in the end!'. She placed much emphasis upon this realisation that all of these strange occurrences suddenly made sense, and that she finally 'came to understand'.¹⁸ In our interview, Bebé recalled particular memory fragments and situated them within a broader framework of East Timor's struggle for independence.

¹⁶ Teresa 'Alita' Verdial de Araujo, interview with the author, Dili, June 21, 2012.

¹⁷ Benícia Eriana 'Bebé' Xavier dos Reis Magno, interview with the author, Dili, July 1, 2012.

¹⁸ Ibid.

For Filomena Fuca, a similar moment of realisation occurred while the territory was still under Indonesian rule, and it informed her subsequent political motivations and actions. Filomena was born in Oecussi in 1982 and, during our interview, recalled several moments from her childhood that had contributed to her understanding of the broader political situation in East Timor. She remembered, particularly, discovering a flag under the bed when she was in the fourth grade at primary school. She had noticed that the colours were strange to her – it was not the Indonesian flag – and it had the word ‘FRETILIN’ written on it, which had made her curious. She had asked her mother about it, but her mother said to keep quiet, that it was ‘not the time to know just yet’. Like Rosa, Filomena remembered being told stories by her mother about the family running away to the mountains in 1975 – these were personal stories, however, and the manner of their telling had not been overtly political. Filomena also recalled hearing her mother sing songs at night time, including *Foho Ramelau* (Mount Ramelau). At the time, Filomena was unaware of its meaning, but she later came to realise what the nationalist connotations and the political import of this act had been. When she was in her first year of senior high school, Filomena recalled also noticing that one of her friends had something written under their collar, ‘SAFARI’, and she had asked what it meant. She was told, ‘*Saya Anak FRETILIN Anti-Republik Indonesia*’ (I Am a Child of FRETILIN Anti-Republic of Indonesia). Filomena said that at this time, she had remembered seeing the flag as a child, and had suspected that it might have represented a stance against Indonesia. In doing so, Filomena recalled beginning a process of weaving these kinds of moments into a meaningful narrative of East Timor’s distinct history.¹⁹ Within our oral history interview, Filomena told her life story as such a process of her awakening to a political consciousness of East Timor’s nationalist struggle.

For all of these women who grew up under Indonesian rule, the description of an emerging understanding of East Timor’s history and the broader political relationship with Indonesia was central to their life narratives. This understanding, they explained, had been gleaned through intergenerational storytelling, songs, witnessing violence, observations, and the experience of living in a culture of fear. Many of the women’s memories were of brutal events, and their narratives revealed the intense personal and devastating effects of the occupation upon individuals. The women attributed an important sense of ‘naturalness’ to their growing understanding of the situation. The eventual success of East Timor’s struggle framed the way that the women thought of their past. They located moments of illumination

¹⁹ Filomena Fuca, interview with the author, Dili, November 30, 2012.

and constructed narratives around them as earlier signs of this path in their life and, therefore, they proscribed a sense of inevitability to independence.

Explaining Women's Participation in the Resistance

There are important intergenerational differences in the ways in which women explained their decision to participate in East Timor's resistance to the Indonesian occupation. In my interviews with women of the younger generation, who grew up during the Indonesian occupation, they often described steady processes of realisation that culminated in political action. Women who were born during the Portuguese colonial period, and witnessed the invasion first hand, attributed their participation to a political opposition to Indonesian rule which, they explained, grew out of their experiences of the politicisation of the territory in 1974–75 and life in the mountains. Uniformly, they all described the brutal nature of Indonesian rule as crucial in their decision to participate in the resistance. My interview participants generally adopted a broad definition of resistance, one which encompassed active involvement in resistance activities, daily acts – however prosaic – in support of the independence movement, and subtle acts that sought to undermine the hegemony of Indonesian authorities.²⁰ In explaining women's decision to join the resistance in the below section, I have adopted a similarly broad understanding of political involvement.

Women who were active in the Popular Organisation of East Timorese Women (*Organização Popular de Mulher Timor* – OPMT) prior to the Indonesian invasion and in the mountains, often referred to political, cultural, or circumstantial factors as motivating their decision to participate in the resistance. Many women who witnessed the broader social movement for change in 1974–75, and who had been involved in political activities at this time, remembered that they had felt a desire to participate in the visible changes that were taking place in the territory, and often explained that they had been captivated by the excitement that the revolutionary environment had provided.²¹ Other women described sympathising with FRETILIN's vision for national independence and an equal society, free from all forms of oppression, including gender-based discrimination.²² Subsequently, they explained, they had become involved in the early activities of OPMT. I described this organisation and its associated activities in Chapter Two. The commitment that many women

²⁰ Laurentina 'Mica' Barreto Soares, interview with the author, Dili, July 12, 2012.

²¹ Céu Lopes Federer, in *Step by Step: Women of East Timor, Stories of Resistance and Survival*, ed. Jude Conway (Darwin: Charles Darwin University Press, 2010), 3.

²² Aurora Ximenes, interview with Michael Leach, Dili, March 24, 2010.

had made in the mountains to work for national liberation motivated their ongoing participation in the resistance. Loudres ‘Merita’ Alves Araujo, for example, explained: ‘I kept going, doing this work because when I started to stop, I felt that I was giving up. So I decided to keep contributing what I had’.²³ For this generation, life in the mountains under FRETILIN control was a foundational experience in initiating, solidifying, and ensuring their ongoing emotional commitment to independence, and in forming the practical links that would facilitate their engagement during the subsequent period.

Some women explained that they had ended up participating in FRETILIN’s programmes during the period of conflict simply because they found themselves in an area that was under FRETILIN control and, thus, that they had been drawn into the movement. For some women, such as Domingas ‘Micato’ Fernandes Alves, these circumstantial motivations merged into political objectives as time went on.²⁴ FRETILIN formed the basis of resistance activity until the late 1970s, when it was destroyed in the face of ongoing Indonesian military offensives, as I described in Chapter Two. The resistance movement expanded after the March 1981 National Conference into the National Council for Revolutionary Resistance (*Conselho Revolucionário de Resistência Nacional* – CRRN), and again in 1987 with the establishment of the National Council of Maubere Resistance (*Concelho Nacional da Resistência Maubere* – CNRM). These shifts demonstrated what Sara Niner has called ‘the new dynamic of inclusiveness and non-partisan nationalist strategy’; a sentiment that is reflected within many women’s explanations for participating in the resistance.²⁵ Political divisions that emerged in the 1974–75 period were sidelined in pursuit of a common goal: national independence. In my interview with Filomena ‘Mena’ Barros dos Reis, for example, she described ‘freedom’ as the common goal that had united all East Timorese in their opposition to the Indonesian occupation. She explained, ‘You know that all Timorese when we met together [during the occupation], we only had one goal: that we would like to be free. We’d like freedom. Of course, Indonesia was doing a lot of development here – they invested in education, they invested in infrastructure. But this cannot buy our right, cannot buy our dignity’.²⁶ Personal and collective experiences of suffering now came to be rhetoricised as instances of a collective ordeal, and, articulated as such within a developing nationalist narrative, aided in the cultivation of a putatively non-

²³ Loudres ‘Merita’ Alves Araujo, interview with the author, Dili, July 6, 2012.

²⁴ Domingas ‘Micato’ Fernandes Alves, in *Step by Step*, ed. Conway, 82.

²⁵ Sara Niner, “A Long Journey of Resistance: The Origins and Struggle of the CNRT,” *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 32, no. 1 & 2 (2000): 11.

²⁶ Filomena ‘Mena’ Barros dos Reis, interview with the author, Dili, June 30, 2012.

patisan political rhetoric that emphasised the broader pursuit of national self-determination and the subordination of political differences to this end.

Many of my interview participants cited large scale displacement, the loss of family members, and an experience of collective suffering, as having contributed to their emerging opposition to Indonesian rule. Adelia Guterres, who was from Bagia, remembered hearing about the treatment that her family had received from the Indonesian military: for example, her uncle had been beaten up and was subsequently to disappear. It was from such experiences, Adelia explained, that she had ‘started to feel nationalism growing’. She had begun to realise, she said, that ‘the military, are not good people, and they are here to destroy us’.²⁷ Maria Dias reflected similarly upon the violent treatment and subsequent death of her father at the hands of the Indonesian military, which I discussed in Chapter Three, and also his unwavering belief in independence, as influencing her commitment to the same goal: ‘My father’s terrible death and his passionate belief that one day Timorese independence would come, had a marked effect on me and my brothers and cemented a determination in our minds to fight for our country to be free’.²⁸ For Maria, these intimate encounters with violence motivated her to fight for independence. Filomena ‘Mena’ Barros dos Reis also described the violence and suffering that permeated daily life in Dili as having shaped her decision to participate in the resistance. She explained:

You know the first thing, every day, not only every day but every hour or every minute, you always hear that someone is missing or someone has disappeared, someone will say that my mother was captured already ... and even at night time, the city is like a ghost city, when you listen and they start to torture the people, the young people or the women, you can hear their voices when they are screaming. It really hurts you! ... I say: ‘Are we human or are we an animal?’ Because you cannot stand to listen to all the voices. Mammaaaa! Sisterssss!! Papaaaa... Help me!! It’s really hard. And you hear that the military was laughing... so I say, I have to do something [sic].²⁹

Mena’s narrative attests to the prevalence of violence which, as I argued in Chapter Three, was constant feature of daily life under the military occupation. Mena provides an intensely sensory and evocative description of the impact of such violence upon her decision to ‘do something’.³⁰

²⁷ Adelia Guterres, interview with the author, Dili, June 21, 2012.

²⁸ Maria Dias, in *Step by Step*, ed. Conway, 43.

²⁹ Filomena ‘Mena’ Barros dos Reis, interview with the author, Dili, June 30, 2012.

³⁰ Ibid.

Another of my interview participants, Isabel ‘Bella’ Antonia da Costa Galhos, explained that the ‘many hardships’ that the East Timorese people had experienced, and the normalisation of such violence, had ‘moved’ her and were most significant in shaping her decision to become involved in politics. As a child, Bella had witnessed first hand the brutality and the violence of the Indonesian military. Bella’s father was one of the many East Timorese who had been arrested and detained by Indonesian forces following the invasion, which had left Bella’s mother to fend for herself with seven children for two years. Upon his release, and in light of the violent nature of their relationship, Bella’s mother had decided to permanently separate from her husband and to raise their children alone. Her experience was a source of inspiration to Bella, instilling in her a strong conscience and sense of justice. Bella recalled: ‘my mother is just one metre high, but man, the strength she has, everything that is in her, it didn’t really show me that she is a small lady. My mother is big in our eyes, you know?’. Bella remembered that as a teenager, she had begun to situate these personal experiences of suffering within a broader political context. Bella explained:

[My mother] told us about the story of my auntie, what happened to my dad when I was very young. And she didn’t like the military – never liked them. So all of that influenced us too. So we didn’t like them too. In the beginning, of course you can’t dislike them simp[ly] because, ohh you killed my auntie! You killed my cousin – that’s what I knew. But I had no idea about the whole conflict that they were here, occupying a country. As I grew up, passed my teenage years, and I realised, damn – they’re here, taking over my country! They destroy the people, they destroy the culture! So basically it’s like, step by step, but it was fast, because of the hardship and the critical situation in East Timor.³¹

As a result of hearing these stories and her increasing capacity to situate them within a broader political context, Bella explained that she had felt a growing sense of responsibility to contribute to the liberation her country. These stories and experiences had laid the foundations for and informed much of Bella’s later activism.

It was not only the application of military violence more broadly, but the specific treatment of women by the regime, that many of my interview participants explained had motivated them to resist the occupation. In Chapter Three, I outlined some of the specific ways in which East Timorese women were targeted by the Indonesian military. Luisinha Freitas Mok explained to me that she had ‘really hated them [the Indonesian military] because they killed people and sexually violated them’. Luisinha was particularly angered by the treatment of East Timorese women by the Indonesian military. They ‘really don’t respect

³¹ Isabel ‘Bella’ Antonia da Costa Galhos, interview with the author, Dili, July 3, 2012.

a woman's body', she explained.³² Several young women also recalled the treatment of women as being particularly brutal in gender-specific ways, and that this had influenced their growing opposition to the occupying regime and desire to act upon these ideas. Mariquita Soares remembered that the Indonesian military 'did not have a good attitude towards women ... it's not good what they did to the women'.³³ Zelia Fernandes reflected similarly that women had particularly suffered during the occupation, not only through direct killing, but also through experiences of intimidation, rape, and gender-specific methods of torture:

It's very different with men. With men they just torture and kill them – finished. But with women, they burn[ed] women's [bodies] ... they raped them, they tortured them and finally they killed them. So this is a very bad thing. They ask women to, to, they ask women to torture their men. So... I don't know how to explain this, but it is very difficult for our women when they faced the military. Because the first thing that we face after they arrest us is automatically they will rape us. No choice. They will rape us and then torture us ... Not only one rapist but more than one, or two or three or even more than that. They rape us publicly, in front of their friends, and then they will kill us. And, so... when we talk about our women [who have been] arrested, then we have a product of imagination inside our head – what they did with the women. So it is very sad, and [we] were also very hurt, but ahh, yeah, that encourages us to do more.³⁴

Several of the young women that I interviewed who grew up during the Indonesian occupation explained that talking about politics had become simply 'a way of life'. Benícia Eriana 'Bebé' Xavier dos Reis Magno, for example, recalled:

[W]e were born in a situation in which we had to talk about politics; no, not about politics, but about our resistance, our situation, every day. It was like food. We had to be fed every day. And so we knew what was going on, like the Indonesian military has attacked somewhere ... we had no option not to know, we had to know. It was like a food that we were fed every single day.³⁵

It was a similar case for Zelia Fernandes, who remembered that independence had been 'a regular discussion' among her family.³⁶ Whenever they sat together for lunch or dinner, she remembered, they would discuss politics and what they needed to do for the struggle. For many young women, such as Bebé and Zelia, their understanding of the broader political situation and desire to act upon these ideas were developed further in the educational institutions established by the New Order in East Timor.

³² Luisinha Freitas Mok, interview with the author, Baucau, August 4, 2013.

³³ Mariquita Soares, interview with the author, Dili, June 11, 2012.

³⁴ Zelia Fernandes, interview with the author, Dili, June 7, 2012.

³⁵ Benícia Eriana 'Bebé' Xavier dos Reis Magno, interview with the author, Dili, July 1, 2012.

³⁶ Zelia Fernandes, interview with the author, Dili, June 6, 2012.

In Chapter Four, I noted that East Timor's first university opened in 1986, the National University of East Timor (*Universitas Timor Timur* – UNTIM). One of my interview participants, Zelia Fernandes, had attended the university in 1997. From that time, she explained, 'everything was politics', it was discussed 'every day'.³⁷ Rosa Xavier explained that when she started university, she had begun to learn more about the situation and to build upon the stories that she had heard as a child, which she explained in terms of a transformation from a 'small view' to having 'big ideas' about 'why we [were] struggling for our independence, for our self-determination'.³⁸ A number of youth and student groups formed in the 1990s within the context of the expanded education system, and went to play key roles in staging public protests against the Indonesian occupation. These organisations were clandestine or semi-clandestine although, at times, they operated within the structures of approved organisations or institutions, such as the Catholic Church.³⁹ For example, the East Timor Student Solidarity Council (*Dewan Solidaritas Mahasiswa* – ETSSC) was formed at the university in Dili in 1998 to facilitate students' participation in the struggle. Alongside this organisation, the Timor-Leste Young Women's Association (*Grupo Feto Foins'ae Timor Leste* – GFFTL) was formed to provide young women with the opportunity to become involved.



Image: Women at the Student Solidarity Council house in Dili.⁴⁰

³⁷ Zelia Fernandes, "Born Hard, Born to Struggle for Freedom" (paper presented at the Country Women of Australia's Country of Study School on the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, the University of New England, Australia, February 2012).

³⁸ Rosa Xavier, interview with the author, Dili, July 13, 2012.

³⁹ For an overview of clandestine youth and student groups, see "Appendix 2," in Dan Nicholson, "The Lorikeet Warriors: East Timorese New Generation Nationalist Resistance, 1989–99" (Hons., University of Melbourne, 2001), 53–7.

