YOUNG EAST TIMORESE IN AUSTRALIA:

Becoming Part of a New Culture and the Impact of Refugee Experiences on Identity and Belonging

Hedda Haugen Askland

Candidata Magisterii (Cand.Mag.)

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School of Social Sciences University of Newcastle, NSW

original research and has not been submitted for a higher degree to
any other University or Institution.
Signed:
Date:

I hereby certify that the work embodied in this thesis is the result of

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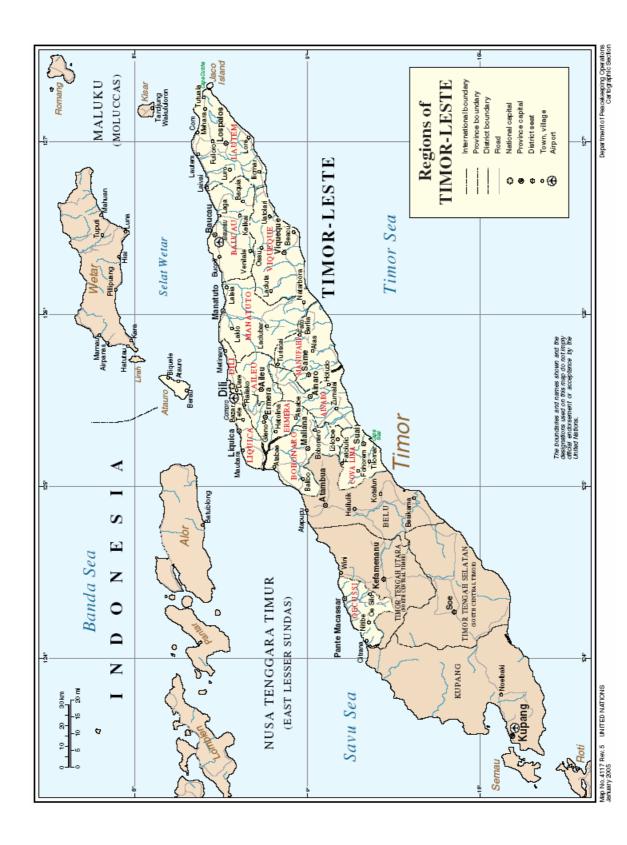
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ABSTRACT

In 1975 Indonesian forces invaded Dili, the capital of East Timor. The invasion and ensuing occupation forced thousands of East Timorese to leave their homes and seek refuge in Australia and other countries. This study considers the situation of a particular group of East Timorese refugees: those who fled to Australia during the 1990s and who were children or young adolescents at the time of their flight.

Founded upon an understanding of social identity as being constantly transformed though a dialectic relation between the individual and his or her sociocultural surroundings, this dissertation considers the consequences of refugee experiences on individual identity and belonging, as well as the processes of conceptualising self and negotiating identity within changing social and cultural structures. The relationship between conflict and flight, resettlement, acculturation, identity and attachment is explored, and particular attention is given to issues of socialisation and categorisation, age and agency, hybridity, and ambiguity.

Through a qualitative anthropological methodology informed by theories of cultural identity, adolescence and cross-cultural socialisation, the thesis seeks to shed light on the various dynamics that have influenced the young East Timorese people's identity and sense of belonging, and considers the impact of acculturation and socialisation into a new culture at a critical period of the young people's lives.



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ABBREVIATIONS

ABRI Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia

(Armed Forces of the Republic of Indonesia)

ASAS Asylum Seekers Assistance Scheme

Apodeti Associação Popular Democratica Timorense

(Timorese Popular Democratic Association, earlier, the Association for the Integration of Timor into Indonesia)

ASDT Associação Social Democrata Timorense

(Timorese Social Democratic Party, forerunner Fretilin)

CNRM Concelho Nacional da Resistancia Maubere

(National Council of Maubere Resistance, forerunner CNRT)

CNRT Conselho Nacional da Resistencia Timorense

(National Council of Timorese Resistance)

DIMIA Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs
Falintil Forças Armadas de Libertação Nacional de Timor-Leste

(Armed Forces for the National Liberation of East Timor)

Fretilin Frente Revolutionaria de Timor-Leste Independente

(Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor)

HECS Higher Education Contribution Scheme

HSC Higher School Certificate
INTERFET International Force East Timor

METAC Melbourne East Timorese Activities Centre

NGO Non-Governmental Organisation
PPV Permanent Protection Visa
PTSD Post-traumatic stress disorder

RILC Refugee & Immigration Legal Centre Inc

RRT Refugee Review Tribunal

SHP Special Humanitarian Program
TAFE Technical and Further Education
TNI Tentara Nasional Indonesia

Telitara i vasionai midonesia

(Indonesian National Army, until 1999 know as ABRI)

TPV Temporary Protection Visa UDT União Democratica Timorense

(Timorese Democratic Union)

UN United Nations

UNDP United Nations Development Programme

UNHCR United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees UNMISET United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor

UNTAET United Nations Transnational Administration in East Timor