

East Timorese in Melbourne:
Community and Identity in a Time of
Political Unrest in Timor-Leste

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STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library, being made available for loan and photocopying subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Dili, May 2006—We are driving. I am sitting next to Señor Santos, the father of the family I have been staying with over the past two months. The silence between us echoes the silence of the dusty streets outside the car. For days, we have been watching people passing the compound where we live in cars packed to the brim. Anxious and frightened, they have fled an unknown enemy, an unknown danger. Dili is empty. The silence fuels the tension that has been building. I look at Señor Santos. I wonder what he thinks; how does he feel about his country yet again being marked by violence? How does he feel about his family being forced to flee and once more live with the uncertainty that violence brings? For the past few weeks, we have had our bags packed, ready to flee to the hills if the violence intensifies. The adults in the compound have gathered every afternoon, sharing news and stories, contemplating their options and praying for a resolution to the unfolding conflict. They have been asking me to secure their refuge in Australia or at the Australian embassy, a request I have been unable to meet. My heart wrenches with my decision to leave them, but I am too scared to stay. I unsuccessfully seek justification for my decision to return to Australia. I am left with no words as I see the back of Señor Santos' car leave after dropping me at my friend's place where I will seek refuge whilst awaiting my flight to Darwin in the morning. Señor Santos is on his way home. His children and wife are waiting for him to take them to the refugee camp.

This study started out as a research project that considered the post-independence situation of young East Timorese whose formative years have been marked by experiences of war, violence, displacement and social disruption. I was forced to terminate my fieldwork and later change my PhD project due to the political unrest of 2006. I wish to begin these acknowledgements by saying thank you to Señor Santos and his family for keeping me safe during what was a very difficult period for him and his family.

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My family in Norway has been an amazing support throughout my candidature. Despite great distance, they have provided endless support and helped me deal with the many challenges that I have faced the last years. Thank you, Mamma, Pappa and Lasse, for listening to me when I have been in doubt and for getting me back on track when I have felt at loss.

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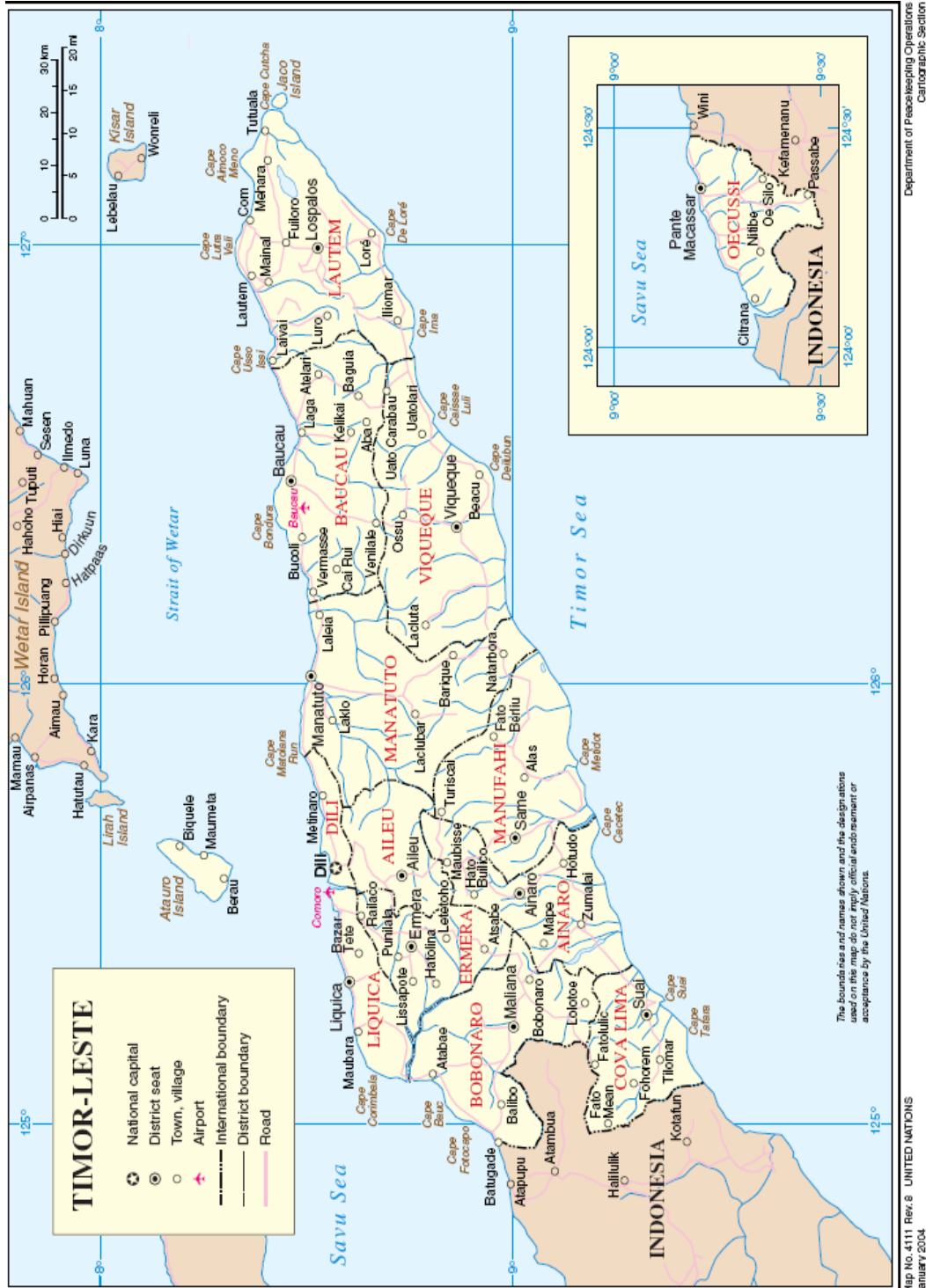
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ABSTRACT

This study considers the situation of a group of East Timorese exiles living in Melbourne, Australia, who left East Timor or were born in exile from the time of the 1975 civil war up to the end of the Indonesian occupation of the territory in 1999. During the Indonesian occupation of East Timor, diasporic groups played a central role in the campaign for self-determination. Throughout the occupation, East Timorese in Australia maintained a strong sense of long-distance nationalism, which drove, directly or indirectly, communal cultural and social activities. The fight to free East Timor was at the core of the exiles' collective imagination, defining them as a largely homeland focused community. However, in the aftermath of independence, many have struggled to find their place and role in relation to the independent nation. Personal experiences upon return, perceptions of political, cultural, economic and social development (or lack thereof), and political unrest and communal violence have led to renewed questioning of identity and belonging. The thesis explores this new questioning of identity and belonging and, through ethnographic field research with East Timorese living in Melbourne, it explores how the exiles experience and respond to the social and political changes in their country of origin.

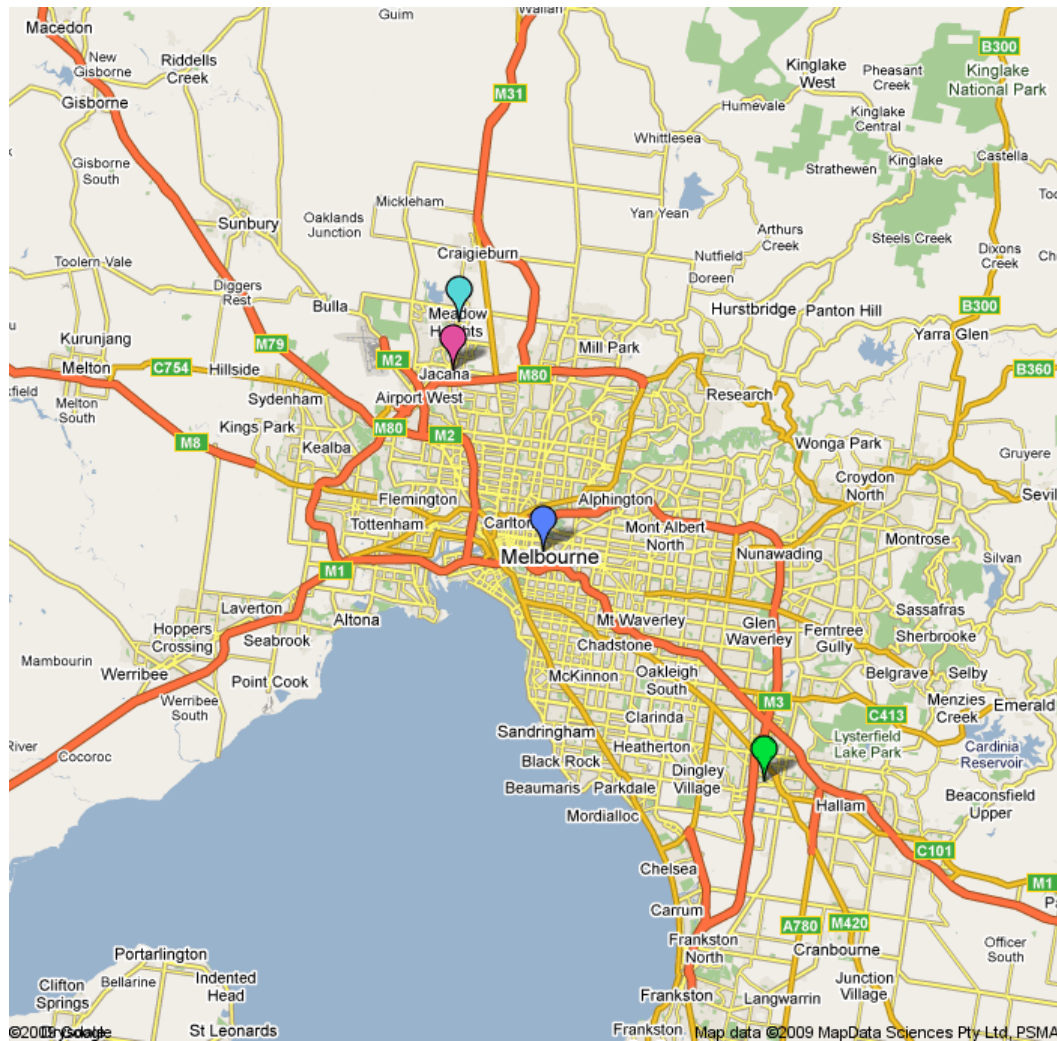
The research for the thesis was conducted during a period of conflict and national upheaval in East Timor, and the dissertation pays particular attention to how violence and unrest at home manifest in the exiles' lives and affect their experience of self, community and nation. The thesis explores how past socialisation and practice within social fields that are characterised by an emphasis on communalism, morality and reciprocity form part of present agency. It considers how potential contradictions between past imaginaries and lived realities can lead to intensely felt emotions, which may further advance the process of negotiation and transformation of identity and boundaries of belonging. Through an analysis of linked conceptualisations of self, emotions and national narratives, the thesis seeks to shed light on the exiles' engagement with and relationship to independent East Timor. It aims to inform contemporary understandings of the processes of change that occur within diasporic communities at times of radical political change in the exiles' home countries.

MAP OF EAST TIMOR



MAP OF MELBOURNE

MAIN AREAS OF EAST-TIMORESE RESIDENCE



Key:

-  Meadow Heights
-  Broadmeadows
-  Richmond
-  Dandenong

ABBREVIATIONS

ABC	Australian Broadcasting Corporation
ABRI	Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia (Armed Forces of the Republic of Indonesia)
ADF	Australian Defence Force
AETA	Australia-East Timor Association
AMP	Parliamentary Majority Alliance (Portuguese acronym)
Apodeti	Associação Popular Democrática Timorese (Timorese Popular Democratic Association, earlier, the Association for the Integration of Timor into Indonesia)
ASDT	Associação Social Democrata Timorese (Timorese Association of Social Democrats, forerunner Fretilin)
BANH	Belgium Avenue Neighbourhood House
CAVR	Comissão de Acolhimento, Verdade e Reconciliação de Timor-Leste (Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation in Timor-Leste)
CNRM	Conselho Nacional da Resistência Maubere (National Council of Maubere Resistance)
CNRT	Conselho Nacional da Resistência Timorese (National Council of Timorese Resistance)
CNRT	Congresso Nacional da Reconstrução de Timor (National Congress for the Reconstruction of East Timor)
Falintil	Força Armadas de Libertação Nacional de Timor-Leste (Armed Forces for the National Liberation of East Timor)
F-FDTL	Falintil–Forças de Defesa de Timor-Leste (Falintil–East Timor Defence Force)
Fretilin	Frente Revolucionária de Timor-Leste Independente (Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor)
ISF	International Stabilisation Force
INTERFET	International Force East Timor
KOTA	Klibur Oan Timor Aswain (Association of Timorese Warrior Sons)
METAC	Melbourne East Timor Activities Centre
NRCHC	North Richmond Community Health Centre
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PD	Partido Democrático (Democratic Party)
PNTL	Polícia Nacional de Timor-Leste (East Timor National Police Force)
PSD	Partido Social Democrata (Social Democratic Party)
PSHT	Persaudaraan Setia Hati Terate (Faithful Fraternity of the Lotus)
RDTL	República Democrática de Timor-Leste (Democratic Republic of East Timor)
SAP	Special Assistance Plan
SMH	The Sydney Morning Herald
SPH	Special Humanitarian Program
TAV	Timorese Association in Victoria

TECCVIC	Timor Ethnic Chinese Community of Victoria
TMAA	Timorese Middle & Aged Association
TNI	Tentara Nasional Indonesia (Indonesian National Army, until 1999 known as ABRI)
UDT	União Democrática Timorese (Timorese Democratic Union)
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNTL	Universidade Nacional de Timor-Leste (National University of East Timor)
UNMISSET	United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor
UNMIT	United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste
UNOTIL	United Nations Office in Timor-Leste
UNPOL	United Nations Police
UNTAET	United Nations Transnational Administration in East Timor
UPF	Unidade Patrulhamento Fronteira (Border Patrol Unit)
URP	Unidade de reserve da Polícia (Police Reserve Unit)

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Earth and Stones, Fire and Water!!!
Sacred Land, sacred places where we planted betel leaves and nuts,
Beloved Land, place of birth, where we were raised,
Timor Lorosa'e!
Matebian, place where we see the sunrise and watch Jaco.
Ramelau, place where we see Oekussi and watch Atauro.
Independence!
As a people, as a territory, as a Nation!
One body, one mind, one wish!
Warriors!
Drums and swords, feathers and tais!
Prisoners, dancers, resistance fighters!
Tasi Feto, Tasi Mane!
Old man and old women, men and women, rejoice.
Youth, children, sing loud!
East, West!
Today is our day, Independence day!
Join hands, and look to the future!
Beloved people of Timor Lorosa'e!

Xanana Gusmão 2002

From inauguration speech, Dili, East Timor, 19th of May 2002 (in: Gusmão 2005: 6)

On the 20th of May 2002, East Timor became an independent nation after centuries of Portuguese colonial control, 24 years of Indonesian military rule, and two years of United Nations transitory administration. The independence was celebrated around the world, not least amongst expatriate East Timorese who had been forced to flee the brutal Indonesian occupational regime. To the exiled East Timorese, the thought of independence had been a thing of the future, a distant dream saturated with visions of freedom, peace and prosperity, of the reunification with homeland, family and friends. So what happened when the dream was realised? How did the expectations and visions of freedom correspond with the reality of independence? These questions provide the starting point

for this study, which, through ethnographic research with East-Timorese exiles living in Melbourne, Australia, analyses how the exile community has responded to the momentous social and political changes in the home country.

The words of Xanana Gusmão, former resistance leader, President and current Prime Minister of East Timor, in the epigraph serve as a reminder of the sense of euphoria, hope and optimism that embraced the East Timorese, both at home and in exile, at the birth of the new nation. Against all odds, the few but resilient people of East Timor had won their independence from a vastly superior enemy and it was with pride and hope that they faced the future. Mindful of the challenges ahead, their tremendous achievement endowed the East Timorese with a sense of confidence about the future—though the challenges would be great, none would be greater than the one they had managed to overcome in their fight for freedom. Still, as one of my friends in Dili told me some years ago, ‘it was with independence that the real fight for freedom started.’ His words are mirrored in those of Gusmão (2005: 8) who, in his inauguration speech of the 19th of May 2002, emphasised that:

independence will have no value, if all the people in Timor Lorosa’e continue to live in poverty and continue to suffer all kinds of difficulties. We gained our independence to improve our lives. Because of this we are celebrating our independence. I remind everyone, especially the leaders, of the discipline needed to affirm our power, the tolerance to affirm democracy, the reconciliation to affirm unity, within an environment of justice and peace.

Seven years later, Gusmão’s words echo in a void created by unmet expectations and continued struggle. The new nation remains one of the poorest countries in the world and little progress has been made on key socioeconomic indicators such as health and income. The nation faces high inflation, high levels of unemployment and illiteracy, and a growing young population. With a per capita GDP of US\$370, falling as low as US\$150 in the rural districts, most East Timorese continue to struggle with daily survival. Approximately 50 per cent of the population is illiterate; unemployment is estimated at 43 per cent and is even higher amongst the young population; approximately 64 per cent of the population suffer from food insecurity; and 60 per cent lack access to adequate

sanitation (UNDP 2006).¹ Furthermore, nation and state building have been challenged by limited bureaucratic capacities, embryonic political and juridical institutions, and disunity in the security sector (Rees 2004; UN 2006; USAID 2006). There is a growing social and economic gap within the population due to inflation and unemployment. A generational divide has emerged between those educated within the Portuguese cultural framework and those born during the Indonesian occupation and educated by the Indonesian regime. These social, economic and generational divides pose further challenges to the fledgling nation.

Despite the vast challenges facing the new nation, East Timor initially achieved what was perceived as a successful transition to nationhood. National consensus pervaded images of the independent country and the East Timorese expressed pride and trust in the nation and their national icons. This sense of harmony was shattered in late April 2006 when ethnically and politically motivated violence erupted in the capital, Dili. The country fell into political chaos following the dismissal of 600 soldiers of the national army, Falintil-Forças de Defesa de Timor-Leste (F-FDTL). The dismissed soldiers, all from the western part of the country, had abandoned their posts because of what they saw as systematic discrimination by Easterners. As the crisis escalated, the soldiers were joined by other East Timorese seeking to use the situation to express discontent with the government and the impoverished situation of the country. The crisis quickly changed from an internal dispute within the army to a political crisis, eventually leading to the resignation of the Prime Minister, Mari Alkatiri. It resulted in the deaths of at least 37 people, internal displacement of 150,000 people, and destruction of houses and property in the capital. Three years later, the situation remains fragile despite the presence of international troops, the establishment and later expansion of the United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNMIT), the accomplishment of relatively free and fair elections, the subsequent election of a new President, and the establishment of a new national government.

There has been extensive media coverage as well as academic discussion (e.g. Kingsbury & Leach 2007; Scambary 2006, 2007; Shoesmith 2007) of the ongoing crisis in East Timor, but little attention has been paid to how the conflict affects those who live in exile. This study addresses this void and considers how political unrest and national

¹ It is, however, encouraging to note that East Timor's economy has moved to positive growth, despite the country having one of the highest fertility rates in the world (in 2004, the fertility rate was at 7 per cent) (Kingsbury & Leach 2007: 3; UNDP 2006: 80).

disintegration affect exiles' experiences of self, community and nation. Concern and anxiety for family and friends at home is a continuous problem facing refugees and exiles (Varvin 2003: 216), and news about violence and unrest can be associated with intricate and complicated feelings of anxiety, fear, guilt, remorse, disappointment and loss. There is no uniform or simple answer to how conflict, violence and unrest affect exile and refugee communities; rather, the particularities of the refugees' flight, the nature of their exile, the specific character of the conflict, and variation in cultural and moral discourses may provoke diverse reactions and manifest in individuals' lives and exile communities in different ways.

In the case of the East-Timorese exiles, their experience of and reactions to the political conflict of 2006 have to be seen in relation to their hopes and expectations of independence and to the community's history as a highly transnational, homeland-focused diaspora. During the Indonesian occupation of the territory, the diaspora played a central role in the campaign for self-determination. The actions of the people living in exile maintained a level of diplomatic pressure on international power brokers and ensured that the East-Timorese people's cause was not forgotten. The exiles represented a vital resource in the struggle for independence. At the same time, the political campaign and the sense of an imagined community on which it rested provided a means by which the refugees could alleviate feelings of loss and guilt associated with their flight. In the aftermath of the independence, the role and position of the diaspora have been less clear and the exiles have struggled to redefine their relationship with their home country. Personal experiences upon return and perceptions of political, cultural, economic and social development (or lack thereof) have led to renewed questioning of identity and belonging. This process reached a peak with the outbreak of communal violence in 2006.

This study explores how communal violence and the breakdown of political consensus have affected the East-Timorese exiles' sense of self, community and nation. The thesis considers the processes of change that have occurred within the East-Timorese diaspora in Melbourne in the aftermath of the realisation of independence and questions how these processes of change relate to people's understanding of political, economic, cultural and social development in East Timor. It considers the effect of radical political change and civil unrest on everyday life, diasporic practice and experiences of self, community and nation, and the consequences of such events upon social structure and individual identity. More specifically, it explores how the exiles' experiences of the political crisis form part

of an ongoing process of negotiation, where values, meanings and expectations shape the dynamics of their post-independence identities in intricate ways.

I. ANTHROPOLOGY AND THE STUDY OF REFUGEES

The thesis draws upon an understanding of exile as an ambiguous state of disruption and loss that simultaneously presents opportunities for agency and change. In his essay *Reflections on Exile*, Edward Said (2000: 173) argues somewhat pessimistically that exile is:

the unhealable rift forced between human being and a native place, between the self and its true home: its essential sadness can never be surmounted ... The achievements of exile are permanently undermined by the loss of something left behind forever.

Cut off from their past, exiles feel ‘an urgent need to reconstitute their broken lives’ (Said 2000: 177); they must ‘reassemble an identity’ (Said 2000: 179) from the discontinuities and refractions of exile. In order to do so, exiles must re-create meaning within new cultural discourses. As I have argued elsewhere (Askland 2007), this is closely tied to the concepts of agency and practice (Bourdieu 1977). I do not wish to dismiss the devastating effects of exile; a refugee’s ability to act within the new social, political and cultural environment may be affected by severe trauma and stress, both prior to their flight and in exile. However, I believe it is important to move the discussion away from the inherently pessimistic view of refugees as passive victims and exile as life led outside habitual order, which has dominated the conventional anthropological study of refugees.

Despite the inherent complexity and divergence in the question of displacement and migration, refugees and displaced people have traditionally been perceived as a relatively coherent, static and singular entity. Refugee studies have been dominated by macro-analysis of mass movement of people, generally camp-refugees moving between third-world countries, and inquiries have been characterised by quantitative analysis conducted for policy purposes. Similarly, studies of return and repatriation of refugees have overwhelmingly focused on statistical evaluation of volunteer and forced repatriation. The sedentary bias of these studies has led to a dehistorised and universalised view of refugees that objectifies the individuals and removes them from the political and historical contexts to which they relate. The subsequent failure to acknowledge the

refugees' historical agency has, as anthropologist Liisa Malkki (1995a, 1996) argues in her pioneering work with Hutu refugees in Tanzania, left them as 'mute victims' or 'speechless emissaries.' They have been silenced, left to

suffer from a peculiar kind of speechlessness in the face of the national and international organizations whose object of care and control they are. Their accounts are disqualified almost a priori, while the languages of refugee relief, policy science, and 'development' claim the production of authoritative narratives about the refugees (Malkki 1996: 386).

The silencing of displaced people has been paralleled by a pessimistic view of displacement as 'an anomaly in the life of an otherwise "whole," stable, sedentary society' (Malkki 1995b: 508). It has been portrayed as a discontinuous state of being (Said 2000), as 'a liminal zone or an anti-structure characterised by uncertainty and lack of coherence' (Askland 2007: 235). Refugees in particular have been perceived as 'pathological victims' (Sørensen 1997: 147). They have been represented as displaced, misplaced and uprooted, left in a state of alienation and isolation in which their identity and social practice is challenged (Marrus 1985; Shawcross 1989; Stein 1981).

Such readings of the refugee experience are based upon a notion of a naturalised connection between people and place. It is reflected in the conventional language used in the debate about refugees, which often refers to exile and displacement in botanical terms (Malkki 1992). Exile and displacement are spoken of as being dominated by 'broken and dangling roots.' Refugees are 'uprooted,' and only by 'transplanting' her or his roots to the 'originative culture-bed' can the refugee recover from her or his loss (Malkki 1992: 31–2). The intimate connection between place and identity embedded in the discursive language of refugee studies has, as indicated by the latter point, led to a perception of return and repatriation as the natural and logical solution to displacement. Social anthropologist Kristi Anne Stølen (2007: 9) explains that repatriation has been conceived as 'a restoration of order in the relationship between people, culture, and place', whereby conditions existing before the flight are re-established and the refugee enters the 'familiar way of life, culture, and identity'. Return is depicted as a seemingly unproblematic process that will alleviate the difficulties and challenges posed by life away from home.

The conventional glorification of the relationship between the refugee and her or his ancestral homeland and the question of return is commonly reflected in the exiles' own imagination. For the exiled self, the dream of return often serves as a way of dealing with

the challenges of exile and it is often imagined as the ultimate resolution of the difficulties faced. Remembered places represent 'symbolic anchors' (Gupta & Ferguson 1997b: 39) that become unifying symbols in the personal and social struggles of belonging that lie at the heart of the migratory experience. Though not all displaced people articulate a homing desire through a wish of eventual return to their place of origin (Brah 1996: 193), the myths of return and cultural identification with a geographical location other than that of exile frequently guide diasporic practice. They serve to strengthen a sense of 'we-ness,' a sense of ethnic solidarity and communion (Safran 1991; Shuval 2000). They bestow a sense of continuity, a bridge connecting the past, the present and the future, and they represent a commanding element in the (re)creation of community and sense of belonging in exile.

The perception of a naturalised connection between individuals and their original home and the romantic vision of homecoming implies a highly static view of identity as something private and fixed and deprives the refugee of individual agency. It indicates an inert view of culture, community and society that ignores the dynamic and dialogic processes that shape communities and the individuals within them. But, in a world characterised by 'intensification of global networks of human relationship and the lack of one-to-one relationships between place and cultural expression' (Askland 2007: 236), can we speak of such a straightforward experience of migration and return? Is exile necessarily a state of sadness and uprootedness, and return the only solution to this essential sadness? Cannot 'roots' be picked up, developed, negotiated and transformed within new geographical, cultural and social contexts?

Responding to such questions, more recent anthropological research on refugees and displacement (Crockford 2000, 2007; Stølen 2007; Wise 2006) has shown that refugee experiences and the question of return are indeed more complex than previously anticipated. This growing body of work provides a more nuanced analysis of the experience and meanings attached to displacement, exile and return. It moves towards the study of diasporic and transnational processes, and challenges the taken-for-granted relationship between identity and territory of traditional refugee studies. Reflecting the contemporary anthropological emphasis on identity as public and negotiable, these authors acknowledge that refugee identities may reflect 'a complex sense of being and belonging,' that has been 'developed, negotiated and transformed in relation to multiple spaces' (Askland 2007: 236). Accordingly, regardless of the past prominence of the

dream of return in refugees' lives, new connections may evolve in exile and the end of conflict may in fact suppress or diminish the desire for return.

This change of perspective allows us to see how refugees and exiles engage with and negotiate their new circumstances and how, through agency and practice within the new environment, they may build new connections, recreate meaning, and transform their identity and belonging in relation to multiple spaces. Through engagement with cultural discourses previously unfamiliar to the refugee, meaningful relations may emerge. The social world of the refugee becomes configured, classified and normalised, and the refugee may embrace the particular combinations of narratives, concepts, ideologies and signifying practices of the host country. With time, the refugee develops an understanding of the cultural logic upon which perception within the new society is founded, further providing him or her with a choice of participation and opportunities for improving her or his life in exile. Such adjustment does not necessarily cause the refugee to reject her or his original culture. Rather, as recent studies of diasporic communities have shown (Askland 2007; Hall 1993; Noble & Watkins 2003; Wise 2006), a pattern of biculturalism emerges, reflecting continued attachment to the original culture and loyalties and affiliations within the host country. As Said (2000: 186) most poignantly argues,

[m]ost people are principally aware of one culture, one setting, one home; exiles are aware of at least two, and this plurality of vision gives rise to an awareness of simultaneous dimensions, an awareness that—to borrow a phrase from music—is *contrapuntal*.

Based upon this perception of exile as a state of biculturalism and exiles as being simultaneously active in at least two cultures, this study explores how members of a relatively well-resettled exile community continue to engage with discourses of the home country and how this critically shapes diasporic and translocal practice, as well as the negotiation of identity and sense of belonging. It represents an anthropological exploration of a particular group of people and the social dynamics that mark their engagement with a distant place, and, paying attention to their active agency in the negotiation between their diasporic reality and events at home, it explores how exiles' belonging to different social realities may affect notions of self, community and nation. By exploring the relationship between conceptualisations of self, historic agency, national narratives, and political unrest and national disintegration, I seek an understanding of the

distinct situation of East-Timorese exiles in Australia, their identity, and their relationship to contemporary East Timor.

II. POSITIONING THE THESIS

Some research has been conducted with the East-Timorese community in Australia. Theresa Morlanes (1991) and Patricia Thatcher (1992) present insightful analyses of the East-Timorese diaspora in Australia during the period of the Indonesian occupation. Their research provides a foundation for comparisons between present-day diasporic practice and that of the past. My previous work with young East-Timorese asylum seekers (Askland 2005, 2007) considers the situation of a particular group of East-Timorese refugees and the consequences of refugee experiences on individual identity and belonging. More specifically, it looks at the process of acculturation and how this relates to issues of socialisation and categorisation, age and agency, hybridity and ambiguity. In conjunction with these, there are a few studies that highlight changes that have occurred within the diaspora after the realisation of independence. Of particular relevance are Australian anthropologists Amanda Wise's (2002, 2004a, 2004b, 2006) work on the East-Timorese community in Sydney and Fiona Crockford's (2000, 2007) research with East-Timorese asylum seekers in Sydney. Wise conducted anthropological research in Sydney between 1998 and 2002 and her work focuses largely on the period immediately following the historic vote for independence in 1999. In her book *Exile and Return among the East Timorese* (Wise 2006) and two other publications (Wise 2004a, 2004b) she explores the various dynamics that have shaped the East-Timorese exiles' identities and the challenges they faced in the immediate aftermath of the independence. Crockford (2000, 2007) conducted fieldwork for her research in the period between 1997 and 2000 and, like Wise, engaged with the diaspora during a period of tremendous change in East Timor. She considers the processes of identity-making amongst a specific group; namely those who fled in the wake of the Santa Cruz Massacre of 1991 and who were in their teens or early twenties at the time of their flight. In her thesis, she explores the diversity of experiences and cultural expressions that exist amongst the East Timorese and deals with the sense of ambiguity and displacement that underpins the young exiles' social identity at a time of intense political transformation. Other relevant studies include James Goodman's (2000) analysis of East-Timorese diasporic politics, Sara Bice's (2003) thesis on Chinese-Timorese women in Australia, Christina Bohle's (2002) dissertation on the experiences of people who returned from the diaspora to East Timor immediately after

independence, and Emily Chew's (2004) thesis about performance groups in the East-Timorese diaspora.

These studies all provide valuable information about the processes that took place within the diaspora in the period between 1999 and 2002; however, only seven years later, the situation in East Timor and that of the East-Timorese diaspora in Australia have dramatically changed and further inquiry into the processes that have taken place is required. With the exception of Morlanes (1991) and Thatcher (1992), who undertook research during the Indonesian occupation of East Timor, all of the above studies are based on research conducted during the period when East Timor moved from being an Indonesian province to an independent nation. During that time, a sense of euphoria still resonated amongst the exiles and the reality of independence was yet to set in. The diasporic reality of the East Timorese today is very different and, using the existing literature as building blocks, this study aims at providing a more longitudinal perspective on the processes of change.

III. THESIS OVERVIEW

The primary objective of this thesis is to provide insight into the relationship between conceptualisations of self, community and nation, past practices and historical agency, national narratives, sociopolitical change, political unrest, and communal violence. To achieve these ends, I have adopted a qualitative, anthropological methodology to listen to the narratives of East Timorese living in exile, their descriptions of the past, the present and the future, and the categorisation of themselves within particular discourses of collective and personal identity.² Chapter Two outlines the methodological framework adopted for the thesis. In terms of methodology, this project has been strongly informed by my aspirations, as inspired by the traditions of my discipline, to conduct long-term fieldwork amongst a relatively coherent group of people in the 'classic' anthropological mould. As Chapter Two illustrates, such a methodological approach presents modern anthropologists, in particular those working within culturally familiar environments, with a range of disciplinary challenges related to the definition of the anthropological subject and appropriate methods for anthropological inquiry. Chapter Three provides an outline of the key historical events that underpin the development of the East-Timorese diaspora.

² Most of the quotes of the participants presented in the thesis are verbatim transcripts, but there are also occasional short quotes sourced from fieldnotes that were not tape recorded.

It discusses the theoretical notion of 'diaspora' and considers its use in relation to the East-Timorese exile community. Chapter Four considers the changes that have occurred to social structure and diasporic practice in the aftermath of independence. The chapter provides a brief discussion of the scholarship on refugees, home and return and explores how notions of home and return have featured in the exiles' imagination. It also questions how perceptions of home and homecoming may have changed and how previous practice may inform post-independence experiences of the community. This discussion is continued in the following chapter, Chapter Five, which explores the individuals' post-independence experiences of identity and community in more depth. Whereas Chapter Four considers how the notion of home and return has featured in the exiles' imagination, Chapter Five looks at the individual experience of home and return. Using Elizabeth Traube's (2007) concept of 'unpaid wages' and her notion of a moral discourse of sacrifice, the chapter explores how the exiles remain entangled in the cultural codes of reciprocity and morality, and how these codes inform their present negotiation of boundaries, identity and belonging. Finally, Chapter Six considers the political crisis, how it manifests within the diaspora and the exiles' lives, and how it has affected individual identity and sense of belonging. It explores the emotional rhetoric in the exiles' narratives about the crisis and expands the discussion in the previous chapters through a theoretical analysis of the relationship between emotions and identity.

The thesis provides a brief presentation of the history and the cultural composition of East Timor and the East-Timorese diaspora, but the purpose of this dissertation is not to forward a comprehensive presentation of East Timor's history and its socio-cultural structures. Nor is its purpose to present a thorough analysis of the political crisis, its causes and effects, or to distinguish the complexities of East Timorese culture in East Timor and in the diaspora. Rather, the study will analyse how East Timorese living in exile negotiate and transform their identity, sense of belonging and communal agency in relation to sociopolitical changes in East Timor, and how their collective history and individual life-histories, communal agency and individual practice influence their present engagement with East Timor and Australia. In this way, the study seeks to illustrate the complex connections between self, community and nation, real political events, conflict and violence, emotions, and agency.

IV. A NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

Before proceeding, it is important to clarify some of the terms that are employed throughout the thesis. Firstly, when referring to the participants of the study, the terms ‘East Timorese’ and ‘Timorese’ are used interchangeably. This may be perceived as incorrect, as ‘Timorese’ literally refers to people of the island of Timor, including people of Indonesian West Timor and those of former Portuguese East Timor. But, when discussing their background and home country with each other and with myself, the people within the diaspora do not distinguish between East Timorese and Timorese, East Timor and Timor. Subsequently, with the aim of retaining the participants’ voices, I use the terms in a compatible manner.

Secondly, I use the English name East Timor when referring to the participants’ home country. There are diverse opinions amongst academics and other commentators as to what is the most appropriate way of referring to the new nation (ETAN 2007; Kingsbury 2007a; Tilman 2007). The country’s official name is Timor-Leste (Portuguese), but it is also referred to as Timor Lorosa’e (Tetum). Despite calls from predominantly East-Timorese commentators to use Timor-Leste when referring to the country regardless of what language one is writing in, I use East Timor. This is the term used by the participants of this study: when speaking in English, they rarely use Timor-Leste and, as this thesis is written in English, I will follow their example.

Thirdly, although the East Timorese arrived in Australia as refugees, the term ‘refugee’ is problematic when referring to this group of people today. The 1951 *United Nations Convention* and 1967 *Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees* define a refugee as:

[a]ny person who ... owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nation, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country (UNHCR 1996: 16).

Today, the removal of any fear of persecution, the level of their integration into Australian community structures and their adoption of Australian citizenship place the participants of this study outside the category of refugee. I do, however, use the term

when referring to their flight and the particular period of the Indonesian occupation during which they qualified as a refugee community.

Fourthly, the term ‘exile community’ will occasionally be used when referring to the East Timorese in Australia so to acknowledge the experience of liminality expressed by members of this community. The nouns ‘expatriate’ and ‘exile’ are used interchangeably, with ‘exile’ being used in the broader sense of a person long absent from her or his homeland. This differs from the traditional use of the term, where ‘exile’ is associated with banishment and expulsion. People living in exile differ from ‘expatriates’ in that the latter suggests a level of voluntariness and choice. Whereas exiles have been born or forced into life in exile, expatriates voluntarily live in a foreign country and may realistically return home if they chose to do so. The (in)ability to return home, most often resulting from political circumstances in one’s country of origin, is an important feature of exile. It is on this latter point that the use of ‘exile’ in relation to the East Timorese may be challenged. This is summarised in Wise’s (2006: 15) contention that ‘due to real political events (gaining national independence), the East Timorese in Australia and elsewhere have had to make a shift from “exile” to “diaspora”’, where the ‘first is an identity forced upon a group, and the second has an element ... of voluntariness.’³ However, although real sociopolitical circumstances after independence provide a more favourable situation for return, my research suggests that many of the East Timorese still experience a sense of ‘living in exile.’ For a variety of reasons, including the (perceived) security situation, experiences of exclusion and change, and commitments to children and family in Australia, many feel unable to return home. This sense of exile is at the centre of this study and will be explored throughout the dissertation.

³ The notion of ‘diaspora’ will be discussed at length in Chapter Three.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY

Over the last few decades, a view of culture and society as flexible, changing and complex has dominated anthropological analysis. Contemporary analysis has challenged the traditional view of single, self-contained cultural units and acknowledged that the borders between self and other are not as easily defined as previously anticipated. The discipline has moved away from its conventional emphasis on ‘the Other’ as the appropriate anthropological subject and there has been an increase in what the American anthropologist Donald A. Messerschmidt (1982: 4–5) calls an ‘anthropology of issues,’ which turns the researcher to ethical and political issues that confront her or his own people. Nonetheless, remnants of the traditional paradigm remain manifest in a paradoxical juxtaposition of a continued valorisation of the classical fieldwork tradition and inter-disciplinary post-modern debate surrounding the prominence of the Other (e.g. Clifford 1988, 1997; Marcus 1995, 1998), the rise of ‘anthropology at home’ (e.g. Jackson 1987; Morton 1999) and an increased focus on the autoethnographic process (e.g. Okley & Callaway 1992; Voloder 2008). Despite a growing body of work by anthropologists working at home, a sense of academic pressure to conduct conventional ethnographic fieldwork in places culturally and geographically distant to the anthropologist remains. Though the main purpose of this chapter is to outline the methodological approach adopted for the project, I will pause to question what leads to this sense of pressure.

The question of how the classical distinction between home and field, self and Other can retain its disciplinary authority within a world where the notion of small-scale isolates is contested by the ‘removal’ of place, has guided the methodological considerations for this project. As the research project has progressed, my personal aspirations and doubts as an anthropologist-in-making have been marked by this discussion. It led me to question how I could best ensure ethnographic quality within a complex, varied and geographically-diverse field. How could I adhere to discipline expectations and conduct ethnographic fieldwork when there was no single, unified site where I could do my research? These questions are addressed in the first section of the chapter, which considers what represents the anthropological subject, the Other, and what fieldwork really means. The

latter two sections of the chapter outline the main characteristics of the East-Timorese community in Melbourne and the methodological approach adopted for the project.

I. THE OTHER AND ANTHROPOLOGICAL FIELDWORK

This PhD research started out as a study of young people in East Timor and their situation in the aftermath of independence. The project was to be founded upon 12 months fieldwork in East Timor, but, after two months in the field, I was evacuated due to the volatile situation in the country and the outbreak of communal violence in the area where I lived. One hot evening during my fieldwork in Dili, I met up with an anthropologist friend of mine for a cooling drink at the beach. My friend was four months into her two-year fieldwork period. Sipping my coconut, I expressed my admiration of her decision and ability to leave her home for such an extensive period of time. The emotional hardship of being away from home and my responsibilities there had led me to limit my own fieldwork to one year and I was in awe of my friend's courage. My friend explained how she found it very difficult, but that she felt she had no choice but to spend 24 months of her 3 year candidature in the field. The department she is associated with had made it quite clear that anything less than 18 months fieldwork would not be accepted, but the students were all encouraged to do two years in the field.⁴ I did not have such a requirement placed upon me, but I still felt a sense of pressure to be in the field for as long as possible. Fieldwork, I had been taught, represents as a *rite de passage* for the student anthropologist and it is by sharing the intense experience that fieldwork represents that one becomes part of the anthropological community. I felt self-conscious due to my hesitations and reluctance to embark on long-term anthropological fieldwork and I was torn between my academic aspirations and my life beyond anthropology.

Whilst trying to grasp where the sense of academic pressure stems from, I was brought back to my years as an undergraduate student at the University of Copenhagen, Denmark and the University of Bergen, Norway. Although the world in which contemporary anthropologists engage is radically different to that of our predecessors (Fox 1991), the traditional paradigm of the Other that underpins the studies of Bronislaw Malinowski (1884–1942), Alfred Reginald Radcliff-Brown (1881–1955), Frank Boas (1858–1942)

⁴ This raises other questions about the pressure placed upon anthropology students who have to negotiate the traditional requirement of long-term fieldwork with shorter candidatures that are now the funding norm, though this is beyond the scope of this particular discussion and will not be addressed further.

and others remains present. The paradigm of the Other forms a central part of undergraduate teaching, and to the anthropology student the notion of ‘otherness’ attains a central position in her or his infant understanding of the discipline. This is illustrated by the introductory paragraph to the textbook that was used at the University of Bergen when I first started my anthropological training. The book, entitled *Small Places, Large Issues* (Eriksen 1995: 1), opens as follows:

This book is an invitation to a journey which, in the author’s opinion, is one of the most rewarding a human being can embark on—and it is definitely one of the longest. It will bring the reader from the damp rain-forests of the Amazon to the cold semi-desert of the Arctic, from the skyscrapers of Manhattan to mud huts in the Sahel; from villages in the New Guinea highlands to cities in modern Africa.

This citation draws a picture of the anthropological subject as something exotic, something beyond the realm of home. There is no mention of the small, and perhaps culturally different, places in Norway that are also open for anthropological curiosity. This is not to say that Eriksen does not mention the possibility of anthropological inquiry in culturally familiar places or that such research is excluded from undergraduate teaching. But, rather, it illustrates how easy it is to define anthropology as a study of people other than us, the Other generally associated with non-European societies.⁵

The valorisation of the Other as a generalised object for anthropological curiosity (Abu-Lughod 1991) is closely connected to the contrasting concepts of proximity and distance, home and away, exit and entry. These binaries lie beneath the conventional appreciation of fieldwork in so-called ‘exotic’ or ‘foreign’ places. Explaining the notion of fieldwork to the novice anthropologist, Eriksen (1993: 31, my translation) writes:

A field study may last for between a few months to two years or longer, and it aims at developing an intimate understanding of the *foreign* [my emphasis] society. Although there are differences in field methods between different anthropological schools, it is generally agreed that the anthropologist ought to live, not only in the same place, but together with the local population of the society he or she is researching. Another goal is

⁵ The ‘legacy of “othering”’ (Morton 1999: 244) can be seen in relation to anthropology’s inheritance from its earliest institutional days of the nineteenth century and the colonial era. Anthropology is often seen as a consequence of colonialism; however, it is important to note that although the establishment of colonies in Africa and Asia made it easier to conduct field studies in faraway countries and although colonial rulers could benefit from anthropological descriptions of local people and practices, there is no direct correlation between colonialism and anthropology (Eriksen 1993: 18).

that he or she should stay there until his or her presence is considered more or less natural for the permanent residents, although he or she will always to some extent remain a stranger.⁶

The accent on ‘foreignness’ and on the Malinowskian field methodology, which emphasises long-term participant observation and requires the researcher to learn the languages and cultural categories of the local population, forward a sense of an intra-disciplinary hierarchy of field sites and research projects, where distance and time in the field determine the ‘anthropological purity’ of the research (Gupta & Ferguson 1997a: 13). Consequently, anthropology remains entangled in a geographical construction of cultural difference whereby ‘there follows [a] built-in necessity of travel: one can only encounter difference by going elsewhere, by going to “the field”’ (Gupta & Ferguson 1997a: 8). Does this mean that anthropological knowledge is dependent on long-term fieldwork away from home? Should anthropological insights and perspectives be confined to analyses of social dynamics, social experiences and processes of knowledge production in places or spaces where only long-term intensive field research, in its traditional sense, is possible?

CHANGING CIRCUMSTANCES, CHANGING SUBJECTS?

The continuing prominence of the Other as a defining feature of the discipline represents a contradiction within modern anthropology. In the last few decades, an analytical paradigm that emphasises culture and society as ‘contested, temporal and emergent’ (Clifford 1986: 19) has dominated the discipline. This new focus on societies as fluid, complex and blurred suggests that there may not be a straight-forward geographical distinction between the self and the Other, and, as John Morton (1999: 248) purports, ‘it is no longer convincing to suggest that Malinowski’s Trobriand Islanders lived in a closed, uniform and undifferentiated world’. The world in which anthropology acts has changed, as has the nature of anthropological inquiry. There has been a move away from a focus on structure and stability to an emphasis on process and change, as well as a broadening of the anthropological subject where ‘the whole studied or made manifest by anthropology is not a reifiable entity, but a space that embraces the process of knowledge

⁶ The published translation of Eriksen’s work (1995) does not sufficiently highlight the focus on foreignness that marks the Norwegian original. It also reduces fieldwork to ‘being in the field’ and excludes the emphasis on ‘living with’ the local population. For the purpose of this discussion, I have therefore provided my own translation and cited the original Norwegian version of the book (Eriksen 1993) rather than the 1995 published English translation.

production itself” (Hastrup & Hervik 1994: 2). As George E. Marcus (1995: 95) states, ethnography has moved

from its conventional single-site location, contextualized by macro-constructions of a larger social order, such as the capitalist world system, to multiple sites of observation and participation that cross-cut dichotomies such as the ‘local’ and the ‘global,’ the ‘lifeworld’ and the ‘system.’

Anthropology has attained a larger and more visible global character (Kapferer 2000: 181). Simultaneously, the traditional pillars of the Other, culture and fieldwork have been subjected to substantial critique. They have been attacked in such a way that, as Bruce Kapferer (2000: 175) claims, ‘much of their epistemological import, and thereby also the very contribution of anthropology to its larger aims—the exploration of the nature of human existence and experience—have been obscured.’ This has led to methodological anxieties and a concern about the limits of ethnography. It has, in the words of Kapferer (2000: 175), led to ‘a climate of confusion, uncertainty, even vulnerability ... [a] deep-seated crisis in the discipline which involves a sense of loss among anthropologists of the relatively distinct project of anthropology.’

Perhaps the continued emphasis of undergraduate teaching on the Other and long-term fieldwork in culturally foreign and geographically distant places is a consequence of this crisis. In order to ensure that the next generation of anthropologists retain an understanding of what anthropology is and what makes it unique in relation to the other social sciences, it is necessary to speak of its early institutional days and the legacy of this period. In doing so, we must be aware that it may be easy to get trapped in a definition of fieldwork as a particular technique for studying the Other, rather than as a methodological approach—an epistemological orientation—that can also be used in studies that are neither geographically distant nor long term.

In addressing these issues, Kapferer (2000) explains that:

[b]eing an anthropologist usually depends on fieldwork because it is this that provides the kind of detailed evidence through which anthropologists can examine and open up a theoretical understanding of human experience in its situated as well as diverse (comparative) substantial and qualitative complexity.

Importantly, he continues, ‘it is not necessary to do hands-on fieldwork to be an anthropologist. Many of the best and most influential anthropologists are not hands-on fieldworkers’ (Kapferer 2000: 188). But, even those who do not travel to the field carry with them a notion of being a fieldworker in their engagement with the ethnographic material. These anthropologists approach the ethnographic data in a way that resembles the essence of fieldwork, and they embrace the world of their materials through systematic interrogation. They inhabit the world of the evidence and, through their experiential grounding, seek a ‘vicarious understanding’ (Okely 1994: 47) of the world of others; they agitate the material and move it from its native voice to the anthropological vision, ‘from implicit knowing to explicit understanding’ (Hastrup & Hervik 1994: 5).

This assertion is based on the observation that fieldwork is not simply a process of data collection or free-floating interpretation (Kapferer 2007: 83). Rather, it is an in-depth exercise that challenges ingrained or take-for-granted assumptions about one’s own and other people’s lives. Fieldwork should not be reduced to an exercise of entry and exit, of being there or of authentication. Fieldwork is

an *attitude* [my emphasis] and a means to break the resistance of the anthropologist’s own assumptions, prejudices and theories, wherever the site of origin, concerning the nature and reason of lived realities (Kapferer 2000: 189).

This attitude reflects the embodied condition of reflexivity (Hervik 1994: 92) and mirrors the process by which the anthropologist’s experiential luggage (*habitus*) intersects with new experiences (Rudie 1994: 28) in her or his efforts to make sense, to transform experience into knowledge.

As mentioned previously, fieldwork is often seen as a *rite de passage* for the student anthropologist; in a ritualistic sense it transforms attitudes and orientations. It is ‘a process of almost ontological proportions whereby the fieldworker-becoming-anthropologist is placed in a routine situation where all that was taken for granted is radically problematised’ (Kapferer 2000: 189). The conventional focus on fieldwork in faraway places culturally distant to the researcher emerged from the inherent ontological challenge this imposes upon the researcher; however, such challenges are not necessarily restricted to these places. In seeking anthropological knowledge by actively engaging with culturally and socially familiar places the anthropologist may also be confronted with her or his bias, prejudices and theories. Moreover, as will be explored below, the

Other, if we are to continue using this term, is not restricted to people geographically and culturally distant to us; a sense of 'otherness' may be present in our own communities and accordingly allow ethnographic interrogation in its traditional fashion within familiar social fields.

THE QUESTION OF 'COMMUNITY'—ANTHROPOLOGY AT HOME AND WITHIN COMPLEX SETTINGS

Globalisation, as it manifests in technological development, growing population mobility, and increased individualisation and fragmentation characteristic of the contemporary world (Amit & Rapport 2000), challenges the traditional notion of fixity of place and calls for consideration of what 'community' really means. In his monograph of the Tamil diaspora in Norway, Øivind Fuglerud (1999: 82) argues that:

most studies of migration still rely on a concept of 'community', with its implied meaning of a common set of rules and values, identifying a discriminable population with a single bounded territory or place. By so doing writers assume that the social interaction in which people take part will be more intense and/ or more 'significant' within this space than across its borders.

The notion of community is, however, much more complex and, as Fuglerud (1999: 82) notes, 'the place of putative communities, often seem in analytical terms no more than *sites* in which circuits of people, values and information intersect with local ways of life.'

The complex nature of communities suggested by Fuglerud is reflected in human geographer Ruth Liepins' (2000) discussion of different approaches to the notion of community in contemporary rural studies. Liepins argues that community is a social construct that involves cultural, political and material dimensions, and that the term reflects the analytical perspectives of process and change, fragmentation and fluidity. It is endowed with a discursive meaning by people within particular historical contexts, who also give it a social function through the establishment of intentional groupings and the negotiation of contemporary society. Through meanings, practices, spaces and structures, people participate in a community and, in spite of actual differentiation and diversity in perception and status, a sense of shared identity and belonging evolve through the imagination and practice of a common set of understandings and relations (Liepins 2000:

28–32). As social constructs, communities are created and *enacted* by people. They indicate a sense of social collectivity and connection established through similar experiences in time and space. People may belong to various communities that take the form of local networks of interaction, or more abstract communities of interest, and shared values and common practices within differentiated communities may evolve over time. This does not mean that ‘community’ necessarily indicates consensual agreement. A sense of collectivity may be exhibited through conflict and disagreement; conflict suggests deep concern about a particular issue and this concern may in itself lead to feelings of communality and shared identity despite opposing views.