⁴⁰ Jude Conway, email communication with the author, July 2, 2012.

I interviewed several women who had been members of GFFTL, including Rosa Xavier and Zelia Fernandes, and they explained that the organisation had been formed within the context of the impending Popular Consultation.⁴¹ It had worked on voter education, facilitated public dialogue, and communicated with the international community about the human rights situation in the territory. Similar organisations emerged in Indonesia, including the underground student group, the National Resistance of East Timorese Students (*Resistencia Nacional dos Estudantes de Timor Leste* – RENETIL), which operated somewhat furtively within the broader Indonesian government-approved organisation, the East Timorese Students and Youth Association (*Ikatan Mahasiswa dan Pelajar Timor Timur* – IMPETTU). I discuss women's involvement in these organisations below.

Many East Timorese recalled that it was, ironically, when they had gone to study at universities in Indonesia that they developed a deep political commitment to national self-determination, and began to actively participate in the struggle. Laurentina 'Mica' Barreto Soares, who grew up in Manatuto, Maliana, and then Dili, recalled not knowing much at all about the political situation within the territory until she went to university in Indonesia. Mica explained that her family, especially her father, had prohibited his children from being involved in politics.⁴² While Mica described her childhood as 'untouched by political activities',⁴³ she still remembered a pervasive feeling that 'something was not right'.⁴⁴ Mica recalled that it was when she went to study in Semarang (Indonesia) that she had begun to participate in political activities. She said that she had felt inspired by her seniors, who were already involved in the struggle for independence, as well as by the revolutionary environment that was generated by RENETIL. She described her initial involvement as something that had happened 'naturally'. She explained:

RENETIL was an organised underground student movement, so when I say naturally [what I mean is] because when you live in an environment where almost every day you encounter many Timorese students [who] talk about the situation back home, about the independence struggle, you are then naturally drawn into that situation, psychologically you are already in that domain. As a Timorese student, you feel you are called to be involved naturally. You feel that you have a high moral responsibility to the independence of East Timor.⁴⁵

⁴¹ Rosa Xavier, interview with the author, Dili, July 13, 2012; and Zelia Fernandes, interview with the author, Dili, June 6, 2012.

⁴² Laurentina 'Mica' Barreto Soares, interview with the author, Dili, July 12, 2012.

⁴³ Mica Barreto Soares, in *Step by Step*, ed. Conway, 125.

⁴⁴ Laurentina 'Mica' Barreto Soares, interview with the author, Dili, July 12, 2012.

⁴⁵ Mica Barreto Soares, email communication with the author, January 20, 2014.

For Mica, it was this culture of revolution which developed among East Timorese students in Indonesia that had inspired her to participate in politics. Mica suggested that many young people became involved in RENETIL quite naturally, although she noted that there were also some strategic attempts to recruit new students. It was a slow process of socialisation, she explained:

Our seniors socialised the activities of RENETIL. It was not propaganda, that's not the word, they 'introduced' RENETIL work. It was not that today someone talked with you and tomorrow you became a member, no, it took time, perhaps a month or two months. Because of the secrecy, we tried to learn about your background and your family, to be careful.⁴⁶

Teresa 'Alita' Verdial de Araujo, who also studied at university in Java and joined RENETIL in 1993, explained that members would be drawn into the orbit of the organisation through 'daily conversations', in which members of RENETIL would connect with those who were attracted to such political ideas.⁴⁷

In addition to these processes of socialisation, some women also described family members as having influenced and facilitated their involvement in both formal and informal resistance structures. In my interview with Elisa da Silva dos Santos, for example, she explained that she was not actually involved in politics at all until she got married. Subsequently, she had started to participate because her husband had been involved. Her husband had spent three years in the mountains and, after surrendering and observing the violence and brutality demonstrated by the Indonesian military, had decided to continue his involvement.⁴⁸ This was similarly the case for Durvalina Belo Magno, who was from Ainaro but lived in Dili for much of the occupation, and explained that she had started to become involved after she got married.⁴⁹ Several women who went on to participate in resistance activities recalled running small errands for their parents as children and, from these experiences, they had begun to obtain an understanding of how the movement operated. Zelia Fernandes, for example, remembered sitting and talking with her father, and listening to why he wanted independence for East Timor. She remembered that when she entered junior high school, her father had given her a letter and asked her to give it to a friend of his who lived near to her school. She had asked her father what the letter was, but he would not tell her, and she simply passed the letter on to his friend. There was a sense that children were less

⁴⁶ Mica Barreto Soares, in *Step by Step*, ed. Conway, 126.

⁴⁷ Teresa 'Alita' Verdial de Araujo, interview with the author, Dili, June 21, 2012.

⁴⁸ Elisa da Silva dos Santos, interview with the author, Dili, June 27, 2012.

⁴⁹ Durvalina Belo Magno, interview with the author, Dili, June 29, 2012.

suspect, and that they could be used for small tasks, such as passing on letters or supplies. Zelia felt as a child, she had been less likely to be detected by the Indonesian military because she did not require an ID card and, thus, she could ‘move around freely’ and share information.⁵⁰ Gosmenia ‘Keizar’ Savio, who grew up in Fuiluro, remembered that she had been three years old and her sister had been five when they began taking items to FALINTIL under their parents’ instruction. Keizar or her sister would often accompany their mother when she took food to the guerrillas because of the protection that she thought the children could provide.⁵¹ These examples demonstrate the way in which a revolutionary culture was established and disseminated across the territory through family networks.

In my oral history interviews, women attributed their decision to participate in resistance activities to a combination of personal, social, political, and situational factors. The influence of these factors was strongly dependent upon generation; for those who grew up under Portuguese colonial rule and experienced the period of decolonisation and the excitement of the political ferment in 1974–75, a particular set of political and ideological factors had been significant in shaping their resistance. For those who were born and educated under Indonesian rule, situational and contextual factors were often very important. The ongoing and pervasive nature of violence under the occupation, in its use as a mechanism of control, prevented the normalisation of society that the Indonesian state officially claimed. Instead, these violent methods of rule inculcated a deep sense of resentment and inherent difference among East Timorese people, and were particularly important in shaping the consciousness of the younger generation. In many cases, politics was described as becoming a way of life for young women growing up under Indonesian rule. Benícia Eriana ‘Bebé’ Xavier dos Reis Magno’s comment that political discussions were ‘like a food that we were fed every single day’ well articulates the prevalence of opposition to Indonesian rule, and the way in which a collective commitment to independence permeated daily life.⁵² Women participated in a range of activities to contribute to the resistance, and also demonstrated a remarkable capacity to endure the violence of the occupation. I discuss women’s diverse contributions to the resistance in the below section.

⁵⁰ Zelia Fernandes, interview with the author, Dili, June 6, 2012.

⁵¹ Gosmenia ‘Keizar’ Savio, interview with the author, Dili, May 5, 2012.

⁵² Benícia Eriana ‘Bebé’ Xavier dos Reis Magno, interview with the author, Dili, July 1, 2012.

Women and Resistance

In the above section, I outlined the way in which the networks and institutions of daily life under the Indonesian occupation shaped many women's, particularly young women's, growing understanding of the political situation. I also discussed the manner in which, in many instances, it was these same sites that precipitated and facilitated their involvement in the resistance. Such networks and institutions provided the foundations for the trust that helped to sustain the resistance movement and, at the same time, were critical sites for the involvement of individual women in various forms of collective political action. John Taylor has argued that one of the reasons why East Timorese society was able to maintain a sophisticated, effective resistance to the Indonesian occupation lies in the particular dynamics and social fabric of East Timorese communities, as well as the importance of kinship relations.⁵³ Taylor's observation is useful in understanding the central importance of extended familial relationships to the networks of resistance yet, in the below section, I further expand this analysis to encompass the role of women – vital, present, yet often overlooked participants in these networks. One of the key explanations for the limited public recognition of women's involvement in the independence movement is that their contributions were often made within such networks. Rather than being concerned with military struggle or guerrilla actions (the very stuff of *funu*), they were often furtive, behind-the-scenes, and concerned with the daily emotional, material, and body-based aspects of maintaining a resistance movement. In this section, I highlight several key themes from my oral history interviews that, I suggest, are better able to capture the nature of women's agency. I also consider how women's agency was effected by the increasingly public nature of resistance from the 1990s.

The Networks and Secrecy of the Resistance

In Chapter Two, I described the way in which a large portion of the civilian population fled to the mountains after the Indonesian invasion in December 1975, as well as the associated dislocation and separation experienced by individuals, families, and communities. For many individuals, although these were often coercive and extremely disruptive experiences, I suggested earlier in this chapter that life in the mountains provided them with a strong, emotional commitment to independence, and a network of like-minded individuals. These

⁵³ John G. Taylor, *East Timor: The Price of Freedom* (New York: Zed Books, 1999), 1.

political ideas and connections often retained their importance and integrity when the population surrendered to Indonesian forces, and returned to towns and villages under Indonesian control. That a large portion of the civilian population lived in the mountains during the years 1975–79 meant that these resistance networks were extensive and can be used to explain, in part, the broad and inclusive language that is often associated with East Timorese resistance to the Indonesian occupation.

Many of my interview participants explained that most people had participated in the resistance in some way; that it was simply a part of daily life in occupied East Timor. One of my interview participants, Benícia Eriana ‘Bebé’ Xavier dos Reis Magno, for example, remembered:

Back in those days, everyone participated in the resistance movement in a different way. My mother and my father, they provided some equipment, like medication, rice, shoes, clothes, to people in the bush. But some other families, they contributed in a different form. Like... most of them, there are some people, one or two families, that were not supportive. But it was not very many of them.⁵⁴

Bebé suggested that there had been a widespread commitment among the East Timorese people to the struggle for independence. She also explained that there had been great diversity in the particular contributions that people had made. Many individuals were involved loosely, or sometimes more formally, in these kinds of underground activities.⁵⁵ These clandestine networks acted in support of the guerrilla fighters in the mountains, coordinated resistance activities and, where possible, channelled information overseas to international activists, in order to make public the violent nature of Indonesian rule, and to affirm that opposing the occupation was a collective experience. The involvement of individuals in these networks was often highly secretive. One of my interview participants from Baucau, for example, Labo, recalled that the messages that she had received from *estafetas* regarding supplies for the fighters in the mountains, which I explained earlier in this chapter, were secret: ‘you couldn’t tell anyone, not even your closest friend’, she emphasised.⁵⁶ Indeed, such was the overwhelming need for secrecy that another of my interview participants from Baucau, Luisinha Freitas Mok, explained that even though both she and her husband had participated in clandestine activities, at that time, they did not even tell each other.⁵⁷ Despite the widespread nature of these resistance networks, many of my

⁵⁴ Benícia Eriana ‘Bebé’ Xavier dos Reis Magno, interview with the author, Dili, July 1, 2012.

⁵⁵ CAVR Report, 11–12, 144.

⁵⁶ Labo, interview with the author, Baucau, August 6, 2013.

⁵⁷ Luisinha Freitas Mok, interview with the author, Baucau, August 4, 2013.

interview participants stressed this need to maintain the secrecy of the movement, so as to avoid suspicion by the Indonesian forces.

One of the key ways in which the secrecy of the movement was maintained was through the use of code names (*nom de guerra*), a widespread practice throughout the occupation period and, as the CAVR Report suggests, demonstrating that there was ‘a consistently followed discipline’ among those involved in the movement.⁵⁸ Code names were either chosen by individuals or were given to them by resistance leaders, often during the years in the mountains following the Indonesian invasion. Women’s code names often had revolutionary connotations and used acronyms (like men’s), but even resistance code names reflected the fundamentally gendered nature of the resistance. Women’s code names were gendered as female, or contained part of their husband’s or another family member’s code name. These names were sometimes changed so as to avoid detection, as an individual’s circumstances changed, or as they progressed higher in the resistance structure. Ilda Maria da Conceição, for example, told me that she had created her own code name: *Lalu Imin*, which she used from 1975–77 during her time in the mountains. *Lalu*, Ilda explained, came from her grandmother, while *Imin* was an acronym for *Independensia Mortem, Integrasaun Nunka* (Independence or Death, Integration Never). When Ilda surrendered from the mountains, she changed her code name to *Wahara GaM*: *Wahara*, which means star in Makasae,⁵⁹ and *GaM*, which was her husband’s code name.⁶⁰ Verónica das Dores’ original code name was *Bilalumau* but in 1980, it was changed to *Bisoi*: ‘BI=Bin (Sister) or Buibere (Woman); SOI means that I could do things ... Each letter also had a meaning: B=Bin and Buibere; I=Independence; S=Saudações (Greetings); O=Organisation; I=Independence’. Verónica explained that sometimes, ‘[d]ifferent people would have different code names for each other, which meant that we would not be known by others’, which established another layer of secrecy to the resistance networks.⁶¹ Code names were used to communicate between individuals, and sometimes in the signing of resistance documents. That way, as Aurora Ximenes explained, ‘If we were taken, they [the Indonesian military] could beat us but we could not give anything away. We always used code. That’s why so many people today still

⁵⁸ CAVR Report, 1806.

⁵⁹ Makasae is a Papuan language that is spoken by approximately 70,000 people in the eastern part of Baucau district and in some parts of Viqueque district. See Juliette Huber, *First Steps Towards a Grammar of Makasae* (Muenchen: Lincom Europa, 2008).

⁶⁰ Ilda Maria da Conceição, interview with the author, Dili, July 5, 2012.

⁶¹ Verónica das Dores, “It is Better to Have No Title Than to Lose My Country,” in *Secrecy: The Key to Independence: It’s Better to Have No Title Than to Have No Nation*, ed. Laura Soares Abrantes and Beba Sequeira (Dili: Blue Mountains East Timor Sisters, 2010), 43.

have code names. We would never use a person's real name'.⁶² Several of my interview participants chose to be referred to by their code names in this thesis, which suggests the personal attachment that many women feel to these names, but also perhaps a sense that the secrecy that was inherent within the resistance movement has had an enduring effect upon East Timorese society.

The use of code was not restricted to people's names, but was also used in the communication of information and to refer to certain items and places. For example, Durvalina Belo Magno remembered that when she received requests from the mountains for bullets, they would be referred to as corn seeds (*batar musan*).⁶³ Luisinha Freitas Mok explained that she would often hide people who came down from the mountains in her restaurant, which was named *Goyang Lidah* (Shake Your Tongue). This was a common name for an Indonesian restaurant but, as Luisinha explained, was also a code name. If guerrillas from the mountains came down to town, people would click or shake their tongue to indicate the fighters' arrival, and to check that there were no members of the military in sight.⁶⁴ The use of secrecy was thus a central means of preventing detection by Indonesian forces.

In order to avoid suspicion, individuals would often engage in acceptable social practices while, at the same time, participating in resistance networks. The clandestine leader, Constâncio Pinto, commented in his memoir that he 'made a mistake by [initially] being openly rebellious'. Instead, he wrote, 'pretending to be a good Indonesian citizen is a good way to protect your life and to continue to fight for the independence of East Timor'.⁶⁵ Many of my interview participants explained that they had adopted a similar approach of living what was essentially a double life: working in the Indonesian administration or dutifully attending school or university while, at the same time, working underground for the independence movement. Filomena Reis, for example, explained what she called playing 'the double game', which meant being 'in the morning a good civil servant, in the afternoon a radical. All of us had to do this. Walking past the military compound I'd say good morning and give them a smile – from the outside, not from the inside'.⁶⁶ Isabel 'Bella' Antonia da Costa Galhos, too, described living a dangerous double life – 'putting two faces all over the place', as she phrased it – by openly supporting the Indonesian regime yet, at the same time, participating in the clandestine movement by spreading information or supplying food and

⁶² Aurora Ximenes, interview with Michael Leach, Dili, March 24, 2010.

⁶³ Durvalina Belo Magno, interview with the author, Dili, June 29, 2012.

⁶⁴ Luisinha Freitas Mok, interview with the author, Baucau, August 4, 2013.

⁶⁵ Pinto and Jardine, *East Timor's Unfinished Struggle*, 88.

