

YOUNG EAST TIMORESE IN AUSTRALIA:
**Becoming Part of a New Culture and the Impact of
Refugee Experiences on Identity and Belonging**

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I hereby certify that the work embodied in this thesis is the result of original research and has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other University or Institution.

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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 through 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.



ABBREVIATIONS

ABRI	Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia (Armed Forces of the Republic of Indonesia)
ASAS	Asylum Seekers Assistance Scheme
Apodeti	Associação Popular Democrática 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 Resistência Maubere (National Council of Maubere Resistance, forerunner CNRT)
CNRT	Conselho Nacional da Resistência 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 Revolucionária 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 (Indonesian National Army, until 1999 known as ABRI)
TPV	Temporary Protection Visa
UDT	União Democrática 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 Transitional Administration in East Timor