The complex nature of ‘community’ and people’s simultaneous engagement in various communities suggest that a sense of ‘otherness’ may indeed be present within particular societies. This refers to what anthropologist Lejla Voloder (2008: 28) describes as ‘the diversity of insider experience.’ In the article *Autoethnographic challenges: confronting self, field and home*, Voloder (2008) discusses the challenges facing anthropologists working within the realms of the familiar and the variability of insider experience. Reflecting on her own fieldwork experience with Bosnian migrants in Melbourne, a group to which she is personally connected, she challenges the insider/outsider dichotomy and draws the readers’ attention to variation and divergence within societies and cultures. Voloder identifies, and is identified by others, as Bosnian; she has a Bosnian name, she shares linguistic and cultural skills with the research participants, and many members of the community know her family and can accordingly position her within the community (Voloder 2008: 32). Her fieldsite was her home and, as she states, ‘I was essentially living my research’ (Voloder 2008: 30). Nonetheless, as her essay eloquently illustrates, ‘a spectrum of experiences and possible identifications works to allow different forms of insider/outsider positioning’ (Voloder 2008: 29). Despite shared cultural engagement and orientation, individual life experiences may create divergent interpretations of belonging (Voloder 2008: 35). She explains how variables including gender, education and class can ‘serve to align or distance researchers from participants’ (Voloder 2008: 29) and, as a consequence, challenge notions of an ‘authentic’ insider perspective. Her argument resonates with that of Angela Cheater (1987) who, over 20 years earlier, claimed that anthropologists who work within culturally familiar fields are still engaged in a self/other relationship. The only difference from the classical ethnographic fieldwork situation characterised by the tropes of exit and entry is that the researcher and the subject of study are likely to be committed to the same social systems (Morton 1999).

Through the fieldwork experience, anthropologists seek a sense of cultural proximity. The traditional anthropological dogma suggests that through the process of ethnographic immersion and gradual acquisition of embodied experiences of what is culturally different, insight may be reached. The researcher is the primary research tool, and anthropologists use themselves and their experiences in their striving for anthropological knowledge. This is a delicate process, and, as Voloder (2008: 28) explains,

[i]ncluding measured amounts of ‘self’ into the study requires traversing the not so clear boundaries between insightful reflection and self-absorbed indulgence, the intention being to allow the inclusion of self to inform the study without overwhelming it with the researcher’s presence.

One of the critiques of anthropology at home has been that the researcher is too close to the research subject and is therefore unable to appreciate and question taken-for-granted practices and facts. Whereas anthropologists traditionally were warned not to ‘go native,’ anthropology at home is based on this very premise. The variability of insider experience and the presence of other forms of experiential proximity beyond cultural proximity (Rosaldo 1996; Voloder 2008) challenge the conventional view and suggest that fieldwork and ethnographic immersion may also be possible in culturally familiar places. As Voloder (2008: 28) argues:

the insight gained from ‘insider’ research need not rely on assumptions of shared experiences and identifications between oneself and participants, but rather that it is in the exploration of the convergences and divergences in these experiences and identifications that the researcher’s experiential self can be used as a key heuristic resource.

By utilising one’s own experiences and perceptions, and by exploring how these are different or similar to that of the participants, the researcher can illuminate and gain a deeper understanding of the social world under inquiry—whether or not it is geographically and culturally distant.

The question, though, remains as to how the anthropological fieldwork can be used within complex communities where people are ‘part-time citizen[s] in a variety of part-time societies’ (Cheater 1987: 267). According to Marcus (1995: 98), the collapse of an easy distinction between individuals’ life worlds and the social system within which they are placed challenges ethnography ‘to discover new paths of connection and association by

which traditional ethnographic concerns with agency, symbols and everyday practices can continue to be expressed on a different configured spatial canvas.’ This, Marcus (1995: 105) maintains, can be addressed through a move towards a multi-sited ethnography by which the researcher defines her or his object of study through ‘chains, paths, threads, conjunctions or juxtapositions of locations in which the ethnographer establishes some form of literal, physical presence’. This allows the study of highly mobile and multi-situated objects. The researcher can use different modes or techniques in the construction of the object of study; that is, make it possible to trace her or his object by following people, material objects, metaphors, plots, stories or allegories, life histories, or conflicts (Marcus 1995: 105–110). Within the multi-sited terrains, the traditional notion of fieldwork may be maintained. In fact, as Marcus (1995: 100) observes, ‘the field broadly conceived and encompassed in the fieldwork experience of most standard ethnographic projects ... already crosses many potentially related sites of work’ and, as such, ‘fieldwork as traditionally perceived and practiced is already itself potentially multi-sited.’ Accordingly, rather than redefining the methodological premise of anthropology, the challenges posed upon the discipline by fragmentation and decentralisation may be addressed through a redefinition of ‘field.’

Whereas Marcus’ definition of multi-sited fieldwork releases anthropology from its focus on geographical locality within a world where locality is not necessarily bound to place, he remains committed to what Morton (1999) argues is a problematic bias towards long-term fieldwork at the expense of other study methods. Morton (1999: 243) maintains that the changes to the anthropological object and the growing number of anthropologists working at home require ‘that a more comprehensive employment of various study methods should displace long-term fieldwork as metonymic of the discipline.’ He does not dismiss the importance of traditional participant observation field research, but argues that this should be more readily supplemented by new and different methods, including survey techniques, structured interviews and archival research (Morton 1999: 251). This approach is not new. Anthropologists have used a range of different methods as part of their fieldwork strategies for decades and continued emphasis on ethnographic fieldwork should not exclude the use of alternative methodological techniques.

Ethnographic fieldwork remains an important part of our discipline and it is through interpretive analysis within the framework of ethnological evidence that anthropology gains its comprehension and authority (Hastrup & Hervik 1994; Kapferer 2000). The

nature of the field, the problem at hand and the theoretical questions asked are what should delineate the character of the fieldwork and the techniques employed, and ‘these should be emergent through the fieldwork and not established in a hard and fast way prior to engagement with the matter at hand’ (Kapferer 2000: 190). Fieldwork, as a particular anthropological orientation (versus a precise technical prescription), represents an opportunity for gaining knowledge and understanding through experience. Anthropology at home or in distant locations, anthropology in familiar or foreign terrains, and anthropology in unified cultural clusters or in complex communities with shifting membership all call for the epistemological grounding that fieldwork represents. This does not contradict the use of other research techniques, nor is it determined by the field being a singular, unified location or by the length of the anthropologist’s stay. Anthropological inquiry is about ‘the willing suspension of disbelief with the pursuit of radical doubt’ (Kapferer 2000: 190); it is about a focus on detail and an unfailing respect for context (Hastrup & Hervik 1994: 10); and about the recognition of ambiguities (Marcus & Fisher 1986). I think it is also about carefully and attentively listening to what people have to say, which is key to the aim of gaining an understanding of others. The ontological challenges that face the fieldworker, regardless of the techniques that she or he adopts, allow for a deepening of our self-understanding (James 1988: 156), and it is through its intersubjective nature (Hervik 1994) that anthropology attains its uniqueness in the search for knowledge.

These considerations have been central to the development of this particular research project; from deliberations over how to balance my anthropological aspirations, discipline requirements and responsibilities to those at home; through to the decision about appropriate research techniques for a study of a complex community spread across a relatively large geographical area; to the execution of the project itself and my immersion in the field of study. The next section addresses the background to these deliberations by providing an outline of the nature of the East-Timorese community in Melbourne. This is followed by a discussion of the methodological approach adopted for the project.

II. THE SOCIAL REALITY OF THE EAST TIMORESE IN MELBOURNE

According to the 2006 Australian Census (ABS 2006), there are 9320 individuals born in East Timor living in Australia. The majority of them reside in Victoria (5010) and New South Wales (2280). There is some uncertainty about the size of the East-Timorese community in Australia. Estimates suggest that the number of individuals born in East Timor and their descendants is between 15,500 and 20,000.⁷ The majority of the Timor born are of Timorese-Chinese background; in the 2006 Census, 5690 (52.3 per cent) individuals stated that they have Chinese ancestry, 3590 (33 per cent) reported Timorese ancestry, and 890 (8.1 per cent) reported Portuguese origin.⁸ On the question of ancestry, the 2006 Census allowed up to two responses per person. The number of total responses is therefore higher than the number of Timor born, and the number is somewhat misleading as to the actual ethnic composition of the community. When looking at the main languages spoken at home, the Timorese Chinese constitute over 63 per cent of the total community. Of the Timor born, 44.7 per cent say they speak Hakka as their main language, 12.9 per cent nominate Mandarin, 4.7 per cent declare Cantonese, and 12.6 per cent claim Portuguese as their first language.⁹ My own experiences of the East-Timorese community in Australia suggest that some of the people who consider themselves as being of Timorese ancestry speak Portuguese as the main language at home, and this may help to explain the divergence between the number of people speaking Portuguese as their first language and the number of people claiming to be of Portuguese ancestry. On the question of language spoken at home, 22.7 per cent state 'other,' and 9.3 per cent list English (ABS 2006). My engagement with the community suggests that the 'other' language, in most circumstances, is the East-Timorese language Tetum and that the English-speaking households are generally families where the children are born in

⁷ In the 2006 Census, 6270 Australian born individuals responded that their ancestry is Timorese. If we add this number to the number of Timor born, we can estimate that there are 15,590 individuals born in East Timor or of Timor-born parents living in Australia. The estimate of 20,000 is presented by Wise (2002: 86, 2006: 47), who arrived at this number by a 'complex process of cross matching refugee arrivals from Indonesia who list their first language as Tetum, or Hakka, and by multiplying this by the anticipated birth rate' (Wise 2002: 305).

⁸ In addition to these numbers, 3.4% stated that they had other ancestry than Chinese, Timorese, or Portuguese and 3.2% did not state any.

⁹ Some of the respondents of the 2006 Australian Census misspelt Hakka as Haka and the ABS recorded these as two separate languages. I have added the number of individuals who answered Hakka (42.4 per cent) and Haka (2.3 per cent) in the figure of Hakka-speaking individuals reported here. In addition to Hakka, Mandarin and Cantonese, 88 of the East Timor born (0.9 per cent) claim Chinese as their main language.

Australia and do not speak Portuguese or Tetum, or households where a Timorese person has married someone of a different ethno-linguistic background.

This brief overview of statistics shows one of the key features of the East-Timorese community in Australia; namely its ethno-linguistic complexity. In conjunction with the variation in language, culture and religion suggested by these statistics, the community is characterised by generational, political and socioeconomic differences.¹⁰ Despite these differences, a sense of collectivity exists and there are historical, cultural and political factors that unite the East-Timorese exiles. A common past and a historical connection to East Timor, maintained through language, food, cultural artefacts and practices, histories, myths and legends, as well as social interaction with other East Timorese, create feelings of shared identity and belonging. The exiles share an embodied and emotional connection to a particular place and a particular people, and associate, and are associated by others, with this heritage. Within this community, there are smaller ‘sub-communities,’ such as the ‘twin communities’ (Thatcher 1992) of the Timorese Chinese and the mestiço/indigenous Timorese,¹¹ the political groupings of União Democrática Timorense (UDT) and Frente Revolucionaria de Timor-Leste Independente (Fretilin) supporters, and the group of young ‘modern Timorese’ who are committed to the preservation and regeneration of East-Timorese culture and cultural identity.¹² These ‘sub-communities’ are more localised and will often exhibit a kinship-based structure where social interaction is initiated and maintained through the extended family or family marital alliances. They are present in the East-Timorese exiles’ social reality through friendships and family commitments, neighbourhoods, volunteer work and localised community organisations.

When I speak about the ‘East-Timorese community,’ I refer to the overall collectivity that is created by the former East-Timorese refugees’ connection to a common past and their shared historical experience of displacement. More than a physical, localised community, this is an abstract, imagined *communitas*, through which ‘people might feel with one another once the superficial clothing of age, status, occupation, gender and other

¹⁰ The next chapter will provide a detailed discussion of the historical layers that underpin the social structure of the diaspora and explore the complexities of the community at greater length.

¹¹ The term ‘mestiço’ refers to people of mixed Portuguese and Timorese ancestry.

¹² The term ‘modern Timorese’ was used by one of the participants, Matteus, when I asked him if he feels East Timorese. He explained that, having been born in Portugal, the youngest of 15 siblings, and growing up in Australia from an early age, he feels part of three different cultures: East Timorese, Portuguese and Australian. He values his East Timorese heritage, but his understanding of being East Timorese is not at odds with his adopted modern western values and practices.

differences' (Rapport & Overing 2000: 233) are removed. Importantly, my fieldwork was conducted with the various 'sub-communities' and its representatives and it was through direct engagement with localised individuals and groups that I sought to understand the post-independence dynamics of the East-Timorese community.

LOCATING THE COMMUNITY

The study was undertaken in Melbourne, the capital of the state of Victoria and Australia's second largest city, with a population of approximately 3.8 million (ABS 2009). The City of Melbourne extends along the Yarra River. It is the hub of a larger geographical region known as the Greater Melbourne metropolitan area, commonly referred to as Melbourne, which is situated on the northern and eastern side of Port Phillip Bay down to the Mornington Peninsula (see Map of Melbourne, page x). Melbourne is characterised by a rich culture and arts scene, a large, long established electric tram network and extensive public transport system, a dynamic energy and great cultural diversity. Melbourne was ranked amongst the top cities in the Economist Intelligence Unit's survey of the most liveable cities in the world in 2009 on the basis of its cultural attributes, infrastructure and access, social conditions (such as crime rate, health care and educational levels), its focus on the environment, and connection to the rest of the world (Economist Intelligence Unit 2009a, 2009b). A strong communal ethos manifests amongst the city's inhabitants and Melbourne is renowned for its open communal spaces, gardens and parks, its exceptional festivals, the huge crowds that attend the city's many cultural and sporting events, its strong unions, and large political rallies.

The East-Timorese exiles of Melbourne are scattered around the city. There are three main areas of residence; namely, Richmond, the Dandenong area, and the suburbs around Meadow Heights and Broadmeadows (see Map of Melbourne, page x). These areas exhibit different ethnic and political profiles, though it is important to note that there are exceptions to this general pattern. The pattern is partly the result of a tendency amongst the Timorese Chinese to congregate in particular areas, forming a concentrated, ghetto-like community, and the inclination of mestiço and indigenous Timorese to live within the proximity of other family members.

Thatcher (1992: 144), who conducted research with the East Timorese in Australia in the early 1990s, explains that for many of the Timorese Chinese it 'was as important to live

in the same neighbourhood as other Hakka speaking people from East Timor, as it was to live close to family.’ This led to a residential concentration of Timorese Chinese in the central suburb of Richmond where many were offered Victoria State Government public housing accommodation (‘housing commission’) at an early stage of their resettlement. The ghetto-like nature of this community means that many have been able to manage with limited English skills. More recently, financially stable Timorese-Chinese families have purchased properties and moved away from Richmond. Many live in the Dandenong area, especially Endeavour Hills, Narre Warren, Narre Hallam, but also in Hoppers Crossing (on the Geelong Road) and Thomastown. The residential pattern of the community is still marked by an inclination to live in close proximity to other family members or Hakka-speaking East Timorese. The older members of the community often rely on the support of their children or other community members in their engagement with the greater Australian society, and a combination of past trauma, restricted language skills and limited education has seen many of them remain dependent on social security. This said, it should be noted that there are some highly successful entrepreneurs and business-people within the Timorese-Chinese community. Moreover, whereas some of the older Timorese Chinese live on the margins of Australian society, their children are generally well integrated and a strong emphasis on the value of education has seen many progress far in relation to education and employment.

There is less residential concentration amongst the East Timorese of *mestiço* and indigenous backgrounds. The *mestiço* and indigenous Timorese are widely dispersed throughout the city, though there is some concentration around two main areas consisting of the suburbs surrounding Dandenong and the Meadow Heights-Broadmeadows area. They tend to cluster in neighbourhoods nearby senior family members or respected community leaders (Thatcher 1992: 144). The subsequent pattern of residence bestows the two areas with a relative political character as political allegiance often follows kinship structures. The people living in the north-western suburbs surrounding Meadow Heights and Broadmeadows are often UDT supporters who fled the civil war and who have close ties to East Timor’s Portuguese cultural heritage, whereas those living in the eastern suburbs around Dandenong are often Fretilin supporters who were refugees of the Indonesian occupation.¹³ Most of the *mestiço* and indigenous Timorese that I met during my engagement with the community had a good grasp of English. As with the Timorese

¹³ The political character of the community and the different groups of refugees will be explored further in the next chapter.

Chinese, there appears to be some generational divergence with regards to language fluency, education and employment. Whereas some members of the older generation continue to struggle with settlement issues, particularly language, the children of the Timor born have become well integrated into Australian culture and society.¹⁴

When trying to place the community within the socioeconomic character of the greater Australian society, it is evident that the East Timorese still struggle with a range of settlement issues. In 2006, approximately 31 per cent of the Timor born said they spoke English ‘not well’ or ‘not at all’. The unemployment rate was 7.4 per cent; 2.2 per cent higher than the total Australian population. The median income of East-Timor born individuals was \$422 per week, compared with \$488 for all Australia born individuals and \$431 for all overseas born individuals. Only 31 per cent of the Timor born aged 15 years or higher had a form of higher non-school qualification, this being 21.5 per cent less than the national rate (ABS 2006). The sometimes liminal situation of the East Timorese has seen the emergence of a range of community organisations that address the needs of the community. During the Indonesian occupation of the territory, many of these organisations became involved in the political campaign for independence, though their initial purpose was to provide support to the refugees in the settlement process. Below is an overview of the main organisations of the diaspora today. Chapter Four will discuss these organisations and the changes to organisational structure post-independence.

ORGANISATIONS

Social and cultural organisations represent an important channel for social interaction beyond the domain of the family and they can provide support to exiles struggling in their dealings with the Australian federal, state and local government bureaucracies.¹⁵ The various sub-communities have their individual organisations, some dating back to the early days of the diaspora’s existence, others having been established after the realisation of independence in East Timor. One of the oldest organisations is the Timor Ethnic

¹⁴ An extensive discussion of the socioeconomic profile of the East Timorese in Australia can be found in Thatcher (1992: 135–86).

¹⁵ Australia has a multi-tiered system of government. Power is divided between three different levels: federal (Commonwealth), state and local municipalities. The East Timorese exiles relate to the three levels of government in different ways. Whereas all issues that concern immigration and citizenship are dealt with at the federal level, those associated with the everyday welfare of the individuals including health, transport, education and housing are the responsibility of state governments. Municipal governments are responsible for local community services such as waste disposal, local roads, libraries, public spaces including city parks, and funding of local community initiatives and organisations.

Chinese Community of Victoria (TECCVIC), which can be traced back to the early period of East-Timorese settlement in Australia. TECCVIC reaches out primarily to Timorese Chinese, though the current President of the organisation, Mr Li Lay, told me that, in principle, it is not restricted to this particular group and that they also reach out to East-Timorese students who arrive in Australia on Australian Government sponsored AusAID scholarships and people in need of assistance. Another Timorese-Chinese organisation is the Timorese Middle & Aged Association (TMAA) that was established in 1983. In contrast to TECCVIC, TMAA has a handful of members that are non-Timorese Chinese. Both organisations help people in their engagement with the Australian bureaucracy and other entities, such as assisting in filling out forms and paying bills. They also translate documents when needed, assist people with funeral and mourning rituals, and will provide assistance if people face legal issues. Their main purpose is, however, to provide communal spaces in which their members can meet. The organisations have their separate offices in a major housing estate of Richmond, though only a minority of people engage with these offices on a regular basis. Instead, parties, celebrations or other social gatherings represent the main social encounters through which people meet outside their private domains. TECCVIC is hoping to expand its role as a community organisation through the creation of a multipurpose centre that can attract both older and younger members of the community. The organisation has bought land in Sunshine in Western Melbourne, but is considering selling this land to build in an area more readily accessible for their members (for example in Collingwood, an area closer to Richmond). The community centre will have a library and a place for older people to meet or read the (Chinese) paper. They hope to be able to attract younger members by creating an indoor sports' facility or a Sunday school.

The main organisations of the *mestiço* and indigenous Timorese are the Timorese Association of Victoria (TAV), the Timorese Australian Community of Victoria (TACOV), and Melbourne East Timor Activity Centre (METAC). In conjunction with these organisations, the political party Fretilin has a branch in the city, and there are a couple of soccer clubs, the East Timor Youth Association, a choir (Lalonak), and a few support groups. Some indigenous and *mestiço* Timorese also attend or are involved in the running of the programs and events of so-called 'friendship organisations,' such as Friends of Ermera (City of Casey) and Friends of Aileu (Cities of Moreland and Hume). These are local government initiatives generally run by Australians with an interest in East Timor and, therefore, do not qualify as community organisations as such.

TAV is the longest-running organisation. It was established in 1975 on the initiative of a group of East-Timorese refugees. It has an office in the city, though only a handful of people use this office. The organisation arranges the occasional party or festival, but there is no regularity that encourages ongoing commitment. In fact, with the exception of the choir and the soccer clubs, which meet on a regular basis for rehearsals or concerts, practice or games, only METAC has established a space where members of the community can meet on a regular basis. METAC was established by a group of young East-Timorese activists in 2003. It is a non-political resource- and activity-centre which focuses on art and culture as a means of getting people together. The organisation runs a range of activities, such as traditional weaving and textile workshops, traditional East-Timorese singing and dancing, and Tetum classes. These activities are open to East Timorese and the general public. It also hosts a 'Welcome Dinner' on the first Friday of every month where anybody, independent of nationality, ethnicity and politics, can meet and share an East-Timorese meal. The Welcome Dinners are held in what is known as 'The Blue Factory' in Richmond, an old warehouse to which METAC gets access through their cooperative relationship with the North Richmond Community Health Centre (NRCHC). With the exception of the Friday dinners, all the organisations are characterised by somewhat ad hoc activities.

III. APPROACH TO THE FIELD

The East-Timorese exiles' everyday lives are marked by participation in, and association with, a range of different communities of interest. Through work, studies, neighbourhoods, hobbies and other interests, they have become integrated in the Australian society and many participate in a range of social and cultural spaces which may have nothing to do with their East-Timorese background. Due to the complex and intricate nature of the community, I was unable to define a simple, unified place that could be called the 'field site.' Instead, the field in which the fieldwork was conducted was made up by a group of people expressing their association with the East-Timorese community in different ways. There was no place in which I could immerse myself in East-Timorese diasporic living through day-to-day engagement with a particular group of

people, and I had to rethink my approach to the field accordingly. In what follows I will outline the methodological approach that I developed in the field.¹⁶

ENTERING THE FIELD

The research project is founded upon ethnographic field research, and the notion of fieldwork as an in-depth exercise, an attitude, through which the anthropologists own assumptions, prejudices and theories are challenged (Kapferer 2000), represents the epistemological basis from which I approached the field. My association with the East-Timorese community in Australia can be traced back to 2003 when I conducted Masters' research with East-Timorese asylum seekers in Melbourne and Sydney, though the main fieldwork for the study was carried out in the period between December 2006 and July 2007. In addition to the eight months of fieldwork in Melbourne, I visited the field in June 2006 to do a scoping study for the project and I returned for three weeks in October 2007 to do follow-up interviews. The project also relies on two months' fieldwork in East Timor. In the period between March and May of 2006, I conducted fieldwork for my original PhD research with young East Timorese in Dili. I lived with a local family and spent my days among local youths in the capital. Although the project abruptly ceased following the outbreak of communal violence in the area where I lived, the months in East Timor informed this subsequent research project in various ways, as will be addressed later in this chapter.

With the aim of ensuring day-to-day interaction with and observation of a local community in which East-Timorese expatriates belong, I initially intended to live with one or two Melbourne-based East-Timorese families during the course of the fieldwork. This would compensate for the lack of a single, localised field-site in which I could immerse myself, and it would inform my understanding of the more intimate environment of which East-Timorese exiles are part. However, after spending a couple of weeks with a friend in Melbourne who has been intimately involved with the East-Timorese community over the past 25 years, I came to realise that such an approach could jeopardise the project due to the political and ethnic divisions within the community. Living with a family would potentially threaten my neutrality, and I was advised that if I became associated with a particular ethnic or political sub-group, it could be difficult to

¹⁶ This project was approved by the University of Newcastle's Human Research Ethics Committee, Approval No. H-359-0207.

get access to the other groups; if I wanted to get an understanding of the greater community, keeping my neutrality was paramount. When I was offered the chance to live with my friend, I chose this as an alternative approach. This person is well respected across the community and, due to her long association with the community, she has an intimate understanding of communal structures and dynamics, as well as East-Timorese politics, culture and society more generally. She also provided an excellent starting point for gaining access to the community and introduced me to representatives of all the sub-communities.

I entered the field through three main approaches: (a) participant observation; (b) discussions with non-Timorese individuals in key roles associated with the community, such as community workers, youth workers and members of various solidarity organisations; and, (c) semi-structured interviews. When I embarked on my fieldwork, I decided that, in conjunction with speaking to, observing and interacting with East-Timorese exiles, there was a need for me to broaden my understanding of the geographical and social surroundings in which they live. I therefore spent a lot of time in the suburbs where clusters of East Timorese reside. In association with a visit to someone's home, a community meeting or a party, I would often spend time in the local area. I would visit the local library and the shops, walk around the area to get a feeling of community facilities and structures, eat at a local café, visit the local church, and observe people playing in the local park. This not only provided an association with the local places in which East-Timorese exiles live, it also gave me the opportunity to see if and how the East-Timorese exiles are present in their local communities. It allowed me to speak informally with local people of ethnic backgrounds different to the East Timorese, to get a feel for how East Timor is perceived by others in the participants' local communities, and to assess people's awareness of the East Timorese living in the area.

The majority of the interviews were conducted in the participants' homes, thus taking me to the location of their more intimate spaces. As the fieldwork progressed, friendships developed, and I was invited to people's homes for meals, celebrations and informal socialisation. Meeting people in their homes gave me access to a personal space, which reinforced and gave life to the stories that people told me. I obtained insights into people's everyday lives and attained a deeper understanding of how people in the diaspora live, their social lives, family relations and friendships. Our conversations progressed by means of my active engagement in the context, my observation of the

physical surroundings and the participants' behaviour and responses, and my relating these observations to the actual interaction. Artefacts, pictures, music and books often prompted the participants' memory and allowed our interaction to progress down unexpected paths where I was entrusted with personal stories filled with emotion.

A similar technique of participant observation was employed through participation in various local community events. I contacted the different East-Timorese organisations in Melbourne as well as organisations that work with refugee communities in the city and asked permission to be present at community meetings, fundraising events and parties. I met with members of TAV on a fortnightly basis and assisted with interpretation and preparation for various community events. Once a month, I participated in the Welcome Dinners arranged by METAC, took part in different fundraising activities arranged by both East-Timorese and Australian organisations, and attended meetings and workshops. I went to soccer games, film screenings and other leisure activities organised by the East-Timorese organisations and their Australian counterparts. I also attended various cultural events, such as concerts, exhibitions, cultural festivals, mourning rituals, and a wedding celebration. I attended mass at different occasions and in various churches and parishes to which the East-Timorese exiles belong. Due to language difficulties, my engagement with the Timorese-Chinese organisations was somewhat restricted, though I expanded my association with the Timorese-Chinese community by participating in weekly English classes at the Belgium Avenue Neighbourhood House (BANH) where approximately 16 Timorese-Chinese students were enrolled. My role as a researcher varied: at some events and with some organisations I actively participated and assisted with preparation, execution and finalisation of events and tasks; in others, my primary role was as an observer and my participation was limited to conversation and interaction with those present. Engaging with the organisations and participating at the various events facilitated a direct exposure to the social processes within the East-Timorese diaspora. It enhanced my understanding of the dynamics of the diaspora and opened windows through which I could observe the exiles' interaction with, and roles within, the community.

I faced few hurdles getting access to sites for participation and observation. People in the diaspora were generally interested in my research and invited me into their lives without any reservation. Their openness seemed to be enhanced by a space of resonance between the participants and myself created by a sense of shared interest and position. This space reflects an unexpected effect of my previous visit to East Timor, my then newly acquired

language skills, and my interest in East Timor suggested by my intention to live in Dili for an extended period of time. As mentioned previously, my experiences in East Timor informed the project in various ways. It gave me a personal, in-depth understanding of East-Timorese society and a first-hand experience of the unfolding conflict. These experiences, my own personal account of and humbleness towards the participants' cultural background and place of origin, and my sincere concern for the country opened a space of mutuality. For some of the exiles, I became an informant, someone who could tell them about what had happened in March and April 2006 when I resided in Dili and who, due to my continuous monitoring of the situation, could provide information about more recent developments. My association with East Timor led some of the participants to see me as an 'insider,' allowing me to use myself and my own experiences in a much more direct fashion than expected. This was augmented by our shared position as 'foreigners' in Australia.¹⁷ Though the reasons why I am in Australia are very different to that of the participants and despite the radical divergence between our journeys to a life in Australia, the participants and I all engage in a space of in-betweenness, of being and belonging to multiple (though different) socio-cultural spheres. As such, we share an existential proximity that helped build a sense of trust between us. I am not a refugee and I have not encountered the hardship of exile that the participants of this research continue to endure, but we share an experience of cultural positioning where we have become emerged in a society to which we will always negotiate our belonging. Our shared experience of the immigration bureaucracy and our ability to meet in the experience of being newcomers to the Australian society enabled a sense of commonality that positively influenced my fieldwork interactions.

Engaging with the various organisations, participating in such a broad range of organised activities and cultural events, and, not least, visiting people in their privacy of their homes compelled me to question previous assumptions and prejudices. It developed and reoriented my understanding of the community and fortified the material collected through the interviews. Throughout the fieldwork, I kept a comprehensive field diary in which I aspired to capture my observations and thoughts, as well as the social processes and their contexts 'in their integrity, noting their features and properties' (Hammersley & Atkinson 1995: 175). Acknowledging Clifford Geertz's (1973, 1991) critique of anthropological material as being the researcher's personal interpretation of other people's constructions of their practice (Geertz 1973: 18), I sought to create rich and

¹⁷ I am from Norway, but reside in Newcastle, New South Wales, where I have been studying since 2003.

detailed accounts of events and people, so-called 'thick descriptions,' which present a comprehensive description of the phenomena observed and place them within their context. Throughout this dissertation, I have used the observations and reflections that are at the heart of my field notes and I attempt to include a rich base of relevant information and detail so as to create a holistic picture from which the reader can develop her or his own understanding.

INTERVIEWS

This project sought ethnographic material that could illuminate processes of meaning making and apprehension. It aimed at gathering information about personal experiences, often loaded with emotions and affect. Ultimately, it searched for information that could lead to an emic understanding of the participants' post-independence experience; that is, an understanding of the exiles and their situation on *their* terms (Maykut & Morehouse 1994). Semi-structured interviewing represents an ideal approach for exploring people's experiences and narration of social organisation, identity and sociopolitical change. It provides access to individuals' thoughts and reflections as they, in dialogue with the researcher, formulate their personal experiences and perceptions of the world. Moreover, it seeks to collect descriptive accounts of individuals' life worlds and descriptions of situations and events. Characteristic of the semi-structured interview is its openness to new and unexpected phenomena and, though it is focused upon particular themes through the employment of an open-ended interview schedule, its flexible approach allows a level of spontaneity that can provide further insight into thought patterns and the interviewees' life worlds (Kvale 2002).

Through the interviews, I aspired to collect information that would help me answer the research questions of how political unrest in the home country affects exiles' everyday life, diasporic practice, and experiences of self, community and nation; how East-Timorese exiles explain and relate to political instability and national disintegration; and how perceptions of political and ethnic divisions 'at home' are reflected in the negotiation of social structure and individual identity. In total, 56 people were formally interviewed, of which 16 participated in group-interviews consisting of two to three people. The research targeted first- and second-generation refugees who arrived in Australia between 1975 and 1999. The interviewees were selected with the aim of reflecting the diverse composition of the diaspora with regards to ethnicity, political affiliation, age, gender,

year of flight, and year of arrival in Australia. The interviews were informed and guided by an interview schedule based on three topics: life stories, diaspora and transnationalism, and the current crisis (see Appendix 1). Due to ethical considerations, the interviewees were not asked directly about specific traumatic experiences, although these matters did arise in the discussions. The interviews lasted between 45 minutes and three hours. They took place at the participants' homes or other locations convenient to the interviewees. The participants were assured of their right to confidentiality and anonymity. Accordingly, all identifying information has been omitted and pseudonyms are used throughout the dissertation.

There are two groups of people that I did not reach throughout my interaction with the community: the group of individuals who, for various reasons, have decided to disassociate themselves with the community and a small group of primarily young adults who struggle with settlement issues, trauma, trust, language and daily survival. Although I believe that the views and perspectives of representatives of both these groups would provide a valuable contribution to the research, the fact that they do not or only rarely associate with the groups and organisations that assisted me with the recruitment process, as well as restrictions of ethics, meant that I was unable to contact them. Moreover, as I was told by youth- and social workers who work with the East-Timorese community, the very fact that they have disassociated themselves from the community suggests that they would be reluctant to take part in the research. In the case of the latter group, this is also likely to have been influenced by their difficult and liminal situation.

DATA ANALYSIS

The analysis of the ethnographic material collected has been ongoing throughout the research process, and continuous engagement with the material has provided the research direction. As maintained by Robert Emerson, Rachel Fretz and Linda Shaw (1995: 3), '[n]o field researcher can be completely neutral, detached observer, outside and independent of the observed phenomena' and 'in conjunction with those in the setting, [the researcher will] develop certain perspectives by engaging in some activities and relationships rather than others.' Accordingly, a sense of analysis is already present at the stage of data collection. This is particularly evident when considering the task of writing fieldnotes. Fieldnotes are *descriptions* of experiences and observations which 'involve issues of perception and interpretation' (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw 1995: 5). Inevitably,

reducing lived experiences to text involves a process of selection and reduction. Throughout the fieldwork, I addressed this dilemma by ensuring ‘thick descriptions’, as well as by writing down reflections on why I focused on the particular phenomenon. At times, this took on a degree of autoethnography whereby I used my own experiences, emotive responses and my presumed expectations to explore convergences and divergences between the participants and myself as a means of understanding the social processes at stake (see also: Voloder 2008).

The more formal process of analysis was initiated by the transcription of the interviews. Transcribing the interviews allowed me to further familiarise myself with the interview material, the voices of the participants and the subtlety within their narratives. I thereafter developed a codebook by identifying potential themes and analytical categories in the interview material and the fieldnotes. From this starting point, I coded, compared and contrasted the transcripts and the fieldnotes. Common and contrasting themes were analysed, related to perceptions of space and place, transnationalism, ethnic and cultural identity, violence, and sociopolitical change. The findings were correlated to existing statistical data and scholarly analysis of the situation of the East Timorese in East Timor and in exile, as well as explained with reference to theoretical insight from the literature regarding theories of transnationalism and diaspora, social organisation, ethnicity, violence and identity.

As a single researcher study, the relatively small amount of written material at hand and my deep familiarity with it meant that I did not have to use a standardised software program for analysis. Instead, I developed an efficient tool for analysis using Microsoft Office OneNote and the various editing mechanisms of Microsoft Office Word and Microsoft Office Excel. I kept a comprehensive log of the process and kept notes of potential hypotheses and new directions, thus continuously processing this in relation to theory, empirical material and relevant literature.

IV. CONCLUSION

Kirsten Hastrup and Karen Fog Olwig (1997: 8) contend that rather than defining a ‘field’ primarily in terms of a locality, it can be seen as ‘the field of relations which are of significance to the people involved in the study.’ Fieldwork is inherently multi-sited, examining the nature of non-local relations and how these shape and are shaped by

particular localities (Hastrup & Olwig 1997: 8). Through a range of methodological techniques, which all form part of an ethnographic field study, I have sought an understanding of the various relations that create a sense of locality to the participants of this research project. Rather than being defined by geographical borders, the field site was marked out by people's associations to a particular physical, though distant, place and their relations within and across a more abstract, imagined community. The study is founded upon a deep appreciation of the discipline's methodological heritage and the search for holistic perspectives, and, as such, it forms part of a long tradition of anthropological research. At the same time, it stands in contrast to traditional anthropological studies in its methodological balance between insider- and outsider perspectives and in the fact that the researcher at the same time belongs to the sociopolitical context of the participants and to different sociocultural and ethno-linguistic realities. Subsequently, it forms part of a more recent anthropological tradition that acknowledges the continued relevance and value of anthropological research and insight in societies to which the researcher may, in differing and often complex ways, relate. It is not defined as anthropological due to the distance travelled for fieldwork or the length of time in the field; it becomes anthropological through its emphasis on the epistemological significance of ethnographic evidence, through its search for detailed material that reflects the opinions, beliefs, thoughts and experiences of those studied on *their* terms, through the researcher's openness to ambiguities and diverse solutions, and through the respect for context in the consideration of generalisations (Hastrup & Hervik 1994: 10).

CHAPTER THREE

THE PEOPLE OF THE CROCODILE: HISTORICAL EVENTS AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF AN EAST-TIMORESE DIASPORA¹⁸

The East-Timorese community in exile is commonly described as a diaspora. This classification of the East-Timorese exile community rests largely on a classic perception of a diaspora as a population removed, often by force, from its original homeland and which retains its collective identity through ongoing support for the homeland and a desire for return. As is indicated by this perception of diaspora, diasporic communities should be seen in the historical context in which they emerge. Diasporic communities are, as are communities more generally, framed by particular historical narratives (Borneman 1992: 12) entrenched within the cultural discourses structuring socialisation, practice and perception. The sociocultural, socioeconomic and sociopolitical circumstances surrounding its formation constitute key elements in the process of trying to understand a particular diaspora's development, social structure and practices. Accordingly, this chapter considers the key historical events that lie beneath the social structures of the East-Timorese community in Australia and it positions the East-Timorese exile community within the historical context in which it emerged. I do not attempt to present a comprehensive analysis of the history of East Timor and the East-Timorese diaspora. Rather, this is a highly selective presentation of particular historical events evident in the life-stories of the participants of the study.

The chapter begins with an outline of the dominant historical events of the East-Timorese exile community. This is followed by the story of one of the study participants, Nunu.

¹⁸ This refers to the legend of the crocodile, which tells the story of a young boy who came across a sick crocodile, hurt by the sun. The legend recounts how the crocodile was saved by the boy who, feeling sorry for the sick crocodile, took him to the edge of a swamp where he recovered. To repay the boy for his kind gesture, the crocodile promised to fulfil his dream of travelling across the sea, and the two journeyed together until the crocodile got sick and died. According to Timorese tradition, the crocodile's last payment was to transform itself into a land where the boy and his descendants could live. The crocodile became the island of Timor, and it is believed that the people of Timor are the offspring of that boy (Askland 2005: 40–1; Sylvan 2009; Wise 2002: 304).

Nunu's narrative provides an illustration of how the exiles' personal life-stories reflect the historical layers of the East-Timorese nation in intricate ways. The purpose of this section is to draw a picture of how the present, as illustrated in communal structures and individual life-stories, reflects certain historical narratives in complex ways. I will therefore not present a comprehensive analysis of how the historical events form part of Nunu's identity and sense of self. The limited analysis does not imply that individuals are passive victims in the course of history. On the contrary, as the latter chapters will explore in great detail, I insist on the dynamic agency of individuals in their engagement with the social, cultural and political milieu with which they engage. At this stage, however, the analysis is restricted to a relatively straight-forward illustration of how individual life-stories are framed by historical narratives.

The final sections of the chapter explore the concept of 'diaspora.' The term has been adopted by a broad range of writers and academics and it is used extensively in the literature on the East Timorese living abroad. A discussion of the terminological approach to the concept is forwarded before I position the East-Timorese case, the existing literature and this particular study in relation to the theoretical paradigm. As the discussion will show, there are divergent understandings of what a diaspora entails and, considering the historical events outlined in the former section of the chapter, I ask whether or not this term is an appropriate concept in relation to the East-Timorese exile community.

I. HISTORIES

The island of Timor is found in the south-eastern part of the Indonesian archipelago in the Lesser Sunda group. It is divided between Indonesian Timor Barat (West Timor) and Timor-Leste (East Timor). In conjunction with the eastern half of the island, East Timor encompasses the Oecussi enclave located on the north coast of West Timor and the small islands of Jaco and Atauro (see Map of East Timor, page ix). The island was of colonial interest to both the Portuguese and the Dutch as early as the sixteenth century. Portuguese contact with East Timor can be traced back to 1514. It was, however, not until 1642 that the Portuguese 'officially' invaded the territory (Dunn 2003; Jannisa 1997; Jolliffe 1978;

Taylor 1995, 1999).¹⁹ Portugal's interest in Timor was under strong challenge from the Dutch who in 1613 sent a force to the island to gain control of its sandalwood trade (Jolliffe 1978: 22–3). The colonial powers' competing interests merged in 1749 in what became known as the Battle of Peniful. This crusade was won by the Dutch, ensuring their presence in the west and the territorial division of East and West Timor (Arenas 1998; Gunn 1999; Jolliffe 1978; Taylor 1995).²⁰

The Portuguese colonial rule in East Timor has been described as 'a rather benign form of rule' (Wise 2006: 20) and it has been argued that East Timor remained 'a backwater Portuguese colony' (Arenas 1998: 133) throughout the 20th century. Indeed, in comparison to Portugal's other colonies and the Dutch rule in West Timor, the East Timorese faced comparatively favourable conditions and they experienced relatively limited intervention in local life. This can be explained by East Timor's apparent isolation from other Portuguese colonies and the neglect resulting from its distance to areas central to European economic interests. However, it does not imply that the Portuguese were compassionate rulers; East Timor was subject to Portuguese slave trade, and the use of forced labour was widespread until the 1974 Carnation Revolution in Portugal (Gunn 1999: 46–7; Jolliffe 1978; Taylor 1995, 1999; Wise 2006: 20). Consequently, though there was no extensive independence movement until 1974, there was always resistance from the East Timorese, the most famous uprisings being the 30-year-war in the late 1800s, the Boaventura rebellion of 1912, and the 1959 Viqueque revolt (Gunter 2007; Jolliffe 1978: 35, 48–9).

In 1974, political upheaval in Portugal led to the end of the authoritarian 'Estado Novo' regime of Salazar (1932–68) and Caetano (1968–74), resulting in the abrupt implementation of a policy of decolonisation that allowed the creation of political parties

¹⁹The first Portuguese contact with East Timor is documented in a letter from 1514, which refers to the rich sandalwood reserves found on the island. An early settlement was established on the island of Solor, northwest of Timor from where the Portuguese became involved in the Timorese sandalwood trade (Dunn 2003; Jannisa 1997; Jolliffe 1978; Taylor 1995, 1999). The early Portuguese settlement on Solor saw the growth of a mestiço population which came to be known as *Topasses*, 'black Portuguese' (from the Dravidian word *tupassi*, meaning interpreter). The Topasses were the offspring of Portuguese soldiers, sailors, and traders who had intermarried with local women. They formed an influential element of the colony and controlled trading networks between Solor, Larantuka and Timor. The Topasses would be the first to bring Portuguese culture and influence to Timor (Askland 2005; Dunn 2003; Jannisa 1997; Taylor 1995; Thatcher 1992).

²⁰A diplomatic agreement was reached between Portugal and the Netherlands in 1859. This treaty formally incorporated the western part of Timor into the Dutch East Indies, while the eastern half of the island, as well as the original base of the Portuguese settlement, Oecusse, became recognised as an overseas province of Portugal. After continuous disputation of the border, the island was finally divided according to the current borders in 1914 (Askland 2005; Arenas 1998; Gunn 1999; Jolliffe 1978; Taylor 1995).

in East Timor (Gorjao 2001). Within three weeks of the 1974 Carnation Revolution in Lisbon, three major political movements had evolved: UDT, Associação Social Democrate Timorese (ASDT, later to become Fretilin), and Associação Popular Democrática Timorese (Apodeti). Both UDT and Fretilin called for East Timor's independence from Portugal. However, whereas UDT pledged a gradual transition towards independence within the Portuguese cultural framework, Fretilin campaigned for immediate independence. Apodeti, on the other hand, campaigned for East Timor's integration into Indonesia. Its programs were influenced and financially and politically supported by the Indonesian government, who 'feared that an independent East Timor would stimulate independence movements and separatist inclinations within its neighbouring provinces' (Askland 2005: 46). Apodeti's program had limited appeal to most East Timorese, who believed that East Timor's incorporation into the Indonesian state represented recolonisation rather than decolonisation (Askland 2005: 45–6; Dunn 1995: 61, 2003: 45–65; Jannisa 192–6).

In late 1974, the Timorese were presented with three options as part of Portugal's program for decolonisation: full independence, ongoing association with Portugal under a more democratic agreement, or integration with Indonesia (Askland 2005: 46; Dunn 1995: 62). Remembering the shortcomings of the Salazar regime, and perceiving themselves as politically, linguistically, culturally and religiously different from their Indonesian neighbours, the East Timorese expressed widespread support for independence. During the same period, the Indonesian military launched *Operasi Komodo*, a covert intelligence operation aimed at 'the integration of East Timor by whatever means necessary' (Dunn 1995: 62). As part of this operation, a propaganda campaign directed at the leaders of Fretilin was initiated accusing them of being communist and anti-Indonesian. The operation initially brought UDT and Fretilin closer and, in January 1975, the two parties formed a coalition for independence. However, following the presentation of fabricated evidence of connections between Fretilin and leading Communist parties in Asia, the coalition collapsed. To counter Fretilin's growing popularity, UDT staged a coup on the 11th of August 1975. The ensuing armed conflict between the two major parties lasted three weeks and left the victors, Fretilin, in *de facto* control of the territory (Askland 2005: 46–7; Dunn 2003; Jolliffe 1978).

East Timor experienced its first major attack by Indonesian military forces on the 16th of October 1975.²¹ With Indonesian troops advancing, Fretilin declared East Timor independent on the 28th of November 1975. However, independence was to be short lived. On the 7th December 1975, Indonesia staged an armed attack on Dili, invading the capital with military, naval and airborne forces (Arenas 1998; Askland 2005: 47; Dunn 1995, 2003; Gunn 1999; Martinkus 2001). Accounts of systematic destruction of whole communities, large-scale public executions and random killings in the streets of Dili pervade the descriptions of the first days of the occupation. It is believed that as many as 2000 of Dili's inhabitants died in these initial days (Askland 2005: 48; Dunn 1995: 65, 2003: 246).

The full-scale attacks lasted four years, during which Indonesian forces attained control of the main urban centres and administrative areas along the coast. Faced with continued violence, summary killings, rape and torture, tens of thousands East Timorese fled to the mountains where Fretilin's military wing, *Forças Armadas de Libertação Nacional de Timor-Leste* (Falintil), maintained control (Askland 2005: 48; Dunn 1995: 65, 2003: 252). The *Comissão de Acolhimento, Verdade e Reconciliação de Timor-Leste* (CAVR) states that a minimum of 102,800 conflict-related deaths occurred in the period between 1974 and 1999, the majority occurring during the initial post-invasion period between 1975 and 1980 (CAVR 2005: 44).²² At a military level, the carnage was carried out through mass murder, bombings with napalm and starvation. Forced movement of the population into so-called 'resettlement camps' saw the Indonesian assaults played out on a social and cultural level as well. The process of 'Indonesianisation' was advanced through the resettlement of large parts of the population in towns or in forced resettlement

²¹ This refers to the attack on Balibo, a village close to the Indonesian border, where five Australian journalists and cameramen were killed. Martinkus (2001: xiii) argues that, '[i]t was from this point the Indonesians knew there would be no resistance from Australia for their planned incorporation of East Timor into Indonesia' as the Australian Government denied any knowledge of what had happened to the Australian crew despite them monitoring Indonesian military transmissions at the time (Askland 2005: 47; Greenless & Garran 2002: 12; Martinkus 2001:xii).

²² CAVR's estimation of conflict-related deaths is a conservative number. Much of the literature on East Timor contends that between 180,000 and 250,000 Timorese lost their lives as a consequence of the Indonesian occupation of the territory (Arenas 1998: 134; Dunn 1995: 278; Kingsbury and Leach 2007: 1; Martinkus 2001: xv; Silove et al. 2002; Wise 2006: 27). CAVR's systematic research into the atrocities that occurred in Indonesian-occupied East Timor makes it the most authoritative source on the matter and, therefore, I quote CAVR rather than any other sources. CAVR was an independent, statutory authority, founded in 2001. It was established to look into the human rights' violations committed in East Timor in the context of the political conflicts between 1974 and 1999, facilitate community reconciliation for lesser crimes, and report on its work and make recommendations. The commission's tasks were mandated by the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) Regulation 2001/10, and were written into the Constitution. It was concluded in 2005, following the presentation of the final report, *Chega!*, to the President, Parliament and Government of East Timor (CAVR 2005, 2008).

villages. With little access to food and medicine, these resettlement villages had a devastating effect on local social systems, people's physical and psychological health, and on the spread of diseases such as tuberculosis and malaria (Askland 2005: 48–9; CAVR 2005: 44, 72–85; Dunn 1995: 65–6; UNDP 2002: 71; Wise 2006: 29).²³

Reports about the atrocities in East Timor began to filter out of the territory at the end of 1976 (Dunn 1995: 66), though they received little attention and the international community remained indifferent and silent. As the CAVR report (2005: 50) states, until 1982, the question of East Timor

was kept alive at the United Nations by about only one-third of the world community. Most of these countries were Third World or socialist states. Only four Western nations supported Timor-Leste at the United Nations throughout this period [1976–1982]: Cyprus, Greece, Iceland and Portugal.

Between 1975 and 1982, Australia supported only one General Assembly resolution on the question of East Timor and, despite being 'well-placed to influence policymaking on the issue ... [Australia] did not use its international influence to try to block the invasion and spare Timor-Leste its predictable humanitarian consequences' (CAVR 2005: 53). Australia's betrayal of the East-Timorese people compounded when, in 1978, the Australian government recognised East Timor as a *de facto* province of Indonesia (Dunn 2003).²⁴

Where the Australian government failed to 'strike the right balance between support for the principle of self-determination and their strategic and economic interests in relation to Indonesia' (CAVR 2005: 50), civil society in Australia and elsewhere played an important role in promoting the rights of the East-Timorese people. Throughout the 1990s, several international solidarity movements kept East Timor on the international agenda, enhancing international awareness of the situation in the territory. In Australia, the solidarity movement gained additional strength as many Australians viewed their government's refusal of East Timor's right to self-determination as a betrayal of an

²³ Of the households surveyed by CAVR, 55.5% reported one or more events of displacement (CAVR 2005: 44), but the number of individuals displaced during the Indonesian occupation is believed to be much higher. The Commission states that '[m]ost individual East Timorese alive today have experienced at least one period of displacement. Many have experienced several. All displacements caused major disruption to the lives of those affected. Some directly caused major loss of life' (CAVR 2005: 73).

²⁴ East Timor was officially incorporated into Indonesia as its 27th province on the 17th of August 1976. In 1979, Australia recognised *de jure* Indonesian sovereignty over East Timor.

obligation owed the Timorese for their support of Australian troops during the Second World War.²⁵

The support from Australian civil society and other international solidarity movements was enhanced by the East-Timorese resistance's focus on human rights and the right for self-determination, principles that eschewed ideology and violence (CAVR 2005:52; Goodman 2000: 35–41; Wise 2004b). The advocacy for humanitarian principles was at the centre of the diplomatic struggle led by one of the founders of Fretilin, the exiled José Ramos Horta. From the early 1980s, it formed part of a three-fold model guiding the resistance, which also included the armed resistance and the clandestine network in Indonesia and East Timor. This model can be traced back to the reorganisation of the resistance structures, which began following immense bombing of Falintil forces and the deaths of President Nicolau Lobato, Vincente Sahe and other Fretilin leaders in the later part of 1978 (Dunn 2003: 273). The reorganisation included the formation of underground networks and the establishment of Conselho Nacional da Resistencia Revolucionario (CNRR) in 1981. Xanana Gusmão was appointed leader of CNRR and commander in chief of Falintil and, during the 1980s, he emerged as the central unifying figure of the resistance. In 1987, Gusmão declared Falintil as a non-partisan 'national' army and in 1988 he resigned from Fretilin, believing that the fight for independence was beyond political loyalties (Gusmão 2000: xiv). That same year, Gusmão established Conselho Nacional da Resistencia Maubere (CNRM), which replaced CNRR. CNRM aimed to expand 'the image of the resistance to include all Timorese opposed to integration' (Dunn 2003: 274).²⁶ It was a unifying, non-partisan body that brought together the different East-Timorese resistance forces: Falintil, the student clandestine

²⁵ During the Second World War, East Timor became a target of aggression between Australian and Japanese forces, despite the neutrality of Portugal and its territories. Canberra was concerned that Japan would invade Timor and use the Timorese territory as a base for an attack on Australia (Dunn 2003: 19; Thatcher 1992: 32), and in December 1941 Australian and Dutch authorities sent approximately 400 Australian and Netherlands Indies troops to East Timor to 'protect its people.' In response, Japan committed more than 20,000 troops to the territory, making the occupation of East Timor a reality. Throughout the occupation, many East Timorese supported the Australian troops by providing guidance in the foreign terrain, protection, shelter, and food (Turner 1992). Fighting an overwhelming Japanese force, the last of the Australian soldiers were evacuated in January 1943, leaving the local population to its fate. The Japanese occupation left East Timor desolate and economically ruined. According to Bishop Goulet, the senior Catholic clergyman in East Timor in 1966, as many as 40,000 East Timorese died as a direct result of the war (Thatcher 1992).