⁶⁶ Filomena Reis, in *Step by Step*, ed. Conway, 218.

medicine to the resistance fighters in the mountains.⁶⁷ Another of my interview participants, Labo, also explained that she had engaged in ‘double work’. She had worked as a public servant but, at the same time, supported the resistance. She recalled that if the military ever suspected her, she would put her associations with the resistance on hold for a month or two to avoid detection.⁶⁸ Zelia Fernandes explained that the term ‘two heads’ (*ulun rua*) was often used by the Indonesian military to refer to such individuals, and that this was also used as an insult during interrogation processes.⁶⁹ This approach of outward compliance while, at the same time, participating in underground resistance activities, reveals another element of the secrecy that underpinned the resistance movement. This impression of compliance was often demonstrated through an individual’s involvement in a state-sanctioned institution, such as a government body or school, which could be used a cover for activities that contributed to the resistance – either by providing supplies to the fighters in the mountains, participating in political discussions, or by sharing information both within and outside the territory. I discuss one such institution, the Catholic Church, in the below section.

An Institution of Survival, Hope, and Endurance: The Catholic Church

In Chapter Four, I noted the transformation of the Catholic Church in East Timor from an institution that was heavily involved in the power structures and programmes of the conservative Portuguese colonial regime to a staunch advocate for the human rights of the East Timorese people, as well as a vital source of cultural survival, sanctity, and hope for many.⁷⁰ As Patrick Smythe writes in his study on the Catholic Church and East Timor, the Church initially adopted a neutral position in respect to Indonesia’s annexation of the territory and, because of this, the New Order regime had allowed the Church to remain as the sole independent institution.⁷¹ A requirement of the Indonesian state ideology of *Pancasila*, which was imposed upon East Timor as part of the infrastructure of occupation, was that

⁶⁷ Isabel ‘Bella’ Antonia da Costa Galhos, interview with the author, Dili, July 3, 2012.

⁶⁸ Labo, interview with the author, Baucau, August 6, 2013.

⁶⁹ Zelia Fernandes, interview with the author, Dili, June 6, 2012.

⁷⁰ For further discussion on the role of the Catholic Church in East Timor’s independence struggle, see J. De Groot and Louise Crowe, ed., *The Church and East Timor: A Collection of Documents by National and International Catholic Church Agencies*, Just Reading, No. 2. (Melbourne: Catholic Commission for Justice Development and Peace, 1993); Louise Crowe, “The Impact of the Indonesian Annexation on the Role of the Catholic Church in East Timor, 1976–1995” (Ph.D., Northern Territory University, 1996); Rowena Lennox, *Fighting Spirit of East Timor: The Life of Martinho Da Costa Lopes* (Annandale: Pluto Press, 2000); Patrick A. Smythe, *The Heaviest Blow – The Catholic Church and the East Timor Issue* (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 2004); and Joel Hodge, *Resisting Violence and Victimisation: Christian Faith and Solidarity in East Timor* (Abington: Taylor and Francis, 2016).

⁷¹ Smyth, *The Heaviest Blow*, 37 and 48.

citizens subscribed to one of five official religions.⁷² In the context of East Timor, the application of this policy was also framed by the Indonesian state in terms of the ‘mental and spiritual development of the community’.⁷³ Accordingly, the government allocated funds and provided information to East Timorese people about religion through booklets, pamphlets, and mass media. Religious instruction was also provided in schools, and scholarships were available to students who wished to further their religious education in Indonesia. Religiosity was framed by the Indonesian government as important for national and human development – central components of the New Order’s state rhetoric, which I discussed in Chapter Four.⁷⁴ Across the course of the occupation, however, in light of the violence and oppression perpetrated by the Indonesian military, the Catholic Church within the territory – and, increasingly, the international Catholic community – began to speak out against the violence, and to advocate strongly for self-determination in East Timor.⁷⁵ I outlined the nature of the Church’s opposition to the occupation in Chapter Four with reference to the Indonesian family planning programme, but in this section, I discuss the significance of the Catholic Church in East Timor more broadly, as well as its increasingly evocation as a symbol of East Timorese national identity.

From the early years of the Indonesian occupation, the Catholic Church expressed deep concerns over the human rights violations being perpetrated by the Indonesian military, as well as what it perceived to be the gradual destruction of East Timorese cultural identity by the occupying regime. The Apostolic Administrator of the Dili diocese, Monsignor Martinho da Costa Lopes (from 1977–83), and his successor, Bishop Dom Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo (from 1983–2002), both openly criticised Indonesian military actions in East Timor in interviews, public letters, and correspondence; as well as in testimony to international forums, such as the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Commission in Geneva. For example, a document prepared by Monsignor Lopes on behalf of the ‘Religious of East Timor’ for presentation at the Conference of the Indonesian Major Religious Superiors in 1981, referred to the ‘invasion, war, looting, the destruction of the indigenous population,

⁷² After independence, six religions were recognised by Indonesian government: Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Catholicism and Protestantism, and Confucianism. During the New Order, however, displays of Confucianism were prohibited, and it was de-recognised by the government. With the fall of Suharto in 1998, the religion was officially recognised once again. See Helen Pausacker, “The Sixth Religion,” *Inside Indonesia* 89 (Jan–Mar 2007).

⁷³ Department of Information, Republic of Indonesia, *East Timor After Integration* (Jakarta: Department of Information, 1984), 146.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 146–7; and Provincial Government of East Timor Province, *East Timor Develops* (Dili: Regional Government of East Timor Province: July 17, 1984), 40.

⁷⁵ For a detailed discussion of responses within the international Catholic community to the Indonesian occupation of East Timor, see Smythe, *The Heaviest Blow*.

territorial subjugation, colonial exploitation, the expulsion of the indigenous population who are replaced by people from other islands, military occupation and attempts at mass mobilization' that had taken place in East Timor.⁷⁶ Much information from inside this 'closed land' was also compiled by Church sources, or was provided to the international solidarity movement via Catholic priests.⁷⁷

From the mid-1980s opposition extended beyond the Catholic order in East Timor, and Church organisations from around the world began to speak out in support of independence for East Timor. In June 1985, for example, Cardinal John O'Connor, Archbishop of New York, wrote to Bishop Belo expressing the support of the United States (US) Catholic Church for the Church of East Timor.⁷⁸ Although no formal statement was made, at the July 1985 Christian Conference of Asia there was 'intense discussion' of the East Timor issue.⁷⁹ As the occupation continued, leaders of East Timor's Catholic Church began to place increasing emphasis on East Timor's political claims for self-determination, rather than focusing solely on human rights violations. One of the most significant actions in this regard was Bishop Belo's 1989 public letter to then-Secretary General of the UN, Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, in which he wrote that the East Timorese were 'dying as a people and as a nation', and called for a 'genuine and democratic' election on the future of the territory.⁸⁰ The awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1996 to Bishop Belo, along with the diaspora East Timorese activist José Ramos-Horta, 'for their work towards a just and peaceful solution to the conflict in East Timor', demonstrated the significance with which Belo's efforts were regarded by the international community.⁸¹ This announcement also provided a source of inspiration and hope to many East Timorese people.

The Catholic Church also played an important role in sustaining East Timorese culture and, at the same time, the Catholic faith became inextricably associated with an emerging sense of East Timorese national identity. In a letter that Monsignor Lopes sent in 1984 to the US Bishops for Social Development and World Peace, he highlighted the deep trust and respect that many East Timorese people had invested in the Church:

⁷⁶ Document prepared by the 'Religious of East Timor' for presentation at the Conference of Indonesian Major Religious Superiors in 1981. In Catholic Commission for Justice, Development and Peace, *The Church and East Timor: A Collection of Documents by National and International Catholic Church Agencies* (Melbourne: Catholic Commission for Justice, Development and Peace, 1993), 13–15.

⁷⁷ CAVR Report, 231.

⁷⁸ "US Bishops Letter of Support to Mgr Belo," *Timor Link* 3, October 1985, 6.

⁷⁹ "Controversy at CCA Assembly," *Timor Link* 3, October 1985, 6.

⁸⁰ "Bishop Belo's Letter to the Secretary-General of the United Nations February," 1989, in *The Church and East Timor*, ed. Catholic Commission for Justice, Development and Peace, 8.

⁸¹ The Nobel Peace Prize 1996, *The Official Site of the Nobel Prize*, http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1996/.

In the face of the cultural and psychological genocide that the Indonesian Army has imposed on us, the largescale [sic] deaths, whether directly from the war or indirectly from starvation and disease, the Catholic Church has emerged as the only one organization that the East Timorese people trust. There is a special and profound respect for the Church. Everything the people know they tell to the priests. The East Timor Church has listened intently for nearly nine years since the Indonesian invasion. With the highest authority the East Timorese Church can say that it knows the plight as well as the deepest aspirations of the people.⁸²

The Portuguese-language school in Dili, Externato São José, also played an important role in maintaining a link to Portuguese cultural heritage through language and religious identification; I discussed the school in more detail in Chapter Four.⁸³ The Church also began to incorporate elements of traditional East Timorese social life into its ceremonial, including holding open-air masses and prayer meetings at sites of cultural significance, such as an event that was held on 10 October 1993 on East Timor's sacred mountain, Mount Matebian.⁸⁴ In addition, the Church organised a range of activities for young people, such as the youth organisation, *Cruz Joven* (Youth Cross), and provided a space for young people to gather together and celebrate at Christmas and Easter time.⁸⁵ The introduction of a catechism in Tetun, and the subsequent adoption of the language for the Church's liturgy in the early 1980s, were important in maintaining a sense of unique East Timorese religious, linguistic, and cultural identity that was distinct from Indonesia.⁸⁶

Large numbers of East Timorese converted to Catholicism under the Indonesian occupation: some ninety percent of East Timorese identified as Catholic by 1994, compared to approximately thirty percent in 1974.⁸⁷ In addition to the religious requirements of *Pancasila*, the high rate of conversions across the course of the period can also be attributed to the role of the Catholic Church, and its network, in facilitating a subtle form of cultural resistance to the integrationist agenda of the Indonesian state. In my interview with Mana Maria, for example, she suggested that the East Timorese people used Catholicism 'as a tool to resist'.⁸⁸ The Church came to be treated with increasing scepticism by the Indonesian government, as a result of its continuing criticism of the occupying regime and its status as a

⁸² "Statement of Martinho da Costa Lopes, Apostolic Administrator of East Timor; 1977–1983: to the American Catholic Bishops Committee for Social Develop. & World Peace," Washington, DC, June 12, 1984, in CIDAC-CDPM/TL 3174.

⁸³ See Peter Carey, "The Catholic Church, Religious Revival, and the Nationalist Movement in East Timor, 1975–98," *Indonesia and the Malay World* 27, no. 78 (1999): 84.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 84–5.

⁸⁵ Emilita Mendes, interview with the author, Liquica, July 15, 2012.

⁸⁶ CAVR Report, 247.

⁸⁷ See Carey, "The Catholic Church," 86.

⁸⁸ Mana Maria, interview with the author, Dili, December 3, 2012.

semi-independent institution. In our interview, Domingas dos Santos explained that ‘the Indonesians did not like us if we were always in Church. They were suspicious of us who were always involved in activities in the Church, [they thought] that we worked with the people in the mountains’. Domingas recalled that the Church in Liquica had facilitated many of the clandestine activities that had been conducted in that area, and had also hid members of FALINTIL when they came down from the mountains.⁸⁹ Church activities and affiliated organisations were often used as a front for clandestine activities and to divert the attention of the Indonesian military.

Many of my interview participants described feeling much safer making contributions to the resistance if they were made through the Catholic Church. Anabela ‘Ana’ Maia Santos, for example, remembered that she had been ‘so afraid’ to actively participate in the resistance, but that she would ‘help from behind’ by participating in Church activities.⁹⁰ Yolanda Maria Conceição Chalhés recalled joining a Church group in Baucau, *Muda-Mudi Katolik* or *Mudika* (Parish Catholic Youth Association), which was established in the late 1980s.⁹¹ This was one of several organisations formed under the aegis of the Catholic Church. According to Maria Teresa dos Santos, a former leader of the organisation, much of the group’s work had involved carrying letters and raising money for FALINTIL by asking for Church donations.⁹² *Mudika* also organised activities related to religious celebrations, which increasingly functioned as a form of cultural assertion. In 1992, for example, the Dili branch of the group organised Bible reading contests, Bible quizzes, choir contests, and sports. With the intention of ‘strengthening fraternity among Christian young people’, the programme was inspired by the theme: ‘In unity, friendship and fraternity in Christ, *Mudika* celebrates Christmas 1992’.⁹³ Another Catholic youth group was *Sagrada Familia* (Holy Family), which was established in 1989, although this organisation did not have the same legal status as *Mudika* and remained a more clandestine network.⁹⁴ Filomena Fuca had been a member of the organisation and explained that they had often facilitated communication between the clandestine network and the resistance fighters in the mountains, as well as collected food and money to support the fighters.⁹⁵ Another of my interview participants, Maria de Fatima Ximenes Dias, was one of the founders of the organisation Ready to Serve

⁸⁹ Domingas dos Santos, interview with the author, Liquica, June 10, 2012.

⁹⁰ Anabela ‘Ana’ Maia Santos, interview with the author, Dili, May 19, 2012.

⁹¹ Yolanda Maria Conceição Chalhés, interview with the author, Liquica, July 15, 2012.

⁹² CAVR Report, 2085.

⁹³ “Dili Youth Organize Month Long Christmas Celebrations,” *UCA News*, December 10, 1992.

⁹⁴ CAVR Report, 2090.

⁹⁵ Filomena Fuca, interview with the author, Dili, November 30, 2013.

(*Prontu Atu Serbi* – PAS) in 1997. Underpinned by Catholic teachings, the organisation undertook various activities in the fields of community health, training, and education.⁹⁶ These activities, Maria explained, had provided a cover for the ‘secret work of organising demonstrations against the Indonesians, hiding people at risk and visiting prisoners in jails to deliver food and medicine and smuggle letters out’.⁹⁷ PAS also used the Church as a site of refuge and activism. In 1998, under the guise of undertaking the ostensible activities of the organisation, Maria remembered pretending to go and pray in the Church, and then interviewing women who had been violated by the Indonesian military in a room at the back of the building.⁹⁸ This information was then passed on and ultimately disseminated throughout international solidarity networks.

Although the Church in East Timor had limited resources, throughout the occupation it attempted to provide food, clothing, and various other forms of support to impoverished families and victims of violence. Catholic nuns also played an important, yet more subtle role, in providing support to victims and attempting to protect women and girls from military violence. In my interview with a nun from Baucau, she explained her belief that the Canossian Sisters ‘had an obligation to respond to the situation’.⁹⁹ In 1985, the Sisters had opened a boarding house in Baucau, which provided a space for East Timorese girls to live and receive an education, while also protecting them from the threat of military violence. Daily life in this institution was highly structured, with time for play, work, eating, and praying. The curriculum of the school also furthered a cultural agenda by focusing on how the students could contribute to and involve themselves in Church life, society, and the family – all important components of this vision of East Timorese nationalist identity. Outside the school, the Sisters also provided support for young people who had been arrested, beaten by the military, and put in jail. They would often visit those in prison, as well as the ill in hospital, to offer advice and comfort them. The ‘dream’ of the Sisters, my interview participant explained, was to ‘save the people’ by providing them with safety and protection.¹⁰⁰ In these ways, the Church was important in assisting victims and providing protection for the disadvantaged and dispossessed, not only practically, but also in its

⁹⁶ Maria de Fatima Ximenes Dias and Juana Gonçalves Amonia Dias Soares, interview with the author, Dili, July 27, 2013.

⁹⁷ Maria Dias, in *Step by Step*, ed. Conway, 45.

⁹⁸ Maria de Fatima Ximenes Dias and Juana Gonçalves Amonia Dias Soares, interview with the author, Dili, July 27, 2013.

⁹⁹ Anonymous, interview with the author, Baucau, August 5, 2013.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

immense efforts speaking out about human rights violations and advocating for East Timor's right to self-determination.