²⁶ *Mau-bere* is a Mambai ethnolinguistic word meaning 'brother'. During the colonial era, the Portuguese gave it connotations such as 'uncivilised' and 'ignorant'. In stark contrast to this derogatory use of the term, Fretilin adopted it as a symbol of pride and independence and it was appropriated to characterise the party's vision of social democracy. It was used to distinguish the Timorese from the Portuguese, Chinese, and others, and, throughout the Indonesian occupation, '*maubere*' became intimately linked to the notion of Timorese national identity, symbolising their cultural distinctiveness, pride and belonging (Arenas 1998; Askland 2005: 52; Ramos-Horta 1987: 37; Wise 2006: 29).

network operating in East Timor and Indonesia, the diplomatic wing, and the overseas diaspora. The vision of a unifying national body was furthered in 1998 when CNRM was succeeded by Conselho Nacional da Resistencia Timorese (CNRT), with Gusmão elected as President. The CNRT completed the process of uniting the East-Timorese people with, for the first time, UDT, which agreed to be part of the resistance structure (Gusmão 2000; Niner 2001).

CNRM, followed later by CNRT, played a crucial role in the internationalisation of the East-Timorese cause by providing channels through which information could be distributed between the internal resistance and the international solidarity networks. The relationship between the internal resistance and the international solidarity movement acquired strength from reports provided by the East-Timorese Catholic Church about the humanitarian situation in East Timor. Between 1976 and 1989, East Timor's borders were closed and the Catholic Church represented the only local institution able to inform the outside world about the situation of the East Timorese (Carey 1995: 9). The Church did not only represent the voice of the people's suffering, it also represented a united forum in which the various ethnic and linguistic groups of East Timor could meet.²⁷ As Kohen (2001: 49) contends, '[c]hurch events and church buildings and facilities became an important locus of the struggle between Indonesian authorities and the East-Timorese independence movement.'²⁸ An example was the first major public demonstration organised by the clandestine movement in October 1989, which saw dozens of young people stage a non-violent protest to coincide with Pope John Paul II's visit to the territory (Kohen 2001: 49; Pinto 2001: 33–4).²⁹ This was a highly successful

²⁷ East Timor is a territory of vast cultural diversity. Intricate cultural patterns have been established by successive migrations of various cultural groups with their distinct lifestyle, social structure and local tradition. The diverse social institutions and languages have been maintained throughout the island because of the irregular topography of the territory, restraining communication between these groups (Askland 2005: 43). East Timor retains 28 distinct languages, which derive from one of the island's two dominant language families: Papuan (non-Austronesian) and Malayo-Polynesian (Austronesian) (Guterres 1997: 7). The linguistic complexity is furthered by the presence of Portuguese, Indonesian, English, Malay and Chinese (Hull 1998; Quinn 2007: 252; Taylor-Leech 2007: 239).

²⁸ In 1975, less than 20 per cent of the East-Timorese population had converted to Catholicism, but this number grew rapidly during the Indonesian occupation. Today, approximately 90 per cent of the population is associated with the Catholic Church. This immense growth in allegiance can be explained by, firstly, the Indonesian Government's prerequisite that all its citizens had to identify with one of the five 'official religions' (Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Catholicism, and Protestantism) and, secondly, the protection and ritual space offered by the Catholic Church. Moreover, faced with predominantly Muslim occupiers, Catholicism fostered a nationalist identity; it reflected the East-Timorese people's distinct heritage and different history to their occupiers (Arenas 1998; Askland 2005: 53; Wise 2002: 44).

²⁹ Pope John Paul II's visit to East Timor in 1989 was significant for various reasons. Firstly, the Pope's visit brought renewed international attention to the territory and it provided a major rallying point for the independence campaigners. Secondly, when arriving in East Timor, he did not kiss the ground as was customary for him when he arrived in a new country; rather, he kissed a crucifix placed on a pillow on the

demonstration and, as a result of these actions, the CNRM decided to establish an executive committee for the clandestine movement. There were immediate signs of increased participation (Pinto 2001: 34), with students playing a more active role. They mobilised oppositional demonstrations and initiated individual and sporadic, as well as collective and organised, forms of resistance (Arenas 1998). Rather than focusing on underground actions, the students focused on non-violent, public protests (Nicholson 2001; Pinto 2001). One of these protests, later known as the Dili or the Santa Cruz Massacre on the 12th of November 1991, became a turning point in the history of East Timor.³⁰ The massacre was filmed by the British cameraman Max Stahl; whose recording was smuggled out of the country and broadcast around the world. It led to increased international attention and recognition of the humanitarian disaster in East Timor.³¹ One result of the increased publicity of the Indonesian atrocities was the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to José Ramos Horta and East-Timorese Roman Catholic Bishop Filipe Ximenes Belo in 1996 for their self-sacrificing contribution to the East-Timorese people (Arenas 1998; Niner 2001: 28).

In 1998, the East-Timorese cause gained increased momentum. Following the Asian economic crisis in 1997, increased pressure was placed on Indonesian President Suharto. Having failed to control Indonesia's economy, Suharto was forced to resign on the 21st of May 1998. He was replaced by B.J. Habibie, whose office would play a significant role in

ground. This was perceived by those East Timorese in favour of independence as a sign of his dismissal of Indonesia's sovereignty over the territory (Wise 2006: 32).

³⁰ Two weeks prior to the Santa Cruz Massacre, a young student, Sebastião Gomes Rangel, was shot dead by Indonesian troops, and on the day of the massacre thousands of people gathered at the Motael Church in Dili to commemorate his death. A peaceful protest had been planned after the mass and the mourners marched to the Santa Cruz cemetery where they planned to place flowers on Sebastião's grave. As they walked, t-shirts and banners were revealed. At the cemetery, they were met by the Indonesian armed forces (ABRI) who, without provocation, opened fire, randomly firing at, stabbing, or beating many of the demonstrators to death. The CAVR report (2005: 67) states that at least 75 civilians were killed in this massacre, however it is believed that many more were killed at the cemetery and afterwards. The literature argues that between 250 and 400 people were killed or 'disappeared' after being removed by Indonesian security forces (Anderson 1998; Arenas 1998; Dunn 2003; Greenlees & Garran 2002: 22; Martinkus 2001: xiv). Australian journalist, author and film maker John Pilger (1998) recounts that a more typical, unreported massacre occurred after the event at the cemetery. He details how, after the killings at the cemetery, the Indonesian military removed the dead and injured. Those who were injured were told to stand up, only to be beaten to death. Others were given paraformaldehyde tablets. The killings continued at the hospital where, instead of unloading the injured from the trucks, the soldiers would push them to the ground and run over those who were still alive. Moreover, with the support of Indonesian doctors at the hospital, they would give the wounded pills, poison liquid, and injections of sulphuric acid.

³¹ The Santa Cruz Massacre is but one of many similar events, but Max Stahl's footage of the massacre and the presence of several other foreigners made it stand out as the decisive moment in East Timor's fight for independence. One of the other foreigners present at the time of the massacre was Russell Anderson, who later submitted a report about the massacre to the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (see: Anderson 1998).

East Timor's move towards independence.³² Following the fall of Suharto's New Order regime, the crisis in East Timor attracted growing international attention. East-Timorese students in Jakarta intensified their campaign and showed great courage when they protested outside Cipenang Prison where Gusmão had been imprisoned after his capture in November 1992. At the same time, dialogues between local village representatives and East-Timorese students in East Timor questioned the future of the territory and vocalised the East-Timorese people's request for self-determination (Askland 2005: 54–5; Gusmão 2003; Martinkus 2001: 51–81; Wise 2006: 33). In response to increasing international and domestic pressure, the political and security committee of the Indonesian cabinet offered the East-Timorese resistance movement a solution of wide-ranging autonomy; a proposal they rejected. Facing continued opposition, Habibie surprised everybody when, in January 1999, he offered the people of East Timor an act of free choice regarding the territory's future.³³

In the months leading up to the referendum, the East Timorese were subjected to great intimidation and violence from pro-Indonesian militia. Nonetheless, on the 30th of August 1999, more than 98 per cent of registered voters cast their ballot; 78.5 per cent voted for independence (Robinson 2001; Soares 2000; UNSC 1999). Tension started to build within days of the referendum. On the 4th of September, only a few hours after the announcement of the results, the punishing response of the Indonesian national army (TNI) began (Askland 2005: 55). Armed forces and Indonesian-supported Timorese militia stormed Dili and, as Dunn (2003: 352) narrates,

[w]ithin a few days the entire city was on fire, its houses and building [*sic*] having first been systematically ransacked by troops and militia with the loot being loaded onto barges and shipped to Indonesia, mainly to Flores. The deportation also proceeded in the same way. The Timorese were ordered to leave, mostly by TNI officers, with those who hesitated being threatened with weapons.³⁴

³² For a more in-depth exploration of the fall of Suharto and subsequent events in East Timor, see: Greenlees & Garran (2002) and Soares (2000: 64–75).

³³ An example of the ongoing opposition facing Habibie was a demonstration arranged by East-Timorese students in Dili on the 15th of June 1998 where 15,000 students called for a referendum and the release of Gusmão (Askland 2005: 55).

³⁴ This strategy is a well-known Indonesian military doctrine, called 'scorched earth' (Indonesian: *bumihangus*). Its use against the Dutch has been described by Abdul Harris Nasution who writes that: '[t]o slow down their progress, there were obstacles placed along the street and some shooting from the side, allowing us time to totally destroy and burn the cities (so it would be difficult for our enemy to use for political and economic purposes and also to live in) and to evacuate the civilians' (Abdul Harris Nasution, cited in Greenlees & Garran 2002: 101).

On the 21st of September 1999, following three weeks of indiscriminate rampage, an Australian-led multinational force, INTERFET (International Force East Timor), landed in Dili. By this stage, the majority of private homes, public buildings and essential utilities had been damaged (UNSC 2000: 7), an estimated 290,000 East Timorese had fled over the border into West Timor or been forcefully deported (UNHCR 2000), and 200,000 had fled inland seeking refuge in the mountains (Askland 2005: 56; Dunn 2003: 352; UN 2002).³⁵

The last Indonesian troops left East Timor on the 1st of November 1999 and, in February 2000, INTERFET transferred military command to a multi-national peacekeeping force, which formed part of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET).³⁶ On the 30th of August 2001, East Timor undertook its first democratic election, which established the 88-member Constituent Assembly. The election took place peacefully with Fretilin winning overwhelmingly with 57.3 per cent of the votes (55 seats) (Askland 2005: 56–7; Dunn 2003: 374). After the election, following recommendations made by the National Council that preceded the Constituent Assembly, it was decided that the Constituent Assembly would be transformed into the first National Parliament with a five-year term of office (Hill 2003).³⁷ The Constituent Assembly approved the structural outlines of the constitution on the 30th of November the same year. On the 14th of April 2002, Xanana Gusmão was elected president with a resounding vote of 82.7 per cent. Finally, on the 20th of May 2002, UNTAET handed over full executive power to President Xanana Gusmão and the National Parliament, and the new

³⁵ The CAVR report (2005) proposes a somewhat smaller number of displaced people than the UNHCR (2000) and contends that '[a]bout 250,000 people were deported to West Timor after the ballot.' The report further states that '[d]etailed plans for the evacuation of a large proportion of the population, involving several Indonesian Government ministries, had been drawn up well before the ballot. Most of these people were forcibly displaced, that is, violence or the threat of violence was used to ensure that the civilian population complied with the wish of the Indonesian authorities that they should leave Timor-Leste ... East Timorese in camps and other places in West Timor where people had settled continued to be subject to the control, intimidation and violence of militia members. Many who wanted to return to Timor-Leste were prevented from doing so by a combination of threats and misinformation from militia members' (CAVR 2005: 85).

³⁶ On the 25th of October 1999, the UN Security Council established UNTAET. Some of UNTAET's objectives were: to provide law and order, to create an effective administration and assist in the development of social and civil services, to support the development of self-government, and to ensure humanitarian assistance, as well as rehabilitation and development assistance (UN 2002). Detailed discussions about UNTAET and the UN mission in East Timor can be found in Neven Knezevic's (2007) PhD thesis, which considers the United Nations' state-building efforts in East Timor between 1999 and 2005, and Sue Downie's (2007) essay *UNTAET: state-building and peace-building*.

³⁷ The National Council was a 36-member body appointed by Mr Sergio Vieira de Mello, the UN Special Representative of the Secretary General in East Timor, based on nominations from the CNRT. Xanana Gusmão was appointed the head of the National Council (Hill 2003; Knezevic 2007: 139).

nation of Timor-Leste was formally born (Askland 2005: 57; Dunn 2003: xi-xii; UN 2002).³⁸

II. NUNU'S STORY

These historical events were lived realities for most of the study participants and the exiles carry with them traumatic memories of displacement, starvation and lost loved ones. An example of how they manifest in East-Timorese people's lives is Nunu's story.³⁹ Nunu's life-story embodies the tremendous political events of the time. He was born in the early 1970s in a quiet rural village in the mountains surrounding Dili. When he was three years old, he moved to Dili together with his parents and four older and two younger siblings. They lived in Farol, a suburb in the centre of the city. They were not rich, but they lived comfortably and had a good life.

Nunu, too young to be aware of the great political changes happening around him, recounts a happy childhood. 'I was just a child when everything was happening in my county,' he told me, 'I was playing with my friends and siblings, doing all the things that children normally do. It was first later that I learnt about the revolution in Portugal and the independence movement in East Timor.' Following the coup in Portugal, Nunu's uncle and other relatives became involved with Fretilin. Despite his uncle's involvement, Nunu's parents remained politically neutral. His father was a nurse. In his job he had to work with people from all sections of the society, and he believed that it was important not to be associated with a particular political party.

³⁸ The United Nations continued its presence in East Timor through the United Nations Mission in Support of East Timor (UNMISET) which replaced UNTAET in May 2002. UNMISET was established to provide assistance to the nascent state and its authorities in the areas of democracy and justice, stability and security. Its original mandate lasted from the 21st of May 2002 to the 20th of May 2004, but it was extended until the 20th of May 2005 as public administration remained weak and fragile and, as stated by the then UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, East Timor had 'not yet reached the critical threshold of self-sufficiency' (UNMISET 2004a, 2004b). In May 2005, UNMISET was transformed to the United Nations Office in Timor-Leste (UNOTIL). East Timor was then left with only a few dozen advisers and without a security backup force. UNOTIL's mandate was limited to support only the development of democratic governance of critical state institutions (Simonsen 2006: 576; UN 2007).

³⁹ I first met Nunu in early January 2007. Nunu was immediately open and shared his story with me. During the course of my fieldwork, we met several times and I got to know both him and his family well. This account is a composite narrative, created from interview transcripts, conversations with Nunu and information retained through engagement with Nunu and his family. It focuses on the events and stories that Nunu himself emphasised when telling me about his life. In most of my interaction with Nunu, I did not use a recorder and I have assumed some ethnographic licence when writing this narrative. What I recount as direct speech are composites based on my field notes. Although the quotes are not verbatim transcripts, I use direct speech so to retain Nunu's voice in the narrative.

At the time of the UDT coup and the outbreak of the civil war, Nunu's mother was expecting his youngest sister, Maria. She was born five days after the coup. There was a lot of fighting in the suburb where they lived and Nunu's parents were worried about the children's safety. Only three days after Maria was born, they fled to Nunu's grandmother's village in the district of Liquica, approximately 35 kilometres away. Nunu's family was one of the few families who had a car. His parents owned a jeep, making it easier to get around the poorly developed roads.

After driving them to their grandmother's place, Nunu's father had to return to work in Dili. He promised to return in a few days. They waited for him to come back, but heard nothing for days. They started to worry: it was unlike him not to give notice when he was unable to make it home. Months later they were told that he had been captured by Fretilin. 'I don't know why they captured him,' Nunu told me. 'Dad wasn't interested in politics and, although he was not part of Fretilin, he was not a supporter of UDT. I think he might have been falsely accused by someone who was jealous of his achievements. My dad had done quite well. We owned a car, a plantation in the districts and a house in Dili. My dad was friendly with everybody and he was well respected around the country.'

With no further news about his father's whereabouts, Nunu, his mother and seven siblings remained in Liquica. They were there when the Indonesian forces invaded Dili. From his grandmother's place, Nunu could see the bombardment by Indonesian boats and planes. After a while, his mother and grandmother decided that it was not safe for them to stay so close to the fighting, and they made the decision to go to their plantation further into the mountains. From their sanctuary they heard about the Indonesian army's attacks on Dili and Balibo and they worried that the Indonesians' advancement would reach the village where they had sought refuge. 'The first Indonesian soldiers got to the village in July 1976,' Nunu remembered. 'By this stage we and almost everybody else in the village had left. We sought refuge behind Fretilin's lines, but with the Indonesians coming closer, Fretilin told us to go further up the mountains. Mum refused to do so. She was worried that the Indonesians would be angry after Fretilin's attack on Bacau and she was concerned about my dad. She decided that we would surrender and go back to the village to look for Dad.'

Nunu's mother took her children to the village where they were placed in a refugee camp. Nunu describes the life in the camp as tough: 'We didn't have enough food. My siblings

and I were getting thinner and thinner, our arms were only sticks. Mum did what she could to get food and money. She took a job with the Indonesians to sew for them. It was volunteer work, but by the end of the day she would be given some food to bring home. She later got work at the hospital. She told the hospital officials that she was a nurse and luckily they didn't check her qualifications. Mum had picked up some basic medicine from my dad's work and was left to work with the Timorese refugees. She was not paid for this work either, but every day she brought back a bowl of food scraps. We would help as much as we could. I remember how I would catch grasshoppers for us to eat.'

In late 1976, Nunu's mother was able to get on a hospital transport to Dili. Nunu explained that, by this stage, the children were so skinny that she worried they would not survive unless she got them to Dili. In Dili, she pleaded with every military or hospital boat going to their village to bring her children to the capital. One morning, without any warning, they were put on a boat and brought to their mother in Dili. By this stage they had been apart for two months. During these two months, Nunu's mother had received a letter from his father, dated the 16th of December 1975. In the letter, he had told her that he had been taken prisoner by Fretilin and brought to Aileu. He wrote that he knew he would die. They were later told that, not long after writing the letter, he had been executed in the Massacre of Aileu.

Life in Dili was better than in the village, but Nunu's mother still struggled to get enough food to feed the whole family. They stayed with a relative who gave them a small garden where they could grow vegetables. Life was neither getting better, nor worse. In 1979, Nunu's mother was offered the chance to escape to Portugal with some Chinese friends. She made the heart-wrenching decision to leave all her children but Maria with their extended family in Dili. 'She must have known this was our only chance of a future,' Nunu explained. In Portugal, she did everything in her power to lobby her children's case and, in 1982, with the help of an East-Timor activist and the Red Cross, she managed to get them to Portugal. 'After she left we lived more or less like street children,' Nunu recounts. 'Mum tried to contact us, but the letters she sent were taken by the Indonesian intelligence and we never received them. One afternoon, I remember it was twilight, some Indonesian officers approached us. We thought we were in trouble, that they had come to get one of us. But they only came to tell us that Mum had arranged for us to come to Portugal and that they would be back the next day to take us to the airport. The next day we went to the market and bought new clothes. We had nothing and travelled

with just the clothes that we wore. We flew to Bali and from Bali to Jakarta. From Jakarta we went to Zurich before we continued to Lisbon. I had never flown in my life. It was surreal. One morning I was at home in Dili and suddenly I was on the other side of the world.'

Nunu lived in Portugal for three years before he moved to Australia together with the rest of his family in 1985. They arrived on a family reunion visa, sponsored by their mother's cousin. Not long after they arrived in Australia, Nunu started working with Fretilin. His decision to join Fretilin caused a stir in the family, his older sister in particular struggling with his decision to associate with those who had captured and killed their father. But with time, they all joined the party, even his oldest sister.

The political situation in East Timor and the fight for independence became the centre of Nunu's life in exile. He dedicated every free moment to the campaign, raising funds, organising demonstrations and arranging meetings. He spent most weekends in the backyard together with his friends and siblings, preparing demonstrations, posters, radio programs, concerts and other events that would draw the public's attention towards what was happening in their country. At night, Nunu would stay up late, discussing the situation in East Timor and strategies for the resistance with his brothers and sisters. 'I think we had quite an unusual adolescence,' Nunu said. 'Our friends and schoolmates used to go to parties and be teenagers, whereas we would travel to Canberra to demonstrate outside the Indonesian embassy, attend protests, or try to raise money for the struggle. I married early and I was only 22 years old when my first daughter was born. I didn't sleep much, having to juggle work, activism, family and studies. My studies suffered and I never got to finish my degree. Still, I did my best. I worked very hard and, at one stage not long before 1999, I had to go to hospital after I collapsed of exhaustion. It was such an exciting time. There were a lot of changes in Indonesia and we knew that we had to work hard to take advantage of the changes that were happening. The resistance movement in exile was an important part of the resistance, so I felt I had no other option—we had to put as much pressure on the decision-makers in Jakarta and Canberra as possible. I was so happy when Habibie offered us the referendum. I knew then that my country would be free. On the day of the referendum, I went to vote together with my wife, my daughters and the rest of my family. The girls were dressed up in traditional costumes. It was such an exciting day—this was what we had worked for all these years. All the struggle, finally it was to come to an end!'

Nunu's story is only one of many. In their different ways, the personal narratives of the exiles reflect the historical layers of colonial domination, invasion, occupation and resistance, and the discourse of resistance, home and return have figured extensively in their exile lives. These discourses are not only visible in the exiles' individual stories; they are also reflected in the community as a whole. In what follows, I will explore how the historical layers are reflected in the development of the East-Timorese community in Melbourne. The question of how they form part of the development and negotiation of exile identities and communal boundaries are at the centre of the discussions of the succeeding chapters.

III. THE EAST-TIMORESE COMMUNITY IN AUSTRALIA

The first arrival of East-Timorese refugees in Australia occurred during the Second World War; however, all returned to East Timor immediately upon the cessation of the war. Prior to the civil war in 1975, only 227 East Timorese resided in Australia, of which 83 had arrived earlier that year, presumably due to the deteriorating situation in the country (Thatcher 1992: 2–3). The civil war between UDT and Fretilin in August 1975 led to the first wave of post-World War II East-Timorese refugees to Australia, with many more fleeing their homeland following the Indonesian invasion and the ensuing occupation. Although the majority of the refugees arrived in the aftermath of the Indonesian invasion, the civil war set the foundation on which the Timorese community in Australia would later develop.

Though only brief, the civil war would leave deep and enduring scars. The fighting between UDT and Fretilin forces took up to 3000 lives (CAVR 2004: 12). A large number of East Timorese, primarily people associated with UDT, Apodeti, and the two smaller parties Klibur Oan Timor Aswain (KOTA) and Trabalista (Labour), fled across the border to Indonesian West Timor (CAVR 2005: 12, 75; Dunn 2003: 278).⁴⁰ By the 15th of August 1975, the first boat of East-Timorese refugees arrived in Australia. A small

⁴⁰It has been claimed that between 40,000 and 50,000 East Timorese fled to West Timor during the civil war, but there is great uncertainty about this number (CAVR 2005: 12, 75; Dunn 2003: 278). According to refugee accounts, the actual number of refugees in West Timor was significantly lower than the 40,000 as claimed by the Indonesian authorities. It has been suggested by East Timorese who were in West Timor at the time that 'the Indonesian authorities inflated the figures both in order to receive larger quantities of relief aid than were justified by the true number of refugees in need of assistance and to create the impression that the scale of the fighting was greater than it actually was, that large numbers of East Timorese were unwilling to accept a Fretilin administration and that Fretilin's victory in the civil war posed a threat to regional stability' (CAVR 2005: 75).

cargo ship, the SS Macdili, had left East Timor on the 12th of August, carrying 272 people, of which 249 were Portuguese. A handful of wealthy Timorese Chinese arrived as well, but the majority were wives or children of Portuguese army and administrative officials. The SS Macdili immediately returned to Dili, bringing about 750 individuals, including members of the Chinese community who had sought shelter at the beach and members of the Portuguese administration, to Darwin. In between the two arrivals of the SS Macdili, a Norwegian vessel, the SS Lloyd Bakke, which was just off the East-Timorese coast when it heard the SOS from the Portuguese governor, evacuated 1150 individuals to Darwin. In total, 2581 refugees arrived in Darwin between August and late September of 1975, of which 1647 were born in East Timor. Of the Timor-born arrivals, 672 were of Chinese descent, but the majority were of mixed Timorese and Portuguese ancestry (Thatcher 1992: 16–18; Wise 2006: 41–2).⁴¹

Increased violence by the Indonesian occupiers in the late 1970s forced larger numbers of East Timorese to flee their home country. Between 1976 and 1981, 2447 East Timorese arrived in Australia, of whom 1940 were Chinese (Thatcher 1992: 19). The majority of the refugees arrived on a specially implemented family reunion scheme that formed part of a number of Australian Government-sponsored Special Humanitarian Programs (SHPs) first introduced in 1976.⁴² Between 1981 and 1986, these programs allowed 1404 East-Timorese refugees living in Portugal and 3168 ethnic Chinese, primarily from East Timor, to come to Australia (Thatcher 1992: 23, 223).⁴³ The SHPs were unique in that they acknowledged and accepted the East-Timorese people's broad understanding of close kin, allowing the reunion of extended family members and informally adopted children (Askland 2005: 68; Crockford 2007; Thatcher 1992: 23–4; Wise 2006: 44). From 1986 onwards, the numbers of arrivals slowed,⁴⁴ but, in the aftermath of the Santa Cruz

⁴¹ In addition to those who arrived on these ships, a few refugees were air lifted from Bacau to Darwin (Thatcher 1992: 18; Wise 2006: 43). It has also been suggested that some refugees were evacuated by an Australian ship that entered Dili on the 1st of September 1975 with medical supplies (McMillan 1992: 51).

⁴² In 1977, the Australian government announced that it would allow East-Timorese residents to lodge applications to sponsor close kin to Australia. This included spouses, dependent children and parents, non-dependent parents, children and siblings (Thatcher 1992: 20). This program formed part of three Special Humanitarian Programs (SHPs) and one Special Assistance Plan (SAP) that was implemented over a 14-year span. The difference between the SHP and the SAP is that the latter requests the Timorese community in Australia to take greater responsibility for the arrivals; for example, by providing housing in the initial period (Thatcher 1992: 223).

⁴³ According to Thatcher (1992), 85 per cent of the Timor-born in Australia had resided in one or two other countries prior to their arrival. The majority of the refugees initially fled to Portugal, via Indonesia, Thailand, Taiwan, Macau or Singapore. Some of the refugees arriving on SHPs were UDT supporters who had fled to West Timor during the civil war and had been repatriated to Portugal in 1976. My own research has found that family networks in Australia, economic considerations and proximity to East Timor are the main reasons guiding the decision to migrate from Portugal to Australia.

⁴⁴ For a detailed outline of the number of arrivals between 1986 and 1992, see: Thatcher (1992: 223–4)

Massacre in 1991, there was a further large-scale flight with approximately 1700 East Timorese seeking refuge in Australia.⁴⁵ In contrast to the East Timorese who had arrived during the 1970s and 1980s and received permanent residency upon arrival, this group of refugees were granted temporary bridging visas. Their application for protection was put on hold and it was only after East Timor became an independent nation that their applications were processed. For many, this was up to twelve years after their arrival in Australia. With East Timor independent, their request for refugee status was no longer valid and a prolonged battle of recognition of their unique circumstances followed. Their fight ended in 2005 when the vast majority of the asylum seekers were granted permanent residency on humanitarian grounds (Askland 2005, 2007).⁴⁶

The composition of the community is marked by the various waves of arrivals. The first group that arrived during the 1970s primarily consisted of Timorese town dwellers, Timorese Chinese, and people connected to the Portuguese colonial era. The 1980s group were mostly made up of refugees who had spent some time in Portugal before arriving in Australia on the family reunion scheme. The 1990s arrivals, on the other hand, were often younger East Timorese who spoke fluent Bahasa Indonesian and who had been socialised into the Indonesian system (Askland 2005: 70–1; Wise 2006: 49). The East Timorese carried with them a complex and hybridised culture and, as Goodman (2000: 31) argues, ‘[s]harp divisions were drawn into this culture, reflecting inter-provisional divisions and the colonial hierarchy of Portuguese, mestizo [*sic*], Chinese and East Timorese.’ These divisions can be traced back to the Portuguese colonial era when, administratively, three distinct ethnic communities emerged: native indigenous Timorese, the *mestiço* and educated Timorese, and the Chinese Timorese (Askland 2005: 70; Thatcher 1992: 56). Ethnic separation was, as Wise (2002: 53) explains, reflected in a rigid class and occupation structure in which:

Portuguese occupied the top level administrative position, while the assimilated, educated *mestiço* were mostly employed in the middle and lower level positions in the civil service, or worked as nurses or some owned coffee plantations. The Chinese dominated the commercial sector, and the indigenous population were primarily employed as labourers on coffee plantations, were fishermen, or village-based subsistence farmers. In the cities, some found work as servants, cooks, cleaners, nannies or gardeners.

⁴⁵ This included the first (and only) group of East Timorese escaping East Timor by boat in 1995 (Jannisa 1997: 263, 301).

⁴⁶ For further information and discussion about the situation of the East-Timorese asylum seekers, see: Askland (2005, 2007); Crockford (2000, 2007); Rees (2003a, 2003b); Wise (2006: 45–7).

With regards to the Timorese Chinese, it is important to note that they are greatly overrepresented within the Timorese community in Australia when compared to the pre-1975 population figures in East Timor, in which the Timorese Chinese constituted only one per cent of the total population (Morlanes 1991: 48; Thatcher 1992: 295).⁴⁷ As stated in the previous chapter, the Timorese Chinese in Australia constitute about 63 per cent of the Timor-born community (ABS 2006). This considerable number can, firstly, be seen as a consequence of their relative wealth (Wise 2006: 49). Towards the end of the Portuguese period, the Timorese Chinese dominated the commercial sector of the country, controlling all importation and exportation businesses. This meant that they would be more likely to raise funds for the flight and the bribes demanded in return for a visa (Askland 2005: 70). Secondly, during the civil war, many Timorese Chinese could be evacuated as they held Taiwanese passports. As Thatcher (1992: 17) explains, ‘one of the criteria for selection to board the ships evacuating people from Dili [during the civil war] was that of foreigner status.’⁴⁸ The relatively large number of Timorese Chinese who were evacuated during the civil-war period provided the foundation for the high percentage of Timorese Chinese in Australia.

As the Timorese community in Australia developed, social and political structures, often replicating the ones left behind in East Timor, emerged. Communal divisions following ethnic lines and political party affiliations were particularly strong. Significant schisms within the community emerged between the Timorese Chinese and the non-Chinese Timorese and between those who fled due to the civil war and those who fled the Indonesian occupation (Goodman 2000: 31; Thatcher 1992: 102–3; Wise 2006: 49–51). In exile, the Timorese Chinese established their own community with its own organisations and community events. Moreover, as they all speak Hakka and are generally Buddhist, they are often disconnected linguistically, culturally and religiously from the rest of the community (Askland 2005: 71; Thatcher 1992; Wise 2005: 49). Apart from associations due to kinship and some political activity, little interaction occurs between the Timorese Chinese and the non-Chinese sections of the community. Thatcher

⁴⁷ It is estimated that 90 per cent of the Timorese-Chinese population has left East Timor (see the 1970 Census of Portuguese Timor and the 1990s Census undertaken by Indonesian authorities as listed in Thatcher (1992: 295–6)).

⁴⁸ According to Thatcher (1992: 17), *mestiço* Timorese express a sense of distrust and lack of respect towards Chinese Timorese, due to the nature of their evacuation. Her respondents ‘allege that many of the Chinese who boarded these vessels claimed to be Taiwanese citizens in order to gain a berth and then when they reached Darwin claimed to be Portuguese/Timorese in order to enter and stay in Australia’ (Thatcher 1992: 17). Some of the people I met during the course of my fieldwork, both *mestiço* Timorese and Timorese Chinese, also told stories about distrust and lack of respect. These participants explained such sentiments with reference to the same incident referred to by Thatcher.

(1992: 101–2) contends that ‘each of these communities consists of a set of relatively closed groups, each with its own ethos and standard motivations.’⁴⁹ My research does, nevertheless, suggest a change within the ethnic classification and social interaction of the younger generation of East Timorese in Australia. On various occasions during the course of my fieldwork I observed young Timorese Chinese and non-Chinese Timorese interacting socially. When asked about their ethnic background, young Timorese Chinese would confirm their Chinese heritage, but would simultaneously argue that they were Timorese. In the context of my interviews they did not distinguish themselves from the indigenous Timorese and mestiço Timorese.⁵⁰

The political divisions within the community can be traced back to the civil war and the subsequent flight of the leaders and members of UDT and their families. Sharp antagonisms, centred around the events leading up to the UDT coup and the civil war, exist, particularly among those who arrived in Australia during the 1970s and 1980s. Although the civil war was instigated by the UDT coup on the 11th of August 1975, many UDT supporters still argue that Fretilin was the cause of the war and for their loss of property, home and loved ones. Most of the refugees who fled East Timor in 1975 did so not only to escape the fighting, but also

because they were fearful, as it happened erroneously, of a Fretilin dominated administration and ... because they believed that if they remained they and their families would have been killed by uncontrolled, undisciplined Fretilin members (Thatcher 1992: 117).

Very few Fretilin supporters left East Timor as a consequence of the civil war, but a number of them arrived in the aftermath of the Indonesian invasion either as refugees or as part of family reunion (Thatcher 1992: 117).

During the Indonesian occupation, both Fretilin and UDT established political branches in Australia. Party affiliation remained relatively stable in exile, although, after the invasion in 1975, a few members of the community in Australia who had previously been

⁴⁹ Thatcher refers to the Timorese Chinese and the non-Timorese Chinese sections of the diaspora as ‘twin communities.’ She perceives them as ‘analogues to non identical twins’ (Thatcher 1992: 101) separated by distinct characteristics, values, mores, and customs, yet linked due to their Timorese connection and their experiences in exile. Her thesis *The Timor-Born in Exile in Australia* (1992) explores the difference between the Timorese-Chinese and the mestiço and indigenous communities in detail.

⁵⁰ I observed similar changes when conducting research with young East-Timorese asylum seekers in Sydney and Melbourne in 2003/2004 (Askland 2005).

politically inactive or supported UDT decided to join Fretilin. Fretilin was generally more active in the political fight against the Indonesian invaders and, as Thatcher (1992: 118) explains, many of those who arrived as adult UDT-linked refugees had an experience of the political process 'so costly that they have usually shunned any occasions that [have] overt political aims.' Consequently, they would go to UDT fund-raising parties, but it was not until after the Santa Cruz Massacre in 1991 that they would attend political protests against the Indonesian occupation of East Timor (Thatcher 1992).

The atrocities of both Fretilin and UDT during the civil war created barren soil for reconciliation; however, after the establishment of CNRM in 1988, the divisions between the two parties gradually lessened.⁵¹ The conflict manifested itself in suspicion and disapproval, as well as lack of participation in events, parties and demonstrations arranged by the opposing political party (Goodman 2000; Jannisa 1997; Thatcher 1992; Wise 2004b, 2006). Younger Timorese, often children of UDT families, expressed frustration with their older peers' inability to unite in an efficient way. This was articulated by Elizabeth Exposto (1996: 35) in her testimony *What it Means to be Timorese* where she explains that:

... we, the youth, have a strong sense of unity. We know that we are all seeking the same goals. It is disheartening to see disunity among the leaders; to see all this 'infighting' between the leaders, between parties, and between organisations. To us it seems as a useless and ineffective way of fighting for the cause.

Many of the young people in the community felt an obligation to play a role in East Timor's quest for self-determination (Exposto 1996; Guterres 1992; Santos 1996). Indicating an allegiance to the struggle for independence itself and moving themselves away from the political disputes of the older generation, many called themselves 'Xananistas' (Jannisa 1997: 302; Thatcher 1992: 119). They found inspiration in Xanana Gusmão's writings smuggled out of East Timor and Indonesia, and their lives were guided by the political campaign in terms of activities, choice of education, careers and planning for the future.⁵²

⁵¹ Australian-exiled Justino Guterres' BA thesis *Refugee Politics: Timorese in Exile* (1992) devotes one chapter to a discussion of the difficulties overcoming the political cleavage within the East-Timorese diaspora.

⁵² Maria Teresa Santos (1996: 25) states that '[m]y family has always encouraged me to be involved with Timorese activities, be in demonstrations, cultural activities, political or fundraising parties. They have continuously reminded me of my identity, and to take full advantage of the opportunities offered here in

Following the ‘opening up’ of East Timor in 1989, renewed contact with East Timor further encouraged activities in the community, and increased knowledge of the situation in their home country fostered a newfound sense of unity between the various East-Timorese groups (Jannisa 1997: 303). A strong sense of ‘East Timorese ethnic, national and cultural ideological “communitas”’ (Morlanes 1991: 184–5) developed and an increased identification with their East-Timorese heritage was expressed through a renewed interest in traditional culture and traditional religion. This ‘cultural renaissance’ (Goodman 2000: 32) occurred within the context of the political campaign for independence and was a direct response to the rapacious nature of Indonesian rule and the fear of the destruction of Timorese traditional culture. Cultural groups were formed to teach song and dance, as were theatre groups that produced plays based upon East-Timorese social, historical and political issues. Cultural resource centres were established that collected and conserved artefacts, literature and documents. Sporting teams founded upon ethnic allegiance were formed. Language classes (Portuguese and Hakka) were established, and groups focused on the recording and preservation of East Timor’s oral culture and particular ethno-linguistic groups’ histories, traditional healing techniques and traditional medicines began to emerge (Thatcher 1992: 157, 197–8).

The political campaign drove, directly or indirectly, these cultural and social activities, resulting in establishing the community as a largely homeland-focused community. As Wise (2004b: 171) contends, ‘the East Timorese imagined community is aided very much by transnational flows between the diaspora and their homeland, and between the diaspora and sympathetic outsiders.’ This was further guided by the imaginative resources that were available, which were largely political in nature (Wise 2004b, 2006). The collective fight to free East Timor became the core of the exiles’ collective existence and imagination, and both collective and individual identities were centred around the illegal occupation of their home country (Wise 2006). This notion of transnational flows

Australia, so that one day I can return and help rebuild East Timor ... Not only has my family encouraged me to be involved in Timorese activities but others have also inspired me—Timorese like Xanana Gusmão, my godfather Nicolau Lobato, Koni Santana, and the Falintil guerilla fighters who continue to defy, and the many that died resisting against the Indonesian armed forces. And those that so openly defy the Indonesian occupation such as Maria Gorete, a founder of the Clandestine movement, and the Santa Cruz demonstrators. These young people know about the consequences of disobeying the Indonesian army, and yet they continue to speak out. Jose Ramos Horta, Shirley Shackleton, and various solidarity groups who refuse to let the world forget about the injustices that are happening in East Timor. Their efforts should not go unnoticed ... These people have devoted their lives and have all inspired me to continue to contribute as much as I can.’

and a homeland-centred exile community has been at the centre of the classification of the East-Timorese community as a diaspora.⁵³

IV. THEORETICAL DEBATES ON DIASPORA

The term ‘diaspora’ has its origins in the Greek words *speiro* (to sow) and *dia* (over) (Cohen 1997: ix; Shuval 2000: 42). It was traditionally used to describe Jewish, Greek and Armenian dispersion, however, during the 1990s, there was a resurgence of interest in the academic discussion of diaspora and the term has become widely adopted in the study of displaced people more generally. The term has, as social anthropologist Steven Vertovec (1997: 277) observes, increasingly been used

to describe practically any population which is considered ‘deterritorialised’ or ‘transnational’—that is, which has originated in a land other than which it currently resides, and whose social, economic and political networks cross the borders of nation-states or, indeed, span the globe.

The meaning of the term has been widely interpreted and the idea of a diaspora varies greatly. As a theoretical term, it allows exploration of the ‘processes of multi-locality across geographical, cultural and psychic boundaries’ (Brah 1996: 194) and analysis of the complex margins of ‘us’ and ‘them’, ‘exclusion’ and ‘inclusion’, ‘belonging’ and ‘otherness’ (Brah 1996: 209).

Key diaspora theorists can broadly be divided between those who adopt diaspora as a descriptive tool (Cohen 1997; Safran 1991) and those who perceive it as a social condition and societal process (Brah 1996; Clifford 1992, 1994, 1997; Gilroy 1993; Hall 1990). In the first issue of the journal *Diaspora*, political scientist William Safran (1991: 83–4) contends that diasporas are ‘expatriate minority communities’ that (1) are scattered from an original centre to at least two peripheral locations; (2) retain a collective ‘memory, vision or myth about their original homeland’; (3) ‘believe they are not—and perhaps cannot be—fully accepted by their host country’; (4) idealise the ancestral home and hold a vision of return when conditions are favourable; (5) remain committed to the maintenance or restoration of the homeland; and, (6) retain a sense of ethnocommunal

⁵³ Chapter Four explores this notion of a ‘homeland-focused diaspora’ further and considers how the question of home has been negotiated in the aftermath of the independence.

consciousness and solidarity, defined by the continuing relationship with the homeland. It is evident that not all of the above features will suit any given group; a fact acknowledged by Safran who remains 'properly relaxed in allowing no contemporary diaspora to fulfil all the definitional desiderata' (Cohen 1997: 23). Consequently, his descriptive schema embeds an inherent bias towards particular experiences and has the potential consequence of identifying dispersed groups according to a scale of 'diasporanism.' Safran is himself guilty of this when he argues that:

we may legitimately speak of the Armenian, Maghrebi, Turkish, Palestinian, Cuban, Greek, and perhaps Chinese diasporas at present and the Polish diaspora of the past, although none of them fully conforms to the 'ideal type' of the Jewish diaspora (Safran 1991: 84).

The notion of an 'ideal type' diaspora is challenged by Cohen's typology (Cohen 1993, 1997).⁵⁴ Rather than talking about an 'ideal type' diaspora, Cohen differentiates between different forms of diasporic community: victim, labour, trade, imperial and cultural diasporas (Cohen 1997). The different diasporic forms rely on the origin or intentionality of dispersal, this being occupational patterning (labour, trade), the experience of a decisive 'break event', such as slavery, forced exile or massacres (victim), experiences of penetration (imperial), or the late modern experience of cultural blending (cultural) (Anthias 1998: 563; Cohen 1997). Cohen notes that different groups may take dual or multiple forms, yet others may change character over time (Cohen 1997: x). Nonetheless, his typology remains essentialist and, as Anthias (1998: 563) rightfully contends:

the factors that motivate a group to move, whether it be labour migration or forceful expulsion, do not constitute adequate ways of classifying the groups for the purpose of analysing their settlement and accommodation patterns nor their forms of identity.

Like Safran, Cohen seeks an objectivist definition and a classificatory scheme, adding three elements to Safran's list: firstly, a diaspora may result from voluntary dispersal, as well as aggression, persecution, or extreme hardship; secondly, a 'strong tie to the past or a block to assimilation in the present and future must exist in order to permit a diasporic consciousness to emerge or be retained' (Cohen 1997: 24) and sufficient time must therefore pass before a community can be described as a diaspora; and, thirdly, diasporas

⁵⁴ However, Cohen (1993, 1997) maintains that the forcible scattering of people is a central idea behind diaspora, subsequently relating his definition to the Jewish case.

may exhibit creative and enriching potential in the tension between ethnic, national and transnational identities (Cohen 1997: 23–5, 180). Cohen’s terminology represents an important contribution to the study of diaspora due to his emphasis on the transnational character of diasporas and the potential positive virtues of a diasporic identity, but his continued emphasis on dispersal from an original homeland as an essential element of diasporic experience implies that diasporas are ultimately defined descriptively with reference to the ancestral home. Moreover, it presents a diaspora as a relatively ‘natural and unproblematic “organic” community of people without division or difference, dedicated to the same political project(s)’ (Anthias 1998: 563), accordingly discouraging further investigation into issues of difference and diversity, inter-ethnic processes and intersectionality (Anthias 1998; Tsagarousianou 2004: 55).

In contrast to the ‘ethnographic approach’ (Butler 2001) exhibited by Safran and Cohen, the postmodern version of diaspora as represented by Hall (1990, 1993), Clifford (1994, 1997), Gilroy (1993), and Brah (1996) acknowledges difference, diversity, positioning and fluidity as part of the diasporic experience. Hall (1990: 235) declares that:

[t]he diaspora experience ... is defined, not by essence or purity, but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of ‘identity’ which lives with and through, not despite, difference; by *hybridity*. Diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference.

Rather than using diaspora as a description of a group, these writers present a view of diaspora as a condition or a process. As such, diaspora is not a typological tool for studying specific groups of people, but a theoretical idea that can be applied across a range of groups. The processual condition of a diaspora requires consideration not only of where people come from, but equally of their places of residence and their emotional or material connections to other places (Kalra, Kaur & Hutnyk 2005: 29). It is a condition ‘put into play through the experience of being *from* one place and *of* another’ (Anthias 1998: 565) and, rather than focusing on ancestral roots, the focus is placed on ‘where you are at,’ this being a space characterised by a powerful combination of ‘roots’ and ‘routes’ (Clifford 1994, 1997; Gilroy 1993).

The writings of sociologists and cultural theorists such as Hall, Gilroy, and Brah have been highly influential in the development of the contemporary understanding of

diaspora, diasporic experience and diasporic identities. In this section, I will focus on the work of James Clifford as I believe it represents one of the most developed analyses of diaspora as a social condition. Clifford is a Professor in the History of Consciousness Program at the University of California, Santa Cruz. He was trained as an historian, but has worked as a Visiting Professor of Anthropology at both the University College of London and Yale University. Clifford's analysis of the transcultural predicaments of the late twentieth century, travel, border crossing, self-locations and multiple belongings has challenged traditional anthropological perspectives of forces and interactions shaping cultures and local communities. As Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1994: 342) argues in her discussion of Clifford's theory, his 'magisterial discussion of diaspora' represents a 'provocation ... to rethink dispersion and proximity in an era of hypermobility,' to take up the challenge of, as Clifford (1992: 304) himself puts it, 'identifying the range of phenomena we are prepared to call *diasporic*'.

Clifford notes that the language of diaspora is increasingly being invoked by various groups of people that maintain, revive or invent a connection to prior homes. Quoting Khachig Tölölian (1991: 4–5), he argues that:

the term that once described Jewish, Greek, and Armenian dispersion now shares meanings with a larger semantic domain that includes words like immigrant, expatriate, refugee, guest-worker, exile community, overseas community, ethnic community (Tölölian 1991, cited in Clifford 1994: 303).

'Diasporic forms of longing, memory and (dis)identification,' he continues, 'are shaped by a broad spectrum of minority and migrant population' (Clifford 1994: 305), and diaspora now describes the contact zones of nations, cultures and regions in which '[s]eparate places become effectively a single community' (Clifford 1994: 303) through the transnational movement of people, money, goods and information. Accordingly, there is vast difference in the range of diasporic forms and 'at different times in their history, societies may wax and wane in diasporism, depending on changing possibilities—obstacles, openings, antagonisms and connections—in their host countries and transnationally' (Clifford 1994: 306). Clifford does not discard the usefulness of a descriptive definition of diaspora, but contends that any attempt to define diaspora must acknowledge the fluidity and variation embedded in diasporic experiences and diasporic identities. He suggests a more polythetic definition of diaspora than Safran, assigning three additional factors to Safran's original six. Firstly, he argues, 'the transnational

connections linking diasporas need not be articulated primarily through a real or symbolic homeland'. Secondly, '[d]ecentred, later connections may be as important as those formed around a teleology of origin/return.' And, thirdly, 'a shared, ongoing history of displacement, suffering, adaptation, or resistance may be as important as the projection of a specific origin' (Clifford 1994: 306). Still, the list of diasporic characteristics remains inadequate if one is to fully comprehend the contemporary range of diasporic forms and its applicability is limited to a comparative exercise of different diasporic forms. A focus on the borders of a particular diaspora—rather than on its essential features—will allow consideration of the processes triggered by displacement, detachment, uprooting and dispersion, multi-locality, temporality and belonging. Diasporas are, Clifford (1994: 307) observes, 'caught up with and defined against (1) the norms of nation-states and (2) indigenous, and especially autochthonous, claims by "tribal" peoples.' As such, 'articulations of diaspora identity reach outside the normative territory and temporality (myth/history) of the nation-state' (Clifford 1994: 307) and diaspora cultures 'mediate, in a lived tension, the experiences of separation and entanglement, of living here and remembering/desiring another place' (Clifford 1994: 311). Subsequently, Clifford argues, diaspora concerns dwelling(-in-displacement), maintenance of relationships and communities, a sense of belonging or collective homes away from home, forms of communal consciousness and solidarity marked by dual or multiple identifications, transnational movement, and historical experiences of displacement, dispossession and adaptation (Clifford 1994: 308–10).

According to Steven Vertovec (1997, 1999), a third meaning of diaspora has emerged within the recent literature; namely diaspora as a mode of cultural production. This relates to the postmodern view of diaspora as process, though it can be distinguished by an even greater focus on the transnational processes and cultural effects of globalisation, media technologies, and communication. The understanding of diaspora-as-cultural-production repositions the centre of the diasporic experience from displacement to connectivity; that is, to 'the complex nexus of linkages that contemporary transnational dynamics make possible and sustain' (Tsagarousianou 2004: 52). It presents a more positive image of diasporas as empowered groups that may exploit the possibilities obtained by increased transnational integration and provides a broader conceptualisation of the term that includes people 'whose displacement arises due to situations that are neither traumatic nor associated with disaster' (Reis 2004: 48–9) but may be the result of opportunity.

Central to this view of diaspora is the production and reproduction of transnational cultural and social phenomena, suggesting a ‘re-configuration of “ethnic” boundaries and bonds’ (Anthias 2001: 631) and the development of ‘new ethnicities’ (Hall 1991) and hybrid cultural forms. However, as social anthropologist Pnina Werbner (2004) contends, it is important to note that this does not imply that diaspora communities are *by definition* hybrid. Rather,

[t]he forms of cultural and social hybridity they evolve are the product of historical negotiation, the constant juggling of moral commitments and aesthetic images from here and there, now and then (Werbner 2004: 897).

This conceptualisation acknowledges a diaspora as both ethnic-parochial *and* cosmopolitan; they retain an (imagined) attachment to the place of origin and will engage in ‘long-distance nationalism,’ yet may offer a positive approach towards integration and cultural change (Werbner 2002). What distinguishes diasporas from other migrant and/or ethnic groups is their sense of *co-responsibility* across borders of nations, states and political communities (Werber 2002). Or, as Tsagarousianou (2004: 59) puts it, it is the diaspora members’ ‘readiness and willingness to engage themselves with the building of a transnational imagination and connections that constitutes the “threshold” from ethnic to diasporic identification.’ Diasporas will continue to recognise a centre to which they express the sense of moral co-responsibility, but, in any particular location, intersectionality (that is, issues of class, gender and trans-ethnic alliances), multiple discourses, internal dissent and competition run parallel to the consensus established through attachments to a place of origin (Anthias 1998, 2001; Werbner 2002).

V. DIASPORA AND EAST-TIMORESE EXILES

As the above discussion suggests, there is no clear consensus as to how the term diaspora should be used. The term has been adopted widely by contemporary observers, academic writers and migrant populations alike, and it has become part of people’s everyday vocabulary. Removed from the academic discussion of the term’s descriptive and analytical usefulness, ‘diaspora’ has become synonymous with any displaced community, resulting in the blurring of differences between migrant and diasporic communities. This casual, untheorised use of the term is evident in parts of the literature on the East-Timorese exile community (e.g. Bice 2003; Chew 2004; Jannisa 1997; Thatcher 1992)

where limited consideration is paid to the criteria, processes and key elements that define it as such. The East-Timorese exile community has been defined as a diaspora primarily with reference to the collective historical trauma of forced displacement, the scattering of East-Timorese refugees to different geographical locations, the cooperation and transnational bond between these groups, and their ongoing support for the East-Timorese cause.⁵⁵ In line with Cohen's (1997) terminological framework, the East-Timorese exile community has been described as a 'forced diaspora' (Goodman 2000), a 'victim diaspora' (Chew 2004), and a 'refugee diaspora' (Wise 2004a, 2004b, 2006). Wise (2004a, 2004b, 2006) presents the most developed analysis of how the East-Timorese exile community qualifies as a diaspora, though she remains entangled in the historical formation of the East-Timorese diaspora. She argues that:

[b]ased on Safran's classic model (1991), the East Timorese case conforms to those more general features of diaspora described by Cohen, which include a strong ethnic consciousness; a sense of empathy with other co-ethnic members; an idealization of the homeland and a collective commitment to its maintenance, restoration, safety and prosperity, or creation; and the development of a return movement (Wise 2006: 14).

Rather than using Cohen's (1997) notion of 'victim diaspora,' Wise adopts the term 'refugee diaspora,' reflecting the self-description of the East Timorese in Australia as 'refugees' and emphasising the fact that the East Timorese are 'recent victims' (Wise 2006: 14–5). She also presents the notion of diasporas as 'communities of co-responsibility' (Werbner 1998), exploring the material gestures and political mobilisation of the East-Timorese community. In relation to this latter point, Wise challenges the intrinsic negative connotations of the classic definition of diaspora in which diaspora communities are perceived as marginalised, deterritorialised, displaced and detached. Through her focus on the transnational (or as Wise calls it, 'translocal') practices of the East Timorese in Australia, she provides rich ethnographic material illustrating how the East Timorese in exile maintain and remain part of East-Timorese long-distance nationalism. A similar perspective is adopted by Goodman (2000) who explores the political mobilisation of the East-Timorese diaspora. Goodman argues that the East-

⁵⁵ Australia has the largest concentration of East-Timorese refugees, but it is estimated that more than 10,000 East Timorese fled to Portugal during the Indonesian occupation (Wise 2004b: 152) and, despite some of them later moving to Australia, a substantial number of East-Timorese exiles remain in Portugal. During the occupation, a few East-Timorese refugees also sought refuge in former Portuguese colonies, including Mozambique, Macau and Cape Verde, and other countries, such as the United States of America, Canada and Ireland.

Timorese political cause deployed diasporic culture ‘to give symbolic and emotive depth to East Timorese political demands and to actively challenge the still dominant image of East Timorese as passive victims.’

The literature on East Timorese abroad has adopted different meanings of diaspora, often blending the various theoretical perspectives by simultaneously using it as a descriptive typology, referring to particular social formations, processes, conditions and consciousnesses, and as an analytical tool, allowing enquiry into the struggles and contradictions of identity, homeland and nation. It is not my intention here to criticise previous writers’ use of the term diaspora in relation to the East-Timorese exile community; rather, I wish to draw attention to the environment in which the term was used and consider its current applicability. Smith (1999: 501) argues that ‘migrant/diasporic identity boundaries are invariably fluid ... [and people] renegotiate their sense of identity in relation to the traumatically changed situational contexts in which they ... find themselves.’ Consequently, he continues, ‘time has to lapse before deciding whether any community that has migrated can be confidently labelled a diaspora’ (Smith 1999: 501). I argue that the aim should not be to ‘label’ a community a diaspora, but rather to understand the negotiation and transformation of boundaries that occur in the diasporic space where notions of home and away, here and there, before and after, us and them, are processed. When such labels have been or are being used, we should consider the historical contexts in which this label emerges, rather than focusing on the descriptive categories used. As the above discussion suggests, few, if any, diasporic communities will exhibit all the objective criteria of a diaspora at any given time. Moreover, these criteria may change over time and, at different times, the term’s usefulness and suitability may change. It is therefore important to consider any diaspora within its particular sociopolitical context and to acknowledge the historical events from which it has grown.

Previous classifications of the East-Timorese exile community as a diaspora formed part of a politicised construction of the East Timorese as a unified, homogeneous group fighting for the cultural survival of their ancestral home and the East-Timorese people’s right for self-determination. The notion of diaspora signalled the exiles’ collective (traumatic) past and common destiny, and diverted attention away from the complex and multiple divisions and conflicts embedded in the community. This, in combination with the diaspora’s adoption of the international language of human rights, peace and self-

determination, contributed greatly to the immense success of the diplomatic struggle of the resistance (Goodman 2000; Wise 2004b, 2006). As shown above, the community exhibited a growing national consciousness at the time of the Indonesian occupation and the political struggle unified the exiles across their political and ethnic differences. The term diaspora represented, due to the traditional disregard of intersectionality, competition and dissent, an 'umbrella' under which the community could be presented as unified. Werbner (2004: 896) has argued that 'diasporas are culturally and politically reflexive and experimental' and, as mobilised groups, they may respond to global, national or regional crises. I will suggest that the self-identification as a diaspora by the East Timorese is an example of such reflexivity. It emerged in the dynamic interplay between external categorisations of the East Timorese as a diaspora and the exiles' personal experience of a shared past and perceived future, and their sense of commitment and responsibility to the East-Timorese cause.

VI. CONCLUSION

As will be explored in the succeeding chapters, things have changed after independence: old divisions amongst the East Timorese living abroad are re-emerging; tensions between those abroad and those 'at home' have surfaced and the previous sense of empathy held by those abroad towards those 'at home' is fading; the dream of return is no longer as prominent as it once was and people no longer idealise their prior home; and, many are increasingly reluctant to participate in the nation-building process. The question therefore has to be asked: does the East-Timorese exile community still qualify as a diaspora? If we adopt Safran's or Cohen's terminology, it can be argued that the diasporic qualities of the East-Timorese exile community are fading. As stated, I am sceptical about such a scaling of 'diasporaness.' If we aim to define the East-Timorese community in Australia and elsewhere according to a list of objective criteria we will lose sight of the ongoing process of negotiation and transformation of boundaries and identity with which the diaspora engages. However, if we adopt a more flexible approach towards diaspora, one which appreciates its divisions and dissents and acknowledges the potential variation over time in transnational imagination and practice, the term diaspora is still useful. Accordingly, the literature on diaspora as process, condition and consciousness retains its usefulness in relation to the East-Timorese community abroad and can further our understanding of the complex processes of redefining and negotiating boundaries, belonging and identity.

I will continue to use the term diaspora when speaking about the East-Timorese community in Australia since, as a theoretical concept, it embraces the processes I wish to explore; namely, the negotiation of community, identity and belonging in the aftermath of independence. In doing so, I remove myself from the classic definition of diaspora as represented by Safran and Cohen and from the contemporary focus on diaspora as transnational communities. Instead, when referring to the East Timorese as a diaspora, I refer to them as a community engaged in a continuous process of negotiation of borders, identity and belonging in the sphere where old homes and new homes collide.

Thus, in complex ways, historical narratives underlie current diasporic practice and agency. Whereas this chapter has provided an outline of the main historical events associated with the diaspora, the following chapter will explore how these historical events and the individuals' engagement with them manifest in present diasporic practice and communal structures.

CHAPTER FOUR

CHANGES TO SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND DIASPORIC PRACTICE

One winter evening in July 2008, I was standing outside the Blue Factory in Richmond together with two East-Timorese friends, Che and Nunu. We had just received news about growing tensions in Dili following the arrest of 21 students who had been protesting against the East-Timorese government's proposed plans of purchasing luxury cars for Members of Parliament. The two men were upset by the news; they were concerned that the government's proposal would lead to renewed violence and frustrated by the politicians' short-sightedness and inability (or unwillingness) to consider what Che and Nunu believe is best for the nation. Thinking back on their high expectations of independence, Che said with an ironic laugh: 'We never thought about what independence would be like. It was all about independence, getting independence, and we forgot to think about what was to come afterwards.' His comment reflects what he describes as a lack of consideration amongst the exiles of how East Timor was to move from resistance to independence. Moreover, it points to what Nunu and Che portray as a sense of indifference within the diaspora as to the exiles' role in relation to an independent East Timor. 'We were not prepared,' he explained; 'it all happened so quickly, and, although we had been fighting for independence and dreaming about this, I guess we didn't expect it to happen so fast.'

This small anecdote reflects some of the confusion and ambiguity that occurred within the diaspora following the 1999 referendum. With the realisation of independence, the cause that had previously guided diasporic practice was achieved and the community had to redefine itself in relation to the new reality. This chapter considers the processes of change that have occurred within the diaspora in the aftermath of independence. It illustrates the argument of the dynamic character of a diaspora presented in the preceding chapter and demonstrates how past experiences form part of present agency and practice.

The exiles' post-independence experiences and the processes of change reflect their pre-independence agency and imagination, and I therefore begin this chapter with a

discussion of the two symbols at the centre of their exile identities; namely, the notion of home and the myth of return. Drawing on Pierre Bourdieu's (1977) notion of habitus and Ghassan Hage's (2002) concept of migration guilt, I consider how the exiles' socialisation into particular social fields characterised by an emphasis on the values of communalism, family and morality fostered the compelling nature of the notion of home and return and how these have featured in the political campaign. This is followed by an analysis of how the East-Timorese exiles responded to the possibility of return home and how notions of home and homecoming may change over time. The latter part of the chapter provides a more straightforward discussion of the changes to diasporic practice and organisational structure that have occurred within the diaspora following independence. I aim to illustrate how divergence in pre-independence activism has led to parallel experiences of lost community and renewed feelings of belonging, and how the community is gradually moving from a focus on the homeland towards an emphasis on the exile community.

I. THE DISCOURSE OF HOME AND RETURN AMONGST EAST-TIMORESE EXILES

As discussed in the previous chapter, the East-Timorese diaspora was established as a largely homeland-focused diaspora. The political struggle for independence drove communal activities and lay at the heart of the exiles' collective imagination. A central part of the political mobilisation of the diaspora and the maintenance of long-distance nationalism was the exiles' articulation of a continued association with East Timor, the land and its people, and, subsequently, their ongoing expression and imagination of exile as *temporary* displacement. The refugees' exile identities were intertwined with the symbols of home and return and, through the public articulation of a narrative of return, the exiles demonstrated their ongoing commitment to the East-Timorese cause and placed themselves within the future discourses of the East-Timorese nation. The forcefulness of the narrative of return and the notion of home suggests a commitment to the homeland that goes beyond the emotional response of empathy and a sense of injustice triggered by the Indonesian atrocities in East Timor. In order to understand the processes of change that have occurred within the diaspora after independence, it is necessary to consider what fostered the compelling nature of home and return and how the notion of home and return manifested within the diaspora through the political campaign. A range of

individual motivations such as a sense of respect, commitment and obligation can be identified in this regard. These can be placed within the framework of the significant influence placed upon the individual's agency by, firstly, their habitus (Bourdieu 1977) and, secondly, feelings of migration guilt (Hage 2002). In what follows, I will explore these concepts and how they relate to the East-Timorese refugees' agency in exile.

HABITUS AND SOCIAL FIELD

The establishment of the East-Timorese diaspora as a highly homeland-focused community rests largely upon the political mobilisation of East-Timorese refugees. It was through their activism that the notion of home and return transpired as compelling symbols in the refugees' exile identities. Their mobilisation in the political campaign and their practice in exile reflect a particular set of values, dispositions and moral codes, which emphasised their ongoing commitment to their ancestral home. That is, it mirrors their habitus as it has been developed through their socialisation into particular social fields, which emphasise the individuals' commitment and obligation to their community of belonging. As I have explained elsewhere, '[h]abitus refers to the principles of generating and structuring practices and representations, subsequently producing identity through particular dispositions and structures of perception which are associated with a sensory environment' (Askland 2007: 240). It is acquired through primary socialisation in childhood and adolescence, but is continuously reproduced and transformed, building on or responding to its past conditions (Bourdieu 1977). It embodies the individual's personal history, including her or his social location (class, ethnicity, gender, etc.), and is constructed through the individual's practice within specific cultural, social and historical contexts. As such, it reflects the collective history of the group (or variety of groups) to which the individual belongs as well as the individual's biography. That is, 'the individual's habitus and the logic of her or his practice will reflect the social field within which she or he acts' (Askland 2007: 240). The term 'social field' refers to a relatively autonomous network, or configuration, of objective relations. It is a social space characterised by a particular logic of action, by its forms of capital, accumulation of history and determinate agents (Bourdieu in Wacquant 1989: 39). Every field follows particular rules that form part of a game of power by which the individuals within the field act and negotiate their relations. It offers fundamental resources, values and relations that individuals use when establishing their internal perception of self and when

negotiating and transforming the underlying dispositions that create meaning and practice (habitus) (Bourdieu 1977).⁵⁶

The forcefulness of the narrative of return and the notion of the homeland must be seen in relation to the exiles' habitus as it has developed through their socialisation into, and practice within, social fields that emphasise a social discourse of collectivism. The main principles of social organisation in East Timor are kinship and church affiliations. These principles define the rhythms of communal life and represent the primary focus for social connections.⁵⁷ The East Timorese have, as I explain in my MA thesis (Askland 2005: 139), 'an extended understanding of the family,' where 'uncles, aunts, cousins, and their in-laws' in-laws are regarded as close kin.' A predominantly patrilineal pattern dominates the kinship system, and individuals are tied to descent groups from birth (Carey 1995: 3; Traube 1995: 44), thus 'creating varying scales of inclusiveness from group to village to ethno-linguistic groups to region' (Askland 2005: 139).⁵⁸ Through the family, the individuals are socialised into a social field dominated by kinship and moral bonds; one which places its emphasis upon the values of collectivism and morality. These values are further enhanced due to the inherent moral commitment placed upon the individual towards the collective. Central factors that underpin the socialisation of East Timorese children include values of devotion, obedience and respect for the family and family allegiances. Intergenerational relations are characterised by formality and respect (Thatcher 1992: 84–97). These values are also forwarded by the Catholic Church. As stated in the previous chapter, approximately 90 per cent of the East-Timorese population identify as Catholics, making the Catholic Church a fundamental communal forum that unites the East Timorese across the nation's various ethno-linguistic groups. Its emphasis on the values of communalism, family, humanitarianism, philanthropy and morality underpin the social and political organisation of local communities.⁵⁹

Socialised into the social fields of the family and the church, the cultural values of respect, obedience, inclusion and togetherness form an integral part of the exiles' habitus.

⁵⁶ I will explore Bourdieu's theory (1977) at greater length in the following two chapters.

⁵⁷ For further information on aspects of East-Timorese social organisation, see: Forman (1976), Francillon (1967), Hicks (1976) and Traube (1986).

⁵⁸ See also: de Sousa (2001: 187).

⁵⁹ The strong communal nature of East-Timorese social organisation resembles the classic sociological conceptualisation of social types reflected in the distinction between collectivism and individualism as societal organisational logics (e.g. Durkheim 1964 [1893]; Tönnies 1955 [1887]); Weber 1968). This conceptualisation places personal agreement and contractual authority at the heart of the social order of so-called 'individualistic societies,' whereas 'collectivistic societies' are characterised by a highly pre-determined nature where social relations and practice largely result from necessity or authority.

Their habitus promotes continued engagement with their moral community of belonging and provokes practice that accentuates the collective good. As such, the exiles' participation in the political campaign and the central position of the notions of home and return can be seen as a response to the embodied, often subconscious, sense of obligation towards their ancestral community of belonging. Their socialisation into strong, cohesive ingroups, for which the moral premise promises continued protection in exchange for unquestioned loyalty, establishes a motif of moral obligation. As members of the greater East-Timorese collective they enjoy privileges but also hold responsibilities, and their actions in exile can be seen as a response to these. The sense of responsibility associated with the collectivist discourse and the difficulties adhering to it in exile may sometimes result in feelings of migration guilt, the other key factor driving the compelling nature of home and return.

MIGRATION GUILT

In his discussion of Lebanese migrants in Australia, anthropologist Ghassan Hage (2002) illustrates the relevance of the collectivistic discourse in relation to particular migrant communities and exilic practice. Hage has worked extensively with Muslim Lebanese migrant communities in America, Australia and France, considering the role of political emotions in the process of migration and integration. Drawing on Nietzsche's notion of social/communal life as a gift, Hage (2002: 203) proposes that migration is a 'guilt-inducing process.' Human beings receive, as members of a community (nation, village, family, or other social entities), 'the gift of social life.' Having received this gift, individuals are indebted to their community and their relationship with their community is marked by a reciprocal obligation. The gift, Hage (2002: 203) argues, can only be repaid 'through life-long participation in the family and community or whichever communal group individuals feel has provided them with that gift of communality', and it is the inability of migrants to repay their debt that lies at the core of the guilt-inducing process of migration; unable to 'share the fate of the collectivity which gave you social life, you are guilty of letting others pay along for the debt you are collectively responsible for' (Hage 2002: 203).

According to Hage (2002), one way of dealing with migration guilt is by showing that one cares about what happens in the home country. Referring to Bourdieu's term *illusio*, he explains that:⁶⁰

[t]o care about a reality is to share in the *illusio* that it is worth being part of it or being implicated in it, and the more one becomes implicated in a reality the more one feels it intensely (Hage 2002: 201).

By engaging in a process of intensification through so-called 'strategies of intensification' that increase the strength of affective experiences related to the home country, migrants may respond to and deal with feelings of guilt associated with their exiled reality. Hage focuses his analysis on utterances, interactions and bodily movement expressed by individuals in response to news from the homeland. As Wise (2004, 2006) found in her research with East-Timorese refugees in Sydney, more collective actions, such as participation in long-distance nationalism and protest events, may also constitute strategies of intensification. Wise (2004: 27) argues that:

participation in [protest events] provided an opportunity to share in, and reproduce, the moral economy of East Timoresehood, and to appease feelings of guilt arising from the sense that they had fled their war-ravaged homeland to save themselves and their own families, while leaving the majority of (particularly poor and uneducated) Timorese back in East Timor to suffer alone.

The East-Timorese practice in exile reflects feelings of migration guilt resulting from their inability to adhere to the moral commitment posed upon them. Their participation in the political campaign, as well as their insistence on future return to their ancestral home, reflect the inherent obligations in the relationship between the individual and her or his ancestral home as it is fostered by the communal nature of their habitus. Responding to the feelings of migration guilt and to the discourse of collectivism embedded in their habitus, the notion of home and the myth of return attained a compelling nature. In what follows, I will outline how the notion of home and return manifested within the diaspora through the political campaign.

⁶⁰ *Illusio* refers to a specific interest that is both pre-empted and produced by the ways in which historically limited fields operate. All fields call for and activate a specific form of interest; that is, a specific *illusio*. It manifests itself as an embodied adherence of and acceptance to the values and the fundamental premise of a specific game (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1993: 101–2).

ENGAGING WITH HOME THROUGH THE POLITICAL CAMPAIGN

Underlying the political campaign and the narrative of return is a notion of a ‘diasporic sense of co-responsibility’ (Crockford 2007; Wise 2006) fostered by the social discourse of collectivism. Throughout the occupation era, this imperative cultivated a sense of continued participation and belonging to the moral community of East Timor. It transpired in the political campaign, manifesting itself through the three pivotal pillars of the nationalist struggle, namely the narratives of innocence, victimhood and suffering (Wise 2006). Articulated and portrayed through the various modes of protest employed in the struggle, these narratives entrenched the imaginative resources and the discursive environment of the diaspora. They promoted a continued orientation of the refugees’ diasporic identities towards the notion of exile and displacement, again emphasising their connection to their ancestral home. By means of political actions and communal responses to events in East Timor, the community tied itself into the suffering of the East-Timorese people; that is, through the re-enactment and affective invocation of physical and symbolic violence, the exiles lived with the suffering of the East-Timorese people. As Nita explained when speaking about her involvement in the struggle:

... we lived the suffering. We lived it. Because, we, we portrayed their suffering in our plays and in our stories and poems and, you know, songs. We lived it, even though we were not there, we lived in spirit.

Nita

Wise (2006) explains how physical and symbolic violence towards the East-Timorese people, in particular the ritualised torture and violence against the body perpetrated by the Indonesian military, symbolically and affectively bound ‘the pain of the individual victim to the fate of the ethnic collectivity’ (Wise 2006: 15). Following Werbner (1997), she argues that the ritualised violence and the violation of communal symbols and property through military tactics and cultural imperialism resulted in ‘a sedimented memory of common suffering which becomes the shared affective-symbolic resource for future solidarities founded in “victimization and suffering”’ (Wise 2006: 15). Wise explores the complex transnational dimensions and trajectories, strategies of intensification of suffering, and various protest forms and witnessing strategies, which together provided a space in which a sense of collective suffering could resonate. According to Wise, these strategies were adopted due to their political benefits and their potential generation of

empathy and support from a 'community of listeners,' as well as their latent alleviation of a sense of guilt experienced in the shadow of the exiles' flight.

Through the political campaign, the notions of victimhood, innocence and suffering placed the East-Timorese exiles within an extended communal space and the exiles became implicated in the lives of those left behind. This was strengthened by the promise of future return when the conditions at home allowed it. The centrality of the political campaign in the exiles' lives saw these narratives play a key role in the development of the diaspora. Their reference to the home country and their espousal of the suffering of the East-Timorese people fostered a unitary sense of Timoresehood that reached beyond the contested complexities of what it means to be East Timorese (Wise 2004a). Political rhetoric and cultural particularities were restrained within the representational constitution of commonality and the notion of shared destiny. Potentially disruptive articulations of divergence and variability were subdued by the overriding cause of independence. The two dominating narratives of suffering and return pacified alternative voices within the diaspora and, as Wise (2004a: 36) maintains,

East Timorese in Australia were rarely represented as full human beings who have lives and families in Sydney, who have dreams for the future, who may wish to settle here.

Such representations 'would have undermined the power of the political cause' (Wise 2004: 36) and, with the purpose of resonating with 'the community of listeners' (Wise 2002: 34–6), the East-Timorese exiles were invoked as representatives of the nation, of the cause and of the suffering people. A reified nostalgic version of home to which the exiles would return was inscribed in the public portrayal of the exile community and, due to the intense presence of home in the diasporic sphere and the nationalist struggle, it remained an intimate part of the exiles' sense of self and their vision of the future. With so much invested in the myth of return and with their exile identities so closely connected to the construction of the homeland and the nationalist discourse, how did the East Timorese in exile respond to the reality and possibility of return?

CHANGING NOTIONS OF HOME—FACING THE POSSIBILITY OF RETURN

Despite the fundamental position of the myth of return in the exiles' lives, only a minority of the exiles returned to East Timor on a permanent basis after independence. Many of the exiles went back to East Timor on return visits, often doing short-term work contracts with donor agencies, NGOs, or the UN, but they would remain based in Australia and return to their Australian homes once their tasks had been completed. There are no official statistics on how many of the exiles returned to East Timor to live, but upon comparison of the 2001 and 2006 Australian Census data (ABS 2001, 2006) we get an indication of how small the number of permanent returnees is. The 2006 census data show that the number of East Timorese in Australia has decreased from 9380 to 9320 individuals, with 2.7 per cent (251) arriving in the period between 2001 and 2006. This suggests that approximately 300 Timor-born individuals have returned to East Timor, moved elsewhere or passed away. With the median age of the community being 42.7 years, it is unlikely that the number decreased primarily due to natural causes and, as East Timor is the primary destination in the exiles' narratives, we may assume that the majority of these individuals returned home. It should, however, be noted that this figure does not comprise second-generation East-Timorese refugees and East Timorese born in Portugal, Indonesia, or other countries of exile. The actual number of people returning to East Timor from the diaspora on a more permanent basis may therefore be higher.

According to Wise (2006), those who returned to East Timor in the period between 1999 and 2002 were in most part people who had been politically active throughout the occupation, who were educated and financially established in Australia, and who had little family in Australia. Their training and financial situation ensured that they would be able to afford housing in East Timor, have the ability to support themselves and gain employment. In contrast, those who were economically and socially disadvantaged, who had little, if any, family remaining in East Timor, or whose lives were well established in Australia through satisfying careers, family and children, would be less inclined to return. This pattern is reflected in the stories that I heard during my fieldwork. Seven years later it appears as if the exiles who remain in East Timor on a permanent basis are generally well-educated people who are financially stable in Australia and who have been able to secure good positions within the East-Timorese bureaucracy. This reflects what Stølen

(2007: 133) refers to as ‘a sense of possibility’, by which people’s decision to return or not reflects a notion of home where

‘home’ is where they have family around, where they have enough resources to make a good living and where they can be with people with whom they share certain experiences and visions for the future.

Stølen (2007: 133) contends that the desire to return home at the cessation of conflict will vary ‘tremendously according to individual and collective experiences as well as social, political, and economic contexts in the country of origin as well as in the country of exile.’ In her research with Guatemalan refugees in Mexico, Stølen found that the decision to return to Guatemala following the signing of the first peace accord in 1992 was characterised by ambivalence and doubt. Many of her participants did not want to return to where they lived prior to their flight or to their own piece of land, as these locations had been destroyed during the war, been occupied by migrants brought in by the army who refused to hand the land back to its original owners, or because the land was not large enough for their family, which had expanded in exile. The refugees were also reluctant to return due to fear about lack of security, concern about their achievements in exile and the potential decline in income and standard of living upon return, and worry about limited job opportunities. Adolescents who had been born in Mexico or lived most of their lives there were particularly reluctant to the idea of return, many portraying a negative image of Guatemala, associating it with violence, persecution, poverty and backwardness (Stølen 2007: 130–2).

A similar rhetoric is visible in the East-Timorese exiles’ decision not to return. Many refer to the obligation towards their children who have been born in Australia. They argue that their children have the opportunity of attaining an Australian education with all the benefits that this entails and returning to East Timor would be a breach of their responsibilities to their children. The children see Australia as home and the exiles do not want them to experience the same loss as they did. As Beba explained to me when I asked if a future return would be temporary rather than permanent:

Exactly, because I have to see also my, my son’s life. I can’t just abandon his life. Because we were like that, like transferred from others, from one language, between different languages and we don’t want to do the same mistake with them.

Beba

Others explain their decision not to return by referring to work commitments in Australia, limited work opportunities in East Timor, property in Australia, loss of property in East Timor, little or no remaining family in East Timor and, not least, concerns about the security situation. Considering the recent political crisis in East Timor, Beba explained:

For you to go back now you have to think twice ... you can't because it's, it is hard because it's war in there, it's civilian war, you can't go back, you have to stay in Australia.

Beba

Beyond these real barriers to return lies an altered notion and experience of home and homecoming. This is explored by Renos K. Papadopoulos (2002), Professor and Director of the Centre for Trauma, Asylum and Refugees at the University of Essex. Reflecting the essence of the myth of return, he argues that:

the usual way we tend to comprehend the idea of reaching home is in terms of one direction only—the regression, the return to the home of origin (physically, geographically or metaphorically), to the location or cultural milieu or psychological space where we were born or grew up (Papadopoulos 2002: 11).

The very idea of home and homecoming embeds an inherent dichotomy of origin and desired destination. This dichotomy suggests a degree of consistency in the notion of home by which origin and desired destination remain the same throughout the lifespan of an individual.⁶¹ Within this paradigm, home is largely associated with a particular place, a physical location, a nation, a village, or even a house. However, as Papadopoulos (2002: 10–11) explains, the notion of home goes beyond this; it encapsulates a fundamental notion of humanity that offers a sense of belonging, a place of refuge, rest and satisfaction, a psychological space of familiarity, relatedness, and communion. Home is simultaneously a physical place and a psychological state.

The loss of home, in both its physical and psychological meaning, is experienced by all refugees and may have devastating effects on the refugees' well-being, their perception of self and their sense of place. This has to be seen in relation to how a fundamental sense of home forms part of what Papadopoulos (2002: 17) calls 'the core "substratum of

⁶¹ This very idea underpins the traditional paradigm dominating the study of refugees and displacement, and has facilitated the association of exile with victimhood and uprootedness.

identity””. Together with various other elements, including surrounding smells and tastes, architectural designs and belonging to a country, language group and geographical landscape, sense of home forms part of a ‘mosaic’ essential to a primary sense of human life. The loss of home disrupts the mosaic substratum, which, when intact, creates ‘the conditions to develop the ability and confidence to get on with our lives’ (Papadopoulos 2002: 18). Reflecting Bourdieu’s (1977) notion of habitus, Papadopoulos (2002: 17) argues that individuals remain unaware or unconscious of the mosaic substratum, and the refugees’ experience of bewilderment, unreality, disorientation and loss in exile will be exacerbated because of the loss of something they were unaware they possessed. When home is lost, he contends,

all the organizing and containing functions break wide open and there is a possibility of disintegration at ... three levels: at the individual-personal level; at the family-material; and at the socio-economic / cultural-political levels (Papadopoulos 2002: 24).

In order to cope with the devastating effects of exile, the refugee must re-establish balance between these three levels. Such balance secures a sense of stability and continuity within physical and emotional space, allowing intimate relationships to develop and a reconnection with one’s sense of self, further recreating meaning and a sense of place. Accordingly, homecoming is not restricted to external arrivals in a physical location; it is equally about the internal ‘re-establishment of all meaningful connections within one’s own family and own self’ (Papadopoulos 2002: 14). Such connections may be re-established in exile and,

although most refugees who end up in exile in other countries may never return to their geographical homeland, this does not necessarily prevent them from recovering from all adversity and being enabled to lead full and creative lives (Papadopoulos 2002:5).

That is, a sense of homecoming and relief from the devastating effects of exile may be possible without a physical return home.

Papadopoulos’ theory provides a psychoanalytical perspective on why the notion of home, homing desire and the myth of return attains its prominence in exiles’ lives and diasporic communities. Moreover, due to its insistence on the parallel dimensions of home—home as a physical location and as a psychological, existential category—it helps explain the ambiguities and ambivalence that many exiles experience when conflict ends

and they are able to return home. Unfortunately, Papadopoulos does not explore the processes by which refugees recover from the loss of home and experience a sense of 'homecoming' in exile. His focus is on the significance of home when seeking an understanding of refugee experiences and the refugee situation, as well as the implications of these explorations on therapeutic approaches towards refugees. However, by reading Papadopoulos' theory within the framework of contemporary anthropological approaches to identity, we may explore the processes at stake.

In her 1992 essay *National geographic: the rooting of peoples and the territorialisation of national identity among scholars and refugees*, Liisa Malkki (1992: 37) eloquently summarises the contemporary anthropological approach to identity, arguing that:

identity is always mobile and processual, partly self-construction, partly categorization by others, partly a condition, a status, a label, a weapon, a shield, a fund of memories, et cetera. It is a creolized aggregate composed through bricolage.

Individuals form a 'multiplicity of attachments to places through living in, remembering and imagining them' (Malkki 1992: 38) and identity will accordingly be influenced by various contexts. It is continuously reproduced and transformed throughout the life of individuals, and may be adjusted in the shadow of cultural change and social disruption. If we, in accordance with Papadopoulos (2002), assume that a sense of home forms part of the 'mosaic substratum of identity,' notions of home are equally open to negotiation and change; that is, the space of home is flexible and homes may be made and remade through the dialectic between objective circumstances and structuring structures and the subjective appropriation of symbolic, bodily, psychological and material conditions associated with these circumstances (Jackson 1995; Stølen 2007: 133). Through the lived relationship with the new environment and through practice and agency within the cultural, social and political fields of the host country, new notions of belongingness are inspired and new concepts of community and self evolve (Askland 2007).⁶²

In the refugee setting, the physical, localised condition of the original home often attains a static, passive character that enforces an idealised, nostalgic vision of the homeland. Simultaneously, feelings of stability and continuity may be reconstructed through a sense of belonging to the host country, established by increased knowledge and familiarity with

⁶² The process of redefining and negotiating identity is explored further in Chapter Five.

the new environment, further encouraging the positive experiences characteristic of the existential condition of home. Accordingly, parallel experiences of home may exist where home as a physical location (country of origin) is juxtaposed by the gradual negotiation of the phenomenological experience of home (host country). Whereas return movements focus on the 'home left behind,' everyday living emphasises the actuality of 'home in exile.' These are not exclusive and 'where you are from' may indeed enhance feelings of belonging in exile.

For the East-Timorese diaspora, the overriding focus on place of origin through a return movement suppressed new feelings of home, and ensured a continued focus on home as a physical location. This disequilibrium prevailed as long as return remained unrealised. It was when faced with the possibility or actuality of return that the exiles became aware of the hybrid nature of their identity and their multiple belongings. Consequently, rather than resolving exilic longing, the end of conflict in East Timor and the subsequent possibility of returning home caused increased ambiguity and upheaval within the diaspora. It confronted the exiles with their hybrid sense of self and challenged the very basis on which they had imagined themselves after the flight. Notions of home and belonging were in flux and 'complex and conflicting emotional attachments and ambivalences emerged to destabilise pre-ordained itineraries that insisted on "return"' (Crockford 2007: 288–9). Acting against their pre-independence imaginings, many of the exiles were struck by competing pressures and intensified feelings of guilt—for many, the decision to remain in Australia was experienced as a breach of their communal obligation towards East Timor and the East-Timorese people. Embedded in this was also a concern of being seen as unpatriotic, that their refusal of the rhetoric of return would be interpreted as a betrayal of their moral obligation to East Timor and its people (see also: Crockford 2007; Wise 2006). In what follows, I will explore the initial strategies adopted by the East-Timorese exiles to deal with the renewed feelings of guilt. This discussion is largely based on a review of the existing literature on the East-Timorese diaspora, in particular Wise's (2006) work with the East-Timorese community in Sydney.

TRANSLOCALISM, PRAGMATISM AND DEFERRAL

Faced with their hybrid identities and the realisation that they had indeed grown accustomed to Australian life, the East-Timorese exiles looked for ways by which they could reconfigure home. How could they regain balance between their wish to remain in

Australia and the symbolic desire for return? How could they address their obligations towards the East-Timorese community and simultaneously attend to their responsibilities towards their families, whose lives had become intimately attached to the Australian community and way of life? For some, a possible solution to this dilemma was to move to Darwin. Only a one-hour flight from Dili, Darwin represented, as Wise (2006: 165) explains, an ‘in-between state,’ a space created

through constant coming and going, through relationships that intertwine at so many levels within, between, and across the two places, through the flows of cultural traffic, through the maintenance of kinship ties across space.

Strong UN and NGO presence in East Timor and the arrival and departure of East-Timorese exiles and expatriate workers bestowed a particular translocal characteristic onto Darwin. The hybrid character of the city—the presence of a sense of ‘East Timorese-ness’ within an iconic Australian space—in many ways reflected the fusion of the exiles’ twofold belongings. As such, it presented a compromise by which the exiles could address their ambiguous position within and between multiple places; in Darwin, the exiles could remain connected to their new home whilst simultaneously moving towards and engaging with East Timor and East-Timorese affairs.

It is unclear how many of the Sydney- and Melbourne-based Timorese actually moved to Darwin, and the narratives of a future move to the Northern Territory may be interpreted as a pragmatic strategy that could help the exiles deal with the increased ambivalence of home and away rather than an actual scheme. Such ‘strategies of pragmatism’ were, according to Wise (2006: 186–8), quite common in the period following the referendum. Responding to the contradictory pressure rising from their commitments to East Timor and the obligation they feel towards making the best possible future for their children, many of the exiles tended ‘to live in the moment, think practically and focus on [the] children’ (Wise 2006: 187). This strategy of pragmatism was often accompanied by a ‘strategy of deferral’ that dealt more directly with the amelioration of feelings of guilt and the maintenance of a future commitment to East Timor. This refers to ‘a promissory strategy’ by which the exiles deliberately bracketed the future and the possibility of return by declaring ‘an intention to one day go home and help rebuild East Timor’ (Wise 2006: 188); however

return is always deferred to some future date ‘when the mortgage is paid, when my work commitments are fewer, when the children leave school, get married, when my husband retires,’ and so forth (Wise 2006: 188).

Conjoining the strategies of pragmatism and deferral was a new focus on translocality, as exemplified in the ‘remainees’ imagination of Darwin as an alternative dwelling.⁶³ The focus on translocality reflected the exiles’ attempts to create an extended space of belonging in which they could link their connections to Australia and East Timor in very direct and practical ways. Through the imagination of translocal lives or the deliberate creation of structures by which to live such lives, the exiles addressed their ambiguous position. It allowed them to respond to their sense of obligation towards the East-Timorese nation whilst retaining their intimate attachment to their Australian lives; it allowed them to retain ‘a connection to *both* East Timor *and* Australia’ (Wise 2006: 171).

The increased translocal nature of their engagement with East Timor manifested itself in ‘dual property ownership, working on short-term international contracts in East Timor, travelling back and forth, and having homes and family in both places’, as well as ‘phone contact and cultural traffic in the form of letters, cultural and practical goods, ideas and information’ (Wise 2006: 171). By means of translocal activism and imagination of ‘neighbourhoods’ where the suburbs of Sydney and Melbourne were interconnected with the local communities in East Timor, the exiles established structures through which they addressed their moral obligation and expressed continued association and commitment towards the East-Timorese nation. That is, through activities such as remittances, charitable assistance schemes and aid projects, their membership in the moral community of East Timor was maintained and performed and the exiles knitted themselves into East Timor’s future from a distance (Wise 2006: 166–7). The translocal character of the diaspora and the continued prominence of the questions of return and how to relate to the ‘home country’ suggest that the exiles’ identities remain closely connected to the notion of refugeeness and exile.

⁶³ Drawing on Arjun Appadurai’s (1995) theory of the production of *locality*, Wise (2006) adopts the notion of the *translocal* rather than *transnational*. This concept, she argues, better encapsulates the everydayness of the networks (material, familial, social, and symbolic) and exchanges that connect East Timor and Australia. She explains that ‘[e]arlier conceptualizations of the transnational ... characterize it as the building of multistranded social relations encompassing a disparate range of processes that include familial, economic, social, organizational, religious and political relationships, giving shape to transmigrant identities connected to two or more nation-states. Appadurai’s conceptualization of the translocal, in contrast, distinguishes those processes of actual everyday relations from those which can be referred to as transnational’ (Wise 2006: 165–6).

When I conducted my fieldwork in Melbourne, questions concerning home and return were still raised and negotiated, though their hegemony on diasporic practice and identity were no longer as clear cut as when Wise undertook her fieldwork seven years earlier. Rather than a highly translocal community unified by the continued struggles of the people 'at home,' I found a highly divided community that expresses frustration and anger towards processes of development and change occurring in the home country. Many have moved away from the translocal sphere and are increasingly focusing their energy on their lives in Australia. The strategies of pragmatism and deferral have been replaced by long-term plans that reflect the exiles' engagement with and commitment to their lives in Australia, their Australian-based families and their various communities of interest within Australian communal spheres. The immense feelings of guilt described by Wise are no longer prominent in the exiles' narratives and the symbolic importance of the desire for return seems to have lost its significance.⁶⁴ It is important to remember that, during the time when Wise did her fieldwork, the relationship upon which the exiles' translocal agency, experiences and imaginative resources rested were still founded in an imagined vision of the nation, the nation itself yet to be born. What has happened as the East-Timorese nation has emerged as a real political entity? What changes have occurred within the diaspora in the more recent years as the reality of independence has transpired?

II. LOST COMMUNITY

Following the referendum, the majority of the key leaders of the diaspora returned to East Timor, many taking on work with the UN, the government or the donor community. Despite the loss of these individuals, many of the community organisations were initially reinvigorated in response to the acute nature of the situation in East Timor and the need for immediate relief. People who had previously held subordinate positions within these organisations stepped up to leading roles. But as the situation in East Timor stabilised, the focus of the diaspora faded. Without its key leaders, the diaspora struggled to redefine its role and position in relation to independent East Timor and it became increasingly passive. As is suggested in the following three quotes, the community is seen as disintegrating:

⁶⁴ The last two chapters consider the processes behind this change.

... before the independence we used to work, not work, but we'd gathered together as a group, as a cultural group, like, we went to Ballarat or Bendigo to present a dance Timorese and do things like that, but now, it's like everything has stopped. No more—it doesn't talk about Timor anymore. I don't know, it's changed. It's not the same as before, you know, like we had the fight for Timor's freedom and now it's stopped, now, like everyone's got their own life. They've got to work and—it's like forgotten about Timor. No more Timor. Freedom and that's it. It's independent, so no more.

Beba

[The community changed] majorly I think, yeah, because ... because, they had this thing to fight for, and then suddenly, you know, once they, once they felt like—there were people that stayed behind here, because all of them went back to Timor, going, working in Timor ... many went back to work, and they feel like, people that stayed back, it was like, they didn't have that [purpose], they didn't have that routine that, you know, like we're having a meeting here, we're gathering here, we're doing something, yeah ... many people were lost. They were asking about, what's wrong? Where is everybody ... Everything just went separate ways.

Alexandre

... we tended to be more active and driven because we had a specific cause that we all had in common, you know, the dream to get independent, so there was a lot of activities and a lot of initiatives from different organisations, but nowadays I think it's a more relaxed view and that goal has already been achieved so some of these gatherings are not a priority anymore.

Theresa

As these three quotes illustrate, people speak of an apparent loss of interest amongst the exiles and argue that the loss of the overriding cause of the struggle has left the community at odds with what to do next. The diaspora has been unable to find replacements for the former leaders and, without these strong, inspirational individuals, the community has regressed in its move towards becoming the translocal community described by Wise (2006). Though many of those I spoke with argue that translocal practice may indeed provide a renewed direction, sense of solidarity, purpose and necessity, there appears to be a general reluctance amongst the exiles to go down this path. Maria explained:

... in Melbourne, here, they [people in the diaspora] say it a lot: since independence everybody just gone, right, they got the independence, we don't need to do any more

things. We don't need to do fundraising, we don't need to do awareness, we don't need to think ... everybody now, it's ok. And a lot of attitude, really, in Melbourne I've found that a lot ... Like, the community is really disintegrated. They are not longer together. It's like they feel like they don't need to be together no more.

Maria

This does not imply that all ties with the East-Timorese community have been broken. People continue to engage with East-Timorese discourses on an individual, familial level, and socialise with other East-Timorese exiles, attending birthday parties, christenings, weddings and other social events. Though, in terms of organised, communal activities, many have 'washed their hands' and turned to other aspects of their lives.

The individuals' withdrawal from the community has led to a decrease of activities at the organisational level of the diaspora. Without people to lead and with limited participation, many of the social clubs, cultural groups and soccer clubs died. There are fewer parties and social gatherings, and the cultural preservation projects that used to form part of the political campaign have ended. There are no longer political rallies or demonstrations and the political organisations have removed their focus from the diaspora to the sphere of East-Timorese politics. Similarly, the Australian solidarity network has attained a renewed focus on development, rebuilding and reconstruction in East Timor, removing itself from, and further isolating, the diaspora.

The organisations for which purpose and activity were closely connected to the political campaign for independence have particularly struggled to redefine themselves within the new environment. Perhaps the most prominent organisation in this regard is TAV, whose diminishing role has to be seen in relation to the participants' sense of 'lost community,' disintegration and fragmentation. When I asked people about their experience of post-independence community change, it became clear that many of the exiles associate 'the community' with TAV. Throughout the years of the political struggle, TAV played a key role as an organisational body driving the cultural, political and social activities of the diaspora. The political campaign attained a central position in relation to the organisation's political and cultural actions, and it played a consolidating role in the organisation of social activities. The realisation of independence has therefore left some individuals with the impression that TAV has fulfilled its role and subsequently ceased. Others, such as Savio, express the belief that the organisation has died due to its loss of

key individuals, the realisation of its driving cause, the drop in activity levels, and the changing focus of the organisation's members:

The community it changed, it changed a lot. In terms of, the community start to spread too much, there's no more like kind of gathering together any more. We, we, the Timorese, we don't see each other for ages since the independence. Someone bumped into me and said 'I thought you went to Timor,' I said, 'no, I'm still here. I've been here all this time,' [laughs] yeah, because we are all spread. Only [at] funerals we bump into each others, [and] weddings, that's it. We don't have more—before we used to have TAV, Timorese Association of [Victoria], this thing is already not working. Since Emilia [former president of the TAV] and them left, it stopped working. So now it's not working. So now, [I used to, when] I went to the soccer and they [would] said that, one of them said that there's a TAV party going on, that was before the independence, now I don't know which TAV they talk about. I didn't know TAV existed ... Yeah, it became like a small pocket of community now.

Savio

The feelings of loss are restricted to those who were politically active throughout the occupation of East Timor. In contrast, others, particularly those who arrived as children or young adolescents or people who remained removed from the political campaign for independence, express a reinvigoration of connectedness and belonging.⁶⁵ Contrary to the former activists' experience of *losing* their community of belonging, these newcomers speak of *finding* such a community. This group of newcomers plays a key role in the post-independence diaspora and is in charge of most of the present day diasporic activism. The former activists' experiences should therefore not be seen as a reflection of the actual disappearance of communal organisations and the end of communal activities, but rather as a result of their search for replicates of the pre-independence community structures. In conjunction with their hopes and expectations for independence, this almost nostalgic longing for the communal spirit and activism of the occupation years makes many of them unable to see the process of rejuvenation, which indeed runs parallel to the decline of traditional diasporic activism.

⁶⁵ There is a significant group of Timorese Chinese and a limited number of mestiço and indigenous Timorese who remained removed from the political campaign and who chose to focus their energy on reconstituting their lives in exile. I will address this further in Chapter Five.

III. REDEFINING COMMUNITY

The period immediately following the referendum caused reverberations for present-day diasporic composition and practice, not only in term of the loss of a unifying cause and key individuals, but also in the introduction of new people to diasporic activism. The urgency of the humanitarian situation in East Timor following the 1999 referendum and the withdrawal of Indonesian troops led to a temporary intensified focus within the diaspora on communal activities and individual initiatives aimed at helping the people of East Timor. These largely philanthropic activities distinguished themselves from the previous political character of communal, social and cultural activities, and they ensured a continued unifying focus for diasporic activism. The unity of the diaspora was advanced by feelings of pride and euphoria prompted by the immense achievement that independence represented, the subsequent positive focus on East Timor within the media and other public spheres, and the increased support and interest exhibited by the Australian public. For some of the exiles who had been disconnected from East Timor and the political campaign, the renewed focus on the East-Timorese cause and the portrayal of the East-Timorese people as innocent victims turned heroes led to renewed pride, further prompting awareness and curiosity. It saw some, often younger, members of the diaspora join diasporic activities with a newfound enthusiasm and purpose.

Matteus, a young Timorese man born in Portugal, was one of the new recruits. Prior to independence, Matteus' engagement with East Timor and East-Timorese people was restricted to socialising with his family, despite some of his older siblings being intimately involved in the political campaign. His life had been led beyond the politics of his ancestral home and he had been largely unaware of what was happening in East Timor. Still young and with limited, if any, interest in politics, he had been sceptical to the community and he felt no attraction towards it due to the highly political character of the diaspora and diasporic activities. Moreover, in his efforts to lead a 'normal teenage life' there had been no room for political engagement and participation, and his attention had been firmly fixed on school, friends, music and art. His Australian friends had limited knowledge of and interest in East Timor and, looking for social acceptance amongst his peers, he had made a conscious choice to disassociate himself from his East-Timorese background. At this time, he thought of himself as Portuguese and he would present himself as Portuguese rather than East Timorese. Following independence, things changed; his Australian friends and acquaintances started asking him about his East-

Timorese background and expressed sympathy for the East-Timorese people and their struggle. Their questions made him realise the limitations in his own knowledge and, inspired by the new attention and positive acknowledgement of his heritage, he started seeking information through reading and engaging with the community. Moreover, the decreased political nature of the diaspora and its increased focus on philanthropy created a positive association and, as the following quote illustrates, he came to realise that East Timor and the East-Timorese diaspora is about more than politics:

The reason I feel that I did not join much Timorese community things 'cause I did not know many Timorese people, except my family. So when I met [Rita] and I met all these other people and I realised that 'Wow', you know what I mean, there's like, there's all these people that actually, that are doing all these things that I want to do, like art and stuff ... As a Timorese person in Australia I'm learning more [about my background] now... New friends in the community I think. I think, and—and kind of like being proud of being East Timorese. Because growing up, it was a bit confusing [and] I wasn't really that proud 'cause people don't know where is and it was quite embarrassing.

Matteus

Matteus' engagement with the community strengthened his sense of connectedness and belonging to East Timor. This was further intensified when he returned to East Timor to visit his family. Indeed, for many of the newcomers, visiting East Timor worked as a trigger for their involvement with the exile community. In contrast to the majority of 'returnees' whose return was closely connected to a mixture of homing desire and nostalgia, Matteus and others like him returned due to curiosity and had little emotional baggage connected with their return.⁶⁶ For Matteus, the return visit was an eye-opener, leading him to reconsider his priorities and changing his life in Australia. Similar experiences were expressed by Maria and other newcomers. Maria explained that:

... my personal involvement with the Timorese community or Timorese issues or anything like that came after 1999 when I went up on my trip and I saw my country and I saw, you know, in a sense, oh my God, now I understand all the friends and families that were so pride, so proud of independence, always partying, now I understood, you know, and I guess I'm the latecomer, but I guess that passion is here now ... [Independence] certainly changed my life [laughs]. It changed my life because, first, it gave me the opportunity to go to Timor and see my country, you know, and see it all. It changed my life in regards to

⁶⁶ Chapter Five explores people's experiences upon return and discusses the impact return had on feelings of home, belonging and identity.

the issues that I never thought of, I never thought I would devote my time to this extent on human rights' issues, women's issues, any of those sort of things that third countries, war countries face. That was not in my world. You know, my world was my little bubble. I had a good job, I was in Sydney, I had a great life. I never really thought about those issues, world issues, and generally in regards to poverty, yes of course, I am not being so, I never thought about it, but after Timor it just changed. I am so much more aware, I want to know, I am so much more involved. It just opened my mind, it educated me, Timor educated me, that trip educated me because I realised that there is so much to the world outside my bubble with my little circle of friends and my life, you know, there was just so much more in the world that I was not aware. I was so naive, that, oh my God. It was an education. It was an eye-opening. You know, especially, in regards to Timor and the situation. And then I wanted to learn, I wanted to find out and, it was never that I didn't have empathy or anything like that, but it was just that that was not my world.

Maria

This particular group of exiles share a sometimes newfound interest in humanitarian and philanthropic work, and commitment to humanitarianism and philanthropy appears to be as powerful a force driving their activism as their Timorese heritage. This is evident in Sebastiao's story. Sebastiao is a man in his early thirties who fled to Portugal as a child. During the occupation he refused to have anything to do with East Timor because of what he saw as a culture of violence, hatred and revenge. Encouraged by his Australian wife, he decided not long after the realisation of independence to visit East Timor to do a project on leadership within East-Timorese communities. He told me:

When I was in Timor I really got the feeling that I was contributing to something, to the creation of the nation. And really seeing that made me want to do it more on a day-to-day basis. I think, you know, like one of the reasons that drives me, you know, it could be of a more selfish reason, for the fact that, you know, I wanna feel that I am doing something worthwhile, that I'm with it, by a community, by a people. 'Cause, here in Australia I feel, as if I'm just another person, you know. Like, everything is so set up now, what I do would not make much of a difference on a big scale. I know on long term, it always does. But in Timor, you know, I feel my actions on a day-to-day basis makes a huge impact on people and on myself, I am really doing something. And—I don't know. I'm more, what drives me is not that I'm looking for acknowledgement or—I just want to do it 'cause I'm really passionate about it. If people acknowledge me, great, but, you know, I enjoy that, it drives me.