For many East Timorese during this time, the Catholic Church thus became a source of refuge, strength, and resistance. One of my interview participants, Mana Maria, explained the 'important role' that the Church had played during the occupation in providing a site for East Timorese people to subtly resist Indonesian rule:

During Indonesian times, I think it was because the Indonesians were Muslim and it was kind of like, I had to have my own religion or else I had to convert to [Islam]. From my perspective, it wasn't about the religion, but I think that [Islam] was the way that the Indonesians used as a tool to take control of Timor. Therefore we used religion as well ... as a tool to resist.¹⁰¹

Churches were seen as safe places during periods of violence, Mana Maria explained, because of the perception that the 'one thing that the Indonesians respected was the Church'.¹⁰² The violence in 1999 around the time of the Popular Consultation was thus seen as particularly shocking, due to these commonly accepted understandings of the sanctity of the Church. Elisa da Silva dos Santos's husband, for example, was one of approximately sixty people to be were killed by the Indonesian National Armed Forces (*Tentara Nasional Indonesia* – TNI) and their proxies from the East Timorese pro-integration militia group, *Besi Merah Putih* (Red and White Iron), when they had been seeking refuge at the Liquica Church on 6 April 1999.¹⁰³ Elisa explained that people had thought that the Church would be 'a safe place for us to hide. But in fact, the militia came and attacked us all'.¹⁰⁴ Another of my interview participants, Yolanda Maria Conceição Chalvés, was at the church in Liquica and witnessed the massacre. She remembered:

What I felt in that time was the war that happened in 1975, you saw people fighting each other with guns. But in this case, the *Besi Merah* was worse. I felt more afraid than before and really traumatised because they didn't shoot you but stabbed you mostly, cut people into pieces. They didn't care if you were a child or an adult, they just kept going ... they covered their faces so you couldn't see them. The way they killed people, it's like they have no heart. So for me, if you mention about the war, crossfire is quite normal. But this case was really different, and I saw it with my own eyes.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ Mana Maria, interview with the author, Dili, December 6, 2012.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ See CAVR Report, 1065.

¹⁰⁴ Elisa da Silva dos Santos, interview with the author, Dili, June 27, 2012.

¹⁰⁵ Yolanda Maria Conceição Chalvés, interview with the author, Liquica, July 15, 2012.

Liquica was the first of several premeditated massacres to be perpetrated by joint operations between militia groups and the Indonesian military against an unarmed civilian population, within the context of the broader political changes that took place within the territory in 1999. That several of these massacres took place in churches – including the Liquica Church Massacre, the Suai Church Massacre, as well as attacks on the Canossian Convent and the residence of Bishop Belo in Dili – meant that they were interpreted not only as a violation of the perceived sanctity of the Church, but also as a brutal attack upon and a complete disregard for East Timorese cultural values and places of worship.¹⁰⁶

The above section has highlighted the importance of the Catholic Church as a source of support, solidarity, and solace for many East Timorese people amid the violence and suffering of the Indonesian military occupation. Many of my interview participants afforded a special confidence and loyalty to the Church as a critically important religious, cultural, and social institution both for them as individuals and for the broader community. As the sole independent institution in operation during the Indonesian occupation, an affiliation with the Catholic Church also came to represent an important expression of the uniqueness of East Timorese culture and identity.

Undermining Indonesian Authority and Hegemony

In the above section, I suggested that many people contributed to the resistance movement under the guise of the Catholic Church – a state-sanctioned organisation that, they felt, could afford them some degree of protection from suspicion and, potentially, from violent punishment by the occupying regime. Many of my interview participants' contributions to the struggle were made in a similarly subtle, furtive, and behind-the-scenes manner. In Chapter Three, for example, I discussed the way in which sexual relationships could sometimes provide women with a degree of safety and protection, and how these forms of negotiated accommodation and self-preservation can also be seen as forms of resistance. A resilience towards Indonesian cultural infiltration and an emotional commitment to independence also characterised many people's expressions of resistance. For some women, a fear of reprisal often prevented them from publicly demonstrating their opposition and yet, as several of my interview participants explained, they still maintained an internal opposition to the Indonesian occupation. Carlota Borromeia de Correia, for example, told me that the idea of

¹⁰⁶ CAVR Report, 1083–84.

independence was always there for her, ‘deep inside’ her heart. She said that she had ‘wanted to get independence, but never showed it in [her] daily life and behaviour’.¹⁰⁷ Although this opposition may not have been expressed through immediately recognisable forms of political action, many women engaged in a variety of daily practices that sought to undermine Indonesian authority and hegemony.

Many women provided material support for the armed resistance in the mountains in acts that may have been subtle, but which still worked to undermine the authority of the occupying regime. While men comprised the vast majority of the armed component of the resistance, as I discussed in Chapter Two, for the most part, the provision of food, medicine, clothing, and information to the guerrilla fighters in the mountains was left to women. For example, Labo told me that she had often delivered food and medicine to the mountains from Baucau. She explained her strategy of acquiring supplies: she would pretend to be sick in her stomach or to have a headache and, once she had received medicine for her ailments, would send this on to the fighters in the mountains. Sometimes, she explained, she would also send food: when the local priest would provide her with two boxes of noodles, for example, she would send one of these boxes to the mountains.¹⁰⁸ In addition to sending food and other supplies, women would often provide a site for clandestine meetings and sustenance for the participants. Mana Marta recalled that when she was at high school in Baucau from 1997, she levied with a relative at a house that was known as a hub for youth to gather and discuss the idea of independence. Although she and her sister ‘didn’t participate in the discussions’, Mana Marta explained, they cooked for the young people and for any FALINTIL members who happened to stop by the house to pass on information. Mana Marta explained her reasoning:

We didn’t participate in the discussions. We also, because ... my mum, before we went to school, my mum said that if something happens, or something is wrong with the house, try not to be involved, you two ... decide not to involve yourself, you can help with cooking, but don’t participate, because it is very dangerous with the Indonesian army if they turn up just suddenly, you could be killed by them, so you shouldn’t participate. So we just followed what my mum said and we didn’t participate actually. Because we were afraid.¹⁰⁹

This understanding of women as having provided only the material sustenance for the resistance often renders their contributions less significant in contemporary East Timorese

¹⁰⁷ Carlota Borromeia de Correia, interview with the author, Baucau, August 4, 2013.

¹⁰⁸ Labo, interview with the author, Baucau, August 6, 2013.

¹⁰⁹ Mana Marta, interview with the author, Dili, November 28, 2012.

nationalist narratives of the past. Yet a consideration of the risks that they took in doing so, and the very real potential for retribution from the Indonesian forces were they caught, demonstrates that these kinds of actions can very much be conceived of as existing within a continuum of resistance.

Although not an official part of organised and public forms of resistance, many women recalled engaging in subtle acts that sought to undermine the authority and morale of the Indonesian military. Such stories were often told to me with pride and humour. Sometimes, these stories that are eclipsed by a broader nationalist narrative of suffering and heroic resistance. In many ways, however, they are more indicative of the manner in which many women not only survived, but also resisted the violence of the Indonesian occupation. Zulmira ‘Sirana’ da Cruz Sarmiento, for example, explained that although she was in jail for extended periods of time during the occupation, she still had some funny stories. One of these stories was about her time in prison in Aileu. She had falsely told the guards that her name was Teresa, so everyone in the prison then started calling her by that name. She remembered a member of the Indonesian military saying to her, ‘Hey Teresa, you know what? The Timorese people are stupid ... Timorese people don’t know how to sing!’. One day, Sirana explained, a member of the Indonesian military had been playing his guitar and singing. Sirana had recognised the song and began to sing with him. She recalled that he was surprised to find out that she had a good voice. As they sang the song together, Sirana remembered that she had sung in Tetun, ‘You’re stupid!’, but he didn’t understand, and just continued to enjoy the music. Sirana said that a fellow inmate had tried to warn her to be careful, but she had just replied that he was the one who called them stupid first. Sirana was greatly amused by this story.¹¹⁰ Isabel ‘Beba’ Maria Marcel Sequeira described a similar act of defiance, this time slightly more public, which had taken place in Baucau at a small food/drink stand (*kios*) where she had been sitting and singing songs ‘to provoke’ the Indonesian military, she explained. Beba said that she had deliberately sung songs that they ‘didn’t like’, such as *Foho Ramelau* (Mount Ramelau),¹¹¹ and called out slogans, such as ‘Viva FRETILIN’ to ‘make the military angry’.¹¹² These examples are indicative of the way in which, despite attempts by the Indonesian government to develop and modernise the territory and to enforce uniformity, many East Timorese people demonstrated a remarkable resistance to these efforts. Such prosaic instances of everyday forms of resistance, and the

¹¹⁰ Zulmira ‘Sirana’ da Cruz Sarmiento, interview with the author, Dili, December 5, 2012.

¹¹¹ Isabel ‘Beba’ Maria Marcel Sequeira, interview with the author, Dili, November 29, 2012.

¹¹² Beba Sequeira, in *Step by Step*, ed. Conway, 157.

enduring resilience that women demonstrated, can help provide a more nuanced understanding of some of the ways in which East Timorese women expressed and acted upon their opposition to Indonesian rule.

Public Expressions of Discontent

The nature of the resistance changed from the mid-1980s, as a new generation of East Timorese who had grown up under Indonesian rule began publicly to express their dissatisfaction with the occupying regime. These protests challenged Indonesia's claims of winning over the 'hearts and minds' of the new generation.¹¹³ Many of these new activists were students at the university in Dili and, as I suggested in Chapter Four, it was there that their activism and organising began to take shape. After President Suharto visited the territory in 1989, he declared East Timor to have 'equal status' with the other provinces of Indonesia.¹¹⁴ Yet the internal military presence remained high, and the military responded heavy-handedly to growing public expressions of discontent. In this section, I discuss the changes that took place during the 1990s, in which the expression and practices of resistance took on a new and more international shape and form.

The visits to the territory of Pope John Paul II on 12 October 1989, and US Ambassador to Indonesia John Monjo on 17 January 1990, precipitated large public demonstrations, which were followed by violent crackdowns from the Indonesian military. The most well-known of these public actions was the Santa Cruz demonstration, which took place in Dili on 12 November 1991 after the death of a young student, Sebastião Gomes at the hands of Indonesian forces. Indonesian troops fired into the crowd of peaceful protesters, resulting in the deaths of over 270 young people. Many others also disappeared in the military crackdown that followed the event.¹¹⁵ One of the participants in the demonstration, Isabel 'Bella' Antonia da Costa Galhos, later wrote: 'I will never forget that day as long as I

¹¹³ Pedro Pinto Leite (International Platform of Jurists for East Timor), "Other United Nations Proceedings," in *East Timor and the International Community: Basic Documents*, ed. Heike Krieger (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 194.

¹¹⁴ See "Keputusan Presiden Republik Indonesia, Nomor 62 Tahun 1988 Tentang Penyelenggaraan Pemerintahan dan Pembangunan di Propinsi Daerah Tingkat di Timor Timur" [Decision of the President of the Indonesian Republic No. 62/1988 on the Organization of Administration and Development in the Province of East Timor], in Himpunan Peraturan Negara [Collected State Regulations], *Triwulan IV* (Jakarta: Sekretariat Negara Republik Indonesia, 1988), 1103–05.

¹¹⁵ Constâncio Pinto and Naldo Rei, both members of the clandestine movement, provide first hand accounts of the demonstration and subsequent massacre in their respective memoirs. See "11: The Santa Cruz Massacre" in Pinto and Jardine, *East Timor's Unfinished Struggle*, 188–99; and "Chapter 7: The Santa Cruz Massacre" in Naldo Rei, *Resistance: A Childhood Fighting for East Timor* (St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 2007), 48–53.

live. I will never forget how many people died around me when Indonesian troops opened fire on us. I was one of the lucky ones who survived'.¹¹⁶ Bella had participated in the organisation of the demonstration, like many other young women, by collecting money, buying and preparing materials for banners to be held by the protesters, and passing on information about the demonstration plans.¹¹⁷ Another of my interview participants, Mariquita Soares, was also present at the demonstration, and managed to escape from the cemetery to a nearby house when the military started shooting.¹¹⁸ Juana Gonçalves Amonia Dias Soares similarly recalled hiding in the cemetery's chapel when the shooting started.¹¹⁹ Such events demonstrated a shift in the nature of opposition to Indonesian rule towards more public, yet peaceful expressions of defiance, that were increasingly aimed at an international audience. The violent repression of these by Indonesian forces simply accentuated their visibility and potency in international networks. The language of human rights subsequently used by activists to describe the Santa Cruz Massacre, as well as the fact that it had been captured on film and broadcast around the world, can be seen as indicative of the changing shape and form of the independence movement.¹²⁰

Speaking Out Against the Violence

In the late 1990s, there was an opening up of Indonesian civil society and, although to a lesser extent, new spaces for public discussion and opportunities for social organisation also emerged in East Timor. East Timorese women, at this time, gathered in several organised settings to share stories and to provide support and comfort to one another in the face of ongoing violence. These forums were organised by a number of East Timorese women's groups that had been established in the late 1990s, including the Communication Forum for Women in the East (*Forum Komunikasi Untuk Perempuan Loro Sa'e* – FOKUPERS) in 1997; the East Timorese Movement Against Violence Towards Women and Children (*Gerakan Wanita Anti-Kekerasan* – GERTAK) in 1998, which later became the East Timorese Women Against Violence (*Perempuan Timor Loro Sa'e Yang Menentang*

¹¹⁶ Isabel Antonia da Costa Galhos, "Presentation to the United Nations Committee on Decolonization," June 16, 1997, 1, in East Timor Alert Network Papers.

¹¹⁷ Isabel 'Bella' Antonia da Costa Galhos, interview with the author, Dili, July 3, 2012.

¹¹⁸ Mariquita Soares, interview with the author, Dili, June 11, 2012.

¹¹⁹ Juana Gonçalves Amonia Dias Soares, interview with the author, Dili, July 27, 2013.

¹²⁰ For a more detailed discussion of the transformation of East Timorese nationalists from modeling themselves on 'Third World' liberation movements, to use the language of human rights as a source for national identity, see David Webster, "Languages of Human Rights in Timor-Leste," *Asia Pacific Perspectives* (August 2013): 5021.

Kekerasan – ET-Wave); and GFFTL in 1998, which I discussed earlier in this chapter. The stated purposes of these organisations were to support women who had experienced violence at the hands of the Indonesian military; and they framed these concerns very much within the language of human rights violations.¹²¹ In this section, I discuss these organisations and some of their associated activities.

Utilising the opportunities provided by these broader developments, and the resulting increased capacity for civil action, these groups organised a number of conferences for women to come together to share their experiences of violence in a public forum. On 13 October 1998, for example, GFFTL organised a gathering of around fifty women in Aileu. One of the organisers, Mariquita Soares, recalled of that occasion that women had spoken about ‘the struggle during Indonesian times, about what they were feeling about the situation in East Timor and [were also able to] share experiences’.¹²² Following the success and positive reception of this event, a national conference was organised in Dili from 9–10 November 1998.¹²³ This conference was organised by GFFTL, with support from FOKUPERS and the newly-formed Organisation of Timorese Women (*Organização da Mulher Timorense* – OMT).¹²⁴ Over 200 women attended the conference, at which they spoke about the abuse that they had suffered at the hands of the Indonesian military. Another event was organised by FOKUPERS on 25 November 1998 in Dili, which was timed to coincide with the UN International Day of Elimination of Violence Against Women. The seminar and peaceful demonstration were attended by over 500 women. During the seminar, the director of FOKUPERS, Maria Domingas ‘Micato’ Fernandes Alves, declared that it was time for East Timorese women to ‘wake up’ and fight against the violence that was being perpetrated against them.¹²⁵ She is pictured speaking at the seminar below:

¹²¹ Laura Soares Abrantes, in *Step by Step*, ed. Conway, 64.

¹²² Mariquita Soares, interview with the author, Dili, June 11, 2012.

¹²³ Zelia Fernandes, interview with the author, Dili, June 7, 2012.

¹²⁴ OMT was formed out of OPMT in 1998 to mirror the bipartisan nature of the new umbrella resistance body, CNRT. It was a bipartisan organisation, though with similar aims to OPMT.