Sebastiao

Like Matteus and Maria, Sebastiao has found a new sense of belonging and connectedness through his return visit and subsequent engagement with the community:

I've found my culture, I found a place where I really belong and where I can go home, you know. And now, it's with pride that when people ask me where I'm from I say that I'm East Timorese. Yeah. I'm East Timorese and I'm proud about it.

Sebastiao

This group of individuals drives much of the current post-independence diasporic activity, particularly through participation in the new community organisation, METAC. The neutral character of METAC and the relative regularity of its activities have resonated well with the younger population of the diaspora. The organisation's non-political approach and its focus on humanitarianism, art and culture have also appealed to the newcomers. They have used METAC as a space through which they have been introduced to and become familiar with the East-Timorese diasporic community.

IV. POST-INDEPENDENCE ORGANISATIONAL PRACTICE

The notion of exile remains prominent in the organisational structures of the diaspora, but the manner in which it manifests itself and how it drives diasporic activity has changed. Prior to the independence, the notion of exile transpired through the focus on homeland and return. Organisational structures and activities were closely connected to the homeland; people joined as a group and mobilised their efforts in response to the unfolding events at home. Ten years after the referendum for independence, it is no longer the homeland itself that instigates their association and practice, but their dwelling beyond their ancestral home; a sense of association is established by their bond to their original home, by their shared heritage and common destiny. Diasporic practice is increasingly guided by the needs and wishes of the exilic community, and communal activity can no longer be seen exclusively as a response to the political situation in the home country.

METAC represents an example of the changing discourse. The organisation was established as a community centre aimed at providing a space in which people could foster their East-Timorese affiliation together with other exiles and Australian people sympathetic to and interested in East Timor. Besides the Welcome Dinners, it does not

have a set agenda, but initiates activities and programs on the call of its members. METAC actively seeks to establish new connections with Australian organisations and individuals. This provides the organisation with a broader focus and contributes to a positive circle of cooperation fostering communal activities. An example of such cooperation is METAC's association with NRCHC and BANH. These organisations played an important role in the establishment of METAC, and METAC continues to receive support from both organisations in terms of access to a community space, phone and internet connections, assistance with finances and organisational matters, and general advice. Another example is the assistance provided by METAC to the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) in their recruitment of actors and extras for the miniseries *Answered by Fire*, a project that saw many of the exiles returning to the community and revitalising their identification with East Timor.

METAC's ability to move beyond traditional diasporic activism by turning to art and culture as communal meeting points rather than political means has led to its successful establishment as a community space. Such a focus is also evident in the Timorese-Chinese organisations. In contrast to their non-Timorese-Chinese counterparts, these organisations have experienced little, if any, changes in organisational structure and activism after the independence. This, I argue, relates to their limited association with the political campaign and their pre-existing focus on the exile community, which ensured a sense of continuity at the time of independence. The communal focus of these organisations, in particular TECCVIC, is illustrated in their care for and promotion of the case of the East-Timorese asylum seekers whose visa applications were rejected when East Timor became independent. The case of the asylum seekers was also adopted by METAC and, together with the Timorese-Chinese organisations, they focused much of their energy on assisting the asylum seekers in the immigration process. This provided the organisations with a specific focal point for activities. It gave them a purpose and an objective during the transitional period when the rest of the diaspora struggled to find a common cause. The focus of METAC and TECCVIC on community matters has seen them become the two most prominent organisations within the diaspora at the time of writing. Nevertheless, the reach of both organisations is limited. TECCVIC remains focused on the Timorese-Chinese section of the community and there is no cooperation between TECCVIC and other Timorese organisations. METAC is dominated by younger members of the diaspora and, despite it being an open forum, only a handful of the older

exiles who used to be part of TAV or other factions of the political campaign attend its programs.

New life has also been given to TAV, which is progressively moving towards the communal focus exhibited by METAC and TECCVIC. A handful of individuals are currently making a concerted effort to redefine the organisation to fit with the new reality. After a period characterised by lack of direction and uncertainty with regards to the organisation's purpose, TAV is redefining itself as a community-focused organisation. The current President of TAV, Cecilia Sequeira Gonçalves, has, with the help of Jose Barbosa, a Portuguese man who lived in East Timor from the age of 15 until he fled the country in 1975 and who has been involved with TAV since it was founded in 1978, re-established the community newsletter, *Hadomi*. She has also initiated a cultural group aimed at teaching Timorese songs and dances to children within the community. Both of these initiatives are responses to a growing concern amongst members of the TAV that people are losing interest in East Timor and a fear that the new generation of Timorese Australians will lose their connection to the territory. The organisation is no longer engaged in fundraising activities or other charitable schemes. This is largely a response to the impression within the community that funds have been misused after arriving in East Timor, if at all making it there. As Theresa explained:

... some people told, you know, said to my face, you know, 'there is no point in going [on] anymore,' you know. What about fundraiser, what about [unclear], we don't know where that money is going. We hear stories. And we've lived in Timor as well too, for a number of years, and people have actually complained about so much money being fundraised but we don't see anything, nothing's happening. So that's [unclear] as well, so people have this uneasiness about going [to] fundraising initiatives that take place.

Theresa

The redefinition of TAV, the establishment of METAC and the continued communal focus of TECCVIC reflect a tendency within the Melbourne diaspora towards an increased focus on the exile community and decreased translocal activity at the organisational level. With the exception of the small, recently established organisation TACOV, which has conducted a few projects in East Timor, translocal activities are largely restricted to individual initiatives. A few of the newcomers are involved in larger projects aimed at capacity-building and empowerment of East-Timorese communities and organisations, cooperating with East-Timorese officials, local community representatives,

and East-Timorese and Australian non-government organisations. I have also been told about returnees, generally Timorese Chinese, who have established, or aspire to establish, businesses in East Timor and who today travel back and forth between Australia and East Timor. Translocalism is, however, generally restricted to individual initiatives and based upon family affiliations. People try to stay in touch with family members via phone contact, email and SMS. There is an inherent limitation to such communication due to high phone rates, expensive and restricted internet access in East Timor, and problems with network coverage and electricity (particularly outside Dili). Those who have the resources send money to their family in East Timor, either on a regular basis or when asked to help with particular projects. Some own properties that tend to be leased or lent to family members, and some travel for short-term work contracts or to visit family and friends.

The transition within the diaspora from the overwhelming focus on homeland to an emphasis on the exile community is also reflected in people's ideas about the role that the diaspora can and should play in the post-independence context. There is an interesting contrast between people's thoughts and ideas about the role of the community and their actual engagement with and practice within the diasporic sphere. As seen above, people's participation in community events and engagement with community organisations have declined. Nonetheless, people see community organisations as playing an important role in providing a social space in which the exiles can meet, a forum in which they can foster their East-Timorese connections, and where they can learn about their cultural heritage. Indeed, one of the most important roles of the diaspora is, according to the study participants, to promote East-Timorese culture to the exiles themselves, to keep the culture alive for future generations. This is not only a matter of reminding the exiles of where they are from, it is also seen as an important part of the exiles' ability to live full lives where knowledge and understanding of the various pieces of their hybrid identities help develop a sense of belonging and a sense of place. Knowing your background, they argue, can promote a sense of connectedness, a feeling of home. Sebastiao explained:

With any Timorese that I meet, there is an instant connection. We don't have to say anything. You know. It's funny. It's as if the thought of, of being Timorese accounts above it all. Whereas before, the thought of Timorese was, you know—but now, the thought of a Timorese, it can put me at ease, and I look forward to [see them]. You know. I can totally, totally see myself [as part of it] ... I feel really at home ... now, when I am

with the Timorese community, it's like instantaneous. I don't have to spend time, you know, slowly build[ing] the relationship—it's instantaneous.

Sebastiao

For the older members of the community, the emphasis on cultural preservation and edification relates to a particular concern that those of the younger generation are losing their connection to East Timor. This is somewhat paradoxical as many of the young exiles who left East Timor as children or young adolescents are today more actively engaged in cultural communal initiatives than their older peers. Despite the fact that a large portion of the communal activities and cultural initiatives are organised by people who are aged in their 20s and 30s and are engaged in METAC and Lalonak (the choir associated with METAC), many of the older participants who were actively involved in the resistance struggle argue that 'the younger generation has disappeared.' They also express concern that the younger members of the community do not have a 'real' understanding of East-Timorese culture and they are worried about what they describe as a lack of interest amongst the young in learning about traditional practices, values and mores. This stands in stark contrast to the attitudes I have found amongst many of the younger exiles who express a real interest in learning and promoting East-Timorese culture and tradition. The cultural expressions of the younger generations do, however, articulate their positioning within different cultural spaces and, rather than seeing East-Timorese culture as a static entity, many believe East-Timorese cultural and artistic expressions can (and should) be brought into the contemporary context.⁶⁷

Some of the participants still believe that the community has a direct role to play in relation to the homeland. With a sense of nostalgia, they speak of the role that the diaspora played in relation to the struggle for independence and express a hope that the community will regain its previous transnational character. The community, they argue, can lobby the East-Timorese people's case within the Australian context; for example, in relation to the Timor Sea negotiations and the distribution of aid. It may also represent an alternative, neutral voice that can counteract negative trends within East Timor itself by placing pressure on the government, the opposition, or other forces within the East-Timorese society. By sharing their knowledge and experiences with the East-Timorese people, and by providing a constructive attitude towards reconstruction and development,

⁶⁷ A further discussion of inter-generational frictions within the East-Timorese diaspora can be found in Crockford (2007).

the exiles can have a positive influence on communal processes and dynamics. They may be able to assist in various development projects using their position as cultural mediators who are familiar with the cultural framework of East-Timorese society and the workings of Australian financial, commercial and entrepreneurial spheres, and by presenting themselves as a unified and proud community they can lead by example and promote unity and peace.

GROWING DIVISIONS

One of the participants, Che, expressed particular disappointment and frustration over the diaspora's apparent inability to regain its transnational character. According to Che, there is growing disunity within the diaspora. He maintains that an increased focus on the differences within the diaspora, rather than on the exiles' shared past and common destiny, makes it difficult for the community to fulfil its role and commitment towards both the exile community and the homeland. Reflecting his experiences of the cohesive nature of the diaspora during the resistance struggle and the subsequent achievements of the exile community, he argues that, to stand strong in relation to pressures from Australia and East Timor, the community must unify along political and ethnic bounds. A unified base will promote greater participation, which again will allow the community to follow through on its commitment towards those living in exile and provide the opportunity to influence processes in East Timor. Che blames the emergence of old antagonisms and divisions on the loss of an overriding cause and the tendency amongst the exiles to discriminate and play political games. Other participants, such as Theresa, expressed similar observations:

... just going back to the pre-independence, even pre-99, you know, although there were already issues within the community, like, there were certain separations and things like that, that was always present, you know, the common theme was the call for independence and we gathered for activities for that one objective. Once that was done, once that was achieved, you know, all these unresolved issues are simmering.

Theresa

As discussed in the previous chapter, despite its apparent homogeneity during the political struggle, the East-Timorese diaspora is not a homogeneous community. Beyond the historical connection to a particular territory and the shared historical narratives, the notion of what it means to be East Timorese is contested, and, though the East-Timorese

diaspora is a small community in terms of people, it is highly complex in its cultural, ethnic and political composition. Moreover, in terms of 'diasporic experience,' there are vast differences according to the individuals' journeys, social relations, genders, ages, languages, ethnicities and so forth (Crockford 2007). In the shadow of political and social development, these different experiences have led to an increasing polarisation of the diasporic community, particularly evident in relation to the old political divide between Fretilin and UDT and the ethnic division between the Timorese Chinese and the *mestiço* and indigenous Timorese. In relation to the political divide, the introduction of a multi-party system in East Timor after independence has reintroduced the political rhetoric to the diaspora and the community has become increasingly polarised along political lines. Yet, rather than being placed within the contemporary political environment of East Timor, the political division is largely articulated in terms of the traditional split between UDT and Fretilin. The political antagonism is amplified in the context of the political battles played out in East Timor, and the Australian media's largely negative portrayal of the first Fretilin government has further split the diaspora along political lines.⁶⁸ There is increased suspicion and disapproval on both sides of the political schism, with each side blaming the other for the difficulties facing the new nation.

The decision of the East-Timorese government to adopt Portuguese as the national language alongside Tetum and the valorisation of East Timor's lusophone connection have also influenced the political division. Whereas the indigenous East Timorese, in particular those who do not speak Portuguese, are critical of this policy, the largely *mestiço*-dominated UDT section of the diaspora has embraced the policy. In what is experienced by indigenous Timorese and Timorese Chinese as a highly exclusionist move, TAV has adopted Portuguese as the organisation's main language, with its newsletter now written in Portuguese and Portuguese being used in conjunction with English at public events. The language issue and the question of East Timor's cultural heritage have endowed the *mestiços* with a degree of symbolic power. Some participants argue that this has led to an arrogant attitude, fostering division along the old colonial hierarchical lines. Domingas, a Timorese-Chinese woman in her mid-forties, explained that:

... now, after independence, it's, what I would call the colonial mentality, the ugliness of the colonial mentality is raising its head again. I noticed something interesting, during the

⁶⁸ This will be explored at length in Chapter Six.

campaign, during the occupation, certainly there were those who see themselves as above everybody else, but ... [the Portuguese or those with] mixed, or those more related to Portuguese, but since Timor became independent they started to again, especially in Australia, because East Timor has chosen to use Portuguese, so now they simply think, 'well, you know, we're running the country again.'

Domingas

Experiences of exclusionist practices are particularly evident in the narratives of the Timorese Chinese. Telling me about a community meeting held not long after the independence where people met to discuss the upcoming visit of Xanana Gusmão, Deng, a Timorese-Chinese man in his late thirties, told me how he felt systematically ignored by the non-Chinese Timorese. He told me how he felt the non-Chinese Timorese only want the money that the Timorese Chinese can assist with and that:

If you come from Chinese background you're not seen to be valued political[ly]—your ideas are not valued, your input, you know...

Deng

Many of the Timorese Chinese argue that they have been excluded from the general community and that many of the indigenous and, particularly, the *mestiço* Timorese do not perceive them as 'true' Timorese. This refers to the notion of authenticity and the battle between diasporic sub-groups as to what it means to be East Timorese (Crockford 2007). As Crockford (2007: 284) argues in relation to the Indonesian-speaking and educated Timorese section of the diaspora, people have been subjected to

moral judgements framed within discourses of East Timorese authenticity. Within such discursive formations, both 'Australianisation' and 'Indonesianisation' were variously marked as signifiers of inauthenticity and conceptualised as a corrupting force.

The moral judgements and the question of authenticity embed a disagreement about what it means to be East Timorese: are Timorese Chinese born in East Timor but raised within a Chinese cultural framework East Timorese? Are children of *mestiço* parents born in Portugal and raised in Australia East Timorese? Are those born, raised and educated within the Indonesian cultural framework East Timorese? Are second generation refugees East Timorese? Though the vast majority of the participants of this study would answer yes to these questions, interactional patterns and issues of discrimination suggest that

there is a contested notion of what it means to be East Timorese. It reflects social and cultural distinctions of the Portuguese colonial time, as well as the different historical experiences of the divergent groups of arrivals. Che, Theresa and other participants are calling for the diaspora to shift their focus away from these distinctions and towards shared principles, experiences and history. In many ways, they argue, the diaspora has to go through a process of reconciliation in which old wounds dating back to the civil war can be healed and more recent issues of discriminatory practices on all levels of the diaspora can be put to rest. This could move the diaspora into the next phase of existence where unity across difference, founded in the exiles' commonality rather than in their opposition to occupational forces, will guide the diaspora in its efforts to provide support to its members and remain engaged in the preservation and development of East-Timorese culture and society.

V. CONCLUSION

This chapter began with a discussion of the concept of habitus and social field, analysing how the exiles' past socialisation and practice enforced a continued emphasis upon their past community of belonging through political participation and articulation of a myth of return. The central position given to the myth of return and the notion of the homeland through the political campaign is at the heart of experiences of confusion and doubt that arose amongst the exiles in the aftermath of independence. With the return of the homeland, the exiles were forced to reconsider what home is, a process that saw many confronted with the contrasting experience of an imagined, refined, nostalgic vision of home and the embodied, lived experience of home. During their exile, a parallel dimension of home to that of the ancestral homeland had developed, and the question of return was no longer as straightforward as the exiles had anticipated. Accordingly, independence did not lead to a mass departure of the diaspora to East Timor, but rather saw the emergence of alternative strategies by which the exiles negotiated feelings of guilt associated with their reluctance to return home.

Whereas the immediate period following independence saw an intensification of transnational activism and the continued prominence of the notion of home and return, more recent diasporic practice shows evidence of an increased focus on the exile community and a decrease of the hegemonic influence of the homeland upon the exiles' identities. Diasporic activism today is driven predominantly by a group of individuals

who refrained from the political campaign throughout the Indonesian occupation of East Timor. Attracted by a newfound interest and pride in their ancestral country triggered by the immense achievement of independence and the increased focus on the East-Timorese cause within Australian public spheres, these individuals face independence without the emotional baggage, nostalgic longing and high expectations held by those who were engaged in the political campaign. For the newcomers, dependence led to experiences of finding a community of belonging, experiences which are contrasted by their politically active peers who express a sense of lost community. An almost nostalgic longing for the communal spirit and activism of the political campaign, as well as dissonance between the exiles' present reality and the way they had imagined this reality, make many of the former activists unable to see the renaissance of diasporic organisations and activism.

Reflecting upon the changing notion of home, this chapter has discussed the changes that have occurred to social structure and diasporic practice. In the next chapter, I will expand upon this discussion and consider how independence has led to changes in the individuals' experiences of community and identity. I will develop the analysis of the discourse of collectivism by considering the notion of reciprocity and further explore the difference between those who were politically active throughout the occupation years and those who refrained from participating in the political campaign.

CIRCULATING STORIES AND RUPTURED COLLECTIVES: QUESTIONS OF POST-INDEPENDENCE IDENTITY

During my interaction with the East-Timorese community in Melbourne I was struck by how everybody I spoke with conveyed a personal account of the situation in East Timor. People who have never returned described the post-independence situation of the country as if they had actually been there themselves. Drawing on the experience of friends and family who had visited or moved back, they told me about the new nation and how they believed it to have changed, for better or worse, during their exile. This revealed a practice of story-telling that has become part of the diaspora. It can be conceptualised in terms of the symbolic–interactionist approach to gossip (Haviland 1977; Heilman 1976) whereby ‘gossip provides individuals with a map of their social environment and with current information about happenings, inhabitants and their dispositions’ and by which they ‘align their actions’ (Rapport & Overing 2000: 154). Through what I call ‘circulating stories,’ people have started to negotiate their position in relation to independent East Timor. Many of the East Timorese in Australia have struggled to find their place and role in relation to the independent nation. Personal experiences upon return, perceptions of political, cultural, economic and social development (or lack thereof), and political unrest and communal violence have led to renewed questioning of identity and belonging. This chapter explores this new questioning of identity and belonging through people’s stories of change, sacrifice and return. It continues the discussion from the previous chapter and illustrates how people negotiate the feelings of guilt connected to their decision to remain in Australia through a moral discourse of sacrifice, which is a constitutive element of the circulating stories.

In order to understand the process of negotiation and transformation of boundaries, identity and belonging, it is necessary to attain an understanding of the basis from which this occurs. This is largely related to people’s perception of change, resentment and exclusion, as it is exemplified in people’s experiences upon return. Accordingly, the chapter sets out to define the notion of ‘circulating stories’ and to consider the narratives

of return upon which they are based. The discussion is divided into three parts. First, I briefly outline the experience of homecoming and spiritual connectedness articulated by many of the participants. This is followed by a discussion of the contrasting experience of, firstly, change and, secondly, resentment and exclusion. The discussion of change is placed within the framework of nostalgic longing, as nostalgic memories of the past amplify the experience of change. The chapter continues with a discussion of what Elizabeth Traube (2007) in her study of the Mambai people in central East Timor calls 'a cultural code of reciprocity.' Traube's study helps illuminate how a discourse of morality and a notion of dualism forms part of East-Timorese society. I argue that this discourse of morality and the notion of dualism are at the heart of the circulating stories and the exiles' experiences post-independence, and that it is through this discourse that they are able to justify their move away from the transnational sphere. The last section of the chapter explores how the circulating stories represent a process of othering. I return to the difference between those who were politically active and those who refrained from involvement in the political campaign in order to illustrate how the political campaign not only influenced pre-independence exile identities, but also signifies the key to understanding post-independence practice and identity.

The chapter focuses primarily on the experience of *mestiço* and indigenous Timorese. As mentioned in the previous chapter, few Timorese Chinese actively related to the myth of return and the political campaign, and independence has not had the same impact upon this group of exiles as on the *mestiço*- and indigenous-Timorese community. In contrast to the *mestiço* and indigenous Timorese, most Timorese Chinese set down roots in Australia at an early stage of their exile and envisaged their future in Australia (Thatcher 1992). Their post-independence questioning of identity and belonging is, consequently, not as apparent.

I. CIRCULATING STORIES

During the course of my fieldwork, I spent much time interacting with individuals and families at formal and informal gatherings. Aware of my interest in East Timor, the study participants discussed and shared their opinions about the state of the new nation with me. The participants' engagement with East-Timorese issues and their knowledge of government initiatives, policies and actions varies greatly. Although only a minority of the participants actively seek information about East Timor through newspapers, internet

websites, email groups, and friends and family in East Timor, everybody I spoke with articulated strong opinions about the political, social, cultural and economic development of the country. I often found myself in situations in which my knowledge and understanding of East Timor was challenged by negative, pessimistic and angry accounts of the state of the East-Timorese nation. Occasionally, emotional descriptions founded in political rhetoric were at odds with factual information, conveying the personal story beneath the narrative more so than the actual situation in East Timor.

The inconsistency between the personal narratives and information derived from various sources such as academic writings and government reports left me wondering on what basis these narratives are founded. Although political affiliation, age, class and personal experiences of the civil war and the Indonesian occupation create a certain bias, this does not in itself create the narratives. More so, these narratives are sustained by what I have called 'circulating stories.' This term refers to a narrative activity within the diaspora through which personal accounts of change, sacrifice and return are told and retold. The circulating stories reflect accounts of post-independence East Timor as experienced by people who have returned to the territory in the aftermath of independence. These accounts are adopted by the wider diaspora and, through their telling and retelling, become removed from the particular personal narratives from which they originate and circulate within the diaspora by their pre-empted capacities as 'truths.' On the subject of return, the circulating stories describe a complex mixture of emotions in which a sense of homecoming, initial optimism and hope intersect with feelings of estrangement, change, exclusion and rejection. In what follows, I will briefly illustrate the sense of homecoming articulated by some of the participants, before exploring the issues of change, resentment and exclusion as they manifest in people's narratives of return.

SPIRITUAL HOMECOMING IN THE MIDST OF RUINS

The majority of the participants recount an experience of what may only be described as a spiritual homecoming in which they felt a strongly embodied emotion of connectedness when they first arrived in East Timor. The intensity of this feeling was often unexpected, particularly for the participants who left East Timor as children or young adolescents and who have no personal memory of their life in East Timor prior to their flight. This sense of belonging and connectedness is articulated by the two sisters, Nita and Letizia, in the following two quotes. Nita left East Timor when she was seven years old, Letizia when

she was one, travelling via Mozambique and Portugal before arriving in Australia. Their sense of connectedness to their ancestral land must be seen in relation to how the spirit and notion of East Timor was kept alive during their lives in exile. Through their parents' concern about East Timor, their pride in East-Timorese culture and their political activism, Nita and Letizia were introduced to the cause from an early age. For both girls, participation in the Free East Timor campaign seemed like an obvious choice. Their activism, either through political channels or cultural and artistic means, fostered a sense of belonging to the country of which they had little personal memory. East Timor was at the core of their exile identities and a central part of their lives in Australia.

Oh, yeah. It was, like, as soon as we got out of the plane, oh we, I felt that sense of belonging, straight away, yeah. And it was beautiful because the flowers were so bright, it was so bright and beautiful. The airport had lots of flowers and, it was just beautiful, completely. And I felt like there was warmth around and as if the land itself welcoming. Yeah, it was this power, this birthing light, like inviting us to come in. That's what I felt. Even my sister felt the same. Even my brother—my brother went there by himself first and he said 'Oh, you get out of the, as soon as I got out of the plane I just felt amazing! [Laughs] This is my place,' he said; 'this is where I belong.' That's what he said. And that's what we felt too. As if the land itself was acknowledging us. Yeah. It was amazing. Spiritual.

Nita

Wow—well, because I left when I was one [year old] I had no idea of where I actually were, where I was born, so it was just overwhelming, you know, seeing the land and meeting my family for the first time in my life. You know, I met so many people and it was just—wow. And I love, I love the mountains, the bush, the temperature was just, 'This is it,' I like it hot! [Laughs] And the beach. I love—it's really weird, I felt, parts of me really felt connected, like felt, it was almost like spiritual—but, you know, but to me it made no sense, 'cause it's like, you know, I've spent most of my life ... I've spent a lot of time in Portugal but a lot more here. So, and, you know, I don't feel connected here. I love it. I really like Melbourne now and I think it's a really special place but I don't feel that spiritual connection. And I felt that at the moment I landed in Timor, it was like, ah. So what is that? Is that, you know, is land that important or is it—it made no sense to me. I was trying, you know, to rationalise and it's like I think it's more than culture 'cause my culture is mixed anyway so it must be some sort of, the crocodile within me.

Letizia

For many, particularly those returning in the early period after the 1999 referendum, this feeling of spiritual connectedness appeared in the midst of ruins and it was accompanied by a sense of shock over the extent of the destruction and the unfolding humanitarian crisis. Arriving in Dili was like entering a war-zone. Houses were blown out, left as skeletons without windows and doors. Some buildings were still burning and the smell of smoke was intense. Many of those who had fled to the mountains or been deported to West Timor during the Indonesian withdrawal and the rampage of the militia had not yet returned and, as Emelda explained, the city felt empty and you could feel the loss and hardship of the years of the resistance:

When I went back after independence, it's the first time, it's very emotional. Because the first time, very emotional. Because—we see the city's empty, burnt. People sit there, just think[ing] 'Now what can I do? I miss these people. Oh, these people fighting too much for this country, he died for independence.' All these things. You can see dead people. Like people say, 'Oh my uncle fighting, fighting. My son fighting, fighting, for independence and they never see independence, the light of independence.'

Emelda

Descriptions of destruction and the returnees' emotional response to the devastation facing them when arriving in Dili form part of the circulating stories of return. These descriptions embody the returnees' reflections on the suffering and sacrifices of the East-Timorese people, as well as their admiration of the people who lived with and endured the brutality of the Indonesian occupation. They provide a framework for the returnees' portrayal of their emotional motivation for return, namely their wish to contribute and help rebuild the country that had been left in ashes. These accounts contextualise the choice of returning and emphasise the returnees' moral commitment to East Timor. The emphasis of the circulating stories is, however, not placed on the returnees' experience of destruction and devastation, on their sincere empathy with the East-Timorese people or on the spiritual feeling of homecoming as articulated by Nita and Letizia. Rather, the stories concentrate on images of change and resentment as they are portrayed in the returnees' personal narratives of return.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ The potential reasons for this focus will be explored later in the chapter.

NOSTALGIA AND EXPERIENCES OF CHANGE

The circulating stories convey a message of change—‘Things have changed, East Timor is not what it used to be,’ people argue. Exactly what has changed remains relatively vague. Hints are given through references to how people remember their ancestral home, revealing a nostalgic longing for times past and a subconscious expectation that East Timor would have remained the same as before their flight. But the 24 years of Indonesian occupation left their mark on East-Timorese community, culture and society, like years of exile marked the refugees. Consequently, returning home has not been as straightforward as many had expected it to be.

The potential ambiguity associated with return home is observed by Paul Gready (1994: 512), who explains that ‘homecoming is often an ambiguous and disorienting experience, with joy and relief tempered, even eclipsed, by other emotions such as disappointment and unfulfilled expectations, disillusionment and anger.’ Only few exiles return with a real appreciation of what they return to, what they return with, and what they return without (Gready 1994: 513). The gradual and perhaps subtle changes to practice, agency and identity that have occurred in exile have become an integral, naturalised part of the individual’s self. Although the individuals possess a habituated mastery of reflexivity and may accordingly have the opportunity to consciously engage with the changes to their identity and practice (Askland 2007: 241), such reflexivity is likely to be intensified when faced with the embodied experience of change to both self and home that emerge when returning to one’s ancestral home. It may be difficult to face these changes. Expectations based on nostalgic memories can make it particularly hard to cope with the reality, as these form part of the exiles’ identity, agency and community.

In an essay on nostalgia critique, Stuart Tannock (1995) explains how nostalgia is a response to a variety of personal needs and political desires. He argues that nostalgia, defined as a ‘structure of feeling’ (Williams 1977),

invokes a positively evaluated past world in response to a deficient present world. The nostalgic subject turns to the past to find construct sources of identity, agency, or community, that are felt to be lacking, blocked, subverted, or threatened in the present ... Invoking the past, the nostalgic subject may be involved in escaping or evading, in

critiquing, or in mobilizing to overcome the present experience of loss of identity, lack of agency, or absence of community (Tannock 1995: 454).

For people displaced, dispossessed or distanced from their origins, nostalgia represents a powerful instrument providing meaning and maintaining a connection to the past (Davis 1979; Tannock 1995; Trotter 1999; Varvin 2003). According to Davis (1979: 31), it represents a sense of continuity when individuals are faced with discontinuity and it allows the displaced subjects to construct, maintain and reconstruct themselves.⁷⁰ Nostalgic narratives can emerge as a response to the collapse of meaning resulting from the reality of exile, which removes many of the conditions that previously underpinned identity and sense of belonging, and it may provide a stable source of value and coherence. As Norwegian psychoanalyst and researcher Sverre Varvin (2003: 169, my translation) argues,

[w]e can only cope with loss when what is lost is represented in the psyche in a meaningful way. Reminiscence is, in this sense, a way of dealing with loss; it is to acknowledge that something is lost but at the same time recreate it as a symbol.

This does not imply that all exiles employ similar nostalgic narratives and nostalgia may be adopted in various ways by different people and by the same person at different times.⁷¹

Aconce's story is example of how nostalgia may help refugees cope with the hardship of exile and how the subsequent nostalgic memories may cause challenges when returning home. Aconce was born in 1958 and grew up in Vemase, east of Dili. She is of indigenous-Timorese background, but acquired a close connection to the Portuguese culture from an early age. The oldest of 12 siblings, Aconce left home when she was 11 years old to attend boarding school in Ozu. The boarding school was run by Portuguese,

⁷⁰ Nostalgia has been criticised for its sentimental weakness and potential for misrepresentation. It has been associated with conservatism, distortion and manipulation. Critics (e.g. Hewison 1987; Lowenthal 1989; Doane & Hodges 1987; Combs 1993) have accused nostalgia of being a social pathology, regressive and delusional. Though these are important issues that deserve further exploration, the purpose of this discussion is neither to forward a critique of nostalgia nor to consider the question about selective memory and the use of nostalgic memories for political and personal gain. Rather, I wish to suggest that nostalgia is a phenomenon that can help exiles cope with, though simultaneously create, a sense of lost identity, community and agency.

⁷¹ The question about nostalgia and memory as it relates to refugees and exiles opens a vast area of issues concerning trauma, identity and coping. It is a complex and, at times, problematic phenomenon that is beyond the scope of this discussion. The purpose of this discussion is to illustrate how memories of the past can represent a challenge when returning home and I will therefore not pursue the discussion of nostalgia and reminiscence as ways of coping. For further information on the question of refugees and nostalgia, memory, recollection and coping, see Beisler (1987), Varvin (2003) and Papadopoulos (2002).

Timorese, Italian and Spanish nuns. Portuguese was the main language and the children's education took place within a Portuguese and Catholic framework. During her first year at the school, Aconce learnt Portuguese and became familiar with Portuguese values and traditions. After a year, her father's boss, a Portuguese man married to a mestiço woman, offered for her to come and stay with them in Dili where she continued her schooling. Aconce has nothing but positive memories of her childhood and teenage years and treasures the Portuguese time. She told me that:

[East Timor] was such a peaceful country. Paradise. It was beautiful, clean, fresh, everything organic—we just lived in peace. I know it was a dictatorial regime, like everybody says, but you live your life. You live, you eat, you go to school in peace, you come home, you have your routine, like, you have respect, everything was in order. There was law and order. And I had the most beautiful youth. Fantastic. I can only have very good memories of Timor. We were free to walk. Free to walk. And free to go to school.

Aconce

The Portuguese cultural heritage attained particular importance for Aconce during her years in exile and it has become a significant part of her identification as East Timorese. Moreover, due to a lack of support from the East-Timorese community during the initial process of resettlement, Aconce and her husband established close links with the Portuguese community in Melbourne. She explained that:

[My husband] did a lot [of] Timorese stuff, but then he didn't have much support. It was only the two of us here and we didn't have any support. And then, us two, we gave up the Timorese and went to the Portuguese community. For years. And we loved it. I tell you what, I'm a bit shy to say this, but—the Portuguese took care of us. And the Portuguese opened their hands for us. I think the Timorese was a bit conflict. The Portuguese were happy with us. [My husband] was the vice-president, then the treasurer. He formed the soccer club—and in the party committee, all this Portuguese.

Aconce

For Aconce, the connection to Portuguese language, culture and community helped her deal with the challenges of exile, creating a connection to the past and a basis for interaction and community. The dynamics of nostalgic longing emphasised the positive aspects of her past. Everything she associated with the Portuguese era attained a positive

twist, even the repressive and totalitarian character of Salazar's rule and the limited investment by the Portuguese in education, health and infrastructure.⁷² She told me:

And then, when we got Salazar, it was a dictator, that's good for some, it was good for some, no one is good for no one, but he was a very respected person I think. He make colonies peaceful ... The Portuguese entered the country without force. They came with the cross to convince the people to go over to Christianity. And they embrace people. They implant their language and culture, but slowly. And they respect the Timorese indigenous culture. They never touch. This is what is most important. Our Luliks and our ancestors, the Portuguese never touched. Never. They respected them ... The Portuguese did not educate us much, very limited. All right. Very limited. It's a little bit like—very limited. Because they know if they educate a lot the indigenous they will know a lot. This is the kind of regime, the kind of mentality. You can't let people know a lot ... [But still,] Portuguese time—that was good.

Aconce

When returning to East Timor, the nostalgic memory on which her dream of return rested posed new challenges. The East Timor she returned to was different to the East Timor she had left behind. The cultural practices, values and codes that she had valorised in exile had lost their significance, changed beyond recognition, or been replaced by Indonesian practices and values. The Indonesian occupation had changed the country, not only in the physical structure of the cities (particularly Dili), but also in relation to language, food, music and people's way of being. Aconce is sceptical of these changes and sees them as degrading East-Timorese culture and community, moving the local people away from their traditional way of living and communal values. This is illustrated in a deep concern about hygiene and cleanliness. Aconce contrasts her nostalgic memories of the beautiful city of Dili with its white beaches, tropical plants and surrounding mountains with descriptions of chaos, dirt, graffiti and tagging. She portrays Dili as a filthy city where waste is left in the streets, outside people's houses and restaurants and shops. Pigs, dogs and roosters roam the streets, picking in the garbage left for their consumption, and the air is filled with dust and smoke from people burning household waste and preparing food

⁷² The study participants generally describe the influence of Indonesian culture and politics in negative terms, but nevertheless acknowledge the contribution by the Indonesian occupational regime with regards to its investment in education, health and infrastructure. The Portuguese colonial authorities invested little in education and health, and at the end of the Portuguese era the socioeconomic conditions in East Timor were appalling. Through improvements and investments in infrastructure, health and education, the Indonesian government attempted to show the benefits of integration with Indonesia. Between 1975 and 1993, the number of elementary schools rose from 47 to 612, the number of high schools from five to 34, and the number of hospitals from two to 10. In 1986, East Timor got its first university (Arenas 1998: 139; Askland 2005: 61–2; UNGA 1993: 14, 1994: 13).

over open wood fires. Though largely a result of poverty, Aconce perceives the hardship endured by the Timorese people and the poor living standards of East-Timorese society as a result of the Indonesianisation of East Timor. She argued that:

Hygiene is poor in that country. They still die of cholera and tuberculosis. [We need to] teach them how to, how to go to the market, teach them don't put food on the floor. Teach them. This is the best thing that other societies could do for Timor. During the Portuguese we had all this. That—the Indonesians took it away. I just think, and this is a very sad thing to say, but I think they went backwards ... They went backwards⁷³

Aconce

During her years in exile, Aconce's dream of return had centred on the expectation of home 'waiting, as before, as remembered and unchanged' (Gready 1994: 513); however, her nostalgic vision of Portuguese Timor did not correspond with the reality she faced upon return. Her life in exile had removed attachments and connections—friends and family were no longer there, the old corner store, her home in Dili and the Portuguese school had been destroyed or burnt to the ground:

The first time I went—a big shock to my system. When I saw, when I enter Dili, I went to Darwin, went on an Air North plane, with my two boys, [my husband] was already there. My father's house was a skeleton. No windows, just a skeleton. No windows, no doors. I was so scared ... it was depressing. Because when I left it was all so beautiful. And now they have—it's all a mess.

Aconce

The changes made Aconce feel like 'a stranger who has no life left in that place called home' (Gready 1994: 513). Her experience illustrates how, as Fuglerud (1999:5) argues, migrants may, 'whilst cherishing their memories and struggling to cultivate their ties,' experience that the door 'slowly closes until, finally, there is no way back [home].' Accordingly, return may be possible in space but not in time and, though it may foster hope, 'it is a source of disappointment and frustration' (Sayad 1996: 12). These frustrations arise not only from the experience of transformation to homeland, but equally

⁷³ A similar concern with issues of hygiene and cleanliness is documented by Wise (2006: 172–4) in her case study of Fernanda. Wise (2006: 172) argues that the perceived decline in hygienic standards represents 'a shift away from Portuguese, "Western" manners and practices, which she [Fernanda] remembers from her youth in Dili and has become used to in Australia' and 'perhaps also represents an unconscious difficulty with living surrounded by poverty. She [Fernanda] has become used to Western standards of health, and associates Westernness, Australianness and *Portugueseness* with cleanliness' (Wise 2006: 173).

due to the processes of change in which the exile has engaged. One of the core issues at stake is that, as exiled South African writer and painter Breyten Breytenbach (1991: 64–5, cited in Gready 1994: 6) puts it:

‘Before’ does not exist for ‘them’, the ‘others’, those who stayed behind. For ‘them’ it was all continuity; for you it was a fugue of disruptions. The thread is lost. The telling has shaped the story. You make your own history at the cost of not sharing theirs. The eyes, having seen too many different things, now see differently.

Aconce shares the experience of change with many of the returnees. Indeed, the majority of those with whom I have spoken who have returned to East Timor either to visit or to live say that they were shocked by the extent of change that had occurred during the years they had been away (see also: Bohle 2002; Wise 2006) and they feel removed from the ‘new’ East Timor. Contrary to their expectations and experience throughout the struggle, they have moved in a different direction to those ‘at home’—their story has taken a different path.

The exiles’ experience of change manifests itself in the circulating stories through a juxtaposition of nostalgic memories of childhood play in a pristine environment with descriptions of ruined towns, polluted neighbourhoods, damaged infrastructure and immense poverty. It is also embedded in negative stereotypes of the local population, which permeate the circulating stories. Local people are represented as lazy and deceitful, unwilling to show initiative, and reluctant to take responsibility for their actions. Those who have received higher education, either in Indonesia or at the university in Dili, are described as snobby. They are said to carry an attitude of superiority, reluctant to engage in tasks that are not related to their education. The circulating stories describe the East Timorese, in particular people living in Dili, as being absorbed in the superficialities of modernity. It is said that, instead of considering fixing the roof of the house or tiling the mud floor to ensure a healthy environment for their children, people yearn for the latest mobile phone, dream of a satellite dish so that they can watch Indonesian television, or desire the latest model of Nike sneakers. These generalisations are placed in opposition to people’s nostalgic memories and, together with the narratives of change to landscapes (urban and rural), popular culture, customs, values and morality, they pervade the circulating stories through retellings of incidents and experiences of family members, friends, or acquaintances who have returned.

RESENTMENT AND EXCLUSION

The experience of change to people and place and, not least, to the self, made the returnees feel different, as outsiders. For the returnees, this was further enhanced by a perception of scepticism and resentment harboured by the local population towards people from the diaspora. Following the 1999 referendum and the arrival of the UN and the international donor community, a new class structure emerged in East Timor. To some extent this class structure reflected the socioeconomic structures of the Portuguese colonial time, with the elite being represented by respected resistance leaders, religious leaders, diaspora Timorese, mestiços and foreign traders (Knezevic 2007: 108). The privileged of the Portuguese era seemed to recapture their privileged position quickly, causing dissatisfaction amongst local Timorese whose hardship in many ways increased.⁷⁴ Reflecting on a conversation with some friends, Abino summarised some of the issues at stake:

... one of my really good friends in Timor, we went out for dinner, for a drink, and [someone] asked him how he felt that his friend, [me], has come back to Timor, and he said ‘Well, it’s good that he’s in work and in good health, but—in some way we resent him, we resent those people [who left] because they were the ones that managed to get away. They saved their lives and their families, they got an education, so they were fortunated.’

Abino

The resentment towards returning East Timorese further developed due to a perceived bias within UN and donor agencies towards people from the diaspora in the competition for the best paid jobs (Knezevic 2007; Saldanha 2001). The returnees possessed multiple language skills, often speaking a minimum of three languages (Tetum, Portuguese and English), and their multi-linguistic skills, educational background and their understanding of both Timorese and ‘Western’ culture were highly valued within the UN bureaucracy and the donor community. Returnees were seen to possess a greater understanding of local conditions than international staff and it was believed that they could help improve communication between international personnel and the local population.⁷⁵ In contrast,

⁷⁴ In relation to the diaspora Timorese, it is important to remember that it was primarily people belonging to the political and financial elite who were able to flee the Indonesian invasion and ensuing occupation.

⁷⁵ The preference for people from the diaspora and the partiality towards their academic and technical qualifications were clearly stated by Sérgio Vieira de Mello, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General. Quoted in Neven Knezevic’s (2008: 68) PhD dissertation *Ba Ne’bé: Where Are You Going? The*

many of those who had stayed in East Timor and endured the struggle of the Indonesian occupation felt that they themselves possessed ‘a superior knowledge of the needs of the people and the social and political complexity of their country’ (Gusmão 2003: 296). The advantages held by returnees led to frustration amongst unemployed locals who experienced ‘loss of social status, as well as exclusion from one of the few sources of cash income’ (Knezevic 2007: 131). Limited opportunities for work and influence in post-independence East Timor fuelled their resentment. People from the diaspora were often seen as arrogant and opportunistic, returning for the good jobs, the status, and the high salary. A ‘social envy’ (Knezevic 2007: 111) grew amongst the local population over what they saw as the better lives of the returnees. This notion of social envy and jealousy is reflected in the following quote by Savio, a Portuguese-Timorese man who returned in 2001 for the first time in 26 years:

And the way that people [are] in there, [it’s] so hard—because we go there with our holiday money and we kind of like act like relaxed people, have a talk in the bar, have a beer and everything, and a lot of youth sort of, kind of jealous. They always threaten us and—I didn’t like it. They call me a foreigner. I hate that, when they call a foreigner. I’ve been in Portugal, they called me a foreigner, in Australia they call me a foreigner, and then I go to Timor and the call me a foreigner [laughs]. What the hell! I said, no, I don’t want this, I might as well go back to Australia. It’s the way that they treat you, as if you are not welcome. The threatened me, threw stones, I was really scared, and the next door neighbour threatened me ... They are just jealous, just because you have a bit more luxury, you’ve got money to buy a beer, you know, they think you are showing off. But, because, for me it is normal to go and buy a beer in the bar, that’s what we do here, that’s what we do in here. So a lot of people—because those youth, they like to steal from the bar. They sit all around the bar ... they sit there and stare at people in the bar. When you walk, you go back to the car, they don’t go away ... because you know the Timorese, they come close to you and they say you went away, you are a coward, you run away in ’75 and now you come back, showing off. But, you know, they don’t have nothing to lose. We have a lot to lose, we are from Australia. I was really scared.

Savio

Changing Nature of United Nations Peacekeeping in Timor Leste, de Mello states that: ‘I cannot rewrite Timor’s history, I cannot change the fact that the Timorese who acceded to leadership positions happened to be those in exile, those in the diaspora. I cannot change that they were those with perhaps the best political and academic preparation to assist me in the early stages of this mission’ [UNTAET]. Indeed, Knezevic (2007: 126) argues, ‘to facilitate the mission’s ability to implement its mandate’ UNTAET, under the leadership of de Mello, adopted a policy of recruiting returnees from the diaspora. Diaspora Timorese were often given key positions in the National Planning and Development Agency and the Donor Coordination Development Unit. This strategy was supported by the East-Timorese political leadership and high-profile UN officials abroad (Knezevic 2007: 127).

In the diaspora, the stories of resentment circulate as stories of unfair and undeserved treatment and discrimination. Many of those who returned did not desire the well-paid, high-status jobs of the UN, the donor communities or the public service, but rather returned with altruistic motives of contributing to the new nation. Three different ‘groups’ of returnees can be discerned: (a) those who returned to work for the UN or international NGOs and who attained a ‘high-flyer’ lifestyle and removed themselves from the local Timorese; (b) those who returned for well-paid jobs within the UN, the donor communities or the public service, but who chose to live amongst the local population and become part of their everyday world; and, (c) the ‘everyday individuals’ who returned to East Timor and who live and work in local neighbourhoods, surviving on local salaries or volunteering for community organisations. The prejudice, resentment, frustration and anger articulated by the local population primarily reflected the actions, attitudes and behaviours of the first group, the ‘high-flyers’ (Wise 2006). This was the most visible group of returnees. They could often be observed at the flashy cafés, restaurants and bars serving ‘Western’ food, beer and wine at prices far beyond the reach of most local East Timorese. They would often dress in Western (revealing) clothes, travel the streets of Dili in four-wheel drive vehicles and do their shopping at the new supermarkets where expensive products unavailable at the local markets, such as fresh milk, cheese and yoghurt, are sold. Unfortunately, this group of returnees became the image of returnees in general and, as a result, the returnees who lived their lives locally and who negotiated their day-to-day existence within the same space as the local population experienced a sense of mistrust and rejection.

‘Everyday individuals’ tried to distance themselves from the ‘high-flyers’ and, like the local East Timorese, they were highly critical of the arrogance exhibited by this group of returnees. As is illustrated in the quotes below, they were embarrassed by these individuals and believed that they showed a lack of respect to the local culture, limited willingness to understand and engage with the local culture and language, and a superior attitude.

... some of the [people] ... that go to Timor they are representing the Timorese from the diaspora when they go in and people that we worked, that I worked with, were expecting a lot from us as well, you know, educated and had a good life, so contributing. And I tell you what, I was embarrassed a lot of the time because of the garbage that came out of some people’s mouth, I was so embarrassed, and I kept on insisting to people that I had contact with, do not judge us all from the same basket. I had different upbringing, I had

different education, and I have a totally different personality to that person. I'm not from the same basket. And I kept reinforcing that because, look, I must admit that there's a lot of people that are there and I, that may be doing more harm than they are doing good. And so, they, sometimes that, their actions actually come, you know, exacerbate this uneasiness about those coming from the outside. And so, in this distrust comes from that as well, which is, you know, quite bad.

Theresa

I remember one lady said to me, 'Oh, I don't expect you to go to mass and wear, put a veil over your head, but I think you can cover yourself,' and I said, 'Oh, what do you mean?', and she said 'Oh, they [the 'high-flyers'] go to church and they don't even pay attention to what the priest was saying, they just go there to check because they think it's the local whatever, place to meet people.' And they go there and some just go with their bikini! ... Just because you live here, but even here [in Australia] you, I think the church, people don't go in a bikini to the church. You know what I mean? What makes you think that, just because you come from Australia you can go with the bikini and nobody say anything. You know, I think they should tell people ... And, I say, well if you go to Timor, they know that you are Timorese, we may not know them, but they will know who you are. If you can't speak the dialect, if you can't speak, just don't talk to them in English because they may not know English! At least say hello in, learn some words.

Sarah

These comments suggest that many of the returnees could empathise with the local population and their frustration with some of the people returning from the diaspora. However, though they could rationalise and explain this behaviour, it did not remove the pain and hurt that they felt when faced with the resentment and anger of the locals.

The feeling of resentment is connected to experiences of exclusion. Both the notion of resentment and exclusion form part of a process of essentialism that occurred in the East-Timorese community following independence. In the aftermath of independence, questions about inclusion and exclusion, national identity and national membership have attained renewed force (Soares 2003; Wise 2006: 178). The East-Timorese people have had to rediscover who they are on their own terms; that is, they have had to re-establish a national identity beyond the bipolar opposition of the Indonesian occupational regime from which East-Timorese nationalism has grown.⁷⁶ This process, and its influence upon

⁷⁶ East-Timorese nationalism is a relatively new phenomenon, and prominent historical awareness did not manifest within the East-Timorese nation until after 1975. The collective experience of the brutality of the Indonesian occupation and the Indonesian regime's active policy to impose Indonesian identity and eliminate

people's experiences of return, is explored by Wise (2006). She argues that the process of redefining national identity post-independence turned into 'a process of trying ... to excavate traditional identities from under the cultural layers of colonial rule and occupation' (Wise 2006: 178). These processes, she continues, showed signs of 'exclusionary practices of cultural boundary making as a means to eject whichever otherness seemed the biggest threat to a sense of "East Timorese Identity"' (Wise 2006: 178–9). Paradoxically, the local population, particularly the young and the disempowered, wanted to evict Westernness more so than Indonesianness, this being perceived as the new 'cultural Other' threatening the notion of East Timoresehood (Wise 2006: 179). As such, the rediscovery of national identity frequently has attained an essentialist notion of what it means to be East Timorese. It has led to a questioning of the exiles' identity as East Timorese, often excluding the returnees from this category due to their association with 'Westernness.'

Such experiences were clearly articulated by Theresa in a conversation with me and two of her friends. Theresa left East Timor in 1975 when she was four years old. She is of Timorese, Chinese and Portuguese ancestry and has straight, long, black hair and fair skin. Despite her mixed ancestry and her association with both Chinese and Portuguese cultural heritage, she always perceived herself as East Timorese, this to some extent reflecting the degree of rejection she experienced as a refugee in both Portugal and Australia. She explained that:

I went back to Timor wanting to find out, you know, what my true identity was, wanting to belong. You know, having gone to Portugal, living here, you've always had the comments from, you know, kids at school saying that, you know, 'You are not really Portuguese' or 'You are not really Australian,' you know, what are you? So there's all those questions which went through my mind, and I wanted to go back to see whether, you know, I did fit in or whatever. But it actually raised so many more issues for me, 'cause, for me, I mean, I am so bicultural there, I've got my paternal grandparents, one's Portuguese, one was from Macau, and my mother's side is indigenous, so I was still, felt, you know, made to feel as if I was not Timorese because of the skin colour. And, you know, and I initially when I stepped out of the plane, that smell, the smell made me feel like, 'Oh, my God, I, I remember this smell,' you know, I actually felt like, for the first

cultural and political manifestations opposing Jakarta's integrationist agenda fostered a *national* sense of East-Timorese identity and community previously unseen in East Timor. For further information on the development of East-Timorese nationalism, see: Anderson (1993), Arenas (1998), Borgerhoff (2006), de Sousa (2001), Leach (2002, 2006), and Taylor (1995, 1999).

time, yeah, I belong, you know. And then I started dealing with, even in my own family, you know, my, my mother's side, the indigenous side, you know, sly remarks, you know, 'Oh, you are Chinese,' 'You are Portuguese,' you know that, and I—I didn't know how to cope with some of these, you know, what is it called, prejudices or—and, you know, some remarks even came from my own family saying that 'Oh, you are not Timorese' ... And, you know, [then] all these issues started going through my head, you know, thinking, 'God, you know, maybe I'm not Timorese!' ... Initially, I got the thing to, right at the start, you know, trying to prove that I am Timorese, but then later on, you know, it just started becoming easier in terms of, look, you know, move on those issues. And it's not just from the colleagues you work with, it's from family that you get that, and, you know, trying to challenge what I thought I was.