¹²⁵ Jude Conway, “FOKUPERS: Women Seminar Dili 25 Nov,” December 8, 1998, ETAN, <http://etan.org/et/1998/december/8-14/08fokupe.htm>.



Image: Micato speaking at the seminar in November 1998.¹²⁶

Reflecting the increased internationalisation of dissent and East Timorese national self-assertion, three Australian activist women were also invited to speak at the conference of 9–10 November: Vacy Vlazna, an activist from the East Timorese Justice Lobby in Sydney; Fiona Crockford, a PhD student from Canberra; and Jude Conway, an activist from Darwin. In my interview with one of the conference organisers, Zelia Fernandes, she reflected upon the importance of having foreign women in attendance, in order to ‘to encourage, or to say how the international women support [East Timorese] resistance women to continue the struggle for independence’.¹²⁷ Laura Soares Abrantes, who also participated in the conference, explained that the presence of these foreign women was important in communicating a sense that East Timorese women were not alone in their suffering, and that they had support from other women internationally.¹²⁸ These events, therefore, demonstrate the way in which East Timorese women began to converge in public spaces to discuss their experiences of violence, and the manner in which these events came to the attention of international networks concerned with activism for and on behalf of women.

For a younger generation of East Timorese women, who had grown up under Indonesian rule and often had less experience of direct violence, these gatherings were a source of inspiration and were critical in both affirming and deepening their commitment to national self-determination. Of the 1998 national women’s conference in Dili, Zelia Fernandes reflected:

¹²⁶ In *Step by Step*, ed. Jude Conway, 90.

¹²⁷ Zelia Fernandes, interview with the author, Dili, June 7, 2012.

¹²⁸ Laura Soares Abrantes, in *Step by Step*, ed. Conway, 65–6.

It was a fantastic experience for us, because as a member of the young generation we learnt a lot from ahh, those women, who were really enthusiastic, who were really very strong women, very dedicated women, to share their experience, to share their strategy, how to hide the information from the military, and how to contribute.¹²⁹

Other young women reflected that the event had solidified their understanding of the plight of women living under Indonesian rule, and that this deeper knowledge had had a politicising effect upon them. They also recalled being able to connect with women of different generations, and to situate their individual experiences of suffering within a longer history of East Timorese women's struggles. A young member of FOKUPERS, Maria 'Mery' Gorumali Barreto, for example, explained that she was 'only a student' in 1997 and thus, she learned from women who were 'more experienced', such as Micato. After hearing the women's stories, Mery recalled that she had realised that 'lots of Timorese women became victims of the Indonesian military, lots of women lost their husbands because they were killed by the Indonesian military, many women were being raped, mostly because they were trying to find their husbands but couldn't find them, so they would sexually violate the women instead'.¹³⁰ Another participant in the conference, Filomena 'Mena' Barros dos Reis, remembered the difficulties that many women had experienced in giving voice to their suffering and experiences of pain; she commented on the importance of being a compassionate listener in order to provide support and encouragement:

It is hard for them because we cannot trust each other, and you are still ashamed to share your experience. So you have to learn how to become a good listener and empathize with them. Even if your tears... you are almost crying, but you have to hold your tears to make them strong. Even if your heart is really breaking. When you listen to all these things, you have to show them that you are strong to give support – this is the hardest thing that you have to give [sic].¹³¹

Coming together and sharing experiences thus provided the opportunity for many women to share their suffering, and to connect with other women who had experienced similar violations, in an entirely new political setting. These sites were, in part, an important step in coming to terms with the violence and provided a great source of strength, solidarity, and support for the women who participated. They were also demonstrative of a pronounced shift in the nature of opposition to Indonesian rule. In these public, internationally-oriented

¹²⁹ Zelia Fernandes, interview with the author, Dili, June 7, 2012.

¹³⁰ Maria 'Mery' Gorumali Barreto, interview with the author, Dili, July 3, 2012.

¹³¹ Filomena 'Mena' Barros dos Reis, interview with the author, Dili, June 30, 2012.

forums, women's narratives were purposefully situated within a broader discourse of women's human rights.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined women's roles in the development and practices of a culture of resistance in East Timor. I have outlined several of the factors that women referred to within their oral narratives in explaining their involvement. I highlighted the way in which personal experiences and shared memories of violence, suffering, and a distinct sense of difference from Indonesia, informed some women's decision to participate in resistance activities. Although there are differences in the individual women's stories, common to all is the depiction of an inherent, moral, and shared opposition to the Indonesian occupation, a commitment to a unique East Timorese identity, and a sense of the inevitability of East Timor's independence. These themes were used to explain an individual's opposition to Indonesian rule, and to justify their personal decision to participate in activities that sought to challenge and undermine the Indonesian occupying regime.

In analysing women's experiences of and participation in the struggle, 'resistance' also encompassed furtive practices that sought to undermine the authority of the occupying regime. Women's participation in resistance activities was often facilitated through familial and social networks, as well as conducted in semi-clandestine organisations under the aegis of state-sanctioned institutions, such as the Catholic Church. Indeed, as I have shown, across the course of the occupation, the Catholic Church became an institution that was central to an emerging sense of East Timorese national identity. It was also perceived as critically important to the capacity of many East Timorese people to survive and endure the violence and suffering that characterised the period. I suggest, therefore, that considering quotidian acts of resilience and resistance within the wider frameworks that I have briefly sketched, enables us to be more attentive and responsive to the daily lives and experiences of East Timorese women, and the manner in which these were interwoven with a broader trajectory of East Timorese resistance.

Conclusion

I interviewed Benícia Eriana ‘Bebé’ Xavier dos Reis Magno in July 2012 at Hotel Timor, a hotel and café located opposite the wharf in the heart of Dili. Bebé was born in Dili in 1981, and had vivid memories from her childhood of the constant presence of the Indonesian military in everyday life – patrolling the town, armed and equipped with full military regalia, ‘physically, psychologically terrorising people’, she recalled. Such experiences and the associated threat of violence were constant features of daily life in occupied East Timor, and for Bebé, they instilled a deep and permanent sense of fear: ‘We [the East Timorese people] lived with fear’, she remembered, ‘any time, we could be killed, back in those days... I was so scared to die’. Bebé explained that years later, even after Timor-Leste had achieved independence, when she was studying in Indonesia and saw members of the Indonesian military, she would always shiver with fear: ‘I was always like, oh my God, they’re here – the feeling came back. I felt intimidated inside, it was not released somehow, but it was still there’, she remembered.¹

After completing high school in Dili, Bebé had gone on to study international relations at university in Surabaya (Indonesia) in 1998. She remembered feeling excited about this opportunity and about moving to such a big city, ‘I came from a town! *[laughs]*’, Bebé explained. Initially, she had enjoyed her time at university greatly, and had become friends with a number of the Indonesian students. She remembered that during her second semester in Indonesia, however, ‘the situation changed’ and ‘most East Timorese students in Indonesia were not so focused on their study anymore’. This change was precipitated by a momentous decision made in New York on 5 May 1999, in which the governments of Indonesia and Portugal entrusted the United Nations (UN) Secretary General to organise and conduct a Popular Consultation in East Timor on the issue of independence.² For the East Timorese people, this decision represented the penultimate fulfilment of an impassioned and long-held belief in the independence of East Timor. Bebé explained: ‘We believed that... I myself, I believed it since I was a kid, like we were... told with a positive spirit that we would be independent one day’.³ Moral, righteous, and inevitable, independence was just around the corner.

¹ Benícia Eriana ‘Bebé’ Xavier dos Reis Magno, interview with the author, Dili, July 1, 2012.

² “Agreement between the Republic of Indonesia and the Portuguese Republic on the Question of East Timor,” May 5, 1999, UN Doc. S/1999/513, in “Peace Agreements Digital Collection,” United States Institute of Peace.

³ Benícia Eriana ‘Bebé’ Xavier dos Reis Magno, interview with the author, Dili, July 1, 2012.

Following the announcement, however, pro-autonomy East Timorese militia – mobilised, trained, and armed by the Indonesian National Armed Forces (*Tentara Nasional Indonesia* – TNI) – commenced a widespread campaign of fear and intimidation.⁴ The prominent leader of the *Aitarak* militia group, Eurico Guterres, warned a crowd in Dili on 26 August that the city would become a ‘sea of fire’ if independence was declared.⁵ Guterres’ warning echoed a statement made by the Indonesian military commander for East Timor, Brigadier-General Tono Suratman, two months earlier: ‘If the pro-independence side wins’, he said, ‘Everything is going to be destroyed. East Timor won’t exist as it does now. It’ll be much worse than twenty-three years ago’.⁶ Despite these tensions, the incipient signs of escalating violence, and the very real possibility that the city of Dili would become engulfed in conflict, Bebé still recalled feeling that she ‘had to return’ to East Timor to participate in the historic vote – it was ‘the chance of a lifetime’, she explained. Bebé recalled a ‘very tense’ situation in Dili upon her return in July 1999: ‘And we heard ... people were shooting, the gunshots, almost every day. And the militia, like they drove around ... like some of the houses were burnt, there were also killings that took place in other parts of Timor as well. It was tense. We were not able to sleep at night’.⁷

After several delays, the Popular Consultation finally took place on 31 August. Bebé told me that she ‘voted for independence – absolutely!’ and was ‘very proud’ of herself for having done so: ‘It was the first time ever in my life to vote, and I was like, I got to vote for an important event like independence, so it was fantastic. Really, it was fantastic’, she recalled.⁸ On the morning of 4 September, the UN announced that an overwhelming 78.5 percent of East Timor’s voters had rejected the proposal of special autonomy within the Republic of Indonesia, paving the way for a transition period before full independence.⁹ In response to the announcement, the militia groups conducted a systematic and brutal campaign of killing, beating, indiscriminate shooting, and the forced displacement of East Timorese

⁴ For an account of the links between the TNI and militia groups, see Chapters 6, 7, and 8 in Geoffrey Robinson, *East Timor 1999: Crimes Against Humanity, A Report Commissioned by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights* (Jakarta: Elsam and Hak, 2006).

⁵ This quotation was cited frequently in international coverage of the events. See, for example: David Lamb, “Militia Warfare Threatens Vote in East Timor: Asia: Indonesian Province Will Choose Between Independence and Autonomy. Many Fear Civil War Will Break Out,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 29, 1999; and Geoff Spencer, “Clashes Kill Six in E. Timor; Militias Threaten ‘Sea of Fire,’” *The Associated Press*, August 27, 1999.

⁶ “Indonesian Justice in Serious Trouble,” *TAPOL Bulletin* 159 (August/September 2000), 16.

⁷ Benícia Eriana ‘Bebé’ Xavier dos Reis Magno, interview with the author, Dili, July 1, 2012.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ UN Security Council, “Secretary General Informs Security Council People of East Timor Rejected Special Autonomy Proposed by Indonesia,” Press Release SC/6721, September 3, 1999, in UN, “Meetings Coverage and Press Releases.”

civilians.¹⁰ To escape the violence and destruction, Bebé and her family had packed up their belongings and taken refuge in a building next door to Hotel Timor. ‘That was how we celebrated the result of the referendum’, she told me ironically. Following our interview, Bebé showed me the shell of the building, burned and abandoned during the violence of 1999, and which, in a stark reminder that this history of conflict is still inscribed upon the physical landscape of Timor-Leste, is yet to be rehabilitated.

In a chilling echo of the strategic and gendered violence that took place upon the invasion of Dili in 1975, Bebé explained that the militia had arrived at the building in 1999 and forced them to leave, separating the men from the women and children, and killing all the men in the process. ‘I think only a few survived’, she remembered, ‘but most of them were killed’. Bebé and her younger sister, who was only nine years old at the time, had witnessed some of these killings first hand: ‘I saw them shoot the men, yeah. I saw them. I saw them kill a person in front of my eyes – it was unforgettable. And this guy, I still remember, he was screaming for help. No one was ... brave enough to save him’. Afterwards, Bebé remembered, her sister had been unable to speak for days, ‘no words came out of her mouth. She was silent and shaking. It was terrible’. An estimated 550,000 people – more than half the territory’s population – fled their homes at this time, of which approximately 250,000 people, including Bebé and her family, were forcibly transferred across the border to West Timor.¹¹ Estimates of up to seventy percent of the territory’s major infrastructure, houses, and buildings, were destroyed as the TNI and their militia proxies departed the territory.¹² For Bebé, this was one of the ‘most terrifying moments’ of her life: ‘I am still emotional when I talk about it. I am still overwhelmed’, she told me.¹³

On 12 September, the Indonesian government agreed ‘to accept the offer of assistance from the international community to restore peace and security in East Timor’.¹⁴ The UN Security Council subsequently authorised an Australian-led multinational peacekeeping taskforce, the International Force for East Timor (INTERFET), which began deploying to

¹⁰ For accounts of the violence before and in the aftermath of the announcement of the result of the independence ballot on 4 September, see Amnesty International, *Indonesia (East Timor): As Violence Descended: Testimonies from East Timorese Refugees* (October 1, 1999); and Amnesty International, *East Timor: The Terror Continues*, ASA 21/163/99 (September 24, 1999).

¹¹ Commission for Reception, Truth, and Reconciliation in Timor-Leste (CAVR), *Chega! The Final Report of the Timor-Leste Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation, Vol. 1* (Jakarta: KPG in cooperation with STP-CAVR, 2013), 299.

¹² CAVR Report, 300.

¹³ Benícia Eriana ‘Bebé’ Xavier dos Reis Magno, interview with the author, Dili, July 1, 2012.

¹⁴ UN Security Council, “Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in East Timor,” October 4, 1999, S/1999/1024, 2, in DAG Repository.

East Timor from 20 September.¹⁵ Subsequently, Bebé and her family returned to East Timor in October with a feeling of ‘euphoria’. ‘It was sad’, she remembered, ‘because many houses were burnt, many buildings were burnt, but when you saw people outside in the streets they wore big smiles on their faces. It was amazing! I am telling you; it was amazing! It was like so emotional. Everyone, when they saw each other they were smiling, you made it! You made it! It was, like, it paid off at the end, but ... but, we passed a rough time before we finally reached our goal’.¹⁶ On 28 February 2000, INTERFET transferred command to the UN Transitional Administration of East Timor (UNTAET) to administer the territory.¹⁷ Finally, on 20 May 2002, the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste (*República Demokrátika Timór-Leste* – RDTL) was declared a sovereign state.¹⁸

This thesis adopted a new approach to examining the Indonesian invasion and occupation of East Timor by placing women’s voices and experiences at the centre of historical analysis. The above extract from Bebé provides just one example of the diversity of women’s experiences during the occupation, as well as the various ways in which they survived the violence that accompanied it. During the Indonesian occupation of East Timor, many of my interview participants lived in similar circumstances of constant negotiation and repeated attempts to maintain forms of order and normality, as well as to provide for themselves and their families in a society where everyday life was characterised by violence and uncertainty. I suggested at the beginning of this thesis that women’s experiences and memories offer a different picture of life during the Indonesian military occupation, one which draws attention to the particulars of locally-grounded experiences, practices, and institutions of the everyday. Through a close analysis of East Timorese women’s narratives, I have hoped to present a more complex picture of how the violence of the Indonesian military occupation was experienced, accommodated, negotiated, and resisted. My analysis of how women remember, narrate, and conceptualise the occupation has shown how deeply violence became interwoven into the social and cultural everyday life of women in occupied East Timor. I have argued that East Timorese women’s personal narratives not only illuminate the experiences of ordinary people living under the exceptional circumstances of foreign military

¹⁵ “UN Security Council Resolution 1264 (1999) on Establishment of a Multinational Peace Force in East Timor,” September 15, 1999, S/RES/1624 (1999), in DAG Repository.

¹⁶ Benícia Eriana ‘Bebé’ Xavier dos Reis Magno, interview with the author, Dili, July 1, 2012.

¹⁷ “UN Security Council Resolution 1272 (1999) on Establishment of the UN Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET),” October 25, 1999, S/RES/1272 (1999), in DAG Repository.

¹⁸ UN Security Council, “Statement by the President of the Security Council,” May 20, 2002, S/PRST/2002/13, in DAG Repository.

occupation, but also point to a more hopeful story; the capacity of people to survive, to endure, and to resist, even amid the most difficult of circumstances.