Theresa

The sense of rejection and exclusion was not only felt in relation to the local population. For some, particularly UDT supporters, the feeling of rejection was extended to the political elite. Faustino is one of the participants who clearly enunciates disappointment with the East-Timorese political leadership due to what he experienced as discriminatory actions against him due to his political background. Faustino is of Timorese-Portuguese ancestry and, prior to the Indonesian occupation, he and his family enjoyed the privileges of the elites. In 1974, at the age of 24, he was sent to Portugal to study veterinary science. In contrast to many others who studied in Portugal at this time, Faustino supported UDT, a political allegiance he has kept throughout his years in exile. In 2000, Faustino returned to East Timor, wanting to contribute to the rebuilding of the new country. As a veterinarian, he believed he could provide skills and knowledge that could help in the re-establishment of the agricultural sector. He planned to volunteer, but, despite his offer of working for free, he experienced rejection. He believes that the government's rejection of his services was due to his political background, and his narrative illustrates great disappointment in what he sees as an emerging culture of nepotism and corruption.⁷⁷

... since I knew that I was one of the few that got a degree in my area, veterinary science, I thought, well I will even volunteer to whatever government, but, yeah, at that time it was United Nations government, and trying to, to, to do my best, to help, that's what I

⁷⁷ Faustino's narrative is contradicted by the bias within the public sector, the UN and the donor community towards people from the diaspora discussed above. Moreover, at the time when Faustino first visited East Timor, the country was under UN transitory administration and the Fretilin Government had not yet been sworn in. I do not intend to challenge Faustino's experiences; however, it is important in these circumstances to be aware of his political background and opposition towards Fretilin. His narrative exemplifies how he uses past experiences to create meaning and explain events and experiences of the present. This will be further discussed later in the chapter.

did. But, I actually was willing to live there at that time ... [But it] changed a lot because at that time there was a power struggle in all those, the, Timorese involve in politics from all different parties. I don't think at that time the most important thing for them was the country. The most important thing for all the politicians there was—to gain the power, you know. And—the political parties that actually, the major political party had got the majority for the constituency assembly [Fretilin], it was a political party, I wasn't involved so—and the leader of the political party was actually the same person involve in the, in the other minister of agriculture and, and—and so he decided he didn't need my contribution. Because, I was told, 'cause I was involved with a different political party that's the main reason why I never [got a job]. I even volunteered, but even as a volunteer I wasn't accepted! They preferred to bring persons from overseas, even from Australia because in my area I, I knew this guy came from Sydney. He was working there, couldn't speak the local language, but they preferred this guy instead of me. And this guy was paid a huge amount of money when I was even giving for free for six months as a volunteer, they didn't accept me. So, I continued there for a year and then I decided to move back to Australia because I couldn't survive there without any.

Faustino

For Faustino and other returnees who lived locally and attained a modest lifestyle on local wages or as volunteers, returning was seen as an obligation. Regardless of their motivations, return included a degree of sacrifice. Many put their lives in Australia on hold, leaving their work, children, family and friends with the intention to contribute towards a better future for East Timor and its people. The perceived lack of gratitude for their contribution and their sincere wish to help led to disappointment, and many returned to Australia disillusioned and saddened by the loss of what they had imagined as home throughout the occupation. The circulating stories articulate these emotions as well as the frustration, anger, disappointment and disillusionment arising from the experience of resentment, rejection and exclusion. In order to understand the emotions that they disclose I will, in the following section, discuss the exiles' expectations and hopes for independence and how they relate to what I call a moral discourse of sacrifice.

II. MORAL DISCOURSE OF SACRIFICE

The time of the referendum and the initial period of independence were emotional times for the East Timorese in Australia; a dream had come true, justice had been done. Feelings of relief, happiness, pride and confidence were compounded by a sense of euphoria, hope and optimism. As illustrated in the following two quotes, anything seemed

possible; the East-Timorese people had been able to overcome the greatest challenge of all and, united, the people would respond to the challenges of the future.

I guess, at that time the only thing that we thought of that we got the independence and we would, no matter what, even if they burn the city and the whole country, we would be able to rebuild. And we thought at that time our, the main, the main wheel of power was just to gain independence. Whatever came after would be everything ok.

Faustino

... we had these high expectations for everything. We thought, ok, we've got independence now, we've got *our* leaders, there's no other way than going forward and we can achieve *anything* easily because if we, if we managed so much with Indonesia who invaded us, and even the other countries getting independence, with Timor, once independence, of course we will get the best. It's a small island and the population is so small. We're gonna have everyone with food on the table, kids at school, proper results, all these things, you know, the basic that a person, a person needs to survive.

Martinha

These high expectations of independence were not based on ignorance or naivety. Rather, they reflect the exiles' faith in the East Timorese as a united people, in their endurance and their capacity for resistance. It was through this unity, endurance and resistance, as well as their vision for the future, that the East Timorese achieved, against all odds, the end of human rights' abuses, their right to self-determination, justice and peace.

The expectations of independence can also be seen in relation to what anthropologist Elizabeth Traube (2007) refers to as a 'cultural code of reciprocity,' in which 'those who suffer are entitled to be recompensed' (Traube 2007: 18). Traube employs this notion of reciprocity in her discussion of the Mambai people of East Timor and their narrative of suffering and sacrifice. The Mambai comprise the largest of East Timor's ethno-linguistic groups. They occupy the rugged mountain area of central East Timor, with the traditional Mambai zone stretching from near the northern to the southern coast, including Dili and the administrative districts of Aileu, Ermera, Ainaro and Same (see Map of East Timor, page ix) (Fox 1996b; Traube 1980). In 1973–74, Traube conducted extensive field research with the Mambai in Aileu, resulting in the insightful monograph *Cosmology and Social Life. Ritual Exchange among the Mambai of East Timor* (Traube 1986). It is, however, in her more recent work (Traube 2007) that she highlights the 'symbolic politics of nationhood and the rhetoric of suffering that demands recompense' (McWilliam

2007c: 4). Traube returned to the site of her fieldwork after 26 years of absence. By then, a narrative tradition about a martyred prophet, Tat Felis, which entwines the popular suffering of the Mambai during the nationalist struggle with a pre-independence local narrative, had attained a prominent position in the Mambai's perspectives of redistributive justice.⁷⁸ Before I explore the notion of a moral discourse of sacrifice further, I will outline the central themes of the Tat Felis tradition as it is portrayed by Traube.

THE TAT FELIS TRADITION

The Tat Felis tradition goes back to the historical encounter between missionaries and indigenous Mambai leaders. It concerns a Christ like figure who came to Aileu with the first missionaries (in the late nineteenth century), and who was persecuted by Mambai ancestral chiefs. Tat Felis' origins are unknown and it is unclear if he arrived with the missionaries as a servant, if he preceded them and awaited them, or if he summoned them to Timor. He was a Christian, but not a priest, and narrators emphasise, according to Traube (2007), that he was not a 'Malai' (a white foreigner).

The story tells that, after witnessing the murder of a missionary priest, Tat Felis leaves the village of Bandeira Fun where he had resided with a group of missionaries. He strikes out alone and travels until he arrives in the origin village of Hohul, leaving behind a trail of houses, stone altars and material remains (now represented as proof of his passage). He is well received by the people, and establishes his own village at a place called Tutreda, just below Hohul, 'where an apparition of the Virgin had previously appeared' (Traube 2007: 13). In his village, Traube (2007: 13) writes, Tat Felis

performs a variety of 'miracles' (*milagre*) centred on productivity and wealth. Although he never seems to toil, his gardens thrive and he always has good things to eat, including such delicacies as bread and egg ... Suspicions of sorcery begin to circulate, on the

⁷⁸ Traube recorded the Tat Felis tradition during her original fieldwork prior to the Indonesian invasion, but little attention is given to it in her monograph (Traube 1986). During the Indonesian occupation, the tradition retained a renewed position within the Mambai society, providing a framework in which the suffering and sacrifices of the Mambai people could be explained and rationalised. Traube writes that, '[w]hen I returned to Aileu in November 2000, for the first time in twenty-six years, the Tat Felis tradition was impossible to avoid. For Mau Balen [a resident of the *suku* Selo and an entrusted informant of Traube], it mediated a distinctive vision of the independence struggle and his own experience in it ... Almost every interview that I conducted included references to Tat Felis, and the story came up repeatedly in casual conversations. In a variety of ways the suffering endured by the people over the course of the nationalist struggle was connected to the injustice done to Tat Felis' (Traube 2007: 11–12).

grounds that he makes things ‘appear out of nowhere and materialise (from thin air)’ (*mous nor delus*).

When he first arrived in Hohul, Tat Felis became a patron of the Hohul house, Fad Liurai. This house, Traube (2007: 13) explains, ‘is the place of justice within the ritual sphere, where Hohul leaders settle disputes related to ritual duties.’ One day, in the absence of the chief responsible for ritual settlements, Tat Felis ‘offers to settle a dispute between two villages regarding their respective prestation obligations’ (Traube 2007: 13). He is overheard by the chief’s wife, who tells her husband that Felis ‘has “usurped his right” (and therefore his manhood).’ (Traube 2007: 13). A complex chain of events is initiated, eventually leading to the arrest of Tat Felis and his delivery to the local chiefs on charges of sorcery.

The matter is handed over to the Portuguese administrator, but Felis is returned to Aileu where the local chiefs eventually send him to the kingdom Motain where he is to be executed. The story continues with graphic descriptions of various execution attempts, from all of which Tat Felis emerges unscathed. Eventually, Tat Felis explains to his captors how they should dispose of him: they were to ‘nail him to a cross, place the cross in a casket, and toss the casket to sea, where Grandfather Crocodile, the Lord of the Sea’ (Traube 2007: 14), would devour his body. The captors do as they are told, however when Grandfather Crocodile opens the casket,

he recognises Tat Felis and cures him. Felis then returns to land, where he seizes a young boy named Mau Bere, takes him back to the undersea world, and gives him to Grandfather Crocodile in return for having cured him. Tat Felis assumes Mau Bere’s appearance, name and identity and returns to land in his new guise (Traube 2007: 14).

The narrative tradition recounts how Tat Felis continues to appear and disappear. This, it is argued, is a consequence of the failure of Mambai chiefs “‘to pay for his fatigue” (*oid seul ua ni kolen*)’ (Traube 2007: 14). The term ‘kolen’ means ‘fatigue’ or ‘exhaustion,’ and it signifies ‘an act of exertion that requires recompense, and it can be used with the sense of “wage”’ (Traube 2007: 14). It refers to the ritual exchange obligations associated with ‘the transmission of life’ (Traube 2007: 14), and is embedded in Mambai death rituals and cosmology. The mortuary ceremony for Tat Felis was never conducted and, according to the narrative tradition, Tat Felis has had to arrange his wages in alternative form. Acting through Xavier do Amaral, the first head of Fretilin, who ‘unknowingly

assumed his name' (Traube 2007: 15), Tat Felis made political parties that were to bring war in which 'human beings died to make up the difference'. As such, 'the suffering women and men who purchased the nation with their blood, were substitutes for the unpaid animal sacrifices' (Traube 2007: 15); the Mambai's suffering was a payment of Tat Felis' wage.⁷⁹

As is evident in the above outline, the narrative of Tat Felis and the injustice inflicted upon him by the Mambai chiefs has become entwined with the suffering endured by the people during the Indonesian occupation. It encompasses an ideology of reciprocity whereby social order and justice is sustained. In Mambai conception, justice is 'a matter of repaying harm with an appropriate, socially sanctioned punishment' (Traube 2007: 19). When returning to the field of research in 2000, Traube encountered a pervasive sentiment: for justice to be achieved, 'some form of social transformation, a redistribution of material and symbolic assets on the basis of contributions to the independence struggle' (Traube 2007: 21) must be made. As she explains, the notion of redistributive justice articulated by the Mambai is simple: 'those who pursued their own selfish interests and prospered under the occupation should be made to pay, while those who suffered and sacrificed for independence should be recompensed' (Traube 2007: 21). In the early days of nationhood, independence seemed to reward those who had been hostile or indifferent, whereas "the [common] people continued to suffer" (*povu teurs nahatin*)' (Traube 2007: 22). Those who had been hostile or indifferent included, in the eyes of the Mambai, former collaborators as well as people returning from the diaspora (Traube 2007: 21).

For those whose suffering seems to have gone unrecompensed, Tat Felis has come to symbolise a sense of dispossession, as well as a promise of the end of suffering 'by leading the people into the just and prosperous kingdom that he tried to establish long ago' (Traube 2007: 22). This kingdom, Traube (2007: 22) argues, 'is now called the nation.' By referencing their own enduring obligations to Tat Felis, the Mambai remind the leaders of the new country that the nation was purchased 'not with silver or gold, but

⁷⁹ This refers to how Fretilin took on the Mambai name of 'Maubere' as a representation of the East-Timorese people. Maubere or Mau Bere, Traube (2007: 9–10) explains, 'is a common Mambai masculine name that was used during the Portuguese colonial period as a demeaning term of address for indigenous men; it became an ethnic label for the Mambai, evoking their reputation among East Timor's diverse ethnic groups as both especially backward and faithful to indigenous tradition ... In using the Mau Bere symbol to articulate the idea of "the people", Fretilin imagined the nation as a poor and oppressed but culturally vital community about to emerge into history under the party's leadership.'

with the blood of the people' (Traube 2007: 10) and 'they expect their own wages to be paid' (Traube 2007: 22).

DUALISM AND A CULTURAL CODE OF RECIPROCITY

Although Traube speaks specifically about a Mambai narrative tradition, the historicised representation of suffering and redemption, the themes of redistributive justice and reciprocity, and the implicit notion of dualism embedded within the narrative are not limited to Mambai. As Andrew McWilliam (2005: 32) contends, citing James J. Fox (1993: 160), 'a fundamental epistemological orientation' exists throughout East Timor, which provides 'a focus for the articulation and celebration of connections that bind individuals and households within an historical and symbolic unity' (McWilliam 2005: 32) and connect people to a 'historico-mythic' past. Moreover, as he argues in a separate article on the Fataluku community of East Timor, '[a]ncestry, the mythic origins of settlement and the memorialised spatio-temporary trajectory of the clan provides an enduring basis for contemporary social practice and claims to resources' (McWilliam 2007a: 363). This notion of origins and conceptions of precedence is characteristic of most Austronesian societies and is frequently paralleled with an idiom of exchange (Fox 1996a, 1996b). In eastern Indonesia, such conceptions often feature with dyadic categorisations or a dual organisation of social and cosmological elements (Fox 1989; Traube 1980, 1986; van Wouden 1968). Social and cultural icons are classified according to a system of complementary categories; that is, they are ordered into pairs of opposites such as male/female, elder/younger, above/below, outside/inside, heaven/earth (Fox 1996b: 132; Soares 2003: 34; Traube 1986: 4). The symbolic dyadic schemes represent various realms of experience and form part of social institutions, ritual practice and myths.

This categorical scheme is evident in the Mambai narrative tradition of Tat Felis. As illustrated by the Felis tradition, the Mambai perceive life as a gift that requires a countergift and life is, as such, part of a continuous cycle of exchanges. The final countergift is death, which closes each exchange cycle and opens a new one (Traube 1986). Traube (1986: 11) contends that:

dying is conceived of as an obligation contracted through living. A principle of reciprocity integrates the two extreme poles of existence. Life and death are defined in

this scheme as reciprocal prestations, complementary gifts which call forth each other in the dialectic unfolding of an exchange relationship.

Similar dialectic exchange relationships have been observed amongst other Timorese ethno-linguistic groups, such as the Makassae (Forman 1980), the Fataluku (McWilliam 2007a), and the Ema (Clamagirand 1980), and notions of exchange and the dual organisation of the world remain prominent across the East-Timorese landscape. Indeed, as argued by East-Timorese anthropologist Dionísio da Costa Babo Soares (2003: 35) in his PhD dissertation *Branching From the Trunk: East Timorese Perceptions on Nationalism in Transition*, ‘traditional thinking regarding dual cultural categories might have some influence on the way the political forms of expression and explanation of life processes among the East Timorese are formulated.’

According to Soares (2003: 36), a particular dual category, namely that of the past and the present/future, has become pervasive in post-independence East Timor and in the East-Timorese people’s portrayal of struggle. This category is paralleled with dyadic pairs such as outsider/insider, *ema a’at* (lit. bad people)/*ema diak* (good people), *rai funu* (lit. land of war)/*rai diak* (lit. good soil), invader/landowner, and us/them. The distinction between past and present/future is articulated in the categories *hun* (roots, origins, past, history) and *rohan* (future, end). Through this dualism, the East Timorese apply the past (*hun*) as a ‘source’ to predict, classify or explain events of today and possible events of the future (*rohan*) (Soares 2003: 38–9). The notion of *hun* and *rohan* forms part of the cyclic relationship between manifest and non-manifest life, the secular inhabited by the living and the cosmos inhabited by the spirits and the ancestors (Soares 2004: 22). Ensuring a balance between these worlds is pivotal for life to proceed, and ‘[f]ailure to observe appropriate rituals/exchange leads to an imbalance, which might result in negative consequences to those living in the secular world’ (Soares 2004: 22). This implies an idiom of exchange and reciprocity, through which balance between cosmos and the living world, as well as social order, is sustained. In light of this, it can be argued that the cultural code of reciprocity and the notion of morality illustrated by the Tat Felis tradition and the Mambai’s narrative tradition are reflected in the general East-Timorese society and the East-Timorese people’s perceptions, rationalisation and explanation of post-independence realities. I will further argue that, despite their detachment from traditional belief systems, cosmology and social life, the East Timorese living in exile have retained the notions of morality that lie beneath the narrative tradition of Tat Felis

and the dualistic complex of East-Timorese society. This can be seen in the circulating stories and the exiles' negotiation of boundaries, belonging and, ultimately, identity.

SUFFERING AND SACRIFICE OF EAST-TIMORESE EXILES

The disappointment and disillusionment expressed in the circulating stories of the exiles reflect a moral discourse of sacrifice. Although the participants do not compare their suffering to the suffering of those who had lived under the occupational regime, the exiles' narratives portray both suffering and sacrifices. This is illustrated in the following two quotes by Martinha and her sister, Favia, who told me that:

We didn't suffer like them. We could go back and we could still get the best jobs, good wages—you know, in a certain way it's true, comparing to what they suffered all these years. But we also had our part of suffering. We went from one side of the island to the other side [West Timor] with completely different, we had bringing up Timorese Portuguese and going to the other was such a shock to our system. We went to Portugal, which was completely different again. I left Timor, I was already 14, so I already had a good understanding of what life I would like to live in Timor ... We went from Atambua to Portugal. Our parents were struggling to—save our lives, really.

Martinha

... we grew up adjusting to different countries and starting fresh with nothing. Absolutely nothing. It was a shock to the system. We left in '75 to cross the border because of the civil war. We were in refugee camps in appalling conditions for nearly one year. We left that and started fresh in Portugal with nothing. I tell you, we crossed the border with only the clothes on our back, no documentation who we were, absolutely nothing, right. Then we went to Portugal with absolutely nothing. And for me, for the people in Timor today to say we had it easy, it's not fair ... We went to schools in Portugal, in Australia, wherever we [were, we would] go back to our household where there was Timor every day, from morning to, you know, on the news, everything, there was a phone call, or a letter that arrived from Timor saying that someone died. It was constant. It was absolutely constant. And sometimes you felt powerless ... We, we were six kids in the house, plus an auntie, plus an adopted brother, plus two that my parents adopted because they left Timor without any family, and they were looking for a family to receive them and my parents said 'Well, there are a lot of us, but sure there is room for another two.' And it was not easy!

Favia

Although the flight from East Timor removed the imminent threat of persecution and abuse, fear and worry for family and friends who remained in East Timor continued to cast a shadow over the exiles' lives. Life in exile was not easy and many of the East-Timorese refugees found themselves depending on government assistance. Many experienced loss of social status and, despite education and previous work in white-collar industries, they were forced to take on jobs as factory workers, tram drivers, cleaners and so on. Many put their lives 'on hold,' sacrificing their careers, work opportunities, education opportunities, and family lives for East Timor and the fight for independence. This is illustrated in the story of Sarah and her husband, Aziby. I met Sarah and Aziby on various occasions, but the following narrative is primarily based on information collected during my interview with Sarah in March of 2007.

SARAH'S STORY

Sarah lives in a small house in the Dandenong area together with her husband, Aziby, and their three daughters who are 8, 16, and 17 years of age. The oldest girls attend high school, whereas their youngest is still in primary school. Their youngest daughter suffers from a condition that requires extra attention, and three days a week she attends a school for disabled children. Sarah and Aziby wanted their youngest daughter to attend a mainstream school, but because of lack of funding at the local school, they were forced to send her to an alternative education facility three days a week. The family lives on a corner block not far from the train station. When I visited Sarah and Aziby, I noticed that the house was run down and the garden was marked by the prolonged drought in Melbourne. I was struck by the limited space that the family of five occupied. The girls' bedrooms were to the left of the entrance, and the lounge room to the right. A turquoise lounge suite was placed in front of the television and room had been made for a computer desk in the corner. Pictures of the girls and other family members decorated the walls. Only one window lit up the room. The house was modestly furnished and gave the impression of accommodating a family trying to make ends meet on a meagre budget.

Sarah is a passionate woman with a warm smile. She is of Portuguese-Timorese descent and grew up belonging to the East-Timorese elite. She went to Portuguese schools, but throughout her childhood she lived close to the indigenous population and she never considered herself as one of the privileged. Because of her parents' work, Sarah moved around a lot. Her father worked for the Portuguese government setting up infrastructure in

the districts, such as hospitals and schools, and her mother was a teacher. Her mother's work largely consisted of establishing schools in local communities. Both her father and mother were well respected in the Timorese community. Her family was quite well off, but she was taught not to take her privileges for granted and that she had to work hard in life. She learnt from her parents, and their vision of life and philosophy of hard work have helped her cope with the pressures and financial strains that she has experienced in exile.

Sarah describes her childhood with fondness and affection, though the memories of tranquillity and peace end in 1975 when she was ten years old and was forced to flee the civil war together with her brother and mother. The family fled to Australia, believing that the conflict would be short lived. They anticipated an imminent return. It was after the Indonesian invasion of East Timor that they first realised they would not be able to return home. They then decided to move to Portugal, where Sarah met Aziby some years later. Aziby had been studying in Lisbon at the time of the invasion and had lived in exile in Portugal ever since. In 1986, wanting to be closer to East Timor, Aziby decided to move to Australia. Two years later, Sarah followed.

When Sarah arrived in Australia, Aziby was already actively involved in Fretilin and the campaign for independence. He would organise meetings and demonstrations, and Sarah would help by making posters, distributing flyers and doing other tasks. Because of Aziby's involvement, he was unable to work and the family relied on Sarah's income as a childcare worker. As she explained:

I wouldn't always go [to meetings and demonstrations, but] he would always be there and I would help, but we had to organise our life around that. If one had to go, then the other one, you know, could organise the house. We couldn't both be there all the time ... If one person in each household does that, then the other could keep on moving a bit, because at the end of the day, no matter how much we love our country but one is enough, the other one has to, you know, food has to get on the table. You know, Aziby wanted to go and free East Timor, but someone has to do those things, you can't just [tell your employer] 'Wait there I'll go to demonstration, I'll come back.' You know, and I said [to him], 'You go and do that and I will deal with it.' It could have been the other way around ... I was working full time. I had to. We had no choice. Someone had to bring the money in. He did his bit, I'm not saying he didn't, he did his bit, but he could have done more if he didn't have to spend all that time [in the struggle].

Sarah

Relying on only one income, the expanding family struggled financially and they had to lead modest lives. Dreams of further education and career were postponed as the struggle for independence and the freedom of East Timor was seen as a greater cause than their individual prosperity:

[Other priorities] had to be pushed out. And like, you know, even with the—for instance, some of Aziby's, some of his friends, now at the time, they weren't as involved in the struggle, but then they had their careers, they had their house and everything paid off, and now they can enjoy their retirement, whereas someone like Aziby, he missed out on that. But he's not blaming [it] on the struggle. He's happy, because—and I said to him, 'At the end of the day, if you had gone like them, built your business, get your house, we could have had two or three houses now, but then you'll feel that there's something in you, like, I've got all this, but I don't deserve it.' Do you know what I mean? At least now you are still on your way, you are half way there, but at least, you know, I deserve it.

Sarah

As this quote suggests, Sarah and Aziby could not set themselves up for the future in the same way as other exiles because of their involvement in the struggle. Their financial situation was, and still is, a strain, and both Sarah and Aziby sacrificed personal dreams for the collective struggle for independence.

Concerned about the changes that have occurred in East Timor since she fled, and with hardly any family or friends left in East Timor, Sarah has decided not to go back. Aziby, on the other hand, returned immediately after independence. His experiences, as well as the experiences of friends and family who have returned, have left Sarah with an image of East Timor as a foreign country where people like her are not welcome. She provided an emotional account of how Aziby experienced his East-Timorese identity being questioned because of his skin colour and how he felt excluded and resented by local people. Though this was not directed directly at her, Sarah feels hurt and is disappointed by the lack of recognition of her, Aziby's and the rest of the diaspora's contribution to the struggle. Even more hurtful than the resentment from the local population, Sarah explained, is the difficulties for Aziby and herself to retain East-Timorese citizenship and the subsequent feeling of being excluded from the East-Timorese nation.

The East-Timorese constitution (RDTL 2002) states that people born in East Timor or children of parents born in East Timor are to be considered citizens of the nation. To

apply for citizenship, applicants must provide a current birth certificate issued by the República Democrática de Timor-Leste (RDTL), a civil registration card, a RDTL electoral card, and/or any other documentation supporting that the applicant is a Timorese national. Indonesian-issued birth certificates and marriage certificates, catholic-issued baptism certificates and Portuguese birth certificates issued after 1975 are not accepted. Applicants who possess these documents must apply for these to be converted into a 2005 RDTL Birth Certificate. To apply for a 2005 RDTL Birth Certificate, the applicant must provide: (a) a baptism certificate, civil registration card or birth date letter from the hospital; (b) a baptism certificate or birth certificate of both mother and father, and (c) marriage certificate of mother and father. In circumstances where the parents' documents are unavailable, a recommendation from the Timorese Community Leader in the Australian state in which the applicant lives, which certifies that the applicant is a Timor-born citizen, should be provided.⁸⁰

The guidelines for applying for citizenship are intricate and confusing, and the complexity of the process has led Sarah and many others to believe that they are not entitled to citizenship. The confusion surrounding the process was clearly articulated by Sarah during one of our conversations when she told me that she has to go to East Timor to sit an interview if she is to apply for citizenship. She expressed uncertainty about the documentation she needs to present with an application and is doubtful if she will be eligible to apply in the first place as she only holds Portuguese identity papers. Sarah has not made contact with the Honorary Consulate in Melbourne, the Consulate General in Sydney, or the East-Timorese Embassy in Canberra with regards to the process of applying for citizenship, and her understanding of the process is based upon information provided by others in the diaspora. This (mis)information has accentuated the feelings of exclusion and rejection and Sarah is upset by the perceived refusal of what she argues is her birth right. She feels humiliated by what she describes as discrimination against those who live in exile:

I think it's sort of like a humiliation, it's like you go and beg for your, for your birthright or something ... Why is it so hard all of a sudden to accept people? ... because to be, it's almost as if you are being discriminated by your own race, like, do you know what I mean? Like, 'You needed me, but now we don't need you, so good bye,' you know ... a

⁸⁰ This information was garnered from Mr João Jong at the Honorary Consulate of Timor-Leste in Melbourne in a meeting on the 16th of May 2007, and from a letter dated the 6th of April 2005 issued by the Consulate General of RDTL in Sydney, which outlines the passport proceedings for the RDTL.

lot of people are disappointed. Why should I have to go all the way to Timor just to prove my point? Do you know what I mean? And I say, like, when you guys needed us to vote for Timor to be independent, all I needed to go was to go here, to a school to vote, and take my birth certificate, anything that said I was born in Timor and I was Timorese. So if I voted as a Timorese, that's proof that I'm Timorese, you still have my papers, why isn't that enough?

Sarah

Sarah's experiences are not unique. Many of the participants of the study recount similar feelings of being excluded from the East-Timorese nation. They experience the questioning of their East-Timorese identity as humiliating and offensive, and many feel denied what they expected as a 'payment' for their sacrifices for the East-Timorese nation; explicitly, the recognition of their contribution and their inclusion into the East-Timorese nation. The circulating stories can be seen as a response to these 'unpaid wages.' They reflect a 'process of othering,' in which the exiles are repositioning themselves in relation to East Timor. The tensions embedded within these stories, exemplified in the negative stereotypes ascribed to the East-Timorese people, suggest a redefinition of boundaries through which the exiles position themselves as different to the East Timorese 'at home.' The imagined community of the East-Timorese nation to which the exiles previously imagined their belonging has ruptured, and the exiles are increasingly redefining their lives away from the transnational sphere in which their belonging and identity as East Timorese was nurtured.⁸¹ This process of redefinition will be explored in the following section.

III. NEGOTIATING BOUNDARIES

The circulating stories form part of a narrative process by which the East-Timorese exiles' negotiate identity and boundaries of belonging. Narrative and self are intimately linked and, as Elinor Ochs and Lisa Capps (1996: 20) argue, 'narratives transform life's

⁸¹ I employ an understanding of 'imagined community' as it is developed by Benedict Anderson (1983) in his book *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. In this highly influential publication, Anderson traces the historical origin and global spread of nationalism. He questions how national communities continue to exist despite the inability of people to confirm their shared identity and meaning. A community, he argues, has to be '*imagined*' because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion' (Anderson 1991: 6). Such imagination is at the core of nations and national identities, leading to practices, institutions and processes of exclusion and inclusion. It produces an experience of belonging, underpinned by an envisaged notion of shared actions and shared experiences, shared values, and shared standards of morality.

journeys into sequences of events and evoke shifting and enduring perspectives on experience.’ Narratives are articulations of human experience. They are simultaneously born from experience and give shape to experience (Bruner 1997; Ochs & Capps 1996). They provide an essential connection ‘between our own sense of self and our sense of others’ (Bruner 1986: 69), and through various forms of narrative practice our lives and selves attain meaning (Kerby 1991: 3ff; Rapport & Overing 2000: 283–4).

Narratives are developed, maintained and transformed through social interaction. Rather than presenting a complete picture of the individual, her or his past, present, and future aspirations, personal narratives are partial representations and portrayals of the world as experienced by the individual (Ganguly 1992; Ochs & Capps 1996). As such, they are versions of reality. The narrative and, accordingly, the individual’s presentation and representation of selfhood, identity and belonging, may change according to situation, context and time.⁸² This mirrors the plural, relational, contextual, and dynamic nature of selfhood and identity discussed in the previous chapter. Personal identities are developed, negotiated and transformed in relation to multiple spaces. As Hall (1989: 70, cited in Thomas 1999: xiv) argues, ‘[f]ar from being eternally fixed in some essentialised past, [identities] are subject to the continual interplay of history, culture and power.’ This does not imply that fluidity, disjunction, mobility and imagined worlds are the only parameters from which to explore contemporary identities; rather, sources of belonging and identification are embedded in ‘cultural sites’ that encompass and embody the complex and, at times, contradictory spheres of life with which individuals engage (Olwig 1997: 35). If we are to understand the processes of identification and selfhood we need to consider these cultural sites as they manifest within people’s multiple and complex identities.

Anthropologist Karen Fog Olwig (1997: 17) classifies cultural sites as ‘cultural institutions which have developed in the interrelationship between global and local ties.’ In relation to mobile people, diasporas and others living in exile, these may be translocal networks and other institutions that tie the exiles to their homeland and emerge through the ‘interplay between dwelling and traveling, presence and absence, localizing and

⁸² This suggests that narratives represent a forum for self-presentation, and it implies a dynamic situatedness of self (Miller et al. 1990: 293). This perspective is similar to that presented by Erving Goffman (1959) in his classic book *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* in which he analyses the dialectic character of individuals’ presentation of self. Goffman’s thesis illustrates the importance of situational context in the constant negotiation, construction and reconstruction of identity and relations, and the dynamic and interconnected nature of social life and social worlds.

globalizing' (Olwig 1997: 35). These sites, she argues, 'attain their significance because they are identified with particular places, at the same time as they accommodate the global conditions of life' (Olwig 1997: 17); they 'allow for "traveling-in-dwelling" as well as "dwelling-in-traveling"' (Olwig 1997: 36). I argue that personal narratives can also be seen as 'cultural sites.' Although they do not in themselves represent translocal activities, narratives such as those embedded in the circulating stories of the East-Timorese diaspora create a connection between the exiles' past and present, between home and displacement. Perceived as 'cultural sites,' the exiles' personal narratives represent mirrors of the individuals' complex and multiple belongings, hybrid identities, and continuous representation of everyday subjectivity. They exemplify the dialectic process in which identity and belonging are negotiated, incorporating the ambiguities of the past, the present and the future.

Emerging from the dialectic process of social relations, narratives (and identities) cannot be seen in isolation from the Other (Rew & Campbell 1999: 10). In their discussion of the political economy of identity and affect, Alan Rew and John R. Campbell (1999: 13) claim that:

all social identities—racial, ethnic, gendered, sexual, religious and national—find their definition in relation to significant Others just as they articulate ideas of self and selfhood which are communicated and given meaning through social interaction.

This implies that identity rests on experiences of cultural difference. When I speak of the process of questioning identity and negotiating boundaries of belonging in which the East-Timorese exiles engage, this must be seen in relation to their experience of difference and change. The circulating stories of the East-Timorese diaspora have emerged in the shadow of the changing circumstances of post-independence and they reflect an enhanced experience of difference between people still in East Timor and the exiles. In order to understand the process we need to consider the question of boundaries and identity further. When does cultural difference become significant? Why do boundaries shift and how does this process take place?

Fredrik Barth's (1969) classic introduction to the book *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* and his theory of ethnic identity can illuminate some of the issues at stake. In this introductory chapter, Barth criticises the predisposition of his contemporaries who presented 'ethnicity as a static, virtually biologically given element of personal identity, or as particular cultural characteristics or rules' (Askland 2005: 180). Rather than

explaining cultural variation through a focus on discontinuity and social and geographical isolation, Barth asserts that ethnic groups and ethnic identities should be perceived in relation to the socially effective means through which the imagining of ethnic groups and boundaries are produced and sustained. He argues that:

it is clear that boundaries persist despite a flow of personnel across them. In other words, categorical ethnic distinctions do not depend on an absence of mobility, contact and information, but do entail social processes of exclusion and incorporation whereby discrete categories are maintained despite changing participation and membership in the course of individual life histories (Barth 1969: 9–10).

Moreover, ‘stable, persisting, and often vitally important social relations are maintained across such boundaries, and are frequently based precisely on the dichotomized ethnic statuses’ (Barth 1969: 10). According to Barth, ethnic identity is a product of negotiation of boundaries rather than of cultural traits. It is, like interethnic relations, characterised by dynamic qualities subjected to negotiation and contextually restricted choice. Subsequently, ethnicity should be seen as an aspect of a relation, not the trait of a person or a group. Through identified practical consequence of cultural difference and through the actors of a particular community—that is, the members of a group and a differentiated ethnic group which is seen as culturally distinct—ethnic groups are constituted ideologically as well as socially (Barth 1969).⁸³

Barth’s focus is on ethnic identity and ethnic groups, but his theory is relevant beyond the realms of ethnicity and can inform discussions about personal identity in general. The transactional nature of ethnicity and the processes of incorporation and exclusion described by Barth can be found within all modes of identification, whether this is association founded upon ethnicity, nationality, gender, class, age, sexuality or other characteristics (Askland 2005: 183). Expanding Barth’s theory of ethnicity through a discussion of self-definition and categorisation, sociologist Richard Jenkins (1994) argues that the dialectic, transactional nature of identity and the phenomena of exclusion and inclusion entail a level of self-consciousness, reflecting processes of internal and external definitions. It is within these processes of self-definition (internal definition) and

⁸³ Barth’s theory transformed the study of cultures and cultural difference into a study of interaction, arguing that social forms are developed by inter-personal transactions (Barth 1966). In his later work, Barth (1989) modified his image of ethnicity to some degree, emphasising the importance of history, accordingly acknowledging the unintended consequences of action. His focus on boundaries and the active participation and purposive decision-making of social agents has, however, remained largely unchanged.

categorisation (external definition) that boundaries of belonging and identification are produced and negotiated, reproduced, and transformed. Internal definition refers to the process through which individuals signal to themselves or others their identification with and ascription to particular values, codes of practice, signals or signs. In contrast, external definition indicates the process during which individuals are defined and/or categorised by others. Internal and external definitions are not mutually exclusive. Instead, due to the usefulness of the Other as a mirror of the self and the definition of self relying greatly on the history or relationship with significant others, self-definition and external categorisation are unremittingly implicated in the other (Hagendoorn 1993; Jenkins 1994: 198–9).⁸⁴

Jenkins (1994: 216–7) contends that external categorisation may contribute to a group's identity in various ways.⁸⁵ This can, for example, occur through 'internalisation,' through which 'the categorized group is exposed to the term in which another group defines it and assimilates that categorization, in whole or in part, into its own identity' (Jenkins 1994: 216).⁸⁶ Categorisations and self-definitions, as well as the possibility for internalisation of external categories, reflect people's relationships, their past experiences, present circumstances, and future aspirations. But what happens when people's everyday realities are altered? What happens when internalised categories are juxtaposed by new circumstances and changing internal definitions of self? What happens when categorisations emerge within a group that challenge previous internal definitions and, ultimately, the individual's experience of self? I argue that it is in these circumstances that a questioning of identity and a process of negating boundaries of belonging transpire. This is when cultural difference becomes significant and boundaries shift. The post-independence reality of East-Timorese exiles reflects such a collision of external and

⁸⁴ The dialectic and contextually determined character of identity and ethnic identification is highlighted by Fuglerud (1999: 130–2) in his discussion of the nature of Tamil identity in exile. Fuglerud emphasises that ethnic consciousness often arises through a sense of negation, that is, through a sense of difference (what one is not), and that repetitive interaction does not necessarily generate a process of integration or 'ethnic incorporation' as suggested by some of the traditional models (Barth 1969; Eidheim 1971) but may lead to 'a patterned reproduction of conflicts' (Fuglerud 1999: 131).

⁸⁵ Jenkins (1994: 200) distinguishes between category and group: a category is externally defined and a group 'is rooted in processes of internal definitions.'

⁸⁶ Jenkins identifies five potential scenarios that can lead to the internalisation of external definitions: (1) similarity, by which the internal and external categories reinforce each other; (2) long-standing contract, leading to incremental cultural change; (3) legitimate authority, by which the external definition is proposed by a person or a group of people who, in the eyes of the subject, holds legitimate authority to categorise them; (4) use or threat of physical force; and (5) rejection, through which the external definition is internalised as the focus of denial (Askland 2005: 116; Jenkins 1994). However, as Jenkins contends, for a classification to be an effective categorisation it needs to be 'an intervention in that group's social works which will, to an extent and in ways that are a function of the specifics of the situation, alter the world and the experience of living in it' (Jenkins 1994: 217–18).

internal definitions. The exiles' experience of self has been confronted by an emerging external definition proposed by others in East Timor and set within the context of their previous imagined community of belonging. This external classification is at odds with the exiles' self-definition and sense of self, subsequently creating a void in which disappointment, disillusionment, frustration and a sense of loss have emerged. As the circumstances have changed, boundaries have shifted.

The changing definitions, categorisations and boundaries suggest a change in the East-Timorese exiles' concerns; the (perceived) categorisation of the exiles as foreigners, traitors, opportunists, outsiders, 'Westerners' and 'non-Timorese,' threatens the exiles' selfhood and identity and, as a consequence, their self-definition is increasingly set according to the difference they experience between themselves and those 'at home.' The circulating stories can be seen as a response to the emerging divergence between the diasporas' and the local East-Timorese people's external and internal definitions, the conflict between returnees/diasporas and local people, as well as the exiles' concern about their present situation and their future. The circulating stories are part of the exiles' (re)creation of meaning, and they maintain the diasporic community's unity, morality and history through their subtle portrayal of communal values and expectations.⁸⁷ They define the exiles in opposition to their significant others, namely the East-Timorese people, and they reflect the exiles' altered self-awareness that has attained a renewed focus on the hybrid nature of their identity. Though indicating a continued concern for East Timor and a connection to their ancestral past, the circulating stories position the East-Timorese exiles outside the moral community of the East-Timorese nation. This repositioning is justified by reference to the moral discourse of sacrifice and the cultural code of reciprocity, which, according to the exiles, the East-Timorese nation and its people have failed to fulfil.

RECIPROCITY: MORAL OBLIGATION AND EMOTIONAL INVESTMENT

As suggested in the preceding discussion, the negotiation of boundaries and process of othering reflect the moral discourse of sacrifice and the notion of reciprocity embedded in East-Timorese communal values and practices; however, despite its sociocultural

⁸⁷ As such, the circulating stories assume similarities to gossip in that they disassemble, evaluate and reconstitute the exiles' world, indicate a moral discourse, and suggest a notion of group-membership (Gluckman 1963, 1968; Haviland 1977; Heilman 1976; Paine 1967; Rapport & Overing 2000: 153–4; Wilson 1974).

significance, this discourse of morality and reciprocity is not one that all exiles adhere to. The cultural code of reciprocity represents a significant marker of difference within the diaspora. It reflects a division within the community between those who were actively involved in the struggle for independence and those who were not active participants. The difference between these groups, their experiences and agency post-independence accentuate the relevance of the moral discourse of sacrifice as a discourse guiding choices and actions.

The preceding discussion focuses on the experiences and (subsequent) practice of the participants who engaged in the political campaign for independence and who remained close to the East-Timorese cultural sphere. There is, however, as stated in the previous chapter, a considerable group of Timorese Chinese and a small number of *mestiço* and indigenous Timorese who did not get involved in the political campaign. With a couple of exceptions of politically active individuals, the Timorese Chinese focused their energy on establishing their lives in exile and they rarely took part in political activities, accordingly removing themselves from the sociocultural sphere that maintained and nurtured a sense of long-distance nationalism. In contrast to the *mestiço*- and indigenous- Timorese exiles' ambiguous position of belonging, the Timorese Chinese set roots and established themselves within the Australian community. Similar attempts at settlement were evident for a minority of individuals of Portuguese- and indigenous-Timorese heritage. For different reasons, these individuals did not engage in practices of long-distance nationalism and remained disconnected to the political campaign for independence. Their detachment from the transnational sphere had various causes. For some, the challenges of exile were overwhelming and, without support from family and the wider community, their lives in exile centred on surviving the strains of everyday life and getting to know the new culture. For others, East Timor represented a difficult past characterised by violence and trauma, and exile presented an opportunity to disassociate themselves from the traumatic memories of the past. This is illustrated in the two quotes below:

We were brought up in [name of town] and Mum kept us pretty much, not away, Mum didn't keep us away, but we basically, new life, new country, new things, and off we went. And we survived with minimum contact with Timorese people ... [My mum] was a single mum, and she, she, we spoke briefly about this over the years. She was a single mum with six kids ... [and] being a single mum she had a lot on her plate. And, you know, getting her, she had to survive herself first and then put us there. And I guess it was just, you know, her focus was to make it, and she had to make it on her own. That was the

biggest thing. And I, I think her focus was always that we are in a new country and we just have to survive and I think that was just a way of surviving, really.

Maria

It was a choice that I made when I came here not to involve with the Timorese community because, after living in Darwin and stuff and I was very involved with the Timorese community and it was always very violent and stuff and I didn't like that. So to avoid all that I decided not to have anything to do with the community 'cause I think, violent and lazy and blah, blah, blah. And so, yeah, I didn't have anything to do with them ... And I didn't want to say that I was East Timorese.

Sebastiao

As suggested by the excerpt from my interview with Maria cited above, children of East-Timorese refugees could become detached from the East-Timorese cause as a consequence of their parents' decision to maintain a distance to the East-Timorese community. Indeed, the majority of those interviewed who remained disengaged in the nationalist struggle during the Indonesian occupation were younger people who arrived in Australia as children or young adolescents. Although these individuals remained connected to their East-Timorese heritage through their history as refugees and the moral and cultural framework carried by their parents, their emotional connection to, and association with, the East-Timorese sociocultural sphere was restricted.

In contrast to their older peers, the younger participants' agency in exile was 'coupled with high levels of mobility and openness to modification to life conditions and social reality' (Askland 2007: 243). For this particular group of East-Timorese exiles, their limited access to and socialisation within the East-Timorese sociocultural framework led to the development of an internal perception of self beyond the cultural, social and moral fields of their background; that is, although East-Timorese sociocultural structures are present in their definition of self, these merge with their complex and hybrid points of reference, representing one of many sociocultural frameworks to which their identity and sense of belonging are developed and negotiated. They articulate a complex identity resting on their socialisation into various sociocultural spheres. Despite its complexity, the hybrid nature of their identity appears less ambiguous than that of their peers, whose exile identities became structured around the conditions of exile, the desire to return, and an embodied sense of morality and obligation towards the East-Timorese nation (see Chapter Four).

Rather than being determined by age and ethnicity, political activism, as expressed through political, humanitarian, cultural and artistic means, reflects a (continued) socialisation into, and association with, the moral discourse and cultural framework discussed above. Accordingly, when considering the difference between those who were politically active throughout the Indonesian occupation and those who distanced themselves from the political campaign and the East-Timorese sociocultural sphere, this discussion must look beyond the simplistic explanation of ethnic and generational difference. It requires consideration of the processes that lie behind the development of identity and belonging and that, subsequently, determine ethnic and generational differences.

This brings me back to Bourdieu's notion of habitus and social fields introduced in the previous chapter. Understanding the difference between the two groups requires an understanding of the political campaign as a social field; that is, as a social space characterised by a particular logic of action, forms of capital, relations, values and resources, which provokes expectations to behaviour, both in the present and in the future. In contrast to other social fields reflecting East-Timorese discourses, this field implied a particular emotional and affective connection to the East-Timorese nation. As discussed in Chapter Four, people's participation in the political campaign reflected a sense of obligation towards the moral community of East Timor, an obligation that mirrors the notion of morality as it is conveyed in the discourse of collectivism and the dualistic principle of East-Timorese sociocultural structures. The notion of reciprocity and the imagined and anticipated inclusion in the East-Timorese nation were intricately weaved into the field, sustaining motivation and logic for action. The intensity of this social field, created by the apparent urgency of the cause on which it rested, placed its social, cultural and historical discourses at the centre of the politically active exiles' lives, further leading to the embodiment of these discourses within their exile identities. Moreover, the social field of the political campaign carried a categorisation of the exiles as East-Timorese nationals; they were perceived by external sources as part of the East-Timorese nation. Corresponding with their internal perception of self, this categorisation, suggesting their adherence to the moral discourse of sacrifice and the cultural code of reciprocity, became an integral part of their sense of self.

As illustrated in Chapter Four, there is vast difference in the post-independence experience of those who were politically active and those who were not. The difficulties

facing the politically active exiles in the aftermath of independence are absent in the narratives of those who remained politically inactive throughout the Indonesian occupation. In contrast to the former group, these individuals' agency in exile was guided by their practice within various social fields, none of which required the emotional investment and affective involvement of the field of political campaign. This does not imply that the politically active individuals did not engage with various fields; they did. But, due to the dominating position of the political campaign and the intensely felt emotion aroused within the individuals through their agency within this social field, it played a particular part in the development and negotiation of their personal and social identities. The participants who refrained from the political campaign continued to relate to a greater or lesser extent with their East-Timorese background and engaged with East-Timorese discourses, but none of these demanded a similar portrayal of affective and emotional investment. The intensity of their East-Timorese heritage in their definition of self depends on their past experiences, their agency within alternative social fields reflecting East-Timorese sociocultural structures, such as that represented by family, and the emotional connection to other social fields within which they have been socialised.

The over-representation of younger people within this group has to be seen in relation to their limited personal experience with East-Timorese discourses and younger people's 'potential to energise and excite their habitus in accordance with the new environment' (Askland 2007: 247) that exile represents. Whereas adults' habitus 'tends to ensure its own constancy and its defence against change through the selection it makes within new information by rejecting information capable of calling into question its accumulated information' (Bourdieu 1990: 60–1), children and young adolescents have, as noted by Tamar Rapoport and Edna Lomsky-Feder (2002: 245), 'fewer vested interests in, and motivations to, preserve the existing social order than do adults, and thus are less anxious about change'. Young refugees will also have more ready access to social fields (such as school, sports, art groups and other social networks) that provide an introduction to the sociocultural character of the host country (Askland 2007). Though this may explain the predominance of younger people within this group, it leaves unanswered the question of why many of the younger participants express experiences of post-independence loss and disappointment.

The fact that the younger refugees faced the challenges of exile with greater mobility and openness than their older peers did not exclude them from the social field of the political

campaign. Their young age bestowed these participants with possibilities for social interaction within local communities and social fields that were unavailable for their older peers and, through their practice within these fields, they developed an embodied understanding of the new society. However, for those who participated in the political campaign, either by personal choice or through their parents' encouragement, this social field remained the predominant field for the development of exile identities. Rather than being determined by age, the study participants' association with the moral community of East Timor reflects their agency, emotional investment and experiences within the social field of the political campaign. Consequently, instead of reflecting contemporaneity in terms of 'the co-existence of persons between two sets of dates,' it suggests 'a subjective condition of having experienced the same dominant influences' (Pilcher 1994: 486). This indicates, as Karl Mannheim (1959) notes in his work on the sociological problem of generations, that although people may share a generational location (i.e. they were born into the same historical and cultural context and were exposed to similar experiences during their formative years), they may belong to different 'generations as actuality' reflecting 'a concrete bond ... created between members of a generation by their being exposed to the social and intellectual symptoms of a process of dynamic de-stabilization' (Mannheim 1959: 303). Within a generation as actuality there may be opposing responses to particular historical situations and circumstances, and a generation as actuality may therefore be stratified into 'generational units' (Mannheim 1959: 304; Pilcher 1994: 490):

Romantic-conservative youth, and liberal-rationalist groups, belong to the same actual generation but form separate 'generation units' within it. The generation unit represents a much more concrete bond than the actual generation as such. Youth experiencing the same concrete historical problems may be said to be part of the same actual generation; while those groups within the same actual generation which work up the material of their common experiences in different ways, constitute separate generation units (Mannheim 1959: 304).

Following Mannheim, we may refer to the young East-Timorese exiles that remained politically active throughout the Indonesian occupation and those who were distant to the political campaign as different generational units. The generational units cut across the ethnic division between Timorese Chinese and *mestiço*/indigenous Timorese. Similar patterns are visible for the older participants of the study; their exile identities and the challenges they face post-independence largely reflecting their involvement and

emotional investment in, or lack of association to, the political campaign, rather than ethnic background and age.

IV. CONCLUSION

This chapter has argued that through circulating stories, the East-Timorese exiles engage in a narrative practice of storytelling by which they redefine their social environment and negotiate boundaries of belonging. Dwelling upon their experience of the East-Timorese nation's failure to fulfil their obligation towards the East-Timorese people and them as exiles, they have negotiated a space in which their decision to remain in Australia and remove themselves from the transnational sphere is legitimised. New boundaries of identity and belonging have been established on the back of experiences of change, resentment and exclusion. The next chapter illustrates how this process of othering has been furthered in the shadow of the political crisis in East Timor and how it has augmented the feelings of disappointment, disillusionment, frustration and anger. The next chapter explores this process further through consideration of how emotions form part of people's identity and sense of belonging.

AFFECTIVE RELATIONS, IDENTITY AND BELONGING IN A TIME OF CRISIS

The East-Timorese exiles are confronted by a continuous flow of information about East Timor through myriad channels. Different information—stories about friends and relatives, gossip, cultural expressions and news—makes its way to the members of the diaspora through friends and family in East Timor, the diasporic community, the Australian media, and the general Australian public. It informs the circulating stories by confirming or challenging the exiles' perceptions of development and change. The role of the Australian media and the Australian public discourse on East Timor in people's ongoing mediation of the circulating stories has been particularly evident in relation to the political crisis of 2006–2007. This chapter considers how the exiles relate to news coverage and media discussions of post-independence East Timor and the political crisis in particular, and considers how the external representations inform the participants' negotiation of identity. The chapter continues the previous chapter's discussion of othering by considering how affect and emotional responses to particular events are not only manifestations of changing boundaries, but in themselves part of the process of othering and boundary negotiation.