At the centre of this research project were East Timorese women's personal narratives and life histories. In Chapter One, therefore, I drew upon an established literature on women's history, feminist theory, and the concept of historical 'experience' to frame my approach. I outlined feminist interpretations of oral history as a research practice and theoretical framework, as well as engaging with literature on oral history, trauma and memory, narrative, and identity, to contextualise and present my oral history interviews. Taking these methods one step further, I used the frameworks of the personal narratives contained within my interviews to structure the thesis. As such, key themes that have shaped this thesis have included violence, everyday life, and resistance. In addition, shifts in the broad affective structures of the women's narratives informed the distinction I have made between the periods of 'conflict' and 'occupation', as constitutive of a significant restructuring of society and of the associated contours of human experience.

In Chapter Two, I explored women's experiences of the violence of the Indonesian invasion, the period of conventional war, and life in the mountains (1975–79). I framed my re-writing of this period in terms of women's everyday experiences of war, and of gendered experiences of the shifting geographies of conflict. I suggested that in the mountains, the structuring of society and the daily lives of East Timorese women were significantly shaped by FRETILIN's gender ideology and, in particular, the nationalist movement's ideas about women's roles in revolutionary struggle. The chapter provided a new history of this phase of the struggle by illustrating what happened to women and their families when the Indonesian military invaded in December 1975, women's experiences in the FRETILIN-controlled liberated zones, and the increasingly difficult conditions of life on the move. In exploring women's experiences of invasion and war, this chapter contextualised the various modalities of violence that impacted upon women's lives and the overall dynamics of the subsequent occupation.

In Chapters Three to Five, I used three broad themes from my oral history interviews to re-examine the long period of Indonesian occupation (from 1979–99): violence, everyday life, and resistance. Chapter Three examined the violence of the Indonesian occupation, which resulted in part from the heavily militarised state structure that Indonesia imposed upon East Timor. I suggested that the territory, within the context of the New Order regime more broadly, can be seen as a unique case in that the threat and direct application of violence were used more readily by the occupying state as administrative tools. Although there were a

number of structural shifts in the Indonesian military's governance of East Timor, I demonstrated that violence remained a constant feature of daily life throughout the period. I explored not only direct acts of violence and their impact on women's lives, but also more insidious forms of surveillance and social control, and the resulting cultivation of a broader climate of fear and mistrust within the territory. I argued that these structures of violence often involved gender-specific dimensions, and that women narrated their experiences of violence in gender-specific ways.

In incorporating East Timor as the purported twenty-seventh province of Indonesia, the state introduced to the territory a number of national programmes for the purposes of 'development' and 'modernisation'. In Chapter Four, I suggested that this kind of infrastructure of the Indonesian military occupation, and its impact on East Timorese women needs to be understood within the context of the gender ideology of Suharto's New Order regime, and its attempts to assimilate East Timorese women into this broader political frame. In so doing, I situated analyses of women's experiences of Indonesian-occupied East Timor in a substantially new framework. I explored a number of state development programmes that targeted women specifically, in addition to state-sanctioned organisations that were used to inculcate these particular gender ideas into East Timorese society. I suggested that these initiatives, in part, paradoxically brought about new spaces for social organisation, new forms of social and geographic mobility, and new opportunities for education and employment, for East Timorese women. Within the highly militarised and repressive context of East Timor, however, many women interpreted these initiatives largely as attempts to restrict, control, and indoctrinate the population, in accordance with the integrationist aims and centralised ideology of the New Order state.

Despite continuing attempts on the part of the Indonesian state to modernise and develop East Timor, due to continuing military violence and brutality, many East Timorese retained an interior commitment to the idea of national independence. In Chapter Five, I traced women's roles within the development of a widespread culture of resistance to Indonesian rule. Drawing upon East Timorese women's articulations of what resistance meant to them, I adopted a similarly broad definition capable of encompassing a diverse range of subtle, sustaining, and non-military practices. In this chapter, therefore, I examined the myriad of ways in which women survived, negotiated, and coped with the violence of occupation within their daily lives – and suggested that in many cases, the women transformed these experiences of suffering into sources of unity, resistance, and activism.

The particular approach and structure adopted by this thesis has provided new ways of thinking about women's experiences of the Indonesian occupation of East Timor. Within previous studies of this period, women have been represented predominantly as either victims of mass human rights violations, or as secondary and firmly subordinate heroes of the revolutionary struggle. This thesis has thus responded to a gap in the literature by placing women's voices and experiences at the centre of historical analysis. As a result, I have offered a history that is more responsive to the substantive political and cultural meanings and effects located within the daily lives and practices of East Timorese women. What has been missing thus far from accounts of women's experiences of life under Indonesian rule is, I suggest, precisely such an attentiveness to the political charge that inhered within such seemingly everyday and mundane actions. In thinking about the nature and dynamics of occupation power and women's experiences of military occupations more broadly, my thesis has also provided insight into how we might better understand the human and cultural elements of territorial control, as well as the locally-grounded strategies that are often used for negotiating with and resisting an occupying power.

While the themes of violence and resistance that have structured this thesis are prominent within the existing literature on the occupation, I have approached them in new and distinct ways. Throughout the thesis, I have kept at the forefront of my analysis of violence both the gendered dimensions of occupation violence, and the gender-specific nature of the violations perpetrated upon East Timorese women by the occupying forces. In my treatment of resistance, I have also shown that there were different possibilities available for women to negotiate with and accommodate, to varying degrees, the violent presence of the occupying forces within their lives that were specific to their gender. The theoretical literature concerned with everyday life provided new ways for thinking about women's experiences of the occupation. I utilised this approach when examining not only women's experiences of violence and resistance, but also their experiences of the ideology and mechanisms of the occupying regime. In particular, I examined the gender ideology of the New Order regime and the imposition of this ideology upon the spaces, practices, and institutions of everyday life in East Timor. I have shown the way in which professed attempts by the Indonesian state to develop and modernise East Timor were at the time perceived and subsequently remembered and represented by East Timorese women as fundamentally foreign. In exploring these key themes, with new interpretive frameworks and original source material, I have provided a more nuanced understanding of this period in Timor-Leste's past.

The nationalist narrative of East Timor's struggle for independence provided an important collective framework within which these women situated their individual narratives. My interview participants' identity as individuals was thus inextricably tied to their identity as East Timorese people. This identity was formed partly on the basis of exclusion – of being *not* Indonesian – but this primary definition was also shaped by historical experiences of a distinct heritage of colonialism and oppression, as well as perceptions of a unique culture, religion, and language. This thesis has further argued, however, that there are distinct limitations to this nationalist narrative as heretofore understood. The nationalist narrative of *funu* – a narrative that foregrounds and, in many senses, publicises a heroic, masculinist, and militarised, vision of East Timorese resistance and national identity – relegates the contribution of women to a firmly subordinate role, placing their participation in the making of an East Timorese national identity at a level beneath that of the political. Yet many women narrated their opposition to the Indonesian occupation and their decision to participate in a range of resistance activities not merely by describing a surrounding and determinative political context, but through a pronounced emphasis upon the evocation of personal experience. The individual narratives thus revealed some of the intersections between personal experience and broader historical processes and events, but not necessarily in a simple and unidimensional way. Through an analysis of these oral history narratives we have seen, therefore, that the women's active positioning of their personal experiences within a collective framework enabled them to see themselves and their lives as part of a moral, righteous, and mythic narrative of a nation's fundamental right to self-determination. Yet also, their emphasis upon the everyday, simultaneously, enables us to expand this narrative to incorporate a wider sense of the political nature of the social world.

The oral history interviews that I conducted as the central part of this project provided an extraordinarily rich collection of personal stories of life under Indonesian rule. Many of the women whom I interviewed were vivid and compelling storytellers. While East Timor's struggle for independence provided the broader context in which the individual narratives were situated, the dynamic nature of oral history as a research method meant that the women's adherence to this political project could not be presented in an uncomplicated manner. Memories of growing up, going to school, and familial relationships – as well as the negotiation of shifting social, cultural, and institutional alignments – both complicated and provided many insights into the intricate and complex processes of both asserting and maintaining a sense of identity, and its varying relationship and degrees of engagement with a broader politics of resistance. Within this thesis, I have demonstrated the potential for the oral

history interview, as a retrospective and personal recounting of the past, to reveal some of the multiplicities, complexities, and most importantly, the substantive meanings that lie hidden beneath the textual record, of women's experiences of life under Indonesian rule. My interview participants engaged with the past in deeply personal and emotionally resonant ways. Their stories drew me in; they illustrated the evocative and compelling qualities of the recollection of personal experience, revealing the numinous and politically-charged everyday. In their evocation of the ordinary, the mundane, and the quotidian, these oral narratives provided a vital mode of understanding women's stoic resistance, in the world of the ordinary, to the violence of occupation – seemingly modest, yet far-reaching in its effects.

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Appendix: Biographical Data from Oral History Interviews

Abrantes, Laura Soares

Laura was born in Dili in 1966. Many members of her family were imprisoned by FRETILIN during the civil conflict for sympathising with the UDT, and Laura visited them in prison as a young child. Laura and her family first heard about the Indonesian invasion on the radio, and then watched the Indonesian paratroopers descend from the family garden. When the Portuguese school reopened in Dili Laura attended, and developed a close relationship with the priests through both the school and the Catholic Scout movement. After finishing senior high school, Laura went to study in Java (Indonesia). There, she made links with international activists. Laura graduated and returned to East Timor in 1993. From that point, she was involved in assisting victims and advocating for East Timor's independence through a number of organisations, including FOKUPERS and GFFTL.

Almeida, Filomena de

Filomena was born in Dili into a strict Catholic family. Her father was Goan, and her mother was a half-Chinese, half-Timorese woman from Ermera. Her parents weren't married and her father didn't live with the family, but came to visit them and gave them money. She attended school in Dili, and was one of only two East Timorese girls in her class during Portuguese times. At school, she studied Portuguese language and culture. After finishing high school in 1973, Filomena went to university in Portugal. She was in Lisbon in 1974 when students began to discuss politics, and Filomena found the revolutionary environment very moving. Filomena received a phone call in December 1975 informing her and the other students that Indonesia had invaded East Timor. Filomena did not return to the territory, and spent the occupation period living in exile and advocating for East Timor's right to self-determination.

Almeida, Ines de

Filomena's younger sister, Ines de Almeida was twelve years old when she left Portuguese Timor at the time of the civil conflict. She didn't remember much about this time, except the shooting and upheaval. Ines and the other members of her family went to the port in Dili because they heard that some people were evacuating to Australia. They were then evacuated, along with 300–400 other people, to Darwin. Due to the cyclone in Darwin at the time (Cyclone Tracy), Ines and her family didn't hear much news about the Indonesian invasion of East Timor. As she grew older, Ines began to participate in East Timorese cultural activities in Australia. She remained in Australia for the duration of the occupation, and became increasingly involved in the international campaign for East Timor's independence.

Alves, Domingas 'Micato' Fernandes

Micato was born in Manatuto in 1959. Her family moved to Dili when she was young. She attended a Catholic primary school in Soibada before returning to Dili for high school. Micato was in her third year of high school in 1974, and participated in political developments that stemmed from the Carnation Revolution in Portugal. She had vivid memories of the Indonesian invasion, and fleeing with her family to the east of the territory. The area in which they were staying fell under FRETILIN control and, as such, Micato began to contribute to the resistance. She was appointed secretary of the local OPMT branch.

Micato had fond memories of life in the mountains with the organisation, and was promoted quickly. She was eventually captured in 1978 by Indonesian forces. During the occupation Micato worked as a public servant, but continued to contribute to the resistance. After her husband's involvement in the Santa Cruz demonstration, he was captured and imprisoned for many years. Micato was involved in the establishment of FOKUPERS and, through the organisation, in door-to-door campaigns at the time of the Popular Consultation in 1999.

Anonymous

Anonymous is a Canossian nun from Ossu. She fell in love with the Canossian work as a young girl, and went to Baucau to train to be a nun. Outside attending school, the students focused on assisting young people who had been arrested and put in jail by the Indonesian military. They would visit them in jail, provide advice, and encourage them not to give up hope. She took the vow in 1995. Subsequently, she was sent to Los Palos until 1999, before being transferred to Dili in July, and then to Baucau. In Los Palos, she was the youngest nun on the mission and taught a religious subject at junior high school.

Araujo, Loudres 'Merita' Alves

Merita was born in Ermera, but spent much of her childhood in Manatuto and then Dili. She completed senior high school in Dili in 1975, and then escaped to the mountains with her family when Indonesia invaded. There, she joined OPMT and was involved in political education programmes. Merita was eventually captured in 1978 in Illiomar. Afterwards, she was imprisoned and interrogated for several months. She was released upon her cousin's request – he had a good position in the Indonesian administration – but she was still required to self-report regularly. After guerrilla attacks on the Indonesian military, Merita and her husband were arrested and interrogated repeatedly, and had to continue self-reporting for many years.

Araujo, Teresa 'Alita' Verdial de, and Adelia Guterres

Alita was born in 1973 in Maliana. She was very young when Indonesia invaded East Timor, and her family lived at the border for several years before moving back to Maliana where she attended school. Some of Alita's family members had positions in the government, while others supported the resistance. She grew up in a Catholic household that was located next to a military compound. The Pope's visit to the territory in 1989 was transformative for Alita in terms of her understanding about East Timor's commitment to independence. She received a scholarship from the Indonesian government to go to university in East Java (Indonesia). There, she became a member of RENETIL. She returned to East Timor in the mid 1990s after obtaining a job as a public servant in Ainaro, and became involved in the clandestine movement. In 1998 she moved to Dili after getting married.

Adelia was born in Bagia where she spent much of her childhood. She had vivid memories of people coming down from the mountains in the late 1970s and helping the Church to prepare food for them, as well as learning from nurses how to provide medical treatment. Her father was a school principal and was responsible for burying dead bodies. After high school, she moved to Dili to become a nun. As she grew older, Adelia began to notice the poor treatment that some of her family members received from the Indonesian military, and this motivated her to become involved in the resistance. In 1986, she received a scholarship from the Indonesian government to study in Bali. There, she became involved in political activities,

such as recording revolutionary music and preparing flags for when European delegations visited.

Barreto, Maria ‘Mery’ G.

Mery was born in Maliana in 1973. At the time of the Indonesian invasion, her family fled to the mountains. After retreating from the mountains they lived in Bobonaro for a couple of years, and she recalled the family having very little food during this time. They moved back to Maliana in 1979, and Mery started primary school in 1981. She was very active in extra-curricular activities, such as volleyball, and competed in traditional dance competitions in Dili and in Jakarta. She was also involved in the Indonesian scout movement, *Pramuka*. In 1989 she attended a boarding school in Bobonaro, where she studied agriculture. Upon completing her studies, she attended university in Dili where she began to learn about politics and to participate in political demonstrations. Her mother’s death in 1996 was one of the biggest challenges of Mery’s life. Mery’s husband worked for the NGO, *Yayasan HAK*, and Mery became involved with the organisation and in the establishment of FOKUPERS. She was concerned with providing support for women victims of the Indonesian military.

Belo, Ester de Assunção Soares

Ester was born in Baucau during the Indonesian occupation. Her father was a member of the Indonesian army and her mother was a teacher, however, they both supported the resistance fighters in the mountains. Her mother’s first husband had been a commander of FRETILIN, who was killed by the Indonesian military. Ester attended school in Laga and then in Dili. She remembered that there was conflict among the students who were pro-autonomy and pro-independence, and at times was unable to go to school because the situation was unsafe. In 1999, Ester and her family fled to the mountains and remained there for three months to avoid being forced across the border by the military.