The first section of the chapter provides an outline of the political crisis. This is not a comprehensive analysis of the crisis or its various root causes and actors, but rather a basic presentation of the course of events.⁸⁸ It provides the background for the subsequent discussion of how the political crisis and the situation in post-independence East Timor have been described in the Australian media more generally, and of the analysis of how the participants of the study respond to external representations of the crisis and East-Timorese leadership. The section following this outline considers how the crisis manifested in the participants' lives and the emotional rhetoric in the exiles' narratives about the crisis. Through a further analysis of Bourdieu's approach to habitus, social field and practice, I explore how emotions form part of individuals' habitus and the process of negotiating and transforming identity and boundaries of belonging.

⁸⁸ For a detailed timeline of the main events of the political crisis, see: UN (2006).

I. THE CRISIS OF 2006–2007

In late April 2006, images of angry mobs roaming the streets of Dili entered the homes of the East Timorese living in Australia. Despite early warning signs, most of the exiles were taken aback by the abrupt collapse of national unity. It was in the aftermath of the events of 2006 and 2007 that they first recognised how explosive the post-independence situation had been. The first four years of independence had not been without challenges: dissatisfaction and claims of discrimination had been brewing within the army since 2003 (see: Hood 2006a, 2006b; ICG 2008; Rees 2003; Shoesmith 2003; Simonsen 2006); tensions between Fretilin veterans and the police had led to violent clashes around the country (see: Hood 2006a, 2006b; Rees 2003; Scambary 2007; Shoesmith 2003; Simonsen 2006); growing antagonism between Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri and President Xanana Gusmão had intensified a political schism between the two parties dating back to the resistance era (see: Aarons 2006; Gusmão 2000; Niner 2007; Shoesmith 2004); poverty and chronic deprivation had led to a sense of social injustice and frustration amongst the population (see: Curtain 2006; Gomez 2006; Scambary 2007; UNDP 2006; USAID 2006); and young, unemployed males had become increasingly vocal in their critique of the government (see: Scambary 2006, 2007; Shoesmith 2003; Simonsen 2006). Set within the context of the East-Timorese people's high expectations of independence, these limitations to institutional, political and economic sectors had progressively created a highly volatile situation. Once the fragile peace was broken, suppressed struggles surfaced in accumulated violent actions.

The conflict had a highly fluid nature where the motives, means and potential for violent behaviour changed over time. It followed different phases, exhibiting diverse dynamics and engaging various actors (Scambary 2007; USAID 2006). The first phase of the conflict was initiated by the sacking of 594 soldiers of the national army, approximately 40 per cent of the total force, on the 16th of February 2006.⁸⁹ The soldiers, known as 'the petitioners,' had complained about unfair treatment of soldiers from the Western part of the country, citing grievances such as limited opportunities for promotion, poor service conditions, and abusive discrimination by Eastern officers (Harrington 2007; ICG 2008; McWilliam & Bexley 2008; UN 2006). Their complaints had been previously raised on the 9th of January when a group of 159 soldiers submitted a written petition to Brigadier

⁸⁹ The effective date of the soldiers' dismissal was set to the 1st of March 2006.

General Taur Matan Ruak and President Gusmão. The number of petitioners grew quickly and, on the 8th of February, after having received no official response on their concerns, 418 soldiers marched in front of the presidential palace. A commission of investigation was established two days later, but it failed to resolve the problems and, on the 17th of February, the petitioners abandoned their barracks. The petitioners refused to accept the subsequent decision of dismissal and lodged an appeal to President Gusmão who responded to the petition on the 23rd of March.⁹⁰ In a highly divisive speech, President Gusmão stated that the dismissal was within the competency of the Chief of the Defence Force, but, simultaneously, that he saw the decision as unjust.⁹¹ The speech lent weight to the petitioners' claims that the problems within the defence force stemmed primarily from discrimination by Easterners against Westerners and, regardless of the President's motives, the address cultivated rather than resolved the evolving communal conflict (Kingsbury & Leach 2007: 6; McWilliam 2007b: 38; McWilliam & Bexley 2008: 67–8; UN 2006: 22).⁹²

The first phase of the conflict was characterised by violent clashes between security forces and large anti-government demonstrations, eventually leading to the resignation of Prime Minister Alkatiri on the 26th of June 2006 (Fitzpatrick & Shanahan 2006; Kingsbury & Leach 2007; Murdoch 2006; UN 2006).⁹³ During this phase, Major Alfredo Reinado, who would become a key figure in the political crisis, deserted his post at the F-FDTL military police.⁹⁴ In the months leading up to Prime Minister Alkatiri's resignation, Major Reinado became increasingly vocal in his critique of the government and he gradually became a symbol of resistance, attaining the status as a present-day resistance

⁹⁰ The decision to dismiss the soldiers was supported by Prime Minister Alkatiri, but, contrary to most accounts in the Australian media, Alkatiri was not responsible for instigating the mass dismissal.

⁹¹ The Independent Special Commission of Inquiry for Timor-Leste (UN 2006: 21) notes that the dismissal of the soldiers was not legally enacted and, moreover, that 'approximately 200 of the personnel dismissed were not petitioners, but officers or other ranks who had been chronically absent without leave in the months and years prior to March 2006.'

⁹² On the evening of the 23rd of March and the following days, multiple disturbances assuming a regional dynamic occurred in Dili.

⁹³ Prior to this, on the 24th of May 2006, the East-Timorese leadership, unable to maintain public order, requested help from the international community. Two days later, on the 26th of May, the first Australian troops landed in Dili as part of an Australian-led military deployment, *Operation Astute*. This deployment, which is ongoing at the time of writing, was authorised by the United Nations. However, it works independently in support of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT), which was established by the Security Council Resolution 1704 (2006) on the 25th of August 2006 (UNSC 2006: 2). In conjunction with Operation Astute, Australia provides police support together with 20 other nations as part of the United Nations Police Force (UNPOL), which forms part of UNMIT.

⁹⁴ Major Reinado abandoned his post on the 3rd of May 2006 in response to the deployment of F-FDTL soldiers on the 28th of April when a five-day demonstration organised by the petitioners turned violent, resulting in five dead and several dozens wounded, and a subsequent rumour of the massacre of 60 people in Taci Tolu by F-FDTL troops (a rumour that was later dismissed as no evidence to sustain it could be found). For further information on the violence of the 28th of April and the subsequent events, see: UN (2006: 23–8).

hero amongst sections of the population. During this phase, Reinado stated that he remained loyal to the President as the Supreme Commander of F-FDTL, thus positioning himself within the increasingly tense political environment and bolstering the growing political stand-off between the President and the Prime Minister.

Contrary to presumptions of most international observers (e.g. Banham & Coorey 2006; Dodd 2006; Perlez 2006; The Age 27 June 2006, editorial), the violence did not subside with the change in government leadership. Instead, as Scambary (2007: 2) notes, the conflict moved into a second phase in which politically motivated violence was replaced by ‘protracted street brawls between large ethnically based groups from the East and the West of the country.’⁹⁵ The violence evolved from vengeance attacks, expressions of social jealousies and petty juvenile criminality into gang warfare, characteristic of the third phase of the conflict. Whereas the initial phase of the conflict had resulted in the killings of at least 38 people, the destruction of about 1650 houses, and the displacement of approximately 150,000 people (UN 2006: 42), the two subsequent phases saw more people die as a result of gang-related violence than during the crisis itself (ICG 2008: 3). Moreover, the antagonisms and rivalry of the gangs driving the violence of the third phase moved the violence, which so far had been restricted to Dili, into the Western highland region (Scambary 2007: 2).

Though tensions persisted, a concerted reconciliation effort in November and December 2006 and the arrest of various individuals claimed to be involved in gang violence in January and February 2007 led to a reduction in gang violence (AFP 2007a; Scambary 2007; UNPOL 2007: 2, 8–9).⁹⁶ Renewed tension would, however, soon surface. In late February 2007, the President ordered the arrest of Major Reinado in response to an attack on a police station close to the Indonesian border during which Major Reinado and his

⁹⁵ The crisis saw an intensification of the geographical polarisation between East, *Lorosae*, and West, *Loromonu*. The rhetoric of *Lorosae* and *Loromonu* is new, but the geographical distinction it refers to can be traced back to Portuguese time and the distinction between *Firaku* (from the Portuguese *vira o cu*—to turn one’s back to the speaker) and *Kaladi* (from Portuguese *calado*—quiet, reserved). *Firaku* identifies the people from the area east of Manatuto, or the four easternmost districts of Lautem, Bacau, Viqueque, and Manatuto, whereas *Kaladi* is associated with the area west of Manatuto or the remaining districts of Dili, Aileu, Ainaro, Manufahi, Ermera, Boboaro, Cova Lima, Liquica and Oecusse (see Map of East Timor page ix). The terms refer to the ostensive difference in behaviour and temperament between the talkative and excitable Easterners and the reserved, taciturn Westerners. Further discussion of the division between *Firaku* and *Kaladi*, *Lorosae* and *Loromonu*, and its origins, can be found in: da Costa et al. (2006: 21–2), McWilliam (2007b: 37–8), Soares (2003: 268–72) and Trindade (2007: 11–13).

⁹⁶ In late January of 2007, 47 individuals were arrested, including Jamie Xavier, the leader of one of the most vicious gangs, Persaudaraan Seti Hati Terate (PSHT). Another 148 individuals were arrested in February 2007. For further information on the various social movements behind the violence and key individuals of these groups, see: Scambary (2006, 2007).

men seized 25 high-powered weapons.⁹⁷ The tension was further enhanced by shortages of rice and subsequent rumours and allegations of corruption and election fraud, as well as the killing of two Timorese men by soldiers of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) during a confrontation in one of Dili's refugee camps (AFP 2007b; AP 2007b; Kammen & Hayati 2007).⁹⁸ Following a failed raid on Reinado by Australian SAS soldiers on the 4th of March 2007, during which the Australian soldiers killed four Timorese men, violence again engulfed the streets of Dili. During this fourth phase of the conflict, mounting anti-Australian sentiments led the Australian government to evacuate all non-emergency staff. The intensity of the anger and violence exhibited by supporters of Reinado eventually drove President Gusmão to invoke emergency powers (Goulart 2007; Murdoch 2007d; Murdoch & Forbes 2007; Murray 2007; Sarmiento 2007).

In this troubled context, preparations for the Presidential and Parliamentary elections began. With the exception of a few angry confrontations between supporters of the two main parties, the election campaigns progressed relatively peacefully. An upsurge in post-election violence did, however, reveal the inherent tensions of the elections and initiated a fifth phase in the conflict. This phase of the violence brings the conflict back to its political underpinnings, and the schism between Fretilin and the opposition was again key in driving the unrest. With no party receiving the required majority of votes to form government, a political standoff between Fretilin and the parties forming a coalition around Xanana Gusmão's new party, Congresso Nacional da Reconstrução de Timor (CNRT), materialised soon after the parliamentary elections.⁹⁹ Subsequent to CNRT's

⁹⁷ At this stage, Reinado had been on the run for approximately six months following his escape from Becora prison together with 56 inmates in late August 2006. Reinado, who had been captured by soldiers from the International Stabilisation Force (ISF) after initiating an armed confrontation with a group of F-FDTL soldiers in Fatu Ahi in May 2006, refused to surrender or disarm, and for months the government engaged in negotiations with the rebel soldiers (AKI 2006, 2007a, 2007b; Dodd 2007c; Murdoch 2007c; Wilson 2006). The attempts at a peaceful solution to the problem collapsed in late February 2007 with the attack on the border station and, in response to the perceived threat to the nation posed by Major Reinado, President Gusmão ordered his arrest. Despite claims by Reinado that he had not led an armed attack but rather been given the weapons by officers at the border station (Fonseca 2007), the ISF mounted an operation for Reinado's capture.

⁹⁸ The rice crisis in East Timor has been explained as being the result of rice shortages on the international market and the low priority of East Timor for regional rice suppliers (Kammen & Hayati 2007), but with political rivalries intensifying in the advance of the 2007 elections, the rice crisis prompted an outbreak of rumours and accusations. As Kammen and Hayati (2007) observe, 'Dili residents and members of opposition parties charge that the government is withholding rice from the market with plans to use rice distribution as a means of securing Fretilin victory in the upcoming election.'

⁹⁹ The election results revealed ambiguities within the constitution and led to the emergence of a political rhetoric centred on the constitutional rules of the appointment of the Prime Minister and the formation of government. Fretilin argued that, as the party that had attained the highest primary votes (29 per cent), it had the right to appoint the Prime Minister of a majority coalition government. CNRT, on the other hand, believed that if they were able to negotiate a working coalition with its political allies, the head of government was to be appointed by them (Clegg 2007; da Silva & Teixeira 2007a, 2007b).

rejection of a proposed 'Government of Grand Inclusion' made by the Fretilin leadership and supported by the new President, José Ramos Horta, it became clear that Fretilin would form opposition to a coalition of CNRT, Associação Social Democrata Timorense-Partido Social Democrata (ASTD-PSD) and Partido Democrático (PD), to be known as the Parliamentary Majority Alliance (known by its Portuguese acronym, AMP). As the implications of the election dawned on the parties and their supporters, politically targeted attacks occurred. Encouraged by a statement made by the Fretilin Central Committee in which it rejected the new government as unconstitutional and threatened to boycott the National Parliament, Fretilin supporters took to the streets. Several days of arson and rioting followed. The violence was eventually contained in Dili, but reports of rape, houses being torched, and displacement of local communities in the eastern districts of Bacau and Viqueque intensified.¹⁰⁰

The security situation in East Timor deteriorated yet again on the 11th of February 2008 when Major Reinado and his associates staged what has been described as a military coup attempt (Tanter 2008), attacking the two most senior leaders of the country, President Ramos Horta and Prime Minister Gusmão. During the attack, which resulted in the death of Major Reinado and one of his lieutenants, and the killing of one of the President's guards, the President was seriously injured. The attack did not lead to a renewed phase of violence, but the situation remained febrile and potentially explosive over the ensuing weeks. Things returned to a sense of normality in April 2008 following the surrender of the rebel soldiers and the confinement of the petitioners whose complaints had triggered the initial phase of violence two years earlier (Jolliffe 2008; Jolliffe, March & Nicholson 2008; Murdoch et al. 2008; Tue 2008; Wilson 2008).¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ Though initially perceived as 'the venting of frustrations of Fretilin voters' (McWilliam & Bexley 2008: 78), the attacks reflect historical political rivalries (e.g. Gunter 2007), the failure of independence to reward those who sacrificed and suffered (e.g. Traube 2007, see also: Chapter Five), as well as the breakdown of trust in the national leadership that transpired during the 2006 crisis. In the politically volatile environment, the election and formation of government offered opportunities to seek revenge and to revive old grievances. The enhanced relevance of the regional distinction between Easterners and Westerners became visible as Eastern gangs sought vengeance on those they saw as responsible for the anti-Eastern violence of 2006 (McWilliam & Bexley 2008: 79). Rather than providing an anticipated 'new beginning,' the elections and the establishment of the new government signified the continuation of community enmities and leadership failings.

¹⁰¹ Conjecture about the motivations of Major Reinado followed the failed attempt and questions have been raised as to whether external elements were involved. In the days after the attack, speculation emerged suggesting that, rather than being an assassination attempt, the renegade soldiers had planned to kidnap the President and the Prime Minister (Murdoch 2008; Niner 2008). Regardless of the motives, the attack appears to be an act of desperation. In the months leading up to the attack, Ramos Horta had, with the assistance of the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue in Geneva, negotiated a potential surrender with the rebel soldiers. With no option but surrender, Major Reinado is said to have become increasingly paranoid and delusional and, feeling progressively more isolated, he became agitated at his receding authority. In light of this, the attack can be seen as an attempt by Major Reinado to reassert his position amongst the political leadership

II. PORTRAYALS OF THE CRISIS

The Australian media represents one of the primary channels of information for the exiles about what is happening in East Timor. Only a minority of the participants actively seek information about East Timor through internet resources and academic writings, and they rely greatly on what is distributed through the media for information beyond that which is attained through family and friends in East Timor, people who have visited East Timor and returned to the diaspora, and other members of the diaspora. As such, the Australian media has significant potential for influencing the exiles' opinions and thoughts with regards to what is happening in East Timor.¹⁰² Moreover, the Australian media provides information to the general Australian public from which members of the public create their understanding of post-independence East Timor and, subsequently, it will often inform conversations about East Timor between East-Timorese exiles and their Australian friends and colleagues. It is therefore important to consider how the political crisis and the situation in post-independence East Timor have been described and explained by the Australian media more generally.

Following independence, an increasingly problematic picture of East Timor, portraying poverty, youth unemployment, inequality, health concerns, power struggles, corruption, mismanagement and poor governance, emerged within the Australian media. East Timor has been described as a fragile country on the brink of becoming a failed nation. It has been compared with other South Pacific nations that have 'enduring problems of poverty, bad governance and corruption' (AFP 2006), and that rely on Australian support in order to prevent instability. It has been portrayed as a volatile country that repeatedly staggers into political, social and humanitarian crises. An example of such descriptions could be read in the Sydney Morning Herald on the 8th of August 2007 in the editorial piece *A neighbour needs help*:

It is poor, small, divided, dysfunctional and often nasty, but East Timor is a project Australia cannot abandon. While Australian troops are yet again being stoned in the

(Murdoch 2008; Niner 2008). More recent evidence indicates that elements of organised crime in association with local political actors backed Major Reinado's actions. He has been connected to an Australian bank account holding over \$1 million. Furthermore, an autopsy conducted on the renegade soldier found that he was on crystallized methamphetamine—'ice'—at the time of the attack (Horta 2008).

¹⁰² It should be mentioned that a few participants also have access to Portuguese television and read the Portuguese newspaper. Still, while Portuguese news reaches some sections of the diaspora, the Australian media plays, due to its general accessibility, a greater role in forming the exiles about the situation in their home country.

streets, and East Timor's democracy *yet again* [my emphasis] lurches into instability, Australia does not have the luxury of walking away, or retreating into token engagement.

In the more extreme commentary on East Timor it has been suggested, as it was by Hogue's (2007) opinion piece published in *The Australian* on the 12th of March 2007, that the liberation of East Timor was a disaster that 'has come back to haunt us.' Hogue (2007) writes that:

[w]e ... have a poor, backward and unstable entity on our doorstep, a state manifestly unable to look after itself. Political and tribal factionalism are rife. Ultimately, this is the fault and the problem of the Timorese; they voted for independence and they got it.

The problems facing the new nation have largely been blamed on the failures of the first Fretilin government (Aarons 2007a, 2007b; *The Australian* 7 February 2007, editorial; Dodd 2007b; Sheridan 2007). Both Fretilin and the former Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri have received harsh criticism in the Australian broadsheet press and have been accused of failing 'to deliver the basics for their people when they had the chance: education, health, jobs, roads, electricity and clean water' (Aarons 2007a).¹⁰³ The Fretilin administration did indeed prove inadequate in project management, implementation and deliverance, and left spending gaps despite a surplus in the budget. In the media, this inability to spend money and deliver on issues such as rural economy and unemployment has been largely explained by the highly centralised administration (Cleary 2007a, 2007b; Dodd 2007b), subsequently ignoring the complexities of the issues at stake.¹⁰⁴ This ignorance of the complexities of post-independence East Timor runs through large sections of the Australian media coverage on a range of issues such as economy, language, education and health, presenting a simplistic picture in which Fretilin remains the main cause of stagnation and instability. This is coupled with an uncritical use of stereotypes describing Fretilin as a communist (Hogue 2007), Marxist (Fitzpatrick 2007; Sheridan 2007; Wilson

¹⁰³ While *The Australian* has been much more explicit than other media channels in its critique of Fretilin and the Fretilin administration, a bias against and scepticism towards Fretilin is visible in the general press as well as in the broadcast media.

¹⁰⁴ The failures of the Fretilin government have to be seen in relation to the complex political and economic landscape of post-independence East Timor. The question about spending gaps should, for example, be seen in relation to the lack of experience and managerial capability of the Fretilin government and the premature withdrawal of parts of the UN mission, as well as the centralised character of the cabinet (Gunn and Vltchek 2007).

2007), or Maoist (Aarons 2007b) party.¹⁰⁵ As is illustrated in the following excerpt from foreign editor of The Australian Greg Sheridan's (2007) piece *Fretilin still a stranger to democracy*, the party is portrayed as an undemocratic movement that is out of touch with ordinary people and that will turn to 'dirty tricks' (Fitzpatrick 2007) in order to remain in power:

Fretilin has been absurdly idealised in this country. It was always a Marxist and profoundly undemocratic movement. It failed in government. Its leaders say they are not ordering or even sanctioning this week's outbreak of violence. But these were Fretilin mobs that were rioting and Fretilin's leaders could have stopped the riots.

The image of Fretilin as undemocratic is furthered by the argument that the first government of the nation was illegitimate. This assertion is based on the belief that new elections should have been held after the writing of the constitution. Instead, a decision was made to transform the Fretilin dominated Constituent Assembly into the first National Parliament.¹⁰⁶ According to sociologist and East-Timor activist Helen Hill (2003), this forms part of a set of myths created, largely by the Australian media, about East Timor. In conjunction with the claim that the Fretilin government was unconstitutional, the myths consist of

the idea that East Timor is run by a clique of retrograde Stalinists left over from the Cold War era who lived it up in Mozambique for twenty-four years; ... that most of Timor's problem arise from the decision to introduce Portuguese as the national language; and that there is a huge rift between Mari Alkatiri, the Prime Minister, and President Xanana Gusmao (Hill 2003: 2).

These myths underlie most of the commentary about the political crisis, and the relative acceptance of these claims as 'facts' has led to the often one-dimensional explanations about the crisis. Although each phase of the conflict has provoked renewed debate of the causes and motives of the violence, the crisis has largely been portrayed as a political and

¹⁰⁵ There is no doubt that Fretilin is a left-wing party. However, as stated by Fretilin's Secretary General Mari Alkatiri, it remains committed to socialism and positions itself as a socialist, rather than communist, or Marxist, party (Gunn and Vltchek 2007).

¹⁰⁶ The decision to transfer legislative and executive powers to the Constituent Assembly was made by the National Council, a 36-member body that preceded the Constituent Assembly. The National Council was appointed by Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General, Sérgio Vieira de Mello, on the basis of nominations from the CNRT (headed by Xanana Gusmão). It represented a broad range of political, social and private interests across East-Timorese society, and had only a few Fretilin members (Hill 2007; Knezevic 2007: 139).

ethnic conflict caused by fragile state institutions, weakness in the rule of law and rivalry between ethnic gangs. The gang violence and the political conflict itself have been described as a recent phenomenon, despite their origins tracing back to the Indonesian occupation and, in some instances, Portuguese times (Scambary 2007, 2008). Much of the scholarly analysis of the crisis has focused on the failures of official state institutions and their political actors, and the breakdown of national consensus has often been portrayed as an outcome of the authoritarian, centralised and anti-democratic rule of the Alkatiri government (Aarons 2006; Kingsbury 2007b). In a reactive mode, others have defended Alkatiri and his government and instead questioned the role of foreign governments and the Timorese opposition (Anderson 2006; Hamzah 2006). The public discourse of the crisis as represented in the Australian media and by academic commentary in the public sphere has greatly reflected this schism, presenting simplistic explanations resting on inadequate analysis of the complex and interconnected nature of sociopolitical and sociocultural elements that lie beneath the institutional failures. Theories focusing on political and economic variables have also been constructed, though these theories tend to ignore the dynamic character of economic issues such as poverty and unemployment and their interconnectedness with historical, cultural and social factors.

RESPONDING TO REPRESENTATIONS

Frustrated by the often one-dimensional explanations and the lack of appreciation of the complex set of variables underpinning the crisis, the participants of the study discussed their understandings of the crisis at length with me both during interviews and at informal gatherings and social encounters. Ultimately, the participants' explanations emphasise the intricate nature of the crisis in which institutional, political, economic, cultural and, for some, external factors reinforce each other and the existing lines of conflict through their interconnectedness. They stress the role of the historical and cultural context of the country, the legacy of the Portuguese and Indonesian eras, and the post-independence realities of the East-Timorese people. They argue that the politicians' lack of experience, limited availability of human resources, tendencies toward opportunism, and reluctance to take responsibility caused political development, and subsequent social and economic development, to stagnate. Nevertheless, governance, policy choices, and political divisions and rivalries are placed at the heart of the crisis, and despite the participants' insistence on acknowledging the various challenges that East Timor faced upon

independence, their explanations fall back on the political elements dominating the Australian media and the public discourse on East Timor.

How the participants explain the crisis and how they relate to the representations of East Timor in the Australian media vary with their positioning within the sociopolitical landscape of East Timor. Some of the younger participants and sections of the Timorese-Chinese community, particularly those who distanced themselves from the political struggle, those with restricted English skills, and those with little or no family remaining in East Timor, articulate a limited understanding of what has happened. They base their explanations of the crisis largely on what they picked up from the media or from others in the community, and remain relatively uncritical of the biases within the press. In contrast, those who were politically active during the Indonesian occupation and who have an association with sections of the East-Timorese political scene demonstrate a high level of awareness, involvement and agency in their engagement with the media.

When speaking about post-independence East Timor, many of the participants' narratives reflect the images drawn within the Australia media. They articulate a concern about what they perceive as a lack of development within various governmental sectors, including education, sanitation and water, health and infrastructure, and unemployment. Rather than improving the lives of East-Timorese people, independence is generally seen to have brought increased poverty and a continued struggle for survival. I have lost count of the many times people told me 'nothing is happening, the country is going backwards.' Reflecting the Australian media's portrayal of post-independence East Timor, this stagnation is largely seen as a result of the inactivity of the first Fretilin government and the incompetence of the East-Timorese political elites; still, whereas the mainstream Australian media tends to place the responsibility solely on Fretilin, the participants do not restrict their criticism to the Fretilin government. Scepticism remains of the general political elite who face fierce critique. The political leadership in general is seen as unfit for the tasks they have been ascribed, lacking the necessary education, training and experience. Politicians are often seen as corrupt, ignorant and narrow-minded and, rather than leading by example and considering the interests of the people, they are accused of engaging in infighting to forward personal ambitions. Despite this critical attitude towards the general political elite, the intensity of the criticism varies somewhat depending on the person's own political association: UDT supporters are particularly

critical of the Fretilin leadership, whereas Fretilin supporters have become increasingly negative towards Xanana Gusmão and the political opposition.

UDT supporters accuse the Fretilin government of corruption and nepotism, of being arrogant and unwilling to be held accountable of their actions. They are also criticised for their connections with Cuba and China, and many are concerned of what they see as a Mozambique leadership style resting upon a communist ideology.¹⁰⁷

... the worst thing, I think was the arrogance, the lack of accountability. Accepting, not condoning, corruption, and, you know, nepotism, like friends and all this, and, and I was told to, to get a job, a certain job, you need to be a member of the political party [Fretilin]. Similar to what happened during the Indonesian occupation ... but I think this government made a mistake of, one of the biggest mistakes I think was the, they try to get their support from, support in, I mean, connections with certain countries that I think were not very well—I mean, in terms of their political system are not very well accepted by the Catholic Church or even countries like Australia, Indonesia and the United States. My best example is especially China and Cuba.

Faustino

No, Alkatiri [Prime Minister of the first Fretilin government], he's got this system that, the Mozambique system, and that kind of system is the kind of, those communist ideology that was formed '70s, 70s, from the '70s, and he tried to introduce that. This system actually collapsed, wherever it exist around the world, it collapsed. And he, when he came [back], he brought that system to introduce in Timor! Of all those people in government, they got to learn from this kind of system.

Savio

The bias evident in some sections of the Australian press against Fretilin and Mari Alkatiri and for Xanana Gusmão and José Ramos Horta corresponds with the UDT supporters' prejudices and fears, which are founded on their personal experiences and

¹⁰⁷ Cuba has provided remarkable support to East Timor in relation to health and adult literacy. In 2003, a co-operation agreement between East Timor and Cuba was reached in which Cuba committed to provide primary and secondary health care for the East-Timorese population, to receive East-Timorese students sent to Cuba to study medicine and support the establishment of the Faculty of Medicine at the National University (UNTL), to assist in a widespread literacy campaign and the development of primary education, and to help strengthen the economy through the development of sugar cane plantations (see: Anderson 2007; RDTL 2007). China has provided extensive assistance to East Timor through, for example, support of the East-Timorese armed forces (Horta 2008), large-scale construction projects in Dili (Murdoch 2007b), economic and technical cooperation, and supply of equipment to the Foreign Ministry. One of the largest state-owned energy companies in China, PetroChina, financed a seismic study for oil and gas (Murdoch 2007b). Moreover, in response to the political crisis of 2006–2007, China sent ten peace-keeping police to form part of the UN peacekeeping force (Xinhua 2007) and provided aid in the form of rice and cooking oil.

memories of the civil war. On various occasions during the course of my fieldwork, I heard UDT supporters question the capability and legitimacy of the Fretilin government on the basis of their actions during the civil war. They argue that the historical legacy of Fretilin is evidence of the party's inability to secure peace and to govern in a democratic, transparent and accountable manner. They believe Fretilin leaders are more concerned about their own political power than the well-being of the people. Many told me that they had anticipated trouble due to, firstly, the anti-democratic rule demonstrated by Fretilin in 1975 and, secondly, the lack of justice for past crimes. This latter point does not refer to the lack of justice of the crimes of the occupation years and 1999 (Kent 2009), but the lack of justice for the crimes against UDT supporters by Fretilin during the civil war. It is a strongly felt issue amongst many of the UDT supporters. One of the study participants argued that Alkatiri, Lobato, Lu'Olo and other key individuals of the Fretilin leadership should face 'the same fate as Saddam' because of their past actions. It was with tears in her eyes and anger in her voice that Jacinta asked me how it could be that people responsible for the murders and destruction during the civil war had gained power?¹⁰⁸ 'I hate Fretilin,' she said, 'I *hate* them! How can't I hate them? When I was only eight years old, they killed men in front of me. I was only eight years old!'

The critique has intensified in the shadow of the political crisis. The UDT supporters, today more appropriately described as Gusmão supporters, argue that the crisis was a result of Alkatiri's failure to control his ministers, his arrogant approach and his limited connection with the people. They blame Fretilin for continued friction within the political sphere and express sympathy for Gusmão's apparent intolerance of Fretilin's radicalism and aggressive campaigns. They express a similar line of argument to that presented by the mainstream press and by academics such as Kingsbury (2007b), Aarons (2006), and Richmond and Franks (2008), noting Fretilin's authoritarian tendencies, its lack of tolerance and respect of dissent and opposition, and its centralised organising principles as inflammatory and degrading. The media's allegations of corruption, nepotism and manipulation have fuelled the UDT supporters' existing resentment against the Fretilin leadership, and concerns are raised that Fretilin has attempted to install a one-party authoritarian state. During a discussion about the crisis, Faustino explained to me:

¹⁰⁸ The UDT supporters generally argue that Fretilin was the cause of the civil war, despite UDT launching the coup that initiated the conflict on the 11th of August 1975. The coup aimed to remove the Portuguese from power and to halt the growing popularity of Fretilin. Fretilin supporters were rounded up and imprisoned and, according to the Central Committee of Fretilin, UDT forces 'engaged in "pillaging, assassinations, rape of women, etc"' (Dunn 2003: 148), triggering Fretilin's response of a general armed insurrection (CAVR 2005: 11–12; Dunn 2006: 139–74; Taylor 1995: 239).

... the main point of all this, I think is the lack of competence of government, of this Timorese government. The way they, they behave in a, especially from the part of the PM it's, it was an, in a lack of accountability, [with] arrogance, corruption, nepotism, everything that you think that we in a democratic country we condemn, everything was there.

Faustino

The UDT supporters argue that Alkatiri's political practice alienated non-Fretilin actors and the people more generally, and that a negative attitude to the state transpired as a consequence of the adoption of divisive policies (see: Cotton 2007a, 2007b; Simonsen 2006).¹⁰⁹ They believe that the government did not do enough to improve the situation of the people and that they placed the interest of the party in front of the interests of the people. The perceived selfishness of the Fretilin leadership and its poor performance augmented pre-existing frustrations within the population.

In contrast to the UDT supporters, Fretilin supporters defend the former government and instead question the role of the opposition and Xanana Gusmão.¹¹⁰ The Fretilin supporters argue that the disappointing performance of the government has to be seen in context of the infancy of the state institutions and the immense challenge of reconstruction that faced the government upon independence. Everything from policy development to construction work, from building infrastructure to establishing a sustainable health and education system had to be done from scratch, and the shortcomings of the first government have to be seen in relation to these tremendous tasks. They assert that no other country in the world has had an immediate successful transition to democracy and Timor should, as is indicated in Teresa's words below, be allowed time develop into a prosperous democracy:

... maybe this is part of the process of people moving towards democracy. Maybe the Timorese have to move through this at their own pace? Because if we look at other

¹⁰⁹ Examples of divisive policies include those related to the security sector and language. With regards to the language policy it should be noted that this group of participants, primarily representatives of the pre-occupation elites who were educated within the Portuguese system and speak Portuguese as their first or second language, remain in general support of the adoption of Portuguese as the official language next to Tetum. They do, however, identify its inherent problems and potential divisiveness. For further discussion of the language policy and the challenges and consequences associated with it, see: Leach (2003, 2007); Simonsen (2006: 584–8); Quinn (2007, 2009); Taylor-Leech (2007a, 2007b).

¹¹⁰ This does not suggest that they are uncritical of the first Fretilin government. They acknowledge that there appears to have been a loss of trust within the East-Timorese population as a result of government action, or inaction, and they agree that some of the policies, particularly those related to language and security, fostered potential lines of conflict and dispute.

countries, they have been through civil wars to get it right, I mean, it took years, Timor has only had five.

Theresa

The challenge of reconstruction and governing in a post-conflict nation was, according to the Fretilin supporters, exaggerated by the actions of Gusmão and the opposition. The President has been outspoken in his critique of the Fretilin government and, according to the Fretilin supporters of the diaspora, his castigation of the government has been unconstructive and his lack of support for the democratically elected government has exacerbated communal conflict and destabilised the nation. They question Gusmão's abilities as a politician and his leadership style by making reference to speeches such as that of the 23rd of March 2006 and other public addresses, which, rather than relieving looming tensions, fuelled resentment, frustration and anger. Some of the participants also speculate on Gusmão's connections with Australian and other external forces and question if he purposefully used his position to see a change of government.¹¹¹ These theories reflect the alternative voice within the Australian media's commentary, presented primarily by left-wing journalists such as John Martinkus (2008) and Tim Anderson (2006).

Referring to the strategic importance of East Timor due to its geography and the country's rich oil reserves, individuals such as Letizia question the interests and motivations of the Australian and American governments in particular. Letizia is from a Fretilin family; her father was one of the founding members of the party. She makes reference to Australia's previous ignorance of East Timor's calls for independence and Canberra's support of Indonesia, and she, like many other participants, remains sceptical about the Australian government's motives.

I think that it's still Australia and Indonesia having their involvement there. And I think—I, I, oh [sigh], yeah, I think that it's Australia going saying that we need the oil and we want, we want to have—it's not just oil, it's also tourism and all the other resources and it's so close to Australia so it's like a gold mine just next to us and, you know, just became independent so what a great opportunity to go in there and just dust them up! It's not about, you know, they put police there but then it's like you're not really doing anything, you know. And I think they [Australia], they still involved with Indonesia, I

¹¹¹ On two occasions, this speculation went as far as suggesting that Gusmão's Australian wife, Kirsty Sword Gusmão, is a spy working for the Australian government.

mean, they still want a lot of things and it's not independent and it's not about, you know, making this nation independent. I don't think they want that.

Letizia

The strong anti-Fretilin and anti-Alkatiri rhetoric of the Australian government and sections of the Australian media, their endorsement of the removal of the Fretilin government as a victory for democracy, and their seemingly unquestioning support of Gusmão and Ramos Horta have placed people like Letizia in a defensive position. Feeling exposed by the events and in search of someone to blame for the events, Letizia and other Fretilin supporters have looked for alternative explanations and other sources of blame. Like the UDT supporters, they have sought accountability and responsibility, but they have had to look beyond the immediate explanations presented by the mainstream media. Embarrassed by the nature of the political crisis, by the lack of constructive efforts of reconciliation, by the apparent loss of unity, and by the image of East Timor as a failed nation and the Fretilin party as politically immature, they have rejected the explanations otherwise adopted by the UDT supporters.

An example of the UDT and Fretilin supporters' contrasting standpoint is their divergent perspectives of a *Four Corners* report by Liz Jackson screened by the ABC in June 2006, during the time when the political standoff between Prime Minister Alkatiri and President Gusmão was at its peak. The report shows evidence of the distribution of arms to civilians by the then Minister of the Interior, Rogerio Lobato. The claims suggest that Lobato had arranged for arms to be taken from Eastern members of the Unidade Patrulhamento Fronteraria (UPF) and ammunition to be distributed to two civilian groups, named after their leaders: Vincente da Conceição, aka Rai Los, and Antonio Lurdes, aka Lima Lima. These groups are based in Liquiça and Ermera respectively. The minister also supplied two vehicles and uniforms of the Unidade de Reserve da Polícia-Polícia Nacional de Timor-Leste (URP-PNTL) to the Rai Los group. Rai Los was quoted saying that he received instructions from the Prime Minister to 'eliminate' petitioners and opponents from the government. The report led the Attorney General to issue a warrant for Lobato's detention and, though uncertainty remained as to Alkatiri's involvement, the pressure on the Prime Minister increased considerably. After being presented with the *Four Corners* report the following day, President Gusmão formally requested Alkatiri's resignation, eventually posing an ultimatum where he threatened to resign unless Alkatiri was

removed from office (Fonseca 2006; McDonald 2006).¹¹² Whereas the UDT supporters adopted the report as proof of their accusations against Alkatiri, the Fretilin supporters claimed that Liz Jackson's report was unsubstantiated and that it was used in a coup against the Alkatiri government.

The portrayals of the crisis have forced the exiles to take sides and ensnared them into a test of loyalty that fosters existing tensions and longstanding grievances within the diaspora. As is evident in the divergence between the UDT and Fretilin supporters' perspectives on the political elements underlying the crisis, the political schism between UDT and Fretilin has resurfaced. Old disgruntlements and accusations are voiced on both sides of the political divide, and mutual allegations have seen bitterness fester. During my research with the Melbourne diaspora, I became increasingly aware of the growing schism. The differing positions and the animosity between the two groups were evident in the participants' narratives, as well as in the interactive pattern between political sides. With the exception of events organised by METAC, community events, parties and social gatherings were coloured by political affiliation. Only a small minority of people linked to Fretilin would attend events organised by TAV and hardly any UDT supporters would be present at events associated with Fretilin. Those whose party affiliation crossed the boundary are people whose political association is secondary and who remain relatively politically inactive. The participants' reactions to the unrest and its impact on their experience of self, community and nation will be further explored in the following section.

III. EXPERIENCING THE CONFLICT

The violence was actually, compared to '99, the one we have now, is, is, this one is smaller compared to the violence in '99. But the difference now is that the violence is among the Timorese. And that's—and we have no goal, no clear goal to go. No. And

¹¹² The UN Independent Special Commission of Inquiry for Timor-Leste (UN 2006: 38–40) dismisses Rai Los' claims against Mr Alkatiri, but nevertheless argues that reasonable suspicion exists that Prime Minister Alkatiri was aware of the distribution of PNTL arms to civilians. The Commission rejects Mr Alkatiri's and Mr Lobato's statements that civilian support for the PNTL was lawful in accordance with the Internal Security Act, and recommends the prosecution of Rogerio Lobato (as well as Vincente da Conceição (Rai Los) and Antonio Lurdes (Lima Lima)), and further investigation into the question of criminal responsibility of the former Prime Minister with respect to weapons offences (UN 2006: 51). In February 2007, Lobato was sentenced to seven years in jail on weapon charges (Reuters 2007). An investigation into the allegations against Mari Alkatiri was instigated, but all charges against the former Prime Minister were dropped in February 2007 due to a lack of evidence (Dodd 2007a; Murdoch 2007a).

that's quite negative, sorry, difficult. It's meaningless what's happened.

Natalino

... when you look at it [the violence] from the outside—it's so sad, so sad. It's far too sad ... And all these kids, the burning stuff, what are they doing? What is the government doing? Where is the law? Where is the respect? Why are these kids burning stuff? Why, why is this happening?

Aconce

The various explanations of the crisis, the accusations and condemnations, represent efforts by the exiles to establish coherence; to recreate meaning within their own personal universe that has been challenged by the political developments and the violent unrest of 2006–2007. Though none of the participants believed independence would be without challenges, the political crisis and the breakdown of national consensus that followed were beyond their expectations. The thought of East Timorese fighting East Timorese, of East-Timorese people themselves causing suffering and pain to the nation's young and old, had been a distant fear, for many too surreal even to consider a possibility. For most, the explanations and attempts of justifying the violence by placing it within its historical, political and cultural context fall short. Though they can rationalise it from its sociopolitical, sociocultural and socioeconomic causes, the exiles remain bewildered and emotionally confused as to why this could happen. Despite the various elements that led to the outbreak of violence, how could their leaders and their people allow things to go this far? How could they let go of the peace that they, the people, had sacrificed their lives for? Why was there no interference to ensure that suffering and trauma did not again become the reality of the Timorese people? These questions remain unanswered and leave the exiles with a sense of numbness, hopelessness, and emptiness. They pose an emotional void in which the exiles' past and imagined future are confronted by the new reality introduced by the crisis. This void is reflected in all the participants' accounts, although its imposition on the exiles' lives varies, and those who have remained emotionally close to East Timor and who were intimately involved in the resistance articulate greater difficulty dealing with the crisis than those who did not. This has to be seen not only in relation to their past ventures and imagined futures, but also their present situations, which in most circumstances are shaped by their positions within the translocal sphere.

The majority of those who engaged in the nationalist campaign remained part of the translocal sphere in the aftermath of independence. As explored in Chapter Four, some returned to East Timor to live and work, others went on return visits. Translocal activities, such as retaining and sharing information from and with friends and family in East Timor, remittances to family members remaining in East Timor, and a continued engagement and concern about East-Timorese politics and culture, were part of many of these exiles' lives. Some reclaimed property left behind at the time of flight; others bought land considering the possibility of future return 'home.' Whereas those who have re-established their lives in Australia and for various reasons remain disconnected to East Timor seem to be moved by the crisis in more abstract, affective terms, these individuals experienced the crisis more directly. Some of the participants received threats to their family and property in East Timor and others had their houses attacked and burnt to the ground. Many of their family and friends were forced to leave their homes, seeking refuge in refugee camps around Dili or with family in the districts. Though the flight would relieve their family and friends from any immediate threat, the exiles remained concerned about their situation due to the poor living conditions within the camps and the disruption the violence caused to their families' lives. Limited and often contradictory information enhanced people's worries and concerns about family and friends, and people were left in a state of panic as they received news about violence but were unable to contact their loved ones either because they had fled to areas without phone coverage or because Dili's phone network had broken down.

The distress experienced by the exiles is exemplified in Chen's story. Chen is a fifty-year-old Timorese-Chinese man. He has visited East Timor numerous times after he left the country in 1976. For the last few years he has considered moving back to East Timor to start a small business. 'I want to contribute to East Timor, and I think that I can do so by creating my own business,' he explained. 'It would create employment and help stimulate the economy. Of course, I hope to get a small profit, but this is only secondary, it is because I am East Timorese that I want to do this. I want to give something back.' Chen planned to return to East Timor for six years, sacrificing his prospective earnings in Australia and leaving his wife and children in Melbourne, but the crisis has forced him to reconsider his plans. As he explained, 'I was willing to sacrifice a lot, but my own safety, my own life ... I don't think so.'¹¹³

¹¹³ This is a summary of what Chen told me on a number of occasions and is not a direct quote.

Chen's perception of the risk involved in moving to East Timor is largely influenced by his experience of the crisis as it has been mediated through his family in Dili. Speaking about the crisis, Chen appeared quite distressed and upset. With an empty look in his eyes, he told me how one of his brothers was forced to flee and seek asylum in Australia on humanitarian grounds.¹¹⁴ His brother, half Chinese and half 'Easterner,' had been threatened by local gangs, as well as by a senior commander of the police:

... when the police chief knows [that my brother had travelled to the East] and he ring him and threaten him, saying 'you involve with Lorosae, you be careful.' So that's why my brother was scared and wanted to come to Australia. With the local, he say that with the local, not, not, you know, [this] happens all the time, but with the police chief he started to worry and also there were a few people, Timorese young people who said, they threatened him and said 'I'm going to rape your, I'm going to rape your daughter.' So when all this happened, my brother said that, how can we stay here? You know, that's why he came ... they have a small clothes shop in there, so people came and they asked for money and they threaten him and also they throw rocks all the time in the night.

Chen

Chen has been looking after his brother since he arrived in Australia. His brother, already heavily traumatised from his experiences during the Indonesian occupation, is suffering intensely. He has 'mentally shut himself down' and he refuses to speak with anybody. The crisis has brought back terrible memories about the invasion and occupation, and Chen explained how he has been reminded of the horrors of the past. The distress, fear and worry that he felt were further exacerbated by the uncertainties connected to the crisis: what was really happening? Who was behind the violence? What will happen next? These concerns echo in the narratives of other participants. Emilia and her husband Ino summarised their experiences as follows:

Emilia ... it was, you know, months of really, how do I say it, feeling extremely lost and just not very happy with the situation that was happening. Worried, stressed, all these kinds of words come to mind ... it was a very distressful period. We just didn't know what to do...

¹¹⁴ There is no official information available about the number of East Timorese who have sought asylum in Australia as a consequence of the political crisis of 2006–2007. I have been told by community workers who are intimately involved in the cases of East-Timorese refugees that ten people have sought asylum on humanitarian grounds. According to Chen, his brother's application for protection was approved by the Refugee Tribunal in 2007.

Ino You always worry something is burnt or someone killed or—you don't know when things happen...

Emilia Yeah, not being there, you don't know what's happened, when things happen. And, yeah, I think that's one of the hardest things that I experienced. The uncertainty of what, if they have parents, what their parents or family is going through. You're constantly worried that, I mean, nothing may be happening, but you don't know.

Emilia's words illustrate the hardship of not knowing and being left in a state of uncertainty. She expresses the feelings of helplessness and hopelessness, restlessness and numbness that many of the participants describe when speaking about their reactions to the crisis. For many, these feelings are coupled with feelings of guilt. Maria, a woman in her forties who has re-established her ties with East Timor in the period after independence, explained how she feels a sense of guilt because of the choice that she and her other Timorese-Australian friends possess due to their dual citizenship. Maria has visited East Timor and worked on short-term contracts at various occasions after independence, and expressed a deep concern for her Timorese friends. She told me that:

I had friends who could not come, meaning local friends, they were Australians like myself, or Timorese Australians who were living and working there, they could, they could have the means and cash to come here, but what about all the others who work for the NGOs, like [name of organisation she has worked with] and all the others and you are like, oh my God, they don't have an option. And I guess that's something that I always had in mind when I was in Timor that, if all hell breaks loose, I've got my return ticket and I have my Australian passport. These people don't. They don't have an option. How do you, what do you do if you don't have that...

Maria

Both Maria and Emilia articulate a belief that it may have been easier if they had been in East Timor; at least then they would know what happened at any given time and maybe they could do something to help. As the stories of three of the returning exiles, Eli, Nelson, and Favia, suggest, this would not necessarily have been the case. Being in East Timor did not guarantee information about the events and these people suggest that there was little they could do to improve the situation of those around them. In fact, for Eli, Nelson, and Favia, feelings of helplessness, hopelessness and guilt were made worse by them being in Dili. At a time of crisis, they were, as Australian citizens, entitled to protection from the Australian government and they could return to safety in Australia at

any time. With no opportunity to extend these privileges to their relatives and friends, the sense of helplessness and feelings of guilt intensified.

EASING GUILT AND INDEBTEDNESS

The decision to leave East Timor at the height of the crisis disengaged individuals such as Eli, Nelson and Favia from their perceived responsibilities as members of the moral community of East Timor. As such, the crisis can be seen as causing a disruption of the moral economy of social belonging. This is particularly evident in the stories of Eli, Nelson and Favia, but it is not exclusive to their experience. The disruption of the moral economy of social belonging is closely connected to Ghassan Hage's notion of migration guilt, discussed in Chapter Four. As argued in Chapter Four, the inability of the migrants to repay their debt to their ancestral community is at the core of migration guilt. This guilt-induced state of indebtedness is particularly acute in times of crisis, such as that facing the exiles during the political crisis in East Timor, when the migrants are unable to share the fate of the collectivity to which they are indebted (Hage 2002). Hage's focus is on migrants living in exile, but his notion of indebtedness and migration guilt is also relevant when considering the situation of returning refugees and it may help explain the intensity of the guilt experienced by people such as Eli, Nelson and Favia.

For all the East-Timorese exiles, the guilt associated with their flight and exile is never far away and it remains part of their engagement with their (trans)local communities. For the returning refugees, their reintegration into local communities has not alleviated the feelings of guilt; indeed, the resentment within the local population towards the returnees discussed in Chapter Five represents a continuing reminder of their indebtedness to the community. Holding an Australian passport is another reminder of their ambiguous relationship to the moral community of belonging. It emphasises their privileged position as members of a second national community and represents opportunities and rights earned by the exiles' perceived renouncement of their East-Timorese communal obligations.¹¹⁵ At the time of the political crisis, the exiles were reminded of their privileged position earned by their flight. However, whereas it remained an abstract

¹¹⁵ One of the issues forwarded by the participants of this study is their disappointment in the perception amongst local Timorese that they, the exiles, refrained from their communal obligation (see Chapter Five). They argue that their participation in the nationalist struggle of independence through both cultural and political activities, remittances and other sacrifices made in exile indicate their continued participation in, contribution towards, and affective identification with the suffering of the East-Timorese people.

apprehension for those in Australia, the returnees found themselves in the difficult position where they had to negotiate safe-guarding their immediate family or facing the fate of the collective. Their rights as members of a particular alternative collective provided them with a choice and a possible 'way out.' Eli, Nelson and Favia all made the difficult choice to return to safety in Australia, though this decision was plagued with guilt and worry as they had to leave their family and friends behind yet one more time. Eli, who had to leave his sister as the violence intensified, told me about his decision to return to Australia:

My sister lives in Bairro Pite, in the junction, there were shooting everywhere. Then the morning, everybody was saying, they are really coming now, the East people are coming. It was all this about East and West, but, after the gang, you know, they all said they are coming. So everybody was being scared. I called my cousin to ask if he could call the embassy to see if we could do anything because it was getting very bad. And then, nobody came. In the morning, about 7am, I heard from my cousin, they said, they are not still coming, they are not coming. So then I said to my wife, let's go to the embassy, let's go. 'Cause one of my friends [an East-Timorese man who holds Australian citizenship], a guy I worked with, he said '[Eli], where are you? I'm leaving, there's a helicopter. Don't stay, let's go. This is not for you anymore. Let's go.' And then I took my wife, [but] I still worry about my family because that little area used to be like clandestine area. I was worried about my sister and the whole group. If they were to start shoot there, it was not good.

Eli

In general, the exiles appear to respond to the feelings of guilt in a different manner than during the Indonesian occupation. As discussed in Chapter Four, prior to independence, the exiles 'appeased feelings of guilt' (Wise 2004: 27) through translocal activities such as those represented by the protest movement. Protest activities ranging from religious rituals and devotion, singing, dance and theatre, as well as the use of ritual objects and distressing images of torture and trauma at political demonstrations, represented acts of public remembering and inaugurated a space for personal bodily and emotional connections between the exiles and the moral community of East Timor (Wise 2004: 30–1). However, a decrease in translocal activities over the past few years suggests an easing of the sense of migration guilt previously guiding social, cultural and political activities within the community. The achievement of independence and the subsequent peace and stability removed the immediate factor inducing migration guilt. Though the East Timorese in East Timor still face a different fate from that of the exiles, this fate was no

longer associated with fear, suffering and trauma, and the immediacy of the exiles' repayment of their debt was temporarily alleviated. The re-emergence of feelings of guilt in the shadow of the political crisis does, however, suggest that continued exile may potentially lead to a re-intensification of feelings of guilt and indebtedness if circumstances change. Indeed, this is indicated by Hage, who argues that, during times when 'your family, your village or your nation is going through a hard time and you (the subject organically related to the community through the original debt of social/communal life) are not there to help' (Hage 2002: 203), the guilt-inducing state of indebtedness becomes more apparent.

According to this, it should be expected that the crisis of 2006 would lead to the reappearance or enhancement of feelings of guilt amongst the East-Timorese diaspora and its associated practices. Whereas there appears to be an initial intensification of feelings of guilt, these feelings have not enhanced translocal practices; rather, there appears to be a further decrease in translocal activism in the aftermath of the crisis. As suggested in the following quotes, exiles are increasingly moving away from the translocal sphere; plans of future return have been discarded; people are cautious about participating in fundraising activities; and East Timor is left out of many of the exiles' plans for the future.

And then the problem start, everybody just feel numb. They feel numb. And when I see, and sometimes I end up with some people in the street or in the shopping centre and they say 'my hope is gone. I have no more hope. I stay here it doesn't matter. I hoped to go to East Timor, but I stay here' ... For me, [the crisis] affect me a lot because I always think that my kids would go back to East Timor ... Now they all think no more security to go. Better we stay here. It affect a lot, Hedda. I think more than the invasion.

Emelda

We used to do fundraisers, but at the moment people are a bit disappointed. The community, I don't know what happened with the other groups, but the one that I am representing now are really badly disappointed. Because they said, 'We're helping. For what? To be destroyed again? That's why they, they think now, we're sort of like in intermission. They are watching ... They want to help. But then we said, and people, suddenly everything happen, with all the things that has been happening, maybe we send it there and then the container will stay at the port for two-three years, and then they

rampage everything to go in and after that ... it's just better we wait and see until things settle to help in different ways.

Angelita

The recent events instigated a limited response from and within the community. With the exception of a few public forums, none of which were organised by East-Timorese community organisations, there was no communal response to the crisis. The forums were dominated by Australian people concerned about the development in East Timor and representatives of civil-society organisations. Only a small number of East Timorese attended. The discussions reflected a discourse removed from the affective domain of the exiles and, according to many of the participants, the forums were politically weighted as pro- or anti-Fretilin.¹¹⁶ The perceived political character of the forums was mentioned as one of the reasons why the participants chose not to attend. Though this may have informed the decision not to attend a particular forum, it does not help explain the overall lack of engagement with the crisis through communal activities.

A similar pattern of disengagement is evident in relation to the exiles' affective responses to the crisis. These suggest a gradual diminution of indebtedness and guilt following the initial re-manifestation of these feelings. This is evident in how many of the exiles respond and relate to news and information about the crisis; the exiles remain passive and they retain a reserved attitude towards the news from East Timor, often rejecting the news presented by the Australian media.¹¹⁷ I observed the reactions of withdrawal and rejection at various occasions, though the most prominent occasion was on a Sunday afternoon when I visited a Fretilin family in Dandenong. That morning, Australian soldiers had killed four Timorese men in a raid to capture the renegade soldier Alfredo Reinado. I arrived at Dandenong railway station in the early afternoon, where Nunu picked me up. The first thing he asked me as we got in the car was whether or not I had heard the recent news from East Timor. I had not listened to the news that morning, so Nunu gave me a detailed account of the morning's events. At 1am, Australian soldiers had attacked

¹¹⁶ Beside forums arranged by the Green Left Weekly and other informal meetings organised by Australian solidarity movements, two main public forums took place. On the 14th of June 2006, the Australia-East Timor Association (AETA), supported by the Globalism Institute of RMIT University, held a public forum called 'The crisis in East Timor and beyond' at the Uniting Church in Melbourne. A one-day forum aimed at exploring the underlying causes of the crisis was held at the University of Melbourne on the 15th of September (Palmer et al. 2007). This forum was closed to the public and only 40 invited guests participated. The study participants argue that the former forum was a largely pro-Fretilin forum, whereas the latter was anti-Fretilin.

¹¹⁷ This does not imply that they are emotionally detached from the news. As will be explored below, the crisis has caused vast emotional and affective reactions.

Reinado and his men at their base in Same with Black Hawk helicopters and armoured personnel carriers. Rumours said that four of Reinado's men were dead and Reinado himself had been shot, though he had been able to escape the attack and had fled to the jungle with his men where Australian soldiers were pursuing him. Nunu had received the news from a good friend who had been in touch with friends in East Timor.

During the day, phone calls were made and received, and Nunu exchanged SMS messages with his brother in Dili. Nunu's brother-in-law arrived with his children just after lunch and, not long after, his friend came by. The men and Joana, Nunu's wife, discussed what had happened. They had no sympathy with Reinado and expressed harsh critique towards the Timorese government and the International Stabilisation Forces (ISF) for not having arrested Reinado earlier. 'Why did they let him be?' Nunu asked. 'I just don't understand why they didn't arrest him earlier. They should have known this would only cause more trouble.' As it was coming up to 6.30pm, I was eager to watch the SBS news and get to know about the latest development. I suggested that we turn on the television, but none of the people around the table seemed interested and continued to chat amongst themselves. The children were watching *The Simpsons* in the background. At 7pm, the ABC news was about to start, but nobody changed the channel and the three men and Joana seemed disinterested in seeing the footage and hearing the commentary. At one stage I suggested we log onto the ABC website or SMH online to get more information, but my suggestion was turned down. I started wondering why they were not interested. Did they not want to hear the ADF and Brigadier Reden's response to the attack? What did the Australian government say about the events and what was the East-Timorese government's response? How did the people in East Timor feel about the killing of the four Timorese soldiers? I had to conceal my curiosity and concern in the silence that my questions brought. It appeared as if Nunu, Joana and their friends did not need to listen to the Australian response or see footage. I asked Joana why she did not want to watch the news. She answered:

It just irritates me. I don't want to know. I always say to [Nunu], if it's good news, I'll read it, but otherwise, I just don't want to know. I don't want to—it's like if people come to me with news from Timor, I'll ask if it's good or bad. I guess we have to handle both the good and the bad but at the moment I'm, I don't really want to know.

Joana

I was at first surprised by the reactive pattern of withdrawal and rejection. In line with Hage's (2002) argument on migration guilt, I expected that the East Timorese would adopt strategies that intensified their identification with the news. In his research with Lebanese migrants in Australia, Hage found that exposure to news from the home country often led to body movements, utterances and interactions. According to Hage, these responses represent strategies of intensification aimed at 'narrowing the physical and symbolic gap between news and reader, and in the process augmenting the intensity of this reality for that reader' (Hage 2002: 200). They are examples of individual attempts to 'develop a sense of involvement in [the news/event], of being part of its unfolding' (Hage 2002: 200). The desire to be implicated in events emanates from their migration guilt, and the affective intensification embedded in these strategies represents a way of dealing with the feeling of indebtedness and guilt. With feelings of guilt and indebtedness re-emerging in the shadow of the political crisis, why do the exiles adopt the strategies of withdrawal and rejection, reactions which ultimately weaken their affective and symbolic implication in the events and, in the context of the collectivist discourse dominating East Timorese communal life, may lead to greater feelings of guilt?

To answer this question, we must consider the nature of the news and information to which the exiles respond. Hage (2002: 194) observes that, in the case of the Lebanese migrants in Australia, there is a distinct variation in how people react to news obtained through the mainstream Australian newspapers, Australian Lebanese newspapers, and Lebanese newspapers printed in Lebanon; there is a gradual increase in people's engagement and identification with the news. Whereas news items in the mainstream Australian media are often experienced as alienating, the Australian-Lebanese paper creates 'a fragment of an imaginary Lebanon and as such brings one closer to the event that is being reported' (Hage 2002: 195). Reading news in Lebanese papers, on the other hand, 'is a totally Lebanese experience where belonging to the Australian physical space becomes immaterial and suspended ... [it] positions the reader in Lebanon' (Hage 2002: 196). Hage explains that when people see articles about Lebanon in Australian newspapers, people are less concerned about the content than the fact that Lebanon has been recognised by the dominant culture, and, as such, it represents more of a celebration of a moment of recognition. This is starkly contrasted to the frequent reporting of issues regarding East Timor in the Australian media in the period between 2006 and 2008. During the course of my fieldwork, East Timor made it to the headlines on a regular basis; the proximity of East Timor to Australia and the presence of Australian troops in

the territory making it particularly newsworthy. However, as indicated by Joana in the quote above, people feel as if there is nothing but bad news about East Timor, and the continuous struggle portrayed in the media makes them feel powerless and without hope. Simultaneously, the biased representation of East-Timorese politics and the East-Timorese leadership has caused frustration, particularly amongst Fretilin supporters. Many feel misunderstood and misrepresented by the Australian media, and the critique against Fretilin is to some extent experienced as a critique against their own values, dreams and hopes. Without access to other sources of information, such as East-Timorese newspapers, withdrawal and rejection are means to protect themselves from these categorisations. Importantly, withdrawal and rejection are also ways of mediating feelings of guilt: by refusing the stereotypes and biased categories presented by the Australian media, they signal their disapproval of them and their continued support of the East-Timorese people and the East-Timorese leadership.

AFFECTIVE RESPONSES

Understanding the individual as well as the communal responses to the crisis requires further exploration of the exiles' affective reactions to the events and the subsequent negotiation of boundaries, belonging and identity. Community members in general are deeply disappointed by the turn of events. Reflecting on the years of occupation, the suffering of the East-Timorese people, their own suffering, the sacrifices and the hard work for freedom and peace, they feel at a loss and find it difficult to comprehend the situation. They articulate a range of feelings where complicated emotions of anger, frustration, sadness and concern intermingle. They feel angry because of the senselessness of the violence, frustrated because of the lack of responsibility shown by the political elites, sad because of the continued suffering that the violence has brought on their people, and concerned about how the violence affects their family, friends and the future of East Timor.

I just can't comprehend, can't understand why that happened, you know, yeah, why did this happen? But, yeah, that's what I felt, you know, we suffered for so many years, we fought, and then we just throw it away. Is there anything behind all of that? Is so much happened that the outside doesn't know? Are there secrets there that we don't know? Why so angry at each other? They must be have, something in there that the outside

people don't know. Even, I just don't understand, we fight for something and then we kill each other?

Alexandre

I was so furious. So disappointed, furious, and I was just saying 'What the hell are they doing?!? What the, what the hell are they thinking about?!? What are they doing?' I even called them names. 'Are they stupid or what!?' I was really angry. Whenever somebody asked me about it, I would just go: 'Don't talk about it! It's so stupid! I don't understand.' I was furious ... I was surprised, yeah. I was just, complete stupidity happen there. How come? We fought, together we fought for independence and we wanted our country to grow well, yeah, into democracy, you know, becoming a new, good country, and then this happened. Oh, if people talked to me, I was just so angry. So angry!

Nita

It's just a personal thing, as a Timorese [I wonder] why is this happening all the time? On and on and on. I don't see anything good happening. Nothing good. No stability. That's another big problem ... [The children] can't even go to normal schools ... If kids can't even go to school and be free—They should, we should be able to do this. There is no enemies there. Why is this happening? I feel like asking the Timorese government: what are you doing to this country? Where is the peace and stability? What are you doing there? Why are all these people coming there [to fight]? Why did you allow this to happen? ... I'm sad. I am sad. I am very sad for all this.

Aconce

I think that I'm quite complicated feelings, quite sort of mixed feelings. Once, I think since the first incidents we worried about my brothers, you know. Are they ok? Are they being threatened by people? Have they been killed by people? And then, luckily we had communication with them [and we were told they were safe] ... But also, as East Timorese, we also worry about East Timor. What's going to happen? Will it be ok? You know, it's just—it's just quite sad. You know. Quite sad. We thought in Australia, we through East Timor, getting independence from Indonesia that people may get a better life, you know, getting, but we are also angry. We are also angry because why the people in East Timor, we are not there of course and they may have quite different experiences, but as outsiders in here, why are they doing this? Why are they not just doing some work, get some, you know, not fight each other? So it's quite mixed feelings. Angry, sad and concerned. You know, all comes to mind.

Chen

The perceived lack of willingness amongst the political elite to reconcile and the subsequent spiral of violence have further led to feelings of embarrassment and shame. These sentiments, fed by the discussion in the Australian media and amongst Australian politicians, academics and everyday Australians on the question of whether or not East Timor is a failed state (e.g. AAP 2008; Aarons 2008; AP 2007a; Cotton 2007a, 2007b; Dodd 2007b; Nguyen 2006), reflect the exiles' concern about the reactions of the international community and a worry that the fight for independence will be seen as a fraud. They express a concern about how to defend their right for independence when people are fighting amongst themselves. How can they claim a right to democratic self-governance when the political elites engage in infighting, corruption and nepotism and a state of anarchy reigns? How can they defend the nation that they fought for when the unity on which it rests is threatened by regional feuds and divisions?

... for me and most people I have spoken with so far and comments that have come out, it's really sad, you know, that, who have we got to blame now? You know, before we could blame the Portuguese this, the Portuguese that, then it's the Indonesians for 25 years we blame them why we are like this, but now, who have we got to blame? We are fighting amongst ourselves ... it's really sad that this has happened and we are doing this to our own and to ourselves. And the whole world is probably thinking, well, what's going on? You know, you wanted independence, you said the whole problem with why the country was in war and up and down was all because of the Indonesians, but now that's gone, and it's [unrest and violence] here ... it's sad.

Maria

We had a once-in-a-life-time opportunity and if we didn't take advantage of this thing—you know last year [2006], April and May, that was the most painful to look at. I feel embarrassed. I feel worse. People say, 'Hey you are Timorese, you are killing each other!' I feel embarrassed. They say that, sort of in joking sense, but I feel, I feel it very heartfelt, this is really much, much more than a joke or a comment. I feel a lot deeper than that ... Before it was easier. When you go against somebody else it was easier. You have someone to yell at. We are fighting a harder battle right now. In a sense it is a battle where you don't have directions ... who are we going to scream at? No enemy. Different directions. You can't blame one leadership, you can't blame the government. You can't blame the politicians. It's harder than before right now.

Deng

The feelings of shame and humiliation have furthered the process of othering and the negotiation of boundaries discussed in Chapter Five. The declining levels of translocal activism and the increased emotional distance resonating in the exiles' narratives are expressions of the exiles' move away from the translocal sphere. Paradoxically, these actions and the attempts to restrict or reduce the emotional intensity of their relationship with East Timor are in themselves depictions of the strength of their affective relations with the nation; they are responses to intensely felt emotions rising from the symbolic proximity of the former refugees' image of self and their lives in exile to the discourse of home, nationhood and ancestry. The emotional reactions to the crisis signal the continued presence of the moral discourse of sacrifice and the cultural code of reciprocity discussed in the previous chapter. They indicate the expectations created by this discourse and the disappointment resulting from the failure of the East-Timorese nation to pay the wages of those who suffered; that is, to establish a peaceful, safe and prosperous environment.

The feelings of anger, sadness, frustration and embarrassment also indicate the exiles' continued engagement in the collectivist discourse of East-Timorese communal life. These emotions signal the presence of a social bond; the events matter to the exiles because of their enduring social, cultural and historical association with the community. According to Scheff (1990), the 'primary social emotions' that convey such social bonds are pride and shame. He argues that 'pride is the sign of an intact bond; shame a severed or threatened bond' (Scheff 1990: 95). The feeling of pride arises from conformity to exterior norms and the subsequent reward of others' respect, admiration and esteem. Shame, on the other hand, is a result of the non-conformity to exterior norms and the subsequent loss of deference (Lupton 1998: 19; Scheff 1990; Velayutham & Wise 2005: 37). The political crisis represents a breach of the norms to which the East-Timorese nation and its people are expected to adhere and, through the Australian media's portrayal of the events and the public discourse about the crisis, the exiles experience decreasing support and esteem for the young nation. The crisis represents the nation's failure to comply with its obligations towards the community set by the moral discourse of sacrifice and the norms established by the discourse of communalism. It is in the shadow of these ruptures that the social bond between the exiles and the East-Timorese nation is renegotiated and transformed. In the following section, I will explore this process of negotiation and the paradox of the exiles' ongoing engagement with the discourses to which they attempt to distance themselves.

IV. AFFECT, IDENTITY AND NEGOTIATION OF BOUNDARIES

Reflecting on the ambiguous and dynamic nature of exile, Wise (2006: 7) states that '[i]ndividuals, communities, homelands, and countries of refuge are always situated within and in relation to a changing grid of circumstances and power relationships.' Intensely felt experiences of changing circumstances, which engage the individual through its involving and affecting effect, can lead to a renegotiation of boundaries, identity and belonging. According to this, we can expect the crisis, due to its affective implications, to inform the ongoing process of negotiation and transformation of boundaries of belonging. As illustrated above, the research material shows a physical distancing from the translocal sphere and an effort to emotionally detach from the discourse of homeland. These are practices underlying the exiles habitus, identity and belonging. How, then, does the crisis affect identity and belonging?

A further exploration of Bourdieu's theory of practice (1977) and his argument about the reproduction of habitus can help illuminate some of the processes at stake. According to Bourdieu (1990: 61), the reification of habitus will protect it from 'crises and critical challenges by providing itself with a milieu to which it is as pre-adapted as possible'. It makes 'systematic "choices" ... among the places, events and people that might be frequented' (Bourdieu 1990: 61), ensuring its reproduction and the creation of meaning and practice through familiar fields and a known milieu. However, to presume that individuals can refrain from potential discordance between the subjective dispositions and the objective structures that form their habitus is problematic. People may be exposed to situations in which they have no such 'choice,' like that of which Bourdieu speaks; they may be forced to move from their known milieu, as is the case with refugees and asylum seekers (Askland 2007), or political or social circumstances may change to such an extent that the social world loses its familiarity. Bourdieu makes reference to such 'crises' when he argues that:

[t]he critique which brings the undiscussed into discussion, the unformulated into formulation, has as the condition of its possibility objective crisis, which, in breaking the immediate fit between the subjective structures and the objective structures, destroys self-evidence practically. It is when the social world loses its character as a natural phenomenon that the question of the natural or conventional character (*phusei* or *nomos*) of social facts can be raised (Bourdieu 1977: 168–9).

Such crises bring the embodied assumptions underlying identity and practice into the sphere of consciousness. This can challenge the individual's habitus and may lead to experiences such as collapse of meaning and further isolation and alienation. As I have argued elsewhere (Askland 2007), crises posed by the collapse of familiarity may be compounded by loss of financial, symbolic (i.e. status), social (i.e. contacts and networks) and cultural (i.e. educational qualification, language, artefacts and goods) capital. This is particularly evident in the case of refugees and asylum seekers. Capital, alongside dispositions and positions, shapes opportunities for action. The determining nature of capital assets for social position suggests that 'access to capital will determine conditions that form life experiences and practice, and thus habitus' (Askland 2007: 241). Loss of capital will, accordingly, impede opportunities for movement and possibilities for action and may restrict access to social fields, resources and relations through which the individuals create their internal perception of self.¹¹⁸ However, circumstances other than forced displacement, such as crises facing individuals due to abrupt political and/or social change, may not be followed by a severe loss of capital. Indeed, in relation to the current crisis in East Timor, the exiles were faced with a reality that forced them to question the character of their social world, but their social status and capital assets that enable practice within their social fields were not impeded. This has to be understood on the basis of the exiles' position within two parallel social worlds that exist independently of each other. Accordingly, the crisis has only limited, if any, impact on the everyday practice of the exiles in Australia; the affect of the crisis on the exiles' lives does not manifest itself in their engagement with the social fields of everyday living, but rather in the translocal sphere in which the exiles' social worlds meet and in the affective dimensions integral to the exiles' conception and experience of self.

The crisis that occurred within the diaspora in the shadow of the political unrest in East Timor and the emotive responses of the participants suggest, firstly, the continued relevance of East-Timorese discourses to people's lives in exile discussed above and, secondly, the place of emotions within their habitus. The development of habitus forms a significant part of Bourdieu's theory; however, his framework remains vague on the question of how this process takes place, let alone the role of emotions in the generation of habitus.

¹¹⁸ For a full discussion on how exiles overcome these challenges: see Askland (2007).

From Bourdieu's writings, it is clear that the initial formation of habitus occurs through primary socialisation and that this process is closely connected to the notion of field, capital and practice. Bourdieu argues that habitus is 'laid down in each agent by his earliest upbringing' (Bourdieu 1977: 81), suggesting a level of agency, though at the same time indicating a notion of dependency. In contrast to Bourdieu's general advocacy of individual agency, the question of the initial acquisition of habitus implies a relatively passive role for the individual.¹¹⁹ It relies greatly on the social fields, capital and practice of significant others, in particular the family. The family represents the primary world into which the child is born. Emotions and affect are part of this world and, as Rew and Campbell (1999: 17) propose, '[t]he domain of family and kinship ... contributes centrally to the emotional salience of identity.' The family, they continue, 'provides the context, the model and the means by which key understandings regarding personhood, selfhood and individuality are learned and internalised by children' (Rew & Campbell 1999: 17). Through gradual accumulation of experience, children develop a sense of identity, personhood and selfhood; that is, they develop an internal mental representation of self as well as a cultural or collective representation that reflects their positioning within social realities (Rew & Campbell 1999). Emotive behaviour and affective expressions manifested in the interactive pattern between a child and her or his significant others mobilise a defined sense of association and belonging. Accordingly, the process of socialisation not only equips the individual with cognitive abilities, skills and competence, capital, knowledge and meaning, but also bestows an experiential dimension onto the habitus in which emotional expressions propose beliefs, attitudes and desires motivating and guiding social participation and practice, belonging and a sense of self.

Despite the apparent connection between identity and emotions, the anthropological discipline has traditionally treated the two separately. The anthropology of emotions has been dominated by the classic theoretical or epistemological tension between the biological and psychodynamical approach to emotions (which views emotions as bodily and universal) and the cultural and cognitive approach (which perceives emotions as being connected to cultural meaning and, thus, radically variable) (Leavitt 1996; Lutz & White 1986; Milton 2005). Various writers have tried to bridge these dichotomies (e.g. Burkitt 1997; Leavitt 1996; Lupton 1998; Lyon 1995; Milton 2005; Rosaldo 1983, 1984), proposing a view of emotions as a dual phenomenon simultaneously involving both

¹¹⁹ This does not imply that infants and children do not possess agency. Conversely, children will engage in a dialectic process of interaction from birth. This is, however, beyond the scope of this discussion.

thinking and feeling, mind and body. Though recognising the importance of seeing emotions in the context of biology and culture, body and mind, physiology and phenomenology, these studies remain largely embedded in the epistemological discussion and only limited attention is paid to how emotions, simultaneously physical and cognitive, form part of people's self-identity.

In an influential study of the Ilongt people of the Philippines, Michelle Z. Rosaldo (1984: 143) notes that:

feeling is forever given shape through thought and ... thought is laden with emotional meaning ... Emotions are thoughts somehow 'felt' in flushes, pulses, 'movements' of our lives, minds, hearts, stomachs, skins. They are *embodied* thoughts, thoughts seeped with the apprehension that 'I am involved.'¹²⁰

This suggests a separation between perception and physiological responses, where a physiological state crates a subjective experience (Damasio 1999; James 1884) through its translation into the sphere of cognition. According to Rosaldo, emotions are a combination of 'intimate, physical experiences, and a more or less conscious apprehension of, or "judgement" concerning, self-and-situation' (Rosaldo 1983: 136); and 'just as thought does not exist in isolation from affective life, so affect is culturally ordered and does not exist apart from thought' (Rosaldo 1984: 137). Placed within the framework of Bourdieu's theory of practice, this dual relationship between thought and affect can be interpreted as an expression of the dialectic between the individual and the social structures to which she or he relates. The physical, embodied component of emotions is formed through practice; the sensate experience causing emotional constructions cannot occur in isolation: it is ultimately relational. It should, however, be noted that physical sensation has a pre-social or pre-cultural potential in that it can occur through individuals' engagement with the non-human, as well as the human, environment to which they relate (Milton 2005: 203). It forms part of the individual's general learning capacity and, through engagement with and practice within her or his immediate environment (social and non-social), responses to, perceptions of, and display of such

¹²⁰ In his review of the anthropological literature on emotions as bodily feeling versus cultural meaning, John Leavitt (1996: 524) states that, despite Rosaldo's efforts to bridge the gap between body and thought in her study of emotions, authors sympathetic to biology (Hinton 1993; Lyon 1995; Spiro 1984) tend to see her 'as a prime representative of the cultural-meaning side of the dichotomy'. Indeed, Rosaldo forwards a view that highlights the cultural variance of emotions, arguing that 'affects, whatever their similarities, are no more similar than the societies in which we live' (Rosaldo 1984: 145). However, as suggested in the notion of embodied thoughts, a level of physicality parallels the cultural and cognitive aspect of emotions.

emotions are shaped (Milton 2005: 205). Perceptions, expressions, and reactions to physical stimuli are therefore coloured by the individual's socialisation and position within particular social fields; that is, emotions, or in Rosaldo's terms, 'embodied thoughts,' rise from the individual's practice within social fields.¹²¹ This is not a fixed, static process. Rather, it comprises a dynamic and accumulative characteristic similar to the nature of the habitus in general, 'which is the active presence of the whole past of which it is the product' (Bourdieu 1990: 56). The sensate, corporeal component of emotion occurs through the individual's ongoing practice within social fields, as does the cognitive, communicative element of emotion. Similarly, reflecting the circular nature of Bourdieu's argument, emotions form part of the development and negotiation of habitus as they motivate behaviour, inform practice and mediate social action (Lutz & White 1986: 419; Milton 2005: 209; Tangney et al. 2007).

This expansion of Bourdieu's theory illustrates how emotions form part of an individual's identity. As part of habitus, emotions guide practice and subsequently form part of its development. Inherent in this argument is the possibility of affective experiences leading to change, negotiation or transformation of the habitus. Bourdieu speaks little of how this process takes place. He focuses on the inert and conservative nature of habitus, and his framework says more about the reproduction of habitus than its transformation (Askland 2007: 241; Crossley 2001; Noble & Watkins 2003). As I have argued elsewhere (Askland 2007: 241), 'Bourdieu's theory reduces the process of change ... to a process of "alchemy" through which the individual's habitus gradually adjusts' (see also: Noble & Watkins 2003: 527). The inherent determinism in Bourdieu's argument is problematic when considering how people respond to potential crises, such as that facing the East-Timorese exiles with the outbreak of violence and degeneration of national consensus in East Timor; '[i]t reduces agency to an effect of structure, undermines the generative capacity of habitus and suggests that action is contained and constructed through an embodied pre-understanding of the world' (Askland 2007: 241). If this is so, how do we explain the active agency exhibited by the participants of this study in their engagement with the disruptions experienced as a result of the political crisis?

Following Bourdieu's theoretical outline, emotional dispositions will, like habitus, remain below the level of consciousness. Indeed, Bourdieu (1984: 466) contends that:

¹²¹ This helps explain the cultural variance of emotion highlighted by Rosaldo and writers within the cultural-constructionist discourse.

the scheme of the habitus, the primary forms of classification, owe their specific efficacy to the fact that they function below the level of consciousness and language, beyond the reach of introspective scrutiny or control by the will.

Although Bourdieu recognises the potential for critical reflection at times of crisis, he underestimates the individual's everyday engagement in critical reflection and conscious calculation (Askland 2007; Crossley 2001: 97). Bourdieu's framework suggests a separation between reflective choice or reflexive analysis and the realm of habit. However, as Crossley (2001) contends, the ability for critical reflection is habitually rooted; individuals possess a habituated mastery of reflexivity. Hence, at times of crisis, individuals will possess the opportunity of conscious involvement with their social world, actively redefining their situation to overcome the experience of disruption and loss.

The intensely felt (negative) emotions evoked by the political crisis in East Timor caused a disruption between the participants' subjective dispositions, their experience of self, and the social world to which they relate. Whereas emotions form an intimate part of our daily lives, not all affective experiences will cause experiences of disruption or change; the *intensity* of the emotions resulting from the crisis is what put the conventional character of the exiles' social worlds at odds with each other. Bourdieu (1984) acknowledges that people may be affected in various ways and to different degrees by similar events depending on their position within physical space and variance in social distance. Drawing on this point, Hage (2002: 193–4) contends that:

[a]n intensely experienced reality is not the same as a 'hard hitting' reality. Intensity has more to do with the extent to which the reality is involving and affecting ... An intense reality is primarily an intense *relation* where the person's engagement in reality contribute [*sic*] to construct its intensity.

I have argued that East-Timorese discourses, particularly those of national unity and freedom, form a central part of the exiles' perception of self, community and nation. The engagement with East-Timorese discourses and their influence on the exiles' habitus (specifically the habitus of those who were active in the political struggle for independence) denotes the intense reality of this relation. Rather than resulting from physical closeness, the intensity of the relation results from the affective and symbolic proximity of East-Timorese discourses and its intimate, often subconscious, presence in the exiles' being-in-the-world. The 'involving and affecting' character of these discourses

is evident in the emotional responses outlined above. The emotions—anxiety, worry, concern, anger, sadness, disappointment, embarrassment, guilt and shame—are signs of the exiles’ interest and involvement in East Timor and the presence of East-Timorese discourses in their lives. Dealing with shame in particular, Elsbeth Probyn (2004b: 225) proposes that ‘[s]hame is our bodies’ way of telling us that we are interested ... [it] is intimately involved in the passions of interest.’ Reactions to shame, she contends in accordance with Nietzsche, will reflect a type of self-transformation:

shame compels a rethinking of how we conceptualize the everyday as it is lived. Shame ... dramatically questions taken-for-granted distinctions between affect, emotion, biography, and the places in which we live our daily lives ... Shame rips the everyday out of its habitual stasis: its sentencing within the present (Probyn 2004a: 328).

However, is this interest and disruptive consequence of shame restricted to this particular emotion? Probyn (2004b: 225) herself observes that:

it’s hard to delineate strictly where one emotion ends and another starts. Anger and rage can be closely tied to shame, attempting to displace the more painful feeling of shame. Shame can also bleed into sorrow.

Considering the indefinite boundaries of particular emotions, their interconnections and relatedness, I suggest that the interest reflected in shame and its subsequent potential for self-transformation is not restricted to this emotion, but translates to other intensely felt emotions such as embarrassment, sorrow, anger and guilt. In the case of the East-Timorese exiles, these emotions rise from the public exposure of what the exiles perceive to be a shortcoming or failure of the East-Timorese nation. It is not an affective reaction resulting from the exiles’ personal impropriety or their violation of a moral code or personal standards (which, as Tangney et al. (2008) explain, are often seen as incentives of shame and guilt), but rather a response resulting from their association with a community that they see as failing to meet the expected standards and conventions bestowed upon it with independence. They feel exposed by the events in East Timor and are concerned with what others may think of the country, let alone of them as East Timorese. It is directly affecting the core of their self-imagination, and the social threat embedded in the crisis forces them to react.

A primary source of the negative emotions exhibited by the participants is a desire for social inclusion, resulting from a central need to belong (Tangney et al. 2008). These emotions will normally produce a 'somatic temporality, where the future of being again interested is felt in the present pain of rejection' (Probyn 2004b: 239). Probyn's words suggest that, despite the pain experienced in the moment of emotional disruption, there is an underlying interest in a continued relationship through which shame (and other intensely felt emotions) will make interest matter again. But the East-Timorese exiles' narratives and translocal practice suggest otherwise. The temporary rejection of East-Timorese discourses is evident within their practice and their negotiation of boundaries and identity, and they are gradually moving away from the translocal sphere. This does not mean they will not return to a greater level of translocal activity and that the East-Timorese sphere will not regain its affective intensity. The muting of their East-Timorese connections signifies a continued presence of these discourses; their rejection or muting are in themselves actions resulting from the presence of these discourses.

V. CONCLUSION

The reduction of translocal activism, the negotiation of boundaries and the process of othering resulting from the crisis can be seen as a self-protective strategy. The crisis precipitated a radical ambiguity in the exiles' pre-existing refugee identities. It challenged perceptions of the past and the very foundation on which the exiles had imagined themselves and their community of belonging. Many experience a sense of betrayal, which has been further accompanied by an erosion of trust. 'Trust' is intimately linked to people's habitus or their 'being-in-the-world' (Daniel & Knudsen 1995). It is a largely subconscious state of awareness, guiding people's agency and practice. It endows people with a capacity to tame risk, not least the risk of being hurt (Daniel & Knudsen 1995: 2), and, as such, empowers individuals in their encounters with and within their social worlds. The loss of trust and, at times, mistrust resulting from the recent political and social unrest in East Timor is at the core of the crisis experienced by the exiles. Their trust had already been challenged by the failure of the East-Timorese nation and its leaders in answering the code of reciprocity. Awaiting their 'wages' for their struggle and sacrifice, the crisis reinforced the simmering discontent and disappointment, furthering the process of othering and the negotiation of boundaries. Aware of their previous actions and their present opportunities for action, the battle, for many, seems to be lost. They respond to the crisis through conscious reflection on their situation and their alternatives

and, for most, this results in a conscious strategy of increasing the emotional distance between the self and the East-Timorese sphere.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

This thesis has explored the changes that have occurred within the East-Timorese community in Melbourne in the aftermath of East Timor's independence, paying particular attention to how political change, violence and conflict in East Timor affect diasporic practice, identity and belonging. The study is founded upon an understanding of identity as dynamic and complex, an intricate web in which cultural codes and mores, historical location, sociopolitical positioning, ancestry, nationality, regionality and ethnicity, intertwine with past experiences (both personal and those of significant others), aspirations, hopes, values, and so on, all of which, ultimately, relate to questions of belonging. We gradually become who we are through socialisation into and engagement with social fields characterised by their particular values, resources, structures and relations. Our minds, identities and our sense of self are developed and transformed through our journey through life, the paths we choose or are forced to take, the ways in which we allow our bodies to move through space, and how we imagine future movement. Collective and individual identities emerge through the interactive experience of similarity and difference. Consequently, identity is about borders and boundaries, about a sense of inside and outside, us and them, I and you. These borders are neither static nor uniform; they change as individuals move along in their life journeys and form part of a continuous process of transformation and negotiation that reflects past positioning and practice, present location within social fields of interaction, and hopes and dreams of the future.

I wanted to examine how the East-Timorese exiles' multiplicity of belongings, or, more specifically, the accumulated effect of their participation in particular social fields, past practice and imagined futures, manifests in a process of negotiation of boundaries and identity. Refugees, exiles, expatriates and longer established populations alike belong to many communities that include local fields of interaction and more abstract communities of interest. This multitude of belongings constitutes any individual's identity, endowing it with a hybrid character. How we engage with and relate to our multiple belongings will, however, differ, and people will to a varying degree be aware of the mosaic of relationships that forms their feeling and presentation of self. In the case of exiles,

migrants and refugees, their belonging to (at least) two distinct and dominating national communities and the, at times, extreme divergence between these two environs, can make the notion of hybridity more prominent. The often traumatic experiences associated with people's flight and feelings of guilt related to their exile may also lead to feelings of ambiguity and uneasiness. In these circumstances, questions of belonging become more acute and the process of negotiating one's multiple belongings becomes more overt. Living within and between two countries, multiple languages and various cultural traditions, exiles, migrants and refugees simultaneously identify with and differentiate themselves from the overarching national communities of their socialisation, and they find themselves at the same time inside and outside their communities of belonging.

The feeling of living on the edge of two cultures, two languages and multiple cultural traditions becomes particularly pronounced at times of crisis or change when one of the individual's affiliations may be challenged by external definitions or acts. Amin Maalouf (1999: 26, my translation), exiled Lebanese author living in France, writes that:

a person's identity is not a mixture of independent belongings. It is not a matter of bricolage, it is a pattern over tight skin. All it takes is for one of the individual's belongings to be challenged, and the whole person will start to tremble.

Maalouf argues that individuals tend to identify with the particular belonging that they feel is under threat and that 'regardless of what belonging it concerns, whether it be the colour of their skin, their religion, language or social class, it will take over their identity' (Maalouf 1999: 26, my translation). Maalouf's argument resonates with the processes explored in this thesis—particularly with the prominence of the political campaign in the establishment of the East-Timorese exile identities. Through the political campaign, the East-Timorese exile community developed as a highly homeland-focused community, and communal and individual identities were centred on the illegitimate occupation of their home country. Ethnic and political differences that can be traced back to the Portuguese colonial era and the brief civil war of 1975, as well as generational differences among the various groups of arrivals, were subdued, and through the independence-campaign the community emerged as largely unified and coherent. Anxious about the effects of the Indonesian occupation on East-Timorese society and culture, and in response to the horrendous crimes committed against their people, East-Timorese exiles met across their differences to fight for their right to self-determination and peace.

The political campaign remains a key factor for understanding present diasporic practice, community and identity. The diaspora is today marked by the divergent experiences of those who were politically active throughout the Indonesian occupation of East Timor and those who refrained from participating in the campaign. Whereas those who were intimately involved in the resistance movement have vested interests, motivations and hopes for independence, those who did not engage in the independence campaign demonstrate greater openness to change and are not affected by the intense emotional proximity between East Timor's independence and the image of self carried by their counterparts. This, I have argued, reflects the prominence of the independence campaign as a social field dominating diasporic practice, social structure and individual identity. The particular logic of action permeating this social field and its forms of capital, accumulative history and particular agents became an integral part of the activists' habitus and, as such, it continues to inform their practice, dispositions, perception and sense of self. In contrast, those who refrained from the diasporic communal sphere throughout the Indonesian occupation and who re-established their lives in exile beyond the realms of the political campaign represent a different generational unit to the politically active, and they face independence with a different attitude and approach.

With the realisation of independence, the core cause guiding diasporic practice was achieved. In the struggle to re-define the role of the diaspora and having experienced the loss of key community leaders, there was a decline in communal activities. For the politically active exiles, this led to feelings of *lost community* and many withdrew from the organisational level of the community, furthering the decline in organisational and communal activism. There has, however, been a recent reinvigoration and redefinition of communal organisations. This has largely depended on the agency of a group of 'newcomers,' that is, people who kept their distance from the political campaign and East-Timorese spheres throughout the occupation. In contrast to their politically active peers, members of this group of individuals express a sense of *finding a community* in the aftermath of independence. Through philanthropic and humanitarian activities, these individuals have sought to reconnect with their former community of belonging and they are today the main initiators of communal activities. They focus their energy on culture, arts and philanthropic work, and remain detached from and, most often, disinterested in, political affairs. With little interest in politics and only modest understanding and knowledge of the political history of the country, they remain relatively disconnected from a battle of authentication that is emerging amongst those who were politically active

throughout the years of the occupation, resulting in a growing division along historical ethnic and political lines.

The ‘newcomers’ base their present activism on the values of philanthropy and humanitarianism, rather than on a sense of commitment or responsibility to the East-Timorese nation and its people. Their East-Timorese connection is, of course, influential in where and how they channel their aspirations for philanthropic work. But, in contrast to those who were politically active throughout the occupation, it is not the core motivating factor for translocal agency. This has to be understood in terms of the limited engagement with East-Timorese cultural discourses during their years in exile. In contrast to their peers, this group of exiles shows a pattern of acculturation that emphasises their practice and agency within the social and cultural fields of Australia. Conversely, through the political campaign, the politically active individuals continued to engage with East-Timorese discourses and were part of social fields that emphasise the value of collectivism, the narrative of return and the notion of homeland.

Following the 1999 vote for independence, the East-Timorese diaspora faced vast upheaval and ambiguity (Crockford 2007; Wise 2006). During their years in exile, a gradual transformation of the exiles’ sense of belonging and the notion of home occurred. Home was no longer confined to the physical location of their country of origin, but rather entailed an emotional and psychological connection to East Timor *and* their country/ies of exile. For the members of this group, increasingly aware of their alternative belongings, the question of home and return was in flux, triggering complicated feelings of guilt and obligation.

Despite the prominence of the myth of return in the exiles’ pre-independence imagination, only a minority returned to East Timor on a permanent basis. Explaining their decision to stay in Australia, the exiles articulate a ‘sense of possibility’ (Stølen 2007) where the decision to stay is founded upon a notion of home as the place where they have the best opportunity to secure their own and their children’s future well-being. For many, the decision not to return to East Timor and the realisation that they had grown accustomed to Australia enhanced their feelings of ambiguity and guilt, resulting in increased translocal practice (Wise 2006). The homeland-focused nature of the diaspora was maintained through promissory strategies of pragmatism and deferral, by which the exiles alleviated feelings of guilt through the imagination of future return and continued

emphasis on their commitment towards East Timor. However, contrary to the existing literature on the East-Timorese diaspora, which emphasises the translocal nature of the community, this research has found that, as the reality of independence has manifested, people have increasingly moved away from the translocal sphere. Today, translocalism is restricted to individual initiatives, and there is a growing emphasis on the exilic community in terms of communal practice.

I explained the decrease in translocalism and the exiles' shift away from the East-Timorese sphere in relation to a cultural principle of dualism and reciprocity. Using Elizabeth Traube's (2007) discussion of the Mambai people's narrative tradition of *Tat Felis* and the notion of 'unpaid wages' as the starting point, I illustrated how the politically active exiles' adherence to a cultural code of reciprocity and a moral discourse of sacrifice underpins post-independence experiences of disappointment and disillusionment. Though the exiles by no means compare their suffering and sacrifices to those of the East Timorese who endured the Indonesian occupation, a sense of suffering and sacrifice saturates their narratives. In exile, they placed their lives 'on hold,' dedicating their time, energy and future to the fight for independence. Their participation in the political campaign formed part of an idiom of exchange and reciprocity that entails a value of moral obligation. As the exiles are committed to an enduring obligation towards their ancestors and their country of origin, so is the nation compelled by its reciprocal responsibilities to compensate for the suffering of those who fought for its existence—it has to pay the wages to those with whose blood it was purchased (Traube 2007).

The politically active exiles feel their efforts, their sacrifices and struggle, have been left unrecompensed. Such sentiments are largely founded upon experiences and perceptions of change, rejection and exclusion as they are articulated in stories circulating through the diaspora. These 'circulating stories' reflect a narrative activity within the diaspora by which personal accounts of change, sacrifice and return are told and retold. They describe a complex set of emotions in which initial feelings of homecoming are juxtaposed to feelings of estrangement, change, exclusion and rejection. These experiences—or the embodiment of these experiences through the telling and retelling of the circulating stories—are at the heart of feelings of disappointment, disillusionment, anger and frustration exhibited by many of the exiles. They form part of a process of othering by which the exiles negotiate their identities and their boundaries of belonging. Faced with

the (perceived) categorisation of themselves as outsiders, traitors, foreigners, 'Westerners,' opportunists and 'non-Timorese,' the exiles move the borders of their self-definition, increasingly placing themselves in opposition to their former (imagined) community of belonging.

The process of othering has been furthered in the shadow of the political crisis of 2006. I have argued that the political crisis represents a peak in the exiles' redefinition of self post-independence and that it has exacerbated the political divisions within the community. The very nature of the crisis and the portrayal of the violence within the Australian media have split the community according to pre-existing lines (Fretilin/UDT). The polarised nature of the conflict (Fretilin versus the opposition, Alkatiri versus Gusmão, East versus West, military versus police) has forced people to take sides and ensnared them in a test of loyalty. There is growing suspicion exhibited by both sides of the political schism and old conflicts and accusations are voiced, further allowing bitterness to fester.

Despite the physical distance to East Timor, the exiles were strongly affected by the 2006 crisis and its violence. Those who have family and friends in East Timor, or who own property in the affected areas, were affected in a very direct way; many experienced their families being subjected to violence or being forced to flee their homes, seeking refuge in refugee camps or with family in the rural 'districts,' and some had their properties looted and burnt. Reminded of their privileged situation as dual citizens earned by their flight from the Indonesian regime, some initially experienced renewed feelings of migration guilt as they found themselves unable to help. However, these feelings did not translate into increased translocal practices, as had been the case during the Indonesian occupation. Moreover, as the crisis continued, feelings of guilt were eased and people have increasingly withdrawn from the East-Timorese sphere. This reaction has to be seen in relation to the intense affective response caused by the crisis.

The exiles articulate a range of feelings in relation to the political crisis and complicated emotions of hopelessness and helplessness, concern, sadness, disappointment, anger and frustration intermingle. They are shocked and embarrassed by the events, and many express a sense of bewilderment and confusion as to how the unity of their people could dissipate so easily. People have lost trust in the nation and its leaders, and, with their identities so intimately woven into the narratives of resistance and heroism that these

leaders represent, many feel personally assaulted by the failures of the leadership. These emotions signal the continued presence of the moral discourse of sacrifice and the cultural code of reciprocity. They emerge from the failure of the East-Timorese nation to meet its obligation; namely, to pay the wages of its people by securing a safe, prosperous and peaceful environment for its citizens. The emotions point to a continued social bond between the exiles and the East-Timorese nation; the events matter because of their enduring association with East Timor and their identification with its people, history and culture.

The crisis had only limited, if any, impact on the exiles' social fields of everyday practice. Nonetheless, it forced the exiles to question the character of their social world and manifested itself in the translocal sphere and in the affective dimension, which is integral to their perception, conception and experience of self. This, I have argued, has to be understood in light of their positioning within two parallel social worlds existing independently of each other and by the role played by affective experiences in people's negotiation and transformation of identity.

Identity and affect have traditionally been treated separately within the anthropological literature. Despite the apparent connection between emotions, emotive experiences, and the individual's sense of self and sense of belonging, little attention has been paid to how emotions form part of people's habitus. Addressing this void, I argued that there is a dialectic relationship between thought and affect that can be compared to the dual connection between the individual and the social structures to which she or he relates. Emotions are relational; they cannot occur in isolation. They form part of the individual's socialisation and through engagement with and practice within their immediate (social and non-social) environments, emotional responses, perceptions and displays are created. As such, emotions become part of habitus and, in a circular manner, they inform and are informed by practice and agency. Through ongoing practice within social fields, the sensate, corporeal component of emotions and their cognitive, communicative element are formed in a dynamic, accumulative manner. Simultaneously, as part of habitus, they inform practice, motivate behaviour and mediate social actions. Hence, it is to be expected that intense emotional reactions caused by change or disruption within the social fields to which the individual relates will instigate responses in terms of practice and, subsequently, affect identity.

The political crisis in East Timor aroused emotions such as anxiety, worry, concern, anger, sadness, disappointment, embarrassment, guilt and shame. These intensely felt negative emotions caused a disruption in the exiles' subjective dispositions, their experience of self, and in their social worlds. People felt exposed by the events and it has affected the core of their self-imagination. In an effort to protect themselves from further emotional strain and trauma, many have adopted a conscious strategy of increasing the emotional distance between themselves and the East-Timorese sphere. The process of othering is thus furthered, and the exiles are increasingly defining themselves beyond, even in opposition to, the East-Timorese nation. These processes are visible in people's withdrawal from the translocal sphere and the seeming disinterest in East-Timorese affairs. The boundaries of belonging are shifting, yet, through the act of rejection and withdrawal, the notion of East Timoresehood remains part of the exiles' identity and sense of self; the rejection or muting of their East-Timorese connections are actions that result from the affective and involving character of the East-Timorese discourses upon their exile identities.

The East-Timorese exiles' emotional reactions to the political crisis and the subsequent negotiation of identity and boundaries of belonging suggest an essential need to belong; it reflects the exiles' position within and between multiple spheres that they can call home and the impossibility of total rejection of any of these spheres. For many, questions of home continue to be in flux and a sense of ambiguity remains. However, these questions manifest in varying ways and their intensity fluctuates, their presence and affect depending on circumstances in East Timor and in Australia, as well as the individual's personal positioning within the East-Timorese and Australian fields.

There are vast differences in the exiles' response to and the effect of circumstances 'at home,' as suggested by the different experiences of those who were politically active and those who were not. The divergent reactions to and experiences of the East-Timorese exiles are illustrative of how we cannot speak of a general 'refugee experience.' The experience of flight, dislocation and exile will vary from individual to individual and depends on personal characteristics ranging from age and gender to class and ethnicity, as well as the migratory journey, the places left behind and those encountered on the way, the forcefulness of the flight and the refugee's arrival in a new place, the social fields of the home-, transit- and host-countries, political circumstances, and so on. Accordingly, if we are to understand the impact of events at home upon diasporic communities and

identities, and address the well-being of the multiple exile communities within our society, we must speak of refugee *experiences* and acknowledge the particularities of refugee or exile communities in terms of their historical schisms and diverging practice.

One evening in 2006, when the project was in its infancy, I was watching a news report on a growing conflict between the Israeli military and the Lebanese-based political and paramilitary organisation Hezbollah. Israeli forces had attacked Beirut, causing significant civilian death and severe damage to the city's civil infrastructure. With Beirut burning, images of terrified Lebanese exiles made it to the screen. Concerned about the safety of their family and friends, anxious about the state of their home country, and angry at the offensive forces, they articulated a sense of helplessness and hopelessness about the situation. The images brought me back to similar scenes displayed only months before when East Timor erupted into civil strife. They made me realise that, firstly, as East Timor disintegrated into chaos, there had been no resonance of the voices of those who live in exile, and, secondly, that the particularities of the individual exile communities and the conflicts in question have to be considered if we are to understand how violence and unrest manifest within and affect exile communities. In contrast to the exiled Lebanese, the East Timorese were faced with a conflict in which there was no defined aggressor. They faced an internal crisis where violence and destruction were tied to growing questions about national identity and unity, causing a twofold anxiety. Moreover, the rampage and violence crushed the previous image of the East Timorese as a unified people committed to human rights and peace; an image which mirrored the exiles' sense of East Timoresehood. Whereas the research project set out to understand the situation, perspectives and experiences of the East-Timorese diaspora and people's negotiation between diasporic reality and events in the homeland, I hope it may also stimulate larger comparative studies of the ways in which expatriate and diaspora communities relate to violence and the threat of radical political change 'at home.'

The thesis illustrates the importance of acknowledging people's ongoing engagement with the cultures of their various communities of belonging. Further anthropological research is necessary on this issue. Within the literature on exile and diaspora communities, there is an overarching focus on translocal/transnational engagement, or the lack thereof, due to settlement processes or levels of acculturation. Though this is important, further inquiry into how cultural symbols and meanings facilitate or restrict local, translocal and transnational practice and agency, is required. Moreover, there is a

need for further research into the role of emotions and affect in the development, negotiation and transformation of identity. Such research may enhance understanding of conflicts between different groups of people or tensions experienced by individuals, which implicate their well-being and engagement with their immediate social milieus. As is argued in this thesis, incidents that trigger emotional responses—in particular negative responses—leave traces that mark the collective sense of belonging as well as individuals' identity. This is evident in the current positioning of the East-Timorese exiles in relation to their home country, whereby the emotional intensity generated by the political crisis in East Timor is, for many, a constituting feature of self-definition. Critical issues for further study include how present and future generations participate in the challenging process of nation building in East Timor and how they negotiate and transform their East-Timorese identity in the context of the multiple communities and cultures to which they belong. This study of East Timorese in Melbourne may help us better understand some of the many challenges facing exiles and other newcomer groups as they mediate between and negotiate the competing pressures of multiple homes, cultures and social domains, and envision future possible worlds for themselves and their descendants.

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APPENDIX 1

GUIDE FOR SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

For researcher use only

TOPICS

Life stories
Diaspora and transnationalism
The current crisis

THE INTERVIEW

Thanks for agreeing...etc

- Make sure the interviewee is aware of his/her rights as a participant in the study: Confidentiality and anonymity, the opportunity to withdraw from the project at any time without giving any reason, the option to terminate the interview at any time.
 - Ask for permission to tape record the interview. Tell the participant that he/she can review, edit or erase the tape recording if he/she so wish.
-

LIFE STORIES

Could you tell me something about your life, both before and after you arrived in Australia?

- Place of origin
- Family
- Friends
- Work
- Study
- Involvement with community groups
- Hobbies and interests

DIASPORA AND TRANSNATIONALISM

Could you tell me about the East Timorese community in Australia and your involvement with this community?

Do you feel the East Timorese community has changed after the independence? If so, in what way?

In what ways did the realisation of independence in East Timor affect your life in Australia?

Have you been back to East Timor after the independence? If so, what was it like?

Could you describe how your East Timorese background is part of your life in Australia?

What are your main sources of information about East Timor?

- Friends and family in East Timor
- Friends and family in Australia
- Australian media
- Email lists
- Community meetings

THE CURRENT CRISIS

Could you tell me about the recent crisis in East Timor? What is your understanding of the conflict?

How did the events of late April and May affect you? How did you respond to the crisis?

What do you see as the greatest challenge for the East Timorese nation?