Bilela

Bilela was born in Queliquai in 1954. She went to school for four years and then stayed at home. When the Carnation Revolution took place, Bilela didn’t hear about it and did not witness any changes in Queliquai. When the parties eventually came to the village and asked her which one they would like to follow, she chose FRETILIN because the aim was to get independence. FALINTIL told everyone to evacuate when the Indonesian military arrived in Baucau via ships, and so Bilela and her family prepared everything and killed all the animals, before running away to the mountains. They remained there for several years. For the first couple of years, life was much organised. Because she had some education, Bilela taught people how to read and write. In 1977, they moved to Mount Matebian because the situation became more difficult. Bilela met her husband in the mountains and they got married in 1978. Soon after she became pregnant and the Indonesian military began to attack the area more and more frequently, until they were captured in December 1978. Bilela and her husband were interrogated extensively and imprisoned in the Hotel Flamboyan in Baucau. Upon release, Bilela was required to stay inside and to self-report weekly. She eventually remarried to her husband’s younger brother, but felt constantly under the eye of the military.

Boavida, Maria Madalena Brites

Maria was born in Ermera in 1957. She attended primary school in Ermera and then on Ataúro Island. Afterwards, she studied at the technical school in Dili. She obtained good marks at school and received a scholarship to continue her studies in Portugal in 1974. Maria studied in Lisbon, but after Indonesian invaded East Timor she moved to Mozambique. She participated in political discussions in Portugal, and was aware of East Timor's desire for independence. She remembered discussing political ideas with students from Portugal and other countries.

Castro, Madre Candida de

Madre Candida was born during Indonesian times and became a nun in 1994. She was involved in teaching students in Ossu, before moving to Yogyakarta (Indonesia) to study and then to Atambua (Indonesia) for work. She decided to become a nun after growing up in Venilale, and felt that she had a calling. In Venilale, Madre Candida attended junior and senior high school and when the nuns visited her school, she felt attracted to their work. She entered a convent in Dili in 1991 and did her training there. In Ossu, she was based at the Canossian Sisters' School, where there were many students from various districts. She found her two years in Ossu an important learning experience. Madre Candidate heard about the violence that was happening in 1999, especially about the two Canossian nuns that were killed in Los Palos. She was surprised and upset to hear about the death of the nuns.

Chalves, Yolanda Maria Conceição

Yolanda was born in Maubara in 1971. By 1975, she had moved to Dili with her grandparents and spent most of her childhood there. Some of her family members were involved in the resistance, including two uncles who were members of FALINTIL. During the occupation, Yolanda lived in Liquica. She recalled seeing many people dying, especially during the early years of occupation, and felt traumatised by these memories. Because Yolanda's uncle was in the mountains, the military often came to her house to interrogate her aunt. Eventually, she lost her mind. Even after they captured her uncle, the military still continued to terrorise her aunt. Yolanda attended a Chinese school and then the Portuguese school in Dili. She received support from Indonesian teachers from eastern Indonesia, such as Ambon and Flores. There were frequent fights between the Indonesian and East Timorese students. Yolanda had vivid memories of 1999 and the massacre in Liquica in 1999 where her father was stabbed and almost killed. She voted in the Popular Consultation in Dili, where there was constant harassment from the *Aitarak* militia.

Conceição, Ilda Maria da

Ilda was born in Uatu-Carbau in 1957, where she spent most of her childhood. As the daughter of a *liurai*, Ilda was able to access an education, and went to primary school in Ossu, high school in Dili, and then the technical school in Dili until 1975. As a result of the invasion, Ilda fled to the mountains and, as an educated woman, was involved in teaching literacy, as well as sewing and needlecraft. She became a leader in the mountains, during which time she was known by her code name: *Lalo Imin* (*Independência ou Morte, Integração Nunca* – Independence or Death, Never for Integration). She married a section commander from FALINTIL. In 1981, she changed her code name to *Wairaha Gae Imin* (a big star that rises before the sun in the morning). When her husband was killed in 1984, Ilda

was captured by the Indonesian military and lived in town. There, she participated in the clandestine movement even though the military closely monitored her activities. She was jailed in 1986 at the Hotel Flamboyan in Baucau. After being released, her movement were still strictly monitored. However, Ilda continued her work with the clandestine movement under the cover of Church activities.

Correira, Carlota Borromeia de

Carlota was born in 1960 in Vermasse. She attended up to her fourth year of schooling, but had to stop when Indonesia invaded and her family ran to the mountains. She lived in the mountains for several years as a child, although had little understanding about politics and what it meant to be independent. Her family began to move around as the Indonesian military discovered them. In 1977, Carlota went to work in the hospital with many other young people. From that point, she started to live separately from her family at a dorm in the hospital. In the beginning, Carlota had no idea about health, but she was trained how to give an injection and how to use medicine. They did not have many supplies, and relied predominantly upon traditional medicine. After several years she was captured, but ran away again to the mountains. Eventually in 1979, she surrendered near Vermasse. After surrender, she was asked by the Indonesian military to take care of the sick people. She was investigated many times, including by the feared East Timorese interrogator, Juliaõ Saka. Afterwards, Carlota continued to work as a nurse's assistant. In 1999, Carlota and her family ran away to the mountains.

Dias, Maria de Fatima Ximenes, and Juana Goncalves Amorin Dias Soares

Maria was born in Dili in 1965. Her father had been a soldier in the Portuguese army. After the invasion, her father was continually interrogated and tortured by the Indonesian military because they suspected him of being in contact with Portugal and of having sympathies for the resistance. Eventually he died from his injuries, and this had a marked effect upon Maria and her commitment to independence. She studied at the Portuguese school, Externato São José, and worked in a clinic, while providing support to the clandestine network. In 1988, Maria was interrogated. She continued to work with the Carmelite sisters at the clinic and eventually entered the convent in 1989. In 1991, Maria was sent to a convent in Malang (Indonesia), and then to Salamanca (Spain), to study nursing. She returned to Dili in 1996 and left the convent, before establishing the organisation, Ready to Serve (*Prontu Atu Serbi – PAS*).

Maria's sister, Juana, was imprisoned and was made to witness her father's torture and interrogation. After her passed away, she started to work on the Motael Clinic. She was also part of the clandestine movement, sending medicine to the mountains. In particular, Juana was involved in demonstrations at Hotel Turismo in 1990 and the Santa Cruz demonstration in 1991, during which time she led the prayers. Having trained in martial arts meant that Juana felt more confident that she would be able to defend herself. Throughout the 1990s, Juana was actively involved in clandestine work.

Federer, Maria do Céu Lopes da Silva

Céu was born on Ataúro Island in 1957. Her father was a political deportee from Príncipe-São Tomé, and her mother was from Ermera. She went to school on Ataúro, at a convent boarding school in Ermera, and then in Dili. She was excited by the political developments

taking place in the territory after the Carnation Revolution in Portugal. She was on school holidays in Ataúro when the civil conflict broke out, and witnessed the invasion from the island. In 1978, Céu received a scholarship from the Indonesian government to study in Jakarta. There, she met her to-be-husband, Juan Federer, the honorary consul for Chile. She studied in Jakarta until 1980 when she returned to Ataúro because her father became ill, and she witnessed the arrival of large numbers of political prisoners throughout the early 1980s. Céu moved to Jakarta in 1983, before moving to Australia. In Darwin, Céu campaigned extensively for East Timor's independence.

Fernandes, Zelia

Zelia was born in the mountains in 1977. Her father had been a soldier in the Portuguese army, and was a member of FALINTIL. At the end of 1978, the Indonesian military launched a bombing campaign on the mountain base where her family was residing. As a result, her family walked across to Mount Matebian, the last remaining resistance base. After one only week of Zelia's arrival, the Indonesian military surrounded the base. After being captured, Zelia's father was continually arrested and interrogated by the Indonesian military, before being sent to Ataúro Island in 1982. Zelia was sent to the island to live with her father, and attended primary school there. When she returned to the mainland, Zelia finished primary school and went on to secondary school in Uatolari. At that time, she started to participate in clandestine activities. Zelia attended high school in Dili, and continued her involvement with the clandestine movement. In 1997, she commenced studying at the university in Dili and increased her involvement in clandestine activities. In particular, she was involved in the ETSSC's women's wing, GFFTL, and assisted with the organisation of a two women's conferences in 1998.

Freitas, Partiani Mardianti

Partiana was born in Kediri (Indonesia) in 1970, but married an East Timorese man when he was in Indonesia studying in 1994. She explained that the Javanese people did not like the East Timorese students because they were seen to cause problems. As such, some of her family did not agree with her marrying an East Timorese man. They had a daughter together but soon after, Partiana's husband returned to East Timor. For a year and a half, he did not send them any money, and Partiana had to continue working at the hospital. However, she then moved to Dili to join her husband. She was warned that the situation was getting more and more tense in 1999, but did not know much about the politics. At the time of the Popular Consultation they fled to Dare in the mountains. They returned to Dili when INTERFET arrived.

Fuca, Filomena

Filomena was born in 1982 in Oecussi, and remembered the different experiences of people in Oecussi during Indonesian times. Filomena recalled that when she was very young, her mother told her the story of when they family ran to the mountains at the time of the Indonesian invasion. Filomena recalled several incidents within her childhood, as she grew increasingly aware of the broader political situation of the territory and the relationship with Indonesia. In Oecussi, Filomena explained that there was a good relationship between the East Timorese people and the Indonesian military. There were lots of transmigrants in Oecussi from other parts of Indonesia. People knew that her family supported independence, but they denied it publicly. Filomena was involved in the church group, *Sagrada Familia*. In

1998 and 1999, Filomena observed that the situation changed. In 1999, Filomena and her family ran away to Kefa (Indonesia), and there suffered violence and intimidation.

Galhos, Isabela ‘Bella’ Antonia da Costa

Bella was born in 1972 in Dili. As a child, she witnessed first-hand the brutality and violence of the Indonesian military. Her father was imprisoned and detained by Indonesian forces early in the occupation, leaving Bella’s mother and her seven children to fend for themselves. Her parents separated upon his release from prison. Bella attended boarding school in Ainaro before completing her studies in Dili. She attended university there, and participated in clandestine activities and demonstrations. In 1994, Bella was selected for the Canada World Youth exchange program. She was initially sent to Jakarta for training, before arriving in Canada. Bella then defected, and spent the rest of the occupation travelling around Canada and the world to raise awareness about the occupation of East Timor and criticising the complicity of Western governments.

Goncalves, Benvinda Pereira

Benvinda was born in Liquica in 1979. She attended school there while living with her grandparents. Members of the Indonesian military would often come to her house to take a shower, so her grandparents had quite a good relationship with them and they were nice in return. However, over time this relationship began to change, as the military began to ask questions about many family members who went to the mountains. Benvinda was in her first year of senior high school during the crisis of 1999. She remembered being told by her grandparents to be very careful as a woman at the time of the Popular Consultation because there were many people with guns.

Gonzaga, Luisa

Luisa was born in 1959 in Tutuala. There, she completed up to her fourth year of primary school. In 1974 Luisa became involved with FRETILIN, and learnt revolutionary songs from UNETIM students who came over from Dili. When Indonesia invaded, Luisa and her family ran to the mountains and she got married in a traditional ceremony. In the mountains, Luisa was involved in literacy campaigns and other activities. Luisa and her husband lived for four years in the mountains before they were arrested by the Indonesian military in Mount Matebian. After being arrested, Luisa spent many years in and out of prison due to the fact that her husband, Nino Konis Santana, was a prominent resistance fighter and went on to become the Commander-in-Chief of FALINTIL from 1993 until his death in 1998. Luisa was not able to go to school or to work during this time and suffered continuous torture and interrogation. The local militia, *Tim Alfa*, killed many people in Tutuala at the time of the Popular Consultation and interrogated them when they went to vote.

Kalsona, Maria de Fatima

Maria was born in Same in 1960. She had commenced study at the technical school in Dili when the Carnation Revolution took place in Portugal, and she stopped studying in order to join UNETIM. All her family were in FRETILIN; the women joined OPMT, and the youth joined OPJT. As part of UNETIM, Maria participated in alphabetisation campaigns and worked at crèche in Mau Koli when she was 14 years old. When Indonesia invaded, Maria retreated to the mountains and began to participate in OPMT. She was very active in the

organisation, teaching literacy, East Timorese culture, traditions, and history. After continually being under attack, Maria was shot and captured in January 1979. After being captured, she received no treatment for her injuries and they got infected. Maria was interrogated and, even after she was released, she had to continually self-report. Her family were also unable to gain secure employment. Maria continued to assist the clandestine. In 1985, she married her boyfriend from the mountains.

Labo

Labo was born in Baucau in 1955 to a *liurai* family. She attended school in Vermasse, Soibada, then Dili, and completed a teacher training course in 1974. She heard about the Carnation Revolution in Portugal and recalled the formation of political parties. Because of the upheaval at the time, Labo couldn't get a job after finishing her training. From September 1975 Labo became involved with OPMT in Vermasse. After Indonesia invaded, Labo fled the town and moved into an area in the mountains under FRETILIN control. She lived in the mountains for three years, moving from place to place as the situation became increasingly more dangerous. Eventually, she surrendered and was taken to the military headquarters in Baucau. There, she was interrogated for several months. After being released, she was still required to self-report. Labo managed to obtain a job as a teacher and then a public servant, but still supported the resistance. After getting married, she moved to Baucau in 1982.

Magno, Benícia 'Bebé' Eriana Xavier dos Reis

Bebé was born in Dili in 1981, and went school there. Her father and mother were involved in the clandestine movement, and Bebé had memories of people coming to visit her house that later, she realised were connected to the fighters in the mountains. At one point, her house was seized by the Indonesian military for several weeks, and her mother was detained and interrogated. Bebé was present for these interrogation sessions. At school, Bebé recalled the violence of the teachers and her fear of them. It wasn't until Bebé was in her last years of senior high school that she began herself to participate in political discussions, and to participate in a youth resistance group. When Bebé she was seventeen, she got accepted into university and moved to Indonesia, but returned for the Popular Consultation in East Timor in 1999.

Magno, Durvalina Belo

Durvalina was born in Ainaro in 1965. When Indonesia invaded, she retreated to the mountains with her family and lived there for three and a half years. Her husband was a former Portuguese soldier and continued to maintain contact with the FALINTIL fighters in the mountains. After surrendering he was jailed and released time and time again for his suspected connections with the fighters in the mountains. As a result, Durvalina was one of the first groups of political prisoners to be sent to Ataúro Island and remained there from 1980–84. She had vivid memories of the difficulties of life on the island including, in particular, a severe lack of food. Afterwards, the family continued to have trouble to move freely and obtain employment. Eventually, her husband obtained a job as a public servant, but continued to support the fighters in the mountains. Durvalina had eight of her own children, and was also responsible for nine nieces and nephews. As the family was attempting to escape to Atambua (Indonesia), they were ambushed by the *Besi Merah Putih* militia. They eventually made it to Atambua, but her husband was kidnapped from a refugee camp there and to this day, Durvalina does not know if he was killed and if so, where his body is located.

Mana Erna

Mana Erna was born in 1972 on Alor (Indonesia). Her family moved to East Timor when she was young. Mana Erna attended primary school in Viqueque, before attending senior high school in Baucau. Afterwards, she went to university in Dili. At university she attended some clandestine meetings, but was not involved directly. As an Indonesian woman living in East Timor she felt that she should just keep quiet, but still followed the situation. In Dili, Mana Erna joined a youth student Christian organisation. She observed that East Timorese women worked very hard to contribute to their country. Overall, Mana Erna felt that she belonged to East Timor. As a woman from eastern Indonesia, she felt that there she had a good relationship with East Timorese people because they had a lot in common.

Mana Eu

Mana Eu was born in Vermasse in 1964 to a *liurai* family. During Portuguese times, Mana Eu went to school up until second grade. When Indonesia invaded, she fled to the mountains where they were constantly on the move to escape the Indonesian forces. Her father, who was a fighter with FALINTIL, died in the mountains. Her mother, who was a member of OPMT, passed away when they surrendered to the Indonesian military. Her grandparents also passed away, and so the children had to live separately with other relatives. Mana Eu went to live with her aunt in Dili. There, the family sold vegetables and Mana Eu got married and had children. She noticed the situation getting much worse in the 1990s, but took care because her children were in school. In 1999, the situation was particularly bad, and the militia placed a post in front of her house. They couldn't move, and she was able to see directly the way in which people were treated by the military. At the time of the Popular Consultation, she ran across the border to West Timor.

Mana Maria

Mana Maria was born in 1965 in Aileu. She went to school in Dili before studying nursing, and then went to Bali (Indonesia) to do a midwifery course. At high school in Dili she recalled the situation being difficult, especially around the time of the Pope's visit in 1989. Some of her friends were involved in protests. Mana Maria supported them indirectly but was not actively involved because she felt that it was dangerous. After completing her course in Bali, Mana Maria was placed in a remote area of Maubisse, before becoming a permanent public servant at the main hospital in Ainaro. There, she worked alongside Indonesian doctors and nurses and had positive working relations with Indonesian doctors. After a number of demonstrations in the 1990s, she noticed that that situation changed significantly. In September 1999, Mana Maria escaped to West Timor.

Mana Marta

Mana Marta was born in 1981 in Venilale. Her mother married many times, after each of her husband – many of whom were East Timorese members of the Indonesian military – were killed. Eventually, she married an older farmer who took care of the children with her. Her stepfather encouraged the children to attend school, despite the fact that they had very little money. Every day when the children returned home from school, they helped on the farm. When she was young, Mana Marta and her twin sister both contracted malaria. Eventually, after studying hard, Mana Marta and her sister received a scholarship from the government to cover their school fees. She moved to Baucau to live with an aunt when she commenced

senior high school, and explained that she did not feel safe because of the increasingly politicisation in the late 1990s. At the time of the referendum, her step father sent Mana Marta and her sister to the mountains to keep them safe from the militia.

Marques, Merita de Jesus

Merita was born in 1969 in Pasabe. When Indonesia invaded her family didn't run to the mountains, they just stayed in their village. She remembered that there wasn't much fighting in Oecussi and the *liurai* came to an agreement with the Indonesian military, which meant that the situation was quite calm. When she was in third grade Merita moved to Pantemakassar to live with her uncle, but returned to Pasabe to attend a Catholic school. She noticed the situation changing into the 1990s as the Indonesian military started to enter at the community. After completing her schooling, Merita moved to Dili to attend university and noticed significant differences between the capital and her home town. There, she participated in youth clandestine activities. Her education was delayed several times because she contracted malaria. She was in Dili in 1999, and observed much militia violence. She was evacuated to Indonesian West Timor at the time of the Popular Consultation.

Mendes, Emilita

Emilita was born in 1970 in Liquica. When Indonesia invaded in 1975, Emilita and her family retreated to the mountains. She remembered running from place to place in order to escape the Indonesian military. Emilita and her family eventually surrendered. Upon surrender, Emilita then continued her education at a Catholic school in Liquica where most of the teachers were from Flores and Kefa (Indonesia), and she had fond memories of attending school and participating in extracurricular activities. Emilita remembered the militia violence in 1999, and she worked to provide food for refugees.

Mok, Luisinha Freitas

Luisinha was born in Gariwai in 1969. She commenced school in 1974, and she remembered the airplanes and parachutes as Indonesia invaded in 1975. Luisinha and her family fled to the mountains with FALINTIL to escape the invading forces. They were constantly on the move, until they reached the FRETILIN-stronghold of Mount Matebian. Her family was separated and her father was captured, and then pretended to be a TBO so that he could see if the rest of the family was safe. When they returned to town, Luisinha went back to school. She observed that the situation was improving, but not for those who had contact with the fighters in the mountains. Luisinha noted that the Indonesian government provided education and implemented some developments in the territory, but that their treatment of women was very poor. She met her husband and they married in 1990, both working for the clandestine but without telling one another. They moved to Baucau, and her first daughter was born. Luisinha began to hide people from the mountains in her home. In 1999 she held a meeting in her restaurant, 'Victoria Guesthouse', for female victims to come together and share their experiences of violence.

Oliveira, Teresinha 'Jina' de Jesus

Jina was born in Fatubesi in 1957. She attended school in Fatubesi and when she was older, attended the Canossian School in Dili from 1963–69. When she completed her schooling, she began studying at the technical school in Dili. When the civil conflict broke out, she hid with

the Canossian sisters in Dili. She was then able to return to Liquica, before hiding in the mountains when Indonesia invaded. In the mountains, Jina was constantly on the move before being captured in 1979. Upon capture, Jina was interrogated every day for a month about what she did in the mountains. After that, she lived in Maubere and worked as a teacher. She initially received no pay, and struggled because she did not know the Indonesian language. The *Besi Merah Putih* militia was active in the area around 1999, and her husband became a member of the militia.

Pinto, Maria ‘Bebe’ Nelson

Bebe was born in Liquica in 1979 into a big family, with fifteen children in total. They all attended school, although not all the children completed her education. She had a rather happy childhood, focusing on school and performing well in her studies. Her father had a good relationship with the Indonesian military, which meant that life was easier for them. Bebe went to Indonesia to continue her studies at university, studying electrical engineering in Surabaya. Her husband went to the mountains in 1991 and became a member of FALINTIL. He didn't return to town until 1999, after the Indonesian military left. Bebe returned to East Timor in early 1999 and soon after her return, the situation began to change and she did not want to return to Indonesia to continue her studies. There was tension between the pro-autonomy and pro-independence groups, which culminated in the massacre in Liquica church. She was at home at the time, but saw the militia burning houses and threatening the population.

Reis, Filomena ‘Mena’ Barros dos

Mena was born in Ermera in 1964, but moved to Dili with her family when she was a young child and her mother passed away. She was in fourth grade in 1974 and political parties were formed. At the time, Mena was afraid because the schools didn't function and everyone was worried. Her family travelled across the territory to Atambua (Indonesia), where Mena began to attend an Indonesian school and to learn the Indonesian language. In April 1976, Mena returned to Dili, which she observed was full of Indonesian military. She recommenced school in 1977, and went on to join the Indonesian scout movement, *Pramuka*. In 1983, Mena passed the public service exam and started work in Dili. At the same time, Mena attended Externato São José. She also became involved with FOKUPERS in the late 1990s.

Reis, Lola dos

Lola was born just out of Dili in 1955 to an East Timorese mother and a Portuguese father. She father was a district administrator who came to the territory as a Portuguese soldier after World War Two. Lola attended school and her family moved around a lot because of her father's work (from Manufahi to Ermera, to Portugal, to Oecussi, to Viqueque). She participated in political discussions when she was studying in Dili, particularly after the Carnation Revolution took place in Portugal and these discussions became public. In 1974, she won a scholarship to study in Portugal. In Lisbon, she participated in political discussions with students from Portugal and from Portuguese Africa. During the occupation, Lola went to Mozambique and then returned to Lisbon. She returned to East Timor for a visit in 1994, and twice more during the occupation.

Reis, Maria Maia dos

Maria was born in Bucoli in 1958. She was the daughter of a *liurai* and, as such, was able to attend school in Buocoli and then in Ossu, before returning to Baucau. She commenced study in Dili afterwards, but stopped because of the conflict in 1974–75. Seventeen years old at the time, Maria supported FRETILIN and became a member of UNETIM and OPJT. She assisted with the literacy programs at the pilot centre in Aileu. Maria was also involved in the formation of OPMT. When Indonesia invaded, Maria fled to the mountains and continued to participate in OPMT. She had an important position in the organisation, and was involved in sharing information and coordinating activities. As the situation became worse she eventually surrendered in 1979, although continued to participate in the clandestine movement. In 1981 she married and moved to Dili, before being imprisoned and interrogated in 1990 for her involvement in the resistance.

Santos, Anabela ‘Ana’ Maia

Ana was born in Maliana in 1971. When Indonesia invaded in 1975 she was five years old, and her family fled to Indonesia and remained there for one year before returning to Maliana. She saw many people passed away during this time. Ana attended school in Bobonaro and then Maliana, before completing her studies in 1991 and commencing university in Dili. Ana had happy memories of her studies, teachers and friends. She especially enjoyed participating in extracurricular activities. At university, Ana studied Indonesian language. She was too afraid to participate in political activities, but assisted behind the lines if she could, particular under the guise of the Church. Some of her friends participated in the Santa Cruz demonstration in 1991. In 1999, Ana and her husband fled across the border to Kupang (Indonesia) and when they returned, they found that their house had been burnt down.

Santos, Ana Maria de Jesus dos

Ana was born in Fatukesi in 1960. She commenced schooling during Portuguese times. When political parties formed Ana initially joined the UDT, but left because she was disappointed with the party. When Indonesia invaded, Ana fled to the mountains with her family and fiancé. In the mountains, Ana participated in OPMT. She also had a baby in the mountains, as they began to run to escape the invading forces. In June 1978, they were captured by the Indonesian military. Upon capture, her husband was interrogated and tortured. Ana was also interrogated, and she told the military that she wasn’t educated to avoid suspicion. Her husband became a member of the police, and then went to study in Kupang (Indonesia). Ana was left alone with her daughter and struggled to find the money for food.

Santos, Domingas dos

Domingas was born in 1970 in Liquica. As a child, Domingas lived in the mountains for several years with her family. There, her mother passed away after becoming ill. When they came down from the mountains, Domingas had to sell vegetables in order to raise money to attend school. She was very involved in Church activities throughout her school years, and participated in some clandestine activities while she was at university in Dili. Before the Popular Consultation, Domingas was involved in door-to-door campaigns. She fled to the mountains in Dare in 1999 in the face of the militia violence.

Santos, Elisa da Silva dos

Elisa was born in Liquica in 1970. She completed her schooling there, before stopping once she got married. Elisa's husband was actively involved in clandestine activities and when they got married, Elisa started to become involved too, by helping to prepare supplies to send to the mountains. Because of their involvement in these activities, Elisa felt that their life was not peaceful for her children – she felt that they had an eye being put on them. When Elisa's daughter was three months old, her husband was arrested. Her husband, who worked as a public servant and provided for the family, was killed in the 1999 Church massacre in Liquica and she never found his body. Afterwards, Elisa received support from FOKUPERS and from the Church.

Santos, Nelinha Mali dos

Nelinha was born in Fatukesi in 1977. As a child she was poorly behaved, and so her mother sent her to boarding school in Ermera with the Catholic nuns. When she finished her schooling, Nelinha went to university in Kupang (Indonesia) for one year in 1998. She returned to East Timor in 1999 when her father, who was a policeman, was killed because of rumours that he was involved in clandestine activities. He had a good relationship with the military, and Nelinha wasn't sure if he was actually involved in clandestine activities or not.

Sarmiento, Zulmira 'Sirana' da Cruz

Sirana was born in Aileu in 1965. In Dili, she was a member of UNETIM and then OPJT. Sirana was also a participant in OPMT from its inception and, as part of the organisation, worked at the crèche in Maubisse. She was there when Indonesia invaded in December 1975, along with Isabel Lobato, Nicolau's wife. After Indonesia invaded, Sirana fled to the mountains near Same, and her family didn't know where she was for several months. There, she supported OPMT. The Indonesian military didn't make it to Same until April 1976, when they came via ships from Wetar (Indonesia). Sirana was captured in 1978 and taken to Aileu. She was then imprisoned and interrogated. Upon release, Sirana was involved in clandestine activities. In response to pressure to marry an Indonesian military commander, she managed to escape and marry someone else who worked for the Indonesian government, but maintained her involvement in clandestine activities. Because her aunt lived with a military commander, he helped her to write a letter to gain employment with the education department. Despite the violence in 1999, Sirana stayed at home with her children.

Savio, Gosmenia 'Keizar'

Keizar was born in 1980 in Los Palos. Her father was involved in clandestine activities, and coordinated meetings between clandestine members and FALINTIL. Their mother also took food to FALINTIL, and often took Keizar or her sister along with her. From 1995, Keizar herself became involved in clandestine activities and particularly with the establishment of the youth organisation FITUN. Her sister became involved in OPMT. In 1998 Keizar stopped attending school after one of her friends was captured, tortured, and killed by the Indonesian military.

Sequeira, Isabel ‘Beba’ Maria Marcel

Beba was born in Baucau in 1967. Her father was the *liurai* of Samalari and, because of this, was seized and beaten by FRETILIN during the civil conflict in 1975. After Indonesia invaded in December 1975, Beba’s father was released and attempted to report to the Indonesian military, but changed his mind after he saw them killing so many people. From 1977, he began to form relations with the Indonesian military, but to support the resistance on the side. He was eventually arrested in 1986, interrogated and sentenced to ten years in prison. Beba often had to interpret for her mother when she was interrogated about her involvement in the resistance. Beba began catechist studies in 1990 before taking a break for a semester, when she became involved in clandestine activities. Her family became known for their affiliation with the resistance, and eventually Beba was arrested and interrogated. After marrying, Beba went to live with her husband in Ermera, where she was involved in organising activities for women in the PKK.

Soares, Josefa Alvares Pereira

Josefa was born in 1953 in Watulari. She attended school in Soibada with the Canossian Sisters. When she completed school she went to Dili to enrol in a teacher’s course, which she finished in 1972. There, she participated in UNETIM. She completed her degree in 1972, and went on to teach until 1975. She was in Dili when the civil conflict erupted. When Indonesia invaded she fled to the mountains and was involved in OPMT, particularly in the alphabetisation and logistics section. In 1979, she was captured by the Indonesian military. Her husband was initially required to work as a TBO, and they lived in Wailili, where they had children. They were both arrested and imprisoned several times for their involvement in clandestine activities. In 1983, Josefa’s husband escaped to the mountains again, and she was left to take care of the children by herself. Josefa was arrested and tortured, then upon release was required to self-report every day. She continued her involvement in clandestine activities until her husband was killed.

Soares, Mariquita

Mariquita was born in 1974 in Watulari. Although she was only small, Mariquita went to the mountains with her family when Indonesia invaded and they lived in Mount Matebian. Several of Mariquita’s siblings were killed by the Indonesian military. She studied first in Ossu, and then went to high school and university in Dili. There, she was involved in clandestine activities, including the Santa Cruz demonstration in 1991, and was active in the Church. From 1998, Mariquita participated in the ETSSC and was involved in establishing GFFTL. As part of GFFTL, she assisted in preparing for a conference in Aileu in 1998 for women to come together and share their experiences of life under Indonesian rule. In 1999, Mariquita travelled to Viqueque to conduct voter education. She was there when INTERFET arrived after the Popular Consultation, before returning to Dili.

Soares, Mica Barreto

Mica was born in Suai in 1972. During the civil conflict her family was in Venilale, before they moved to Manatuto. Mica went to school in Dili in 1982 and stayed with her older sister, who was married to an East Timorese member of the Indonesian military. She then moved to live with her aunt and uncle in Maliana to help them look after their *kios*, before finishing high school in Dili in 1990. When Mica went to university in Semarang (Indonesia), she had

not encountered politics before that time. There, she joined RENETIL as one of the first women members in that area. After a RENETIL demonstration in 1991, even though she did not attend, Mica was interrogated by the military. In Semarang, Mica visited East Timorese prisoners who were jailed after the Santa Cruz Massacre. In the late 1990s, Mica collaborated with the pro-democracy activists in Indonesia. After finishing her degree, Mica moved to Jakarta and continued to work with RENETIL in their campaign for East Timor's independence.

Xavier, Rosa

Rosa was born in Bagia in 1976. At the time of the invasion, her parents were in the mountains and remained there until 1979. When they came down from the mountains, Rosa and her family lived in Laga. Rosa started primary school there in 1982, before moving to Baucau. In Baucau, she was involved in the scout movement. Afterwards, Rosa moved to Dili to attend university and to live with her uncle. At university, Rosa became involved in clandestine activities, but always took care because she was an only child and her mother would worry about her. She was involved in the ETSSC and in the founding of GFFTL from 1998. As part of the organisation, Rosa assisted in organising demonstrations and in voter education in the districts at the time of the Popular Consultation in 1999.

Yayu, Juliana

Juliana was born in Ambon (Indonesia). She came to Dili for a visit in 1998 and again to live in 1999 a couple of weeks before the Popular Consultation with her East Timorese husband and small baby. Juliana met her husband while they were both at university in Malang (Indonesia). Coming from an eastern Indonesian island, Juliana did not feel that the people from East Timorese were very different to those from Ambon. Despite the violence at the time of the Popular Consultation, Juliana remained in Dili.